Golden Valley Pilgrim Way [GVPW]: Overview

This is a stunning 6/7 day circular, 'bring your own beliefs or none' pilgrimage route, along beautiful and ancient paths that begins and ends at Hereford Cathedral. Hereford can be accessed by public transport from anywhere in the country making this an environmentally sensitive pilgrimage option. With the route being circular if you do arrive by car you don't have the hassle of having to find a way back to where you left the car.

The trail itself, links the Wye Valley with the Golden Valley and the flower meadows and foothills of the Black Mountains. Once you leave the city and the Cathedral behind, this is a rich and silent land, good for the body as well as the soul.

Approximately 60 miles long you will come across apple orchards, sacred sites, ruined castles, holy wells, and Arthurian legends as well as hidden farms that produce local ciders and ice cream. There is a real contrast between gentle wooded river valleys and stunning views of mountain landscapes with one or two spots for wild swimming.

Uniquely, along the way, and for a suggested donation of £22 [£25 in the winter], you can sleep overnight in medieval churches, we call these our night sanctuaries. We have 10 churches that act as night sanctuaries for this purpose. A beautifully illustrated pilgrim credential or passport can be stamped in each church. All but two of these churches is situated in villages with fine country pubs where you can eat local produce at the end of a day of walking. Village stores are located on each section of the walk where you can refuel and restock your packed lunch.

In addition The Golden Valley Pilgrim Way includes a 3/4 day path, also beginning and ending at Hereford Cathedral, as well as an 82 mile cycling route.

To order your credential and access the booking system as well as the historical guide please contact Anne Lloyd Deanery Administrator on abbeydoredmc@gmail.com

For further information and guided pilgrimages contact Simon Lockett on simon@wildearthpilgrimage.co.uk

Recommended route sections, accommodation and amenities along the way for walkers

Pilgrims are now able to stay in the cloisters of Hereford Cathedral on the night before they begin their pilgrimage and on the night at the end of the pilgrimage. This can be booked along with your other night sanctuary stays through Anne Lloyd.

Please check the websites of each pub and food venue for opening times and availability.

Day 1

Hereford Cathedral to Eaton Bishop 5 miles or Madley 6.5 miles or Tyberton 10 miles

Accommodation

Eaton Bishop Night Sanctuary: Perfect if you are leaving later on in the day from Hereford. No shop or pub.

Madley Night Sanctuary: The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Madley Church or Stables with all facilities in the Stables. Fully equipped kitchen and shower.

Tyberton Night Sanctuary: St Mary's Church with portaloo toilet facilities and washing up and hot drink making facilities fridge and microwave

Food and drink:

Madley Village Store and Post Office

Madley The Comet Pub; The Red Lion; Madley's Mighty Mix Takeaway

Preston on Wye The Yew Tree 1.5miles from St Mary's, Tyberton

Highlights

Hereford Cathedral has the pilgrims scallop shell symbol at the entrance to the North porch engraved into the paving. There is also a small medieval carving of a pilgrim figure on the left-hand side as you enter the porch.

The Thomas Traherne stainglass windows by Thomas Denny in the Audley Chapel depict the beautiful countryside of Herefordshire. Trahern's poetry is in keeping with a celebration of nature which this pilgrimage seeks to capture.

Eaton Bishop St Micheal and All Angels Church amazing stained glass

Madley Crypt is in the recently published book Britain's best 500 sacred spaces. The large triptych of the seasons of the year is by Ed Kelly. The large contemporary paintings in the Nave also by Ed Kelly, depict the life of St Dyfrig.

Tyberton: just inside the front door is a print of Roy de Maistre's painting 'The supper at Emmaus' where Christ eats with two pilgrims.

Day 2

Madley to Dorstone: 12 miles or Tyberton to Dorstone 8.5 miles

Accommodation

Dorstone Night Sanctuary St Faiths Church, with portaloo toilet and basic washing and cooking facilities

Food and drink

Byecross Farm and Campsite to the north and a 10 minute detour from the path has a shop

Fine Street Ciders on path above and to the south west of Bredwardine

The Pandy Inn, Dorstone

Highlights

Moccas Church 0.5 miles off route. Green Man carved in roof over sanctuary

Bredwardine St Andrews Church with its Sheelanagig; ancient motte and fish pools. Wild swimming in the River Wye down from the church

Dorstone Hill: Arthurs stone on route and north of Dorstone

Day 3

Dorstone to Michealchurch 9.5 miles

Accommodation

Michealchurch Night Sanctuary: St Micheal and All Angels Church with hot drink making facilities. For washing, toilets and shower please use facilities at the Bridge Inn next door where there is also a campsite. There is a small charge for this.

Peterchurch 3.5 miles from Dorstone:

St Peters Church Night Sanctuary: With heated floor so a good winter option

Food and drink

The Nags Head

The Hub at St Peters Café https://www.hubcommunity.org

The Boughton Arms

Peterchurch Village Store and Post Office

Food for Thought restaurant [evenings only]

Poston Mill: Caravan Site and Pub ½ a mile detour from route south east of Peterchurch

Highlights

Snodhill Castle ½ mile off path

Peterchurch St Peters Well on the path ½ a mile from St Peters church

Day 4

Michealchurch to Clodock 12 miles

Accommodation

Craswall Night Sanctuary: St Mary's Church. Pilgrims will be able to access water, toilets and showers at Chapel House Farm. Chapel House Farm also has a farm shop and sells pizzas and does the most amazing breakfasts. This breaks up Day 4 with Craswall being 4 miles from Michealchurch and 8 miles from Clodock. Staying at Craswall creates something of a gentle day half way through the pilgrimage.

