This walking trail takes you through the rural Worcestershire -shire parishes of Alfrick and Suckley. Hills, vales and river valleys shape the landscape, which in turn is woven with a tapestry of woodland, orchard, pasture and farmland.

The geology along the walk is divided between rocks of Silurian age and rocks that are Triassic in age. All of the rocks seen along the trail are sedimentary in nature.

**Silurian aged rocks (444 – 416 million years old)**

During Silurian times this area lay about 30° south of the equator. At the beginning of the Silurian times this area was experiencing a transition from land to the margin of a tropical ocean, as sea levels rose with the melting of ice. The tropical sea stretched westwards to the deeper ocean beyond the Welsh Borders. The Silurian seas teemed with life. The wide variety of weird and wonderful creatures that inhabited this environment can be found today, as fossils, in some of the limestone rocks seen along the trail.

**Triassic aged rocks (251 – 200 million years old)**

By Triassic times this area had drifted northwards into the semi-arid regions of 31° north of the equator. The tropical seas were long gone. A vast rill valley, the Worcsrer Basin, was the dominating landscape of the area. A hostile environment to life in comparison to the Silurian tropical sea. This sediment from this river would have built up over millions of years. Eventually, after compaction, it would form sandstones, conglomerates and siltstones. These distinctly red sedimentary rocks can be seen along the trail.

Start Point: St Mary Magdalene Church, Alfrick

Ordnance survey grid reference: SO 748 529

Ordnance survey map: Explorer 204

The trail begins on ground underlain by Triassic rocks before climbing Crews Hill onto the Silurian aged rocks of the Suckley Hills. The trail then traverses a variety of sedimentary rock types, all of Silurian age, on its way to and through the Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve.

1) With your back to the church gate, follow the lane around to the right for approximately 500m. Cross the road, continue ahead until you reach a kissing gate on your left. Go through the gate and cross the field to a wooden post. Follow the path into the hedge mad with a hedge by the gate. Lift this up and head straight onto another gate.

2) Follow the path between the parallel wooden fences, right turn around until you reach a gate. Open the gate and continue on the path to an opening obstructed by a wooden bar. Lift this up and head straight onto another gate.

3) Exit the field onto a lane, turn left and follow the lane for 100m. Just after White House Farm cross the stile on your left. Go through the gate and continue on the path. 5) Cross the stile and bridge into a field. Walk across the field towards the hedgerow slightly to the left, which may be partly obscured by vegetation.

4) With the field boundary on your right, head up the hill into the orchard. As the fence rounds to the right, keep the fence line to your right as you walk along the edge of the orchard. Continue to a stile in the hedgerow slightly to the left, which may be partly obscured by vegetation.

5) Cross the stile and bridge into a field. Walk across the field to the fence line that runs up the hill towards the woods. Here, turn left following the field boundary, now on your right, uphill to the woodland.

6) Go over the stile into the woodland and along the path up into Crews Hill Nature Reserve (refer to text box over page). Just over the brow of the hill there is a path crossroads. Follow the path straight ahead that leads downhill and then turns to the right. Continue along the path exiting onto a lane. Turn right for about 210m to a small clearing on the right hand side of the lane.
Crows Hill Wood Nature Reserve is owned and managed by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. This wood is a wonderful example of oak, lime and ash ancient woodland. The varied understorey includes field maple, hornbeam and hazel and the dense ground flora is rich in a magnificent selection of fungi, particularly in the autumn.

The reserve contains a number of old quarries and pits which form part of a long line of Silurian aged limestone (Wenlock Limestone) quarries along the Suckley Hills ridge line. They are believed to have been worked as far back as the 18th century through to the 20th century. This fossil rich, hard limestone was used as an aggregate. Other uses for local limestone include rough building stones and as an agent in agricultural/industrial processes.

Limestone scree litter the footpaths along the Suckley Hills ridge line. Some of this scree contains fossils, most commonly brachiopods, crinoids and corals.

A Selection of Silurian fossils found in the Wenlock Limestone

- **Trilobite**
- **Brachiopod**
- **Crinoid**
- **Coral**
- **Limestone**

7) At the far end of the clearing walk up the steps back into Crows Hill Nature Reserve. Follow the permissive path through the reserve for approximately 350m until you reach the paths crossroads that you met in step 6.

8) Head straight on at the crossroads until you reach a gate at the Nature Reserve exit. Go around the gate and follow the path until it forks. Take the left hand fork downhill. Follow this wide track for ¾ km to a wooden way marker post on your left. Here turn sharp left onto a narrower path. Follow the path downhill and round to the right to a stile.

9) Go over the stile, with the field boundary on your right, walk along the top of the field to a metal gate and stile. Over the stile continue ahead to where the woodland steps back to your right.

Spectacular views over the local landscape open up in front of you. In the distance to the south-east lie the Malvern Hills, closer, to the south are the hills of Storridge and Cradley. To the west of these hills stretching northwards is a valley cut into soft Silurian shales. Directly east of this valley lies the hills of Old Storridge Common composed of hard Silurian sandstones and conglomerates (refer to photograph in next column).

The trail ends here.