

Wart Hill Wander

Within 5 minutes walk from the Secret Hills Centre you will find yourself in the heart of the countryside.

Follow the Shropshire Way to Wart Hill, to discover an ancient hill fort overlooking the sleepy valley of Hopesay. Return by the Onny Trail following the river along the route of the old Bishop's Castle Railway. This is the longest of the Secret Hills Walks and is challenging with some steady climbing at the start and a steep climb up to the summit of Wart Hill.



Allow 4-5 HOURS to complete the whole walk. Allow 4 hours for the shorter route.



**Complete route 8½ MILES
Shorter routes of 7½ MILES**



Rough, sometimes wet terrain so walking boots are essential.



Remember to take refreshments.

Welcome to the Wart Hill Wander. Use the map and numbered route descriptions to help you navigate this excellent walk.

Look for the special waymarkers to help you find your way (see example on map). Take time to stop and enjoy the views whilst the guide reveals the secrets of the woods and hills.

START Your experience from the front entrance

1 of the Secret Hills Centre.

Turn left out of the car park and cross the Ludlow to Shrewsbury road. *Please take care when crossing the road.* Follow Dodd's Lane heading away from the main road under the railway bridge. At the end of the lane, cross the stile and turn left to follow the hedge up the field.

2 Cross the stile and turn right to follow the field edge to another stile into Sallow Coppice. In the wood stop and read on.

Sallow Coppice may have once been dominated by willow trees and coppiced (the stems cut off regularly) to produce withies for fencing, hurdles or even coracle making! Today, the trees are mostly sweet chestnut, silver birch, wild cherry and sycamore.

Go straight on following the right hand edge of the wood. Descend to eventually take a narrow track on the right, leading to a road and turn right.

You are now standing on Watling Street, known locally as Park Lane, now a minor road, but 2000 years ago it linked the Roman settlements of Wroxeter (Viroconium) east of Shrewsbury and Leintwardine. 'Park Lane' is probably a reference to its bordering the western edge of the Medieval Stokesay deer park.

3 Follow the lane to cross the Clun Road (*with care*). Continue along the lane almost opposite, until you come to a stile next to a field gate on the left, just before two houses.

4 Cross the stile heading across the field to the corner of the fence on your left. Cross the stile and follow the hedge until you reach another stile.

From the Roman road as far as Hopesay Hill you follow the flying buzzard waymark of the Shropshire Way, Shropshire's 170 mile, circular long distance footpath.

5 Cross the stile and continue along the hedge to reach a gate next to a narrow stile. Go through the gate and turn right. Bear away from the hedge to cross a small footbridge at the top of the field. Continue to a stile in the hedge ahead.

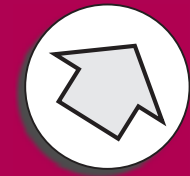
6 Cross the lane and the double stile in the opposite hedge. From here, bear left away from the right hand hedge crossing the field to reach a metal kissing gate to the left of Sibdon Castle.

You will notice the scatter of large parkland trees around Sibdon Castle. This is typical of the estate design and planting of the 18th century. The castle was once owned by the Norman lord Picot de Saye having been granted the parish by William the Conqueror.

