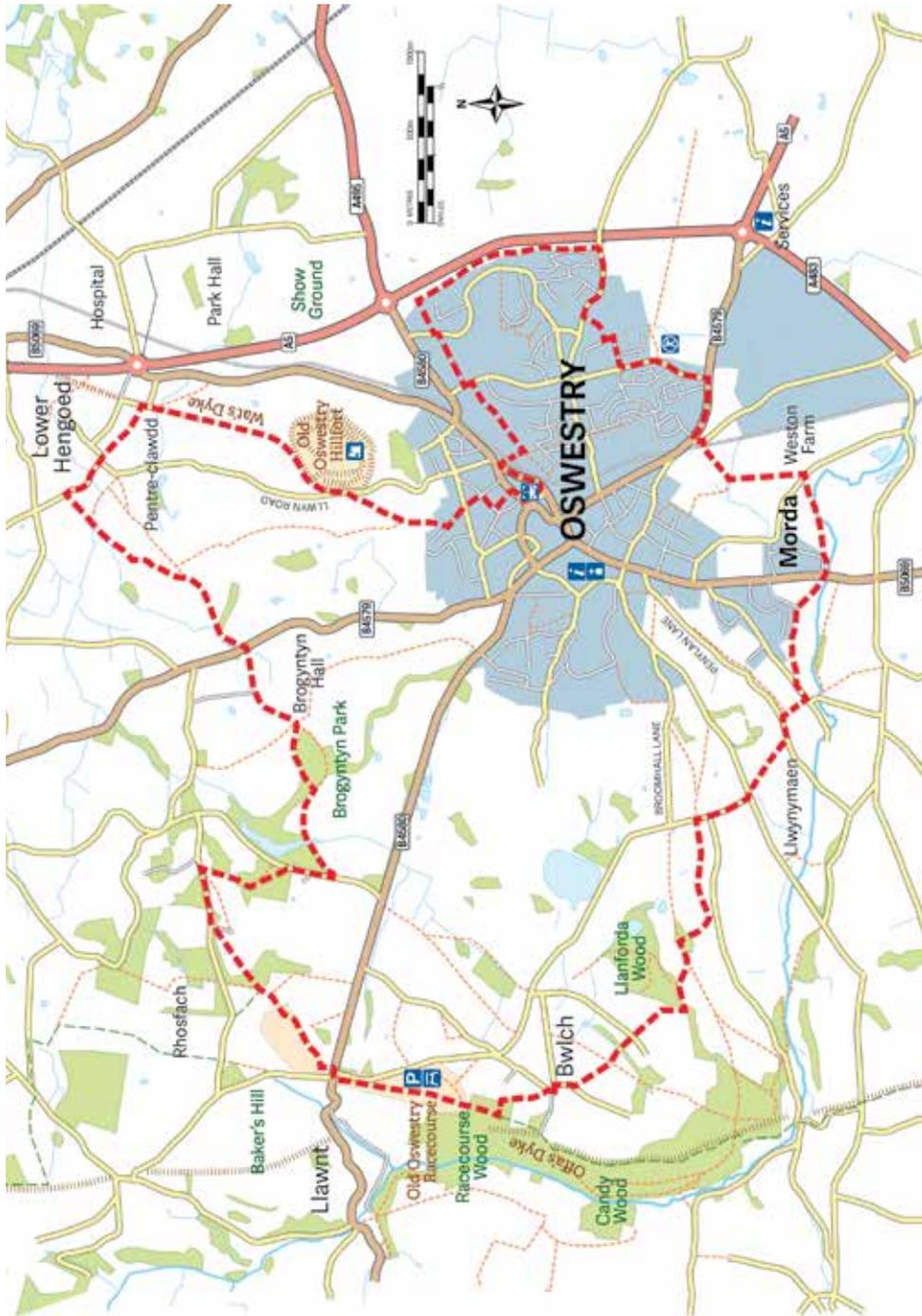




**A 12.6 mile circular walk
round Oswestry**



Old Oswestry Hillfort

Introduction

Oswald's Trail was conceived by the Oswestry Group of the Ramblers as a permanent mark of the group having been in existence for 40 years (2013).

