

# Black & White VILLAGE TRAIL



## Welcome to the Black & White Villages of North-West Herefordshire and the market towns of Leominster and Kington.

Together they contain hundreds of timber framed buildings, many of great age. Their churches, too, remind us of the long history of this area, containing records of people and events going back to Domesday and beyond.

Today these villages still possess that feeling of community which many urban dwellers would dearly love to regain. An hour or two spent at any of the places on the Trail, visiting the church, the pubs, tea rooms and shops, looking at the houses and exchanging a word with the villagers, will give a taste of this desirable quality of country life. This circular trail is set out in a clockwise direction, and although the commentary starts and finishes in Leominster, you may join at any

point. The route is signed throughout with brown and white tourist signs. Please be prepared for, and patient with, farm vehicles, particularly on the minor roads. The total distance is about 40 miles (64kms) and with stops at the villages and places of interest along the way, the circuit will provide an enjoyable day's excursion at any time of the year.



Many of the houses to be seen on the Black & White Village Trail are timber-framed - that is, the framework of the house is built from green (unseasoned) oak, and the panels are infilled with lath - woven strips of wood and plaster. Occasionally, panels would be infilled with brick. Panels had limewash applied, often tinted with natural pigments.

The idea of decorating timber-framed houses by painting the beams black and the panels white is a surprisingly recent one. Many of the houses date from the 16th and 17th C. or earlier, when timbers were often left unpainted to weather naturally, while the panels were painted with pigmented limewash - sometimes both beams and panels were limewashed. In the 18th C. when stucco and stone finishes became fashionable, many houses had their timbers plastered over. 19th C. photographs of Herefordshire show houses which now have exposed beams, but which were then covered in plaster.

The practice of painting the beams black and panels white, in part to emphasise the intricate patterns of the timber frame, became established. Recently fashions have changed again and now some houses have had paint removed from beams to reveal the natural colour of the weathered wood, while the panels are limewashed in soft earth tones.



**Old Chapel Gallery**  
Contemporary Fine Arts and Crafts in Herefordshire

Daily 11 - 5 | Sunday 11 - 4

[www.oldchapelgallery.co.uk](http://www.oldchapelgallery.co.uk)

East Street, Pembridge, HR6 9HB | 01544 388 842

**Oaker Wood** 01568 780111 [www.oakerwoodleisure.co.uk/holiday](http://www.oakerwoodleisure.co.uk/holiday)

**Lowe Farm**  
bed & breakfast  
HEREFORDSHIRE

T: 01544 388395 or 07855 904715  
E: [juliet@lowe-farm.co.uk](mailto:juliet@lowe-farm.co.uk)  
[www.lowe-farm.co.uk](http://www.lowe-farm.co.uk)

**Kinnersley Self-Catering**

Artisan workshops in textiles together with characterful award winning accommodation 2 miles from the Welsh Border.

[www.herefordshireholidays.co.uk](http://www.herefordshireholidays.co.uk)  
07585004751 Jon and Pearl Taylor

**Westonbury Mill Water Gardens**  
Pembridge HR6 9HZ

Beautiful gardens, fantastic follies  
Lunches and teas, plant sales

11am - 5pm daily 1 April -30 Sept

[www.westonburymillwatergardens](http://www.westonburymillwatergardens)

**MONKLAND CHEESE DAIRY**

Cheesemaking | Cafe | Cheese shop

[www.monklandcheesedaairy.co.uk](http://www.monklandcheesedaairy.co.uk)

**Small Breeds Farm Park & Owl Centre**

OPEN EVERY DAY  
Feb Half Term - Oct Half Term

[www.owlcentre.com](http://www.owlcentre.com)

**BUZZARD HOUSE B&B**  
[info@buzzardhouse.co.uk](mailto:info@buzzardhouse.co.uk)  
[www.buzzardhouse.co.uk](http://www.buzzardhouse.co.uk)

**BURTON COURT**

[www.burtoncourt.com](http://www.burtoncourt.com)

A 14th century manor house open for guided tours of the house and grounds.  
Also luxury B&B, corporate, private hire and weddings.  
Open all year, tours by arrangement.

**WalkHerefordshire.com**

We can supply guides for guided walks, coach parties and private groups throughout the Black and White Villages.

