

Notes on Points of Interest.

* Woolhope Church Is dedicated to St George and the present stone building is essentially Norman and is probably a replacement for an earlier wooden Anglo-Saxon church.

In a window there is a depiction of Lady Godiva, of Coventry fame. It is thought she and her sister, Wulviva, daughters of the Leofric Earl of Mercia, gave this manor to Hereford Cathedral and this involved a church being built in Saxon Times.

Woolhope is thought to derive from it being "Wulviva's Hope". "Hope" being a place surrounded by hills and as you walk down from the church and see how the hills form the collapsed edge of the Woolhope Dome. Geologically this ring of hills is made up of later Silurian Limestone.

Sir William Gregory 1625-1696 was given land and residence in Woolhope by his father, the Vicar of Fownhope. He was a distinguished figure in the 17th century being, amongst other things, a great landowner and Judge as well as M.P. for Hereford and later Weobley and for a year Speaker of the House of Commons.

* Lime Kilns - These can be seen at two sites on this walk. These belong to the latter period of lime making locally which was particularly active between 1770 and 1845. Lime was used to sweeten the land, in building and leather making. (removing the hair from skins before tanning)

* Sollers Hope Church is dedicated to St Michael and the present stone building replaced a wooden 14th century building. The porch contains a board full of interesting information including reference to the Whittington family and Dick Whittington. Inside note; the 700 year old font, the 13th century coffin lids, the 17th century panelling in the pulpit and the carved angels on the choir stall posts.

Outside, note some of the early gravestones and nearby, Court Farm, an attractive 15th century timber framed building with two interesting period chimneys.

* Fossils – Woolhope limestone form the lowest unit of the Wenlock series and dates from the Silurian period, about 410 million years ago. This area was once a tropical sea; fossil evidence includes corals in great diversity, crinoids and trilobites.

* Busland Wood – Bluebell flora is a good indicator of ancient woodland, defined as land that has been continuously wooded since AD1600. Other good indicators to look out for include Wood Anemone, Dogs Mercury, Wood Sorrel and Herb Paris.

* Stinking Hellebore – A striking and strong smelling perennial plant associated with calcareous scrub and woodland. Very often a naturalised escape but not the case in the limestone rich Woolhope Dome (be careful as this plant is poisonous!)

* Black Poplars - Black poplars have long been a distinctive feature of the British landscape, often planted as boundary or marker trees, but mostly as a tree of flood plains and riversides. The wood of the black poplar is both heat and fire resistant and in the past it has been used for brake blocks, clogs and for floorboards. As boundary trees they were often pollarded, not only to make them more stable, but also to provide wood for bean poles, thatching spars and fruit baskets.

Walking is a form of exercise that is free, fun and a great way for families to get together. Regular walking can have a positive effect on your health and quality of life.



The Countryside Code

Launched on 12 July 2004, this Code for England has been produced through a partnership between the Countryside Agency and Countryside Council for Wales.

The Countryside Code has been revised and re-launched to reflect the introduction of new open access rights (Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) and changes in society over the last 20 years.

Countryside Code - advice for the public

- * Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- * Leave gates and property as you find them
- * Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- * Keep dogs under close control
- * Consider other people

This Leaflet has been produced with the support of the Woolhope Dome Project

The 'dome' supports a rich mosaic of ancient woodlands, species-rich hedgerows, wildflower meadows, traditional orchards, streams, and a wealth of wildlife. The importance of protecting and supporting this unique landscape is at the heart of the Woolhope Dome Project.

