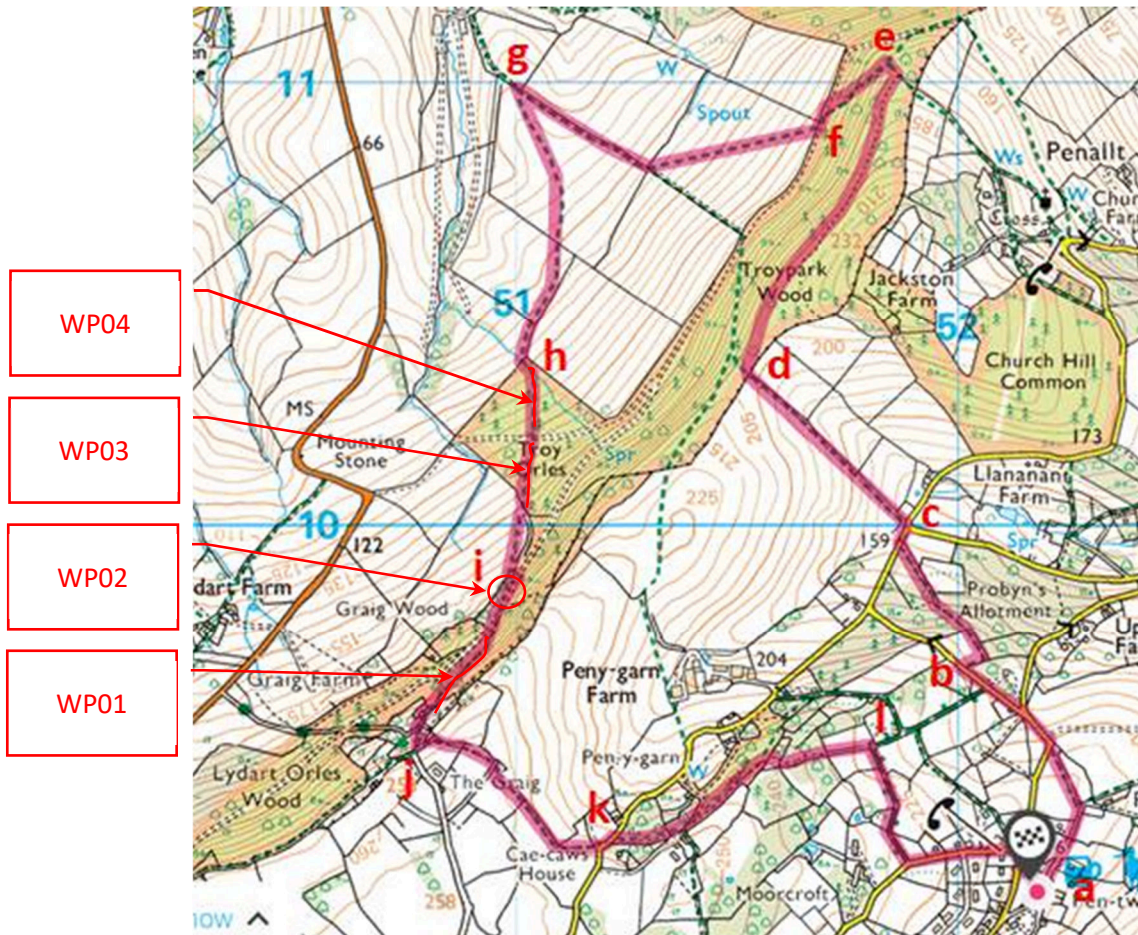


Proposed Clearance Work Packages for Kite/Troy Farm walk

As suggested, I've scoped out some packages of clearance work for the Troy Farm walk. I'm assuming each activity will involve 1 or 2 people for 2-3 hours, armed with hand tools and a flask of hot coffee.



For the record, there is a massive tree down across the path between points e and f but as that is clearly a job for MCC I'm not mentioning it here. It is possible to divert around it and people have clearly been doing so.