The trail is a complete circuit of Oswestry taking in many of the important historical points of interest along the way. Whilst the total route is 12.6 miles in length, we have divided it into 5 easily accomplished sections so that the walk can be undertaken in stages and so should be within the capability of most walkers of average fitness.

Oswestry's story began with the 3000-year-old settlement of Old Oswestry, one of the most spectacular and best preserved Iron Age hillforts in Britain, with evidence of construction and occupation between 800 BC and AD 43.

The Battle of Maserfield is thought to have been fought near Oswestry in 642, between the Anglo-Saxon kings Penda of Mercia and Oswald of Northumbria. Oswald was killed in this battle and was dismembered; according to legend, one of his arms was carried to an ash tree by a raven, and miracles were subsequently attributed to the tree (as Oswald was considered a saint). Thus it is believed that the name of the site is derived from a reference to 'Oswald's Tree'. The spring Oswald's Well is supposed to have originated where the bird dropped the arm from the tree. Offa's Dyke runs nearby to the west.

We gratefully acknowledge the support and help of The Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust, The Ramblers and Shropshire Council in achieving the fulfilment of this trail.

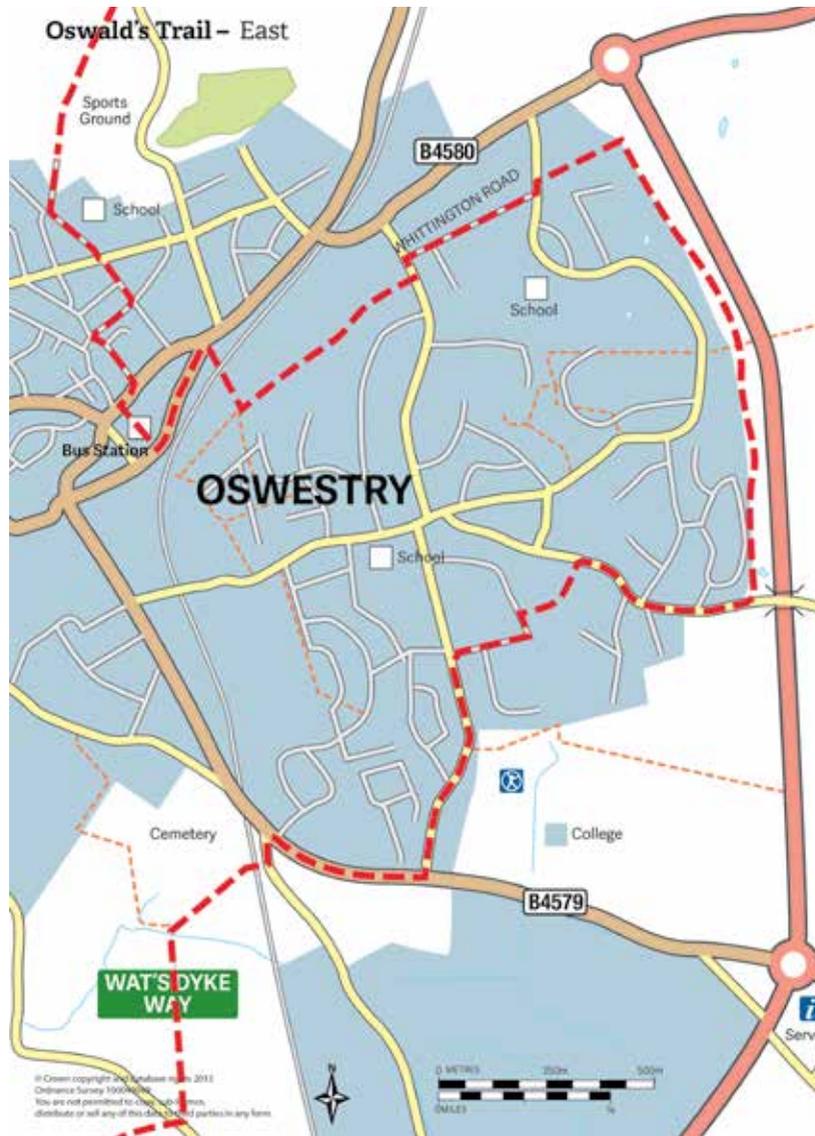
Oswestry Group of the Ramblers

Oswald's Trail – East

Length of section 2.75 miles

This section goes from Oswestry Bus Station to Shrewsbury Road via the green corridor to the east of the town between the A5 and the town. You can return to

Oswestry from this section by walking along Shrewsbury Road, then Salop Road – approximately 0.6 miles.



