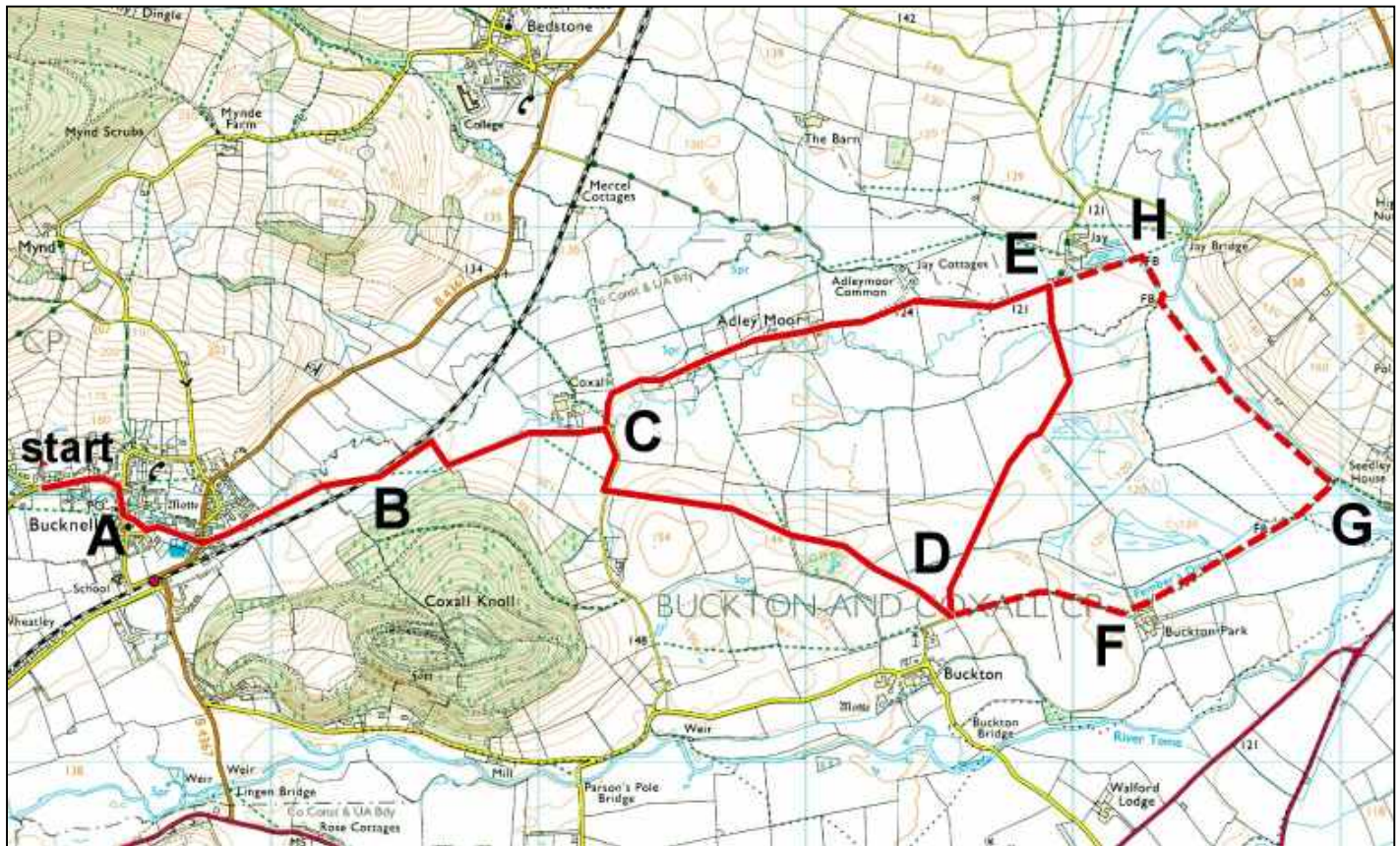


Walks 5a and 5b (6 and 7 miles) - River Redlake and heronry - with optional extension via Clun water meadows

Walk 5a – Flat, easy walk across open fields in the Redlake valley (solid line)

Walk 5b – As for 5a plus an optional 1 mile extension (dashed line) to include water meadows of the river Clun, plus further option to visit Leintwardine

Note: pub and fish & chips available in Leintwardine - see Walk 9 for details



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Walk 5a (6 miles) – river Redlake and heronry

Turn L out of the Baron at Bucknell and follow the road round to the church.

Point A

Turn L in front of the church and follow the footpath past the churchyard and along by the river into the village. Cross the road onto a stony track opposite the Sitwell Arms, and pass through two kissing gates into the meadow beyond. Go to the far end of the field, through a gate and then bear half R to the second stile over the railway. Ahead of you is the wooded Coxall Knoll, which hides of an iron-age hill fort.

Point B

Turn L after the stile and walk along the edge of the field by the railway. Don't go through the gap at the end of field, but turn R and pass under the power line until you reach the corner of the field by the end of the wood. Above you is a stile partly obscured by a tree. Cross this stile into the meadow beyond.

Head for the house and cross the stile in the far corner. Go straight ahead past a red brick barn to the corner of the field, then turn R and walk along to the finger post in the hedge. Cross the stile and turn R onto the road.

