

Discover Joan's Hill Farm Nature Reserve

A circular walk through classic Herefordshire countryside

This is a beautiful walk through Plantlife's Joan's Hill Farm Nature Reserve and surrounding countryside. The area epitomises rural Herefordshire: a soft, pastoral landscape of flower-rich meadows and mixed woodland, black-and-white cottages and orchards decked with mistletoe.

Where to start

Start at Haugh Wood car park and picnic site, just off the road from Mordiford to Woolhope (grid reference: SO 592 365).

Distance

3 miles

Walk grade

Moderate. The route includes some steep slopes and stiles.

Refreshments

The Crown (Woolhope), the Yew Tree Inn (Prior's Frome) and The Moon Inn (Mordiford) all serve meals. Basic provisions are available in local Post Office stores at Mordiford and Fownhope.

WC

None



We are Plantlife

Plantlife is the organisation that is speaking up for our wildflowers and plants. From the open spaces of our nature reserves to the corridors of Westminster, we're here to raise their profile, to celebrate their beauty, and to protect their future.

Wildflowers and plants play a fundamental role for wildlife, and their colour and character light up our landscapes. But without our help, this priceless natural heritage is in danger of being lost.

Join us in enjoying the very best that nature has to offer.

Britain's countryside. Save it with flowers.

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales



Speaking up for the nation's wild plants

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Thank you

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Plantlife

Wildflower walks



The wildflowers of Joan's Hill Farm

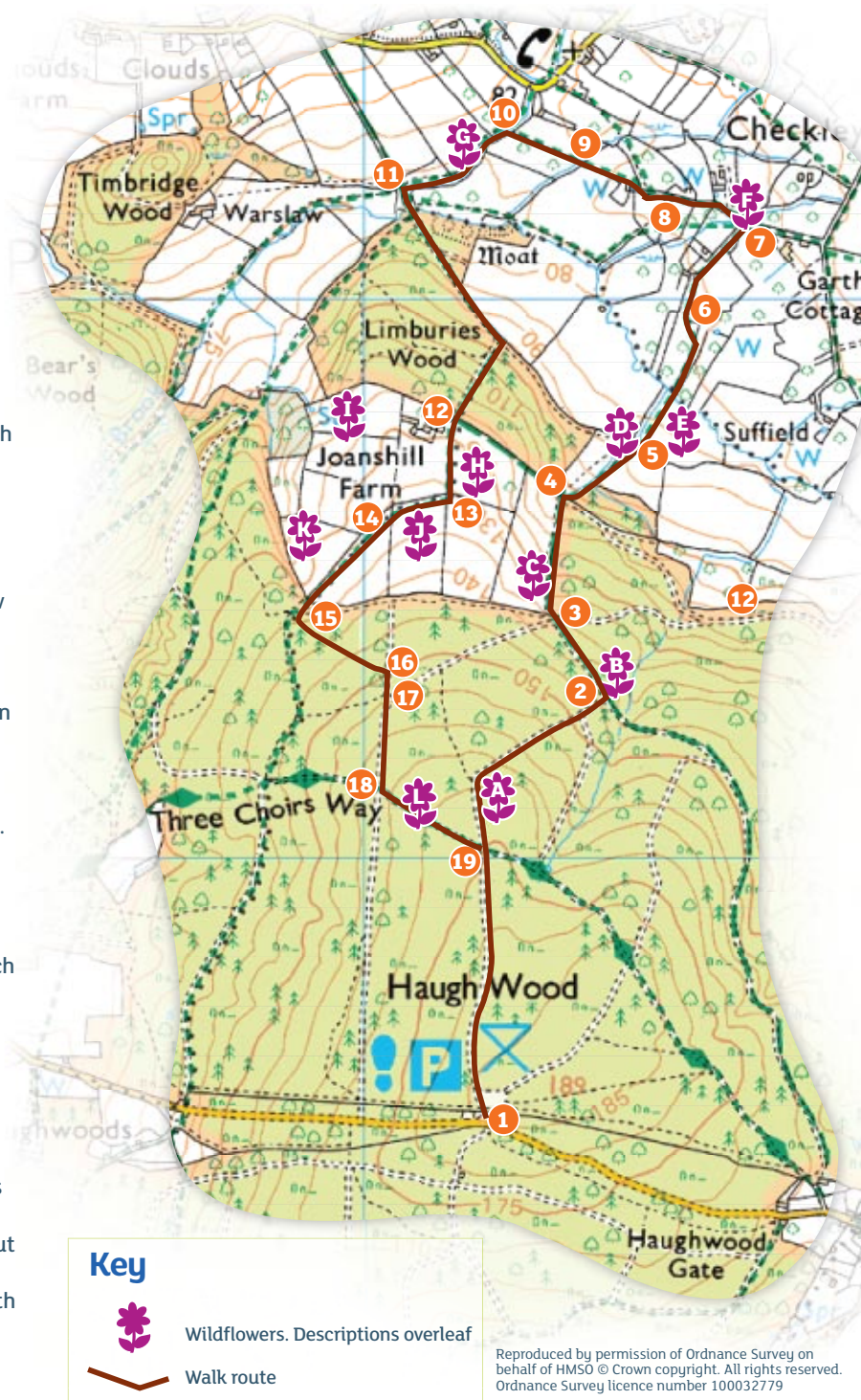
A circular 3 mile walk through
Herefordshire countryside




