



Ross on Wye Walkers are Welcome

Coppett Hill Walk



Start/Parking: Goodrich Castle car park.

Mas: OS Outdoor Leisure 14. **Grid Ref;** SO576198.

Distance: 6.3 miles. **Grade:** Moderate.

Stiles: 3, plus 4 places with a stile and a gate.

Refreshments: Café/snack bar at Goodrich Castle, pub in Goodrich and at Kerne Bridge.

Public Toilets: At the café/snack bar.

The small village of Goodrich grew up close to Goodrich Castle, a fine Marcher fortress standing on a high point overlooking an ancient ford in the river Wye. Building of the castle began in about 1101 and it was the family seat of the Earls of Shrewsbury from 1326.

1. Leave the castle car park and walk to the end of the access road. Turn left and walk up the hill, passing over what the locals call the "Dry Arch" (presumably because there is no water beneath it).

Continue up hill to reach a road junction.

Stop here and look left to admire the view of Kerne Bridge, one of loveliest of the Wye bridges. It was built in 1828 when the road was driven through to carry coal and iron ore from the Forest of Dean to South Wales.

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2. To the right, and on the top side of the green triangular road island is a flight of steps. Climb these and follow the path that leads up onto Coppett Hill, one of the largest commons in Herefordshire.

The path passes large conglomerate boulders made up of sandstone with quartz pebbles. The route is steep and soon leaves the woodland to come out onto the open spaces of Coppett Hill. Once on the open hill head for the trig point (188m) and the ruin just beyond it, known as "The Folly" which originally was possibly the residence of the rabbit Warriner.



3. From this point the superb views into Wales begin, with Ross on Wye behind you.

Continue along the ridge of the hill enjoying the views to your right. The path drops slowly down through woodland and eventually crosses a stile into a field alongside the river.

You are now below Caldwell Rocks, famous as the nesting site of the peregrine falcon. High to your right you will see Symonds Yat Rock. The RSPB operates a peregrine falcon observation post here during the nesting season.

4. At the river bank turn left, across a rather awkward stile, and follow the river upstream passing through a field. Leave the field via a gate and proceed along a woodland track.



On your left you will see a memorial recording the death of John Whitehead Warre, a 15 year-old boy who drowned near this spot on September 14th 1804.



5. Emerge from the woodland track, using the gate or stile, into a field. Cross this and four other fields, keeping close to the riverbank. Go over a stile onto a woodland path. Parts of it are very close to the river, so take care. Herefordshire Council has temporarily diverted the route, but the diversion is easy to follow. At the way-marker arrow turn left for about 10 yards then turn right onto a well-worn path.

6. Continue alongside the river, passing under the old black railway bridge that carries the Wye Valley Walk, until you reach a clear fork in the path marked by a sturdy oak tree.



7. Across to the left is an electricity pole with a cylindrical, grey transformer attached to it. Take the left fork, heading slightly uphill. About 25 yards before you reach the grey stone Welsh Bicknor youth hostel a path goes to the left up a set of steps. This is the path you want but it is worthwhile continuing along the front of the hostel to visit the small church of St Margaret's.



Retrace your steps past the youth hostel and turn right up the steps. Follow the path (it can be muddy in places) until it opens out onto a narrow lane. Keep left here and walk along the lane eventually crossing a cattle grid. Continue along the lane, admiring the views into the Wye valley to your right, until you go downhill into Goodrich village. Then turn right up the lane back to the castle car park.

