



Hills, woods, rivers, waterways, history, wildlife, meres & mosses

Originally devised in 1980, the *Shropshire Way* was a 136-mile trail running mainly through the county's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Shropshire Hills featuring the great hog's back of the Long Mynd, the mysterious outcrops of the Stiperstones and the unique Wenlock Edge. Links from the south of the county then took it to Wem and on to Whitchurch where it met the Sandstone Trail.

In 2007 a major two year programme upgraded the southern sections and "tweaked" the route to take it to places that were not possible to access in 1980. A new guidebook was written, the Shropshire Walking website expanded and a Harvey map created.



Haughmond Hill



Oswestry Racecourse



Silver-studded blue butterfly, Prees Heath



Canal locks at Lower Frankton

View of Selattyn and beyond



But the “Shroppy” Way still did not take you to some of the wonderful places in the north of the county so another programme of work started in 2010 using European LEADER funding. This time new routes were created in partnership with the Ramblers, local walking groups, the Canal and Rivers Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Pughs and Natural England taking the walker to the mystical Oswestry uplands and the Meres and mosses landscape that makes this area so special.

The Way now includes:

- Llanymynech with its fascinating Hoffmann lime kiln
- Old Oswestry racecourse with its figure of eight track so loved by Mad Jack Mytton
- Chirk world heritage site
- Ellesmere
- Fenns and Whixall mosses that are internationally important RAMSAR nature reserves
- Brown Moss nature reserve

There is something other-worldly about the north of Shropshire – a watery landscape of green and blue which seems to be lit up from within. Glacial lakes and canals weave through a countryside with some amazing heritage and attractions. By Offa’s Dyke in the west is Llanymynech where the wildlife is as interesting as the remains of the 19th century limeworks. At Chirk, the World Heritage Site of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal begins as Thomas Telford’s aqueduct carries the waterway high over the Ceiriog valley before plunging into the four hundred metres of The Darkie tunnel. The second aqueduct at Pontcysyllte four miles on is even more hair-raising. There’s Hawkstone Park, near Wem, an 18th century fantasy of grottos and follies which made just the right location for the TV adaptation of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. And Ellesmere, where in spring you can watch herons hatch their young and enjoy the lakeside views anytime of year.

The market towns have character. And decent beer. Stonehouse of Oswestry, and Joules of Market Drayton are two of the local breweries. Artists and musicians seem to like it here so there’s plenty going on.

The walks along canal towpaths and around the Meres and Mosses are not strenuous, but allow plenty of time, look closely and you’ll spot wildlife and heritage that you’ll probably see nowhere else.

When you visit **Fenn’s and Whixall Moss** then make sure to have look at the new history trail, created with Natural England as part of the Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Project, where a WW2 top secret **Starfish site** is being recreated. This was a bombing decoy where basket fires were lit every time there was a bomber raid on Merseyside in the hope that the Luftwaffe would bomb it and not the cities.

For more details visit: www.shropshirewalking.co.uk where you can download the guides and maps as well as the podcasts sponsored by a local company **Pughs**.



The Roving Bridge



Chirk World Heritage Site



Whixall Moss



The Starfish site
on Whixall



Find out more at

www.shropshirewalking.co.uk