Instead I'm focussing on the section of the walk between The Graig and the bottom corner of Troy Orles wood – points j down to h on the map below – where the sections most in need of clearance can be found. I'll describe it as though walking down from the The Graig towards Monmouth (that is, in the opposite direction to the way the walk instructions go. At present the path is easier to find in that direction!)

The route breaks down conveniently into 4 work packages:

WP01 From The Graig down to the track which runs along the contour of the hill between Lydart Orles Wood and Troy Park Wood.

WP02 From the track down to the field, overlooking the Lydart bends.

WP03 The top half of the route through Troy Orles Wood, down to the green lane which runs East to West through the wood.

WP04 From the green lane, on down to the bottom corner of the wood, closest to Monmouth.

In what follows, items requiring MCC attention are shown in *italics*.

WP01

50 m in, a fallen sapling requires heavy loppers or a bowsaw to remove. 20 minutes max.

Another 50 m in, just beyond the track on the left leading to Lydart Farm, *the first stile is badly in need of repair as the 2 uprights have rotted off at ground level*.

After a further 20 m, 2 overhanging boughs not more than 6 cm in diameter, at around head-height, could be removed using a bowsaw. These have been marked with pink paint.

Shortly beyond that, *2 substantial part-fallen boughs definitely require a chainsaw. Both are marked with the number 13 using pink paint – is someone else already on this task?*

At the end of this section the path descends via some more steps onto the muddy track passing along the length of Lydart Orles Wood.

Here, there are 2 partially fallen trees at about head-height which require a chainsaw.

None of these obstacles currently prevent the path from being followed by able-bodied individuals, but they do detract from its ease of use.

WP02

Approximately 200 m along the muddy track to the right, near point *i* on the map, the route departs to the left, down a short flight of steps towards another stile. Unfortunately a tree has fallen at exactly the point where the path leaves the muddy track, making the turning easy to miss despite the presence of a waymark post. Chainsaw or serious bowsawing is required to permit people to pass. There are about three or four 15 cm diameter principal boughs which need to be cut through here, along with smaller boughs and ivy. Just below here, there is a second stile which although robustly planted *is missing its horizontal steps*. Below this point, a substantial bough about 12 cm in diameter lies across the path but could be cleared with a bowsaw. *Beyond this, a 30 cm bough and several others all require chainsaw action to clear the way into the field below. It would be really helpful to have a waymark post here, to help those walking UP the field to this point locate the path into the woods.* This is the famous “oak tree whose boughs brush the ground” in the walk description.

WP03

This 150 m stretch requires conifer lopping and bracken trampling or cutting with a scythe.

Immediately after crossing the stile into Troy Orles Wood, following the direction of the waymark, a fallen bough about 15 cm in diameter lies across the path and *requires a chainsaw to clear*. This is important because it gives the subliminal message “don’t walk here” just where taking a different route could result in missing the path altogether. The path runs steadily downhill, almost exactly due North, initially through bracken and then through a conifer wood. There are a number of possible paths here, but I think by clearing the straight-line route and leaving the cuttings on either side, it should be quite easy to make the preferred course evident to all.

Where the route emerges onto the crossing green lane, some light clearing of vegetation is required – just so it is obvious to anybody walking *up* from Monmouth that there is a path to follow.

WP04

This 175 m stretch is entirely in a conifer wood, and it is necessary to cut away conifer branches in several places to make the correct path evident. All clearance can be done by hand, using heavy-duty loppers to remove growing conifer branches. As in WP03, placing the cut branches at the side of the path will help to indicate the correct route and avoid walkers getting diverted onto the several crossing paths which exist here. The correct path is basically straight downhill and due North, until the final 30 m where it bears right and crosses a small stream. Light clearance in this area will make the stream crossing point more evident.

There is one 15 cm diameter fallen bough just above the stream. It is fairly rotten and could be cut with a bowsaw *(but would be easier with a chainsaw)*.