

Riverside Ramble

**This is an easy walk
for all the family**

Ramble along the River Onny for **two miles**, watching out for dippers and kingfishers.



Allow 1½ HOURS to complete the walk.



Complete route 2 MILES



Easy walking. Can be muddy in places.



Remember to take refreshments.

Welcome to the Riverside Ramble. Use the map and numbered route descriptions to help you around this pleasant, gentle walk. Look for the special waymarkers (see example on the map) which will help you find your way.

START Starting from behind the

1 Secret Hills Centre, go left and follow the surfaced path to the kissing gate at the meadow edge.

Go straight ahead past the black and white house on the right, to follow the narrow lane to a white metal bridge across the River Onny.

Stop in the lane leading to the footbridge and you look at the houses, some of which are over 400 years old! The cottage on the right has a massive chimneystack. Chimneys like this are a typical feature of squatter cottages, which started with the fireplace and chimney. Popular legend said that the chimney had to be built and smoking before dawn to allow squatters a right to the land. Walk on to find the bridge.

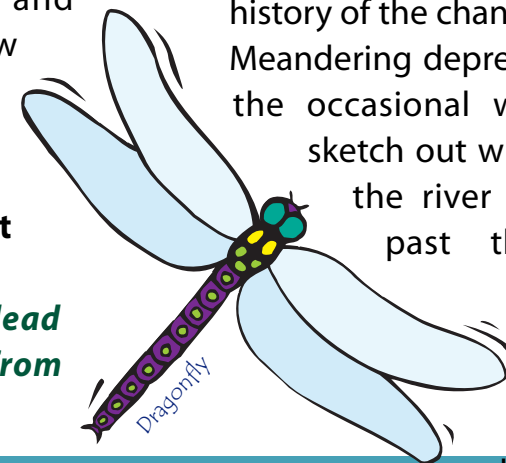
2 Cross the river and bear left along the edge of the field.
Please keep your dogs on a lead and take care to stay away from any farm animals present.

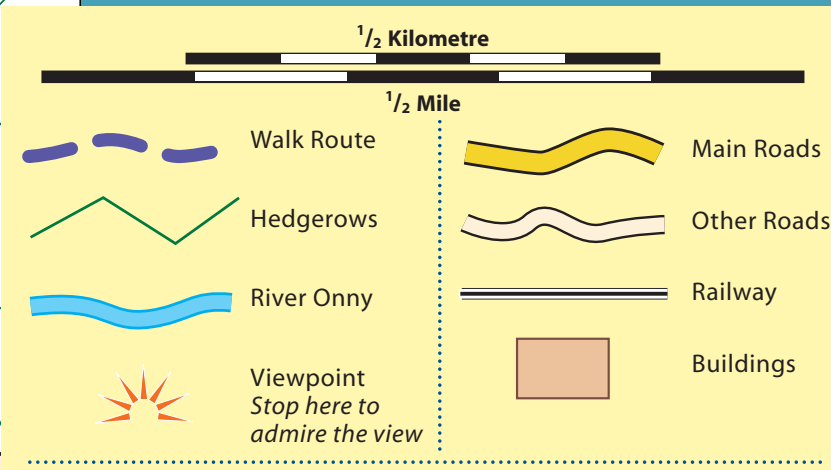
Follow the riverbank passing to the right of a line of old oak trees to meet the bridge on the Corvedale Road.

The Onny is fringed for much of its length with alder trees. Alders and willows are the only common trees that can survive right on the riverbank with their roots below water level. Alder wood was once a valuable timber in Shropshire. Riverside trees were coppiced (their stems regularly cut to ground level) to make into clog soles.

3 Cross the stile and turn left.
Walk to the end of the bridge and cross the road to another stile.
Please take extra care when crossing the road.

Stop on the bridge and look at the meadows. The riverside meadow tells the history of the changing course of the river. Meandering depressions in the field, with the occasional willow tree alongside, sketch out where the natural bed of the river once flowed. In years past the river has been straightened to flow faster past the old mill at Halford. Can you see the line of the old riverbed?





© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Shropshire County Council. Licence number LA 076821/00/03

The Secret Hills Walks have been funded by



European Regional Development Fund

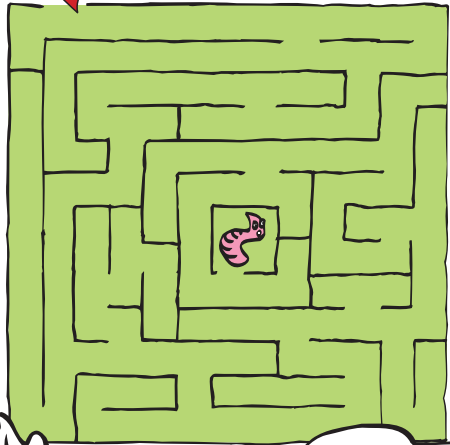


SECRET HILLS walks

Look out for these markers to show you the route

Maze Puzzle

Help the hungry bird catch her dinner. Find a route through the maze to the juicy worm hiding in the middle!



Word Search

Hidden in the word square below are ten words connected with the Riverside Ramble and things you may see along the way. See if you can find them all!

