About Marcle Ridge
The route along Marcle Ridge has been an important line of communication for many millennia. The long, gentle slope of its eastern side offers well drained, easily worked agricultural land and this is reflected in the huge number of prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites recorded.

During the Bronze Age and Iron Age farmsteads would have been scattered over this slope with the ridge itself used as a vantage point. This is reflected in the location of Oldbury Camp, (Iron Age Hill Fort), south east of the ridge. The Roman period saw the construction of a road (from Gloucester to Wroxeter), at the base of the eastern slope. At intervals off this road were tracks leading to farmsteads and villas.

During the Saxon and medieval periods arable agriculture was intensified to keep pace with a growing population. Regular ploughing formed headlands between areas of ridge and furrow, many of which have been preserved today in the form of reversed “S” shaped hedges.

The narrow strip of woodland along Marcle Ridge and Ridge Hill is designated as Ancient Woodland. The steeper, uncultivable west side of the ridge has ensured that this woodland has remained uncleared and reflects woodland as it might have looked following its regeneration after the last Ice Age.

It has an important ground flora that includes orchids and spurge laurel. There is a good mix of tree species including the interesting and historic Wild Service Tree or Checker Tree, *Sorbus torminalis*. This attractive tree has beautiful flowers followed by brown fruit that used to be used to flavour beer before hops were cultivated; hence pub names derived from the word ‘Checkers’. To complete its seasonal uses the foliage turns from a glorious yellow-green to a beautiful deep red-brown in autumn.

Parking
Parking is limited - see map for details.

Refreshments
Refreshments cannot be obtained on route, however there are Inns in nearby Much Marcle, Woolhope, Fownhope. There is also a visitor centre at Weston’s Cider in Much Marcle.

Walk Information
This leaflet has been designed to tell you all you need to know about the route before you set out.

| Stiles | 14 |
| Gates  | 5  |
| Steps  | 2 flights |
| Narrow Bridges | 1 |
| Slopes  | Many steep sections |

Always follow the Country Code. Enjoy your walk!

This leaflet is available in large print from Tourist Information Centres and libraries throughout the County. Also available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/circularwalks

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General Views

Whilst walking along the ridge on a clear day you should be able to see the following:

**Looking North East**
Distinctive hump-backed shape of the Malvern Hills (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

**Looking East**
Bredon Hill and north Cotswold hills

**Looking South East**
Western slopes of the Cotswold Hills (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

**Looking South/South West**
Wye Valley (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

**Looking South West**
Garway Hill

**Looking West**
Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons (National Park)

**Looking North West**
Across Woolhope Dome and upper Wye Valley