

Three Castles Walk

Introduction

The Three Castles Walk is a circular route about 19 miles (30 kilometres) long. It takes the walker through an undulating landscape of wooded hillsides and hidden valleys in North East Monmouthshire. The countryside in this area retains a strong local identity with its fine tapestry of hedgerows, copses and woods; its maze of narrow lanes, tracks, bridleways and paths; its distinctive old market towns, villages and hamlets; and its secluded historic farmhouses and churches. It is on the borderland of England and Wales and the many castles are a reminder of the turbulent history of this area.

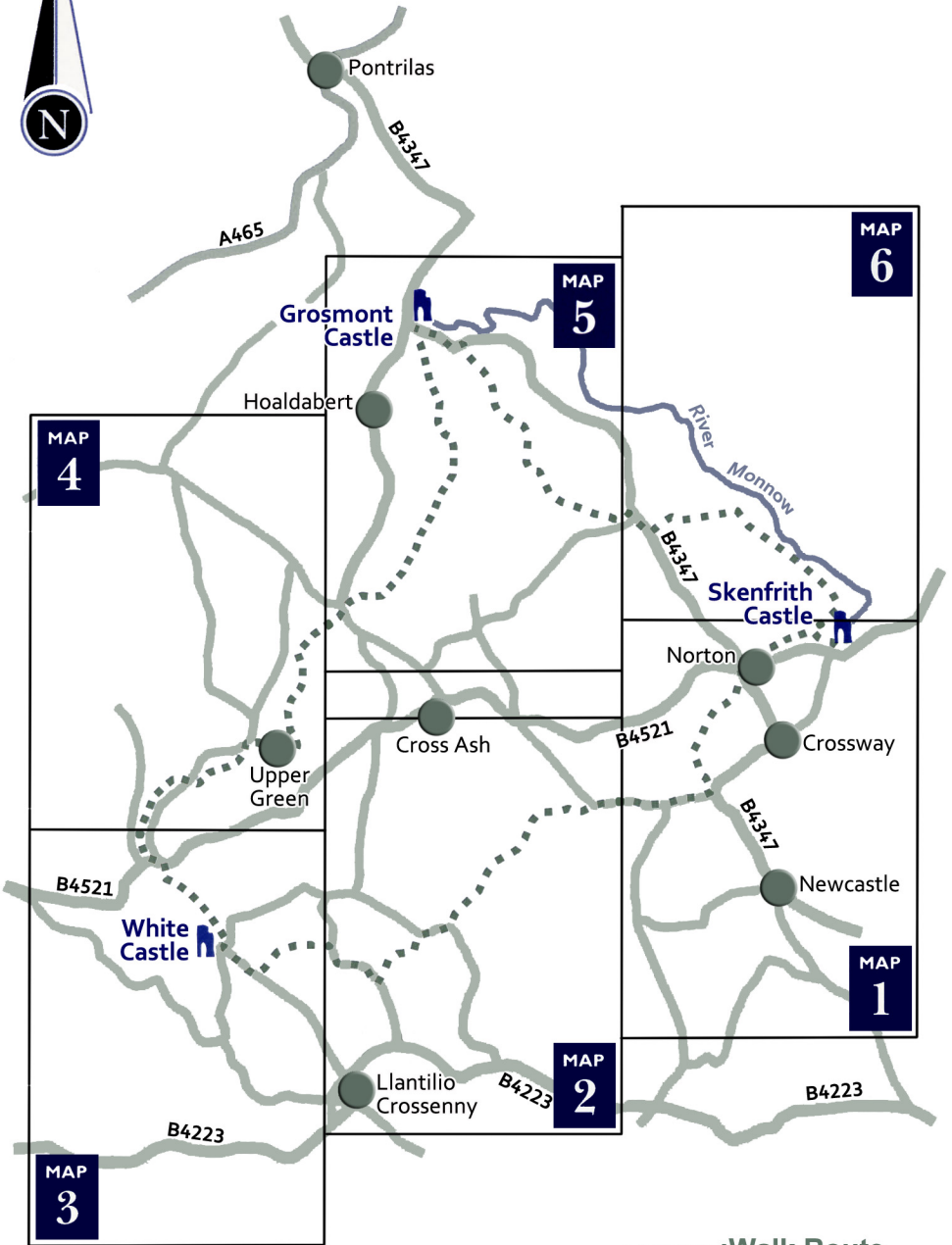
The Three Castles Walk links the three Norman Castles of Skenfrith, White Castle and Grosmont. The main purpose of these "Three Castles" or "Trilateral" Castles was to form a line of defence on the border of the Marches and to control the transport routes from Herefordshire into Wales. The walk primarily follows existing public rights of way and was first opened in 1991, with the kind cooperation of farmers and landowners along the route. Although becoming better known and more popular, the walk runs through sparsely populated countryside. It provides the perfect opportunity for one or two days' walking away from the pressures of everyday life.

Using the guide

This guide has been produced by Monmouthshire Countryside Service who maintain the walk. The large scale route maps are each based on the Ordnance Survey 1/25,000 scale maps*, but some features which are not relevant to the route have been omitted. The guide is designed to ensure you can follow the whole of the walk without hesitation or confusion, knowing at all times exactly where you are and what lies ahead. As well as providing route finding information, the text contains short descriptions of features of interest along the walk. The guide describes the walk in a clockwise direction starting and finishing at Skenfrith.

*Please refer to heading "Useful Maps"

Three Castles Walk



..... :Walk Route

Skenfrith

Time seems to have stood still in Skenfrith, which nestles in the shelter of three hills. It was once known as Ynys Cynfraeth which means isle or court of Cynfraeth, possibly a Welsh chieftain living here in the 6th century. The castle was probably constructed to guard a ford on the River Monnow, and the important highway passing from Wales to England just north of the village. It was reinforced with stone in the early 13th century when a Welsh uprising threatened, and all three castles were re-fortified.

Flowing past the eastern side of the castle, the Monnow tumbles over a weir. The leat which follows the castle wall once powered Skenfrith Mill, adjoining the castle. Archaeological excavations reveal the village itself was much larger than it appears today. The 13th century church with its wooden belfry is dedicated to the Irish saint, Bridget. Inside the church are several items of interest including the tomb and family pew of the Morgan family, once governors of the castle.

The real treasure of Skenfrith Church is the 15th century embroidered cope (ceremonial mantle) displayed in a glass case at the end of the north aisle. The semi-circular mantle decorated with angels, saint, the Madonna and child was fastened across the chest with a hood at the back and was worn on ceremonial occasions.

