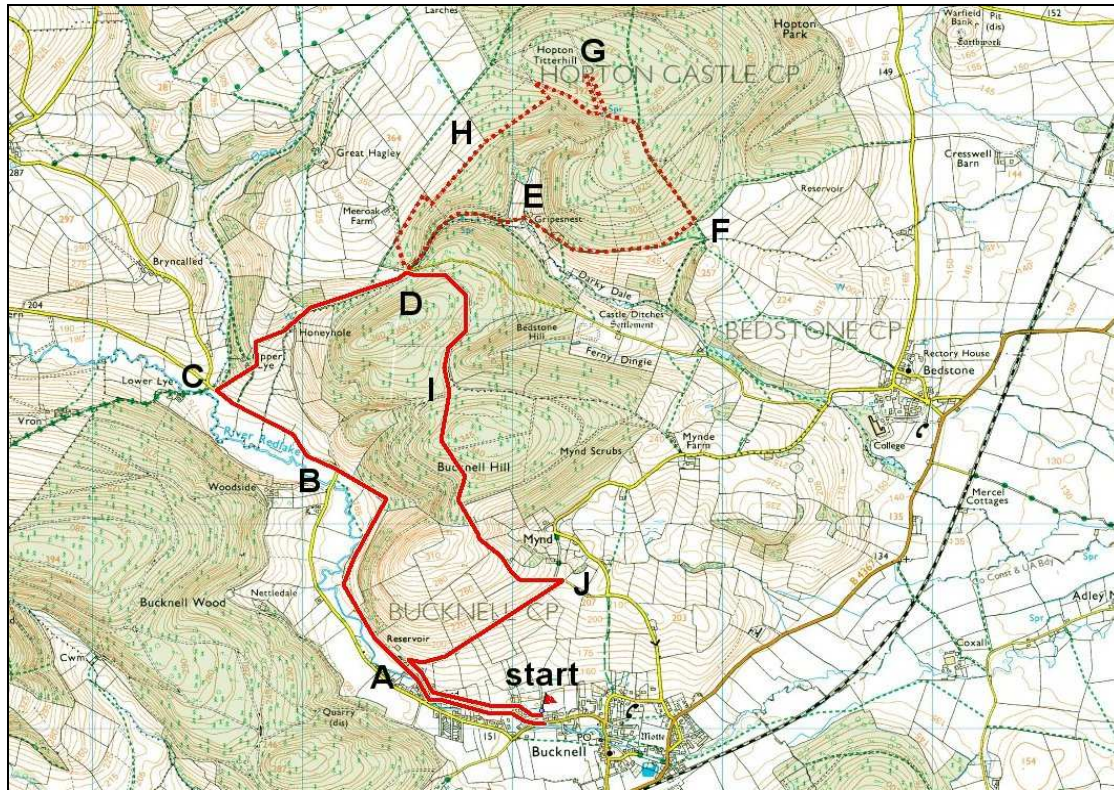


Walk 3 - Bucknell Hill (4¾ miles) with optional extension to Hopton Titterhill (7½ miles) South Shropshire

By Mike Starr 2nd edition 2010

Walk 3a – Hilly walk, mainly woods, out by the river Redlake with good view of [Bucknell](#) on the way back (solid line on map)

Walk 3b – As walk 3a plus a hilly 2¾ mile extension (total 7½ miles) via Hopton Titterhill. Good views of the Stretton hills at the top (dotted line on map)



Walk 3a – Bucknell Hill (4¾ miles)

Turn R out of the [Baron of Beef](#), go along the road, then turn R again into Bridgend Lane. Walk up this road alongside the river Redlake for about ½ mile to a gate.

Point A

After the gate the road bends R, but you carry straight on along a grassy bridleway, bordered by gorse and a line of trees. The river Redlake meanders to your L, while to your R is [Bucknell Hill](#). Continue on this bridleway through two gates, ignoring a track going uphill to your R and a stile below you to your L. After passing through the second gate the path bends L around an imposing line of redwoods and descends via a gate to a road, where you go through another gate and turn R.

Point B

You are in the Redlake valley heading towards the village of Chapel Lawn. Walk up this road for about ½ mile until you see a fingerpost pointing R before an access road to a house.

Point C

Turn R and walk up the drive to the house. Keep R of the house and go up a grassy bank to a gate. If you look to your L here you will see that the valley is dominated by Caer Caradoc, a bare hill that was once an iron age hill fort (for a historical note see Walk 7).

