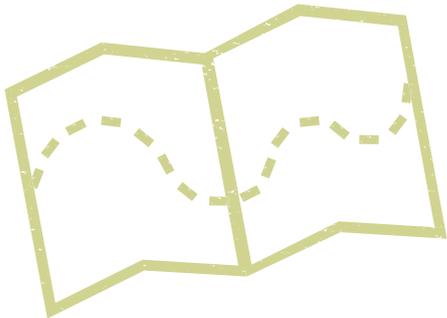


Take a wild walk

7.5 MILES

Allow up to 4 hours to complete this walk which follows a mixture of footpaths and lanes with some rough ground and steep inclines.



This route, created by **Nic Howes**, travels through meadows and woodlands and along winding lanes and takes in three Nature Reserves and a fantastic pub - a perfect walk!

Approaching from Hereford, park in the narrow verge on the left immediately before Slough Cottage, by the footbridge (Start).

Walk back along the road towards Vowchurch for about 500 metres and then turn right off the road and up a drive with a fingerpost and large white gatepost (point 1). Fork right up the concrete drive to avoid the house drive with white gates ahead. Follow the concrete drive through the gap between the old wooden barn on your right and the attractive stone buildings of White House on your left.

Leave the yard through the farm gate ahead and ascend the track beyond, ignoring the short track that soon branches on your left. Fork left uphill at the next junction, signed to The Quarry. Fork left up the track at the entrance to The Quarry and follow it uphill to reach two metal farm gates ahead (ignore the short cut footpath marked on the map for this section as it is obscure on the ground). Follow the track through

a sharp right hand bend, with the two metal farm gates on your left, then keep straight ahead, passing a large stone barn close on your right (point 2).

Keep ahead through a metal farm gate and follow the grass path along the left hand edge of a large field, keeping Blackpool Wood close on your left. There is an anomaly on the map, which shows the large field on your right as woodland, even though it was cleared of trees long ago. Go through a metal farm gate and bear left towards the house. Go through a wooden farm gate and continue along the drive ahead - with the house on your right - to meet a surfaced lane (point 3). Turn left uphill along the surfaced lane and follow it to St Margaret's Church (point 4). The church is usually unlocked and is well worth entering to see the wonderful carved wooden rood screen, one of Herefordshire's many secluded treasures.

Retrace your steps from the church porch, turning left out of the car park and promptly turning left again over a stile and onto a footpath as directed

by the first fingerpost, by a yellow grit bin. You should now aim for the hedge corner visible diagonally ahead. Once at this corner you should aim for the gap in the hedge extending from the wood on your left. Go through this gap with its metal farm gate and aim for the stile ahead; over this stile keep straight ahead through a tree plantation. Exit the tree plantation via a stile (point 5), cross the drive beyond and continue ahead through a waymarked metal farm gate. Keep the hedge close on your right, cross the next waymarked stile and descend the field to a stile ahead, at the corner of a small wood. Cross this stile and follow the edge of the small wood on your left down to a concrete footbridge to cross the headwaters of the Dulas Brook. Climb the bank ahead to the old ash tree on the hedge corner to your right and you should find a waymarked post beneath the ash tree to direct you on the level ahead with the hedge close on your right. Go ahead through a hedge gap with a wooden farm gate and then aim for a house with separate garage, left of straight ahead; this will lead you to a metal gate giving access to a surfaced lane (point 6).

From the metal gate make a staggered right/left crossing and ascend the surfaced lane to the right of the house and separate garage for which you just aimed. Keep ahead, passing a white house (Bannut Tree Cottage) on your right at the top of the pitch. At the sign for Upper Gilfach Farm (point 7) descend to your right to a fingerpost, stile and bridge to cross. Follow the easy path across three grass fields to reach Upper Fenbreed Farm, clearly visible ahead all of the way (fog permitting). Cross the stile to immediately pass to the left of the farm buildings, join the farm drive and follow it to meet a surfaced lane. Turn left out of the drive and follow the lane to a T-junction (point 8).

Turn right at point 8 and follow the surfaced lane for about 400 metres to a black metal farm gate on your left (point 9) that you should turn through to aim to pass to the right of a black barn ahead. Continue straight ahead after passing through the metal farm gate by the black barn, go through another metal farm gate and access a surfaced lane by a vernacular stile made of a sandstone slab on edge. Turn right from the stile and follow the surfaced lane curving left

until it reaches a sharp right hand bend (point 10).