Skenfrith to White Castle

About 7 miles and (11km)

From the Castle, walk along the small road through the village, passing the church and the old school. Continue past the houses and on until you reach a bridge over the Norton Brook. Bear left along the narrow lane. Keep to the lane, though if you wish, just after the bridge is a stile into a field. If you cross the field between the stream and the hedge you will exit onto the lane at a further stile. Continue along the lane until you reach Norton Court Farm. Bear slightly right and cross the road to a stile alongside a gate. Cross the field to a foot-bridge and bear left to follow the path to a stile on the side of the Skenfrith to Abergavenny Road. Cross the road to a stile.

1. Go over a stile and just follow the stream on the left to reach a stile in the corner of the field. Continue to follow the stream to reach a stile near a gate. On the left to the south is 'The Lade' Farm. Turn left to join a farm track and then turn right and follow the track. After a short while to the right can be seen an interesting farmhouse appropriately called 'The Farm'.

2. On reaching a road junction, turn right. From this ridge road, edged with cowslips and primroses in early spring, there are extensive views. Follow the road for about a mile (1.6kms) to reach a sharp bend where an interesting milestone set into the ivy covered stone wall on the right is known as 'The Traveller's Rest'.

**At one time there was a seat here and the inscription on the stone reads:
*'Travellers Seat erected 1780, to New Inn 2 miles, from thence to Crickhowell***

13 1/2 miles, Brecon miles 12, to Ross miles 10 from thence to Gloucester miles 16, from Gloucester to Brecknock 54 miles."

Stagecoaches used to stop here to pick up passengers and the adjoining wood is still known as Seat Wood. This was the stage coach route from London via Ross-on-Wye. Skenfrith and Abergavenny to Milford Haven.'

3. At this point bear left down an obvious lane, which descends into a valley, following the old stagecoach route. Pass the farm and farm buildings on your left and continue on past two cottages, one reputedly the former blacksmith's cottage and the other called 'The Traveller's Rest'. Soon the lane becomes a grass track and then a 'hollow way'. Note: This part of the route is seriously eroded for several hundred metres, and great care should be taken, especially in descent.

Go over a stile and carry on down past a ruined barn on your left. Just below are the ruins of 'The Traveller's Rest Inn' where the horses used to be changed. On the 1860 Ordnance Survey map a smithy is marked at this spot. It is said locally that the tiny building on the right is the smithy which closed in about 1812 and was known as Rhydd-y-ago Forge. Passing the site of the old inn on your left, cross the stream with great care and go over a stile to cross a bridge.

Ascend the bank opposite and go over a stile into a field. Go straight across the field to reach a hedge. Turn right, and keeping the hedge on your left, head up the field until you reach a stile. Cross the stile and continue upwards keeping the field boundary on your right. At the corner go over a stile in the fence.

4. Turn right along a farm lane to immediately pass 'Little Llanllwyd' on the right. Opposite a duck pond just past the farm entrance go left over a stile. From here is an extensive view over southern Monmouthshire and along the ridge which extends from Twmbarlwm to the Blorenge Mountain.

Go straight across the field to reach a fence, and follow the fence down to reach a stile. Head diagonally to the left, towards a stile. Do not cross, but follow the fence line down to another stile on the left beside a gate. Cross over and continue through the next two fields keeping the dingle on your left. Descend into the dingle and cross a bridge over a stream to bear left and go over a stile beside a hunting gate.

The many streams in the area are often lined with alder trees and during the autumn and winter small flocks of siskin can be seen feeding on the cones.

These birds have benefited greatly from the afforestation that took place in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the next field cross a plank bridge and follow the hedge uphill, keeping it on your right. Directly ahead go over a stile and drop down into a valley to follow a farm track, which descends under the electricity line to the valley bottom and then goes up the other side. At the top of the track turn right along a metalled road.

5. Ignoring the stile nearest the bend in the road, continue on the road to a stile on the left. Cross the stile and continue, keeping the hedge on your left. Carry on around the edge of the field and after passing a gate bear slightly right and pass through a gap in the hedge. Continue straight down through the next field and head across to a small footbridge over a stream. Go diagonally left to the corner of the field passing underneath the electricity line.

Cross a stile and continue through another field keeping the edge of the field on the right to reach a stile in the corner. Carry on beside the edge of the field crossing back under the electricity line and go over a stile by a gate near a small stone and brick building.

Turn right onto the farm drive and shortly pass through a gate onto a tarmac road. Turn right and follow the road past Lower Cwm and Middle Cwm Farms.

6. Continue along the road and go through the kissing gate near to the first of two gates on the left. Bear diagonally right and go through another kissing gate. Turn left and head down the field keeping the fence on your left. At the bottom follow a fence to the right and cross a ditch. Continue beside the fence to reach a kissing gate. Go through and keeping a solitary oak tree on your left, head straight across to another kissing gate. To the left can be seen the spire of Llantilio Crossenny Church and directly ahead are the towers of White Castle dramatically situated on a hill-top.

Carefully follow the waymarking, and head straight on to pick up a hedge line before descending into a valley keeping the hedge on your left. Go down to a footbridge over a stream and then follow the stream to the left and across to another footbridge. Go through a kissing gate and up the next field keeping a fence on your left. Follow the edge of the field and go through 2 metal kissing gates in the fences enclosing a paddock. Continue on to a third kissing gate.

Descend some steps and then turn right up a road. For the short stretch as far as White Castle, our route shares that of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

Keep straight ahead at the next road junction by White Castle Cottage.

When visiting the castle look out for moorhens and heron which are often seen on the moat. Heron are often thought of as solitary birds because they have individual feeding territories, but they nest in noisy colonies and travel some distance to find food.

White Castle

Originally this fortress was known as Castell Gwyn and it has been suggested it was named after Gwyn ap Gwaethfod who possibly occupied an early defensive position on this site at the time of the Norman invasion. Alternatively it may have been known as Castell Gwyn (White Castle) because it was white in appearance and traces of white plaster can still be seen on some of the exterior stonework.

This is the best preserved of the Three Castles and it stands in isolation for no village ever grew up around it. Surrounded by a wide water filled moat it has a forbidding appearance. Six massive drum towers protect the curtain wall and a drawbridge spanning the moat gives access to the gatehouse.

White Castle to Grosmont

About 6 and a half miles (10.5 kms)

Having visited the castle retrace your steps for 25 metres and leaving Offa's Dyke Path, turn left and follow the wide track at the back of the parking space opposite the house. Continue along the track until you reach a stile into a field. Go over the stile and follow the track and fence line straight ahead.

Why not sit a while on the memorial bench and enjoy the fantastic views? (Go around a large fallen tree after a few metres). Continue keeping the fence on your right and go over a stile next to a gate. Carry on along the fence line to a stile in the bottom right hand corner of the field. Cross the stile and continue with the fence on your right to the bottom corner of the next field. Go over a stile by a gate and carry on down the next field. Just before the stream at the bottom of the field, turn right, go over a stile and down a flight of steps to reach the site of an old mill.

