

**The Malverns from Colwall** – Thanks to Piers & Pat for leading the walk and providing this write-up.

Distance: 6.7 miles and very steep in parts!

Map: OS Explorer 190

Starting Point: Colwall Station

Turn left from station, crossing line by footbridge and continue ahead to field gate. In field, take path to right, through gap in hedge and follow path to next two fields. Turn left, up through hedge and follow path diagonally across field, aiming roughly towards British Camp. Through gate into next field, keeping trees to your right, towards gate into lane.

DO NOT go into lane, but keep it just on your right to corner of field.

Continue ahead over stile, which may also be gated to retain goats, and follow path up across small field and scrubby woodland (two more stiles, beware loose steps) to road. Cross road, go over stile into "Private" land – a pretty orchard.

Keep parallel to right hand hedge, cross footbridge at far end and bear left, keeping watercourse on your left side.

After 100 yds cross treeline on left into new field by gate or footbridge – very wet and muddy here. Continue roughly SE bearing away from right hand edge, aiming for the clearest space across the field – user path not well defined. Go over dry ditch into second field, aiming for footbridge ahead in left corner. Continue ahead aiming well to the left of a solitary tree, to near a low point in the trees bordering the far side of the field. Find the stile into the woods, but first turn to admire the view behind you.

Now climb a steep, potentially muddy path between the trees, over a second stile, and pass public toilets to reach road. Turn right and cross road to Malvern Hills Hotel – refreshments and better toilets. (*Allow about an hour to here*).

Leave hotel, turn left through car park, around the hotel to road. Turn right and almost immediately right again onto the broadest, steepest track at right angles away from road. This quickly levels out to an open area with benches. Follow path around to the left and then start to climb up the hill. Follow the path northwards, nearest the ridge line for wide views in all directions. Weather permitting these will improve as you climb.

Continue to follow the ridge line over six humps, the third and fourth being higher than the Herefordshire Beacon. The walking is firm underfoot, occasionally rocky. Descend to road at Wyche Cutting. (*Allow about an hour and a half for this section*). Note: toilets to left.

Continue across road up to Worcester Beacon OR turn right through cutting and cross road to Wyche Inn. - Good, drinks, toilets etc. \*\* See footnote

On leaving the inn turn right and immediately right again up a steep path to the rear of the inn and pass houses. It levels out and broadens. Continue ahead to the road.

Here you have a choice: **EITHER** Follow the surfaced road and track on a steady climb up through the car park almost to the summit of the Worcester Beacon. This is interesting, more sheltered and easier, but views are restricted.

**OR** Immediately before the road, take a rough path crossing up to the right. Continue on this between low trees, moving left onto the ridge as it opens out. Follow ridge line over a couple of lower bumps, taking care not to re-join the surfaced path, and eventually you too will reach the top of the Worcester Beacon. This is harder going, but offers much better views and gives a great sense of achievement - about 1400 feet up. (*Allow about an hour for this section*).

Aiming roughly for the next summit northwards (North Hill) descend to the right hand (eastern side) of the broad saddle between the hills to the large, round, stone way-marker. (There is a short cut from here, but unless you know it, stick to the instructions).

Take the broad, stoned path northwards that goes towards, and round to the right of North Hill. After about 300 yds, take the path angled acutely back to the right down between trees to St Ann's Well. Continue to a junction with open ground ahead.

Take the path to the right, then after 100 yds descend steps on your left to St Ann's Well, or, if the steps are closed, go left around the far side of the building. If open, it offers teas etc. Public toilets just below.

Continue down the steep, tarmac, zig zag road, noting tree roots clinging to the rocks.

Turn right, then keep left to descend 99 steps. Continue down through park and cross main road immediately ahead.

Turn left and follow road down to right.

Cross over next road, then quickly turn right and follow path and steps to Malvern Priory.

Follow path round down to the road, keeping church on your right. Cross road, turn left, then right into theatre complex (more toilets, cafe etc.) Walk straight ahead through complex and down steps into Priory Park. (If complex is closed, turn right after crossing road, then through gate on left into Priory Park. Take paths around to left).

Cross park taking bridge over pond/lake. Turn left, then round to the right, keeping swimming pool on right. Exit, cross road, right, then left into, and diagonally across the larger car park.

Turn left out of car park, follow road down until you see a railway bridge ahead. Turn left here, take the second of the two roads, Imperial Road.

After 100 yds, turn right and Great Malvern Station is ahead. (Another tea room, if open, but no public toilets on station). (*Allow a good hour for descent from Beacon to the station*).

**\*\*Footnote**

If it's too late, hot, wet or windy to continue northwards over the top, or if you have eaten or drunk too well, there are at least five other ways back to Malvern from the Wyche Inn:

1. Catch a bus (rare). Ask in pub for timetable and location of stop.
2. Cross the road, turn left and follow road to bottom of hill. Cross over road at bottom, and go left along road to Malvern. (Quickest and most boring way).
3. Cross road, go right, then sharp left down steep road through Lower Wyche. Left along main road at bottom, back into Malvern. (Longer, slower and steeper in part than 2, no real advantage).
4. Cross road, left down hill as far as second car park on left, re-cross road into car park. Take path that starts in right hand corner of car park near the road. Follow the "obvious" main path that continues through the woods without steep sections. There are occasional signs to St Ann's Well. Follow these until you get there. Then as main itinerary.

Note: There is a dead end detour via an attractive track to the left. Follow this to a "lake", really a flooded quarry. Well worth it, if you have a few minutes spare. Re-trace your steps and turn left to re-join the above route. (This is a pleasant, easy, shady walk but the longest of these options).

5. This is probably the second shortest/quickest route. Left down road and cross back into second car park as No 4 above, and take the same path initially. At every opportunity take the right/downhill turn, generally staying quite near the road, but not re-joining it. Just keep the road to your right and below you at all times. At the bottom, take the path to the left, just above the road into town. Follow this as far as the park with "the birds" sculpture, then join the main route. (This avoids the steep descent from St Ann's Well).