

Walk D - Dodderhill Common and Hanbury Hall (6¾ miles)

A more strenuous walk particularly up to Hanbury Church. Fine views followed by mature parkland. Boots advisable in wet weather. The route also incorporates the waymarked permissive path around Harris Brushworks.

Parking (roadside) is available near the start of the walk at the Harris Business Park. The Navigation will probably allow walkers to park but please check. Parking is also available at Pipers Hill/Dodderhill Common, Hanbury Church (donation) and Hanbury Hall. There are five Geocaches on this walk.

1. Stoke Wharf, Navigation Inn. - Continue along Hanbury Road and over canal bridge (there are refreshments here at the café on the Metal Ores Ind. Estate, open weekdays and Saturday morning). Enter Picnic Site on left and leave following waymarked permissive circular walk around the perimeter of Harris Brushworks. Follow the waymarker signs in a clockwise direction until it joins public footpath on the far side of the Brushworks. Turn right then down steps and alongside building to factory road. Turn left by factory door J up steps. Follow public path alongside fence and then into enclosed path alongside Appletrees. Turn right into Hanbury Road.

2. Saxon Park Industrial Estate (F/P sign). After 100 yards turn left into woods by edge of industrial estate. Continue along enclosed path. Go through kissing gate at end of metal fence. Go round the field, keeping alongside the wood and then bearing right alongside a hedge to leave field through a kissing gate onto a farm track. Turn left along the track and follow the hedge line through a kissing gate. Turn left through gate near end of hedge. Cross field diagonally towards house with detached garage and barn, passing through a side gate and kissing gate on to a lawn. Leave lawn by gate with footpath sign (not down driveway).

3. Westonhall Road. Cross road and go over stile by gate with footpath sign. Cross stile in railed fence. Go diagonally left across field to double stile with ditch crossing. Follow hedge up field to leave by footpath sign.

4. Astwood Lane. Go left along lane for 70 yards. Turn right through kissing gate alongside field gate (F/P sign). Keep hedge on left through two fields. At the end of the hedge line cross a third field to a gate in the opposite hedge. Go half right downhill to second gate by footbridge in small coppice.

5. Footpath Junction below farm. Cross the bridge and turn left along enclosed path. Near the end of field turn left over a footbridge and kissing gate. Keep right to double gated ditch crossing in far corner. Go straight on up to kissing gate into Pipers Hill/Dodderhill Common woods. Turn right onto main path, which leads into a drive towards a kissing gate. Continue straight on enclosed path up the hill to enter the churchyard through a gate.

6. Hanbury Church. In marvellous setting with rectory below in the vale. The church has been used for weddings in the 'Archers'. Various memorials to the Vernon family. Go left around the perimeter of the churchyard to Millennium Viewing Point. Continue round the church in a clockwise direction to the main gate into Church Drive to road junction. Turn right for a few yards and left through kissing gate with National Trust sign. Follow path towards parallel line of trees. Go through gate and walk between left hand line of trees. Bear right with trees at a W/M post to join tarmac drive.

7. Hanbury Hall. [If visiting Hanbury Hall and Tea Room (National Trust) cross the drive and continue straight on to the main gateway. The reception is by the car park to the left. The Hall is a Wren style brick house completed in 1701, the seat of the Vernon family. Allow 1½ hours for house and grounds. Note the main entrance and car park are accessed from School Road].

About halfway along tarmac drive turn right at W/M post and bear half left across park. Soon after leaving drive, Brick Kiln Pool becomes visible in the dip on the right. Go straight on through kissing gate and keep right of small fenced clump of trees around a pond. Keep well left of Victorian monument to a favourite horse, aiming for two gates in middle of far fence.

8. Hanbury Park Turn right crossing stile and over a second stile. Cross the field, aiming for stile in fence with single tree alongside. Cross stile and aim for metal footbridge barrier in far corner. Cross bridge and next field to stile at bottom of canal bank.

9. Astwood Bottom Lock (Lock 17) Note how the footbridge over the lock was designed so that it is only supported from one buttress. This was to allow the tow rope from the barge horse to slide underneath the planks at the other buttress. Turn right along towpath. The towpath is not a public right of way but walkers are permitted to use it. Note fine half-timbered building on the left as you approach the road bridge. Continue past lockkeeper's house to Astwood Top Lock (22) - Good views back towards Dodderhill Common. (For Bowling Green and Boat and Railway pubs and the bus, turn left into Astwood Lane and into Shaw Lane. Re-join walk at 10). The former village school on the left just before Stoke Works was built by John Corbett, the Salt King.

10. Stoke Works. Leave towpath and go to entrance of the warehouse. This former industrial village was massively developed by John Corbett. A plaque by the Business Park and two information displays outline the story. Some claim it was the largest salt works in Europe. Re-join towpath.

1. Stoke Wharf. Cross over bridge to return to the Navigation.

Full circle takes about 3½ hours.

Bus points served

145/145a Longbridge - Bromsgrove – Stoke - Droitwich (Mon-Sat only) Serves point 10
For times contact Traveline 0871 200 22 33 www.traveline.info

For details of all walks visit the Stoke Parish website. www.stoke-pc-worcs.gov.uk

- A Upton Warren
- B Avoncroft and St Michael's Church
- C Stoke Flight and Woodgate
- D Dodderhill Common and Hanbury Hall
- E Pipers Hill and Two Trees Hill
- F Great Transport Feats
- G Reserve Links
- H John Corbett Way
- J Return to Avoncroft (a return walk to the John Corbett Way)

INFORMATION

If you encounter any problems please ring Worcestershire County Council-Public Rights of Way Section 01905 768289 or visit http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20237/public_rights_of_way

For Tourist Information ring:

Droitwich Tourist Information Centre 01905 774312
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