

Wart Hill Wander

A challenging but rewarding walk climbing the Shropshire Way over Hopesay Common to Wart Hill, an ancient hillfort, and back along the River Onny.



10 miles/16km



4-5 hours



About 25 stiles*



Pasture with cows and sheep – dogs must be on leads for some sections. Woodland, with some pheasant rearing. Muddy in places. Five main road crossings (rail crossing on short cut).

*The route directions were correct when printed (2017), however there may be minor changes over time for example stiles are increasingly being replaced by kissing gates to make routes easier. If you encounter any significant problems with the route please report them at the Discovery Centre and we will inform Shropshire Council who can liaise with the landowner.

OS Explorer Map 217

Start behind the Discovery Centre

- 1 Start in front of the Discovery Centre and turn left out of the car park to cross the main road (A49) at the pedestrian crossing. Go along Dodd's Lane opposite, between houses, and keep ahead to meet a track which leads under the railway bridge. Follow this track and cross a stile above a gate.
- 2 Turn left to follow the left hand hedge up the field to a stile. Cross the stile and turn right along the hedge to Sallow Coppice wood where, through some bushes, there is a stile into the wood.



If you're lucky enough to be here in spring you'll be blown away by the carpet of bluebells and clumps of wild garlic. In the autumn there are many types of mushroom in the woods.

→ Wild garlic grows in woods in the spring. The leaves are delicious in soup or pesto.

- 3 Keep on along the edge of the wood, until you descend to reach a small road, on which you turn right.

This is Park Lane which 2000 years ago linked the Roman settlements of Wroxeter (Viroconium) east of Shrewsbury and Leintwardine (Bravonium). It is called Park Lane because it borders the edge of Stokesay Manor's medieval deer park.

- 4 Follow the road under the railway bridge to the main Clun road. Carefully cross this road to reach a stretch of old road. Walk along this to reach the new road and look for a fingerpost for the Shropshire Way off to the left.
- 5 Follow the footpath past some new houses. Keep left to find a kissing gate and follow the fence and hedge line to a stile. Keep ahead on the same line along the hedge until you reach a gateway with a stile on the left. Go through the gateway and head right at an angle across the field, over a small footbridge and on to the top of the field and a stile in the hedge ahead.
- 6 Cross the stile onto the lane and cross the double stile opposite. Head diagonally left across the large field, past a waymark and on to a kissing gate to the left of Sibdon Castle.

It is thought that this 'new' castle, built in the 1600s was built on the foundations of an earlier Norman fortification. It's possible some of the large parkland trees scattered round it could be as old as the castle.



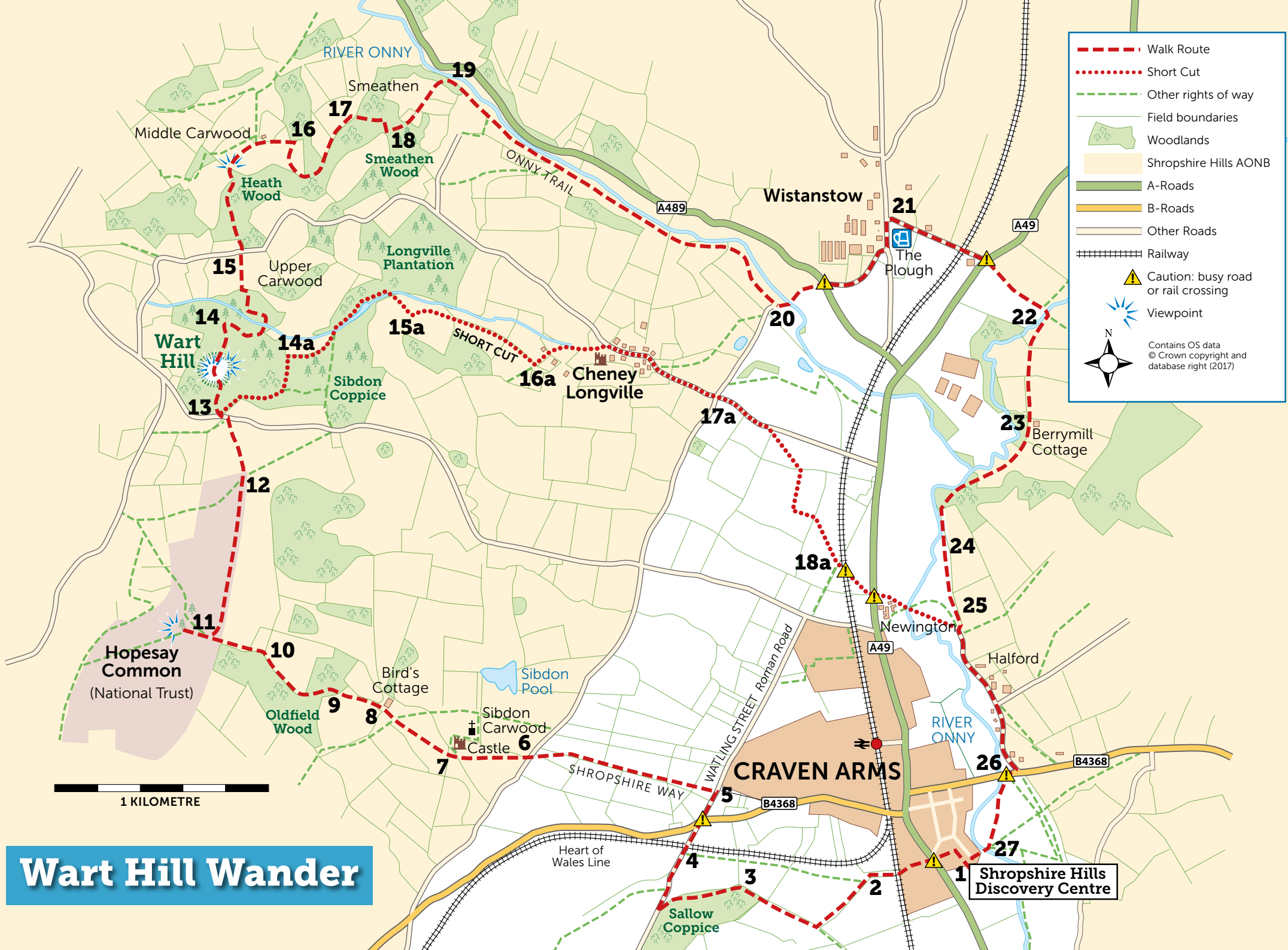
You can take a detour right, up the driveway, and turn right to reach the interesting Sibdon Carwood church.