1 Leave the Bus Station at the eastern (bus entrance) end and turn left to pass alongside Morrisons Supermarket. Cross Oswald Road at the pedestrian lights and then continue along Oswald Road towards the traffic lights. Just before the traffic lights turn right into Thomas Savin Road. Go along Thomas Savin Road crossing the Cambrian Railway line and bear right to enter the medical centre car park. Continue along the pavement to enter the Wilfred Owen Green area. Immediately turn left and follow the gravel path along the edge of the green (medical centre car park immediately on your left), after a short distance take the path as it swings left and goes gently uphill behind some factory buildings.

2 Continue to follow the path as it heads downhill to reach some bollards and the access to a road (Queen Elizabeth Drive). Turn left and follow Queen Elizabeth Drive to the junction with Unicorn Road. Now cross diagonally left over Unicorn Road to enter Windsor Road and continue along until just before the end; then bear then bear left through the wildlife area to come out on Harlech Road. Cross diagonally left over Harlech Road to enter a tarmac pedestrian way (with a green metal fence on the left hand side).

3 At the end of the pedestrian way, turn right onto a hard surfaced track running through a wooded area (the buffer zone between the houses and the A5) and continue along the path to a football practice area, where the path once again becomes a tarmac-surfaced path. Take the path alongside the football practice area and past a children's play area and then take a short set of steps down into a grassed area. Continue along the path passing along the backs of houses (with

the A5 a little way to the left) to pass through the Eaton Fields and pond area. Just a short way past the pond the path reaches a gate onto Middleton Road.

4 Go through the gate, turn right and go along Middleton Road to the junction with Middleton Way (be careful on this section as the road is narrow and cars travel quite fast here). At the junction with Middleton Way, bear right to continue along Middleton Road, until Wilfred Owen Road on the left. Go along Wilfred Owen Road to the junction with Llys Road and turn left for a short distance, then take Hazel Grove on the right. Continue on Hazel Grove, crossing Maple Avenue to the junction with College Road.

5 Turn left and go down College Road to its junction with Shrewsbury Road (the B4579), now turn right and go along Shrewsbury road to the junction with Maesbury Road on the left.

