

4. March into madness

Five walks on the Shropshire border - Oswestry Old Racecourse walk

In winter's snow the stone-throne in Candy Woods would be more at home in Narnia than Shropshire. But this land is as epic as Lewis' fantasy. Offa's Dyke marked out a border with Wales, later controlled by the Norman 'Marcher Lords' who built castles along it as mighty as Cair Paravel. And Mad Jack Mytton, who gambled away his inheritance here, once rode a bear into dinner and named his son Euphrates after his favourite racehorse. Did a Witch Queen freeze the horses' heads?



START/FINISH POINT

OS Explorer 240

The car park at the Old Oswestry Racecourse (SJ 259305).

Distance: 7¼km (4½ miles)

Time: 2½ – 3 hrs

DIFFICULTY



1 START by heading north from the car park and following the wide grass ride parallel to the road, to join Offa's Dyke Path. Follow this to the crossroads.

2 Leave Offa's Dyke Path bearing right along the wide grass ride on Racecourse Common. Continue to just before the bench where the ride bends to the left.

3 Take the path on the right and then follow the old lane down to the barriers. Continue along the track for a short distance then turn right at the finger post and over the stile.

4 Head diagonally across the field to the waymark post and then carry on to the wood. Follow the edge of the wood down and cross two stiles. With the hedge on the left, walk down the bank to the stile at the road.


5 Turn left and continue on the pavement down the road to the crossroads.

6 Take the road on the right, then go through the wooden gate and follow the double-hedged lane to the gate just past the ditch on the left. From the gate, head across the field to the left-hand corner of the wood and follow the edge to the stile in the hedge. Head across the field to the left-hand edge of the next wood. Cross the double stiles and continue down the edge of the wood to the double gate and the road.

7 Head across the road and along Bwlch Road down to the passing place, going down the drive to Plas Waen. Go over the ladder stile on the right and around and over the next stile. Turn left and go along the field edge to the sleeper-bridge and stile, continue straight across the field to the stile at the edge of Gwalia Wood.



8 Pass through the wood over the sleeper-bridge to the next stile. Head diagonally across the field with the trees and fence on the right. Bear right at the stile and gate to reach two trees, then bear left to the stile and stone stile at the wood. Follow the path through the wood to the track and waymark post. Head straight on down through the trees to a finger post. Turn left along the track to the "T" junction. Turn right along the track crossing Offa's Dyke to meet the National Trail.

9 Go right and follow the route through Candy and Racecourse Woods to the Old Grandstand. *(The stone alcove in Candy Woods is a great place to listen to the podcast).* 

10 Leave Offa's Dyke Path and head off to the small fenced enclosure on the right, then off to the left along the path back to the car park. *(The second part of the podcast can be listened to from the old grandstand).* 

SAFETY INFORMATION

- The walk follows challenging terrain. Wear walking boots and carry refreshments and waterproofs
- Please take care on roads and road crossings
- If walking alone, tell someone where you are going and how long you will be
- Walk responsibly and follow the country code

Offa's Dyke Path National Trail • T: 01597 827580

E: odpnt@powys.gov.uk • www.nationaltrail.co.uk/offasdyke

Shropshire Council Outdoor Recreation

T: 0345 6789000 • E: countryside.access@shropshire.gov.uk

These guides and the podcasts are also downloadable from www.shropshirewalking.co.uk



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