- 7 Go through the kissing gate opposite and cross to a small, gated bridge and stile into a large open field. Head straight across this field, past a waymark, and aiming to the left hand side of Bird's Cottage by the trees ahead.
- 8 Cross the stile behind the cottage and go straight up to follow a sunken lane a short way up the hill. Head left away from the hedge diagonally across the field towards some tall pine trees to reach a gate and stile in the far corner of the field.
- 9 Over the stile follow the track up to the left along the edge of a wood.
- 10 Keep going to turn left by a derelict red brick building to come to a gate and stile. Continue along the field edge which is usually very muddy, to reach a stile which leads onto Hopesay Common.

You may wish to continue straight on for a short way to the stand of larch and pine trees. The view across the valley of Hopesay village west to Burrow Camp Iron Age hill fort above the valley is worth the detour.

- 11 Turn right and follow the field edge to the reach the corner of the Common. On your right you will see a stile with an inscription on the finger post. It's a quote from a 19th century poem the *Rubalyat of Omar Khayyam*, 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 reach a gate with a small gate on the right.

From here you can take the short cut – details at the end of this guide.





Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, the home of Grow Cook Learn

School Road, Craven Arms, SY7 9RS

+44 (0)1588 676070

info@shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk

www.shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk



Grow Cook Learn is a registered charity, connecting people to the food, history and landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB, providing opportunities to local people and visitors to learn and discover.

Visit the Centre for the Shropshire Hills exhibition and film, our cafe which serves delicious home cooked meals and for walks through 30 acres of riverside meadows.

There are regular bus and train services to Craven Arms.

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is recognised as one of Britain's finest landscapes. It's one of 46 AONBs in the UK.

Walks produced with support from:



**CRAVEN ARMS
Community Food
Initiative**

13 Go through the kissing gate and follow the permissive path to the left which climbs up to the top of Wart Hill, bear right to the summit.

People lived here 3000 years ago. This small knoll was a small fortified homestead. The ancient Britons could see other Iron Age farms below and forts on the hill tops all around. Look north west for **Caer Caradoc**, south west to **Burrow Hill** and south east to **Norton Camp**. The **Clee Hills** beyond also boast impressive earthworks.

Pass the trig point and take the path on the left of a large tree down onto a track and turn right, downhill to a T junction. Go left along the forestry track to eventually reach a sharp right hand bend downhill.

14 Continue downhill to reach another junction. Take the middle track, heading downhill, then climbing steeply zig-zagging uphill to turn left up a surfaced track to the road at the top.

15 At the road turn left and then immediately right to follow the track down the hill. You will pass through several gates.

16 Pass the small cottage on the left and stay on the track until it goes through a gateway and swings right. The path cuts diagonally up across the field to a gate and stile. Over the stile, follow the track down the hill to a T junction.

