



Royal
Geographical
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with IBG

A little mountain with many secrets

A self guided walk in Shropshire



Discover the most diverse geology on Earth in one place

Find out why prehistoric people chose to settle here

Explore a forest and its hidden secrets

Witness the remarkable power of Nature to triumph over humans

www.discoveringbritain.org

the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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A little mountain with many secrets

Discover The Wrekin in Shropshire

Introduction

Did you know that the area round The Wrekin has the most diverse geology to be found on Earth? This walk takes you on a journey through millions of years to discover different types of rocks and special geological features.

These rocks and their various qualities have been of interest to humans for centuries. They have been quarried and mined, smelted to make metal, burned to generate electricity, crushed and spread on fields, carved and turned into paving stones.



Discover the enormous Ercall Quarry hidden in the forest
© Scenesetters

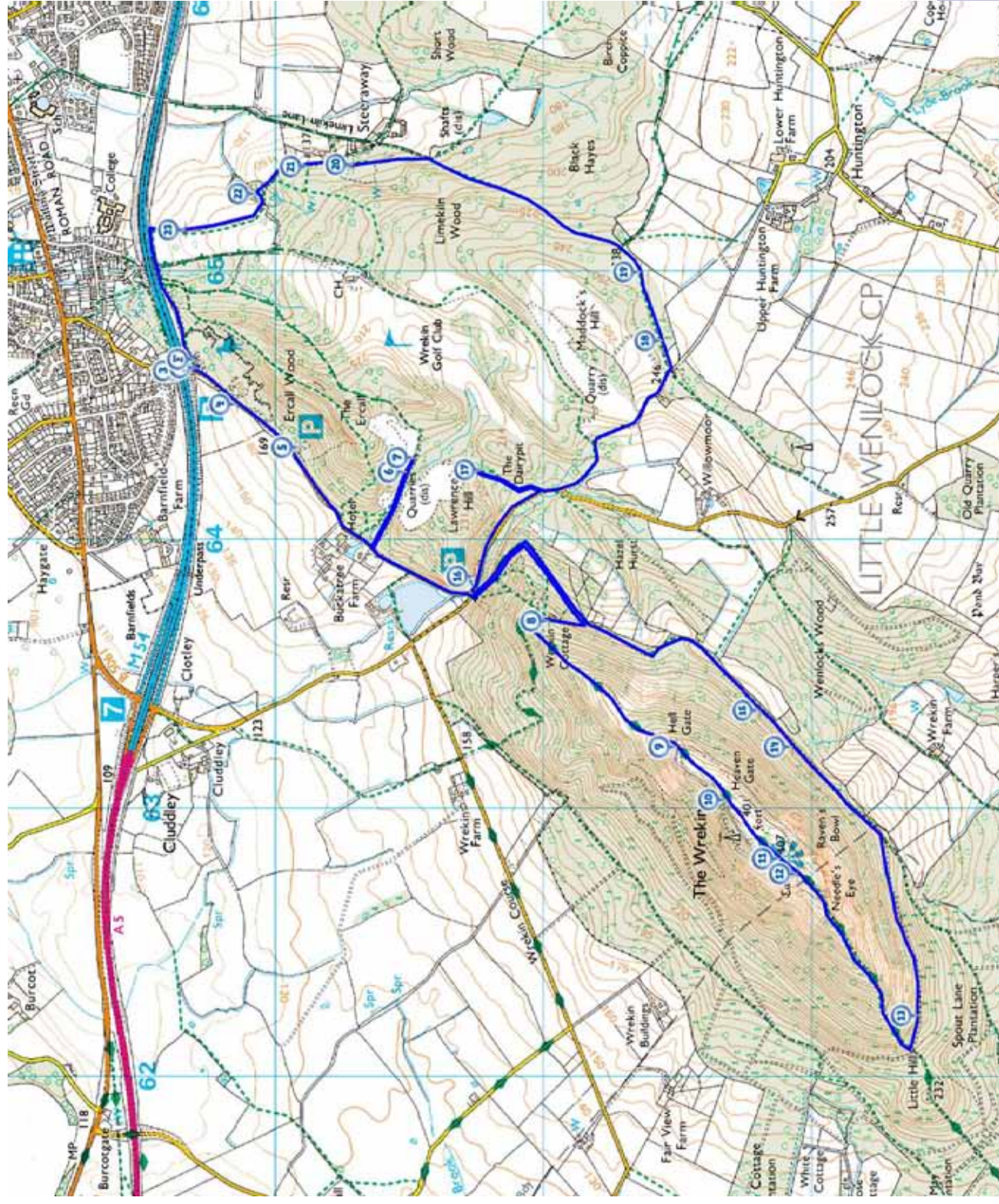


Aerial view of The Wrekin
© Webb Aviation

But this walk is about much more than geology.

