

15 SHORT WALKS ON THE

MALVERN HILLS



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CICERONE

SHORT WALKS ON THE MALVERN HILLS

by Julia Goodfellow-Smith

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The Northern Hills from the west side of Herefordshire Beacon

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USING THIS GUIDE

Routes in this book

In this book you will find a selection of easy or moderate walks suitable for almost everyone, including casual walkers and families with children, or for when you only have a short time to fill. The routes have been carefully chosen to allow you to explore the area and its attractions. Although there may be some climbs there is no challenging terrain, but do bear in mind that conditions can sometimes be wet or muddy underfoot. A route summary table is included on page 6 to help you choose the right walk.

Clothing and footwear

You won't need any special equipment to enjoy these walks. The weather in Britain can be changeable, so choose clothing suitable for the season and wear or carry a waterproof jacket. For footwear, comfortable walking boots or trainers with a good grip are best. A small rucksack for drinks, snacks and spare clothing is useful. See www.adventuresmart.uk.

Walk descriptions

At the beginning of each walk you'll find all the information you need:

- start/finish location, with postcode and a what3words address to help you find it
- parking and transport information, estimated walking time, total distance and climb
- details of public toilets available along the route and where you can get refreshments
- a summary of the key highlights of the walk and what you might see

Timings given are the time to complete the walk at a reasonable walking pace. Allow extra time for extended stops or if walking with children.

The route is described in clear, easy-to-follow directions, with each waypoint marked on an accompanying map extract. It's a good idea to read the whole of the route instructions before setting out, so that you know what to expect.

Maps, GPX files and what3words

Extracts from the OS 1:25,000 map accompany each route. GPX files for all the walks in this book are available to download at www.cicerone.co.uk/1139/gpx.

What3words is a free smartphone app which identifies every 3m square of the globe with a unique three-word address, e.g. ///destiny.cafe.sonic. For more information see <https://what3words.com/products/what3words-app>.

Walking with children

Even young children can be surprisingly strong walkers, but every family is different and you may need to adapt the timings given in this book to take that into account. Make sure you go at the pace of the slowest member and choose a walk with an exciting objective in mind, such as a cave, waterfall or picnic spot. Many of the walks can be shortened to suit – suggestions are included at the end of the route description.

Dogs

Sheep or cattle may be found grazing on a number of these walks. Keep dogs under control at all times so that they don't scare or disturb livestock or wildlife. Cattle, particularly cows with calves, may very occasionally pose a risk to walkers with dogs. If you ever feel threatened by cattle, you should let go of your dog's lead and let it run free.

Enjoying the countryside responsibly

Enjoy the countryside and treat it with respect to protect our natural environments. Stick to footpaths and take your litter home with you. When driving, slow down on rural roads and park considerately, or better still use public transport. For more details check out www.gov.uk/countryside-code.

The Countryside Code

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
 - leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
 - be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only have BBQs where signs say you can
 - always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do
- care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

WALK NAME	START POINT	TIME	DISTANCE
1. Great Malvern Priory and Worcestershire Beacon	Great Malvern Priory	2hr	6.5km (4 miles)
2. Malvhina fountain and St Ann's Well	Great Malvern railway station	2hr	3.5km (2¼ miles)
3. Around North Hill on Lady Howard de Walden Drive	Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern	2hr	4km (2½ miles)
4. Woodland and apple orchard walk	West Malvern	3hr	7km (4¼ miles)
5. Worcestershire Beacon from the Wyche Cutting	Wyche Cutting	1¾hr	4km (2½ miles)
6. British Camp Iron Age hill fort	Wynds Point	1½hr	2.5km (1½ miles)
7. Black Hill	Wynds Point	1¼hr	4km (2½ miles)
8. Wynds Point (British Camp) from Colwall	Colwall railway station	2½hr	6km (3¾ miles)
9. Holy Well from Gardiner's Quarry	Gardiner's Quarry	2¼hr	6km (3¾ miles)
10. The Southern Hills	Hollybush	3hr	7.5km (4¾ miles)
11. Eastnor obelisk	Eastnor	1¾hr	5km (3 miles)
12. St Wulstan's Nature Reserve	Malvern Wells	1hr	2.5km (1½ miles)
13. Around Malvern Common	Peachfield Road, Malvern	1¾hr	3.5km (2¼ miles)
14. Malvern Community Woodland	Malvern retail park	45min	2.5km (1½ miles)
15. Old Hills	Callow End	1½hr	3.5km (2¼ miles)