Wilfred Owen Green

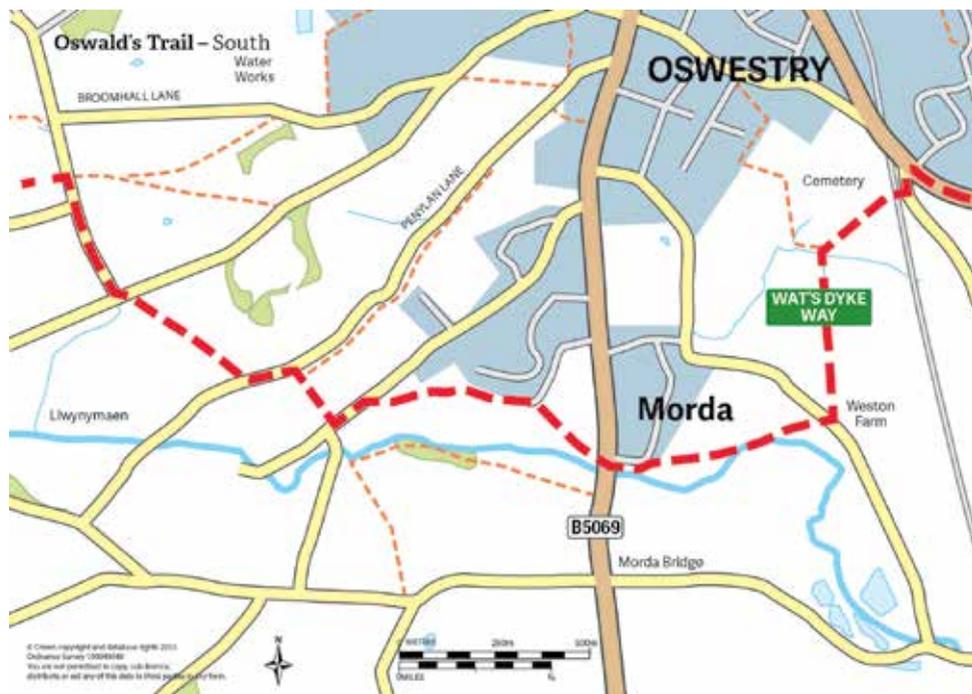


Oswald's Trail – South

Length of section 1.85 miles

This section goes from Shrewsbury Road to Trefonen Road. The section can be joined from the centre of Oswestry by

walking out on Salop Road to Maesbury Road. Return to Oswestry via Trefonen Road – approximately 1 mile.



1 Cross Shrewsbury Road into Maesbury Road and after a few metres, at the fingerpost, turn right into the Travis Perkins Builders Merchants. Go straight across to and go over the stile ahead, cross the railway (currently disused) and through the gate on the other side to enter a field. Now head diagonally left to a kissing gate about 200 metres from the far right hand corner of the field (note the field can be boggy in wet weather and it may be better to skirt the RH edge of the field in these conditions). Go through the

kissing gate into a green lane and turn left. Continue along the lane to a kissing gate onto a country road (Weston Lane).

2 Cross the road diagonally right and take the stile into the field. Now go along the field heading diagonally left to intersect the hedge line ahead close to the river Morda. Go through the hedge line and then head diagonally right to a kissing gate to the right of some houses. Go through the gate onto a rough lane and turn right. Continue up the lane to



Penylan Mill

the B5069 (Morda Bank). Cross straight over and through the kissing gate; now continue straight ahead on a good track past a house on the right, then over a grass field to a kissing gate. Go through the gate and turn left into Love Lane.

3 At the end of Love lane turn left at the fingerpost onto a tarmac lane (Croeswylan Lane) and continue for about 50 metres. Where the lane turns sharp left, cross the stile on the right and continue straight up the field to a stile at the top. Go over the stile into Penylan Lane and turn left, continue on the lane for about 100 metres and just past the house on the right take the stile up the bank on the right. Now head slightly diagonally left towards a wooden gate that will become visible once you reach the top of the slope. Go through the gate and head across the field to a stile (that should be visible). Cross the stile onto Trefonen Road.



Looking down Love Lane

Oswald's Trail – West

Length of section 2.5 miles

This section goes from Trefonen Road to the B4580 (Oswestry Racecourse common). The section can be joined from the centre of Oswestry by walking out on the Trefonen Road. The return to Oswestry is via the B4580; it is approximately 2 miles to return to

Oswestry. There is currently a bus service (the 78 to Llansilin) on Wednesday and Friday that goes past the Racecourse Common – check Shropshire Council web site – <http://shropshire.gov.uk/bustimes> for details and location of bus stop. There is a car park at the Racecourse.



Llanforda parkland

1 At the exit onto Trefonen Road cross over, turn left and in just a few metres turn right (road signposted to Racecourse). Go along this road for 350 metres passing a road signposted for Candy on the left. Approximately 60 metres after the road for Candy go over the stile on the left and follow the broad track through the parkland. The track will start to bear right as it approaches the field boundary. Continue along the track and as it then begins to bear away (right) from the boundary leave the track and under the power lines. The track fades away in approximately 50 metres; go straight ahead to a stile into the woods. Continue ahead to a waymarker post in the centre of the wood then turn left and continue on the track though the woods ignoring the track that forks off right. At the stile alongside Llanforda Gardens (ruin) go ahead into the field and head directly across to a gate way in a stone wall.

