

Twin Valley Ley Line Trail



A modern pilgrim route uncovering
wild landscapes & ancient landmarks

Journey along the 47 mile/76 km walking trail which celebrates
the discovery of ley lines as it winds its scenic way through two
river valleys to lost castles, remote churches, sacred stones
and spectacular summits.

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On 30 June 1921 Alfred Watkins had an extraordinary revelation. As he stood on a Herefordshire hillside, it came to him that straight tracks criss-crossed the landscape, connecting ancient and spiritual sites.

He christened them 'ley lines' and regarded them as we might imagine a Neolithic Sat Nav — visual lines of sight enabling our ancestors to situate themselves in the landscape and navigate through it. We know our forebears travelled for trade, rituals and celebrations, perhaps these alignments unveiled how such feats had been made possible.

Sacred stones, spiritual spaces, crumbling castles and once-fierce forts dot this wild, remote landscape. Walk along lush river valleys, climb peaks in the Black Mountains and discover the birthplace of two rivers – the Dore and the Monnow.

Walk deep into Herefordshire's dramatic landscapes, from remote moorland and high ridges to ancient woodland and undulating fields.

The route uncovers these special places as it follows the two rivers, perhaps the oldest paths of all, revealing their opposing natures. The Dore runs through the heavenly Golden Valley, bathed in light, whilst the Monnow Valley is a darker, in-between borderland in the shadow of the Black Mountains. The trail then ascends these spectacular summits with vistas across England and Wales.

Take a journey from the modern day to the ancient past, as you connect with the landscapes which sparked Watkins' revelation.

A Herefordshire story

An enthusiastic antiquarian, talented inventor and pioneer photographer, Alfred Watkins was a born and bred Herefordian. He travelled the length and breadth of the county taking orders for the family brewing business and was passionate about the local landscape. He was also a lifelong member of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club which studied local geology, natural history, architecture, history and archaeology. Pulling together his geographical and historical knowledge, he went on to expound his ley lines theory in *The Old Straight Track*, published in 1925. Still in print, his book and the concept of ley lines continue to intrigue.

Planning your trip

The Twin Valley Ley Line trail is 47 miles/76 km long and can be completed over three to five days, depending on your pace, or walked as individual day hikes. Stages 1 and 2 are dotted with interesting historical sites, so you may wish to allow time to linger. Stage 3 is a wilder, more remote stretch through dramatic landscapes and is more challenging in terms of distance and terrain. Please note, there are options to shorten or extend the stages to suit your requirements. For example, staying overnight at Craswall rather than Longtown will shorten Stage 3 by several miles.

The west of Herefordshire is very rural, with the occasional tiny village so it is necessary to plan accommodation and parking in advance. The nearest train station is Hereford which is 20 minutes in a taxi from Ewyas Harold and 30 minutes from Dorstone.

Places to stay, eat and drink

There are country pubs, B&Bs and self-catering retreats to stay en route. Two of our churches also welcome overnight visitors. Details are provided at the end of each stage, with recommendations for places to break both earlier and later in order to help visitors to plan their own itineraries.

Places to park

Our local communities are very small and in order to minimise disruption, there are only two spots where cars can be parked and left for a few days: in Dorstone car park and in Ewyas Harold. Alternatively, speak to your accommodation host as they are likely to let you leave your car or help with pick-ups/drop-offs for each stage.

Practicalities

To follow the trail, download the free GPX route from visitherefordshire.co.uk/twinvalley or use OS Explorer Map OL13. As the route features some challenging terrain, proper walking gear is advised.

The Twin Valley Ley Line Trail

SCENIC WALKING ROUTE - 47 MILES/76 KM

Connect with Herefordshire's wild landscapes and ancient places on this long-distance circular route.

Stages

This is a multi-day walk and can be completed over three to five days, depending on your pace. The various accommodation options en route provide the flexibility for you to plan your own itinerary.