HIGHLIGHTS

Pamoramantic views and priory
Two famous fountains and Malvern's treescape
Views
Woodland, orchards and views
Summit with great views
Magnificent views and ancient hill fort
Views, bluebells in spring
Views, nature reserve and bluebells in spring
Views, woodland and a famous spring
Views, woodland and hill fort
Views, obelisk and castle
Woodland and meadows, view of the hills
Views, orchids and butterflies
Woodland
Views, woodland and horses

SYMBOLS USED ON ROUTE MAPS



Start point



Finish point



Start and finish at the same place



Waypoint

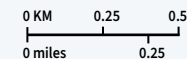


Route line



Alternate route line

MAPPING IS SHOWN AT A SCALE OF 1:25,000



DOWNLOAD THE GPX FILES FOR FREE AT
www.cicerone.co.uk/1139/GPX



The northern hills

INTRODUCTION



The Malvern Hills rising from the Severn Plain

The Malvern Hills rise spectacularly from the low rolling landscape of the Severn Plain to the east and the wooded hills of Herefordshire to the west. The Malverns are not high, but because they stand out in the landscape, they can be wild and invigorating. Trees flank the lower slopes, thinning to grassland at the top of most of the hills, which creates the opportunity for far-reaching views. Bluebells swathe the west side, apple orchards bloom to the north and flower-rich meadows adorn the valley to the east.

Walking on the Malvern Hills

From steep paths straight up to the top of hills to gentle strolls through the meadows below, the Malvern Hills have everything you need for fabulous walking. For this book, we

have chosen 15 popular walks that are easy to follow, offer incredible views and give you the opportunity to experience the best of the area.

The Malvern Hills also have some of the most pleasant weather in the country – drier and sunnier than average. However, even if it appears calm at the bottom of the hills, it can be seriously breezy when you near the ridge. The temperature at the top of the hills is around 2–3 degrees lower than at the foot, so it is always a good idea to carry a jacket.

The paths on the hills are mainly dry and are well kept, although many have a loose stony surface. There are some exceptions, and these are clearly identified in the walk descriptions.

Redundant quarries abound on the hills, from tiny workings to large commercial sites. Many now form

SHORT WALKS ON THE MALVERN HILLS

interesting wildlife habitats. Beware the quarry lakes; these are spring-fed and can be deep, cold and dangerous to swim in.

The Malvern Hills have many water fountains and springs, known locally as 'wells', and the walks in this book visit some of them. Although many locals drink from the wells, there is a risk that the water is contaminated, so it is not recommended. The water from the Malvhina fountain on Bellevue Island, however, is filtered and therefore usually safe to drink.

Each of the habitats on the hills supports different birds. You might hear the call of a cuckoo in May and June, see yellow flashes from a flock of goldfinches or the looping flight of a green woodpecker. Skylarks nest on the commons and some of the upland grassland areas – listen out for their distinctive song, heard high in the sky as they try to distract attention from

their nests in the grass. Birds of prey like buzzards and kestrels are commonly seen and occasionally red kites soar overhead. Goshawks and peregrine falcons also live on the hills, the latter sometimes nesting on the quarry faces.

Things to see

The main attraction for people visiting the Malvern Hills is the incredible vista over the surrounding area. On a clear day, you can see the Bristol Channel to the south, the Black Mountains in Wales to the west, Long Mynd in Shropshire to the north and the Cotswolds to the east. The topograph on Worcestershire Beacon shows you where to look for each.

The Malvern Hills GeoCentre is a great place to visit if you want to understand more about the geology of the hills.



North Hill (furthest right) seen from Worcestershire Beacon (Walk 3)

Until Victorian times, Malvern was a small town housing a community of Benedictine monks. During the 19th century, it became a spa town and had a population and housing boom. Great Malvern Priory has misericords (part of the choir stalls) that date from the 14th and 15th centuries, an impressive range of stained-glass windows and a stunning collection of medieval tiles. A few miles south, Little Malvern Priory contains one of only two 15th-century stained-glass windows in the country that depict Edward IV and the young prince who became Edward V.

The market town of Ledbury contains many independent shops and a 17th-century market hall. Nearby is Eastnor Castle and Gardens.