An internet search tells us that Llanforda Hall, was a home of the Williams-Wynn family but burned down in 1780. It was rebuilt in the 19th century but fell to ruin and was auctioned for demolition in 1948. The ruins of the walled gardens are all that now remain.

2 Go through the gate and turn right to follow the field boundary up and round, turning left at the top by the wood. Ignore the gate into the woods and continue for a further couple of minutes along the field boundary with the wood on your right until you meet a gate into a field. Go through the gate and follow the field boundary up and round to the right (with the wood and hedge on your right). At the corner of the field, turn left and continue to follow the field boundary to the top of the field where you will encounter a stile onto a track.

3 Cross the stile and track and then the stile opposite into the field. Head straight across the field towards a stile heading into a wood. Cross this stile and the small footbridge, then go straight ahead through the wood to another small footbridge and stile into a field. Follow the field boundary straight ahead for about 150 metres to a stile in the fence on your right. Go over the stile and another small footbridge into a field.

4 Head diagonally left across the field aiming slightly to the left of the modern house (Bwlch) you will see in the distance. As you cross the top of the slope in the field you will see some older cottages to the left of the modern house; start to head towards these. At the edge of the field, cross the stile (alongside a gate) onto a track and then directly across the stile into the grounds of the cottages. Head diagonally to go past the entrance to the cottages up to the road (cattle grid at road entrance).

5 Take the stile opposite the entrance to the road and go up past the barn with the barn on your right, over another stile and the hedge on your left. Keep heading up the field and past the now defunct stile where a fence has been removed. Then a



Janus horse on the Racecourse

further 50 metres to another stile which you should cross. Keep straight ahead with a wood on your left. After another 50 metres you will encounter a dry stone wall with a kissing gate on your left into the wood.

6 Go through the gate, then go straight ahead through the wood down through the avenue of the trees until you encounter a broad track (Offa's Dyke Path – signed with an acorn and the Shropshire Way). Turn right and head up to a kissing gate onto the Racecourse.

7 Continue ahead passing the Janus horse sculpture and the ruins of the grandstand, crossing several access roads until you reach the B4580.

The hilltop formed the Oswestry Racecourse where the English and Welsh squirearchy held an annual race week from early in the 1700s until 1848. Before the races the road that separated the north and south commons was barred to stop carriages and other vehicles from interfering with the running. Turf was laid over the road surface to prevent the horses from slipping. Most of the famous families from the Oswestry area were involved in the races during

the Racecourse's history, including 'Mad Jack Mytton'. The main event was the Sir Watkin Williams Wynn Cup. The race was normally two circuits of the figure of eight course (4 miles). This was accompanied by 'much drinking, betting, begging and picking of pockets'. The race week included many other social events in and around Oswestry. Spectators sat in the grandstand, the remains of which can be seen, or on the banks that surrounded the track.

Oswald's Trail – North West

Length of section 2.5 miles

This section goes from the B4580 (Oswestry Racecourse common) to B4579 (Selattyn Road). See previous section re bus services to Oswestry Racecourse and car parking. It is approximately 1 mile from the end of this section to return to Oswestry via the B4579.

1 Taking care, cross the B4580 (Note that this is a busy road with fast moving traffic). Go straight onto the Racecourse Common, at this point you leave the Offa's Dyke Path and take the right hand broad track. Continue ahead bearing right round the edge of the Racecourse Common until you reach a waymarked path bearing off to the right at the top of the common.

2 Take this path through the woods for about 25 metres to emerge onto a broad track. Follow the track and then just after you pass Wood Villa take the stile on the right into a wood. Continue on the obvious path down through the wood until you encounter a forest track. The path you are following now takes a slight right-left dog-leg to continue on down through newly planted woodland. Go over the stile at the bottom of the woodland to enter a field. Continue straight ahead, aiming just to the left of a farm building (Coppice Farm) in a small copse, to a stile into the next field. Cross the stile and continue ahead to a short track ending in a gate and stile.