After a few yards go over a bridge which crosses the Trerew Brook. Carry on almost straight ahead, keeping the ditch to your left and go over a stile onto the road. Turn left and carefully walk along the edge of the road, passing a turning to your right. Take care when crossing the road bridge over the River Trothy and after a few metres go over a stile between a gate and a bus shelter on your right.

7. Bear slightly right and cross the field to pick up the river. Keep it on your right until you reach a footbridge. Cross the bridge and continue across the bottom of the next field, going between the lowest electricity pole and the fence line at the edge of the field to reach a stile in the far right hand corner. Head straight on to cross two stiles in the hedge of the next boundary. Continue straight on until you reach the end of a tree line jutting out into the next field. Pass the last small tree and a ditch on your right.

Head for a stile in the hedge by a horse jump (with a pedestrian gate next to the jump) just outside the garden of the old lodge to Glen Trothy House. Cross over and bear slightly down to your right to pick up a tarmac drive. Continue until you reach a junction in the road just after a cattle-grid. Turn right, go over a stone bridge over the stream, and immediately turn left to follow a track climbing through the trees until you reach a stile onto a small lane. Go over and cross the road. Climb two flights of steps

and go over 2 stiles into a field. Bear left diagonally up the field to a stile in a fence line above a large oak tree. Go over and bear slightly uphill to pass the corner of a stone wall below a stone barn on your right. Carry on to pick up a track below a metal barn.

Follow the track for a few metres, passing a metal gate on your right. Leave the track as it turns downhill and continue across the field keeping the fence on your right. Where the fence goes off to the right continue straight on across the field to a small bridge and a stile next to a gateway. Go over and bear left to reach a stile by a metal gate to the right of two cottages in the far corner of the field. Go over and turn left. Follow the track until you reach a road.

Turn right and carry straight on at the next junction, to follow the Cross Ash road. Carry on along the road until you reach a 'dead end' road leading off to your left. Follow this lane until you reach the new graveyard of Llanfair Cilgoed Church on your left. Your route goes through the gate into the churchyard, but why not visit the old Church just along the lane on your right? There are tea making facilities in the church which is built on the site of a Cistercian Grange and before that a Celtic hermitage. Retrace your steps to the gate into the graveyard. Go through and follow the path and leave through another gate at the far end. Head up the field keeping the hedge on your right. At the end of the field, go over a stile next to a gate.

8. Continue past a fenced off pond on your left and a small brick building on your right. Having passed close to the brick building, head for the circular group of trees in the hollow. Keeping these trees on your left, reach a stile next to a gate in the corner of the field. Turn left and follow the boundary of the next field passing under an electricity line, to a stile in the left hand far corner then bear left across the next field to cross a stream (when the stream is in full spate, there is a tractor crossing 50 metres upstream in the same field) and go up about 20 metres beside a hedge on your right to a stile by an oak tree. Walk through an apple orchard to cross a stile in a fence.

During autumn and winter a number of resident birds are attracted to our hedges. Mixed flocks of tits and other species such as nuthatch, treecreeper and goldcrest join the communal search for insects. Redwings, fieldfares and other thrushes come from Northern Europe to winter here and can often be seen feeding in remnant orchards or on hedgerow berries softened by frost. On late summer evenings, some species of bat may be seen flying along the hedgerows and country lanes after moths.

Cross the next field keeping a stream to your right, to a bridge. Then carry on up the next field passing trees on your right to reach a stile in a fence. Continue through the next field and go over a stile in the hedge and turn left along a road. Take the next road to the right signposted 'Grosmont'. To your right the prominent hump of Graig Syfyrrddin dominates the skyline and this is the next objective, providing a satisfying challenge and sweeping views. (It can however be avoided by following the road to Grosmont if you so wish).

9. Go over a stile beside a gate and head straight up to another stile on a permissive path. Make your way diagonally up to your left to a stile just below the tree line. The seat provided here by Monmouth Ramblers makes a good lunch spot. Catch your breath and admire the view. In springtime wild daffodils, then bluebells and foxgloves grow in profusion on the Graig. Now go straight up the steps through the trees to join

a forest track. Turn left to follow a track contouring the side of the hill. Join a forest road and keep straight on.

If you are lucky you may catch sight of fallow deer in the early morning close to the woods, but for most of the day they will be resting up in deep cover.

Under beech trees, flocks of chaffinch are a common sight feeding on fallen mast, sometimes with white-rumped bramblings - winter visitors from Northern Europe. Because the chaffinch is a resident bird it is not generally appreciated that most of the winter flocks also comprise birds that have arrived from northern or eastern Europe, possibly because the beech crop there has failed.

At the point where the track leaves the wood there are panoramic views including the Malvern Hills, Ross-on-Wye and the Forest of Dean. Immediately after leaving the wood, there is a field gate on the left and, a few metres downhill from this gate, there is a stile. Go over this stile and continue down the field keeping the hedge on your right. Go over a stile by a gate and after a few metres on to a wide grassy track. Follow the track downhill.

10. Carry on down the track into the valley where Grosmont will be seen picturesquely situated on a hill beside the Monnow River.

The ancient lane you are following was once used by monks making their way to Cold Grange. Situated high on the Graig, this was one of the possessions of Abbey Dore in the Golden Valley of Herefordshire.

Carry on down the track passing through three more gates to reach a farmyard. Continue down what is now a tarmac track ignoring a small bridge on your left near the bottom of the valley. Go through a hunting gate, turn left to cross a footbridge over the Tresseny Brook then climb steeply up to Grosmont village. To reach the castle turn left onto the road and after passing the Church turn first right.

Grosmont

Grosmont is a sleepy little village, the old part, consisting of a collection of houses mainly in one street with an ancient castle, a noble church and a town hall. At one time it was the third largest town in the county. The town hall was erected in 1902, the coronation year of Edward VII, by Henry 9th Duke of Beaufort. The fine parish church of St Nicholas has a central spire which rises from an octagonal base. With a very long chancel and a spacious nave the church has been described as a miniature cathedral. An interesting curiosity inside the church is a mutilated effigy, which is believed to represent Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster who was born at Grosmont and died in 1361.

Grosmont Castle stands on a mound above the River Monnow with a good outlook over the surrounding countryside. It is protected by a deep moat enclosing a single ward surrounded by a curtain wall, three towers and a gatehouse. An interesting feature is the delicate octagonal Eleanor's chimney which dates from the 14th century. During the Welsh uprising of the 15th century Owain Glyndwr's men attacked the castle but were beaten back by the English army, commanded by Henry of Monmouth later crowned King Henry V. Soon after this the castle fell into disrepair.