Climb a little mountain that was created by an angry giant. Follow in the footsteps of Bronze Age people to their sacred sites. See a Roman Road alongside the 'world's worst-built motorway'. Discover how old rocks were used to build a New Town. And find out why a forest has bent trees and straight trees side by side.

Route overview



Practical information

Location	The Wrekin Forest, Shropshire, West Midlands
Start & finish	Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park, Ercall Lane, Wellington, TF1 2DY
Getting there	<p>Car - Easily accessible from the M54 (Junction 6 or 7); free car park at Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve</p> <p>Train - Nearest station Wellington (1 mile); served by trains from Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Chester, Shrewsbury</p> <p>Bus - Service by local buses running between Telford and Shrewsbury; alight on Holyhead Road at the stop for Christine Avenue</p>
Directions from railway station to start	<p>From the railway station, go up Station Road and turn left (not over the railway lines). Follow the road straight into the pedestrianised area. Go round the left side of the small old black and white building. Turn right and leave the pedestrianised area.</p> <p>Continue straight along Walker Street for approximately 150 metres until you meet a main road. Turn left into Wrekin Road and follow it for about half a mile until you reach The Wickets Inn on Holyhead Road. Turn right (signposted Shrewsbury A5, Wrekin Hospital, The Wrekin).</p> <p>After about 150 metres turn left into Ercall Lane, signposted 'The Wrekin 1'. Follow the road as it climbs steadily. It is narrow in places with no pavement so take care. After about 400 metres is a bridge over the motorway. Immediately after the bridge on the left hand side is the car park where the walk starts.</p>
Directions from nearest bus stop to start	A short distance from Christine Avenue bus stop on Holyhead Road is a residential road called Ercall Lane. It is signposted 'The Wrekin 1'. Follow the road as it climbs steadily. It is narrow in places with no pavement so take care. After about 400 metres is a bridge over the motorway. Immediately after the bridge on the left hand side is the car park where the walk starts.

Walk distance 8 miles

Option to shorten the walk by finishing at Stop 16

Level **Challenging** - The walk includes the summit of The Wrekin; parts of the ascent and descent are very steep

Terrain The route includes paved lanes, gravel tracks and footpaths; conditions underfoot will vary according to the weather

Suitable for **Dogs** who enjoy a challenging walk will enjoy the mountain and the woods

Refreshments There is nowhere along the walk route to stop for refreshments; we suggest buying a picnic in the town of Wellington before setting off

Facilities There are no public toilets on the walk route

Other info The town of Wellington is a 'Walkers are Welcome' town (www.wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk); there are a variety of attractions and facilities, as well as accommodation and restaurants