Oswald's Trail – North West



Brogyntyn Estate

3 Go over the stile into a lane and turn right to head down a rough track (signposted unsuitable for motor vehicles). Continue down the track until you reach a waymarked path on the right. Go through the gate to enter a field and continue along the field edge with the hedge/wood on your left until you reach a stile into a wood. Cross the stile and follow the obvious track through the wood to reach a road.

4 Now turn right and head up the road for approximately 350 metres to the turning into Brogyntyn Park on your left (you will see a cluster of farm buildings below the road just as you leave woodland on the right).

5 Turn left into Brogyntyn Park and follow the roadway through the farm buildings and then past a pond on the

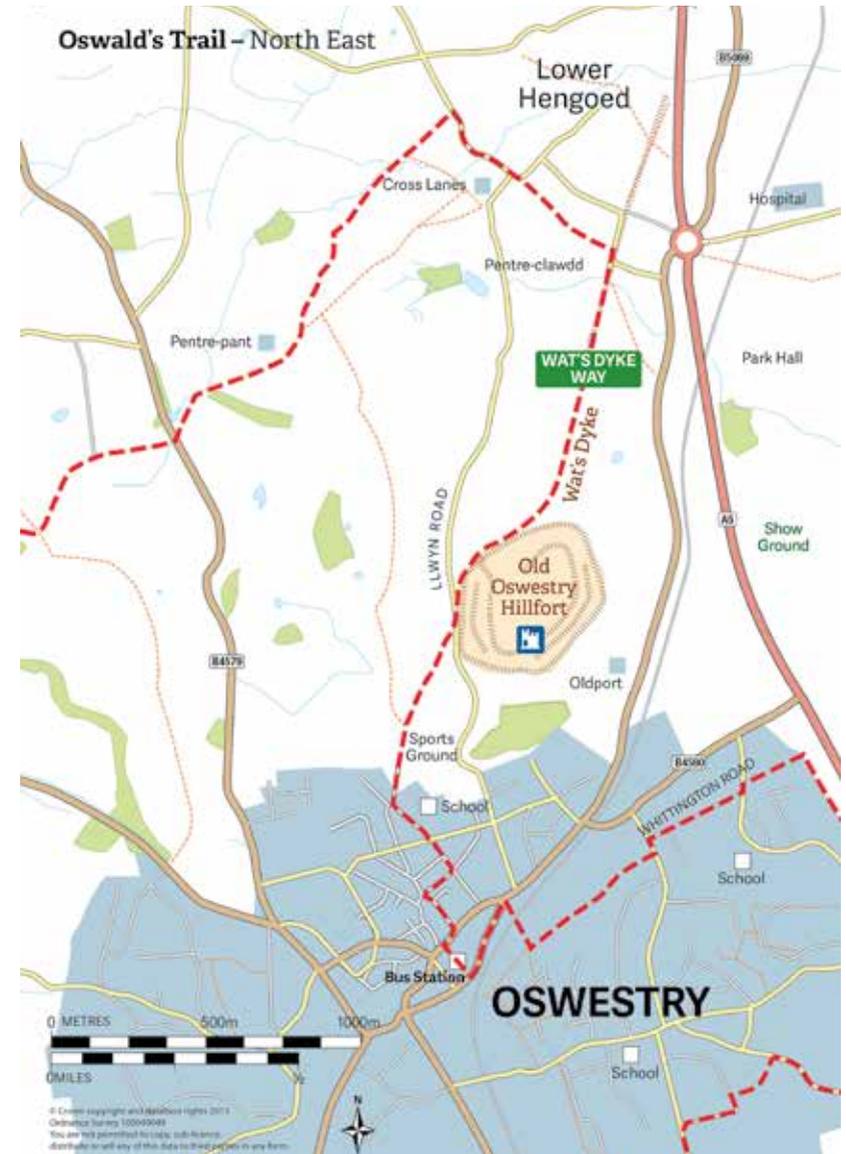
right to a gate. Go through the gate and continue ahead until you see a waymark post directing you to the left through the woods. Continue to follow the path through the wood until it emerges just beyond Brogyntyn Hall and regains the tarmac driveway. Follow the drive until it reaches the road (the B4579).