The Woolhope Dome project is a partnership between local people, Natural England, the Wye Valley AONB, Forestry Commission, and Herefordshire Nature Trust. Funding has also been given from Herefordshire Rivers Leader + in association with the EU and DEFRA



Woolhope Dome Walks

(Part of the Fownhope Walk Series)

Walk One

Marcle Ridge Loop Walk

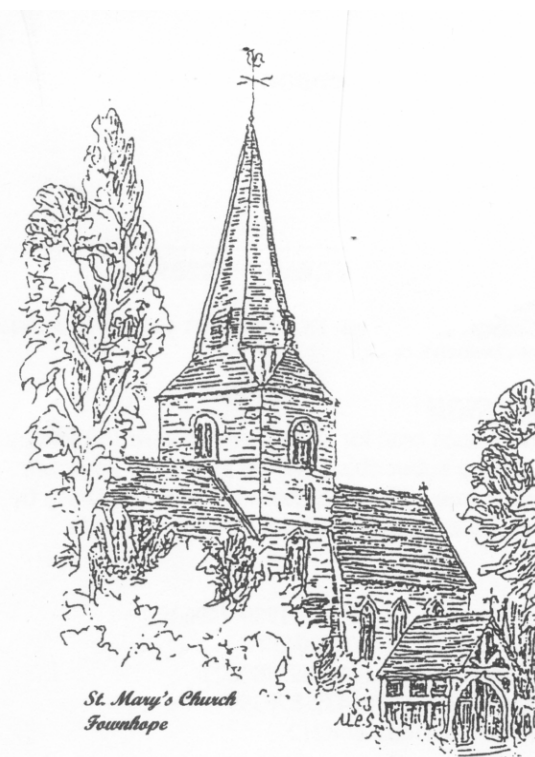


Illustration by Mary Soulsby reproduced by kind permission of John Soulsby

This is one of a series of walks produced by Fownhope Residents Association with the help of many villagers. Financial support has been given by the Countryside Agency through their "Walking the Way to Health" initiative.

Other organisations/groups also participating and giving assistance are: Fownhope Medical Centre, Herefordshire Nature Trust, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Woolhope Dome Project, local landowners and farmers.

Woolhope Dome Walks - Number One

Marcle Ridge Loop Walk

Summary: A pleasant half-day walk, which takes in the rolling hills and valleys of the Woolhope Dome landscape. The walk takes you through a range of habitats including ancient woodland, traditional orchards, streams and takes in stunning views from Marcle Ridge to the Malvern Hills, Cotswolds, and May Hill.

Distance: 7 miles

Time: 4 hours plus time for refreshments

Parking: Woolhope Parish Hall (SO611358)

Refreshments: The Crown or Butchers Arms in Woolhope, the Marcle Ridge Picnic Site, or at Sollers Hope Church.

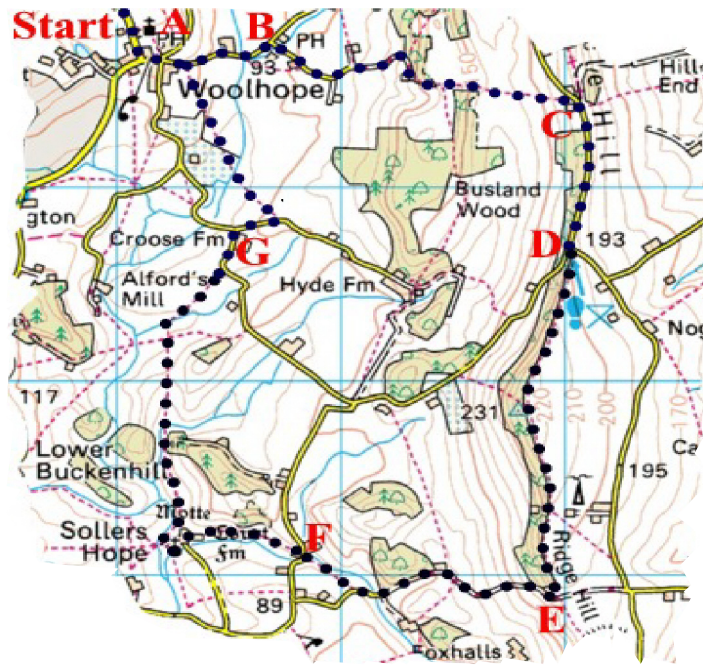
Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 189 Hereford & Ross on Wye is recommended and may be purchased from the West End Stores in Fownhope.