Call us on 01568 614411 or e-mail [info@walkherefordshire.com](mailto:info@walkherefordshire.com)

# Black & White VILLAGE TRAIL

Discover the delightful Black and White Villages of North Herefordshire.

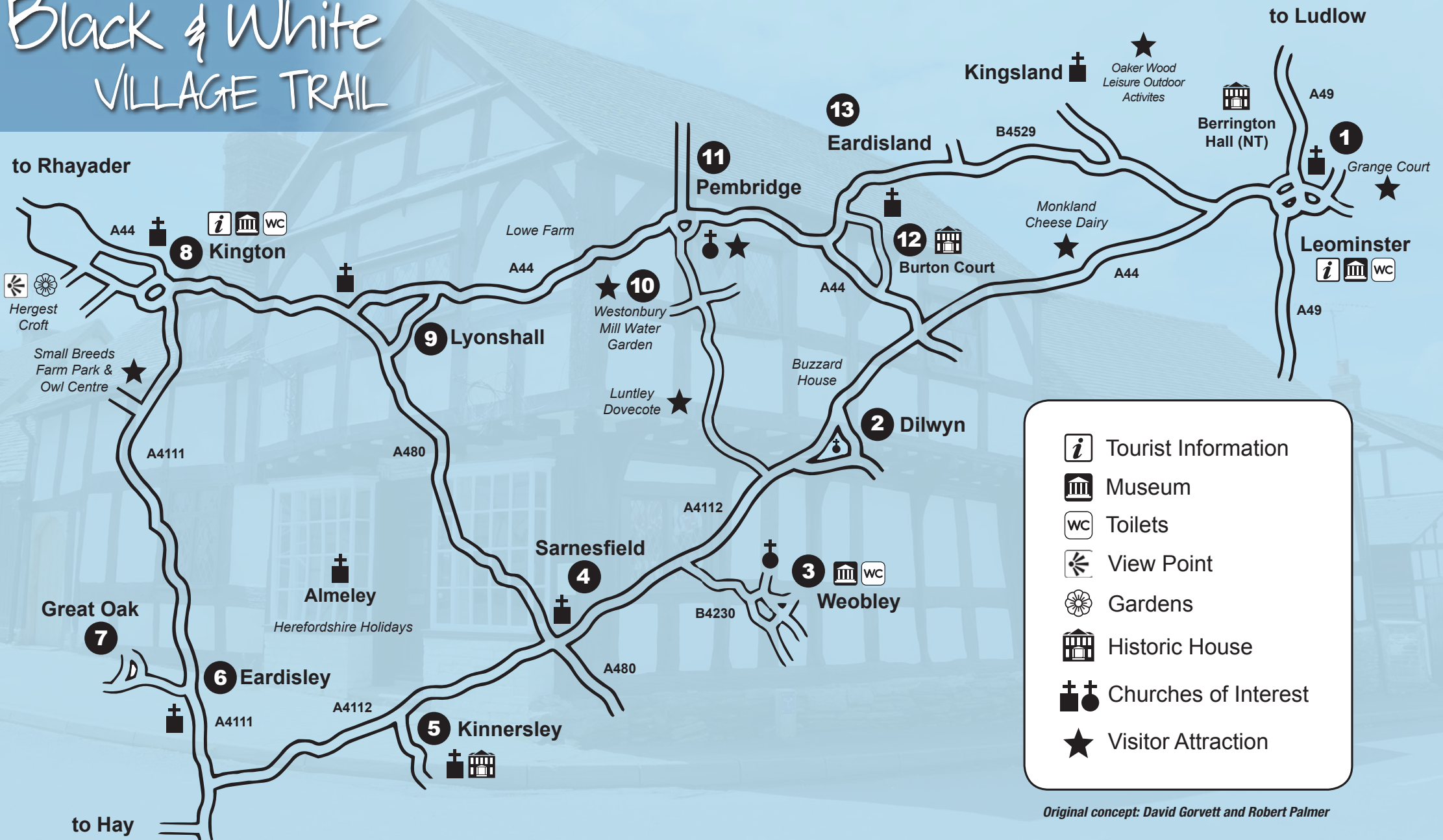
Set in the beautiful and historic borderlands of England and Wales.



