



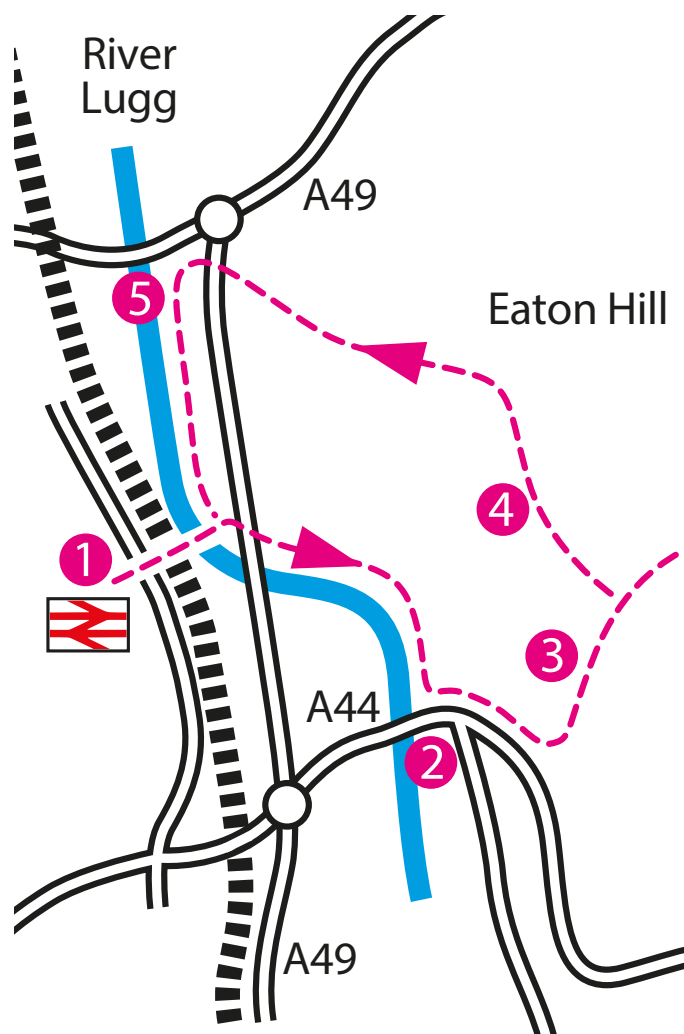
Please remember the Countryside code

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants & animals
- Take litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people at all times



1

Family Walks around Leominster



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Rotary



Eaton Hill walk



2 miles , uphill after the riverside
then downhill or flat.

5 stiles, 3 gates, steps before the
railway line crossing.

Start at the White Lion Inn, Etnam Street, near
Leominster Railway Station.

OS map explorer 202.





“On Eaton Hill, townspeople and others thereabouts come once a year to sport and play,”

John Leland, Itinerary, circa 1540

The walk begins at the **White Lion**, a fine timber framed inn circa 1600, best viewed from its garden on the east side. **Butts Bridge**, derives its name from a former rifle range between the River Lugg and Eaton Hill. Today’s unglamorous concrete bridge is said to have replaced a cast iron footbridge, **Lammas Bridge** – named because of its proximity to the ancient Lammas Meadows of the Lugg floodplain. They were common lands - each commoner was able to harvest hay from a designated strip or ‘dole.’ Livestock could not graze the land until Lammas, August 1st.

Easters Wood, was Lammas meadow given to the townspeople in the 13c by Lady Matilda Mowbray of Clifford Castle near Hay. Matilda owned lands around Leominster. She had a special affection for the town and was buried at Leominster Priory. Leominster’s commons, including the Lammas Meadows, were lost in the 19c Enclosure Acts. In recent times the site of the wood was privately-owned arable land. Following a successful public appeal to buy the land, the wood was planted by the Woodland Trust to mark the millennium. Local families brought their spades for a volunteers day and many children planted their first tree.

Eaton Bridge, dating from the 16c, carries the A44 over the Lugg. The road was once a stagecoach route from London to the Welsh coast. There was a tollgate to the west of the bridge in the turnpike roads era.

The Ancient Steps (remains of) near West Eaton, are of great antiquity. Leominster’s Benedictine Priory founded in the 12c and its Saxon monastic predecessors held important properties to the east of Leominster, including the farms of Ford Abbey, Fencote Abbey and Moor Abbey.

The path over Eaton Hill was an important route for people and pack animals for centuries. Poorer tenants of the Priory walked to town carrying threshed corn to pay their dues at the Great Tithe Barn in The Grange.

Eaton Hill - When the Tudor chronicler John Leland travelled through Herefordshire he heard about a local custom of gathering on Eaton for May Day “sport and play.” He heard, also, about the site of Comfort Castle, a former Saxon fort at the north end of the hill.

“The common fame of people about Leominster is that King Merwald and some of his successors had a castle or palace on the hill,” wrote Leland in the 1540s when earthworks were still visible. The spot was marked as “site of demolished castle” on Taylor’s 1754 map of Leominster. On private land, Historic England lists it as a site of interest but says no remains can be found.

The route returns to the river at **Ridgemoor Bridge**, near the confluence of the Lugg and Ridgemoor Brook. According to legend, St Edfrith, a 7th century monk from the north, paused to rest at ‘Ridgmouth.’

Confronted by a lion (!) he pacified and shared his bread with the creature, taking this as a good omen for the success of his Christian mission. The local ruler, Merwald, was first to be Baptised in the Lugg.

1. White Lion – follow path past pub garden, cross railway and river bridges, TR, follow River Lugg downstream under A49 bypass, then past Easters Wood on riverbank path to –

2. Eaton Bridge (A44) – ignore stile to road. TL on field path by hedge, cross stile at end. Continue ahead on pavement past West Eaton nursing home. Just after, TL through small gate for walkers set in large gate by footpath sign. Continue uphill.

3. Eaton Hill, The Ancient Steps – Continue uphill, TL over stile by gate along part of an old green lane, then on field edge. At field corner cross stile, continue past wooded area to cross another stile, continue ahead.

4. Eaton Hill solar plant. Cross track by entrance, continue up bank. Follow track down if footpath is slippery. Follow hilltop footpath through woodland and downhill to gate. Continue on track past houses to the busy A49 road. CAUTION - cross road with great care. By FP sign go down steps and through gate to

5. Easters Court (commercial site) TL, TR, to pass main building on your right. Continue across forecourt, cross stile by main gate, TL through kiss gate, follow riverbank footpath to next bridge (Butts Bridge). Cross river and railway, return to **White Lion Inn**.

