

## 1 Offa's Dyke

*Circular walk of about 2½ hours. Steep in places and can be muddy in wet weather.*

Walk into the village and turn right and the telephone box, up Mynd Lane. Note the war memorial on your right – can you spot the (deliberate?) mistake on the inscription? Follow the lane up the hill, ignoring all left and right turnings. After the cattle grid, you will come to the gates of Old Impton Farm (with a porch that dates to the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century). Just before the gates to the farm, scramble up the bank to the right and go through the farm gate. Cut across the field diagonally (past a large tree) and turn half right through a new gate and walk up the hill, keeping the small plantation of fir trees on your right (this stretch can be muddy). The path divides – take the left fork and pass through the swing gate. Follow the steep path up the valley until you reach an open field. Through the gate turn half right and walk up to the brow of the hill, where three fences meet. There is a stile here and a sign marking the Offa's Dyke path. Cross over the stile and follow the path, with the fence on your left.

A worthwhile short detour is to climb across the field to your right to the four or five blasted pines on top of Hawthorn Hill - you will be rewarded with a wonderful 360 deg. view across the Marches hills of Radnorshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire. Return to the path and after the next stile you will be able to walk along a fairly well preserved section of the dyke, with the fence now on your right.

On your left, down in the valley, you can see the tiny hamlet of Pilleth and above it, on the hillside, its tiny church (worth a visit) and the four Wellingtonia trees planted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a memorial to mark the spot where local farmers found human remains. It was on this site on 22 June 1402 that the bloody battle of Pilleth was fought, when Owain Glyndwr's forces defeated the English army lead by Sir Edmund Mortimer. It is thought between 800-1200 English soldiers died that day, partly because their Welsh mercenary archers changed sides during the fight.

Follow the path along the dyke, over a number of stiles. One stile is at 90 degrees to the path and cross it so the fence is now again on your left and there is a plantation of firs on your right. At the end of this short path, there is another stile and you will see ahead and slightly to the right the obelisk commemorating Sir Richard Green-Price (a local MP in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who built the Vicarage and restored the church. From the monument walk south (to your right) until you come to a gate onto a minor road, very close to the junction with the main B4355 Norton to Knighton road. Turn right. Where the metalled road turns left down the hill, keep straight on along the farm track into the woods. Here the trees have recently been harvested and are being replanted. Follow this path as it winds gently along the hillside and eventually in rejoins Mynd Lane; turn left back to the village.

## **2 The Observatory**

*Circular walk of about 2 ½ hours. Steep in places and can be muddy in wet weather.*

Walk along Meeting House Lane (first right from the cottage north along the main road in the Knighton direction). Follow this lane up the hill. Where it divides take the left fork. Go past the ruined farmhouse on your left; the metalled road degenerates into a steep farm track that winds up the hill. Pass through one gate and at the very top you meet a second gate onto a green lane.

Turn right along the lane, keeping the plantation on your left. You will get glimpses of Knighton down in the valley on your left. Pass the Observatory on your left (Centre for the Study of Near Earth Objects) and eventually you meet a metalled road. Turn right and right again at the next fork in the road (by a small plantation).

A worthwhile detour is to take the left hand fork here for a couple of hundred yards or so. Look back and enjoy a superb view up the Teme valley beyond Knighton - it is especially enchanting in the evening. Retrace your steps and... Follow this road along Stonewall Hill (it is the border between England (on your left) and Wales (on your right). There are wonderful views, with all of Herefordshire at your feet and the Shropshire, Malvern Hills and Brecon Beacons visible on a clear day. Sadly a local landowner wants to put up four vast 300ft high wind turbines along this road, just within England (they would not be allowed by the Welsh planning rules on the other side of the road).

After about 1 ½ miles take the first turning on your right (a road not a metalled farm track) and follow the road down into the valley. Just after a farmyard on your left, take the right hand fork down the very steep (no doubt aptly named) Kill Horse Lane. At the bottom you reach Norton Brook and can see the cottage on your right perched on the hillside. Continue up along the lane and walk through the church yard into the Vicarage gardens.

### **3 Norton Brook**

*A short walk (1 hour), with fewer steep bits, mostly off road. Can be muddy.*

Walk into the village towards Presteigne and take the second lane on the left (School Lane) just after Taylors Farm House. Follow the lane round to the right and past the Old School. At the end of the lane climb over the fence and walk through the field, keeping the hedge on your right. Pass through the gates/stile (over the drive to the Old Mill) and follow the path until it joins the brook on your left. After passing some high fir trees on your right you come out into a small field. Keep the brook on your left and you come to a stile in the hedge, leading into a lane.

Turn left into the road, cross the bridge over the brook and take the first left up the hill (A).

After about 500 metres there is an old shed set back on your left. Take the path on the left past this barn and there is a gate with a fine view across the village and into Wales. Pass through the gate and walk down the field until you are under the power lines. Under the cables turn half right and follow the contour of the hill to a gate in a dell, just to the right of an ash tree. Go through the gate into a green lane that slopes gently down the hill until it reaches the brook. Cross over the brook by the old bridge and the path climbs up to meet School Lane at the back of Corte House.

### **3A**

#### **3A Presteigne**

At (A) in walk 3 above you can extend the walk into Presteigne by keeping straight on and turn right at the cemetery, crossing over the Lugg from England into Wales into Presteigne. At the cemetery turn you can take a detour to the left a short distance to see the remains of Stapleton Castle. Before the cemetery junction there is a footpath that cuts off the corner by the cemetery into Presteigne – can be muddy in winter!

### **Combine Walks 1 & 2** *(about 4 hours)*

On Walk 1, after you leave the Offa's Dyke Path, pass the Green Price Monument and cross over the main Presteigne-Knighton road ( B4355). Follow the farm track to the right. After two fields on your left turn left into the third field and walk along the edge of the field, keeping the hedge on your left. Take care not to damage or disturb crops or animals that may be in the field. At the top of the field there is a small coppice on your left: turn right into the green lane along the top of Llanwen Hill. Eventually you reach a green lanes cross roads which joins the Observatory Walk (walk 2).