Grosmont to Skenfrith

About 5 and a half miles (9 kms)

Leaving Grosmont follow the road downhill. Go over a bridge and pass Lower Tresenny Farm, then continue past a gate on the right to a stile next to a second gate.

11. Walk uphill across the field to a stile by a gate. Keeping the edge of the field on your right, go over another stile next to a gate and follow the hedge on your left to cross a footbridge over a stream. Climb the steps ahead and at the top, turn left, keeping the trees on the left and then follow the field boundary upwards on the left to reach a track leading past the rear of a barn. Bear right and go up some steps and over a stile, bearing left around the back of a cottage.

Turn right at the electricity pole and cross a field to reach a stile. Continue to reach another stile beside a gateway. Go across the next field to a stile in the top left corner and then diagonally up to the left to the corner of the woodland and field. Why not sit on the bench and enjoy fine views of Grosmont?

12. Take a track uphill keeping the fence to your left. Go over a stile near to a gate and follow the sunken lane through birch and other deciduous trees. Carefully follow the waymarks until you reach a stile in a fence at the end of the wood. Keep straight on with the fence on your right. At the corner turn left and follow a fence to reach a stile by a gate. Cross the stile. Cross the field diagonally left downhill to join a track and follow it for 30m to a track junction.

13. Bear right at the junction in the track and head downhill, passing the back of the metal barn. On reaching the next junction in the track turn left and follow the track

with a fence on the right to a stile above a gate. Continue through the next field, keeping the fence and woodland on your right.

Where the fence turns to the right, carry straight on to another stile next to a gate. Buzzards can often be spotted circling high overhead advertising their territory, while in the autumn the mewing of the young after leaving the nest. Follow the fence on your right until a track bears off to the right down to a stile next to a gate. Go over the stile and follow a fence on your left to reach another gate. Do not go through the gate. Instead go your right down a slope to reach another stile. Head down towards the larch wood keeping the rock outcrop and a line of trees on the left to join a fence. Follow it to the right, and walk down to another stile.

14. Turn left along a road passing White House Farm and at the next junction, turn right and follow the road. Take the next turning left down the drive to 'Box Farm'. From here there are good views across to Garway Hill.

On reaching the farm buildings bear left down the concrete lane between the barns and follow the track to a gate. Carry on down the track towards Trevonny Farm.

Before reaching the buildings follow the waymarks and cross a stile by a gate. Having passed in front of the farmhouse follow the waymarks through the field to reach another stile. Head straight on across two stiles. Continue towards another gate, a few metres from the banks of the river Monnow. Do not go through, but follow the fence line and continue ahead with it on your left.

In early spring you may see the showy flight of the lapwing or peewit, accompanied by calls which give it its common name. Lapwings nest in spring cereals or short grass, while the curlew, whose haunting call may be the only evidence of its presence, nests in longer grass, preferring more marshy areas. Both species have declined in recent years due to agricultural changes, and the large winter flocks of lapwing are now rarely seen in the county.

15. Continue beside a hedge and cross a wide ditch to a raised wooden walkway and onto a stile on the right. Keep the hedge on your left, go over another walkway and then cross to a stile next to a gate. Go uphill to a stile by a gate then on past a farm and over another stile beside a gate to a stile where you join the farm drive.

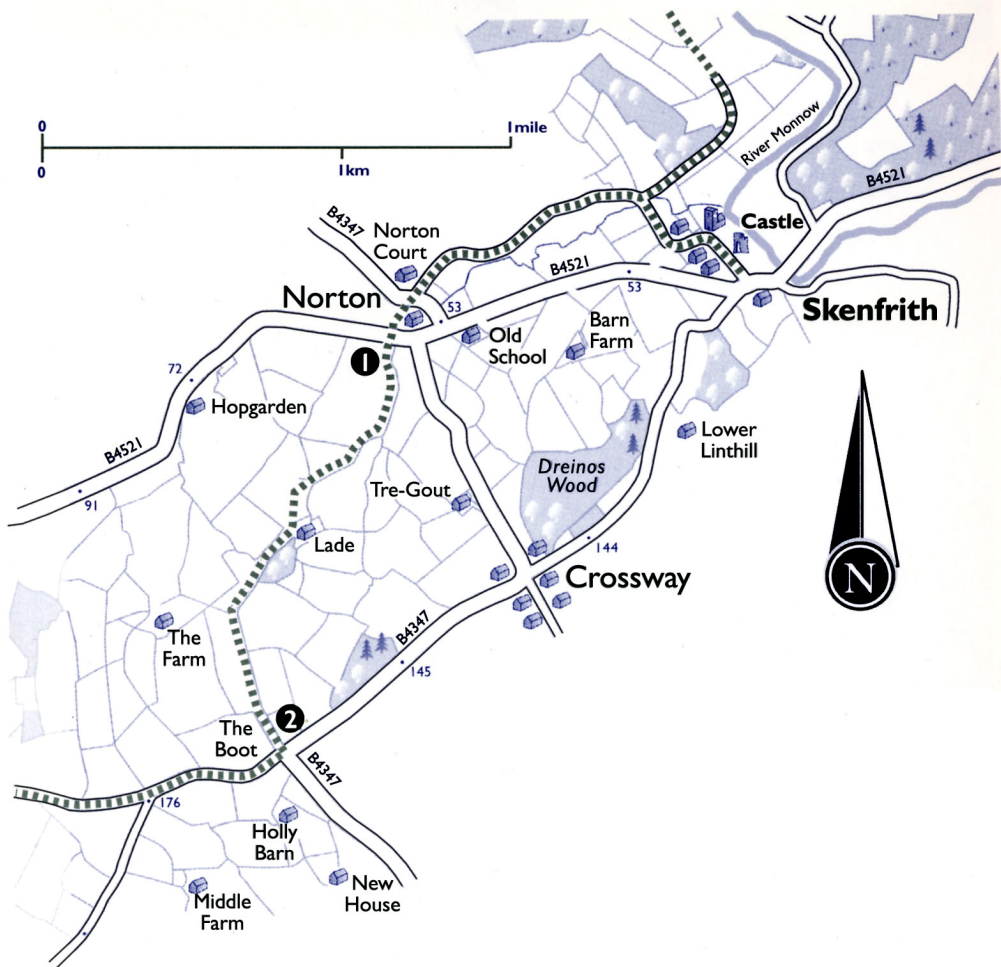
Bear left to follow the drive. From the drive there are fine views of the Monnow Valley and back to Garway Church and Hill.

Beyond a cattle the track becomes a surfaced lane. Continue to Drybridge House. Turn left and follow the lane to Skenfrith.

