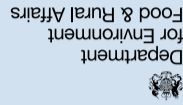




# Herefordshire Parklands WALK 1 Eardisley & Almeley Parklands

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Please Note: The routes described in this leaflet do not grant any right of access to any site or parkland, other than passage along the statutory right of way(s) marked for the route.  
Other walks leaflets available: Kington & Huntington Parklands, Lyonshall & Titeley Parklands  
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## Starting the walk in Eardisley

Park at the car park for the 'Tram Inn' in Eardisley. Turn right down Church Road, cross a small brook and follow the grassy, way-marked footpath on the left. The path runs behind houses and follows the stream onto open land. At the next kissing gate, turn left onto a straight, raised embankment - the route of the Kington to Eardisley Tram road.



The Kington to Eardisley tram road (Lewis Goldwater)

### 1 Brecon to Hay to Eardisley Tram Road

In 1811 an Act of Parliament was passed to construct a tram road from the canal at Brecon to Hay and onto Eardisley with a view to continuing it to Leominster, though this latter section was

not completed. Its purpose was to carry coal, iron, lime, corn and other commodities. The tram road was completed in 1818 from the canal at Brecon to Eardisley. It was then continued through to Kington, opened in 1820 and out to Burlingjobb in Radnorshire, 34 miles. Parts were absorbed into the Kington and Eardisley Railway in 1861. Various sections remain today and can be clearly seen in the landscape. (HER.35537)

After the metal kissing gate, cross the road and through a way-marked, field gate. Continue with the tram road to your right. The path cuts across the arable field to a grazed field with woodland on one side. Note the hollowing field maple on the right and further on, a veteran ash tree. This open field was once part of a narrow field system but only the mature trees now mark the boundary.

### 2 What is a Veteran Tree?

Veteran Trees are those that are of biodiversity, landscape and cultural interest. They are usually in their ancient stage of life or are old in relation to other trees of the same species.

Many trees are indicators of past land management and use. They vary widely in species and physically take many forms such as coppice, pollard, maiden or a phoenix regeneration. However, unlike most other heritage features, these trees also have an added ecological value. Veteran trees may support a wide range of fauna and fungal bodies, many of which are only associated with long periods of continuity in their habitat.



Veteran ash tree (Lewis Goldwater)

The mature woodland on the right forms the southern end of Holywell Dingle. A series of ponds are just visible. Shortly after, the path turns right through a scrubby glade. This is excellent habitat for woodland birds.

You are now entering the picturesque valley, possibly landscaped for the parkland of Lemoire. Older maps suggest the name was 'Lower Moor'.



The picturesque wooded valley at Lemoire (HNT)

### 3 Lemoire Landscape Park, Eardisley

Lemoire was the family home of the Cokes, including George Coke, bishop of Hereford in the 17th century. A moat lies somewhat to the north of the house, indicating an early origin. The present house may have been built in the 1850s. It is shown on the 1885 OS 6' map with restricted grounds and a drive from the Hereford-Kington road. A possible park lies to the east. The nearby gorge at Holywell Dingle may have been a picturesque walk for the owners of Lemoire.

The path crosses a bridge and continues north, following the stream. At a way-marker, either drop down along the stream side or continue along a higher path. The lower path may be wet at times (*care should be taken*). The upper path may be overgrown but is mainly level.

### 4 Holywell Dingle

This wooded ravine with its steep sides, fast flowing stream, and mature trees may be fragment of ancient woodland. Today is home to many species of plant, birds and mammals.

## Walk 1: Almeley & Eardisley Parklands

Location: Northwest Herefordshire

Start: Either at Eardisley, The Tram Inn car park or Almeley, The Bells Inn car park or Almeley opposite Primary School

Finish: Eardisley or Almeley

Length: From Eardisley – 11.8 km; from Almeley 10 km.

Time to walk: Allow approximately 4-5 hours.

Difficulty and Terrain: Moderate difficulty,

mostly level ground but ground may be wet across fields, occasionally steep, slippery ground through woodland. Strong walking boots recommended.

