

Presteigne and Norton Walk 4

Although this walk is short, there are a couple of steep climbs. You are rewarded, however, with panoramic views of the whole area. Leaving town via the historic Warden Site with its Ring and Bailey, the route climbs to the edge of Harley's Hill before dropping down through Paradise Farm to return via Clatter Brook. In winter, if the latter is impassable after heavy rains, an easier alternative is given, see 4 below.

Moderate with some steep climbs, total ascent 170m; 5.2 km; ~1 ½ h; walking boots recommended

1. From the Assembly Rooms walk along the High Street, taking time to admire the many different styles of architecture as you go, and continue in the same direction past the impressive Jacobean Radnorshire Arms Hotel which was built in 1616. At the junction continue straight ahead past a row of newer houses on your left and a hedge. Immediately beyond this turn left up Castle Dyche and head up the steps to the road at the top. Cross the road and turn right to walk along the pavement until you reach the end of the hedge where you turn left up a grassy track onto the hillside. *Note that this is beyond the footpath marked on OS maps.* Head uphill – you may wish to use the bench halfway up to stop and admire the view behind you, you can see Offa's Dyke on the ridge to your left and Hell Peak slightly to the right.
2. Continue on up and turn right when you reach the path. If you wish you can detour off the path round the old reservoir which supplied water to Presteigne from the early 1900s up to the late 1960s. there are a number of information boards diving the history of both the reservoir and the water mill. The detour is U shaped and returns to the main path where you can continue in the direction you were heading. There are many grassy tracks and benches through the Warden so children can happily run off their energy here. At a fork in the path continue straight and downhill towards the exit where there is another information board detailing the history of the Warden and some wildlife you may see there. Leave the Warden by a walkers' gate and turn right along the road.
3. After a short distance turn left up a no through road with a bridleway fingerpost. Head up the lane, taking time to admire the massive oak tree on the left, until you reach a bend, where you go up the steps and across the stile and a wooden hurdle. Head straight, going through a makeshift fence and gate. Keep to the field boundary heading towards the gate ahead. Cross the stile and continue straight, passing through another temporary fence and gate. You can now see Harley's Hill ahead. Go through a further field gate (if this is tied up there is a shallow horse jump to the right of it which is easily climbed over). About half way along the left hand fence of the next field, cross the waymarked stile and head along the green lane ahead where you will start to see the view on the left towards Nash Wood opening up.

4. Continue uphill along the sunken green lane until you get to a three way fingerpost; take the left turn towards a waymarked post, where you follow the blue bridleway sign straight ahead. Keep walking along the grassy track until you reach the wood, where a post indicates no right of way ahead. Turn left down a track partly hidden among ferns and trees. The top of the track can be almost impassable with vegetation at times and you may need to walk down the field and make your way back onto the track a little lower down the hill. Continue down the track, listening out for buzzards mewing up above, all the way to the dip at the bottom, where you take a sharp left back towards a metal field gate. Don't go through this gate but take a walkers' gate leading to the buildings ahead. Pass to the left of the barn and along the tarmac track in front of the cottages and out through a field gate with a post box on it, following the right hand bend between two barns. Now follow this track all the way to the road at the bottom. Turn left along Slough Road and walk along this peaceful lane for a short distance. *(Note: if there has been persistent heavy recent rainfall Clatter Brook may be difficult to navigate. In this case your best option is to continue along the road all the way to Joe Deakins Road where you head down the underpass and continue straight down the road to return to the Assembly Rooms.)*

5. When you reach a field gate on your right just past a high hedge, go into the field and walk to the far right hand corner by keeping to the left hand hedge then turning right at the boundary and walking along the backs of the houses. Go right up to the field gate but don't go through it, instead turn left through a walkers' gate and along the narrow footpath with fields to your right and trees to your left. Go down a few steps, follow the path up another few steps and down again. In the winter the brook can be very full and it can be tricky to navigate your way along without getting wet feet (see alternative route above), but in the summer it can be completely dry. Just keep following the track all the way along this peaceful wooden area, across a wooden footbridge, taking a right hand fork at the footpath junction and then back across another bridge. Ignore the ornamental bridge on your left. The path then moves back and forth over the brook a few times on stepping stones and can be narrow and slippery in places.

6. Eventually the footpath leaves the brook via a short flight of steps and you emerge onto Joe Deakins Road. Cross the road and take the footpath opposite, indicated by a fingerpost. Follow this along the right hand side of the bungalows and houses. When the tarmac path reaches a T junction turn left between the houses and then turn right onto the road. Keep straight, joining another road down to Hereford Street. Cross this road into Lugg View and take the first left. Walk towards the metal gates ahead and just to the left of them take the narrow path with metal railings on the right and a wooden fence on the left. The footpath winds back and forth through an area of waste ground before emerging onto Back Lane. Turn left and then right onto Hereford Street. After a short distance you will return to the Assembly Rooms.