THREE CASTLES WALK

MAP

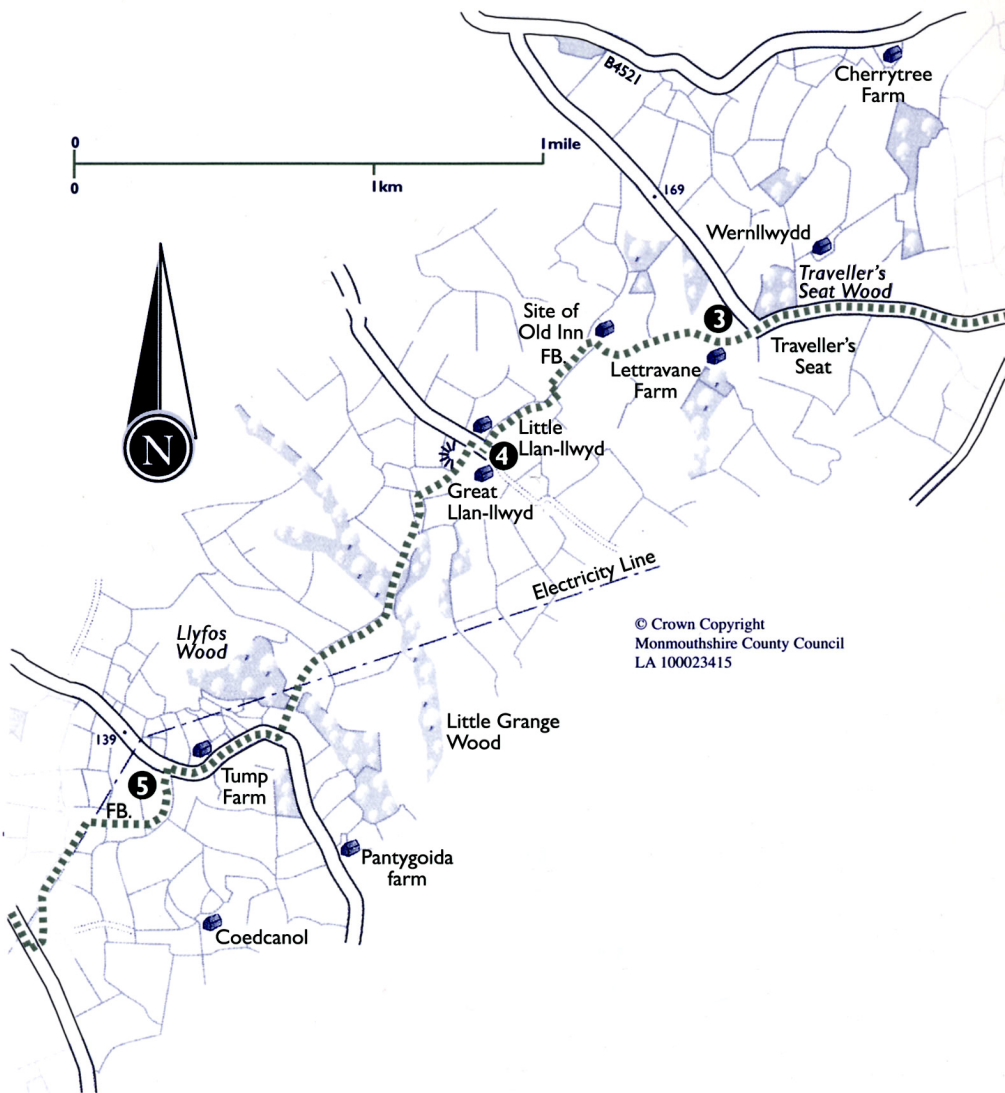
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THREE CASTLES WALK

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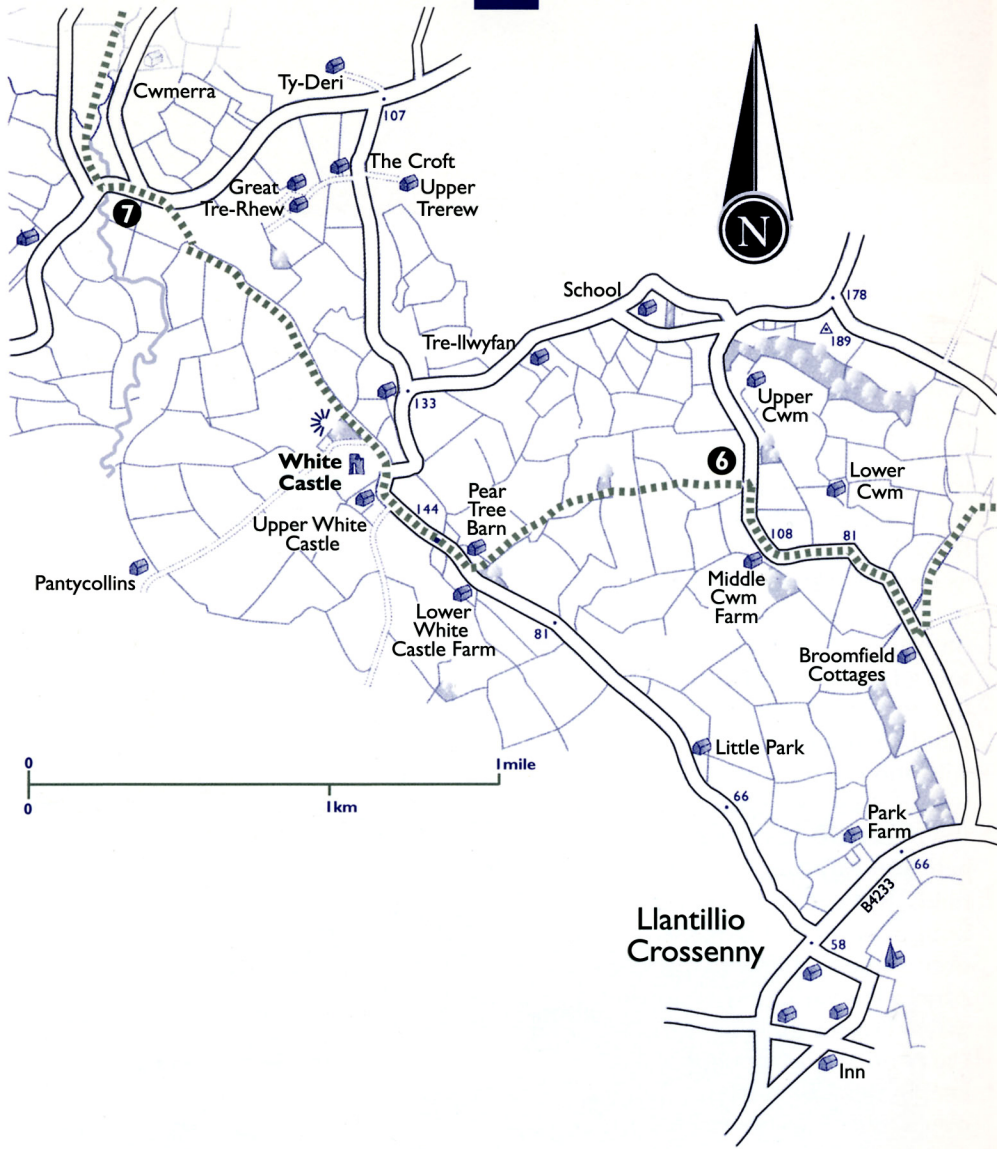
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THREE CASTLES WALK

