

Start: The lay-by on the Martley side of Ham Bridge

From the lay-by at Ham Bridge walk down to the gap into the field on the right, next to the bridge, and follow the signpost (1). In actuality, the route crosses further into the field, some way from the river bank, but the farmer maintains a broad field margin and walkers take the more obvious route! In Summer, swallows and house martins dive down across the river and, throughout the year a kingfisher, grey wagtail or dipper may be seen anywhere along this stretch. In Winter, the colourful goosander may be found fishing below or the cheery siskin busying itself above you in its pursuit of seeds from the alder trees that line the bank. Follow the river bank over a slight depression in the ground (an old boundary now removed) and continue heading in the same direction, past occasional waymarking (2) along the path close to the river. In the older trees to your right, you may be lucky enough to hear the Greater Spotted Woodpecker's call, a sharp "quick quick" or the "doit, doit" call of the nuthatch. There are many holes in the trees here for both birds to find places to nest. At the end of the field, look for a muddy track going up on the right with a waymark (3). Follow this far track up to an old metal gate that goes into the woods on the left but head up right around the corner through another gate and, continuing to skirt the woods on your left, enter the narrow path over a stile alongside a field with a just visible man made lake. At the end, cross the stile into woodland, (4) and turn immediately right and follow the switchback path through trees, bearing right at the path junction, and effectively, following the edge of the field but on the woodland side, until the end of Pudford lane (5) is reached, by Lower Southwood Farm.

A very short way up the lane (ignore the bridleway to the left down a drive) take the footpath uphill at the rear of some cottages on your left. Continue up, over a stile, through a grass field and another gate. Continue to climb the steep slope next to the fence until, at the top, you come to a gate on the left side, go through it and continue through another gate in front, now on a bridleway (6). This is the toughest part of the walk. Keep the wire fence and then the woodland plantation on your left, right up to the end of the pasture and on up, through the gate at the very top, to a path junction on the crest of the hill where you join the Worcestershire Way and Martley Circular Walk at a signpost indicating several routes (7). Turn immediately right, almost back on yourself, along the ridge and note, on the right, the fine views of the Teme valley and the Clifton ridge. The strategically placed seat affords views in front of the motte at Homme Castle below, the river Teme between its tree lined banks, the extensive Weyman's wood behind and the spire of Clifton's church of St. Kenelm on the ridge above the valley. Inevitably, buzzards will be "mewing" above and ravens "gronking"! The panorama stretches from the hills of Wales to the Clee Hills in Shropshire, and is one of the finest views in Worcestershire. Continue along the ridge to a dip in the ridgeline at a junction of paths (8) and bearing right, leave the Worcestershire Way and follow the bridle path downhill between trees.

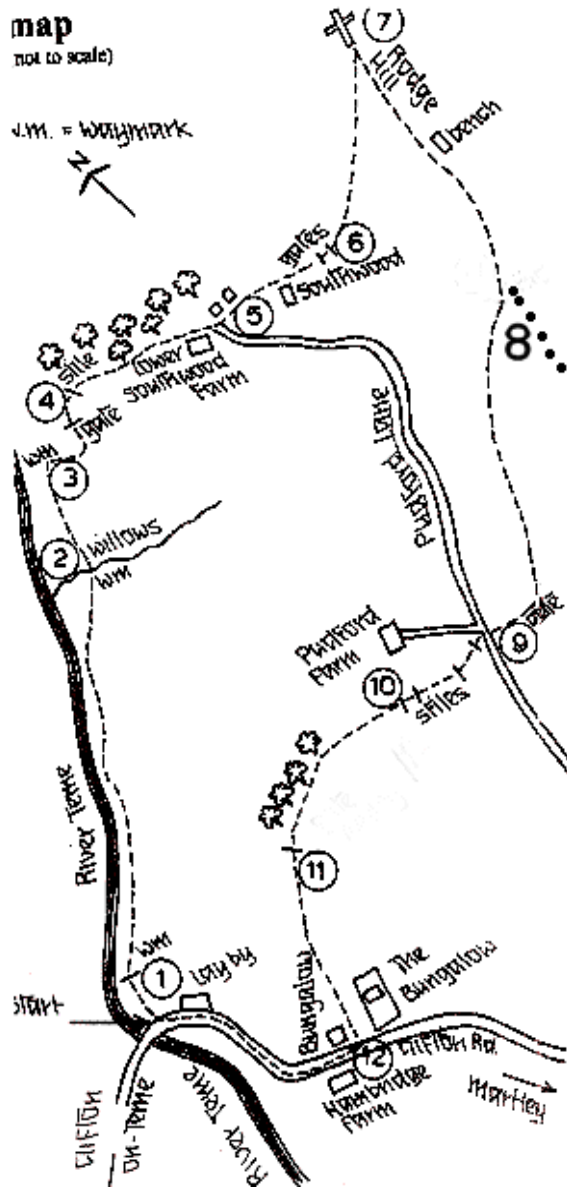
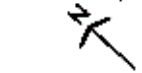
After some distance pass through a field gate and turn right down to a metal bridle gate into Pudford Lane (9). Cross over the lane and a stile on the left of the drive to Pudford Farmhouse. Proceed diagonally across the field to a stile in a post and rail fence (10). Walk to a further stile as indicated by the waymark. Beyond this stile is another stile on the left. Cross this, follow the field edge with woodland on your right and note in the dip to the left, a large pond where Canada geese and goslings may be seen in early summer, also the occasional heron. Round the corner of the woodland (11) and turn left down the field keeping the hedge and the pond to your left. Follow this track and field edge to the road (B4204), without entering the area of farm buildings themselves (12). Turn right at the road (single file essential) and proceed down to your start point at the layby near Ham Bridge watching carefully for fast traffic coming around the bend.

Birds to listen out for, especially in spring: tits (great and blue), chaffinch, mistle thrush, mallard, pheasant, wood pigeon, chiffchaff, blackbird, goldfinch, willow warbler, stock dove whitethroat, magpie, jay, dunnock (hedge sparrow).

map

not to scale)

↓.M. = Waymark



Martley Walks

No. 10: From River to Ridge and Back

Grade: Easy with one steep ascent. 2.8m (4.5km)

Remember the Countryside Code:

Respect other people

- ✓ Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- ✓ Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment

- ✓ Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- ✓ Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors


- ✓ Plan ahead and be prepared
- ✓ Follow advice and local signs

The Path-or-Nones meet each third Sunday of the month for 2-3 hours from 9am, and has done since around 1985. The group tackles everything and anything on Martley's 41 miles of Rights of Way— clearance, installing gates, stiles, bridges, signposts and signage. We act on behalf of Worcestershire County Council and liaise between users and landowners. Volunteers are always welcome; we find it fun and worthwhile. Please contact Jon Pearsall 01886 888793 or John Nicklin 01886 888318 www.thepathornones.co.uk

Martley Parish and all service outlets, supports the Walkers are Welcome initiative www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk

Come to see Martley's unique geology! www.geo-village.eu

These walks were first written by Keith and Audrey Trumper in the early 90s

(May 2019 by PONS. Sponsored )