

Further Information

Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre

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www.shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk

Travel information

Mainline railway stations are at Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Craven Arms and Ludlow. For bus and train information call **0871 200 3333**

Guidelines for walkers

- Always wear suitable clothes and footwear
Pay attention to the weather and dress accordingly
- Please keep your dogs under close control at all times.
We recommend they be kept on a lead on farmland
- Take care in fields with livestock, especially if dog walking. Take extra care when crossing fields with cows and calves
- Leave gates as you find them
- Always try to keep to waymarked paths, unless on designated access land
- Respect the countryside; protect wildlife, plants and trees. Take your litter home. Do not light fires or make unnecessary noise

Other Secret Hills walks

Riverside Ramble – a relaxing amble along the River Onny

Wart Hill Wander – climb to fine views and ancient hillforts. Explore the Onny along an old railway.

Hills & Dales Hike – you owe yourself this walk. Both its views and climbs take your breath away!

Secret Hills Cycle Rides – the best way to explore the beauty of the Shropshire Hills is by bike. Six superb routes for all levels of ability.

Discover Shropshire - To explore more of Shropshire's beautiful landscape and to find out more about its people, nature and history go to www.discovershropshire.org.uk



FSC Logo to go here

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winds along the top of the escarpment in the wood. Cross the next stile and keep left away from the edge ⚠ following the narrow path.

To your right the sheer limestone cliff resembles the Wenlock Edge that runs in an unbroken line from Craven Arms to Much Wenlock. The rock has been quarried in many places to be 'burned' to make slake lime for 'sweetening' fields and making lime-wash and mortar.

- 9** The path winds away from the edge eventually bearing left then turning right to descend to Rotting Lane. Follow the blue bridleway arrows down Rotting Lane.

Rotting Lane joins a forestry track that, still descending bears left then curves right to reach a metal gate. Pass the gate and follow the track to the bottom of the hill.

The route turns sharply down a narrow lane on the left.

To head back to the Discovery Centre from here ignore this turning and refer to the Norton Camp Short Cut, at the end of this guide.

At the bottom of the lane turn left along a surfaced track then right to follow the road as it climbs up the hill to reach a fork.

- 12** Go right to follow the tarmac track to pass a brown stone house known as 'Park Croft'. Pass the house to descend along the track to Park Farm.

The name 'Park Farm' dates back to the 12th Century when the area was

enclosed parkland. Please take care when walking through the farmyard and keep to the waymarked route.

- 13** Cross the farmyard passing the farmhouse on your left to follow the lane down to the main road. Cross the road ⚠ and the narrow footbridge to the left of the main bridge.

- 14** Turn right off the bridge on to a track. Shortly bear left across the field to the railway tunnel. Go through the tunnel taking care to leave gates as you find them.

- 15** Climb up the hill from the bridge to a stile at the edge of the wood. Go right across the field towards Stokesay Castle.

- 16** Cross the fields with the railway on your right to pass lime kilns on your left and following a rough track.

- 17** To take the Stokesay Short Cut, turn right down the track. Turn to the end of this guide for the route.

The main route turns left up the track to pass to the right of Stoke Wood Cottage. Climb to a fork and take the right hand path.

Parts of the steep wooded escarpment of Stoke Wood remain as a good example of ancient semi-natural woodland being at least 400 years old.

- 18** Follow the wide and often waterlogged, undulating path along the edge of Stoke Wood to eventually reach Clapping Wicket where the path widens in front of a solitary house.



THREE WOODS WALK

Within 5 minutes walk from the Discovery Centre you will find yourself in the heart of the countryside. Explore the woods and fields and discover their secrets.

A fairly challenging walk with some steep climbing at the start.



Allow **4½ hours** to complete the whole walk. Allow at least 2½ hours if you take the shorter route.



HOW FAR?

Complete route **8 miles/12.8km**
Norton Camp short cut **4½ miles/7.2km**



Stokesay short cut **5¼ miles/8.3km**

Rough terrain, expect lots of mud.



Remember to take refreshments.



1 START Walk into the Onny Meadows. Go left at the first junction and follow the surfaced path past the community garden.

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

The Onny is one of the major rivers of the Shropshire hills. When crossing, you might catch a fleeting glimpse of brown trout, a favourite food of otters. You may also be lucky and see a kingfisher.