- Stage 1: Dorstone to Ewyas Harold 16 miles/26 km
- Stage 2: Ewyas Harold to Longtown 11 miles/17.5 km
- Stage 3: Longtown to Dorstone 20 miles/32 km

Distances

When planning your itinerary, you may wish to view the distances between map locations. These are available via the free online OS map at visitherefordshire.co.uk/twinvalley.

Recommended shorter sections of the trail include:

- Dorstone to Vowchurch - 6.5 miles/10.5 km
- Ewyas Harold to Walterstone - 7 miles/11 km
- Ewyas Harold to Clodock - 9.5 miles/15 km
- Craswall Priory to Dorstone - 11.5 miles/18.5 km

Key

-  Eat & Drink
-  Sleep & Rest



The Twin Valley Ley Line Trail

Scenic Walking Route

Points of interest

Stage 1: Dorstone to Ewyas Harold – 16 miles / 26 km

Delve deep into the Golden Valley’s heavenly countryside, calling in at ancient ley line landmarks including crumbling castles, tiny churches and a serene abbey.



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 St Faith’s Church, Dorstone, HR3 6AW | 7 St Margaret’s Church, St Margarets, HR2 0QW |
| 2 Dorstone Motte & Bailey, Dorstone | 8 St Faith’s Church, Bacton, HR2 0AR |
| 3 Snodhill Castle, Snodhill, HR3 6BG | 9 Dore Abbey, HR2 0AA |
| 4 St Peter’s Church, Peterchurch, HR2 0RS | 10 Ewyas Harold Common, HR2 0JD |
| 5 St Bartholomew’s Church, Vowchurch, HR2 0RB | 11 St Michael’s & All Angels Church, Ewyas Harold HR2 0TX |
| 6 St Mary Magdalene’s Church, Turnastone, HR2 0RA | |

Stage 2: Ewyas Harold to Longtown, 11 miles / 17.5 km

Travel to enchanting villages and churches on this beautifully scenic route which finishes at the mighty Longtown Castle, the epicentre of ley lines.



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| 12 St Peter’s Church, Rowlestone, HR2 0DW | 15 St Clydawg’s Church, Clodock, HR2 0PD |
| 13 St Peter’s Church, Llancillo, HR2 0DS | 16 Longtown Castle, HR2 0LE |
| 14 St Mary’s Church, Walterstone, HR2 0DX | |

Stage 3: Longtown to Dorstone, 20 miles / 32 km

Journey across a wild, remote landscape in Herefordshire’s highlands, including the Black Mountains, taking in unrivalled views before falling under the spell of the neolithic Arthur’s Stone.



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|---|--------------------------------------|
| 17 St Bueno & Peter’s Church, Llanveyno HR2 0NQ | 21 Cusop Hill, Source of River Dore |
| 18 Black Hill, Black Mountains | 22 Merbach Hill, Black Mountains |
| 19 Craswall Priory, HR2 0PX | 23 Arthur’s Stone, Dorstone, HR3 6AX |
| 20 Cefn Hill, Black Mountains | |

Where to Eat and Stay

The map includes places to eat & drink and stay along the route. They are listed in map order, starting at the end of stage 1 at Abbey Dore/ Ewyas Harold, providing options to plan your own itinerary.

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| | | Pond & Beyond, Abbey Dore, HR2 0AA |
| | | Abbey Dore Pod, Abbey Dore, HR2 0AA |
| | | Home Farm Dulas, Dulas, HR2 0HJ |
| | | The Temple Bar Inn, Ewyas Harold, HR2 0EU |
| | | Carpenter’s Arms, Walterstone, HR2 0DX |
| | | St Clydawg’s Church, Clodock, HR2 0PD |
| | | The Crown Inn, Longtown, HR2 0LT |
| | | Offas Dyke Retreat, Longtown, HR2 0NA |
| | | The Bridge Inn, Michaelchurch Escley, HR2 0JW |
| | | Bridgefarm House B&B, Michaelchurch Escley, HR2 0JW |
| | | The Bulls Head, Craswall, HR2 0PN |
| | | Chapel House Farm, Craswall, HR2 0PN |
| | | Olchon Valley Campsite, Llanveynoe, HR2 0NH |
| | | Badgers Den and Gooses Roost East View Farm, Westbrook, HR3 5SY |
| | | The Pandy Inn, Dorstone, HR3 6AN |
| | | The Pandy B&B, Dorstone, HR3 6AN |
| | | St. Faith’s Church, Dorstone, HR3 6AW |
| | | Old House Farm B&B, Dorstone, HR3 6BL |
| | | Highfield B&B, Dorstone, HR3 5SU |