Discover Joan's Hill Farm Nature Reserve


Directions

- 1 From the car park, follow the track from the Forestry Commission noticeboard, past the vehicle barrier. At a crossroad of tracks, ignore turnings and continue ahead downhill.
- 2 At the T-junction, turn left and continue until you reach another T-junction.
- 3 Climb the stile next to the metal gate to reach an information board. You're now in Joan's Hill Farm Reserve. Follow the right-hand edge of the field downhill and beneath trees. This long, sloping meadow is crammed with wildflowers, including cowslips and oxeye daisies.
- 4 Towards the bottom of the slope, ignore a small wooden gate on the right and continue ahead through an open field entrance. Head towards the bottom, right-hand corner of this field. The plants in this damp meadow include meadowsweet, ladies bedstraw and twayblade.
- 5 Climb the stile in the corner and turn left. Follow the left-hand side of this field. Cross the stile and a footbridge over the stream. Now continue ahead, but slightly left through an orchard towards houses to reach another stile.
- 6 Climb the stile and continue ahead and to the right of a house, soon following close to a fence on the left to reach a wooden gate. Pass through the gate on to a tarmac lane and continue ahead.
- 7 After the cattle grid you'll see a junction of three paths on your left. Ignore the first left (through a wooden gate) and the path bearing right (towards The Oaks), but take the middle path, leading off through a gap in the hedge beneath tall ash and poplar trees. Follow the path and eventually you'll reach an orchard through a gate.
- 8 Follow the wire fence on the right. Almost immediately after the fence turns to the right, bear left and



Key

 Wildflowers. Descriptions overleaf

 Walk route

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- you'll pass the right-hand side of a ruined building. Continue slightly downhill through the orchard towards a wooden stile.
- 9 Cross the stile, then a footbridge and then another stile into an area of pasture. Continue ahead but slightly left. When the boundary on the opposite side of the field comes into view, head for a stile marked by a yellow and black waymarker on a post.
- 10 Cross the stile, then a footbridge. Go through a metal gate, then bear left along a stream towards another stile. Cross this stile and keep following along the left-hand edge of meadows, crossing two further stiles to reach a track.
- 11 Turn left along the track, following it uphill and bear right at a fork. Just off the track is a well-preserved Medieval moat and pond.
- 12 Eventually you'll reach a gate on the left with a timber-framed farmhouse ahead. Through this gate, you're into an orchard, once again within Joan's Hill Farm Reserve. Bear right along the hedge. This orchard contains mainly cider apple trees with wonderful names such as Broxwood Foxwhelp and Herefordshire Redstreak.
- 13 If time allows, why not break from the walk route to explore the other fields on the reserve. Look for green-winged orchid (I) and dyer's greenweed (K). To continue the walk bear right through a gateway and follow the hedge in front of you.
- 14 At the end of the hedge bear left, ignoring a field entrance to the right, and continue ahead on the left-hand side of a tall hedge to reach a stile (15).
- 15 Cross the stile into woodland and follow the path ahead, bearing left at junctions of paths until you emerge on a track.
- 16 Bear right along the track. On a fine day in May or June you might spot the rare wood white butterfly here.
- 17 At the T-junction, bear right.
- 18 At the next crossroads of tracks turn left.
- 19 At another crossroads of tracks, turn right and follow the track back to the starting point at the car park.

The plants of Joan's Hill

Joan's Hill Farm Reserve is rich in wildflowers, particularly from late April to July.



A **Columbine**

Commonly associated with cottage gardens (and sometimes known as Granny's bonnets). Grows here along the edge of woodland tracks. It has purplish-blue flowers in May and June.

B **Wood vetch**

This uncommon plant grows in a number of places in the area, typically at the edge of forest tracks. It has tufts of scented flowers that are white and lined with purple veins. Flowers June-July.



C **Common spotted orchid**

This species is so vigorous in some areas of the reserve that the flowers form carpets of pale lilac. The peak flowering time is June.

D **Meadowsweet**

A plant that favours damp conditions with frothy, creamy-white flowers that are at their peak in July. Its name probably derives from its former use to flavour mead (honey wine).



E **Yellow-rattle**

An annual plant found in meadows, named after its yellow flowers and the way that its seed rattles inside brown papery capsules when ripe. Flowers from May onwards.

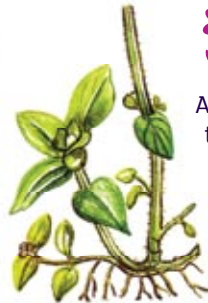
F **Rough chervil**

Flowering between May and July, rough chervil is abundant beneath the tall trees, its white flowers forming delicate, lacy drifts either side of the path.



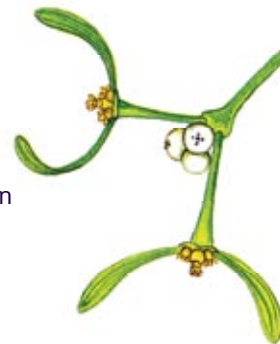
G **Selfheal**

A very common plant in the area. It has bluish-violet flowers from June to October.



H **Mistletoe**

Voted the county flower of Herefordshire. An evergreen plant, best seen in winter when the berries appear and the leaves are off the trees.



I **Green-winged orchid**

A purple (occasionally pink or white) orchid distinguished by the parallel dark green veins on the "wings" that form the hood of the flower. Look for it in May.

J **Common knapweed**

In early summer yellow is the dominant colour of the meadows (meadow buttercup, catsear and yellow-rattle). In July, this changes to purple, when an abundance of thistle-like common knapweed comes into bloom.



K **Dyer's greenweed**

A small shrub with rich, gold-yellow flowers, similar to broom and gorse. It was once cultivated as a dye-plant, but here grows in a few small patches as a wild native. Flowers from June onwards.

L **Betony**

A perennial plant of the dead-nettle family with intense pink-purple flowers. It has a long history of use in herbal medicine and in folklore was said to ward off evil spirits. Look for it along the verge of the woodland track in late summer.