17 Turn right, back into the wood. At the top of the hill take a path on the left, steeply downhill. Descend to a stile. Go to the left of the shed ahead, over two stiles, then cross a field to another stile.

18 The route goes ahead over the rise and descends to a stile in the far right hand corner of the field. You may have to detour round high growing bracken in the summer. Cross the stile and turn right to follow the path down to the river and turn right onto a muddy track.

This is the **Onny Trail** which follows the line of the heroically, doomed **Bishop's Castle Railway (1865-1935)**. It was vital to local life but was bankrupt for 69 of its 70 years. Many of its staff worked for less than union wage rates to keep it going.

19 Follow the trail along the old rail track, keeping the river on your left, under a bridge and across several stiles. At a second, ruined bridge, follow the path left, away from the rail track, along the riverbank and over a stile. You reach a kissing gate onto a small track and a footbridge.

20 Go left over the bridge and follow the track up to the road. Cross the main road carefully and take the lane opposite towards Wistanstow and to a T junction. Turn left to pass the Plough Inn on your right.

The **Plough** is also home to **Wood's Brewery** that brews **Shropshire Lad** – a 'must try' pint for anyone new to the county.

21 Take the next right turn and follow this lane over the railway and down to the very busy A49 road. Cross very carefully. Take the stile opposite and follow the right hand field edge to cross a small bridge.

22 Go on, heading slightly left to a bridge over the Quinny Brook. Go left to cross a third bridge, on the right and then go on ahead to a stile in a hedge. After this, follow the path across fields heading for Berrymill Cottage.

23 Pass the cottages on your left, following a track ahead to a stile. Head right, across the field, following a faint track round the left of a clump of trees. By the trees cut left away from the track to find a small metal gate into the woods ahead. Follow the narrow path round to a kissing gate.

24 Go straight on through the gateway on your right to follow the left hand hedge to a stile on the left. Cross and go right to pass the Old

School House at Halford where there are two stiles.

25 Go left at the lane and follow it through the village, past Halford Church to meet the main Corvedale road.

26 Go right to the bridge and cross the road carefully to a gate on the bridge. Drop down into the field and follow the river to reach a while metal bridge.

27 Cross the bridge into Newton and go straight on to reach the Onny Meadows. Go right in the meadows, back to the Discovery Centre.

Short cut

13a Instead of going left up Wart Hill, go across the clearing, keeping right to meet a track heading downhill. Take the second turning on the right, steeply downhill.

14a Follow the track to eventually turn right at the T junction going downhill. Pass through the metal gate with a large pool on your right and turn right. After another 100m bear right and cross a muddy ford. Cross the footbridge to climb to a stile into the fields.

Head across the field bearing right up the slope, close to a line of mature trees.

On a clear day you can look ahead to see Flounders Folly, a small tower on the ridge. In the distance you can see the Cleve Hills.

15a Go left along a rutted track downhill to a field gate and stile. Follow the track, keeping the hedge on your left. Ignore the first gate on your left and continue to the second gate where you turn left and drop down left, past Castle Farm.

16a Follow the lane ahead to Cheney Longville, turning right onto the lane through the village.

Cheney Longville was called simply 'Langfeld' at the time of the Domesday Book in 1087, when it was owned by Shrewsbury Abbey. Later Roger de Cheney gave his name to the village around 1395

when he fortified the manor house.

17a Continue over the crossroads until you find a gate and footpath on the right leading diagonally across a field. Follow the footpath as it kinks right, then left at an ancient oak tree to a further hedge. Pass through and bear right to a wide hedgeline masking the railway line and the crossing point.

18a Take great care crossing the railway line* and then bear right across the next field to a gate by the busy A49. Carefully cross the road and then the stile opposite. Follow the footpath over stiles around the back of Newington Farm and then turn left to reach the river. Go over the river bridge and through the gate to follow the surfaced path across the field. Go right after the next gate, up the lane to the Old School House.

Follow the directions from point 25 back to the Discovery Centre.

* If the railway crossing is closed, follow the Watling Street byway to the right under the trees to join Long Lane, turn left and cross the railway at the level crossing. You can rejoin the route via a path on the other side of the A49.

Guidelines for walkers

- Wear suitable clothes and footwear for the walk, paying attention to the local weather forecast.
- Take water and refreshments with you suitable for the length of the walk.
- Most of the Discovery Walks have muddy patches for much of the year and stout shoes or walking boots are recommended.
- Please keep dogs under close control, taking particular care when crossing fields with livestock.
- Keep to the waymarked paths and leave gates as you find them.
- Take your litter home. Respect the wildlife, plants and trees and do not light fires.

SHROPSHIRE HILLS DISCOVERY WALKS

10
miles

Wart Hill Wander