2 Cross the river and head out across the field, bearing to the right of the electricity post ahead. **Please keep your dog on a lead in this field. Just before the hedge turn right to cross the footbridge and bear left to go uphill along the edge of a sunken lane.**

Cross the stile next to the gate and follow the lane and past Whettleton Farm to reach the road.

Whettleton was once a thriving village. It has not always been as quiet. In 1645, during the Civil War, the fields above the farm were the scene of a bloody skirmish. Parliamentarian soldiers charged down the hill to surprise a larger Royalist force. The Roundheads won the day, killing Sir William Croft, one of the Cavaliers' commanders and taking several hundred prisoners.

3 Turn right and continue for a short distance. Take the next left just past the entrance to a large house called Norton's Oak. Climbing steeply up into Nortoncamp Wood.

4 Bear left at the Y junction climbing

along the edge of the wood to eventually bear right up a sunken muddy track.

5 Pass through the clearing taking the left hand path. Keep going straight on as the path narrows.

6 Go straight on, then around the bend to the right following a track that becomes enclosed on both sides by rhododendron bushes. Go straight on at the next junction.

Soon the track becomes a lane with views out to the east of the Clee hills. To your right is Norton Camp.

Hidden by the bushes are the earthworks of an ancient hillfort that has stood here for over 2500 years. The camp is renowned for the double rampart and ditch of its Iron Age defences. Evidence from excavations elsewhere suggests that hillforts like this were really hilltop towns.

Following the track around the outer rampart gives you an idea of how big the hillfort is. The track eventually reaches a once fine house that is now derelict. It was built in 1870 by John Derby-Allcrofts whose family made their fortune making gloves. John also built Stokesay Court, near Onibury, the romantic setting for the film 'Atonement' starring Keira Knightley and James McAvoy.

7 The lane follows the outer edge of the camp until you reach an old house. Go on between the old house and the red brick building along a broad permissive path that follows the curves of the ramparts. Keep going to reach a stile on the left.

8 Pass the stile and follow the path as it

19 Go right past the gate onto a track to take a stile on the right and cut diagonally across the fields to Sallow Coppice.

20 Go over the stile into the wood bearing right. Take the next right to follow a path around the eastern side of the wood (keep right). Eventually you will come to a stile on the right.

Sallow Coppice is an excellent example of ancient semi-natural woodland. Most of the sallows (willows) from which it takes its name have long gone, as has the practice of coppicing. Instead you can see sycamore, sweet chestnut, silver birch, oak, hazel, wild cherry and lime that have regenerated naturally since it was largely felled in the last war. In spring it is a riot of bluebells, primroses, violets and wood anemones marking the banks and woodland rides.

21 Cross to emerge into a field and follow the high hedge to your left to eventually reach a stile on your left.

22 Cross and follow the right hand hedge to the top of an old lane and stile in the bank on the right.

23 Follow the lane back into Craven Arms under the railway to come out at the main road opposite the Discovery Centre. **⚠ Please take care crossing the road back to the centre.**

Norton Camp Short Cut

- From the point 11, ignore the left hand turn and go right staying on the track.
- After 250 metres turn right before the path goes down to the road (look

for the waymark post as there are several false turnings here). Climb for a short distance to turn left and follow the footpath along the bottom of the wood.

- Ignore all turnings until you reach the turning at the top of the track at point 4.
- Turn left here and retrace your steps back to the Discovery Centre.

Stokesay Short Cut (from point 17)

One of the best known medieval buildings in England, Stokesay Castle is well worth a visit and is open all year round

- Turn right and follow the track over the railway crossing **⚠**. Follow the lane to reach Stokesay Castle and Church on your right.
- Pass the church and follow the lane dropping towards the main road.
- Take a path on the left that runs parallel to and then meets the main road. Cross carefully **⚠** into Onny Meadows bearing left on a grassy path, then surfaced track after a small bridge. Follow the track back to the centre.