[www.leominstertourism.com](http://www.leominstertourism.com)



# Black & White VILLAGE TRAIL



Original concept: David Gorvett and Robert Palmer

**1 Leominster** is an ancient market town on the River Lugg, which grew up around a Saxon monastery, founded about 660 AD. In medieval times it was famous for its fine wool, produced from the local Ryeland sheep. The Priory Church, intricately carved **Grange Court**, the wealth of half-timbered and historic buildings and the many antique shops make Leominster well worth a visit.

Leave Leominster on the A44, signed Rhayader, turning left (still A44) about a mile from the town centre, at Barons Cross. After about a mile you will reach Monkland.

**Detour turn right off the A44 signed Cheesemaking, to visit Monkland Cheese Dairy, where Little Hereford Cheese is handmade to original recipes. Cafe and farm shop open daily Easter – mid October. Nov-Easter Mon– Sat. Cheesemaking days Mon, Wed, Fri 10am-2pm. Last entry 1.15pm. T: 01568 720307.**

Rejoin the A44 and after about 3 miles turn left to **2 DILWYN** Drive down past the church to reach the village green, surrounded by black and white cottages. Opposite the green is the Old Forge Gallery & Tea Room, coach parties are welcome by arrangement only T: 01544 319306. On leaving, continue past the green on your left to rejoin the main road, now the A4112 signed Brecon.

After about 2 miles turn left signed Weobley, onto the B4230, driving past the former workhouse before turning left and then right by the Lal Bagh Restaurant, formerly the Red Lion into the main street. Watch out for Weobley's black and pink house on the way in!

**3 WEOBLEY** pronounced Webley - The village prospered from the medieval wool trade, and later through glove and ale making – Weobley ale was famous for its quality. Charles 1 stayed here after the battle of Naseby in 1645. The spire of the fine church is a landmark for miles around. Sadly, a number of Weobley's black and white houses were destroyed by fire in 1943, but a remarkable collection of buildings still survives.

Return to the A4112 and turn left (signed Brecon). You will shortly pass **4 SARNESFIELD** a small village whose churchyard contains the grave of John Abel, Charles 1's King's Carpenter, the builder of **Grange Court** (Leominster) and many other Herefordshire buildings. The church is on the main road on the right. Please take extreme care if you decide to stop. Continue on the A4112 to reach **5 KINNERSLEY** in about 2 miles. Just before the village, on the left, is Kinnersley Castle, an impressive Elizabethan House remodelled from a medieval castle by Roger Vaughan about 1588. The Castle is open only occasionally – always check in advance with Leominster Tourist Information Centre. Next to the Castle is the impressive church, which houses a remarkable collection of monuments - the Smalman, monument (1635) with family members in Stuart costume and plump, trumpeting cherubs, is particularly appealing.

About 2 miles further on turn right at the T-junction with the A4111 (signed Rhayader) to enter **6 EARDISLEY**

St Mary's Church, on the left, contains a wonderful font of c.1150, decorated in the Herefordshire style of Romanesque carving.

Further along the main street, with its pretty cottages and gardens, is Tram Square, named for the horse-drawn tramway from Brecon to Kington which ran through Eardisley from 1818 until the coming of the railway.

**Detour turn left on reaching Tram Square, down the minor road alongside the Tram Inn signed Woods Eaves. After about a mile, turn right by a chapel to visit one of Herefordshire's most remarkable veteran trees, the 900 year old hollow 7 GREAT OAK of Eardisley.**

Return to Tram Square and turn left on the A4111 toward Kington. The road climbs for 3 miles up to Kingswood Reservoir. The lay-by on the right provides a fine view of Herefordshire to the east and a foretaste of the Radnorshire Hills westward. Shortly afterwards is a left turn signed Kingswood.

**Detour turn left for Kingswood, and in about a mile you will reach the Small Breeds Farm Park and Owl Centre an award-winning family attraction with an endearing collection of miniature, rare and unusual animals as well as one of the finest collections of owls in Europe. Open from Feb half term until the end of Oct half term. Tea room and gift shop. Coach parties or tea stops by arrangement only. T: 01544 231109. Admission charge.**

Return to the A4111, turning left for Kington, until reaching a roundabout with the A44. Turn left into town centre of **8 KINGTON**. There is car parking at the Market Hall end of High Street.

