

Main Walk (Stile Free Route)

1. With your back to The Queen's Head go right along pavement of Old Road to near its junction with main road. (**Route A** see below)
2. Go thro' k/g on right, cross-field (paddock) to f/b ahead. **T/R**, ditch right to corner, **T/L** hg-right, then follow up ditch right to meet hedge ahead. **T/L** & shortly **T/R**, hg-right thro' fence gap and soon go thro' k/g onto road.
3. **T/L** down road on verge & then pavement. **T/L** down Leys Lane, pavement on right, passing pool & Leymere Close on right.
4. 60m after Close **T/R** thro' walkway (Digby Place). Enter cul-de-sac and **T/L** down to junction. **T/L** to main road.
5. **T/R** to Village Green. At the island **T/L** along Hampton Lane using wide verge. After approx 150m **T/L** thro' gap at The Firs, along drive, walkway to go thro' gaps beside gate and stile. **T/L** in front of bank for a short distance then **fwd** to cross concrete road. **Fwd** thro' k/g right of gate into field, **fwd** hedge near left to reach k/g ahead, **do not go thro'**.
6. With back to k/g **H/L**, aim to pass on your left the end of a brick culvert with two trees a short distance ahead (culverted stream). **Fwd** cross-field up to meet the fence (on your left), **do not cross over the concrete bridge**, use wooden footbridge further along the fence. Thro' p/g and **H/R** to cross-short-field corner to go thro' p/g, **H/L**, up cross-field, aiming to pass to the left of brickwork and bushes ahead (#), **fwd** to reach top fence at top right hand corner.
7. At this point **DO NOT EXIT** this field. **T/L** fc-right, and in next corner, go thro' p/g, shortly **H/R** thro p/g. **T/L**, fc/hg-left **fwd** thro' p/gs & k/g onto road (Berkswell Road).
8. **T/L** for 60m & go thro' k/g on your right, **H/L** to field corner. Thro' k/g & **T/R**, hg-right, thro' k/g **fwd** (ignore gap), hg-right until a second gap (on right) allows you to enter field above.

T/L, hg-left, & follow round to right until reaching a green lane on left. **T/L** down green lane onto road. **Fwd** along road towards the church. Pass old vicarage on your right and church on your left.

9. After the road turns left and just past Moat House Farm, enter church grounds thro' the "Cyril Bean memorial gate" on left. **H/R** down path to exit into field thro' "Cyril Bean memorial k/g". Hg-right over next two fields to a small copse that leads you onto Main Road. Cross road to island and over to reach top of steps down to The Queen's Head in Old Road.

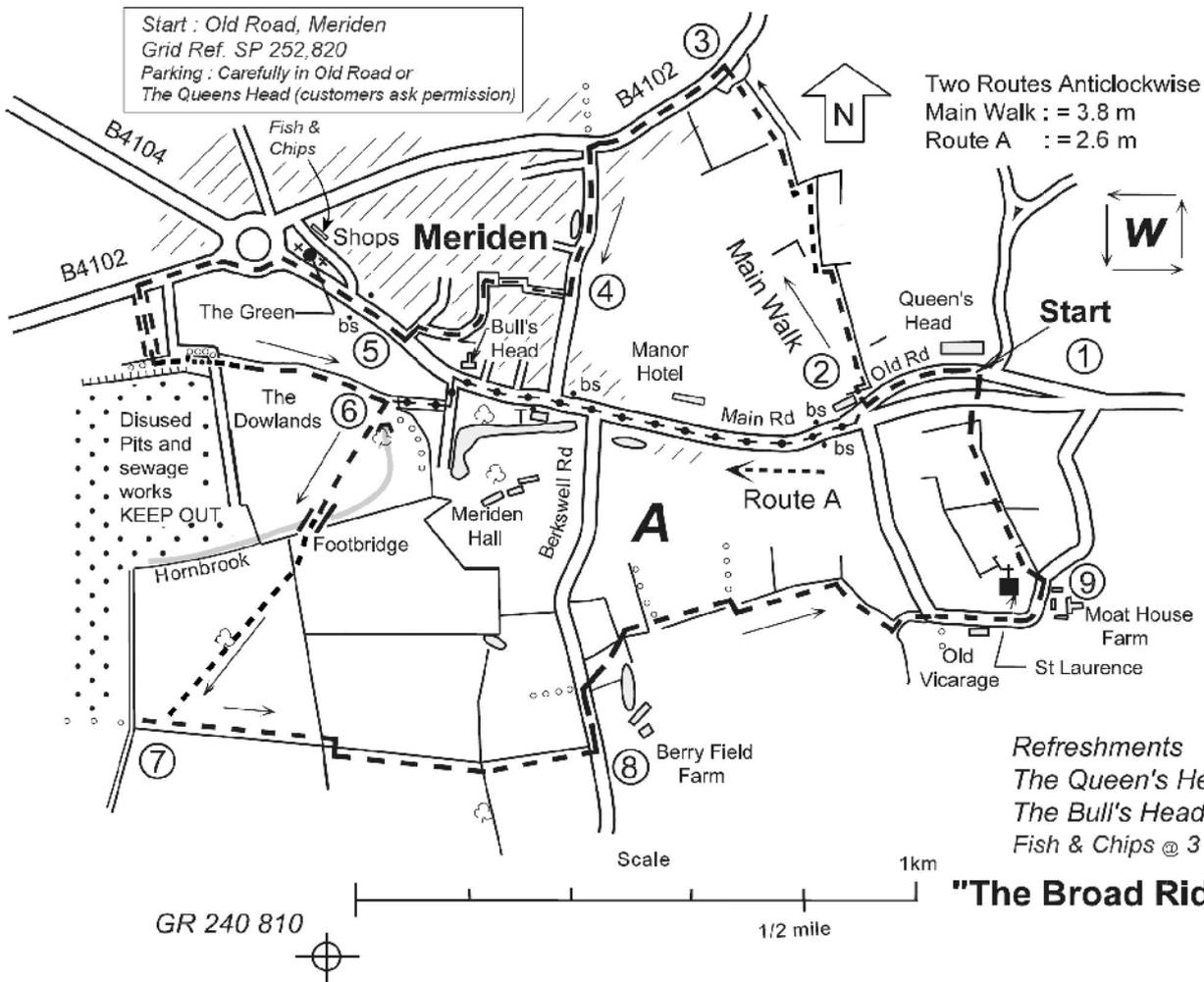
Route A (Stile Free Route)

