

Walk 4

About 4½ miles

Allow 2 – 2½ hours

This is the shorter of the two walks starting from the Loggerheads Hotel. It passes through the well-kept, quiet village of Muckleston and close to Blore Heath – both places linked in history by one of many battles of the Wars of the Roses. After passing through the edge of a copse maintained for pheasant shooting, the return stretch from Blore crosses a variety of grazing and arable land.

If a near half marathon walk of 11 miles is wanted, combine this with the next walk. Follow instructions for this walk to location 3 and then continue from the same point in the instructions for Walk 5 (location 2).

Cross over the A53 turn right and take the left turn sign-posted 'Muckleston and Knighton'. In 600 metres at the top of the hill turn right into MUCKLESTONE WOOD LANE and immediately left into ROCK LANE. This is a pleasant, quiet lane and vehicles are rarely seen.

Soon, through the hedge on the left can be seen fine views over into Shropshire (and even Wales on a clear day). That Shropshire land mark, The Wrekin, about 20 miles away, also stands out clearly.

Towards the end of the lane, from the rock on the sides of the cutting and under foot, it is obvious how the lane got its name.

When the main road is reached the route lies to the left but you may wish to visit the village of Muckleston which is to the right. Notice the former village school on the left – now converted into a residence, and the wonderful position of the Parish Church of St. Mary on a mound. The Church dates



from the 13th Century and from the Tower, Queen Margaret of Anjou was reputed to have seen her General, Lord Audley, slain across the fields at Blore Heath. Legend has it that the local blacksmith, one William Skelhorn, reversed the shoes of her horse to enable her to escape from the pursuing Yorkists. Note the anvil at the right-hand side of the Churchyard and the plaque on the house opposite – once the site of the smithy.

Retrace your steps towards the Rock Lane junction and proceed down the main road which soon goes downhill. It then begins to climb and at the point where the road bends to the left there is a small lay-by on the right. The route lies up the short track at the side of the lay-by and through the iron farm gate at the top of the track.

1

In the field, walk alongside the hedge on your left and through another farm gate along a well-marked farm track. (This was once a connecting road for carts between Mucklestone and the Market Drayton Road).

Cross the stream and go over the stile. This leads into a stretch of woodland with conifers and broad-leaved trees known as THE FOLLY. At the right time of the year pheasants may be seen but do remember that this is private woodland and the line of the footpath must be strictly followed.

The path goes uphill between banks, through a plantation. When another path appears on the right, do not take it, but carry straight on until you come to a stile to give access to the A53. Turn right and walk carefully along the verge for about 100m to a driveway on the right hand side. On the opposite side of the main road, there is a stile in the hedge.

2

A small detour can be made at this point to view Audley's Cross and the battlefield of Blore Heath – about 800 metres away. Instead of crossing to the stile continue in the same direction (towards Market Drayton), keeping to the right to face oncoming traffic except where there is a wide grass verge on the left. A driveway is soon seen on the right going down to Audley's Cross Farm (well signed) and on the opposite side of the road is a farm gate. From this point, Audley's Cross, a stone monument can be seen in the middle of the field. There is no public access to this monument which marks the spot where Lord Audley was slain during the Battle of Blore Heath in 1459. Lord Audley was leading a Lancastrian Army against the Yorkist Force. The Battle raged across this field and eventually the Lancastrians were routed. Retrace your steps to the stile in the hedge described above, taking great care along the A53.

Cross the stile. The public right of way lies diagonally across the field to where there is a stile in the hedge line at the side of the farm lane. (This stile can also be reached by walking down the farm lane itself, though this is not strictly a right of way). A point to aim for across the field can be judged by counting the telephone poles down the farm lane - the stile is between the 4th and 5th pole from the right counting the one on the right of the main road as No.1. Cross over the farm lane to another stile and into the field. Turn half left and walk diagonally across the field and soon two old gate posts will be seen down the bank in the hedge line. Go over the stile sited by the gate posts and along the right hand side of a wire fence down the bank to a foot-bridge. Cross the foot-bridge and stile and turn left to follow to the right of the fence and ditch to the top of the field. Cross over the stile in the field corner.

Turn half-right, and in the distance to the left of the farm-house (BLORE FARM) a low building can be seen with ventilators at the top of the roof. Walk over the fields to the top right-hand corner of this building, crossing a stile in the wire fence line on the way. At the building, cross over the stile, turn left and walk down to the lane (PARK LANE).

3

Turn left again and carry on down the Lane for about 150 metres to cross over a stile situated in the hedge line to the left of the road on the corner. Walk on down the field keeping closely to the hedge on the right, cross over another stile by an oak tree. Follow on down the field to the left of the ditch and over a bridge. There is a stile in the field corner by the wood (ignore the gate on the right). When over the stile, look ahead and notice a long line of trees



ahead running from left to right. Aim across the field to the right of the right-hand tree. Then go left round the corner of the copse, and proceed across a stile.

Look straight across the field and walk over to a stile with a tall marker post. Cross this stile and go through a copse into the BURNT WOOD. When the path forks, turn right and follow the path through the trees until you reach a track. Keep straight ahead and follow the track with trees on both sides up the hill until you reach a point where nine paths converge, (one maybe overgrown). Take the second path on the left (keeping the football field on your left), and follow this until you reach an open area. Go straight ahead down a dirt track but almost immediately branch right along a path which follows the fence line of the first house you see. Follow the path ahead, keeping the fence on your left, pass one road and continue until you come to a second road ahead. This is KESTREL DRIVE, turn right up Kestrel Drive towards the A53. At the T-junction turn right towards the village of Loggerheads and return to the Hotel car park.



Foot-bridge