

Trail Guide:



This is not a walk that can be done with pushchairs as there are rough tracks, a steep ascent and when you get off the tracks lots of mud and water in all but the driest of summers. Boots are essential. The path is not difficult to follow as most of the alternate paths that you find are marked "private".

The 'Fancy That' Factor

Take part of the route that Bonnie Prince Charlie took when he marched upon Derby in 1745

Sit on a bench made of horseshoes by a village pond – lucky you!

The walk through both parks is nearly 5 miles (8 kms) to Shirley Village, so allow 3 - 4 hours for the walk and another mile if you have come by bus from Ashbourne.

A walk with a wild side, abandoned grandeur and neglected glory. You get the feeling that you are all alone in the world as you walk around these old estates. All you are likely to see are sheep, deer, foxes, wildfowl and a wonderful spot for buzzards, kestrels, sparrow hawks and barn owls. The trees are also an indication of greater times; ancient oaks with enormous girths, tall beech trees, stands of yew,

conifers and giant cedars. Everywhere the rhododendrons have gone wild and now fill the undergrowth with dark, damp and mysterious places. You will also be walking in the footsteps of Bonnie Prince Charlie! In the unsuccessful Stuart rebellion of 1745 he was proclaimed King of England in Ashbourne market square and then marched through Osmaston and Shirley on route to Derby. The result is history.

Trail Key:



Difficulty Rating for walks:



This trail is one of 44 exciting trails to explore in the Peak District & Derbyshire.

By car: Start at Osmaston and park free of charge in the village hall car park.

By bus: From Ashbourne catch a "big 1" Derby bus to 'Osmaston Crossroads' at Yeldersley, cross over the A52 and walk to Osmaston. The buses run hourly and details can be found at the Tourist Information Centre or tel 0870 6082608. The walk from the bus stop adds just over a mile (2 kms) to the walk.

Osmaston is a picturesque 'model village' which formed part of the estate of the wealthy industrialist Francis Wright, who built Osmaston Hall in the 19th century. Thatched cottages and village hall are clustered around the centre of the village and the duckpond, next to which is a remarkable bench made entirely of horseshoes. The "Shoulder of Mutton" village pub serves good food and is a good place to stop.

From the village pond bear left and take the centre track marked "**Bridle Path to Shirley**" and when you sally forth along this track, you are walking on Bonnie Prince Charlie's route of 1745, when he marched from Ashbourne to Derby. This route takes you through **Osmaston Park**.

Osmaston Hall was pulled down in 1964. All that's left are the magnificent parklands and lakes, the grand park gates and a stone tower that was the chimney for the hall's central heating system on a grand scale, although rumour says it never worked.

There is one gem left standing by one of the lakes; an **old water mill** where time has stood still. The work benches and tools are still there quite untouched and the water still flows over the mill race. Osmaston Park is being rejuvenated and there are plans for sports facilities and better pathways and cycle routes through the grounds so who knows, perhaps this old mill will work again.

Keep walking down the trail to the village of **Shirley**, where a wonderful village inn called the Saracen's Head serves excellent food and makes an ideal lunch stop. The 'Valiant Shirleys', the Earls Ferrers, are mentioned in Shakespeare's Henry IV and although remains of their manor are now part of a farm, Shirley Park still retains something of their past.

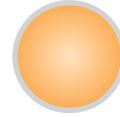
Leave the village turning **westwards** and follow the bridle path (often muddy!) as it skirts round the western side of **Shirley Park**, over **a series of bridges** above Shirley brook and then **near Wyaston Grove, take a very sharp right** and follow the track back towards Osmaston going past 2 black and white-fronted houses and the remains of the Hall.

Your walk is complete but perhaps you'll come back to see the annual Ashbourne Shire Horse Show on the 3rd Saturday in August at Osmaston Park.

