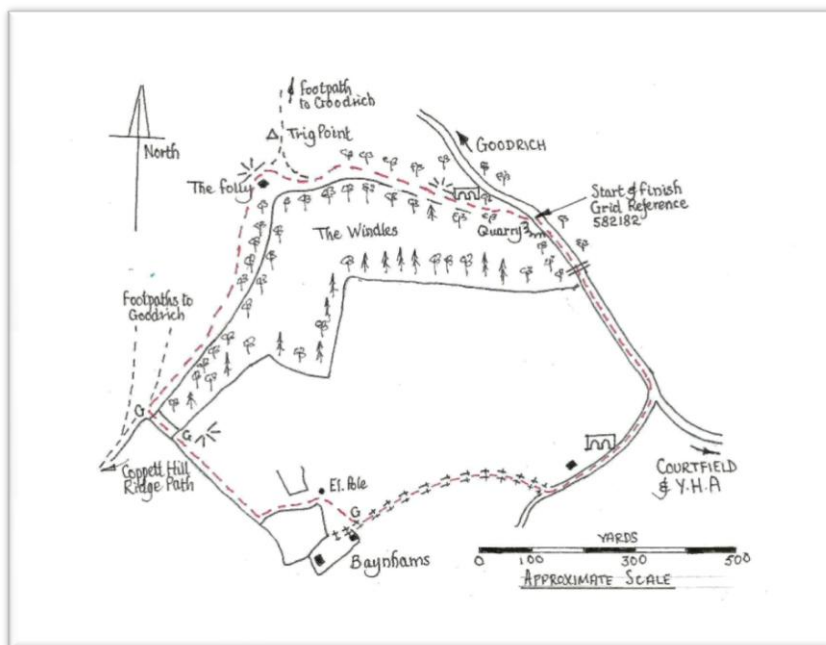


A Short Walk on the Hill by Mike Thompson



Most readers of this Newsletter will be familiar with the Friends booklet of Walks on Coppett Hill.* All those walks start and finish at the Castle car park and involve at least a partial, and in most cases a full, ascent of the Hill. So for the less energetic, or those with limited time available, A ***Short Walk on the Hill*** without a full ascent, but still with the benefit of the magnificent views that the summit provides, plus an opportunity to see that area's flora and fauna and observe some of the Trust's management activities, may be an attractive option. So here is a short circular walk of 1¼ miles with gentle ascents and descents. It requires a brief car journey to the start; so get your friends to join you and share a car.

Start Take the Welsh Bicknor road from the cross roads in Goodrich (near Jollys). After just under 1 mile (100 yds before reaching the cattle grid) turn into and park in the quarry on the right.

Walk Take the path on the Goodrich side of the quarry going gently uphill. You are now on Trust land. After 100 yds, where the trees on the right give way to a grassy open area, leave the main path turning right onto a narrow one with some steps which will bring you to the base of limekilns. These were restored as part of the Wye Valley AONB's 'Overlooking the Wye' project in 2010 with financial help from the Trust and the Friends. A plaque on the kiln shows how the process operated, using local charcoal and limestone.

Retrace your steps back to the main path and continue uphill to the fenced area which protects the hole in the limekiln dome where the lime was fed to the furnace below. A few paces further on provides a splendid viewing point across the Wye Valley from Bishopswood, over Ross on Wye with the Marcle Ridge beyond, to Backbury Hill above Mordiford. In the 19th century the view would have been partially obscured by smoke from the iron furnaces across the river at Bishopswood.

Continuing uphill you will soon observe a derelict stone wall on your left. This is the boundary between the Trust's Common land and the Courtfield Estate. It is traceable along the left of the ridge path for its entire 1¼ miles length down to opposite Coldwell Rocks. As you continue uphill do look for some of the 25 new bird boxes provided by the Friends in 2012. You may also see some of the 50 Dormice boxes monitored by the Trust and distinguishable from bird boxes as they have no front access. Considerable coppicing has been achieved by the Trust's working parties in this area and you may notice some small wire netting enclosures, about 1 yd square. These are sited adjacent to unprotected but similar vegetation so that the damage caused by grazing deer can be monitored.

On reaching the summit (656 ft) there are the remains of a building on your left. Known now as The Folly. It was recorded in 1799 as a "little white building.....the residence of a rabbit warriner." When the Lord of the Manor sold 19 cottages on the Common in 1919, it was then known as Cook's Folly and had deteriorated to 4 walls without a roof and was sold for £70. Take time to enjoy the magnificent panorama from here of six counties. (Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Powys and Monmouthshire) On a clear day the Malverns, 30 miles to the North East; Titterstone, 37 miles away in the Clee hills can be seen due North over Goodrich Castle and to the West, the top of the Sugar Loaf is visible 19 miles away. Continue along the Ridge Path for 500 yds.

The path is level at first but soon goes gently downhill. Where the woodland ends on your left, turn left through a pedestrian gate and then another 50 yds ahead into a field. You are now on a Permissive Path recently created by the Courtfield Estate. It is hoped that this path will soon have full Footpath status but in the meantime please observe any notices the Estate may display.

From the top of this large area of pasture there is a fine South facing new view of the Wye valley which is only now possible due this new link into the Courtfield Estate from the Ridge Path. Now go downhill keeping to the hedge on your right. When you come to a farm gate do not go through it but turn left along the fence to continue downhill to an electricity pole on your left. Bear half right here to cut across the corner of the field to a metal pedestrian gate onto a track to the left of a barn at Baynhams farm. Turn left along the track for 500 yds to turn left again onto a metalled road. Follow this road, soon with pasture either side, keeping to the left for 600 yds, to where it enters woodland just before a cattle grid. The quarry start point is 100 yds ahead on your left.

* "Coppett Hill - Goodrich and Welsh Bicknor - 7 Walks From Goodrich Castle" Price £3.00 Available from Jollys, Goodrich Castle, Ye Hostellerie and Ross TIC