

Countryside walk...3 miles

May Hill, Gloucestershire/Herefordshire

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

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Enjoy an exhilarating walk over this prominent landmark. Starting on May Hill Common the walk climbs to the clump of trees on the summit, before crossing an open expanse of grassland. The walk returns via the woodlands of the Huntley Estate.

Start: May Hill Common – grid ref: SO690221 – maps: Landranger 162, Explorer OL14

How to get here & local facilities

By foot: The Gloucestershire Way (Chepstow-Tewkesbury) and Wysis Way (Monmouth-Kemble) run across May Hill's summit

By bus: Stagecoach 24 & 33 run a regular service from Gloucester to Ross-on-Wye, alight Huntley. From here it is a 1½ mile walk to join the walk at point 5 on the map.

By car: off the A40 Gloucester to Ross-on-Wye road, 1 mile west of Huntley, 3 miles SW of Newent (B4216). Follow road up hill past the Yew Tree Inn, Clifford's Mesne. Roadside parking ½ mile past cattle grid

Pubs at Clifford Mesne (Yew Tree) and May Hill village (Glasshouse). Nearest public WCs at Newent, 3 miles. Contact us on 01452 810054 or mayhill@nationaltrust.org.uk

Things to look out for...

Acidic grassland

The acidic grassland and heathland habitats on May Hill Common and on the summit of May Hill includes herbs such as heath bedstraw, heath speedwell, bilberry and heather. Listen out for breeding birds like tree and meadow pipits as well.

Pond life

In areas where there are scattered ponds and flushes, uncommon plants, including lesser skullcap, bog pimpernel and bog mosses flourish. Palmate newts and rare water beetles live here too and you may even spot dragonflies flitting over the water.

May Hill

May Hill, with its conspicuous clump of pine trees, rises to a height of 1000ft. The Corsican pines at its summit were planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887, with more recent planting marking Queen Elizabeth's silver jubilee. There was an even earlier clump of Scots pine trees in the 18th century, several of which still survive. Morris dancers celebrate May Day each year on top of the hill.



The area of acidic grassland on the summit of May Hill is the largest and finest example in Gloucestershire. Bracken grows in abundance here so we have to cut it back every July.



Horses and ponies have been grazing on May Hill for more than half a century. Some have spent their whole lives on the hill. They are ideal for helping to keep the grasslands trim and tidy.



There are fantastic views from May Hill over Herefordshire, to Wales and the Black Mountains (pictured here). You can also see the Forest of Dean, over the Severn Estuary and out towards the Cotswolds.

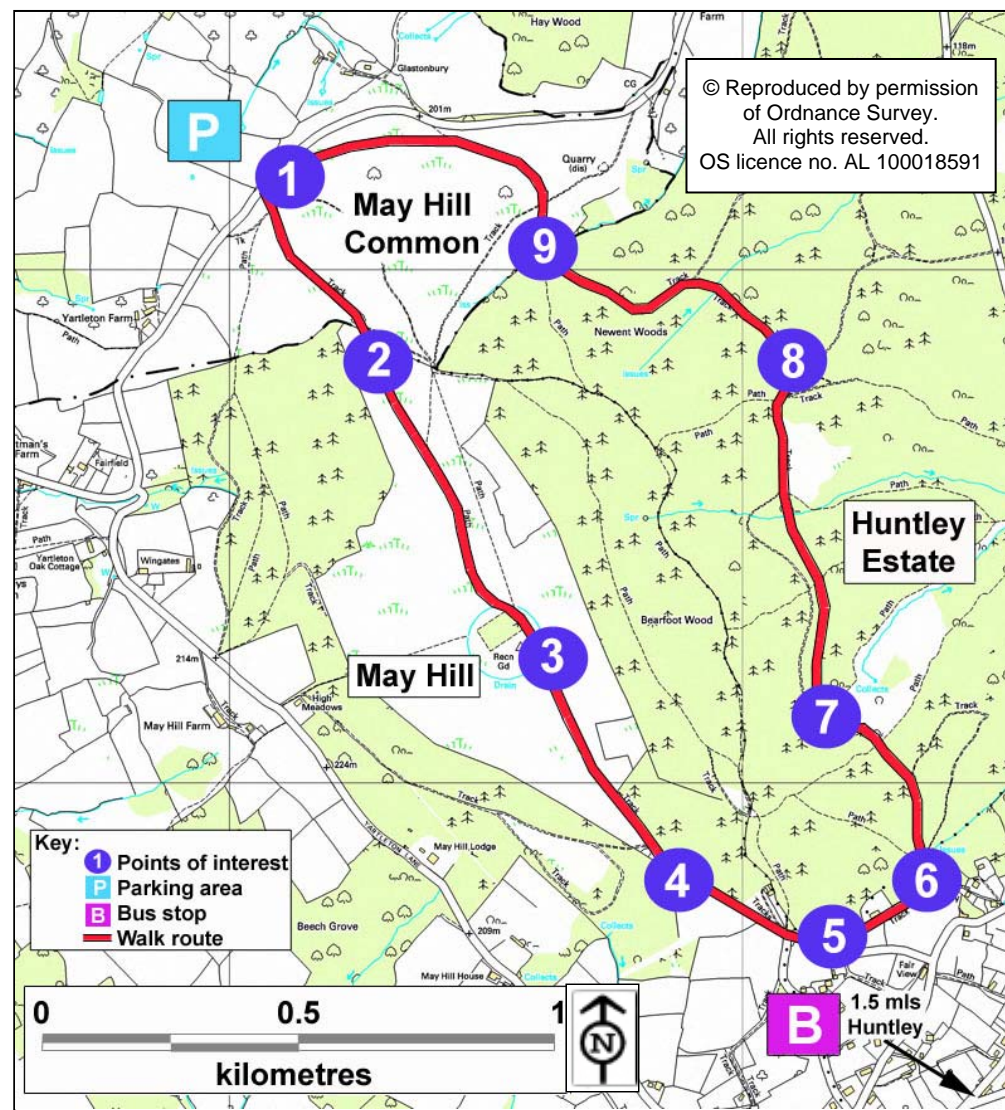
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Directions...

1. From the parking area, go past the metal gate and head straight up the fairly steep middle path to the top of May Hill Common.
2. At the top go through the kissing gate at the end of the wall (which marks the county boundary) and head across the grassland in the direction of the clump of pine trees.
3. From the pine trees follow the main track to the southern end of the hill.
4. Pass through the gate and continue down the track, crossing straight over the crossroads by a water tank in the field to your right.
5. After about 50 meters, turn left down the track and follow the public footpath way-markers.
6. When you reach a small road, turn left along the forestry track and over a stile next to a metal gate. Continue along the track into the woodlands of the Huntley Estate.
7. At the next bend the public footpath leaves the main track. Follow the arrows until it re-joins the forestry track. You will pass through an impressive plantation of coast redwood trees.
8. Just after the timber stacking area, turn sharp left, still following the public footpath. Continue along this footpath, ignoring the next two footpaths leading off to the right.
9. Go over the stile onto the common, continuing along the footpath. Head straight over the track and follow the path through the bracken. Eventually the path will join the road just below the parking area.

Terrain and accessibility

A 3 mile (4.8km) circular walk with an initial steep climb. The ground through the woodland section can be muddy, especially after wet weather. There are two stiles.



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