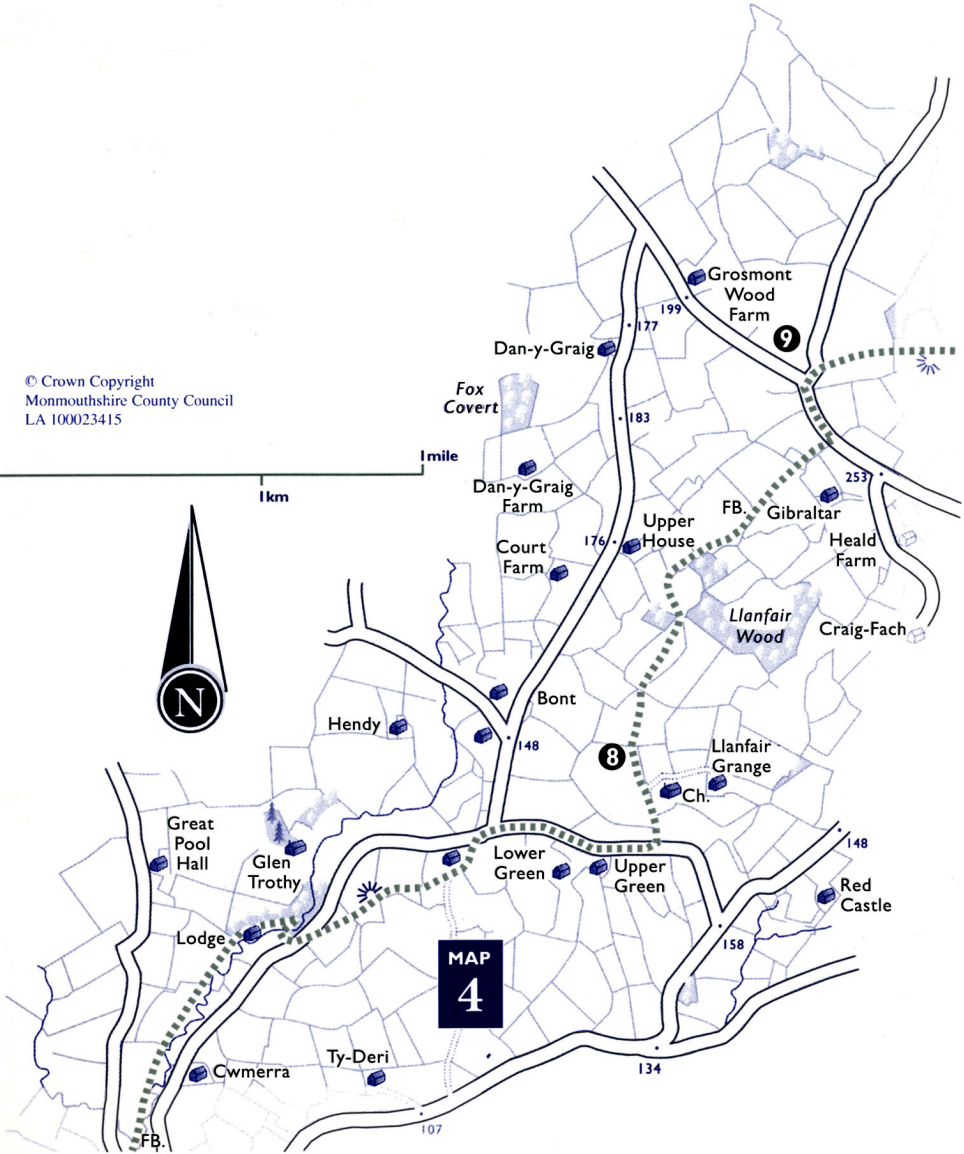
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3



WHITE CASTLE TO GROSOMT

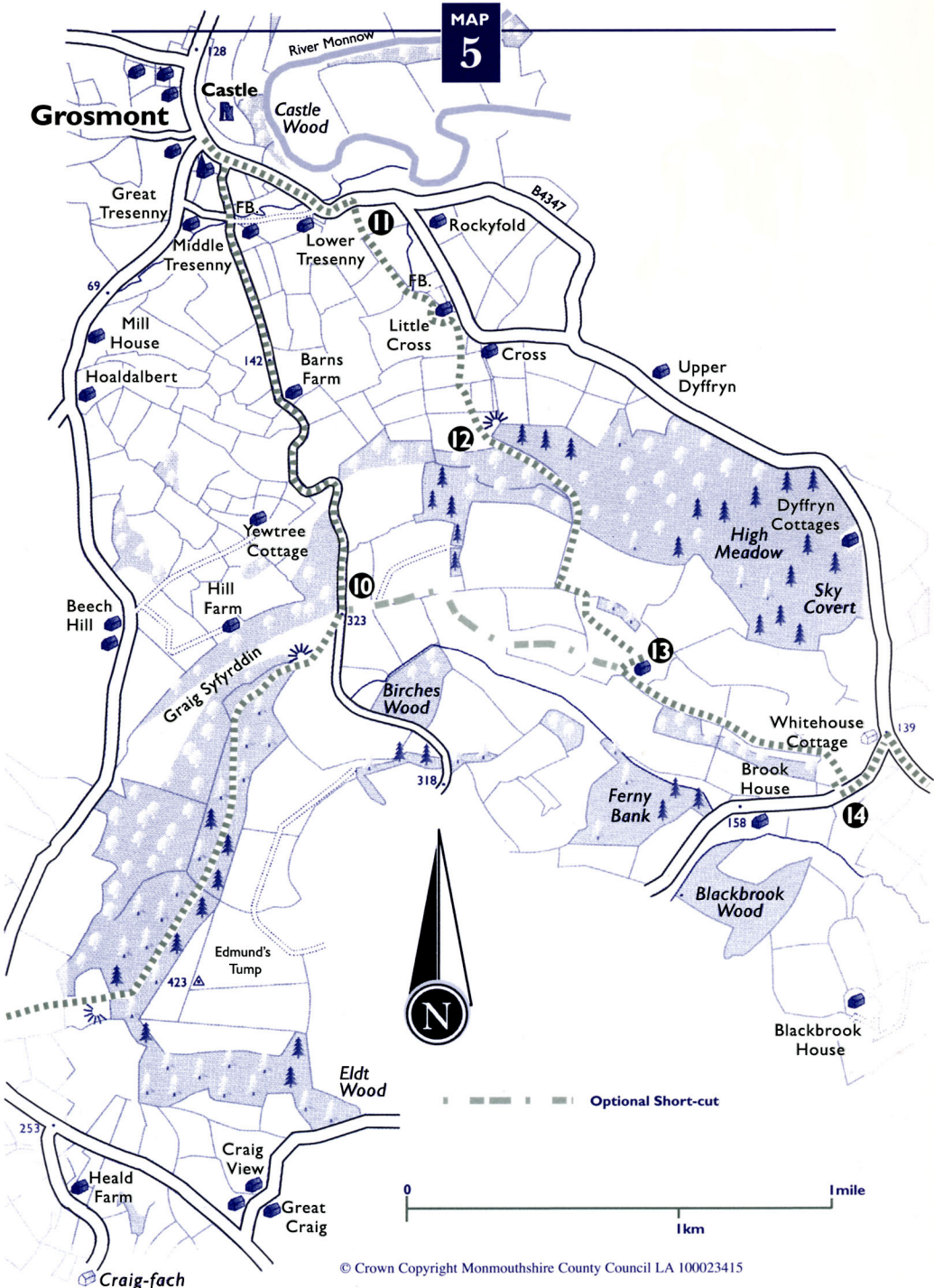
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LA 100023415



