

## Presteigne and Norton Walk 9

A longer walk from Norton in open countryside and woodland. The route climbs towards Stonewall Hill then descends via Stapleton Wood past the ruins of Stapleton Castle to the edge of Presteigne before returning to Norton via field paths and quiet lanes. Can be muddy at times. *Note: this walk can also be started in Presteigne at the footpath just north of the bridge over the Lugg in Bridge Street, see point 6.*

Moderate: 8.6 km; ~2½ h; ~350m total ascent. Walking boots recommended.

1. From the Lych Gate at St. Andrew's Church in Norton walk towards the church door and turn right along the grassy path in front of the church and leave the churchyard through the small gate. Turn right and then immediately left. Walk down to the bottom of this shaded lane, cross the bridge and walk a short distance up before turning left at the fingerpost to the left of the water station. Keep straight on along the path and through the walkers' gate ahead. Walk in the same direction across the field, keeping the trees and ditch to your left through two rows of trees marking field boundaries. You are aiming for a field gate that will come into view slightly to your right in the distance.. There is a crossing over the ditch just before the gate; this area can get very muddy at times depending on recent rainfall. Go through the gate and follow the waymark post just to your right. Continue towards the farm and curve round to the right hand side of the barn. Keep ahead and through the field gate, bear left and through the waymarked field gate between the barns.
2. Cross the stream and follow the track uphill through a wooden field gate marking the start of a wood on your right. Keep straight past Cook's House on your left and follow the track as it curves gently left and right up to a metal field gate. Once through the gate turn off the track and take a diagonal route across the field on your right. Aim for the metal field gate in the corner and cross the stile immediately to the left of it. Curve round to your right and back left in front of the small copse of trees ahead and pass between the gateposts following the directional waymark diagonally up the next field. As you walk up the field you will see a gate ahead of you in the far left hand corner of the field. Pass through the gate, across the road and through the double field gate opposite.
3. Cross the field diagonally to the far left hand corner. Exit the field via a field gate and turn right onto the road. Almost immediately on your left is a hidden stile in the hedge. Cross this and follow the waymark direction just to the right of the dip in the field. Keep the dip just to your left and head steeply downhill towards the wood where you will see a waymarked stile into the wood. Cross the stile (take care of electric fencing) and follow the waymarked path through the wood. Although not very well trodden the path is discernible and roughly follows to the right of the stream bed. After a while cross another stile over an electric fence and continue to follow the waymark along a path with a hedge on your right and the wooded stream on your left. After a short distance cross another waymarked stile into an open field. Cross this field slightly diagonally right aiming for the farm in the distance, across a number of muddy ditches to pass in front of a small pond in front of the barns.



4. Go through the field gate to the right of the pond following the waymark just to the left of the oak trees towards the wooded area along what soon becomes a recognisable track slightly downhill. Cross the stile ahead into the wood (take care the stile is broken). *Note: here the footpath deviates slightly from the OS map, which indicates the path is to the right of the wood boundary.* The wood opens up soon and the path, although narrow, is a clear track through the undergrowth, which can be wet and muddy. Eventually the path opens out onto the forest track, where you should turn left for a short distance before taking the footpath on your right indicated by a fingerpost. The narrow path goes through the wood over three plank bridges before winding it's way up right over an open area which has been recently deforested but now through the summer months is glorious with purple foxgloves.



5. Continue to a waymark on an old tree trunk which turns you left towards a wood. The path winds its way down to cross a small stream on a plank bridge and between a house and outbuildings. Keep straight up the path and over a waymarked stile ahead. Follow the path across a field keeping the field boundary to your left until you enter Abley's Wood. Continue to follow the track through the wood across a stile and sinding back and forth a little before straightening out in a area of predominantly ash trees. At the end of the wood pass through a field gate and keep straight; here is a good stopping point for lunch with a grassy bank and a view of Stapleton Castle through the trees. Go through a further field gate ahead onto a grassy track and after a short distance leave the field via another field gate down a drive to the left of the house and out onto the road.
6. Turn right onto the road and after a short distance take a left hand footpath marked by a fingerpost. The footpath is narrow with a kissing gate at the end. Through this follow the obvious track diagonally right across the field through another kissing gate continuing in the same direction across the next field to exit through a third kissing gate onto the road. Turn right and then immediately left. If you want to rest a while with lunch or afternoon tea in Presteigne then continue down this road across the bridge and up Broad Street to turn right onto the High Street. Otherwise after a short distance you are looking for a hidden fingerpost and stile in the right hand hedge just opposite the third house on the left. Cross the stile and walk diagonally right across the field aiming for the nearest tree in the foreground. Cross the stile and continue on a diagonally right path. You are aiming for a stile just to the left of a group of hawthorns and elder shortly before the corner.
7. Cross the stile and follow the track across the stream and up the rise opposite. Continue in the same direction as the previous field aiming to the right of the field gate you can see in the far left corner. Cross the stile and turn left onto the road. Continue along this lane for some way keeping straight at the junction. Ahead and to your left you can see Offa's Dyke along the ridge in the distance. Eventually the road dips down to cross Norton Brook and just beyond cross the stile on your right marked with a fingerpost. Now follow the path approximately straight through two fields, then through two walkers' gates by the water treatment works and along a narrow footpath and a further walkers' gate. Continue through the field and a field gate, across a private drive, through another field gate and field and eventually out via a bridleway gate into a small lane with houses on your left and woods to the right. Walk down this lane bearing left until you reach the road. Cross the road and walk up the pavement back to the church.