

Walk 6

1. Staffs County Council map of area relating to this walk.





2. The relevant Google Earth image on which is superimposed the outline of this walk.

Note: Walkers should be aware of traffic down Barton Lane, which can be quite busy at times with both cars and farm vehicles. It is also lies on a bus route.

This walk was initially carried out in April 2020. Conditions underfoot were difficult in many parts owing to the dense undergrowth. Consequently, although it is only 2 miles in length, it took 1^{1/2} hours.

When the walk was repeated in September conditions had worsened considerably, making parts of the walk impossible without risk of injury. The obstacles experienced on this walk, namely, the vast undergrowth which masks the (sometimes dangerous) unevenness of the ground, the presence of cattle which are not separated from footpaths, the instance of an electric fence across a footpath, fallen trees across the pathways and a broken stile have all been reported to the Staffordshire County Council. There are two main reasons why so many photographs have been attached to this account. Firstly, to point out the directions of the paths which in places are obscured by the rough nature of the terrain and, secondly, to illustrate the potential hazards associated with this walk.

Starting this walk at the Red Lion, keeping the pub on the left, this walk follows the road downhill until, on the right, it reaches a track (Bradley 0.1231) which lies between Hill Farm and the house named Lyndhurst as shown in photograph no.1 (below, taken on 4/09/20):

1.



At the end of the track on the left is a stile, as shown in photograph no.2 (below, taken on 4/09/20) . Photograph no.3 (below, taken on 4/09/20) shows the state of this path after crossing this stile. It is not only overgrown, it has disappeared completely under a bank of earth.

2.



3.



Photographs no.4 and no.4a (below, both taken on 4/09/20) illustrate the difficulty in finding direction on this walk:



4.



4a

Photograph no.4 looks towards the corner of the field where there should be a sign indicating a right turn. However, the dense undergrowth impedes efforts to reach the corner. It is not recommended that efforts be made to reach this sign, which is illustrated more clearly in photograph no.4a.

After taking this right turn the path continues until a gate is reached on the left, illustrated in photograph no. 5 (below):



5.

This gate opens out on to an open field which is grassed over so that the direction of the path is not apparent. However, looking at the Staffs County Council map and Google Earth image it can be seen that walk now takes a rather peculiar route: Bradley 0.1231 crosses the field diagonally to touch upon Shredicote Lane, it then becomes Bradley 0.1230 as it turns back, thus making a “V” shape. Photograph no.6 (below) illustrates the point at which the two paths meet at Shredicote Lane:



6.

Note : When this walk was undertaken in April there were cattle in this field and there was no barrier between the animals and the footpath. If walkers were to avoid the animals, then the “V” shape would have been very difficult to follow. There were no cattle, however, when the walk was repeated in September.

The exit to this field is via a stile which lies on the left near to the corner, close by a pond, as shown in photograph no. 7 (below):



7.

After crossing the above stile the path skirts round the pond which lies to its right. The last time this walk was undertaken, 4/09/21, there were cattle in this field. Difficulties arose because an electric fence had been erected to prevent the cattle from reaching the pond. Unfortunately the wire reached over the pathway, leaving no room for walkers to circumvent the pond outside the range of the cattle. See photograph no.8 below:

8.



After crossing the stile shown in photograph no.8 the path enters another field which contains cattle, which are not separated from the path by any barriers. Looking at the Staffs County Council map and Google Earth image, Bradley 0.1230 appears to wind erratically across this field. Because the field is grassed over there is no physical sign of the path. The desire to avoid contact with the cattle deters walkers from any efforts to locate

its exact line. The position of the exit to this field is also problematical as it is neither marked by a stile nor a gate. It appears to be merely a gap in the hedge near the corner, as shown in photograph no.9 (below, taken 4/09/20):

9.



After passing through this gap Bradley 0.1230 proceeds along this next field keeping the hedge to the left. Photograph no.10 below shows the approach to the next stile, which lies to the right of a pond :

10.



Photograph no.11 (below, taken 4/09/20) is a close up of this stile, which is broken:



Photograph no.12 (below, taken 4/09/20) shows the condition of the path once the above stile has been crossed :

12.



The density of the weeds, especially the stinging nettles, sometimes reaching over four foot in height, hid the unevenness of the ground. In addition, as may be seen in the above photograph no.12, the pathway was strewn with rubbish in places. Extreme care should be taken to avoid injury.

A short way from the previous stile comes a weed choked pair of stiles placed close together, as shown in photograph 13 (below, taken 4/09/20). Again, care should be taken when crossing over these stiles due to a shallow trench which lies between them:

13.



After crossing the above “double stile” the path enters an open field, as shown in photograph no.14 below in which a stile may be seen at the far end:



14.

Photograph no.15 below is a close up of this stile:

15.



After crossing this stile the walk enters its most hazardous phase, shown by photograph no.16 (below, taken 4/09/20):

16.



This portion of the path was not only choked with nettles, which reach at least four foot in height in places, danger also presented itself in the many fallen trees which blocked the way. In addition, the tree pictured above was covered with a swarm of wasps, indicating the presence of a nest nearby. On the day the above photograph was taken it was not possible to walk along the last few yards of Bradley 0.1230 to Barton Lane.

The last photograph, no.17, below, shows the exit of the walk from Bradley 0.1230 on to Barton Lane. It was taken in April when the final portion of Bradley 0.1230 was still just about walkable. But even in April this portion of the path was difficult to navigate due to the dense undergrowth.

17.



On reaching Barton Lane Walk 6 turns right. At the top of this lane is the Red Lion pub, the start of the walk.