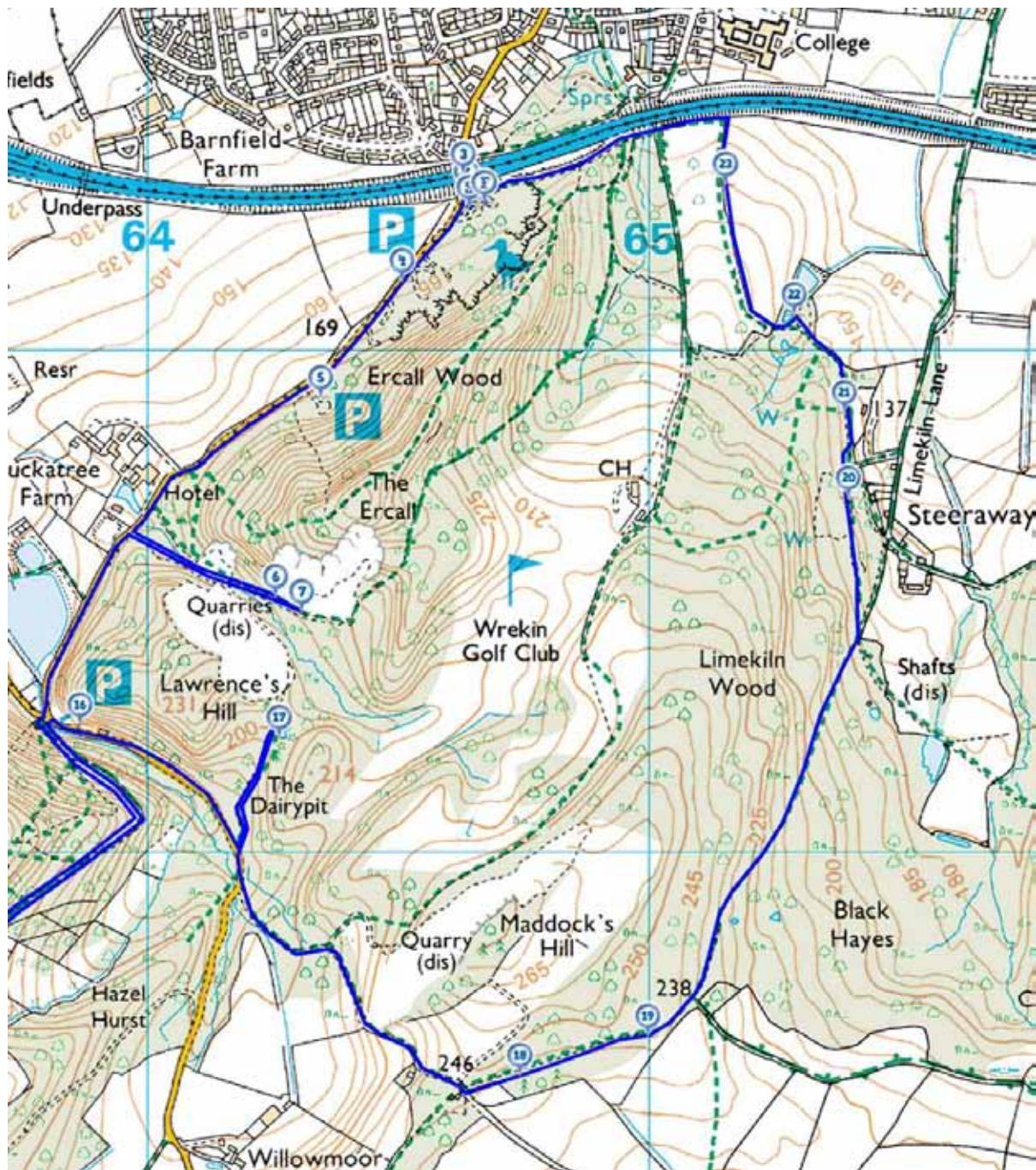
Tourist information Currently there is no Tourist Information Centre in Wellington. The nearest centres are located in Telford at the shopping centre (5 miles) and in Ironbridge (7 miles)

Visit <http://www.shropshiretourism.co.uk> to plan your trip



Fingerpost near the halfway House
© Row17, Geograph (Creative Commons License)