THREE CASTLES WALK

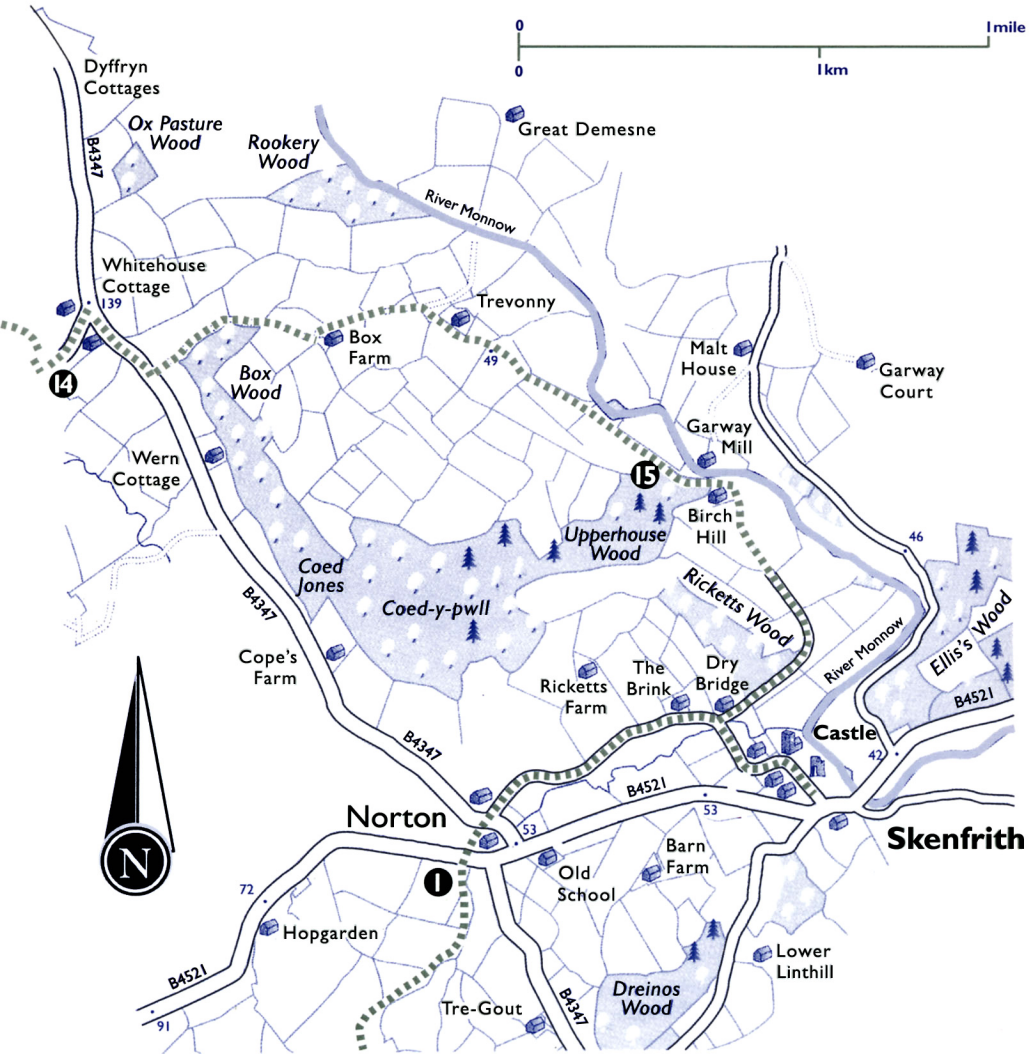
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Grosmont



THREE CASTLES WALK

MAP
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Natural History

The Three Castles area is a landscape of mixed farmland - sheep, cattle and some crops. Most of the hedgerows have survived, as have the characteristic small areas of woodland. This diversity of different types of habitat makes the countryside here rich in wildlife.

During spring and summer many migrant birds return to breed after spending the winter months in South Europe or Africa, and the countryside is full of birdsong. The dense hedges offer excellent nesting sites to resident birds such as the yellowhammer and migrants such as the whitethroat, formerly a common warbler which has declined recently due to poor conditions in its wintering area of Africa. The chiffchaff and willow warbler are also found in most scrubby woodland situations. They look very similar but are easily told apart by their songs. The third member of this family breeding here, the wood warbler, can be found in the Graig woodlands where either shade or grazing prevents too dense a ground flora developing. Its rapid trill will be remembered long after the birds have departed to Africa.

During autumn and winter, rooks and jackdaws gather together in large numbers to feed on pasture, noisily flying to roost in nearby woodlands towards dusk. Other wetter fields may attract large numbers of gulls (mainly black-headed) who fly in a south-westerly direction in the evening to roost at Llandegfedd Reservoir 20km to the south west. Early autumn is the best time for seeing charms of goldfinch feeding on teasel or thistle heads before they fly south for the winter. Regrettably the large winter flocks of mixed finches (greenfinch, linnet) and tree sparrows are rarely seen, as stubble is no longer left over the winter, but is soon reploughed and resown with autumn cereals.

Green and great spotted woodpeckers are fairly common. Great spotted woodpeckers feed on wood-boring insects living in dead and rotting wood and are more typically found in woodlands. Little owls are more likely to be seen and heard in daylight rather than their larger relative the tawny owl and although more common, tend to remain in woodland, becoming active only after dark.

