***A Special Christmas Offa***

***21st December 2019***

***The Route***

From Trefonen Village Hall turn right to cross main road on crossing. Ahead up Bellan Lane past Post Office and TURN RIGHT at Offas Dyke sign.

 *This is important – Offa’s Dyke path runs North and South from Trefonen and you don’t want to be the only person heading South.*

Follow Offa’s Dyke path National Trail acorn signs 3Km North towards Racecourse Common

Trail follows lane and enclosed path to road. Cross field to double kissing gate *which you do not cross* but turn left uphill to road.

Path crosses some damp fields alongside dyke to road and drops on road to Candy. Turn right at junction (broken fingerpost) and left at Brook Cottage. Down drive to turn right opposite house.

Path climbs into wood firstly on woodland track then climbing steeply on narrow path through trees. After a zig zag towards top edge of wood it heads roughly North for 1Km to a cleared area where it does a dog leg and continues North.

In 200m you pass bench on your left and enter some gloomy conifers. Slow down and pay attention. In 100m turn right through woods at a waymark post. **SJ256 300**

*You are now on Oswald’s Trail that you follow to Weston*

Through conifers and turn right down hedge line to road at Bwlch. Turn right, up drive of “The Old Farm” into garden. Half left across lawn. The trail crosses track and crosses first field to right hand corner. Follow waymarks as trail heads through fields and woodland to skirt Llanforda Wood**. SJ262 289**

You emerge into park land to pass a deserted walled garden on your left.

Trail enters small area of wood where it turns sharp right (South) at a waymark post and emerges into further park land. Ahead to join track initially with fence on your right – track then turns left (East) to road. **SJ274 288**

Turn right 400m to T junction then left to cross road with care and follow trail over 2 fields to road. Turn left again looking out for stile on right where you cross a further field to road.

Another left turn and in 150 m turn right on enclosed track. Join path that takes the trail in front of some new houses, across a green and along the River Morda to the B5069. **SJ288 281**

Cross with care and up track opposite. The path turns left immediately before red brick cottages. Behind cottages turn right alongside the river Morda. At “Danger deep water” signs head half left to field corner to emerge onto Weston Lane. Here you say farewell to Oswald’s trail and hello to Wat’s Dyke Way.

 Turn right on Weston Lane to T junction where turn left. In 150m turn right over stile with care – there is a steep drop. Turn left to disused railway line. Turn right along railway line and cross A483 **with great care – this is a fast, busy road.** Continue on railway line for 50 m to Wat’s Dyke stile on left. Follow waymarked path over fields generally South East to road and farm at Gwern Hafod. **SJ 300 265**

Turn right on road for 350m to gate and stile on left. Walk through narrow field area with fence on right for 90m and cross stile on right into another small field. Cross this to come into wide grazed area. Head half left aiming for white house with 2 long windows in gable end to footbridge onto road. Turn right.

*We are now leaving Wat’s Dyke Way for a while to head to the checkpoint for a cup of tea!*

In 120m at road junction go ahead (sign Morton). In 200m at cross roads ahead sign Aston. At T junction straight over to clear footpath across arable field to road. Cross to small green building.

**Checkpoint 1 Maesbury WI Hut. SJ311 254**

Leave checkpoint, turn left into Maesbury Marsh village. First left (Waen Lane). The road ends at a cattle grid which you cross and continue on a byway to a track junction **SJ321 253** where turn right on bridleway. In 220 turn left at gate. Bridle way follows border of arable field and swings right through trees to the canal. Cross bridge. *If not visiting the well turn right (West) on tow path*

***Optional out and back to visit St Winifred’s Well.***

Bear S across field to far left hand field corner. Cross at gap in hedge with broken stile lying on ground. Continue with hedge on your right over a footbridge into the grounds of the well**.**

**SJ 322 244**

*This is reputed to be a resting place of the body of St Winifred as she was carried from Holywell to Shrewsbury Abbey. A unique medieval well chapel is built above an ancient and venerated spring that feeds three linked pools. Now a Landmark Trust holiday home there is also an incongruous brick built detached bathroom for visitors who prefer modern amenities.* Having bathed in the holy well (or maybe not) return to the canal tow path, turn left (West)

Follow the canal **for 8Km**. You rejoin Wat’s Dyke Way and also the Shropshire Way Main Route The canal is initially navigable. Around Crickheath Wharf you pass an area of restoration. It is then a quiet overgrown backwater to Llanymynech.

As you approach Llanymynech the canal is again filled with water. Cross the dam between the full and empty sections **SJ 270 212**

Climb steps and turn left through gate. Folllow path to join hard bottomed path towards chimney. Bear left at path junction to go through gate leading to Hoffman Kiln and Stables. Climb wooden steps on right to visit kiln – worth the climb. Return down steps to follow path to the Stables.

**Checkpoint 2 The Stables Llanymynech Heritage centre SJ 268 212**

Turn left from the Stables following the main path to the Tally House. Follow the path veering leftwards under the road, then turn right *before* waymark on metal gate to go up the steep English Incline Plane to the winding gear at the top. This is an old route of the Shropshire Way with buzzard symbols. Turn left 250m to the top of the Welsh Incline Plane where you rejoin Offa's Dyke Path. **SJ265 216**

.Follow Offa’s Dyke Path back to Trefonen.

Path climbs under rock face to join a golf course. It circles the golf course mainly in trees for 1km then turns left steeply downhill to join a track. Waymarks take you over a field and disused railway line to driveway onto the A495. Cross with care.

Cross stile on left to climb through field and enclosed path to road where turn left. Path follows road for 1.4km to Cefn y Blodwel. Turn right downhill at waymark to reach road near Nantmawr.

Turn right into Nantmawr and in 300m turn up path on left (easy to miss – if you have reached the phone box you have gone too far).

Climb steeply to top road where turn left and follow steps into nature reserve. Follow waymarks to the toposcope on Moelydd Uchaf.

Enjoy the view then head East then NNE downhill. Follow instructions to keep to field edge as you drop to track heading North past Ty Canol to the road. At junction turn left and in 50m right to cross several fields back into Trefonen.

Pass the post office a second time, cross main road and back past the school to village hall.

***Congratulations – and a very Happy Christmas***

***We hope to see you in 2020***

***29th February South Shropshire Circular – a secret route of about 25 miles from Minsterley village hall. Event full but waiting list open***

***25th April Corvedale Cake Walk. 10, 14, or 22 miles from Holdgate Church – with lots of cakes to eat on the way round. Entries open.***

***Details*** [***https://www.ldwa.org.uk/Marches/E/0/future-events.html***](https://www.ldwa.org.uk/Marches/E/0/future-events.html)

***And in September – look out for the Tour de Marches – 26 miles from Wistanstow***

***And the last Saturday before Christmas our annual Christmas walk***