Brogyntyn was a residence of members of the princely dynasty of the Welsh kingdom of Powys in late medieval Wales. It subsequently came into the possession of the Ormsby-Gore family (Lord Harlech). Apart from the Hall and parkland which are self-evident on this section of the walk, there are the remains of a medieval castle mound. For more information see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brogyntyn>.

Oswald's Trail – North East

Length of section 3 miles

This section goes from the B4579 (entrance to Brogyntyn Park) to Oswestry Bus Station. It can be joined from the centre of Oswestry by walking out on Oakhurst Road, approximately 1 mile.





Hillfort – main entrance

1 At the road at the exit from Brogyntyn Park, cross diagonally left to enter the driveway to Pentre Pant. Now go ahead to pass the entrance to Pentre Pant Hall on your left, continue ahead as the track becomes rougher and climbs up hill. As the track flattens out and just where the wall on the left has a wooden fence on top of it, you will find a narrow gap in the wall (on the left) with metal rails across it.

2 Take this, the entrance to the footpath and go ahead for a short distance to a stile you can see ahead. Cross the stile and bear right across the field to a stile in the top right hand corner, just a few metres to the right of a water trough. Cross the stile into the field on the right and then go left to follow the hedge line. When the hedge veers away to the left, continue ahead bearing slightly diagonally left aiming for the bottom left-hand corner of the field and a wooden bridge. Cross the bridge and then go slightly diagonally left to a stile you can see ahead. Cross the stile

and head across the field aiming for the wooden electricity pole you can see in the middle of the field; then go ahead to the stile you can see and cross into the lane.

3 Turn right and go along the lane until just past a turning on the right and just before the lane swings harp left. You will now find a stile in the hedge on your right, cross it and go a few metres to another stile into a wood. Go straight ahead along the edge of the wood to a stile into a field. Cross this stile and head diagonally left to a further stile into another field. Cross this stile and continue to head diagonally left to a stile onto a lane.

4 Now turn right and head along the lane for a short distance towards a farm. Just as you reach the farm you will see ahead a stile (waymarked Wat's Dyke) into a field. Cross the stile and head slightly diagonally right to a self-closing gate into the next field. Go through the gate and go along the field edge with the

hedge/fence on your left. As you cross the rise in the field Oswestry Old Hill Fort will come into full view. Continue ahead to a stile into the next field, follow the hedge line until it swings away to the left at which point you should head diagonally right to reach the field boundary at the bottom of the hillfort by a waymark post. Continue along the bottom of the hillfort to reach a metal gate leading onto a lane.

Oswestry Iron Age Hillfort remains one of the best preserved hillforts in the UK, according to English Heritage. Built on lower ground, it is also one of the most accessible hill forts with stunning panoramic views across North Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire.

Designated as a scheduled monument (number 27556) in 1997 it is now in the guardianship of English Heritage. After the Hillfort was abandoned it was incorporated into Wat's Dyke, and two sections of this are adjacent to it.

For more information see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/old-oswestry-hill-fort/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Oswestry.

5 Go through the gate, turn left and go along the lane for about 100 metres to a wooden kissing gate at the back of an informal car parking area on the right. Go through the gate and go diagonally left over the field to a kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and turn left to follow a short path (between a hedge and a fence) to exit onto a car park.

6 Go across the car park to the exit and go straight ahead along Gatacre Avenue. At the bottom of Gatacre Avenue cross the road into Gatacre Road. At the bottom of Gatacre Road cross the road to enter the small car park; go straight ahead to the exit and then continue ahead along Lloyd Street. At the end of Lloyd Street, cross straight over into Swan Lane. Go down Swan Lane to the bottom and cross the road to reach Oswestry Bus Station.



Llwyn Coppice



© Oswestry Ramblers 2014

Text: Peter Carr

Design: Jane and Ray Hadlow

Waymark design and photography: Ray Hadlow

Aerial photo of Old Oswestry Hillfort: Oswestry Borderland Tourism

Maps: Mike Ashton, MA Creative

Print: WPG, Welshpool