The Twin Valley Ley Line Trail

Scenic Walking Route

Stage 1: Dorstone to Ewyas Harold – 16 miles / 26 km

The route begins at the northern end of the heavenly Golden Valley. Walk through open fields and tiny settlements, calling in at ancient ley line landmarks, from remote churches and lost castles to a tranquil abbey.

The origins of the Golden Valley's name are the source of speculation. The preponderance of 'gold' place names led Watkins to wonder whether gold traders' tracks ran this way. Others have suggested it is derived from 'd'or', French for gold, or the Welsh for water, 'dŵr'. Whatever its roots, it is a very apt name: the valley feels bathed in light.

1 St Faith's Church, Dorstone, HR3 6AW

The route begins at the head of the Golden Valley in the pretty village of Dorstone. The church sits on the banks of a stream which joins the River Dore a few metres downstream. Watkins believed the church was on a ley with the neolithic burial chamber, Arthur's Stone, which lies a mile away and is the final stop on the walk.

2 Dorstone Motte & Bailey, Dorstone

Wander down the small footpath next to the village hall to find a delightful gathering of trees on a gentle mound, once a motte and bailey, with a brook running alongside. Then start the walk out of Dorstone, which takes you over fields.

3 Snodhill Castle, Snodhill, HR3 6BG

A short detour off the route is Snodhill Castle. One of the largest and oldest Norman castles in Britain, it lay forgotten for over 350 years. It is unique for its innovations, including a 12-sided High Keep with twin-turreted entrance and unusually elaborate defences. Perfectly located to guard the prosperous Saxon villages nearby, it looks out over a lush patchwork of fields. Watkins believed that the castle was on several ley lines, including one with Arthur's Stone and Longtown Castle as well as Skirrid Fawr, over the border in Wales.

4 St Peter's Church, Peterchurch, HR2 ORS

Cross the River Dore into the village of Peterchurch. Founded in the 8th Century, St Peter's has a plaque on the south wall of a fish with a golden ring suspended from a chain around its neck. Story has it that monks from Dore Abbey went fishing in need of food and gold. They caught a fish with a golden chain around its neck so caught both in one. This tale beautifully explains the two different interpretations of the word Dore, originating from water and gold. This atmospheric church also houses 'The Hub', a centre for the community, complete with a cafe famed for its home-baked cakes.

Another point of interest nearby is St Peter's Well. This freshwater spring with reputed healing powers is off the Madley Road, just beyond Wellbrook.

5 St Bartholomew's Church, Vowchurch, HR2 ORB

The route continues to trace the River Dore before taking a quick loop to visit the picturesque St Bartholomew's in Vowchurch. The younger brother of Lewis Carroll was vicar here from 1895 to 1910, see a display of documents and photographs of his time here as well as coloured shields representing the arms of local families. It is said that John Abel, the celebrated 17th-century craftsman, undertook his first commission here in 1613 when he rebuilt the roof. There's also a prehistoric mark stone which has been turned into a churchyard cross – Watkins believed these stones were planted on specific routes to guide the way for megalithic travellers.

6 St Mary Magdalene's Church, Turnastone, HR2 ORA

On the way back from Vowchurch, peek into this tiny church to admire its handsome barrel roof. According to Watkins, the mark stone at Vowchurch points over the River Dore and aligns with this church. Nearby you'll spy the oldest filling station in the country with traditional pumps on either side of the garden gate.



