



Walking with Offa 5

Food, drink and accommodation

If you stop for a drink at **The Miners' Arms, Priest Weston**, you'll be in thirsty company. Imagine patrolling the border or mining for barytes without a decent pub. How would Offa's Dyke have been built without them? Over a

thousand years later, keep up the tradition and call in. The pub serves excellent local beers as well as a range or wines, soft drinks and snacks. Meals and earlier opening for groups can be arranged by prior appointment. Call 01938 561352. Open Monday - Friday from 3pm, and Saturday & Sunday from 12 noon.



Getting there: BY BUS: There are buses along the A488 between Shrewsbury and Bishop's Castle (service no 552/553), although this would mean a 1½ mile walk to the pub. ShropshireLink Zone 1 may be able to transport you to The Miners' Arms from Bishop's Castle, Pontesbury or surrounding areas. Journeys can be booked up to seven days in advance or with as little as 24 hours notice.

Bookings are handled on a first come first served basis so where possible, book early. Call 0345 678 9068 and ask for The Miner's Arms, stop ref 16010. **BY CAR:** Car parking is available at The Miners' Arms car park, Priest Weston, SY15 6DF.

To get the best from your walk we recommend comfortable walking boots, waterproof jacket and overtrousers, warm clothing, gloves and warm hat or sun cream and sun hat (depending on the season!), a mobile phone and something to eat and drink. Sheep and cattle are often in the fields on these routes – dogs must be kept under close control or on leads at all times.

Walking with Offa Promoting the Welsh English border as a great place to get your boots on, enjoy the beautiful countryside and indulge in some fabulous food and drink.



For more details contact the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership on **01588 674080** or see www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk

Many thanks to Mike Watkins of Priest Weston for developing this walk.



The series of **Walking with Offa** circular walks guides are also downloadable from www.shropshirewalking.co.uk

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Walking with Offa 5

Myths and mines on Stapeley Common

A relaxed, four mile walk on stone tracks, grassland and moorland taking around two hours



The Welsh English Border - where King Offa met his match!

One of a series of walks with spectacular views and glimpses of history, wildlife and archaeology.

in the Shropshire Hills



Start point is The Miners' Arms car park opposite the pub at Priest Weston, SY15 6DF.

- ① From the car park, turn left and walk down the hill keeping to the right at the junction. Soon a finger post indicates a waymarked byway on the right. Turn in and walk up the green lane.
- ② A short steep climb to where two footpaths lead off to the left. One drops back to the village. Take the second path, crossing the stile, and following the side of the hill until a fence. *This path has lovely views of the hills to the west over the farmland cottages of Priest Weston and Middleton. Workers were attracted to the area by the mining of barytes in the 19th century. Barytes is the stuff of barium meals, and as filler in ceramics, golf balls, paints, paper and leather.* The footpath continues along the side of the hill and through the gate.
- ③ Once through the gate, follow the track parallel to the lower fence. After a short distance it drops down a slope. Cross the field, staying close to the fence and go across the footbridge over the stream.
- ④ A short distance up the bank, turn right on the track and climb the stile over the fence at Cwm Dingle Cottage. Turn left immediately and go up the bank, keeping the cottage on the right. Cross the stile to the left at top of bank, leaving Cwm Dingle grounds, and follow the footpath that runs alongside the fence, eventually turning up to the ridgeline.
- ⑤ When the footpath reaches the ridge, cross a stile over a fence (at the end of a hawthorn line). *To your left are views over Montgomery and the Kerry Ridgeway, Wales's oldest road.*
- ⑥ Turn right and after a short climb Stapeley Common will open up. If it's clear you will see Mitchell's Fold Stone Circle about ¼ mile in front. *The Stone Circle is Shropshire's best-known prehistoric monument. Erected during the period 2000-1200BC it is a testimony to the importance of the Shropshire Hills for the early Bronze Age communities. Some 90 yards to the south east is a standing stone set on a small bank. To the immediate north of the stone is a low mound*

- probably the remains of a prehistoric cairn. Long ago, a magic cow on Stapeley Hill gave milk to all good folk, until Mitchell, an evil witch, milked her into a sieve. The cow disappeared never to return. The witch was turned to stone and the circle erected to keep her in.*
- ⑦ Turn left heading north and out of Mitchell's Fold and gradually climb Stapeley Hill. *This ridgeway route is likely to have been in use since prehistoric times, the centuries scouring-out this hollow way. By the side of the track is a large boulder the 'Dead Cow stone' – an allusion to the legendary cow.*
- ⑧ Keep to the right and follow the track that runs parallel to the ridge above and to your right. The track gradually climbs up to the ridge, joining it at its northern end *from where you can see the Shrewsbury plain and the odd circle of trees on Callow Hill, perhaps a drovers' landmark, above the Callow Inn (see Walking With Offa 3).* Turn right towards a marker cairn of stones and follow the ridge back in the direction of the Stone Circle. This leads you back to another stone cairn. *Enjoy the panoramas. To the east, the distinctive Stiperstones, to the west, Montgomery nestled into its hillside, and beyond the mountains and uplands of Wales.*
- ⑨ Drop down right from the ridge and follow the 'sheepways' across the heather-covered common until you rejoin the track and return through Mitchell's Fold. From there continue to follow the footpath in a southerly direction. This takes you off Stapeley Common via a grid and gate and onto a well-worn track.
- ⑩ At the end of the dirt track you will meet the road at a bend. *There are small scale barytes workings to be found near the turning to the car park (SO 30029767).* Continue in the same direction and at the next bend continue straight on another well-worn track. On your left you will see Corndon Hill. Pass through the gate and continue along the dirt track.

- ⑪ After 200 yards, with Lan Fawr hill where starting to rise in front to your right, take the footpath to your right. *A survey in 2007/8 identified an area of small-scale quarrying on Lan Fawr which may have been the site of a prehistoric stone axe factory. Numerous picrite – hard igneous rock - battle axes and axe hammers have been found.* There isn't a clear footpath - only sheep tracks, but keep Lan Fawr close to your left and the path will lead you around the shoulder of Lan Fawr through the bracken. Cross a stile and drop down the steep hillside until you join another dirt track. Cross the grid and continue to the right, down this track. After a short distance you will join the road at The Miners' Arms.