Kington is one of Herefordshire's five market towns, named for Edward the Confessor. The original town clustered around the impressive church, and the area is reputedly haunted by a black dog said to be Conan Doyle's inspiration for 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'. Beyond the church, Ridgebourne Lane leads to the famous gardens of Hergest Croft. Spectacular rhododendrons and azaleas, in spring, sensational autumn colour from maples and birches, a traditional kitchen garden and many champion trees. Open Easter - end Oct, 12 - 5.30 pm. Tea room and shop. T:01544 230160. Admission charge.

Kington is located on the English/Welsh border, and possesses the highest golf club in England, over 390 metres above sea level. It is an ideal centre for walking, situated on Offa's Dyke long distance path, and at one end of the Mortimer Trail. In the town centre is a Museum and TIC, (both seasonal), plus a range of traditional shops.

Return to the roundabout and follow the A44 Leominster signs. You will shortly pass Penrhos Court, a fine 14th C. house on the right. In about 1 mile you'll reach **9 LYONSHALL**, with a church on the left.

Turn right here to park in the lay-by. Walk back to the A44, cross the main road carefully, and visit the delightful church. Alongside lie the remains of the castle, now hidden by trees. A well preserved section of Offa's Dyke lies to the south-west.

After returning to the car, proceed into the centre of the village between the Royal George Pub and the Old Forge. Turn left immediately after the pub to return to the A44. The junction with the main road is marked by a group of firs, such as the drovers planted in the 19th C. to mark key places on their routes. Continue along A44 passing the Westonbury Mill Water Gardens on your right hand side.

**Detour turn right off A44, following signs for 10 Westonbury Mill Water Garden, a two acre garden laid out around a tangle of streams and ponds behind an old corn mill. Gardens are open from 1st April – end of Sept, facilities include a cafe offering morning coffees, light lunches and afternoon teas. T: 01544 388650. Admission charge.**

Rejoin the A44 and continue along until reaching **11 PEMBRIDGE** Pembridge has wonderful timber framed buildings along its main street. Park in the car park (on the left past the garage) and walk around. A short stroll along the main street will reveal some fine almshouses, and some splendid timber buildings. You will also find a few shops and craft outlets, including the **Old Chapel Gallery** and award-winning cafe 'The Steppes' in a small square the Market Hall still stands in front of the 17th C. New Inn and steps lead up from the Market Place to St. Mary's Church with its remarkable detached bell tower. This extraordinary structure, more pyramid or pagoda than conventional tower, is supported by massive 14th C. timbers, and houses the clock and a ring of five bells.

**Detour drive through the Market Square, follow signs for 'Dunkertons'. Although cider is no longer produced here there is still a cider shop with limited opening times and the Cider Barn restaurant.**

A short distance further along the lane brings you to Luntley Dovecote, a reminder that in Herefordshire even the pigeons have black and white houses!

Return to Pembridge and turn right from the Market Place onto the main road – A44.

After 2 miles turn left at a junction signed Eardisland. Turn right at the edge of the village to reach **12 BURTON COURT**. This 18th C. House, with its neo-Tudor front designed by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, encloses a 14th C. great hall with a fine timber roof. Pre-booked lunches and group tours of the house are available. T: 01544 388222

From the house turn left, retracing your route, then right at the junction to enter the village of **13 EARDISLAND**

Eardisland, on the River Arrow, is perhaps the prettiest village in Herefordshire. An exceptional building is Staik House, build around 1300 as a Yeoman's Hall, with many original windows and doors intact. The 17th C. Georgian dovecote contains over 900 nesting alcoves in the upper storey and is now a village shop. The church of St Mary The Virgin, which is of Norman origin, is always ready to welcome visitors who wish to sample the peace and calm of a traditional village church. Eardisland grew around a castle which has long since vanished, although the great moated mound where the castle once stood can still be seen.

Continue through Eardisland towards Leominster, a journey of about 4 miles.

**Detour about 3 miles from Eardisland, turn left, signed Kingsland, and drive into the village – about 1 mile. Kingsland is a large and attractive village with a number of black and white houses as well as fine examples of 17th and 18th C. brick buildings. It is also home to Border Oak, a company which continues the Black and White convention by building half-timbered houses using traditional methods all over the world.**

Retrace your route to the main road, turn left, and in about 1 mile you will reach **1 LEOMINSTER**.

Visit  
Herefordshire

EAT SLEEP LIVE  
HEREFORDSHIRE