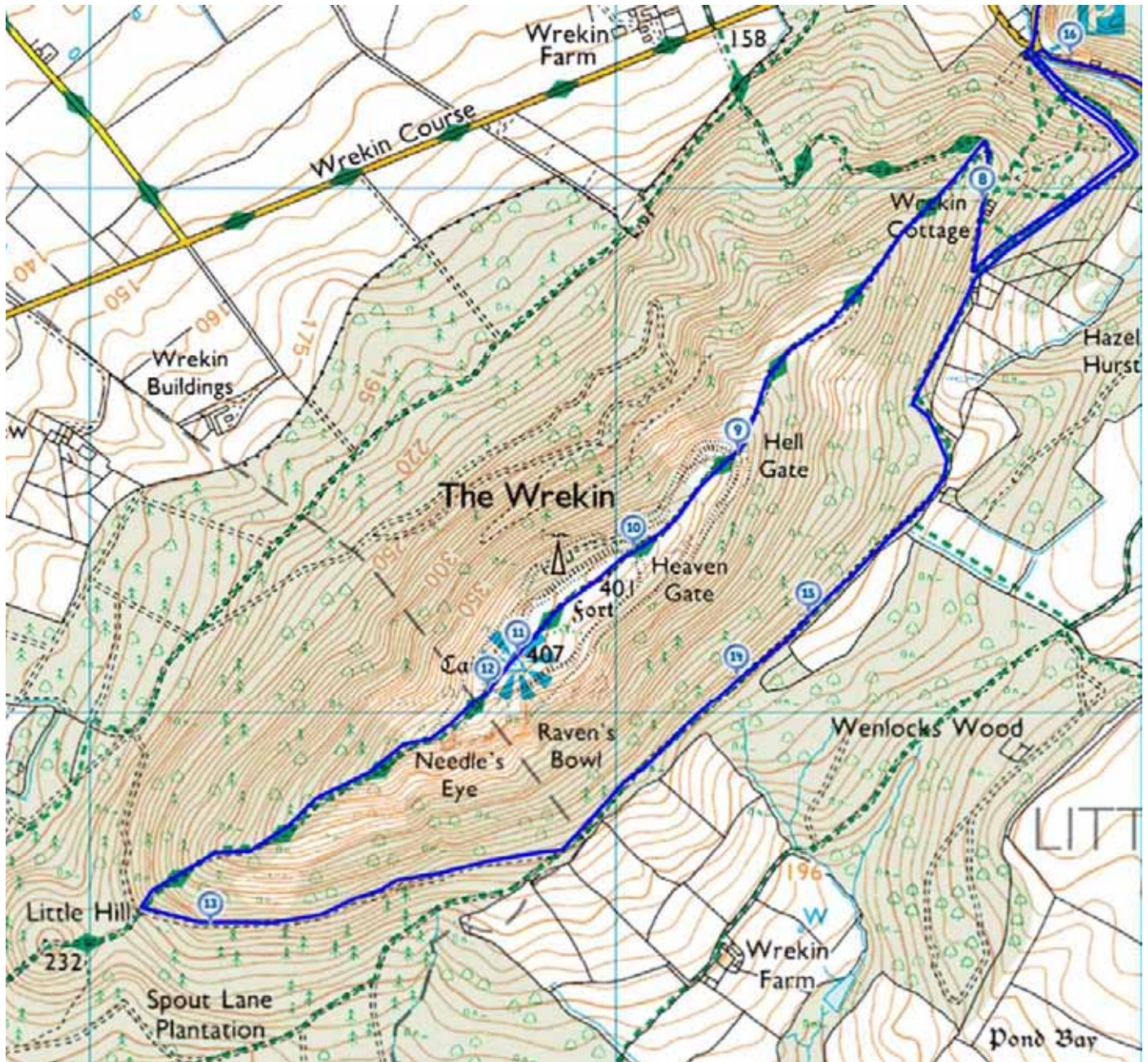
Detail of first and last part of route



Stopping points

1. Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park
2. Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park
3. Ercall Lane bridge over M54
4. Ercall Lane
5. One of the quarries along Ercall Lane
6. Buckatree Quarry
7. Buckatree Quarry
16. Forest Glen car park
17. The Dairy Pit
18. Wood on south flank of Maddock's Hill
19. Wood on south flank of Maddock's Hill
20. Limekiln Wood near Steeraway
21. Steeraway Cottages
22. Steeraway reservoirs
23. Wrekin Golf Club
24. Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park

Detail of middle section of route



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Stopping points

- 8.** Halfway House
- 9.** Below Hell Gate
- 10.** Heaven Gate
- 11.** Trig point at summit
- 12.** Trig point at summit
- 13.** Footpath on south flank of The Wrekin
- 14.** Footpath between The Wrekin and Wenlocks Wood
- 15.** Footpath between The Wrekin and Wenlocks Wood

Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions in the boxes below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to The Wrekin

Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park

Directions 1

Remain in the car park and listen to Track 2.

2. Beneath your feet

Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park

Directions 2

From Ercall Wood car park, go a few metres down Ercall Lane to the bridge over the motorway. Stop on the bridge and listen to Track 3.

3. The world's worst-built motorway

Ercall Lane bridge over M54

Directions 3

Make your way back past the car park and up Ercall Lane with the woods on your left and fields on your right. There is a footpath running parallel to the lane. Stop part way up the lane and listen to Track 4.

