

Arlescott Deserted Village and Wyke



Medieval field terraces

You can see the remains of the medieval field terraces, hollows, humps and pond bays of the abandoned village of Arlescott, built on a site almost halfway between Broseley and Much Wenlock. The only buildings here now are a farm and a house. It is not known why Arlescott became deserted. Although some villages were abandoned after their populations died out after the Black Death, there is no documentary evidence as to it being emptied by plague or any other cause. However, the ending the open field strip system of farming caused many to leave the old medieval villages to move to growing nearby towns, in this case possibly from Arlescott to Broseley. This change began in the C15th and C16th when giving land over to sheep and wool became more profitable than growing grain and vegetables, so less people were needed on the land. This change of land use by landowners resulted in hundreds of villages becoming deserted. It was reinforced and accelerated in the C17th and C18th by Parliamentary Enclosure Acts, when the common land villagers needed, to supplement their wages by keeping a few animals and growing some food, was taken over by large landowners.

Wyke has never been a big village, although there have been farms here since Saxon times, wyke is Anglo Saxon for a specialist hamlet, usually a dairying place. The first buildings on the left and right are listed, early C16th, later rebuilt with stone. In 1620 there were four farms here but by 1849 there were only two farmhouses and five cottages left. Was there ever a vineyard? Well in 1796 a holding was called The Vineyards, probably the same place called Wyniattes in records in 1592, so rather disappointingly, possibly just a misspelling or mispronunciation rather than wine cellars.



Site of Arlescott medieval village and pond bays; humps and hollows mark the sites of former buildings.

Much Wenlock to Broseley via Arlescott, Wyke and Benthall Hall bridleways, fields, lanes, 6 stiles. 5.3 miles /8.55 km vertical gain 295ft / 90m



Raynald's Mansion early C15th 55/56 High St



Many listed buildings can be admired from Church Green above. You can see Priory Tower, part of a C13th gatehouse, and a row of C16th cottages in Bull Ring below



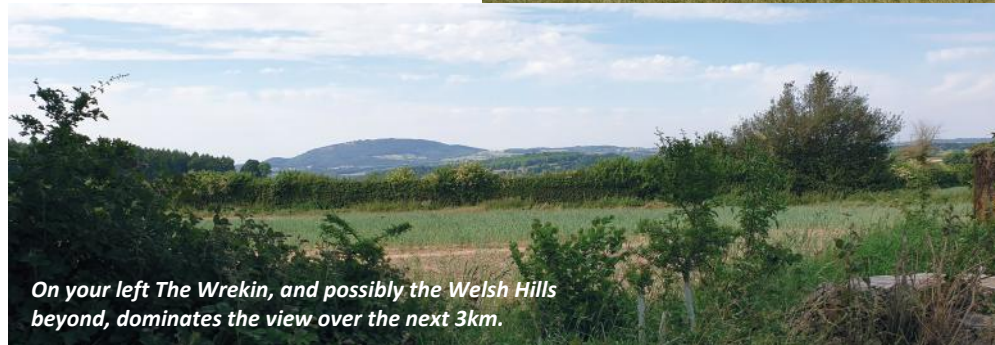
Much Wenlock has a long history. An abbey was founded in 680, Milburgha, daughter of a King of Mercia, became its first abbess and a saint. The town was a place of pilgrimage as well as a market town. It has 104 listed buildings. Some are parts of a C12th priory built on the original abbey site, you can see them on Church Green.

5 Much Wenlock via Priory to Bellhole Cottage miles 1.25 / 2km

Take the opportunity to discover the C16th Guildhall (still used as a market) and C12th church. There's an information board on Church Green. To see Dr William Penny Brookes' grave, and more historic buildings, take a path which goes left around the rear of the church and Guildhall to join Bull Ring lane. Turn right down Bull Ring, go straight on down the lane for 1km passing the ruins of Wenlock Priory. At the end where it becomes a private drive turn right through a kissing gate. You cross a bridge and then walk across the middle of a field (the line is marked by the remains of cut down wooden telegraph poles) for 300m to another kissing gate in the field corner. On your way you pass medieval pond bays which used to belong to the priory. Follow the hedge on your right for 250m. You meet a gate and a track to a cottage, turn left down a narrow path between hedges and climb a stile into another field (if the path is under water in winter, retreat back to the field, there's a handy hole in the hedge).