Map: OS 125000 Explorer 201 Kington & Presteigne/Kington & Hay-on-Wye

Refreshments: The Bells Inn at Almeley, The Tram Inn at Eardisley



Remains of a stone dam in Holywell Dingle (HNT)

In several locations are the remains of stone dams built to create attractive, ornamental pools. There are mature trees (beech, horse-chestnut, limes and exotic conifers) which would probably have been planted to enhance the appearance of the valley. An ancient yew tree grows close to site of a spring (with a more modern, brick housing). This spring is probably the origin of the name 'Holy Well'. The site is now a nature reserve, managed by the Herefordshire Nature Trust.

Follow the public footpath to the top of the dingle, then exit to the right over a stile. The path doubles back diagonally across the field. In the corner, cross a wooden bridge and turn left onto a farm track to 'New House Farm'. Turn left onto a quiet lane to 'The Parks' farm. Just after the farm, turn right onto the right-of-way through a gate, and follow the field edge to the next gateway. Continue over a culverted stream. Note the old fish pond on the right the parkland planting of oaks and a Wellingtonia. Continue through to one of the inner roads of Nieuport House.

## 5 Nieuport House and Historic Garden

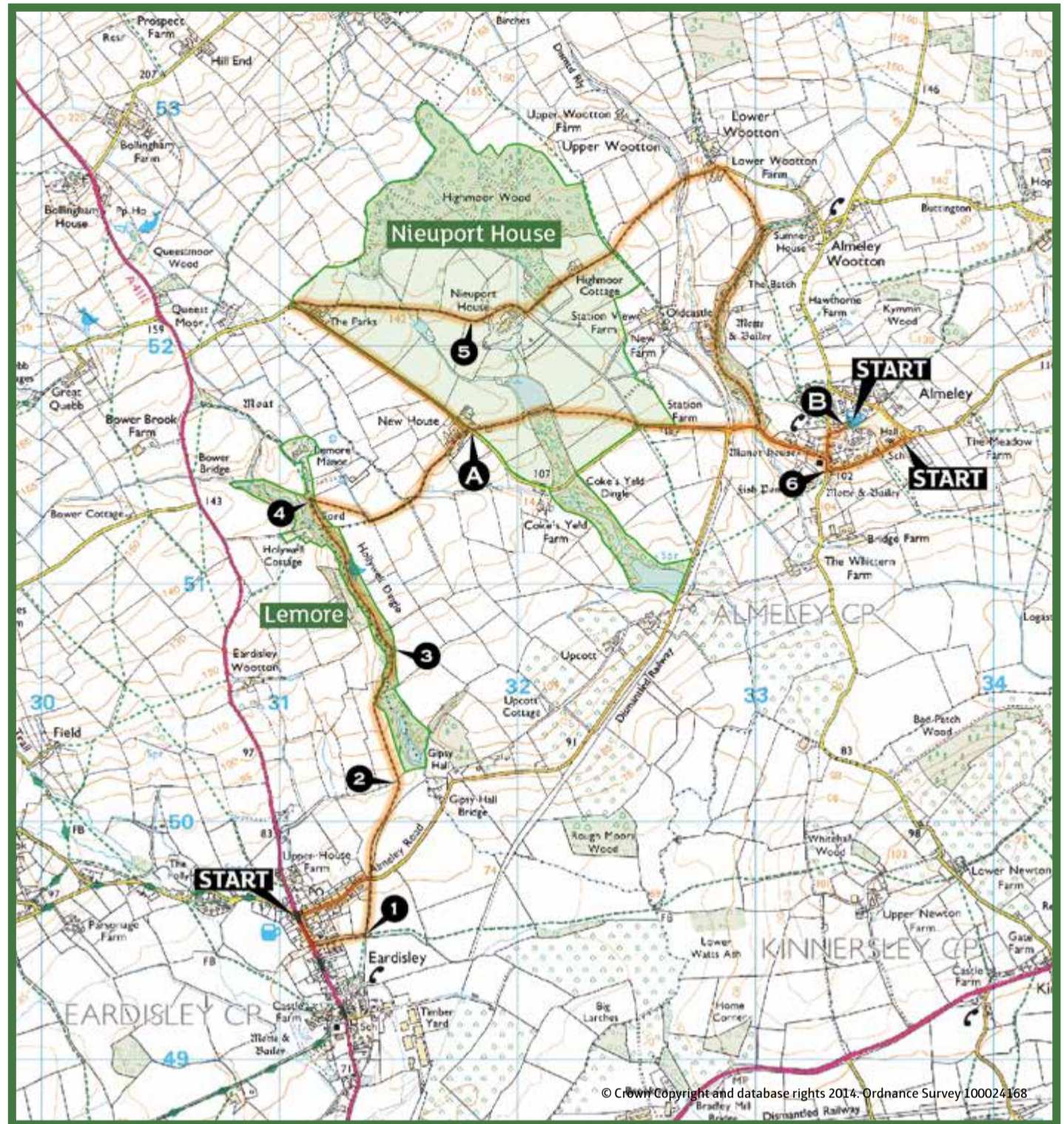
Nieuport (formerly Newport) is a medieval estate. A 1683 illustration shows a high-gabled house with a formal garden surrounded by a pale. Nieuport was bought in 1712 by Thomas, 1st Lord Foley of Great Witley for his grandson, Paul Foley. A new brick house of 17 bays was erected c.1718. The outer garden included a stretch of water which still survives. The boundaries around the house were demolished to allow the creation of an informal landscape, shown on a 1774 plan. In 1863, the Foleys sold Nieuport to James Watt Gibbs Watt. He remodelled the house in Italianate style and the garden was altered to suit.



