

## Presteigne and Norton Walk 7

Starting from the Assembly rooms in Presteigne, this walk heads North through Abley's Wood, Stapleton Wood and the Globe to join the Herefordshire Trail over Harley's Mountain to Lingen. From Lingen the route continues on the trail through Lingen Valley Wood, around Cole Hill and along a quiet lane past Brian's Ground, returning to Presteigne on footpaths near the Lugg.

Strenuous with 620m total climb; 17.4 km; 4 ¼ h. Walking boots, suitable clothing and light refreshments strongly recommended.

1. From the Assembly Rooms head North down Broad Street, past the Judge's Lodging, over the bridge and continue straight up the road. At the junction, look for the fingerpost on the right hand turning signing a footpath through a walkers' gate. Walk across the field through a kissing gate and continue diagonally across the next field to another kissing gate leading to a narrow track to the lane. Turn right for a short distance and look for a fingerpost indicating left, follow this between the hedges and pass through a field gate onto a grassy track ahead. Keep straight through two further field gates to enter Abley's Wood. In the winter you have a clear view of Stapleton Castle on the hill to your right.
2. Follow the track through the wood across a waymarked stile and onward. Eventually the path leads out into an open field, and continues in the same direction through the field heading for a house ahead. The path runs left of the house and garden and over a stile in the corner. Follow the waymark and fingerpost down and across a yard to the right of a log cabin. A waymark leads you across a small brook and out into an area that was once wooded but has now been cut. Follow the path, which is well trodden, to the waymark post which turns you right downhill and across a plank bridge back into a wood. Follow the trail through the wood across two more plank bridges and out onto the forest track. Turn left for a short distance until you reach a small clearing on your right. There is a (hard to spot) waymark on a tree trunk ahead, and you need to take the path from the far corner of the clearing.
3. Continue to follow this well-trodden (and often boggy) path through the undergrowth and trees until you reach a more wooded section. Keep straight until you spot a wire fence. The OS map shows the path crossing the fence and running to the left hand side of the field boundary, but in fact it continues on the right hand side to cross a stile at the end and re-join the OS marked path. Keep following the trodden path ahead until you emerge from the wood and see a farm ahead to your right.
4. Pass through the field gate ahead and take the right hand waymark, following the track between the trees to the right of the pond. Once past the pond, bear right on the path which crosses in front of the farmhouse and then take a left diagonal track down through the field following the terraces along until you reach more level ground. At this point it's hard to see where you're heading, but continue in the same direction down to the nearest couple of trees, and you'll spot the bridge you need to cross in the bottom left corner. Once over the bridge, follow the track to uphill through the trees until you emerge onto the forest track. Turn left and keep straight, ignoring any turnings off. Eventually the path descends gently down to a quiet lane where you turn left and head uphill.

5. At the crossroads, continue straight for a short distance until you spot a gate on your right. As you approach the gate you will see a fingerpost indicating the Herefordshire Trail. Go through the gate and up the grassy track ahead, through a field gate and into a shaded green lane. Follow the waymarks all along the green lane until you pass through a field gate into a field with a clear path through the crops. Behind you can see the distinctive bump of the Whimble in the distance and the mast on Black Mixen, while to your left you can see the Shropshire Hills. Head for a fingerpost at the summit, where you turn right. Pass through a field gate and continue down the hill. On a clear day you should now see the Black Mountains ahead and even, to your right, the double peak of Pen-y-Fan. Pass through a waymarked walkers' gate and follow the track ahead until you cross a road, taking the track straight ahead.
  
6. You should spot a waymark leading to a path on the right. Pass through another waymarked walkers' gate and out along the track into the field. The path wends round to your right just before you reach the edge of the main field. Follow the edge of the wood round to the left, keeping in the field following the waymarks. At the field corner follow the waymark into the wood and down a clear trail. Head all the way down across a plank bridge at the bottom and continue along the valley side. Pass through a waymarked field gate keeping straight. Eventually you approach a field gate with a waymark on a tree to the left, follow this down to a kissing gate into a wood. Continue through the valley with the stream to your left through two more kissing gates and a walkers' gate back onto the road.
  
7. Turn left and continue down the quiet lane until the road bends left. Here there are three footpaths. Ignore the one on the track right and the Herefordshire Trail which leads slightly left across the field. Cross the stile and take the public footpath in the middle, crossing the field diagonally right heading for a kissing gate in the distance. Follow the waymark through the kissing gate and across a bridge, (which is stronger than it looks) then aim diagonally left – the footpath approximately follows the boundary of the field along the stream to a kissing gate in the lower left hand corner. Pass through the kissing gate onto a forested track, across a stream and past a few cottages until you emerge onto a road. Turn right for a short distance then turn right at the Herefordshire Trail fingerpost just after a row of cottages.
  
8. Head uphill all the way up through hedgerows and woodland until you eventually go through a field gate onto another track through a wood. Continue through another field gate along the track between the trees with views across the fields to your left. The path eventually wends its way slightly to the right to the higher field but continues to follow the edge of the treeline. At the next field boundary pass through a wooden kissing gate into the wood. Follow the track ahead until you reach the semi-derelict Noisy Hall (which is neither noisy nor a hall!); here the public footpath is completely overgrown so continue straight past the house and you will soon come to a track leading sharply left. Follow this down and turn right at the bottom down through the wood. At the fork follow the right hand route and at the bottom turn left to follow a straight, wide flat track for a considerable distance with the woods to your left.

9. Eventually the track bends left and you can see the Lugg Valley towards Presteigne to the right, before bending right and heading downhill. At the lane turn right for some way. You will pass Bryan's Ground on the left, which is well worth a visit for its beautiful gardens in the summer months (check the opening days), to say nothing of tea and cake. A short distance beyond this, just past a wooded area by a telegraph pole you should spot a very buried fingerpost in the left hand hedge. Follow the direction of the fingerpost across the field to an oak tree approximately halfway down the field hedge. Just to the left of the oak tree cross the stile, the narrow road and the stile opposite. Continue straight with the field hedge on your left. Pass through the field gate at the next boundary and continue straight. At the end of the hedge on you left go through the wooden gate onto a private road and turn right then immediately left. After a short distance go through a waymarked field gate on the right. At the far end of the field, a series of metal barriers appear to be blocking the path but at the far end nearest the fence one can be unlatched. Immediately through that there is another gate (don't be fooled by the padlock!) and the path crosses the track through a kissing gate down a narrow path with fields to your right and the Lugg to your left. Once through another kissing gate you have access to the river to wash your boots or even cool your feet if needed. Eventually the path opens out to a grassy track to the road. Turn left along the road, across the bridge and up Broad Street to the Assembly Rooms.