6 **Across fields to Arlescott 1.2 miles / 1.9 km**

After climbing the stile aim for a row of small hawthorn trees to your left which marks the line of an old hedgerow, follow them uphill and then climb a stile to follow a delightful wooded path for about 500m gently uphill. You emerge into a field, follow the hedge to your left for 300m passing the highest point between Much Wenlock and Broseley. Though the trig point is just out of sight the views are outstanding. Look behind you to the right, on a clear day you can see both Brown Clee and Tittersone Clee Hills, the woods of Wenlock Edge and the Church Stretton Hills behind.



On your left The Wrekin, and possibly the Welsh Hills beyond, dominates the view over the next 3km.

You come to a stile and go down a narrow pathway past some Severn Trent works bear left onto a track and then go diagonally across a field down towards Arelescott Farm. Cross the farm drive and take the path opposite, slight right through another metal kissing gate. Walk down towards a ditch and through another gate.



You are on the site of an abandoned village, with medieval pond bays in the dip on the left and a pond on the right. Go straight on past Arlescott Cottage and in about 100m where the track bends right go through the gate on the left to join the Jack Mytton Bridleway.

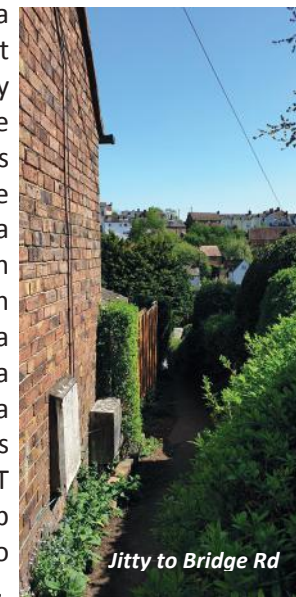


7 **Jack Mytton Way via Wyke to Vineyards Farm 1.3 miles/ 2.1 km**

The views are glorious in all directions on this stage. The path follows the hedge at first then bears left to the bottom of the slope where it turns right to go through a gate. Continue straight on along the bridleway for 1km. You cross a narrow footbridge and emerge onto a lane, turn right and walk uphill into the hamlet of Wyke. At the junction keep right past some cottages and you will see a Shropshire Way signpost pointing down a farm track to The Vineyards turn left here. Continue along the track (600m approx) till it ends at a metal kissing gate next to a farmyard. Go straight on.

8 **Vineyards Farm via Benthall Hall & Jitties to Broseley 1.6 miles / 2.55km**

Climb a stile into the next field and turn right down to a pair of stiles at a ditch at the bottom. Walk across the next field to a gap in the opposite hedge. Then aim diagonally across the next field to a stile in the top corner. Climb the stile, turn right, in about 100m you pass St Bartholomew's Church and Benthall Hall entrance. Turn left through a gate and follow a wide path in front of the hall. Just before a gate take the a path on the right, down through an 'avenue' of chestnut trees. Follow this path straight on through fields for 1km. Where it bends right, just after a disused farm, turn left down a narrow path for 50m to a pair of kissing gates where you turn right to walk down a narrow steep jitty between cottages to Bridge Rd. Cross straight over at the bottom into a lane opposite. At the T junction go right into Simpsons Lane, then turn left to climb the steep Lloyds Jitty, turn right at the top into King St to return to the Pipe Museum and back to Broseley High St.



Jitty to Bridge Rd



Entrance to Lloyds Jitty off Simpsons Lane