

Peace in our time

Greta Pennington of the Mortimer Ramblers takes a gentle riverside walk along the banks of the tranquil river Lugg... where once, battle raged



The Ramblers is Britain's biggest charity working to promote walking and improve conditions for all walkers. In Herefordshire there are four groups: Hereford, Mortimer, Ross-on-Wye and Leaddon Vale.
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River Lugg meanders (8)



Old gravestones at Lucton Church (1)

STARTING from Lucton School (1) take a quick look at the front of the building, before setting off on the walk. John Pierrerpont founded a Free School for local boys in 1708. His statue stands in a niche at the front of the building. It is now an independent school. Looking towards the school from the lane enjoy the distant view to the Black Mountains, while to the north the wooded, western end of the hills leading up to Croft Ambrey rises steeply.

Walk along the minor road for about 30 yards, then turn right down towards a wooded area, keeping the car park on the left and a wooden building on your right. Follow the gravel path down to the trees, then go to the right and almost immediately left, into the wood. Walk down to the stile and then cross left, over the field to the stile. Ahead you will see a line of gravestones (2) lining the wall of the garden of what is now a private house, but was once the church.

Turn right along the lane, walk down to the shallow ford and go round to the right and in about 20 yards, follow the way-marked track on the left.

Go through the gate into the field to

walk along the track, with the attractive pond on the right. (3)

There are often waterfowl on this piece of water.

Walk over the field to the stile, and keeping the hedge on the left, cross the next stile and continue up to the gate.

Here, you can look down the field to the River Lugg. Go down the field to the bridge (4) in the bottom right hand corner. This field usually has crops growing in it.

The bridge was built in 1771 as part of the turnpike system. Just beyond the bridge is Mortimers Cross (5). This has always been an area where there has been a meeting of various routes. To the north lies Leintwardine with its history of Roman occupation and to the north and south it is claimed are the routes of old Roman Roads.

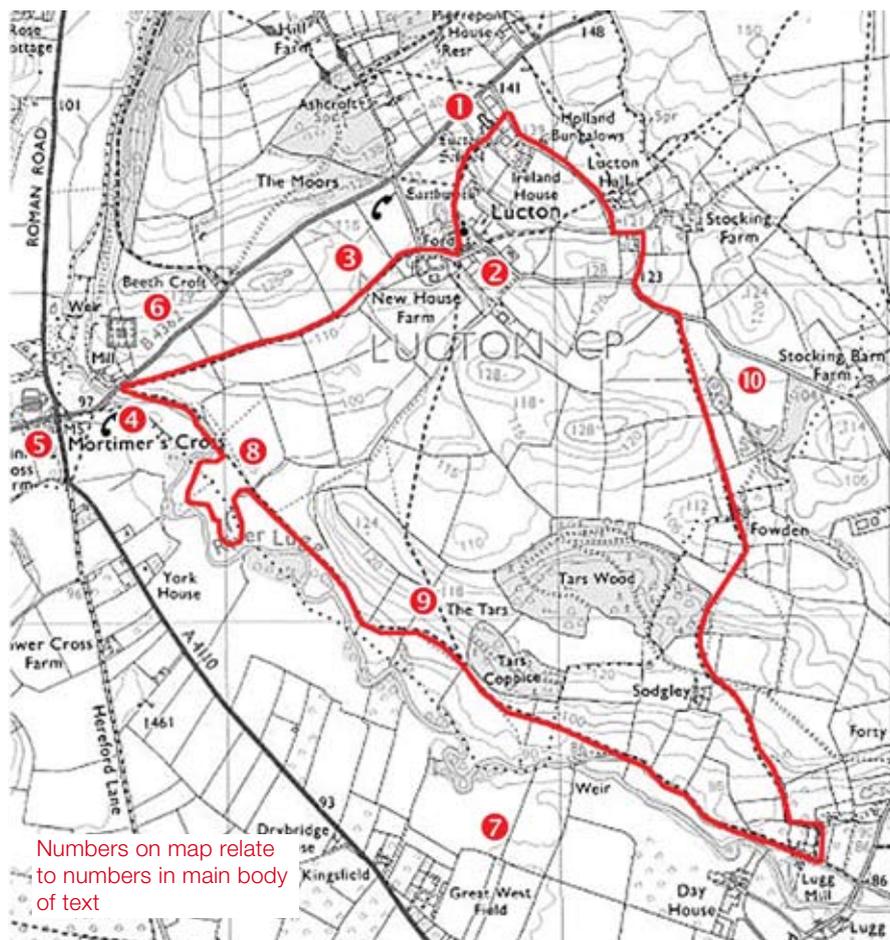
Across the road from the bridge is Mortimers Cross Mill (6). This is an 18th century, one man-operated water mill. A number of mills were sited along the River Lugg. Turn left to walk along the bank of the river. In summer this can be quite overgrown.