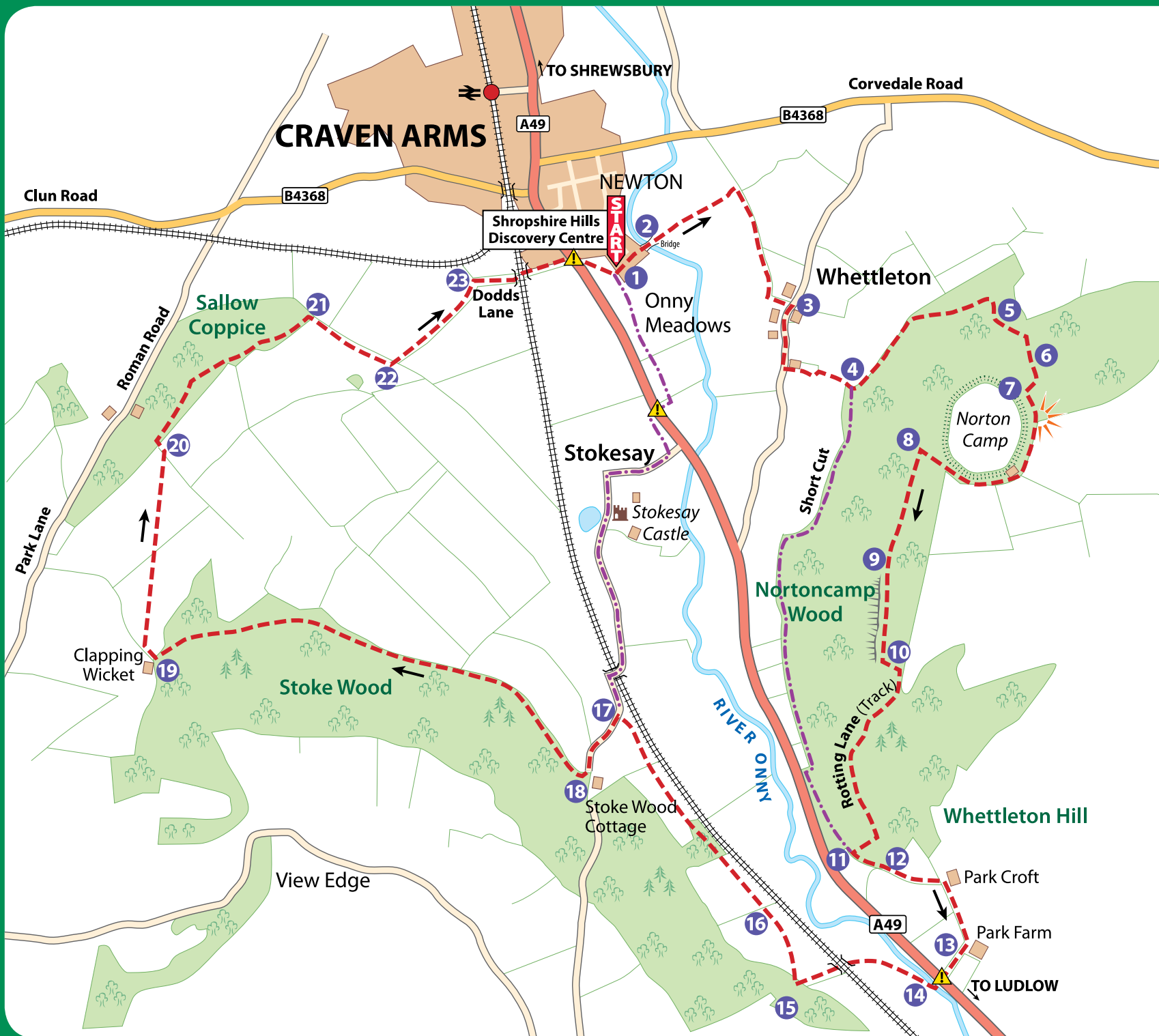


THREE WOODS WALK



Discover the woods and fields from the
Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre

CRAVEN ARMS



This walk mainly follows footpaths and is waymarked with **YELLOW** arrows. Blue arrows show the right of way is open to walkers, riders and cyclists. Red arrows are for byways which are also open to motorised vehicles.

- Walk Route
- Short Cut
- Caution: take care on busy roads
- Viewpoint
- Castle
- Public House
- A-Roads
- B-Roads
- Other roads
- Railway
- Woodland
- Hedgerows