7 St Margaret's Church, St Margarets HR2 OQW

Step out over quite steep fields until you reach St Margaret's Church. The landscape is wilder here and the vista extends to the hills of Dinedor, Aconbury, Garway and the Black Mountains. Inside the humble church, view the striking painted wall texts and the extraordinary oak-carved rood screen. Dating from 1520 it survived the post-reformation order that all such works should be destroyed. This is a fine example of a church that fascinated Watkins and which he documented through photography.

8 St Faith's Church, Bacton, HR2 OAR

Looking down onto the River Dore and the Golden Valley, the remote church of St Faith's has surprising regal connections. A local woman, Blanche Parry, served as personal attendant and confidante to Elizabeth I, Queen of England – see the 16th-century carved monument in her name. In 2015, it came to light that one of the church's intricately embroidered altar cloths was made from one of the queen's dresses. Believed to be the only piece of Elizabethan clothing in existence today, it now hangs in Hampton Court Palace and an exact replica is displayed in Bacton. There's a small water fountain outside for refilling bottles.



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Scenic Walking Route



9 Dore Abbey, HR2 0AA

Walk up lanes and through an orchard, following the River Dore. Approaching Dore Abbey from this aspect, it may appear unremarkable at first. However, this is a significant, spiritual place and deserves a visit. Today the Abbey is a secluded parish church, but in its prime it was one of the great medieval Cistercian monasteries of Britain. As such, it takes its place as a terminal on the Canterbury ley line which runs from the Abbey to Canterbury Cathedral via Gloucester Cathedral, Downing Street, Greenwich and Rochester Cathedral. Make time to contemplate the wall paintings, original stone altar and wooden carved screen, the work of John Abel.

10 Ewyas Harold Common, HR2 0JD

Hike up the steep field opposite the Abbey, heading for the top left corner, to reach the Common. There are fantastic views in all directions, including Garway Hill, the Black Mountains and the Golden Valley. And you might spot the Exmoor ponies which help manage the landscape. The spring which rises here is known locally as St Martin's Well.

11 St Michael's & All Angels Church, Ewyas Harold HR2 0TX

Wander down to Ewyas Harold to visit the church which sits on Dulas Brook and is known for its tower. Its walls are 7ft thick, a reflection of how churches here on this once troubled border between England and Wales needed to offer both a spiritual space and a safe harbour. The church is on a ley line with the village's motte and bailey castle, which is one of the earliest Norman castles built in England. It also aligns with Longtown Castle.



Stopping Over

The thriving village of Ewyas Harold makes an excellent overnight stop. Visit the 10th century motte and bailey, say hello to the friendly pair of donkeys and pick up provisions at the fabulously well-stocked village store. Alternatively, break a little earlier and stay in tranquil Abbey Dore.

Places to stay

-  Pond & Beyond, Abbey Dore, HR2 0AA
-  Abbey Dore Pod, Abbey Dore, HR2 0AA
-  Home Farm Dulas, Dulas, HR2 0HJ
-  The Temple Bar Inn, Ewyas Harold, HR2 0EU

Places to eat

-  The Temple Bar Inn, Ewyas Harold, HR2 0EU

Find more at visitherefordshire.co.uk

The Temple Bar Inn, Ewyas Harold



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The Twin Valley Ley Line Trail

Scenic Walking Route

Stage 2: Ewyas Harold to Longtown – 11 miles / 17.5 km

The second stage of the trail travels between the River Dore and the River Monnow, taking in enchanting villages and churches before arriving at Longtown Castle which was hailed as an epicentre of ley lines by Watkins. Over the course of this walk, the Black Mountains start to assert their dominance over the skyline.

12 St Peter’s Church, Rowlestone HR2 ODW

Leaving Ewyas Harold, you’ll walk through woods before arriving in Rowlestone. The simple village church boasts outstanding carvings which are the work of the celebrated Herefordshire School of Romanesque Sculpture. Watkins was also interested in the churchyard cross here – he believed many such crosses evolved from stones which had been used by our ancestors as points of assembly, tradition and superstition. Only 200m down the road, find Rowlestone Court which is the home of luxury farmhouse ice cream.

