

## Badger Walk

### A blast from the past



**Map illustrated by Kendall Walford  
from Oldbury Wells School**

**Start:** The parish church in Beckbury - about six miles south east of Shifnal

**Grade:** Moderate.

**Distance:** Five and a quarter miles.

**Terrain:** Undulating on field paths and tracks some across arable land. Gentle gradients. Quiet lanes.

**Refreshments:** Seven Stars at Beckbury. Red Cow at Ackleton.

**Recommended map:** OS Explorer 218 and 242.

In its heyday Badger Dingle was a major tourist attraction. In summer it was a favourite place for West Midland families with its temple-like summerhouses, ornamental pools, stream and waterfalls cascading through the dramatic sandstone gorge. Today the picture is very different, but this walk gives the visitor a chance to catch a glimpse of this forgotten gem and sample the atmosphere of this intriguing holiday haunt of a bygone age.

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## The Route

(1) With your back to the church gates go left and ahead on the pavement, passing Beckbury Hall, left. Opposite the Seven Stars Inn go left along Higford Lane. Initially it is surfaced, then becomes a track as it goes forward between open fields. Ignore a footpath, left, and track into woodland, right.



(2) At the field edge go right and ahead as the path narrows and descends gently with the hedge on your left. Keep this clear path as it enters woodland. Look out for an old gate post on the left upon entering a small clearing where the ground levels out. (if you come to a concrete bridge with another path off left you have gone too far!). Take the first path, left, and at a T-junction go left on a path which makes an ascent out of the wood to emerge into open countryside.

(3) Go ahead between open fields. Where the route meets with a crossing track go left for about 20 yards and then right down a sandy track keeping the slope immediately on your left. Follow these wheel tracks to enter woodland via a gateway. Go ahead on the wide track, passing a pond to the right.

(4) When the track goes sharp left go straight forward through a gateway. Continue ahead keeping the bank immediately on your left to pick up a path which leads to another gateway. Continue forward to eventually pass between several oak trees and ahead to a gateway (blue waymark) to enter more woodland. Go ahead on a wide track running along the inside edge of the wood to exit on to a lane at Stableford Bridge.

(5) Go right on the lane and immediately after crossing the bridge over the River Worfe go left over a stile. Proceed forward to follow the right-hand hedge line to a footbridge. Now straight ahead up the steepish slope aiming for the tree line on the right at the top and a stile in the right-hand corner. Cross, bear slightly right and ahead to exit on to a lane. Go left into the village of Ackleton.

(6) Opposite the first house on the right, go left on an enclosed footpath. (The Red Cow Inn is a few yards further on). The clear path goes ahead between hedges then crosses an arable field before descending into Badger Dingle. After passing between Upper and Middle pools do not go through the tunnel ahead, but go up to the right and then immediately left continuing on a gentle ascent for a few paces. Now go right, then bear right again to pass an ivy-covered ice house on the left. (Ice was taken from the pools and stored here for use in Badger Hall). The path continues to climb quickly emerging on to a road.



(7) Go right into Badger. At the junction at the village pond go left along Badger Lane for just over half a mile, passing Badger Farmhouse, left.



(8) Immediately before the next house on the left, go left on an enclosed track on a rise. Within a short distance go right over a concealed stile. Go straight forward across the arable field through a gap in the facing hedge. Continue ahead as the path runs under a power line pylon and continues forward. Immediately after passing under a second set of power lines the path bears half left to a stile over a low-level fence.

(9) Go ahead through woodland into a field. Bear right and ahead on the field edge. In the corner go right up the slope to cross a stile on the left. Go straight ahead and at a marker post veer half right uphill. At the next waymark bear left and ahead keeping the boundary fence of Beckbury Hall immediately on your left to arrive at a stile into the churchyard.