



Walking with Offa 15



Food, drink and accommodation

Imagine patrolling the border without a decent pub. How would Offa's Dyke have been built without them? Over a thousand years later, keep up the tradition and stop for a drink and a bite to eat at **The Bridges, Ratlinghope.**

Sample the real ales at the tap house of the Three Tuns Brewery, the oldest in the country. The Bridges occupies an idyllic location beside the River Onny. A wide selection of soft drinks and hot drinks available. An interesting lunch and evening menu available. Open all day, seven days a week. Accommodation available in The Oat House adjacent to the pub. Contact: 01588 650260
www.thebridgespub.co.uk

Find accommodation listings on
www.visitshropshirehills.co.uk



The Bridges Youth Hostel is within a short walk from The Bridges. For further information www.yha.org/hostel/bridges Tel : 01588 650656



GETTING THERE:

You can find public transport options throughout Shropshire at:
www.travelshropshire.co.uk.
Or contact Traveline on 08712 002233.



BY BUS: The Bridges is served by the **Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle bus** which runs at weekends and Bank Holidays from April to September. The shuttle runs from Church Stretton to numerous points in the Shropshire Hills. You can link to the scheduled services between Shrewsbury and Ludlow (**435**) at Church Stretton. Further information on www.shropshirehillsshuttles.co.uk and www.travelshropshire.co.uk

BY RAIL: There is a mainline station at Church Stretton.

BY CAR: Bridges Inn, SY5 0ST. Please note parking at the pub is for patrons only.

To get the best from your walk we recommend comfortable walking boots, waterproof jacket and overtrousers, warm clothing, gloves and warm hat or sun cream and sun hat (depending on the season!), a mobile phone and something to eat and drink. Sheep and cattle are often in the fields on these routes – dogs must be kept under close control or on leads at all times.

Walking with Offa *Promoting the Welsh English border as a great place to get your boots on, enjoy the beautiful countryside and indulge in some fabulous food and drink.*



For more details contact the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership on

01588 674080

or see www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk



There are 18 pub walks in this series and four 'Days Out'. Download, including podcasts, from www.shropshirewalking.co.uk/walking-with-offa. Turn your Smartphone into a complete outdoors GPS. Download an app: www.viewranger.com and search for 'Walking with Offa'. A guide featuring 12 walks is available.



This project has been supported by Advantage West Midlands' Natural Assets Programme in partnership with Natural England.



Walking with Offa 15

A Golden Valley in the foothills of the Long Mynd

A 6½ mile walk with a steady climb beside the Darnford Brook and along an ancient drovers road taking 2 to 3 hours



The Welsh English Border - where King Offa met his match!

One of a series of walks with spectacular views and glimpses of history, wildlife and archaeology.

in the Shropshire Hills



Walking with Offa 15 **RATLINGHOPE Darnford Valley**

A 6½ mile walk, taking two to three hours, with a steady climb beside the Darnford Brook and along an ancient drover's road.

Start from The Bridges, Ratlinghope SY5 0ST. Streamside path which can be muddy, grassland and tracks with eleven stiles.

① With the pub on your right walk up to T junction and turn right. Pass the Bridges Youth Hostel and just before the stone bridge take the stile on left. Follow the Shropshire Way along the path through trees. Turn left to go over stile then continue to a stile into conifer plantation. Follow the narrow path beside the Darnford Brook to a stile onto a stoned track. Cross the track to stile ahead and follow path through garden.

② Turn left onto a track which continues up above the Darnford Brook, along the side of the valley below Ratlinghope Hill. Follow the Shropshire Way to the old road at Lower Darnford. After the gate turn left and follow track through two gates. Leave the Shropshire Way and keep to stoned track climbing left uphill through more gates onto track. Ascend with some pools on your right up to road.

③ Turn right onto road and follow past Thresholds, visited frequently by Mary Webb, the Shropshire author, on her walks where she gathered ideas for her novels such as *Gone to Earth* and *Precious Bane*. Pass house and take the next lane on right which is The Portway, an ancient drover's road, which continues along the length of the Long Mynd.

④ Follow the surfaced lane to a kissing gate on your right. You have rejoined the Shropshire Way and this section of route is also a part of WWO route 16. After the gate descend through the Golden Valley, scattered with bright blooms of gorse, down to a stile. Continue along the path, down over a plank bridge then up to rejoin the track walked on outward journey.

⑤ After two gates keep to the track and descend to small footbridge over brook. The stoned track runs

past Lower Darnford then becomes surfaced and ascends to road. Turn right and follow road back to Ratlinghope where you can visit the small church and look for the memorial of, Richard Munslow, said to be the last sineater in Shropshire. *A sineater attended the funeral of those who had died without recanting their sins. By making a short speech at the graveside the sineater took upon himself the sins of the deceased.*

⑥ Back on the road pass through Brow Farm and continue down to the Manor House. Take the stile on right and follow path which will take you back to the Darnford Brook. Turn left and follow the Shropshire Way back to The Bridges.

