

Circular Walk – Leintwardine, Burrington, Downton-on-the-Rock (12 miles)

Circular Walk from Leintwardine to Burrington and return via Downton on the Rock.

Distance 12 miles.

Map Explorer 203

Walk past Leintwardine Church into Watling Street. Turn left and walk up the road to take the footpath off to the right just before the school. After entering a field, follow the fence on your left passing through the line of trees. Continue on the same line, down to a stile near a house. Cross the stile and bear left to a small footbridge. Continue on the same line, cross a stile to join a lane and turn right. Follow the lane up to the road junction and turn left to follow the lane up to the A4113.

Cross the road, with care, and go straight down the track opposite. Follow the track round to the right and, in a short while, cross a stile on your left, heading diagonally down the field to your right. Cross another stile and climb up the other side to cross a stile in the hedgerow and straight across the next field to a gap in the hedge. There is a waymark at this point, which could be hidden by the hedge.

Turn right and follow the track uphill, admiring the views all around. Pass through the gap into the next field, towards the top of the climb, cross a stile in the fence on your left. Bear right to a stile on the far side of the field. Cross this then cut across the corner of the next field and then go straight across two further fields, aiming for the far end of the hedgerow on your left, where there is a waymark, to join the byway near Woodhead. Whilst walking along the byway, look behind for good views of the Black Mountains, Mynydd Troed and Black Mixen with the mast on its summit. Looking forward, there are good views of the Titterstone Clew Hill, and to the right Mortimer Forest.

At a junction with a byway going off to the right, where the surface becomes stony, continue ahead. Follow the stony track as it swings round to the left and immediately take the grass track on the right, aiming for the left-hand edge of the woods in front of you. Continue along the byway past Far Barn.

At the junction of byways and paths, take the footpath to the right, which runs along inside the edge of the woods through Stubbs Coppice and eventually out to a lane. Turn right along the lane to the junction with the A4113 and continue down the lane opposite. At the crossroads, turn right for about 200 metres and then take the footpath off to the left. Make for the bottom left hand corner of the field and through a gap out onto the lane. Turn left and descend to the bridge over the River Teme.

Just before the bridge, turn right along the footpath, which follows the river. Pass through a gate and then head for the far left-hand corner of the field to go through a second gate. Turn right up a track and then left along the drive of a house to a stile on the right. Cross this and go forward up to the track and turn left. Look right for good views of Downton Castle.

Follow the track as it drops down and enters the Nature Reserve. Turn left to cross over Castle Bridge, following the track uphill and round to the right. When you enter a field, aim for the far left-hand corner to a stile leading onto a track. Turn right along the track and as it descends and starts to turn to the right, look for a footpath going off to the left up the bank. Continue up the slope, again aiming for the top left-hand corner and towards the top of the field, you will join a track, which leads up to a gateway. On the ascent, look back for good views of Downton Castle and Downton Church.

Go through the gate and the track now swings hard round to the left but continue on the same line to cross the field to a stile, by a gate, leading into a wood. Cross this and turn left and follow the path descending through the wood. At the bottom of the wood, cross a stile and go across a field to join a track. Continue uphill to reach a gate on your right and enter a field. Descend to the bottom left-hand corner. Cross a stile and walk down the middle of a strip of field to a footbridge. Cross the bridge, turn right and go across the field to a gate leading into a wooded area. The path ascends, following the right-hand edge of the wood to a stile leading out onto a concrete bridleway. Turn right and follow the bridleway, round the hairpin bend to the left and down to Burrington Farm. Continue down the lane to the T-junction.

A visit to St. George's Church, Burrington, to see its remarkable collection of cast iron grave slabs is a must.

From the porch of Burrington Church go right to the stile in the hedge. Follow the boundary hedge/fence on your right to the next stile. Now go through four fields following the left-hand boundaries until you re-join the lane, over a stile by a gate, just before the Burrington Bridge. Turn right over the bridge and follow the lane gently climbing to a tee junction. Turn right sign posted Downton. As you walk along this lane look up to the left, Tatteridge Hill, where you will see a brick and concrete structure. This is a valve chamber for the Elan Valley Aqueduct, which supplies water to Birmingham. A lane joins on the left but continue for Downton. Opposite a small brick building on the left hand side of the lane is a stile. Do not cross this, but just look over it, to see where the aqueduct is carried over the River Teme and on up the hill.

At Downton, where the road swings hard right by a post box, continue up the driveway to Old Downton House and go round to the left passing along the rear of the buildings. Just before reaching the two gates in front of you, follow the track up to the right through a third gate. As you enter the field go slightly right to the boundary fence and cross the stile to enter an avenue of trees which you follow up hill.

As you come over the summit of the hill and start the descent, you will see Leintwardine below you. Go through the double wooden gates and take the track, going slightly down hill to the left, not the track going hard left immediately after the gates. Follow this track as it becomes stony, passing the cottage to become grassy again but still with the hedge on your left. It soon becomes an enclosed lane running between two fences, at this point look down to the left to see the loops in the River Teme. At the bottom of this section there is a gate in front of you but go through the gap/gate way on your right continuing to follow the left-hand boundary of the field to a stile.

Cross this and go to the right to join a track, which starts in a hollow, to descend Church Hill. The top of the hill is littered with small quarries from which it is believed that the stone for

the church in Leintwardine was quarried, hence the name. Generally follow the left-hand boundary of this steep field down to a stile in the corner leading out into the lane. Turn left and then immediately right, signposted Leintwardine.

(With thanks to <http://www.herefordshiretrail.com>)

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