At the end of Note 1, **fwd** to junction, **T/R** along pavement, Main Road. Pass Meriden Hotel and then Manor Hotel on your right, over Leys Lane, Waterfall Close and Glover Close to The Bull's Head. At The Bull's Head cross road to enter the drive to Meriden Hall. After 30m **T/R** along narrow passage over s/b & thro' k/g. Continue with Note 6.

From "Meriden Walks" the remains of a bridge over a channel which once carried water from a ram pump back to Meriden Hall.



Queen's Head - Old Road



WALK 21 “THE BROAD RIDGE”

Start: Queen's Head, Old Road, Meriden
Grid Ref: SP 252,820
Direction: Anticlockwise
Main Walk: 4 miles
Route A: 2.5 miles
OS Maps: (p = part)
Landranger 139p
Landranger 140p
Pathfinder 935
Explorer 221
Parking: Carefully in Old Road or the Queen's Head. Customers please ask permission

Brief Information and Outline of the Route

Starting in **Meriden** at The Queen's Head, its oldest inn, built on the original "Old Road" from London to Holyhead. After walking to the north, the main walk descends into the village centre. Here you can stand on the green with the medieval cross, believed by many to denote the centre of England. Also nearby is the National Cyclist's Memorial, commemorating cyclists who died in both World Wars.

Over the centuries many famous people have visited Meriden. Charles I, hoping to quell Coventry's citizens during the Civil War, Victoria before she became queen, the novelist "George Elliot" and Winston Churchill, who picnicked near Church Lane on his 1945 election campaign.

At the island follow the road towards Hampton in Arden and shortly turn left to skirt the embankment surrounding disused pits and sewage works. Cross The Dowlands and up onto the broad ridge with magnificent views of the Vale of Arden. The late John Smith in his excellent booklet "Meriden Walks" (sadly out of print) pointed out that the Clent Hills and Lickey Hills can usually be seen, as can the heights of Dudley and the Post Office Tower. You can also see aircraft taking off from Elmdon!

After Berry Fields Farm the route eventually joins the line of the original Church Lane, now a footpath. Then into the modern Church Lane and the conservation area of "Alspath", passing the 17th century Church Farm and 18th century old vicarage. Note the old horse mounting stone at the main entrance to the church. Further along on the right is Moat House Farm, part of which dates back to the late 15th century. Traces of the moat can still be seen at the south end of the garden but remember this is in private grounds and not on a Right of Way.

Now turn left through St Laurence's churchyard. The church with its square tower was probably founded in Saxon times. Downhill through kissing gates and back to the Queen's Head. On Route A we pass the following:

The Manor Hotel which dates from Tudor times; Meriden Pool that according to legend dries up in times of crisis; Meriden Hall, built in the 18th century and now a Grade 2 listed building; The Bulls Head, another historic coaching inn; Strawberry Bank Hotel, which was originally a farmhouse, then a school during its two hundred year life.

Wildlife

A short walk passing by three ponds. The duck pond opposite the Manor Hotel is typical of this sort of village feature and contains rafts of amphibious bistort within the centre of the pond vying for position over the yellow water lily whilst tussocks of yellow flag iris, weeping willow, alder and white willow line the banks.

Dragonflies, including large hawk species, can be seen during the warmer months demonstrating their flying superiority as they undertake complex aerial acrobatics whilst feeding on flies above the pond. The churchyard at St Laurence Church is worth a visit.

The library and information centre can be found by the Green.

A Coventry Way Challenge has been held in the Meriden area since 1998. The start and finish are at the Queen's Head public house.

A public house goes missing!

Duncan Bean, one of our members from Nottingham, visited Barnacle during one of the annual challenges around A Coventry Way. He had constructed the Association's first web site. Also, as a teenager, he drew the first map for the original A Coventry Way booklet, as well as supporting the first continuous walk round the route in 1974. He was keen to see how the Way had developed so he decided to walk some of the route and enjoy a pint at the Red Lion. To his astonishment the pub had not only closed but he could not find a vestige of its being there.

The closure of village pubs affects us all. They not only rely on custom from the village but visitors from local urban areas as well.

We feel that the constant rural versus urban argument is too negative. We all rely on both communities to support one another and enjoy the facilities and goods that they each offer. Unfortunately, the Union Jack at Stretton on the Fosse, again the only pub in the village, has closed and the building, we are told, has been demolished.