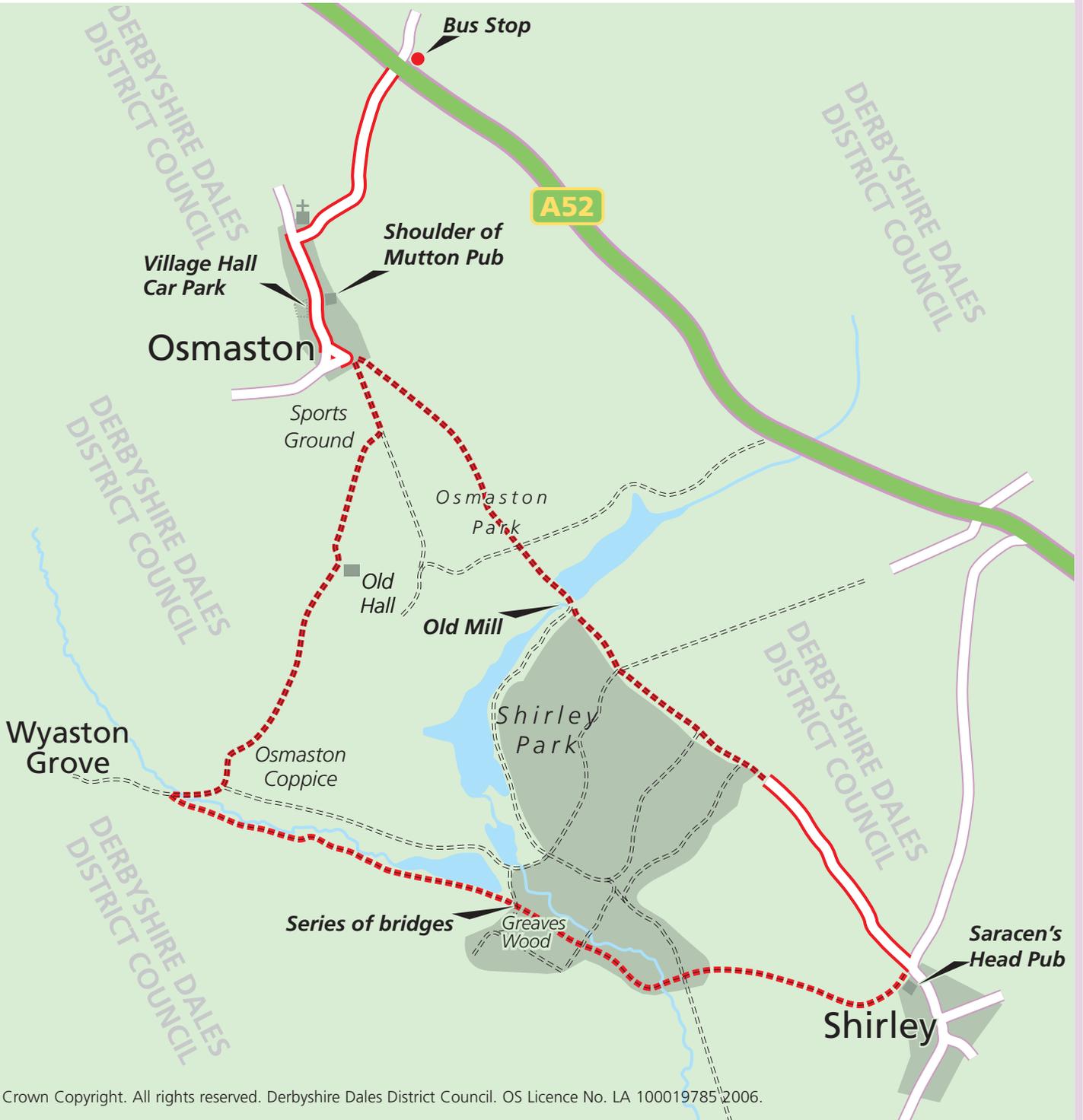
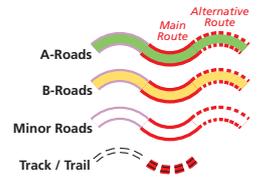


8 km
5 miles

3-4hr



Key



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