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Directions:

* Look out for this symbol which indicates Points of Interest along the route. Take a look at the accompanying notes overleaf. We hope that this will add enjoyment to your walk.

- Leave the parish hall car park (**Point A**) take a left turn down the road. After 100 yards turn left and follow the footpath to the church* Go through the churchyard. At the road turn left and follow the lane sign posted to Putley/Ledbury (for c.500 yards).
- At **Point B**, take a right turn before the Butchers Arms and walk along to the end of Blackhouse Lane. Continue up the track towards Beans Butts Wood. Follow the track as it bends round to the right. Go through the field gate and turn left. Continue along the track (this track section is a good area for fossil hunting*) and into the open field (half way into the field you will find an old lime kiln* to your left). At the end of the field go over the stile and follow gently down the edge of Busland Wood* (this ancient woodland has a rich woodland flora and is full of Bluebells in the



spring). At the end of the wood, go over the stile and into the valley. Follow the footpath up the hill towards Hoopers Oak with the hedge on your left.

- At the road (**Point C**) turn right and follow for about 1km (to your left you will see stunning views to the Malvern Hills, the Cotswolds, and May Hill). The road takes you part way along the Marcle Ridge and to the ridge Car Park (in the car park there is a picnic bench and display board, which describes the unique geology of the surrounding area).
- At **Point D**, go over the stile above the car park and follow the footpath with Hoar Wood to your right. Follow the footpath towards the mast, 50 yards after the second stile go over the stile to your right. Turn left and continue along the ridge (you walk along a sunny glade brimming with butterflies in the summer months, also look out for the trig point). At the end of this section you will come to a stile. Turn right and gently descend off the ridge, follow the wooden steps to another stile and turn right (**Point E**).
- Follow the small track that declines towards Lyndalls Wood (as you go past Lyndalls Wood look out for interesting flora of wild Orchids and Stinking Hellebore* plus old limekilns* that mark this woods ancient past).

- After the wood you return to the road, follow this for 500 yards (look out for the traditional orchards on your right that will be full of blossom in May), and take the footpath on the right hand side and cross two fields following the stream towards Whittlebury Farm. At the stile turn left (**Point F**- look out for the large Black Poplar* near the stile, a rare tree in the county) and briefly follow the lane for 20 yards before taking the footpath on your right near old barn dwellings.
- Follow the footpath towards Court Farm keeping the stream to your left, you will cross over two stiles and through both meadow and orchard. Go through the farm gates and continue until you see footpath signs to the left. Follow the footpath into St Michael's churchyard at the heart of Sollers Hope* (this is a good place to stop for lunch). Go through the churchyard along the flagstones and through the gates to pick up the footpath again. Turn right towards Long Wood.
- Follow the footpath towards Long Wood, you will cross several stiles (after the 3rd stile stay left of the hedge) at the 4th stile on the edge of Long Wood cross over a small brook. Continue on the footpath with the hedge on your left and follow the footpath towards Croose Farm.
- Turn left on reaching the lane (**at Point G**). Follow the lane until you get to a fork (with Croose Farm on your right). Take a right turn towards The Hyde after c.100 yards take the stile on your left and follow the footpath towards Woolhope (the Church & finish is on the horizon).
- Cross diagonally across the field and over the wooden bridge into an old traditional orchard. After c.200 yards into the orchard you need to take the stile to your right. Cross over the stile and take a sharp left, follow the footpath through the next two fields until you reach the road.
- Turn left at the road and climb gently into Woolhope village. Just before the Crown Pub (this could provide a welcome refreshment stop before finishing your walk) take a right towards Woolhope Church.
- Go through the churchyard and through the kissing gates. Follow the gravel track as it bears left. On reaching the road turn right. Continue for 100 yards, and then take the right turn into the Parish Hall & **FINISH**.