

## The Fording and Burton Court from Weston under Penyard

### A 6.7 mile circular walk north east towards Linton and return via Pontshill.

Start from the Village Hall on School Lane in Weston under Penyard.

Grid reference SO 633 231.

Grade: Easy. 16 stiles.

1. Starting from the village hall in Weston under Penyard, walk back down towards the main road, but opposite the primary school go left up a stony track signposted to the church and public footpath. Enter the churchyard and keep right to emerge onto a concrete path down to Church Lane and turn right down to the centre of Weston village. Carefully cross the busy main road into the road opposite, alongside the Weston Cross Inn.



*The Weston Cross Inn*

2. Turn right opposite Street House into a narrow lane going slightly uphill, passing Lawn Cottage, and turning left at Rose Cottage. The path turns right and takes you to the road known as Rectory Lane. Turn left up the road at Bollitree Lawns and after about 100 m, turn right at the finger post onto the footpath, passing through a wooden kissing gate (WP18/6)<sup>1</sup>. You are now entering the private gardens of The Old Rectory and you must keep right along the hedgerow. At the end of the garden, bear left to a wooden field gate. A few paces later cross stile (WP18/4) and turn half left heading across the field towards the buildings on the skyline and emerge at a stile (WP18/3) onto the road Bury Hill Lane at the site of Ariconium.

*Ariconium was a Roman station at the junction of Roman roads from Glevum (Gloucester) and from Blestium (Monmouth). Ariconium appears to have been an area of intensive iron working and possesses smelting furnaces and forges. Archaeologists have referred to it as the "Birmingham of the Roman era". A whole range of antiquities have been found through the years including many different types of coins. As recently as 2015, an archaeological evaluation discovered a Roman Villa including mosaic flooring and indications of a hypocaust system.*

3. On the road turn left for about 400 m to a T-junction, with Bollitree Farm on your left. Cross the road towards a steel field gate, and over the stile (WP19/6) and head half right down the field into the valley. Cross a stile (WP19/5) at the bottom of the field and turn right keeping to the fence on your right-hand side. Cross the stile (W19/4) into another field and continue with the fence and hedgerow on your right. Cross a stile (WP19/3) into another field and look behind you for a wonderful view to The Skirrid and Black Mountains with Ross on Wye below you. Keeping to the right again you will soon come to a gateway in a stone wall. The gate is currently missing, but there is also a stile (WP19/2). Continue for a short distance along a grassy track with a bungalow on your left, to emerge onto the road at a steel field gate (WP19/1).

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<sup>1</sup> Note: It may help route finding to note that the stiles and gates in the parish of Weston under Penyard are uniquely labelled by their footpath number and stile number e.g. WP25/5 – Stile 5 on footpath 25.

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4. Carefully cross the road, checking for fast-moving traffic, and go down the road 25 m to the right (Fording Lane). You are now in the parish of Linton. Continue down this tarmac lane for 1 Km with the South Herefordshire golf course on either side. Pass Bronte Lodge on your left and Fording Farm on your right. Immediately after crossing the stream, turn right through the wooden gate way into Fordings End. This is the public right of way, but you are entering a private garden and so please walk courteously with the house on your right across the grassy lawns and past a wooden shed and through a small steel gate into the field beyond. As a courtesy you can avoid the private garden by walking a few metres further along the road to take the wooden stile into a field and, keeping right, return to the normal footpath.



*Frogs Leap at The Fording*

5. Go straight ahead in the field and over a stile near the stream into the next field. Continue close to the stream on the left and then bear right onto a grassy field track with waymarker post on your left and then through a field gate onto a lane. Go left and then quickly right through a field gate on the other side of the kennels. Cross the field to a stile in the far right hand corner and then continue with the stream on your left, with views to your left uphill to Linton Ridge. Leave the field through a field gate onto a road. Go left for about 150 m and, where the road goes left, go straight ahead for another 100 m on a minor road, having the charming name of Cut Throat Lane.



*Rudhall Brook Valley*

6. Turn right by the side of a stone cottage and over a stile at the left of a field gate. Keep straight ahead onto a path into the trees, with the boundary wall of Burton Court on your right. Emerge at the corner of the hedgerow by a marker post and continue straight ahead across the field and through a gap in the hedgerow onto a farm track with views to May Hill to the left and Bromsash to the right, with the Scudamore racehorse training centre at Eccleswall Court in the foreground. Keep straight ahead on the track, through a double steel field gate, past an old Dutch barn on your left and then another 500 m to leave the field by a field gate onto the road. Pass through the double field gate in front of you, where two footpaths are signposted. Take the path to the right, keeping the hedgerow on your right, pass a bungalow behind the hedge then leave the field onto a road at the double field gate.



*Peter Scudamore Horse Racing Centre*

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*Eccleswall Court is a substantial Georgian farmhouse, steeped in history. The present house dates back to 1827, although there has been a dwelling on this site for centuries. The dove cote tower is what remains of the Chapel of St Thomas. This Chapel was last mentioned in a deed dated 1725. In addition, the remains of a Saxon Mote and Bailey Castle, a mound circa 700- 800AD, are evident in the garden, and some of the walling around the upper lake is believed to be part of the old fort.*

7. Checking for fast moving traffic, cross the road, and over a stile just to the left (WP10/9) into a field going slightly downhill with views to Penyard Hill on your right and Lea Bailey on your left. Continue down the field keeping the hedgerow and fence on your right and then, after about 200 m, go over a stile on the right (back into the parish of Weston under Penyard). The line of the footpath across the large field goes down into the hollow by the telegraph pole and then up the other side. Head to the field gate (WP10/7) in the far distance, just to the left of the silver birch woodland. Leave the field onto a farm track and keep left to the main A40 Road.



*Penyard Hill*

8. Carefully cross the road and enter an orchard through an old steel pedestrian gate. Go down through the orchard, starting just left of a waymarker post on an apple tree. Leave the orchard through an old steel kissing gate, turn right onto a narrow footpath and down to the road in Pontshill. Turn right down the road and turn left at the T-junction. There is a tubular stile on the right, opposite the parish noticeboards, but the correct public right of way is a little further on, where you should use the field gate (WP 12/1) to enter the field.
9. Go directly ahead to the wooden fence, turn left, and follow the wooden fence to leave the field through a steel field gate. After a short distance follow the line of the hedgerow to the right and turn left at the corner of the field and continue with the hedgerow on your right. At the waymarkers turn right and continue with the hedgerow/fence on your right (rhubarb is often grown in the field on your left) and go over a stile (WP11/5) in the corner of the field. Go half left diagonally across the field towards a single tall tree. On reaching the tree, keep left with the hedgerow on your right and then over the stile (WP11/4) onto the farm track. Turn right back to the village hall 100 m down the track.

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