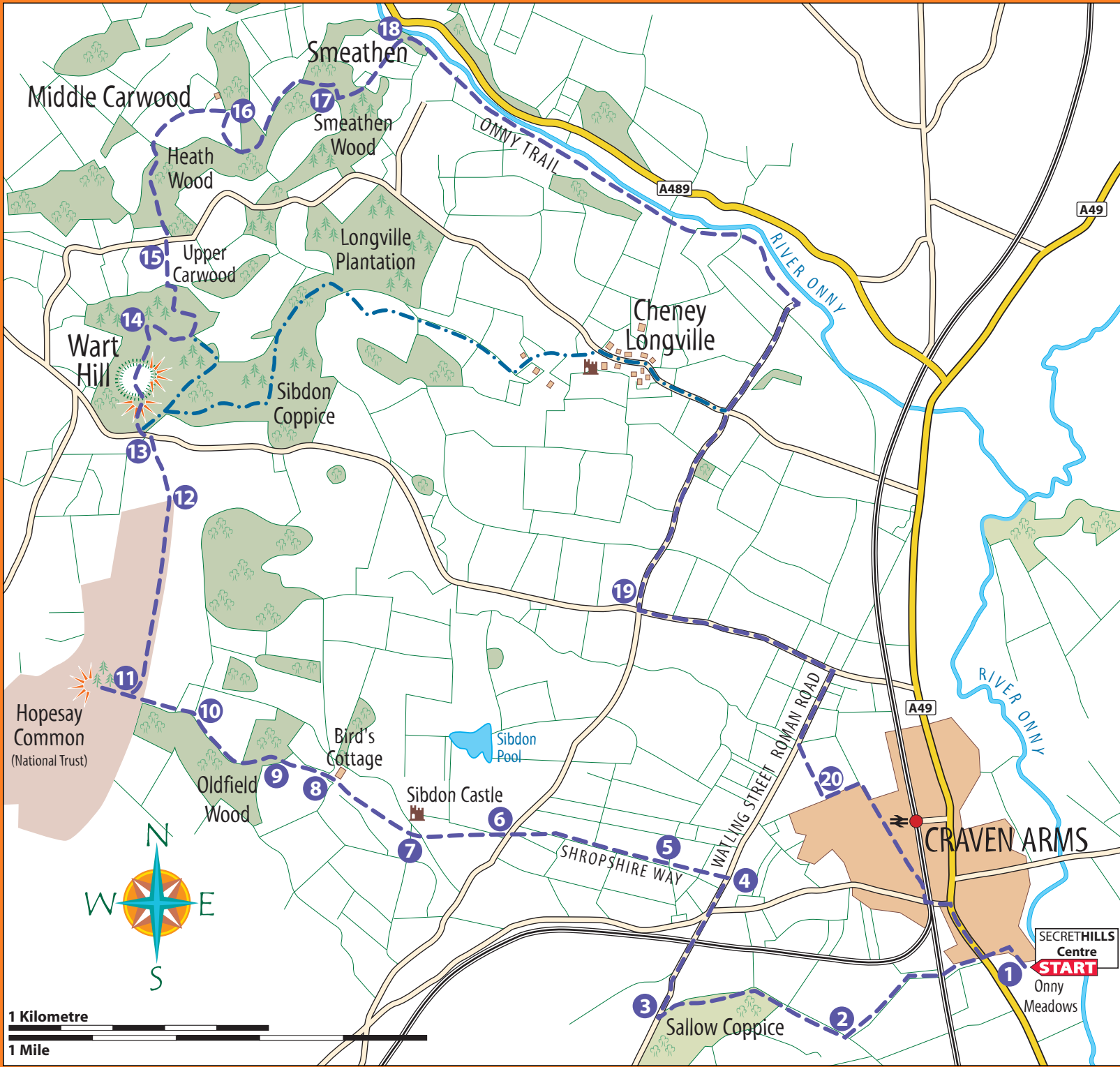
7 Go through the kissing gate opposite and cross the paddock to cross a small bridge and stile into a large open field. Head across the field bearing right towards Bird's Cottage, aiming to pass to the left of it.

8 Cross the stile to the left of the cottage and go straight on to follow the sunken lane a short way up the hill. After a short distance bear left away from the hedge to reach a stile and gate in the opposite corner.

9 Cross the stile and follow the track that climbs up the hill to your left. You are now following the edge of a wood that is used to rear pheasants. *Please keep your dog on a lead.*



Look out for these markers to show you the route



- Main Walk Route
- Short Cut Route
- Hedgerows
- Woodlands
- Main Roads
- Other Roads
- Railway

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European Regional Development Fund



SECRET HILLS Centre START Onny Meadows



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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

Riverside Ramble – An easy walk for all the family

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

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

Secret Hills Cycling

The best way to see the Shropshire Hills is by bike. Discover superb views, hidden valleys, ancient castles, quiet woods and sleepy villages.

Walking For Pleasure

Great walks for all the family.

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- 10** Continue along the edge of the wood to eventually turn left by the derelict red brick building. After a short distance you will come to gate and stile. Cross and continue along the left hand field edge to reach a stile next to another field gate. Cross the stile on to Hopesay Common, a large area of open land owned by the National Trust.

You may wish to continue straight on for a short way to the stand of larch and pine trees, originally perhaps a Victorian celebratory landmark. Here you can see a splendid view down onto Hopesay village. Across the valley you can see the ditch and rampart defences of Burrow hill fort.

- 11** Turn right after the stile and follow the field edge to reach the corner of the Common. On your right you will notice a stile with an inscription on the finger post. It's a quote from the *Ruba'iyt of Omar Khayyam*, a nineteenth century poem – but why it's here we have no idea!
- 12** Pass the stile and continue through the gate to follow the track down through another gate to the road. Go left to follow the road to reach a gate and stile on the right.