Bases and places to stay

The biggest base in the area is Great Malvern, usually just called 'Malvern',

where there is a wide range of accommodation. The town boasts a priory, spa, museum, three theatres and a cinema, as well as pubs, cafes and restaurants.

The smaller market town of Ledbury has accommodation, a theatre, museum and a range of independent shops, cafes and pubs. There is also a hotel in the village of Colwall, which has a limited range of local facilities.

Travel

Many people travel to Malvern by car, as it is only a 20-minute drive from the M5 and M50 and bus services beyond the bigger towns are infrequent. Frequent train services run to Malvern Link and Great Malvern. Colwall and Ledbury also have train stations. Several of the walks start at or near public transport links, as detailed in the walk information.



One of the many benches on the hills (Walk 7)

Great Malvern Priory seen from the hills



WALK 1

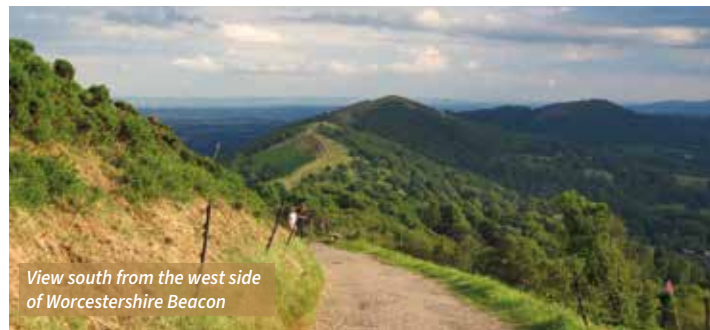
Great Malvern Priory and Worcestershire Beacon

Start/finish	<i>Great Malvern Priory</i>
Locate	<i>WR14 2AY ///views.field.spark</i>
Cafes/pubs	<i>Pubs and cafes in Malvern, cafe at St Ann's Well</i>
Transport	<i>Train to Great Malvern station, 800m from priory. Bus from Hereford and Worcester</i>
Parking	<i>Small car park off St Ann's Road, larger car park on Priory Road, limited on-street parking in town centre</i>
Toilets	<i>Next to theatre on Grange Road, above Waitrose on Edith Walk and at St Ann's Well</i>

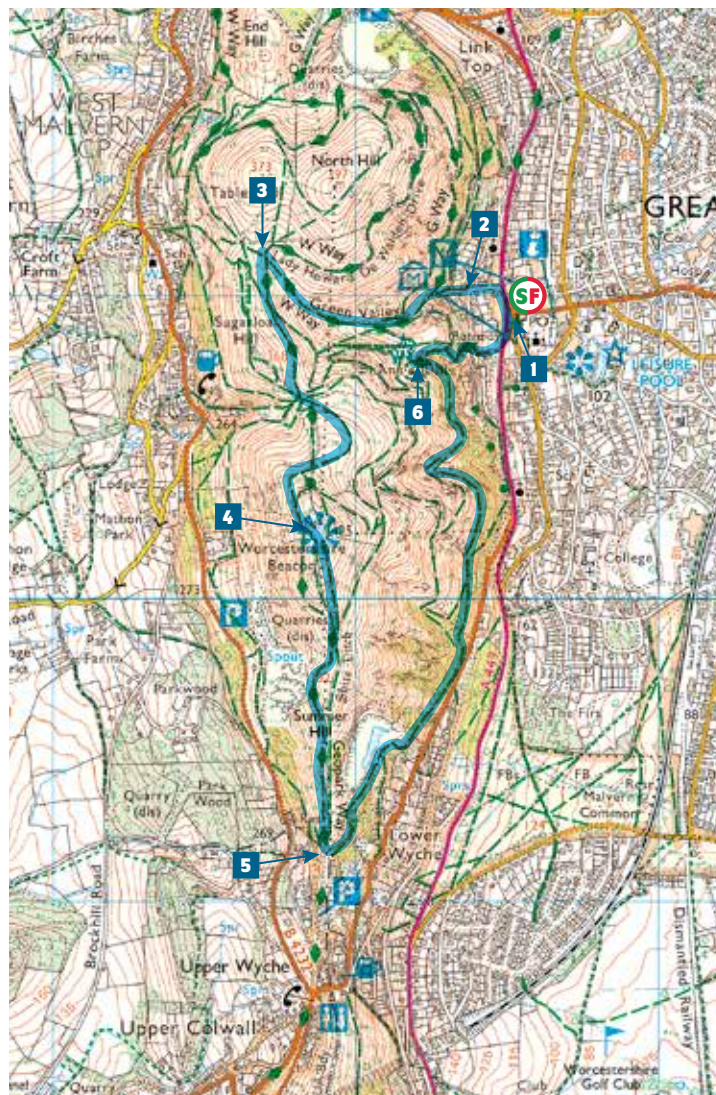
A steep climb onto the hills is worth the effort as the views open up, first across the Severn Plain to the Cotswolds, then to the Black Mountains in Wales, and finally a full 360 degrees. After visiting the summit of Worcestershire Beacon, the route drops down into cool woodland, past one of Malvern's famous springs before returning to Great Malvern Priory.

