

Walk Information:

Maps: OS Explorer 201

Distance: 6 or 7 miles 10 or 11 kilometers

Duration: Allow at least 5 hours from New Radnor or 4 hours from forestry carpark

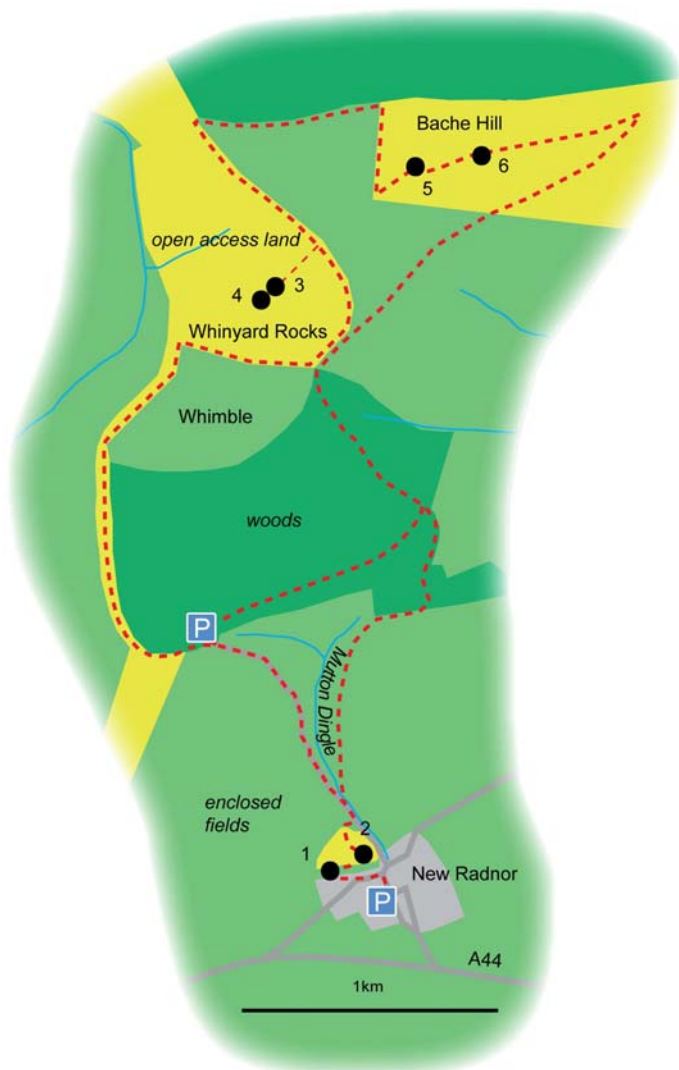
Difficulty: medium/hard. Some unmarked sections through heather

Start and finish: Either in New Radnor **SO21276090** or forestry parking at **SO20556185**

Walk summary

The walk takes advantage of public footpaths, lanes and open access land. Starting in the village of New Radnor the route takes the visitor to the church and then the impressive earthworks of the medieval castle before following a lane onto open access land below the prominent hill known as Whimble. Skirting the base of the hill the walk then ascends Whinyard Rocks to visit two Bronze Age burial cairns, from where there are impressive views of the Walton Basin and south to the Black Mountains. A further two burial cairns lie on the adjacent Bache Hill, the highest point in the area.

The descent follows an unmade track as far as a forestry plantation, and then a combination of footpaths and bridleways to return to New Radnor.



Introduction

The Walton Basin in eastern Radnorshire covers an area of around 6.5km west to east by 5km north to south and is thought to be the bed of a post-glacial lake, now drained by the Summergil and Knobley Brooks. The basin is largely surrounded by uplands, with Bache Hill to the north, Evenjobb Hill and Burfa Bank to the east, Herrock Hill, Stanner Rocks and Old Radnor Hill to the south and Whimble and The Smatcher flanking the western end.