This area, south of Mortimers Cross and north of Kingsland is where one of

the decisive battles in the Wars of the Roses took place. This was a very poorly documented encounter but it is known that Edward, Earl of March, a Yorkist, beat the Lancastrians in February 1461. It has been estimated that possibly 4000 men were killed. This area is known to have been swampy in that period. There is a stone monument at Kingsland commemorating the battle (7).

The path rises slightly, away from the river to a stile. Carry on along the top of this small cliff to a gate on the right. Here the landowner has opened up the land under the countryside stewardship scheme. This enables you to take a fascinating, almost circular detour along the deeply incised meanders of the Lugg at this point (8). Go down the slope to the river, where, in early summer, you often have clouds of swallows and martins wheeling overhead. You can see the holes for nests in the low river banks and follow the lines of older river courses, some of which are lined by rows of willow trees.

After this detour go back alongside the hedge to a gate that is about 150 yards further to the east from where you entered this field. Go over the



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Getting there:

Start/parking: On grass verge on the minor road alongside Lucton School. This road leads off the B4362 between Mortimers Cross and Croft.

Map: Explorer 203/SO437646.

Distance: 5 miles.

Grade: Easy.

Stiles: 10.

Nearest town: Leominster.

Refreshments: Mortimers Cross Inn (01323 846236); Tea Shop in

Aymestry (01568 708236);

Riverside Inn, Aymestry (01568 708440).

Toilets: None.

Transport: Lugg Valley service 498 between Bucknell and Hereford. Details from Traveline on 0871 2002233.

plank bridge on your right, through the gate into the field and walk straight ahead to the gate opposite. Walk through this meadow keeping the fence, copse, and river on your right and cross the stile into the next field. Continue for a short distance and then walk gently uphill to pass the clump of trees on the top of the shallow river cliff on your right. The farmer usually cuts a path through any crops. Where there is a right of way across a field, landowners are required by law to leave a path at least one metre wide. Crop obstructions are one of the main problems faced by walkers in the summer months. These should be reported to info@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Now walk up beside the fence to the gap and then walk on up to the wood above you (9). Follow along

beside the edge of the wood almost to the end until you see an isolated tree in the field and slant down left towards the river. Again the farmer usually cuts a very good path through the crop.

Walk left alongside the riverbank with the river very close on your right. Walk through the thicket of trees into the field and cross the stile ahead. Slant over to the stile on the left to follow the path between the building and field. Carry on through the edge of the garden to the gate to the lane.

Turn left up the lane and then take the track on the left to the stile into the field. Walk to the right through the trees to the stile into the field. Walk up beside the fence with the wood on the right. Where the fence turns to the right, go left up the field past the tree keeping the buildings well to your left.

Cross the gravel track at the top and walk slightly to the left into the field and just to the left, follow the path that slants down to a stile into the woods. Wind your way through the trees down to the right, to the stile in the bottom right. Cross the meadow to the stile opposite into the next patch of woodland. Walk up through the trees bearing to the right and at the top go left into the field, which you cross diagonally to the left into the next field. Walk down to the stile and walk down this next long field to the gap into the lane. There is a plank bridge over the brook halfway down the slope. Over to the right there are some pretty ponds (10).

Turn left into the lane, which you now follow, keeping to the right at the first junction, back to the starting point. ■