Time: 2hr
Distance: 6.5km
(4 miles)
Climb: 380m

A circular walk from Malvern town centre to the highest point on the Malvern Hills, with one steep climb



View south from the west side of Worcestershire Beacon



The track meandering towards the summit of Worcestershire Beacon

1 From the end of the drive leading to the priory, head up Church Street. Climb the steps to the left of the statue of Sir Edward Elgar and turn left at the top to the Malvina fountain. **Designed by Rose Garrard in the 1990s, the fountain is fed from three different sources on the hills. The water is UV filtered, so is usually safe to drink.** Use the pelican crossing above the fountain and turn right past the shops. Turn left immediately after The Unicorn pub up a steep hill.

Authors C S Lewis and J R R Tolkien frequented The Unicorn when visiting Malvern. Were Malvern's gas lamps the inspiration for the entrance to Narnia? Did the hills provide inspiration for the White Mountains? Some certainly like to think so.

2 Where the road bends to the left, continue straight up Happy Valley. A little way up, a small stream flows to the left of the track. Follow this stream to its source and then continue uphill until you reach a track running around the hill.

3 Turn left and head approximately south until you reach a round stone waymarker at a junction of many paths. The summit of Worcestershire Beacon is straight ahead, but our route takes the wide track diagonally left at about 10 o'clock. Follow this track as it meanders towards and around the summit, gently rising until it crests the hill and arrives at the top of **Worcestershire Beacon**. The trig point and toposcope are a few metres to the left.

Great Malvern Priory seen from Rosebank Gardens



At 425m Worcestershire Beacon is the highest point of the Malvern Hills. The topograph details the peaks visible on a clear day, including Long Mynd, the Cotswold escarpment and the Black Mountains.

4 Head east off the summit (Malvern is visible at the bottom of the hill) and turn right onto the track that heads downhill towards the south. **The Iron Age hill fort at British Camp can be seen ahead in the middle distance.** Continue past **Summer Hill** to the next round waymarker labelled 'Goldmine'.

i *Many eminent Victorians visited Malvern, including Florence Nightingale, Charles Dickens and Alfred Lord Tennyson.*

5 Take a sharp left downhill into the woods. As the path rises, fork right between the low mossy wall and the bank. When the path reaches a grassy clearing, take a small detour into Earnslaw Quarry by following the path a little further and to the left. **The lake in this quarry is home to water lilies and, occasionally, kingfishers.** Retrace your steps to the grassy area

On the top of Worcestershire Beacon



and take the path leading steeply downhill. After about 400m, as you near a road, continue left on the path to reach **St Ann's Well**, just over 1km further on, where there is another spring, a cafe and toilets.

6 Follow the zigzag drive downhill from the cafe. At the junction with St Ann's Road, turn right then bear left almost immediately and descend the steps into Rosebank Gardens and back to the priory, which is clearly visible from here.

— To shorten

For a walk that will take around 45min, at the stone waymarker between Waypoints 3 and 4, turn left and take the second path to the left down to St Ann's Well.

15 SHORT WALKS ON THE MALVERN HILLS

Get outdoors and discover the best of the area with 15 short walks chosen by an expert, for all abilities.

- ▶ Walks under three hours
- ▶ Easy to follow with clear route descriptions
- ▶ Facilities, parking and highlights for every route
- ▶ No specialist gear needed
- ▶ Ordnance Survey mapping



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US \$16.95

ISBN 978-17-8631-139-9



9 781786 311399

UK £9.95