4. Ancient roads

Ercall Lane

Directions 4

Continue up the footpath alongside the lane. Stop along the path in one of the many quarries. Depending on the time of year, pick a point where you have a good view around then listen to Track 5.

5. Outstanding Natural Beauty

One of the quarries along Ercall Lane

Directions 5

When you reach the Buckatree Hall Hotel, drop down from the footpath onto the lane. Continue along the Ercall Lane past the hotel. After a short distance is a track off to the left signposted Ercall Wood Nature Reserve. Go through the gate and follow the track. After a short distance you will see a quarry on the left hand side. Continue up the track. Stop when you reach an even bigger quarry with an interpretation board and listen to Track 6.

6. Old rocks for a New Town

Buckatree Quarry

Directions 6

Remain in Buckatree Quarry and listen to Track 7.

7. Nature reigns

Buckatree Quarry

Directions 7

Retrace your steps down the track to Ercall Lane. Turn left and follow the lane. Note an old reservoir on the right hand side which will be referred to later. At the road junction, turn right (signposted Shrewsbury) then immediately left through the gate and up the track. This is what some of us call the Pilgrims' Way. This is the easiest route to ascend The Wrekin and has for centuries been a popular pilgrimage for locals and returning ex-pats.

At the first major junction in the track, follow it as it bends up to the right. After a short way there is a house on the right hand side known as the Halfway House (yes we are about half way to the top now!) Stop here and listen to Track 8. At weekends and holidays they serve refreshments so you may wish to have a break here.

8. Resting place

Halfway House

Directions 8

From the Halfway House, go through the gate and follow the main path up to the left. The path goes up the spine of the hill. Beware: there are two false tops before the real summit! After the first false top, the ground levels before climbing steeply again. Stop by the interpretation board and listen to Track 9.

9. Going through Hell

Below Hell Gate

Directions 9

Continue on the main path upwards. Stop on the log seats above Hell Gate near Purgatory Wood (you've earned a rest) and listen to Track 10.

10. Ancient revelations

Heaven Gate

Directions 10

Continue on the main path upwards. Go past the communications mast. Stop at the trig point (white column at the summit) and listen to Track 11.

11. The world at your feet

Trig point at summit

Directions 11

Remain at the summit of The Wrekin and listen to Track 12.

12. A tall tale

Trig point at summit

Directions 12

From the trig point, follow the path as it descends from the summit through the embankments of the hilltop settlement. After a short way the path leaves open ground and enters into woods. It descends very steeply and great care should be taken, particularly if the ground is wet.

After just over half a mile is a crossroads of paths at the saddle between The Wrekin and Little Hill. Turn left along the path which goes slightly uphill again. At the first rise in the track, look for a hillock with a flat top on the right hand side of the path. Stop here and listen to Track 13.

13. The windy cockarth

Footpath on south flank of The Wrekin

Directions 13

Continue on the path as it undulates through the woods. After about half a mile, a path joins from the right hand side and there are fields down to the right of the path. Stop after the fields end and you have woodland on both sides of the path and listen to Track 14.

14. Bent trunks

Footpath between The Wrekin and Wenlocks Wood

Directions 14

Continue about 200 metres. Stop by the conifer plantation and listen to Track 15.

15. Straight trunks

Footpath between The Wrekin and Wenlocks Wood

Directions 15

Continue on the path through the woods. When you reach the junction with the main track that you climbed earlier, go straight ahead to retrace your steps back down to the road. At the junction, turn right (signposted Little Wenlock). Stop by the car park on the left and listen to Track 16.

16. A drink and a dance

Forest Glen car park

Directions 16

From the car park follow the road as it goes gradually uphill. After about 500 metres, look on the left hand side for a gate and track. Follow this track for about 200 metres until you reach a large mound with a hole in the centre on the right hand side of the path. Stop here and listen to Track 17.

Note: For a shorter walk you can finish the walk here and return back down Ercall Lane to the start point.

17. A strange enigma

The Dairy Pit

Directions 17

Retrace your steps back to the road and turn left. After a short distance, where the road bears round to the right, take the track straight ahead which is blocked by large boulders.

Ignore the path up to the left (also blocked by boulders) to another quarry, known as Maddock's Hill. This was where hundreds of thousands of tonnes (half the hill) of 'Camptonite', a granitic rock were removed and used as hard core for the building of Telford. As we saw in Buckatree Quarry earlier, nature has now reclaimed the space and today you will find it difficult to spot the rock faces.