Point C

Follow the road for about 40 yds, then turn L at the next finger post into a gently sloping field. Follow the path up the hill (the only one on this walk – honest!) along a wide field margin, giving open views of the South Shropshire hills. Go through the kissing gate, walk ahead for a few yards to a corner and then head half R to another gate on the far side of the field. Once through the gate go over the track and take the next gate ahead of you. To your R you will see a line of trees, below which there is a lake and a heronry. The herons seldom see people and are therefore very timid. Observe them by all means, but try to avoid disturbing the birds unnecessarily, particularly in the nesting season. Continue on past the lake towards the disused square, red brick water reservoir, and then bear R and head for the kissing gate (between two obvious trees). Beyond the gate head for the gap in the far L corner. Pass through this gap and cross the next field to the gate in the corner. To your R is the hamlet of Buckton.

Point D

Once across the stile, do not approach the road junction, but turn L up the dirt track. This section can be wet and muddy after rain! Follow this track for about 1 mile as it snakes between two hedgerows, which are home to badgers and

rabbits. Eventually you reach a metal field gate, which takes you into a large meadow, where you continue straight ahead to a clump of tall trees and a crossing of paths. At this point turn sharp L.

Point E

Aim for the wooden footbridge on the far side of the field. If the construction of the bridge appears over the top, you should see the river when it's in flood! Turn L after the bridge and walk to the gate in the far R corner (by a large oak tree). Once through the gate you are now on Adleymoore Common, with its tussocky grass and gorse bushes. To your R Jay Cottages enjoy a tranquil setting. Walk ahead to the dirt road, turn L and follow this track across the common. The track soon becomes a metalled road that takes you through the hamlet of Adley Moor. You follow this road for the next ½ mile.

As you leave the houses behind, the road curves to the L and you rejoin the river Redlake. Cross the bridge and immediately climb over the fence on your R. You are now back on familiar territory (**Point C**).

Walk ahead along the field edge, past a brick barn and across a stile, then over the meadow to the stile on the far side. Cross the stile and turn down R, going round the end of the field to reach the railway. Turn L here and walk alongside the railway until you come to a gate across the tracks. Cross the railway here and then turn L to follow the remains of a grassy earthwork to a gate on the far side of the meadow. Pass through the gate and walk alongside the river back to Bucknell.

Walk 5b (7 miles) – River Clun water meadows

Before walking this route see footnote.

Continue from **Point D** (*Walk 5a*). Having crossed the stile, turn R and then immediately L at the *No Through Road* sign. Walk along the road for ½ mile, until you reach the buildings of Buckton Park. Do not enter the farm, but bear L instead down a short track that takes you through a gate.

Point F

Cross the stile ahead of you and walk past some delightful old barns to a further stile, which leads to a large meadow. Make a beeline for the large clump of trees in the far L corner of this meadow, where you will find a triple stile that takes you acrobatically into a further large expanse of meadow.

Directly ahead, just visible above the trees, is the flagpole of Leintwardine church (worth a visit to see the church itself as well as the workings of the ancient 16th century clock recovered from the tower). Cross the meadow by keeping to the L of the ditch. On the far side you cross a footbridge, where you turn R and head for another bridge over the river Clun.

Point G

(For plenty of reward with very little extra effort, you can cross the bridge and then turn R to follow the track into Leintwardine (under ½ mile), exiting by the Lion hotel and the village shop. Don't forget to reverse your route to continue the walk).

Otherwise, turn L before the bridge and follow the fenced-off path alongside the river Clun, crossing into the main field where directed by a waymarked gate. After about 1 mile you reach the confluence with the river Redlake.

This whole stretch is proper water meadow (south-east England speak for housing estate). If the rivers look docile, try to imagine yourself standing in a foot or so of water, with a lake to your L as far as the eye can see, as happens not infrequently after a heavy storm!

Just past the confluence is a white-painted footbridge over the river Redlake, next to a sign threatening doom to Birmingham anglers. Cross the bridge (see footnote) and immediately turn sharp L and walk along the edge of the field (probably overgrown, but it keeps you close to the river) for about 120 yards, until you meet a lone telegraph pole. Shortly after you will see another flimsy-looking concrete footbridge through the undergrowth, where you cross back precariously over the river (see footnote).

Point H

The waymark on the stile beyond directs you to a gate on the far side of a pasture, just to the R of a line of trees. Depending on the time of year, this field and the next one are wonderful flower meadows, reminiscent of how the countryside used to look before intensive farming.

Once through the gate head towards a stand of tall trees, where you pass through a gate to rejoin walk 5a at **Point E**. Refer now to the description for walk 5a to get back to Bucknell.

Footnote: *Both bridges have been declared unsafe, but can be crossed with care. There is no alternative to the first bridge, but the second can be avoided by continuing past for a further 100 yds and taking the stile on your L. Exit the field via the gate on the far side and walk across the front lawn of Jay Barn. A gate leads you to a far track, where you turn L, drop down past a manicured garden and through a 2nd gate to regain the river Redlake. Turn R after the bridge and then follow walk 5a from **point E**.*