13 Llancillo Church, HR2 ODS

The route then heads on to Llancillo Church, a miniscule delight in the middle of a field. The Friends of Friendless Churches have taken it under their wing and dressed it as if a service were about to start. Nearby, you’ll also spy the remains of a motte and bailey castle. According to Watkins, both the church and castle are on a ley line with a peak in the Black Mountains.

14 St Mary’s Church, Walterstone, HR2 ODX

Continuing through idyllic countryside, you’ll skirt past Walterstone Iron Age Camp (no entry permitted) and then walk past Rocky Fold waterfall and woodland. It really feels a world away from anywhere. Once in Walterstone, soak up the view across to the Black Mountains. The pretty Grade II listed church has a Victorian interior and is on a ley line with the nearby motte and bailey. Next door is the 300-year-old Carpenter’s Arms pub, a perennial favourite with locals.

15 St Clydawg’s Church, Clodock, HR2 OPD

On the scenic footpath to Clodock, keep an eye out for Walterstone’s motte and bailey before crossing fields and following quiet lanes to the hamlet. The magical early and wholly unrestored church, built on the tomb of a 500AD King, has a superb three-decker pulpit. It’s a sublime setting in the shadow of the Black Mountains with the sparkling River Monnow running alongside. Sit on the flat stones and treat your toes to a paddle.

16 Longtown Castle, HR2 OLE




Track the River Monnow until the turn for Longtown, then pass through fields, looking out for Ponthendre. This 30ft high motte is thought to be the early predecessor of Longtown Castle. Entering the village, you’ll find the distinctive castle built on a mound. Strategically located close to the Black Mountains, the castle would have helped guard the English border from the invading Welsh. Watkins believed the mound had its origins much further back in Neolithic times and said the castle was in alignment with Arthur’s Stone and Llanthony Priory, as well as with Longtown Church and the Cat’s Back Ridge in the Black Mountains. Another ley connects it with Ponthendre.







Stopping Over

There are a few alternative spots to stay the night. Longtown is a lovely location and you can stock up on picnic supplies at Hopes of Longtown. Or, finish a little earlier and book an overnight stay in Clodock Church. If you would prefer to get a head start on Stage 3, then carry on to Craswall or take a detour to Michaelchurch Escley which is another delight.

Places to stay

-  St Clydawg’s Church, Clodock, HR2 OPD
-  The Crown Inn, Longtown, HR2 OLT
-  Offas Dyke Retreat, Longtown, HR2 ONA
-  The Bridge Inn, Michaelchurch Escley, HR2 OJW
-  Bridgefarm House B&B, Michaelchurch Escley, HR2 OJW
-  The Bulls Head, Craswall, HR2 OPN
-  Chapel House Farm, Craswall, HR2 OPN
-  Olchon Valley Campsite, Llanveynoe, HR2 ONH

Places to eat

-  Carpenter’s Arms, Walterstone, HR2 ODX
-  The Crown Inn, Longtown, HR2 OLT
-  The Bridge Inn, Michaelchurch Escley, HR2 OJW
-  The Bulls Head, Craswall, HR2 OPN

Find more at visitherefordshire.co.uk

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The Twin Valley Ley Line Trail

Scenic Walking Route

Stage 3: Longtown to Dorstone, 20 miles / 32 km

The final stage journeys across a wild, remote landscape. It tracks the River Monnow, with the looming Black Mountains as a constant companion, and then rises up into the Herefordshire highlands. Both rivers are born in these hills. Very sparsely populated, it's a challenging route which scales hills in the Black Mountains, before descending to Dorstone, past the spellbinding Arthur's Stone. The spectacular views make for a satisfying finale through this historical, untouched terrain.

17 St Bueno & Peter's Church, Llanveynoe, HR2 0NQ

Starting at Longtown Castle, the route heads through fields and past a pretty waterfall. Cross the River Monnow and walk up the hill to Llanveynoe Church. With its gorgeous views and its secluded location, there's a real sense of history beneath your feet. Take a look at the two Saxon stones embedded into the wall of the tiny church and imagine the ley which runs from here to Longtown Castle and Church.