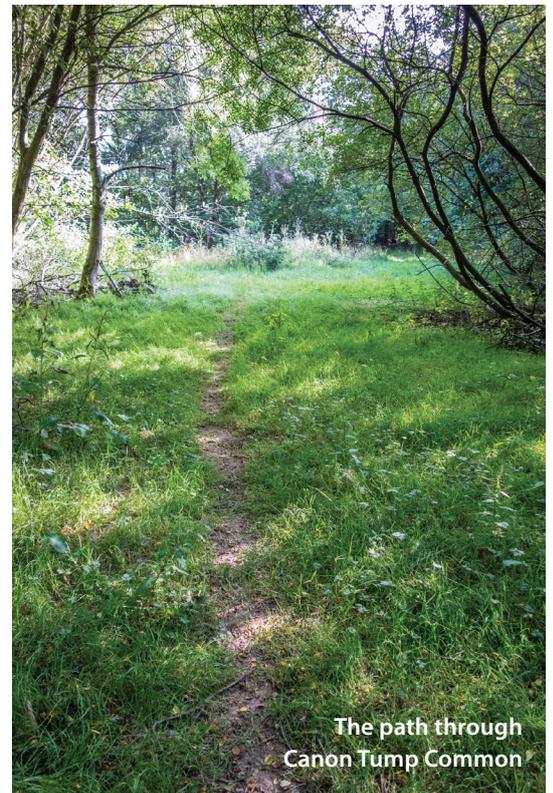
Continue on the surfaced lane, round the right hand bend and continue for 300 metres to the entrance to HWT's Canon Tump Common nature reserve (point 14). At this point you can pick up the route description from point 14 if you do not wish to visit The Bridge Inn or you can make your way down to the Inn via the lane and footpaths through points 13 and 12 on the map.

Turn left along the road behind The Bridge Inn (point 12) for a few metres to reach a fingerpost and stile on the right that you should cross and climb the steep, short bank ahead. At the top of the bank cross the field ahead diagonally to a metal farm gate that you should go through to enter another field and cross that to another metal farm gate with a sandstone slab stile beside it. Once past this you should aim for the far top corner of the field ahead, at which point you should cross a ditch to access the field beyond through a metal farm gate. Follow the waymark to the wooden gate ahead and slightly left; once through this gate keep the field boundary close on your left. Reach a metal farm gate and go through, bearing left along the hedge line to reach a waymarked metal farm gate. Go through the gate and turn right up the track to a T-junction with a surfaced lane; turn right here (point 13). Walk along the lane to the fingerpost on the left by the wooden entrance gate to HWT's Canon Tump Common nature reserve (point 14).

Enter Canon Tump reserve and follow the bridleway through it, leaving through a wooden gate by a house and follow the drive straight ahead. At the end of the drive carefully cross the surfaced lane to descend along another drive that passes a gate on the left through which you may loop into HWT's Marises and Cethins nature reserves and back. Continue along the drive and after Little Marises keep ahead down a grassy track. On reaching a surfaced lane (point 15) turn right along it and keep going for about a kilometre, ignoring all turnings to left and right. After a series of left hand bends the lane has a slight kink to the right with a metal farm gate on your left and the remnants

of a waymark (point 16). Go through the gate and follow the footpath, keeping the hedge close on your left to reach and cross a footbridge with stiles just before a large oak tree. Pass the oak tree on your right to reach another footbridge with stiles; cross this and keep ahead with the hedge close on your right. Cross a waymarked stile in the corner of the field and aim ahead to the metal farm gate into Great Wood (point 17).

Follow the faint footpath ahead, heading northwest and do not turn along forestry operation tracks that cross it. If you stay on the right path you should pass a long-abandoned Vauxhall Nova car, circa 1988. Keep ahead, descending gently and go straight across a well-worn forestry access track (point 18). After this the path descends more steeply to a metal farm gate through which you should exit Great Wood into a field. Cross this field, aiming slightly right to enter Slough Breast Wood via a stile. The path winds down through this wood to reach a metal farm gate into a field that slopes down to the stream beside which you started. As you approach the outbuildings to the right of Slough Cottage you should see the footbridge beyond them that you should cross to access the point from which you started the walk (S), upstream of a vehicle ford.



The path through Canon Tump Common