Continue uphill, crossing a stile and passing a house on your R (Honeyhole). Two more stiles lead to an open pasture, where a further slope takes you to a kissing gate and a major junction. A sign announces that you are now entering Hopton Wood. Once through the kissing gate you can either turn L and add a 2¾ mile loop around Hopton Titterhill, making the walk 7½ miles, or else turn R and limit the walk to 4¾ miles.

Point D

To return to [Bucknell](#), turn R and head for the black-yellow road barrier directly in front of you and slightly uphill. Follow the forest road as it swings first L and then R, before dropping down to another major junction.

Point I

Take the path in front of you, next to mountain bike sign 48, and follow it uphill. A short climb takes you to a high point, but the only views you get are glimpses of the Chapel Lawn valley through gaps in the fir trees on your R.

After cresting the hill, the path drops down through beeches and conifers, until eventually you pass a track joining from the L and you see signs of civilisation once more. At the [Bucknell Hill](#) sign carry straight on past the house called Vermont. On a clear day you now begin to get a wonderful panoramic view, with the radar dome of Titterstone Clee Hill clearly visible on the skyline to your L.

As you descend further the village of [Bucknell](#) is laid out before you in the valley below. Beyond the village is Coxall Knoll, a wood-covered hill that hides another iron age hill fort. Keep walking downhill until you meet a track on the L and an old horse box in the field nearby. Go past these and take the next turn R, just past a fingerpost. This is a permissive path that traverses the hill above Bucknell.

Point J

The grassy banks to the L of this path are covered with primroses in spring, while those to the R are home to numerous rabbits. Curlews can often be heard in the fields beyond. The path drops gradually, passing through a series of five gates, and becomes a metalled road at Hillside Cottage. Shortly afterwards the road bends sharp L and another gate is reached. You are now back on Bridgend Lane (**Point A**) which takes you back into the village by the pub.

Walk 3b – Hopton Titterhill (7½ miles)

From **Point D** turn L out of the kissing gate and then bear R along a stony forest track, past a black-yellow road barrier. You stay on this track for about 1 mile. It descends gently at first, skirting the end of a valley, with a house called Gripesnest below you on your R.

Point E

Once past Gripesnest the road begins to climb again, with the valley to your R. Always stick to the main path and take no notice of mountain bike routes going off L.

The woods clear briefly on your R, giving way to a grassy meadow, but then reappear again at a L-hand bend in the road. Shortly after you will meet a cross track, marked by mountain bike sign 36. Turn L here and follow the path steeply uphill.

Point F

Ignore any mountain bike tracks going off L and R and keep going uphill. A stony forest track joins from the R. A little further uphill you come to a wide open area. Bear L and keep to the main track. Tree felling has opened up the views on your L and you begin to appreciate the height you have made (if your legs aren't telling you this already!). Follow this track until you meet a pool on your R that marks a spring (by mountain bike sign 22). As you turn R here you will find a thoughtfully placed log seat offers a welcome rest, before the final stretch up to the summit of Hopton Titterhill.

As you emerge from the trees the top is just above you and to the R. The top affords some fine views of the south Shropshire hills. As well as being the start of various downhill routes for mountain bikes, the hill is also renowned for its summer whinberries.

Point G

Nowadays the whinberries are eaten or picked for jam, but in the early 1900s they were reputedly collected by local villagers for the dyeing industry. A specially made tool (resembling a dust pan with prongs) was used to comb the whinberry bushes, and the berries and leaves were deposited into wicker baskets for sorting later. Tree planting has decimated the whinberries on Hopton Titterhill, but they still grow in profusion on the Stiperstones (a few miles north of here).

After soaking up the views and sampling the wild fruits, retrace your steps to the spring below and turn R to regain the forest track. After a short distance, by mountain bike sign 9, turn back sharply L and proceed down a grassy path. Follow this path, round a R-hand bend, and continue until the wood on your R comes to an end.

Point H

Carry straight on with a wood on your L and a young fir plantation on your R. Seeds from these fir trees are harvested periodically and sent to tree nurseries in south east England. Keep to the obvious path where it zig-zags R and L through the trees, until you reach a road at Mereoak Farm (by mountain bike sign 44). Turn L and you will find yourself at the complex junction you were at earlier.

You are now back at **Point D**. Your route home is through the black-yellow road barrier ahead of you (see walk 3a above).

Acknowledgements: Ordnance survey maps reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Council. The majority of the footpaths covered have been the subject of major refurbishment by the Shropshire Countryside Access Team. They have been subsequently maintained and improved by [Bucknell](#) Volunteer Footpath (P3) group (chairman Mike Starr).

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