18 Black Hill, Black Mountains

From Llanveynoe, the route heads up into the Black Mountains. Straddling the border between England and Wales, the views from the Cat's Back Ridge and the summit of Black Hill are simply magnificent. And you may even see the resident wild ponies too. Watkins identified Black Hill as a beacon, a spot used by our forebears to send fire signals to other settlements. He also believed ley lines often ran from beacon to beacon. Meanwhile the Cat's Back is on a ley line with Longtown Castle and Llanveynoe Church.

Continuing in the direction of Hay Bluff (a worthwhile detour if your legs can take it), the walk includes a short section on Offa's Dyke Path, constructed in the 8th century to divide King Offa's kingdom from what is now Wales. Watkins spent much time investigating lost sections of the Dyke and considered it to be a well-preserved ley line.

19 Craswall Priory, HR2 0PX

Craswall Priory is a special place, the highest of all the monastic sites in England at 1240ft above sea level. It is sited on private farmland but access on foot into the Priory grounds is permitted. Watkins' photographs record details of the church which have been subsequently lost. Life here would have been austere as it was home to the strict Grandmontine order. Seek out the intriguing yew tree which hugs the wall at the entrance.

The location of the Priory is significant – this spot is the meeting point of all the little springs which rise up in a fan-like formation around the valley to form the River Monnow. And it means the monks would have had a supply of pure drinking water. Watkins' fascination with local archaeology means that today we have superb photographic records of the Priory and other historically important sites.

20 Cefn Hill, Black Mountains

Continue to climb to reach the summit of Cefn Hill. Trek across the moorland at the top, looking out to Hay Bluff on the northern tip of the Black Mountains. Watkins believed the Midsummer ley ran from Cefn Hill through the Golden Well nearby and on to Bredwardine Castle.

21 Cusop Hill, Source of River Dore

Travelling along woodland tracks, country lanes and farmland you'll reach Cusop Hill. These highlands are the source of the River Dore, meaning that both the Dore and Monnow are born close together in this magnificent wild landscape. The trail then continues over undulating hills and common land, with a short section on the road. (The location of the source of the Dore is on private land so no entry is permitted.)

22 Merbach Hill

Brace yourself for the final ascent of the walk! Trek up the sharp incline of Merbach Hill and enjoy a sense of achievement on reaching the top. The panorama across the Wye Valley is nothing short of magnificent, with the River Wye snaking across the floodplain below.



Merbach Hill



Craswall Priory

23 Arthur's Stone, Dorstone, HR3 6AX

Catch your breath on the stroll to Arthur's Stone, much of it on quiet lanes. This spellbinding Neolithic burial chamber is said to have inspired C.S. Lewis, making its way into The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe as the stone table on which Aslan is sacrificed. According to Watkins, ley lines run in three directions, including an alignment with Snodhill Castle, Urishay Castle, Longtown Castle and Skirrid Fawr, also known as the Holy Mountain.

From here, follow the footpath down to Dorstone to complete the trail.



Arthur's Stone

Stopping Over

At the end of the final leg, rest your head in Dorstone. This beautiful village in the Golden Valley has an excellent country pub and several accommodation options.

Places to stay

-  Badgers Den and Gooses Roost
East View Farm, Westbrook, HR3 5SY
-  The Pandy B&B, Dorstone, HR3 6AN
-  St. Faith's Church, Dorstone, HR3 6AW
-  Old House Farm B&B, Dorstone, HR3 6BL
-  Highfield B&B, Dorstone, HR3 5SU

Places to eat

-  The Pandy Inn, Dorstone, HR3 6AN

Find more at visitherefordshire.co.uk

The Twin Valley Ley Line Trail has been written by Visit Herefordshire in partnership with the British Pilgrimage Trust. (www.britishpilgrimage.org) The Trust was established to advance British pilgrimage as a form of cultural heritage that promotes holistic wellbeing as well as community and diversity within our spiritual and geographical landscape.



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