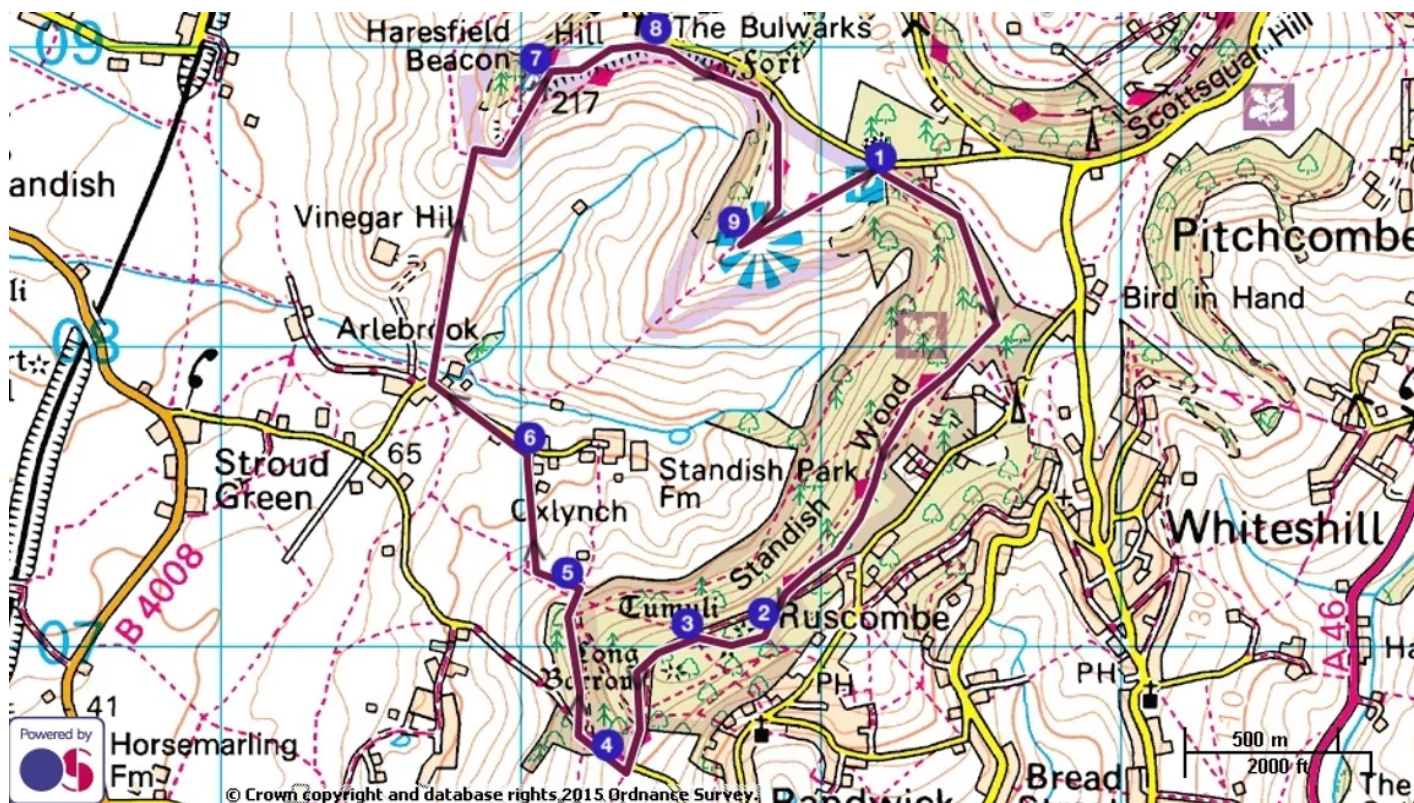


GLOUCESTERSHIRE & THE COTSWOLDS

Haresfield Beacon walk

The Haresfield Beacon estate encompasses a variety of woodlands and grassland areas high on the Cotswold scarp. It offers impressive views, an abundance of wildlife, and major archaeological features and monuments, all of which can be discovered on this substantial walk.



Information

Address: Haresfield Beacon, GL6 6PP

OS map: Landranger 162 Gloucester and the Forest of Dean; Explorer 172 Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud

Activity: Walking

Challenging: Route follows stoned woodland tracks, natural grassy paths and undulating ground.

Dog friendly: Dogs are welcome but should be kept under close control in the woods and on leads when walking through areas grazed by livestock.

Full trail: Miles: 4.8 (km: 7.68)

Duration: 3 hours 30 mins - 4 hours

Terrain

The route follows stoned woodland tracks, natural grassy paths and undulating ground.

Total steps: 10

Start point: National Trust car park, Shortwood, grid ref: SO832085

1. Leave the car park via the gap in the wall and take the top track through the woods following the Cotswold Way markers for 1 mile (1.6km).
2. After 1.2 miles cross the track ('Robbers Road') and follow the path to the right. Look out for an elongated mound on either side as the path cuts through it – an iron age cross dyke – and a few metres further on your right the small round barrows. Follow the wide path for 400m until you see the grass-covered long barrow on your right. Head up the steep little paths to the top of the long barrow to fully appreciate the scale of the monument. Subsequent quarrying and tree planting have perhaps reduced its significance in the landscape.
3. Follow the path off the barrow, opposite to the direction you walked up, through the open woodland and the track ahead (Robbers Road) where you will rejoin the Cotswold Way. Turn left and follow it for 400m. You will pass a small bench on your left overlooking a wildflower meadow with views across the Stroud Valleys. Continue along the Cotswold Way until you come to a small parking area (Ash Lane).
4. From Ash Lane car park – with open views over the Severn Vale – take the stone track down to the right. Just after Jackdaw Quarry turn right past the green metal gate and head along the track for approximately 400m until the track divides. You'll see several barriers: one on your right then one straight ahead. Ignore these and bear left down the steep stony track.
5. Emerging from the woods (leaving National Trust property), follow the footpath sign to the left and enter the field through the gate. The view shows the Forest of Dean and May Hill (the one with the clump of trees on the top, also NT). Go straight across this field and turn right across the second field and through two wooden field gates at the end. These gates can sometimes be padlocked so you may need to climb over them.

6. On the road, turn left. At the bend, turn down the track to Tudor Farm. About 20 metres down the track go left over the stile (footpath sign) and steeply up across four fields.
7. You are back on NT land. Turn left and immediately sharp right up the steep grass path to get to Haresfield Beacon and Ring Hill. If you prefer a more gradual climb, just turn right and follow the grass track with an old wall on your right (you will miss the Beacon). Up at the Beacon, keep right. From the small footpath, you will enjoy views towards Gloucester and the Malvern Hills. Go through a small wooden gate and you will see the recently cleared Ring Hill ramparts, part of the Iron Age hillfort.
8. Before the small Beacon car park, take the steps down to the right, following the Cotswold Way markers (eventually meeting up with the alternative path again).
9. On reaching the grassland, keep following the Cotswold Way markers towards the toposcope. Once there, follow the track straight down for 250 metres to the twin round barrows.
10. Walk back up the track, towards the toposcope, but bear right past the wooden bench until you come to the ditch and mound 50 metres further on. This is the medieval woodland boundary and can be followed back to the car park.

End point: National Trust car park, Shortwood, grid ref: SO832085
