

Exploring Bringsty Common & Bromyard Downs

a linear walk between two pubs!

by Nic Howes

Start off from the small car park just off the A44, beside the sign for "The Live and Let Live" pub.

Bracken has been harvested in this area to make "brackettes" to burn as biomass fuel (www.brackenburn.co.uk).

Descend the lane onto Bringsty Common and bear right towards the pub but just before entering its car park fork left along a drive.

As you approach the gate to "Brookside" turn right along a grass path with the property boundary on your left (**point 1**). Keep on this path, ignoring any paths off to the right, with a brook below you on the left, until you reach a small footbridge to cross it. (At the time of writing, this path was quite overgrown and the footbridge somewhat concealed.)

Climb a grass path towards houses but turn right at a cross of paths (**point 2**) before you reach them. Once on this path keep straight ahead on the level, across a cross of paths and then a staggered crossing across a drive. Turn right onto another drive for about 50 metres until it bends right to the gate of "The Old School House" at which point (**3**) you should fork left onto the grass path. This will take you to a gate off Bringsty Common with a waymark explaining that you should follow a "Permissive Path" that avoids Nuttage Farm.

Just beyond the farm buildings the path enters a large orchard through a gate (**point 4**), with trees thick with mistletoe. Follow the path ahead, which soon runs outside the southern edge of the orchard. At the western end of

the orchard (**point 5**) cross a stile and continue straight ahead into Clater Park. Bearing slightly right will take you to a stile to cross the next fence (**point 6**), just below Clater House. Once over this, aim for the stile and post straight ahead, cross this and aim ahead to the top corner of the field you have entered (**point 7**). Please note, livestock often graze in these fields.

Cross the stile at **point 7** to enter woodland and continue straight ahead, taking the left hand path at the fork about 40 metres beyond the stile. This path soon joins an access drive; follow it straight ahead (as the waymarked post directs). As the drive bends right, take the waymarked path over a small footbridge. You will emerge from the woodland onto the southern end of Bromyard Downs, close to the busy A44 road (**point 8**).

Carefully cross the A44 close to the road warning sign for a junction and parking; follow the grass path opposite, up to Brockhampton School building. Walk left along the road past the school and immediately after it walk onto the Downs beyond and above the road. Walk uphill, keeping the hedge close on your right; fine views open up on your left across Bromyard and beyond. Keep on in this direction until you reach the edge of Warren Wood.

Enter Warren Wood (National Trust) via the small gate, follow the path which leads ahead then bends left and ascend a flight of steps to the wood's highest edge. There is a reservoir on your right beyond a fence and hidden in the bank below on your left are the buried remains of two World War Two Auxiliary Unit Operational Bases that were excavated by Herefordshire

Distance: 6.4 miles

Terrain: Mostly easy with some paths rather overgrown and some moderate inclines.

Time: circa 2 hours 40 minutes

Start point: Parking area off the A44, by the Live & Let Live pub sign.

Grid reference: Start: SO698550

OS Map: 202 (Leominster & Bromyard)

Additional information: This is a 'there-and-back' linear walk but there are car parks (and pubs) at both ends where a second car could be left in advance, or a convivial drop-off and pick-up arranged. Please note, the route passes through fields where livestock graze.

Archaeology in 2016.

Keep walking north with the fence on your right and exit Warren Wood to emerge again onto the open Bromyard Downs. Bear slightly right, around the western edge of the next small wood to reach the remains of Shepherd's Cottage (**point 9**), where a National Trust tenant lived from 1954 to 2009.

Continue along this path as it swings down to the left, descending to the main Bromyard Downs car park where there are interpretation boards with more information about the Downs, alongside which is the Royal Oak pub.