Nieuport House looking north across the lake (Philip Halling)

The drive passes to the rear of Nieuport House and round to a cross roads. Turn left towards the walled garden, which has been sympathetically restored, passing Highmoor Cottage before going through a paddock and over to a green lane.

Take the way-marked path opposite through another gate. Keeping the hedge on your left, walk towards the small bridge in the corner of the field. Go over the bridge and up the slope. This is the track bed for 'The Kington & Eardisley Railway' (closed in 1962). Turn left and then through the small wooden gate, turn right onto the lane to Lower Wootton Farm. At the crossroads turn right.



Shortly after, take the footpath waymarked on the right. Cross the stile and head for the large oak tree in the left hand corner of the field. Cross a stile to left of the tree and turn right. Follow the fence and cross next stile into a green lane. At the end of the lane turn right and walk down the green lane into 'The Batch'.

This attractive dingle later becomes a footpath (sometimes wet and muddy). The path goes around the earthwork remains of 'Almeley Old Castle Twt' (which is not publically accessible) and emerges into a lane over a small wooden bridge. At the foot of the lane, (Point B) turn right along station road.

Follow Station Road, passing Station Farm to the gatekeepers cottage for Nieuport House. Enter the driveway and take the way-marked path on the left, over the stile. Cross diagonally over the large field, through the gate and follow the clear path up a slight rise, turning left to go along the old dam, with fine views of Nieuport House, across the lake.

Pass over the next stile and head towards a hedge and a small clump of trees. Go through the gate and onto the lane to New House Farm. From Point A, retrace the route through Holywell Dingle, back to Eardisley, but instead of following the last part of the tramroad, (marker 1) turn right onto the road into Eardisley.

## Starting the walk in Almeley

Parking is available opposite Almeley primary school, or in the car park of 'The Bells Inn'. In either case, head towards the parish church of St Mary, and then along Station Road, keeping the church on your left hand side. After about 200m, the road

passes the sign post for the footpath to 'The Batch'. **This is Point B.**

The route is then followed up to Point A, before taking the path to and from Holywell Dingle as described before, then back to Point A. Return to Almeley by following the previously described route via 'The Parks' farm, Nieuport House, Lower Wootton and 'The Batch'.

A recommended diversion is to Almeley Castle – From Point B, at 'The Batch' head towards Almeley village centre, turn right at the church cross-roads and follow the way-marked on the right.

## 6 Almeley Castle

A roughly circular motte with four-sided bailey on north. Motte 36' diameter at top and rises about 21' above bottom of ditch (dry). Remains of ditch on east and north sides of bailey. Probable round or polygonal tower, indicated by burial stone in the motte. Stone foundations in the bailey. (HER 1703)

\* Patton and Whitehead – A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Herefordshire. Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (Ref. 21730) ©Herefordshire Council.



Almeley Castle, looking south from the church tower (R.J. Higginson)