Clodock Night Sanctuary: St Clydawg's Church with all facilities inside church including warm enclosed area.

Food and drink

Craswall

Chapel House Farm, Farm shop on route and down the lane from St Mary's Church, Craswall. Access water, toilets and showers and also their small shop with drinks etc.

The Bulls Head, Craswall

Longtown The Crown, Longtown

Longtown Hopes of Longtown Village Store and Post Office

Clodock The Cornewall Arms [drinks only]

Highlights

Craswall: A contemporary celtic cross made by Ken Watkins opposite the south facing porch of St Mary's Church

Cats Back Take a short detour up the Cats back for amazing views. A path after the Cats back will take you to St Thomas' well and crossing Offas Dyke you can walk to the Holy well and Church of St Issui, Partrishow in Wales.

Llanveynoe St Peter and St Beuno's Church with ancient cross inside church.

Between Llanveynoe and Longtown wild swimming away from it all and on the path

Longtown Longtown Castle on path

Clodock St Clydawg's well follow road over the bridge just after the pub and turn right onto the path going alongside the eastern bank of the River Monnow. The well is 200 yards down this path.

Day 5

Clodock to Ewyas Harold 8 miles

Accommodation

Ewyas Harold Night Sanctuary: St Michaels and All Angels Church with all facilities in the Parish Hall

Food and drink

Walterstone The Carpenters Arms 2.5 miles from Clodock

Rowlestone Rowlestone Court Farm Ice Cream and Camping

Ty Gwyn Cider Bar and shop 1 mile from the path following road going east from Rowlstone Court Farm

Ewyas Harold

The Temple Bar Inn

The Dog Inn

The Old Stables Fish and Chips

Village Store and Post Office

Highlights

Walterstone St Mary's Church beautiful depictions of angel faces on memorial stones

Llancillo St Peter's Church is isolated and wild

Rowlestone St Peter's Church

Day 6

Ewyas Harold to Kingstone 9 miles

Accommodation

Kingstone Night Sanctuary: St Micheal and All Angels with all facilities

Food and drink

Gwatkins Red Cow Cider Farm and Restaurant [5 miles from Ewyas Harold on path]

Kingstone

The Bull Ring

Village store and Post Office

Highlights

Ewyas Harold St Martins well on western border of Ewyas Harold Common

Abbey Dore Dore Abbey on path

Day 7

Kingstone to Hereford Cathedral 7 miles

Accommodation

Hereford Cathedral Cloisters

Food and Drink

Belmont: The Cantilupe Restaurant, Hedley Lodge, St Micheals Abbey 500 yards detour

Many options in Hereford

Highlights

Clehonger All Saints church

Belmont St Micheals Abbey Benedictine Monastery

Recommended route sections and accommodation for cyclists

Cyclists can make up there own itinerary using the night sanctuaries as there are many lanes and alternative routes in this area. For stocking up with provisions please see walking recommended routes for the location of village stores

However here are some recommendations:

2 days 1 night going anti-clockwise

The midway night sanctuaries if cycling the route in 2 days and covering approximately 40 miles each day are

Craswall Night Sanctuary: 41 miles from start: St Mary's Church can accommodate cycling pilgrims. Pilgrims will be able to access water, toilets and showers at the Chapel House Farm Campsite. Chapel House Farm also has a farm shop, sells pizzas on some nights and can provide the most amazing breakfasts.

Supper: The Bulls Head or Chapel House Farm

Michealchurch Night Sanctuary: 45 miles from start: St Micheal and All Angels Church with hot drink making facilities. For washing, toilets and shower please use facilities at the Bridge Inn next door where there is also a campsite. There is a small charge for this.

Supper: The Bridge Inn

3 days 2 nights anti-clockwise

Dorstone Night Sanctuary: 29 miles from start: St Faiths Church, with portaloo toilet and basic washing and cooking facilities.

Supper: The Pandy Inn, Dorstone

Clodock Night Sanctuary: 54 miles from start: St Clydawg's Church with all facilities inside church including warm enclosed area.

Supper: The Crown, Longtown, 0.5 miles before Clodock church on the route.

The steepest and certainly the longest climb by far is before Craswall going anticlockwise: See link for elevation diagram:

https://explore.osmaps.com/route/8589744/cycling-route-gvpw?lat=51.954309&lon=-3.005773&zoom=12.6996&style=Leisure&type=2d&overlays=&placesCategory=

Here is the easiest recommended route:

5 days 4 nights clockwise:

Ewyas Harold Night Sanctuary: 16 miles from start: St Michaels and All Angels Church with all facilities in the Parish Hall

Supper: The Temple Bar Inn or The Old Stables Fish and Chips

Michealchurch Night Sanctuary: 36 miles from start

St Micheal and All Angels Church with hot drink making facilities. For washing, toilets and shower please use facilities for a small fee at the Bridge Inn next door where there is also a campsite

Supper: The Bridge Inn

Dorstone Night Sanctuary: 52 miles from start: St Faiths Church, with portaloo toilet and basic washing and cooking facilities.

Supper: The Pandy Inn, Dorstone

Tyberton Night Sanctuary: 68 miles from start

St Mary's Church with portaloo toilet facilities and washing up and hot drink making facilities, fridge and microwave

Supper: There is no pub in Tyberton so you can either eat at the Yew Tree in Preston on Wye which you will pass about 3.5 miles before Tyberton or cycle on to Madley another 3.5 miles from Tyberton heading back to Hereford and eat at the Red Lion or the Comet Inn. You can also stay in the Madley church Night Sanctuary as another option.