M	S	L	E	T	I	A	D	M	U	P
E	E	D	R	A	G	O	N	F	L	Y
J	C	A	K	S	H	E	E	P	C	L
T	R	U	D	G	W	E	O	E	I	L
W	E	I	R	O	S	V	G	M	R	I
O	T	X	I	R	W	D	L	H	X	M
L	H	F	R	V	I	F	R	I	O	R
R	I	V	E	R	O	N	N	Y	D	E
T	L	A	B	L	E	M	C	A	E	T
I	L	R	A	M	B	L	E	X	O	A
F	S	L	R	W	I	L	L	O	W	W



Look out for plants and animals on your ramble. Why not take time to colour in these pictures?



Further Information

Secret Hills, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre,
Ludlow Road, Craven Arms SY7 9RS.
Tel: (01588) 252593.

Discover the wonders of the Shropshire Hills from the splendour of the scenery to the complexity of their history and heritage.

Travel Information

Mainline railway stations are at Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Craven Arms and Ludlow. For bus and train information call: **0845 705 6785**

Guidelines for walkers

- Please keep your dogs under close control. We recommend they be kept on a lead on farmland.
- When walking your dog, please take care when in fields of livestock. Take extra care when crossing fields with cows and calves.
- Please leave gates as you find them.
- Always try to keep to the waymarked paths.
- Please respect the country code: protect wildlife, plants and trees. Do not drop litter, light fires or make unnecessary noise.
- Always carry refreshments and wear suitable footwear.
- Pay attention to the weather and dress accordingly.

Other Secret Hills Walks

Wart Hill Wander – Discover an ancient hill fort, walk part of the Onny Trail along the route of an old railway

Three Woods Walk – discover a Civil War battlefield, a hidden fortress, a deer park and a Roman road!

Hills & Dale Hike – Climb to a tower and discover one of the best views in South Shropshire.

Secret Hills Cycling

In 5 minutes you are in the heart of the Countryside. Discover superb views, hidden valleys, ancient castles, quiet woods and sleepy villages.

Walking For Pleasure Great walks for all the family.

Published by Secret Hills, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, as part of the Sustainable Managed Access Project. Designed by MACreative (01743) 231261. The publishers have made every effort to ensure the information in this publication was correct at the time of printing. If you have any comments regarding this publication please contact the Sustainable Managed Access Project, Shropshire Hills Countryside Unit, 2 The School House, Acton Scott, Church Stretton, SY6 6QN

- 4** The next part of the walk follows a **permissive path opened in co-operation with the farmer. Please keep your dogs on a lead as there are often sheep and cattle grazing on the river banks.**

Go down the steps to cross the paddock to another stile. With the river on your right, follow the riverbank crossing another stile to reach a stile by a weir. You will pass a line of alders marking the edge of the old riverbank. Take time to admire the mill and read on...

As you follow the river look out for three unmistakable birds, often seen here. The dipper with its overall dusky plumage and distinctive white bib, stands bobbing on the rocks before darting under the fast flowing water in search of insects.

With the grey wagtail it is the tail that is always on the move. Despite the name, the colour that catches the eye is the yellow of its chest rather than the steely grey of the head and back. The grey wagtail catches insects above the water and on the riverbank.



Most colourful is the kingfisher. It watches the water for fish from a branch or stump on the riverbank. Despite its electric blue wing feathers it is not easy to spot but you may see one flash quickly past along the riverbank. (There's one to colour in, over the page).



A few of the willows along the riverbank have been pollarded. This means cutting the branches off at least eight feet above the ground. The tree grows a new crop of stems from the pollarded stump above the reach of grazing cattle. The stems once grown were traditionally cut for fire wood.

- 5** **Cross this stile and pass to the left of a fallen stand of old willows to go right, back to the riverbank.**

Follow the river as it winds through the meadow until you reach a stile leading to an old lane next to a white bridge. You have now reached Newington. Stop here and read on...

Two hundred years ago Newington was a major crossing point on the Onny for the Bishop's Castle coach road that had come through



Halford to continue westwards up Long Lane. Mail coaches would have clattered up the lane and swept round the curve north of the school to cross the Onny and pause at the New Inn (where Newington now stands) for a change of horses before pulling steeply up Long Lane.

- 6** Cross the white metal bridge then go through the wooden gate to your right. Follow the path across the water meadow.

The field you are now crossing was once a traditional water meadow and was deliberately flooded in the spring to encourage early growth of the grass for cattle to graze.

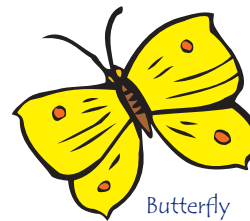
- 7** Continue along the path to another gate. Go through the gate and turn right to reach the old School House at the top of the track, then turn right onto the lane through Halford village.

Halford Church is very old, the southern doorway dates back to Norman times, although most of the church has been rebuilt in the last 200 years. Take time to look at the war memorial in the lych gate. Walk out to the west end of the churchyard for an excellent view over the Onny, flowing close to the foundations of the church. Just downstream is Halford Mill, now completely rebuilt as a modern dwelling, but with a working mill wheel on its west wall.

Leave the church and follow the lane until you meet the Corvedale road.

- 8** At the T-junction with the main road turn right heading back into Craven Arms.

Cross the road on the bridge and either retrace your steps crossing the stile and following the river to the white bridge at Newton, or continue along the road taking the second left onto Market Street. You can then follow Market Street to the Secret Hills Centre.



A short, easy walk from the SECRET HILLS Centre

Thank you: The Riverside Ramble has been created in co-operation with local landowners and Craven Arms Town Council.