



The Malvern Hills AONB Partnership exists to secure the conservation and enhancement of this special area.

malvern hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Hill & Valley

Malvern Hills Ridge



Discovery Walk No 5

THE MALVERN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Points of Interest

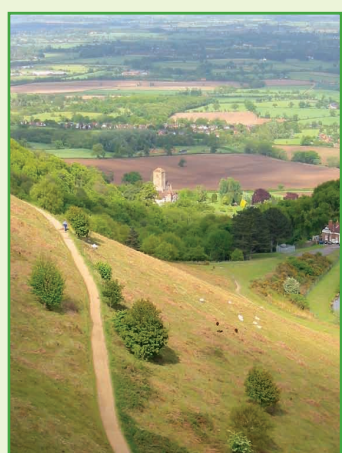
The title of the walk comes from a poem by Elizabeth Barrett, who lived in Colwall, at Hope End until a young woman. The Parish Footpaths map is recommended and can be obtained from the Post Office at the end of Station Rd, Colwall.

- A** The ridge ahead is impressive and such hills have always been a source of inspiration to writers. Psalm 121 starts: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." The Psalmist found valleys more morbid; "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil." See if you feel like the Psalmist on this walk!
- B** To your left is the quaintly named "The Kettle Sings" cafe. Refreshments here if the uphill stretch has left you with a thirst!
- C** The Quarry is one of many on the Hills. Malvern stone is not a freestone (it cannot be cut to shape) and its main uses were for roads, walls and the outer cladding of buildings when a large quantity of mortar was needed to hold the stone in place. George Bernard Shaw remarked about the extent of quarrying in a letter to the Times that soon the Malvern Hills would become the Malvern flats! Most of the quarries were closed by the 1950s, the Gullet Quarry closing in 1977.
- D** There is a fine view back down the path to Oyster Hill and the Welsh mountains in the background. Facing north you can observe the larch trees of 'Thirids Land' to your left. Just before you turn back, the small hill ahead of you is Jubilee Hill, named in 2002 to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee.
- E** On the ridge, enjoy the superb 360° views. It could have been this ridge that W.H.Auden was thinking of when he wrote:
*"Here on the cropped grass of the narrow ridge I stand.
A fathom of earth, alive in the air,
Aloof as an admiral on the old rock, England below me."*
Auden taught at the Downs School, close to Colwall station in the 1930s.
- F** Along the ridge is the Red Earl's Dyke, (Shire Ditch) 13th century, built by Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, to mark his western boundary. Though he may have adapted an earlier Bronze Age ditch, tradition has it that the Bishop of Hereford's deer to the west could easily jump onto his land, but his own deer could not jump the other way because of the severe gradient. The highest point on this section of the ridge is called Pinnacle Hill.

The hill that stands out to the east is Bredon Hill; William Cobbett in his 'Rural Rides' wrote:
"From Bredon Hill you see those curious bubbleings up, the Malvern Hills"

The Malvern Hills are among the oldest in England and are made of a mixture of igneous metamorphic rocks. To the west there are a series of Silurian limestone ridges (the oldest limestone in Britain).

- G** Below you, to your left, are the picturesque buildings and gardens of Little Malvern Priory and Little Malvern Court. The oldest part of the Priory dates from 1171. It was here in the mid 14th century that William Langland was a novice Monk. (See 'O'.) Ahead of you is Wynds Point, the last home of Jenny Lind, who many consider the greatest soprano of them all. The "Swedish Nightingale" gave up singing in opera at the age of 28, but she continued to teach and would travel to London by train using the stations at either Colwall or Great Malvern.
- H** Close to the path is the memorial to Sir Barry Jackson, the founder of the Malvern Festival, which featured works by Edward Elgar and George Bernard Shaw. He built the house (Black Hill) which is just below you to your right.
- I** The road is called Jubilee Drive and was constructed to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887.
- J** The reservoir to your left was a holding facility for Malvern's commercial supply. The bottled Malvern water originates in a spring on the west side of the hills not far from where you crossed the A449. It is piped to a bottling plant in Colwall Stone that lies about 200m north of Colwall station.