The autumn evenings are the best time to listen for owls as this is when territories are established ready for the winter. The kestrel's hunting habits set it apart from sparrowhawks, for which it is sometimes mistaken. While kestrels hover over rough grassland waiting to drop onto unsuspecting small rodents, sparrowhawks glide along lanes and hedgerows seeking out the small birds which are their main prey. The large females are more likely to be seen as they cannot manoeuvre through the trees as easily as the smaller males.

Follow the Countryside Code and take care not to disturb wildlife.

Practicalities

Useful Maps

The most useful maps for walkers are those to 1/25000 scale (4cm to 1km or 2 1/2 inches to 1 mile) published by Ordnance Survey. Unfortunately the Three Castles Walk falls on the edge of three different sheets:

Explorer Series (Orange) OL13 - Brecon Beacons (East)

Explorer Series (Orange) OL14 - Wye Valley and Forest of Dean

Explorer Series (Orange) 189 - Hereford and Ross-on-Wye

Waymarks

The walk is marked by discs with the Three Castles symbol on them, which appears below. You will also follow standard footpath way marks, usually yellow because they indicate footpaths. Blue arrows indicate bridleways and white arrows indicate paths where access has been permitted by a landowner.



Public Rights of Way

Most of the walk follows public rights of way, but the land you cross is private. Please keep to the line of the path and do not linger longer than necessary or stray from the waymarked route. If the path has to be diverted for any reason, such as the replacement of a footbridge, please follow the waymarks rather than the map until you are guided back to the main route. Where cultivation has occurred the course of the path must be reinstated and made clear. If you do find the Three Castles Walk blocked in any way please follow the route as closely as possible and report the obstruction to the Monmouthshire Countryside Service.

Car Parking

There is limited space to park cars in Skenfrith, close to the Castle. If you are staying locally it should be possible to leave your car at your accommodation address. Please do not park on roadside verges, in field entrances and passing places.

The Three Castles

Each of the Castles is in the care of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Cadw carries out the statutory responsibilities of the Welsh Assembly Government for protecting, conserving and preserving monuments and historic buildings in Wales. There is always free admission to Skenfrith and Grosmont Castles. There is also free admission to White Castle. It is open most days in the year between the hours of 10.00am and 4.00pm. Please check on the CADW website in advance.

www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Local Accommodation

There is a variety of accommodation options in the area, including catered, self-catered, camping & glamping.

Further information can be obtained from the various Tourist Information Centres (See under Useful Addresses) or by logging onto

www.visitmonmouthshire.com/threecastleswalk

Public Transport

At the time of printing there is no public transport facilities available in the area covered by the guide. This situation could change in the future. For current information contact Monmouthshire County Council.

Shops and other facilities

The only shops on or close to the route are at Grosmont, and a community shop usually open at weekends and Bank Holidays opposite the castle in Skenfrith. This shop has limited resources.

There are public toilets in Grosmont, situated next to the Angel Inn.

Useful Addresses

Monmouthshire Countryside Service

Monmouthshire County Council

Rhadyr, Usk. NP15 1GA

T: 01633 644850

E: countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MonCountryside

Twitter: @MonCountryside

Cadw

Welsh Government

Plas Carew

Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed

Parc Nantgarw

Cardiff. CF15 7QQ

www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Tourist Information Centres (TIC)

Abergavenny TIC **Open** Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri and Sat **Closed** Wed, Sun
Monk Street, Abergavenny.
Monmouthshire. NP7 5ND
T: +44 (0) 1873 853254
E: abergavennytic@breconbeacons.org

Chepstow TIC **Open** all year, 10 – 5 (April – Nov). 11 – 3 (Dec – March)
Bridge Street,
Chepstow.
Monmouthshire, NP16 5EY
T: +44 (0) 1291 623772
E: Chepstow.tic@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Monmouth Tourist Information Outlet (**Open** all year)
Shire Hall, Agincourt Square,
Monmouth. Monmouthshire, NP25 3DY
T: 01600 775257
E: enquiries@shirehallmonmouth.org.uk

General information for Monmouthshire: www.visitmonmouthshire.com

Managing the Three Castles Walk

The route is maintained and managed by Monmouthshire Countryside Service. The broad aims of the Service are to provide effective countryside management by working:

- To enhance the landscape
- To create and support wildlife habitats
- To provide access opportunities for recreation, environmental education and community participation

For many people living in or visiting Monmouthshire, getting out into the countryside is an important form of recreation and enjoyment. To assist this process the County Council maintains a public path network of over 1000 miles (1600 kilometres). If you have a specific enquiry or problem please contact Monmouthshire Countryside Service (see list of useful addresses). If you are reporting a problem, give as much information as possible, preferably including a Grid Reference so the problem can be identified and located quickly.

If you can suggest any improvements to the route, to the waymarking or information, please let us know. We can make things better for those who follow you along the walk. Our policy is of continual improvement and your comments are valued, on the other hand if you found everything in good order and enjoyed the walk - apart from the weather or the odd blister - it would be nice to know. As much of the work on the route is done by Countryside Service volunteers, they enjoy knowing you have enjoyed your experience.

Safe Walking and Weather

When out for a long walk, always remember to tell someone where you are going and how long you expect to take. Plan your walk and take the correct maps for the area and a guide-book, particularly if you are unfamiliar with the route.

Wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions and stout boots or shoes. Paths often get muddy after rain and there are climbs and descents, which require care. Carry adequate clothing in case the weather changes for the worst as parts of the route cross exposed hillsides. A small day sack to carry waterproofs, warm fleece or sweater, a warm hat and gloves a snack and a hot drink are ideal when walking when poor weather conditions can be expected. In summer ensure you have a good supply of water or other drink. A small first aid kit, compass, torch and whistle should also be carried and an ability to use the compass and map in adverse conditions should be cultivated. Check the weather before setting out.

Dogs in the Countryside

Dogs in the countryside are an emotive subject, generating more comment than almost any other countryside related matter. Monmouthshire Countryside Service regularly receives complaints about dogs being allowed to roam free, fouling footpaths and disturbing game and farm stock.

Dogs should follow the line of a public right of way in the same way as a walker. Their mere presence can cause serious disturbance to farm stock and ground nesting birds. If lambs or calves are present, farm stock can become aggressive towards dogs they see as a threat.

If livestock threatens you because of your dog, do not hold on to or pick it up. Let it go! It can run faster than you! Normally keep your dog on a lead when passing through livestock enclosures or near farms. Farm dogs can become very aggressive towards strange dogs they see as trespassers.

Do not allow your dog to foul paths or fields. Clean up after it and dispose of the results sensibly.

Make sure your dog is regularly treated for internal parasites to avoid contamination of pastures.

Countryside Code

Respect, protect, enjoy

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people