If you wish to cut your walk short at this point and return to the Secret Hills Centre, go to 'Short Cut 1'. Otherwise continue below. Alternatively if you don't wish to climb the hill you can follow 'Short Cut 2' around the side (see later).

For much of the path between here and Upper Carwood you are following permissive paths, opened in agreement with the landowner.

- 13** Cross the stile and follow the path to the left that zigzags up the hill.

Stop at this point and admire the views. Wart Hill is a distinctive conical shape sticking out 120ft (40m) above the surrounding countryside and is crowned

by the ring of an Iron Age hill fort. From the top you can see the Stiperstones and Corndon to the northwest peeping out from behind the southern end of the Long Mynd and Brown Clee and Titterstone Clee in the east.

From the trig point bear slightly right initially, before veering left as you descend the other side of the hill.

- 14** Cross the next track and continue downhill, as the path broadens, until you reach another junction. Turn left, then immediately right, heading downhill to a footbridge passing a small pond. Zigzag up the hill to join a surfaced track and turn left up the track to the road.
- 15** At the road turn left and then immediately right to follow the track as it winds down the hill. You will pass through several gates, which are usually left open. If any are locked, use the stiles next to them.
- 16** Stay on the track to reach a T-junction. Turn right and go up the slope to take a path on the left in to the wood. Follow this down the hill to cross a stile. Go to the left of the building in front of you, passing behind it over two stiles, then cross a field to another stile.
- 17** Follow the right hand field edge ignoring the gap in the hedge, to bear left to reach a stile in the field corner. Cross this and turn right to follow the path down the hill and turn right when you reach the River Onny.

You have now joined the Onny Trail that follows the tracks of the old Bishop's Castle Railway which closed in 1935, and the river Onny. Look out for dippers and kingfishers on the river; you may even hear the bark of an otter!

- 18** Follow the trail straight on bearing left at the next fork, crossing several stiles with the river on

your left. The trail opens into fields until, after crossing a small bridge by a burnt-out willow tree, you will cross a stile into a very narrow, hedged lane. Turn right and follow the lane until you reach Long Lane. Cross the lane and go straight on to reach a crossroads.

19 Turn left at the crossroads and continue to another crossroads, this time turning right back onto Watling Street. After a few hundred metres, cross the second of two stiles on your left and follow the right hand hedge to cross a small bridge and another stile on the left.

20 Turn left down a narrow alleyway and take your first right into Greenfields Road. Take the second left into Coronation Road and at the T-junction, go right into Brook Road. Go straight on to eventually reach the main road. Turn left under the railway bridge, and then right onto the Ludlow Road. Cross the road and go on to take the narrow lane on the left along the brook. Follow this back to the Secret Hills Centre.

Short Cut 1 *Cheney Longville*

➤ Instead of going left up on to Wart Hill continue across the open area bearing right to meet a grassy track heading downhill. At the next fork turn right.

➤ At the T-junction, turn left downhill. Cross the footbridge and turn right and go on to a metal gate with a large pool to the right. Cross the stile to the right of the gate turning right along the lane. After a short distance you will reach a right turn across a muddy ford. Follow the fence line to cross the footbridge to your left and climb to cross a stile into the fields.

You are now crossing farmland. Please keep your dog on a lead, as there are often sheep and

cows grazing in the next two fields. Take extra care where there are cows and calves.

➤ Look for the waymarking post on the hill ahead of you. Head across the field bearing right up the slope to pass to the left of the third of a line of mature trees towards the post.

Stop and admire the view from the hill. On a clear day you can look ahead to see Flounders Folly, a small tower on the ridge beyond the Wenlock Edge. Further away in the distance beyond the folly you can see the Clee Hills.

➤ At the post go left along a rutted track that follows the ridge and then drops down to a field gate. Cross the stile to the right of the gate and follow the track towards Castle Farm.

➤ Cross the next stile bearing left past Castle Farm to join the lane in to the village of Cheney Longville. Go on through the village until you reach a small crossroads. Turn right, you are now back on the final leg of the Wart Hill Wander. Please refer to point 19 in the main directions to complete the walk back into town.

Short Cut 2 *From the foot of Wart Hill.*

➤ If you do not wish to climb to the summit you may alternatively continue across the open area bearing to the right until you are following a wide track down the hill.

➤ Follow the track going left at the first fork and right at the second. Continue to eventually reach a turning on your right. Take this then turn immediately right to go down to a footbridge next to a small pond. (Read on from the last sentence of point 14).

Thank You: The Wart Hill Wander has been created in co-operation with local farmers and landowners. SMAP would like to thank them for their help.



**Discover the Shropshire Hills
from the SECRET HILLS Centre**