Little Malvern Priory

- K** The terraces of British Camp were constructed around the 5th century BC, at around the same time as the Parthenon in Athens. The earthworks probably served to keep animals in and intruders out; it has a superb defensive position but there is no positive evidence to support the long-held tradition that this was where Caractacus (Caradoc) and the Roman General, Ostorius Scapula, fought their first battle. Edward Elgar based his oratorio, 'Caractacus' on the tradition, and the Poet Laureate, John Masefield who lived in Ledbury only four miles away, wrote of the contest in his poem, 'On Malvern Hill'.
*"The leaves whirl in the wind's riot
Beneath the Beacon's jutting spur
Quiet are clan and chief, and quiet
Centurion and signifier."*
- L** Ahead of you to the south-west is the 16th century Eastnor Castle, and more prominently, the Obelisk, a memorial to various members of the Somers family who lived at the Castle. The cave is of unknown origin; locally it is known as Giant's or Clutter's Cave.
- M** Walm's well is one of many wells around the hills. They occur where the igneous rocks meet the sedimentary limestone. This well would have been the water supply for the hermit who lived in Clutter's Cave (Giant's Cave). The wooded area to your left was once managed by coppicing (cutting trees to ground level), and in spring is carpeted with bluebells and the infusion of wild garlic.
- N** If you look back, you will see an old tollhouse, dating from when this was a turnpike road. It has recently been repainted in the sort of bright colours that were used originally. The turnpike road used an ancient route through the hills. After another 100m, the route veered off to the left to follow the ancient ridgeway, which is no longer a Public Right of Way.
- O** This must have been close to the place where William Langland's 'The Vision of Piers Plowman' had his vision.
*"To the east I saw a tower on a hill;
A deep dale beneath - a dungeon therein
A fair field full of folk found I there between"*
The tower would be the 13th century look-out on the Herefordshire Beacon (British Camp), and the dungeon was the keep at Oldcastle, which fell into its moat in the nineteenth century. Only the picturesque Oldcastle Farm remains.
- P** Ahead of you is Oyster Hill, on the slope of which is Hope End, the childhood home of the poet Elizabeth Barrett, who later married Robert Browning. She wrote:
*"Dimpled close with hill and valley
Dappled very close with shade
Summer snow of apple blossom
Running up from glade to glade"*
*"Hills draw like heaven
And stronger sometimes, holding out their hands"*
- Q** Evendine is a very old settlement; you pass Lower House on your right, with an Edward VII post box set into the barn; then Hartlands, with two ancient barns and a stream running through the garden. On the left, is a limestone outcrop typical of the valleys to the west of the Hills (the sediment layers are clearly visible); then, on your right, Malt House and Upper House, the latter an amalgamation of several cottages.
- R** This field is known as Perrycroft and it gives the best view of all of British Camp. Perrycroft is also the name of the house to the east of the field beyond the wood; it was built in the 1890s by the Arts and Crafts architect, Charles Voysey.
- S** The views from here to the west are very impressive. The undulations in the field are all that remains of Baxhill Farm. The wood below is still called Baxhill Coppice.
- T** The Nature Reserve contains a stream, two ponds, an alder copse and a plum hedge of the sort that used to be common in this area up to sixty years ago.



Clutter's Cave



Edward VII Post Box



Hartlands

Essential Information	
Starting Point	Colwall Station (SO756424)
Alternative Starting Points	Gardiner's Quarry (766421), Black Hill (766406), British Camp (763403)
Distance	10.5 km (6 miles)
Maps	OS Explorer 190 (1:25000), Colwall Parish Footpaths map
Terrain	Hilly (total climb height of 310m) but not severe
Short Cuts	The spur to the station can be avoided by using the car parks on the hills
Refreshments	The Kettle Sings cafe (SO765421), Tel: 01684 540244 The Malvern Hills Hotel and Kiosk (SO763404), Tel: 01684 540690 The Crown Inn (SO755425), Tel: 01684 541074
Public Transport	For bus and train information - Tel: 0870 608 2608 or www.travelinmidlands.co.uk
Car Parking	At all Hill car parks (there is a charge for parking) No public car park at Colwall Station

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.
Leave gates as you find them or follow signs.
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.
This is one of a series of Discovery Walks which enable people to understand and appreciate the Malvern Hills AONB. For further details please contact the AONB. Tel: 01684 560616.
www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk

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