Continue straight upwards with farmland to the right. Do take time to look at the view back up to The Wrekin. From here you can see the Halfway House perched on the side of the hill and the communications mast at the top.

Shortly after passing a ruined building, you reach a farm track. Take the waymarked footpath on the left running into the woods. Stop part-way along the first straight section of path and listen to Track 18.

18. Round the Hatch

Wood on south flank of Maddock's Hill

Directions 18

Where the track bends slightly to the left there is a view over fields to the right and to the open cast mine. Stop at this corner and listen to Track 19.

19. Environmental vandalism

Wood on south flank of Maddock's Hill

Directions 19

Follow the path as it descends gradually through the woods still following the route of the Jinny rail. At the next split in the paths, keep straight. Where paths merge and split and there are farm buildings to the right, take the left fork. After a short distance, look on the left hand side for an old quarry and on the right hand side for two brick shafts. Stop here and listen to Track 20.

20. Lime

Limekiln Wood near Steeraway

Directions 20

Continue along the footpath. When you reach a wider track, turn left with the woods on your left and a cottage on your right. Stop overlooking the cottage and listen to Track 21.

21. A hard life

Steeraway Cottages

Directions 21

Shortly after the cottage, the path splits. Go straight on until you reach a pool on the right hand side. Stop by the pool and listen to Track 22.

22. Quenching thirst

Steeraway reservoirs

Directions 22

Continue along the path with the old reservoir to the right. Go through the metal gate and take the path on the right with a field on the right hand side and a golf course to the left hand side. The path goes down the side of the golf course. Stop along this path overlooking the golf course (somewhere safe from flying balls) and listen to Track 23.

23. A landscape of leisure

Wrekin Golf Club

Directions 23

Follow the footpath down the side of the golf course. At the bottom, follow it to the left with the motorway on your right. Go over the stile, cross Golf Links Road and follow the footpath on the opposite side. Where the path splits, continue straight with the motorway on your right (you can follow the path on the left which takes a longer route through Ercall Wood). This path climbs and then falls again and takes you back to Ercall Wood car park where you started the walk. Stop in the car park and listen to Track 24.

24. Closing the circle

Ercall Wood Local Nature Reserve car park

Further information

Find out more about the walk location and places of interest along the route:

Websites

All Friends Round The Wrekin

Website of locals campaigning to keep The Wrekin wild
www.wrekinfriends.com

Explore Wellington and The Wrekin Forest

A website with plenty of useful information for visitors
www.explore-wellington.webeden.co.uk

National Trust

Visitor information about Sunnycroft, the Edwardian villa in Wellington
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sunnycroft

Natural England

Details about The Wrekin and Ercall SSSI
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/geodiversity/englands/sites/local_ID74.aspx

Raby Sawmill

Find out about the company whose plantations on The Wrekin provide sustainable wood
www.rabysawmill.co.uk

Secret Shropshire

Website with over 10,000 images which allows you to explore the county's local history, natural environment and archaeological treasures
www.secretshropshire.org.uk

Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Find out about the special characteristics of the AONB
www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Information about The Ercall nature reserve
www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/Nature+reserves/Explore+our+nature+reserves/The+Ercall

The Wrekin Transmitter

Information about the history of the station and the radio and television signals that it transmits
<http://www.thebigtower.com/live/TheWrekin/Index.htm>

Books

The Wrekin Hill

Allan Frost

The History Press Ltd, 2007

Wrekin Wraiths, Rebels and Romans

Allan Frost

Wrekin Books, 2006

Fern Ticket to the Magic Forest of The Wrekin

George Evans

Wellington Civic Society

The Wild Wrekin Trail

Marc Petty

Wellington Local Agenda 21 Group

Other walks

Around the Wrekin – From ashes to ice: the making of Shropshire’s favourite hill

Shropshire Geological Society Geotrail

Order from andrew@scenesetters.co.uk

Wellington Historic Town and The Wrekin Forest Walks

Leaflet produced by Wellington Town Council

www.wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk/images/wellington_walking_and_town_map_v21.pdf

Credits

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Britain's landscapes are wonderful.

There is a tremendous variety within our shores – whether in the countryside, in towns and cities or at the seaside. And every landscape has a story to tell about our past and present.

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