

THE MALVERN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Discovery Walk No 8



A Walk in Three Counties



Points of Interest

This walk passes through the least well known part of the Malvern Hills and the parish of Bromesberrow, which until the seventeenth century was a part of a royal hunting forest. Bromesberrow Estate has changed little since it was carved out of the forest and the working landscape remains much as it was.

A Hollybush Church Room (1915) is one of several corrugated iron buildings in the area and it Hollybush church east of here (Discovery Walk 3).

B The Georgian Manor House is the most prestigious house in Hollybush; Manor cottage is older.

C A good view of (the private) Hollybush quarry can be seen from the slope of Raggedstone Hill. Quarrying of the pre-Cambrian Malvern stone is no longer permitted.

D The twin peaks of Raggedstone Hill have always inspired fanciful tales; there are several stories about the legend which foretells doom for anyone on whom the shadow of Raggedstone falls. The best material is found in Malvern Chase, a historical novel set in the C15 by the Victorian naturalist W. S. Symonds who was rector of Pendock a few miles south-east of here. The novel also deals with other places encountered on this walk.

E White Leaved Oak is a small hamlet at the point where the three shires of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester meet. The original oak was cut down by David Ricardo the famous economist, of Bromesberrow Place two hundred years ago; he didn't approve of all the tourists coming to see the tree.

F Chase End Hill is the most southerly hill in the Malvern range, and the king's hunting forest, Malvern Chase, extended only a mile or so south of here. To the north can be seen the twin peaks of Raggedstone; to the east Bredon Hill with the Cotswolds beyond; to the south, May Hill, with its characteristic clump of trees on top; to the west, Eastnor castle stands out with the Frith and Oyster Hill behind to the north-west; in the western distance are the Black Mountains and Hay Bluff.

G Howlers Heath is Howling Heath on older maps; legend has it that this was one of the last places in England where wolves survived and the name recalls their howling. More prosaic is the theory that the name refers to the howling of the wind; the slopes take a real battering from the prevailing south-westerlies. It is also possible that the name is derived from owls.

H Bromesberrow Estate forms a working landscape not only with this parkland, but also with arable crops, woodland maintenance and research ventures. You will have already passed some of the estate cottages. You may also see white park cattle (Chillingham cattle), an extremely rare breed and, possibly, black swans in this area of the estate.

I Across the lake is Bromesberrow Place which started as a farmhouse at the end of the seventeenth century and was expanded in 1768. The owner David Ricardo employed George Basevi to expand it further and face it in the Regency Greek revival style in 1820, which is essentially what you can see today.



Hollybush Church Room



White Park Cattle & Bromesberrow Place

Essential Information

Starting Point	The Car Park at Hollybush (SO 766368) on the A438.
Alternative Starting Points	Bus Stop at SO 758369. Bromesberrow Village Hall at SO 745336.
Distance	11.5 km (7.2 miles).
Maps	Ordnance Survey Explorer 190.
Terrain	Hilly at the start; the ascents are strenuous and the Raggedstone descent is very tricky. Easy alternatives are available.
Refreshments	None in the immediate area.
Car Parks	At the starting points. There may be a charge at Bromesberrow Village hall.

When out walking, please follow the COUNTRYSIDE CODE.

Use alternatives to your car whenever possible.
Keep to the public rights of way and designated areas of public access when crossing farmland.
Use appropriate gates and stiles to cross field boundaries.
Close all gates that you have opened.
Avoid damaging or disturbing wildlife, including plants and trees.
Keep dogs under close control and always clean up after them.
Guard against all risk of fire.
Take your litter home and dispose of it responsibly.

Many of the commons over which this route travels are owned by the Malvern Hills Conservators. They work with the commoners, whose stock graze the common, and the AONB Partnership to maintain the open beauty of this landscape. Visitors should respect this working landscape and realise that driving their vehicles over these commons is not permitted and dogs should be kept on leads.

This is one of a series of Discovery Walks in the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. For further details please contact the AONB office: Tel: 01684 560616. www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk.

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J The Old Rectory is an impressive building which reflects the importance of the church in quite small parishes at the end of the eighteenth century when it was built. Note the symmetry and the way the windows get smaller nearer to the top of the building.

K The round hill on your left gives Bromesberrow its name (round hill with broom). Other such hills can be found in the neighbouring parish of Berrow and in Mathon (Discovery Walk 6) with Bagburrow and Rowburrow. Elsewhere such hills (natural and artificial) are known as 'Barrows'. The name 'Coneygree Hill' appears on older maps and suggests the presence of 'coney' or rabbits.

L Bromesberrow Court, with its site adjacent to the church, is much older than Bromesberrow Place. It, too, was altered by Basevi, since Ricardo owned both properties. The delightful view of the house and garden from the churchyard is quintessentially English.

M St. Mary's church is just as English in that it is a glorious mixture of periods and styles; originally late Norman, there is still a Norman font, a beam dated 1502 and the Yate chapel of 1725. But the overall impression is of much Victorian work. Outside, local sandstone blocks are the main, but not the only, building material. The best Victorian feature is the lovely shingled spire.

N To the south is the Glynych brook occupying a wide river valley; nowadays the brook carries the rain from the south-west side of the Malverns, but, before the last Ice Age, the Mathon river, which drained all of the West Midlands, ran along this course (Discovery Walks 2 and 6).

O The oaks in Oak Drive were originally planted in the early 1800's and recall the trees in the Royal Forest that was sold by Charles I. (The word 'forest' means a royal hunting area and the word 'chase' was applied to those of Bishops or Earls). Malvern Chase was royal except between 1280 (when Edward I gave it to the Clares) and 1485 (when Henry VII confiscated it again). At the top of the drive is an attractive nineteenth century thatched 'cottage ornée' lodge.

P The productive walled garden is another working feature of Bromesberrow Place. There is espalier fruit on the outside of the walls. The cedars behind are typical of the planting of 'Capability' Brown.

Q Although the Gate House is now part of the Bromesberrow Estate, it is clearly older as suggested by the moat, the architecture and the very old barn. The reason for the name remains a mystery, but 'Gate' may come from the Norse word for a street.

R Perrins Court dates from the late sixteenth century and an outbuilding was used as a gaol in the Civil War.

S The lengthy Bromesberrow Place drive enabled the owners to get to Ledbury station with the minimum of delay and disruption; hence a bridge for their carriages was built over the road to White Leaved Oak.

T The northern lodge is another excellent example of 'cottage ornée' architecture popular in the nineteenth century. Unusually, it is clad with Malvern stone, perhaps from the nearby Hollybush Quarry.



The Old Rectory



Oak Drive