This is an area of considerable significance in its grouping and variety of archaeological sites, but is best known for its prehistoric monuments. Unfortunately, many of these have been levelled by centuries of ploughing and were only discovered from the air as cropmarks in dry summers. The earliest evidence of activity consists of scatters of flints dating to the Mesolithic (10,000 – 4,300 BC) and Neolithic (4,300 – 2,300 BC) periods, although it is the complex of large-scale Neolithic monuments for which this area is best known. Clustered around Hindwell and Walton village are the buried remains of a causewayed enclosure and two cursus monuments dating to about 3,600 BC, together with two palisaded enclosures, one of which was built about 2,600 BC and enclosed 34ha, making it the largest such site in Britain. There are also a number of Bronze Age (2,300 – 1,200 BC) sites, many of which are still upstanding, including the Four Stones stone circle (SO 24576080) and numerous burial mounds. The barrows on Bache Hill are prominent landmarks which are visible on the skyline from much of the Walton Basin. More information on these remarkable sites can be found on the CPAT website: www.cpat.org.uk



The stone circle at Four Stones

The Walk

The walk starts in New Radnor, where there is usually ample roadside parking on Broad Street (SO 21276090). Alternatively, it is possible to shorten the walk by using a forestry carpark at Cwm Broadwell (SO 20556185), in which case the church and castle could be visited either before or after the walk.

From Broad Street walk uphill to the junction with High Street and turn left, then taking a lane on the right, rising behind the War Memorial, which leads to the **St Mary's Church 1**, which was built in 1845. Continue along the south side of the church and through a gate leading to **New Radnor Castle 2**.



Aerial view of New Radnor Castle

Bache Hill burial cairns

Climb to the top of the castle mound for a good view of the medieval town with its regular gridded street pattern. Descend from the north-west corner of the mound, crossing two massive ditches defending the castle and its bailey, and continue across the bailey to the northern corner to join a footpath which descends right, leading to a lane. Turn left and follow the lane up Mutton Dingle to the edge of the forestry at Cwm Broadwell.

Take the track on the left, around the edge of the forestry, leading to a gate into a field, from where the path follows the forest edge. As the ground levels at the end of the forestry, continue along the track which starts to descend. Unfortunately, there is no public access to Whimble, the prominent hill which overlooks the forestry from the north. On the left is Harley Dingle which is used as a live firing range. At the end of the track (SO 20476296) go through a gate and turn right to follow another track around the base of Whinyard Rocks.



Aerial view of Bache Hill and Whinyard Rocks with the Whimble to the left

On reaching a large shearing shed surrounded by conifers bear left above a belt of conifers and then follow a grassy track which ascends along the edge of the open access land. As the track levels, opposite a field boundary joining from the right, turn left (no path) to a prominent **Bronze Age burial mound 3** visible on the skyline (SO 20856317). A second, larger **burial mound 4** lies a further 75m to the south-west, from where there are good views south to Whimble with the Black Mountains and Hay Bluff visible in the distance. The burial cairns, together with two on Bache Hill which will be visited later, appear to have been deliberately placed to be visible from much of the lowland of the Walton Basin, from where they can be seen clearly on the skyline.

Return to the track, noting a third burial mound on the skyline to the north-east which will be visited later. Unfortunately, the intervening fields have no public access. Turn left and follow the track to the north-west. On reaching a junction of boundaries at a saddle (SO 20546381) cross the first stile on the right, next to a gate, and turn right alongside a pond to follow the edge of the forestry. Go through the gate at the far end of the field and turn right, leaving the bridleway, to follow the fenceline southwards.



The Bronze Age barrow on the summit of Bache Hill

Close to the corner of the fence there is a narrow track on the left which leads through the heather to a prominent **Bronze Age burial mound 5**, surmounted by a trig point (SO 21396365). This is the highest point on the walk (610m) and a good vantage point for surveying the Walton Basin to the south. Take the narrow path to the south-east which then turns eastwards to a final **burial mound 6** (SO 21646368).

Bache Hill burial cairns

Descend eastwards on a path which meets a trackway where you turn right to follow it back towards the shearing sheds at the base of Whinyard Rocks. Go through two gates and take a signed path descending through the forestry on the left. Cross the forest track diagonally to the right and take the signed path which leads around the edge of a block of conifers. Rejoin the forest track and turn right for a short distance to a junction on the left where there is a signed footpath descending to the south-east. Alternatively, continue along the track to the west-south-west to return to the forestry carpark.

On reaching a junction with a bridleway (SO 21456195) turn right and follow the path to join the lane down Mutton Dingle, turning left to follow it back to New Radnor.



