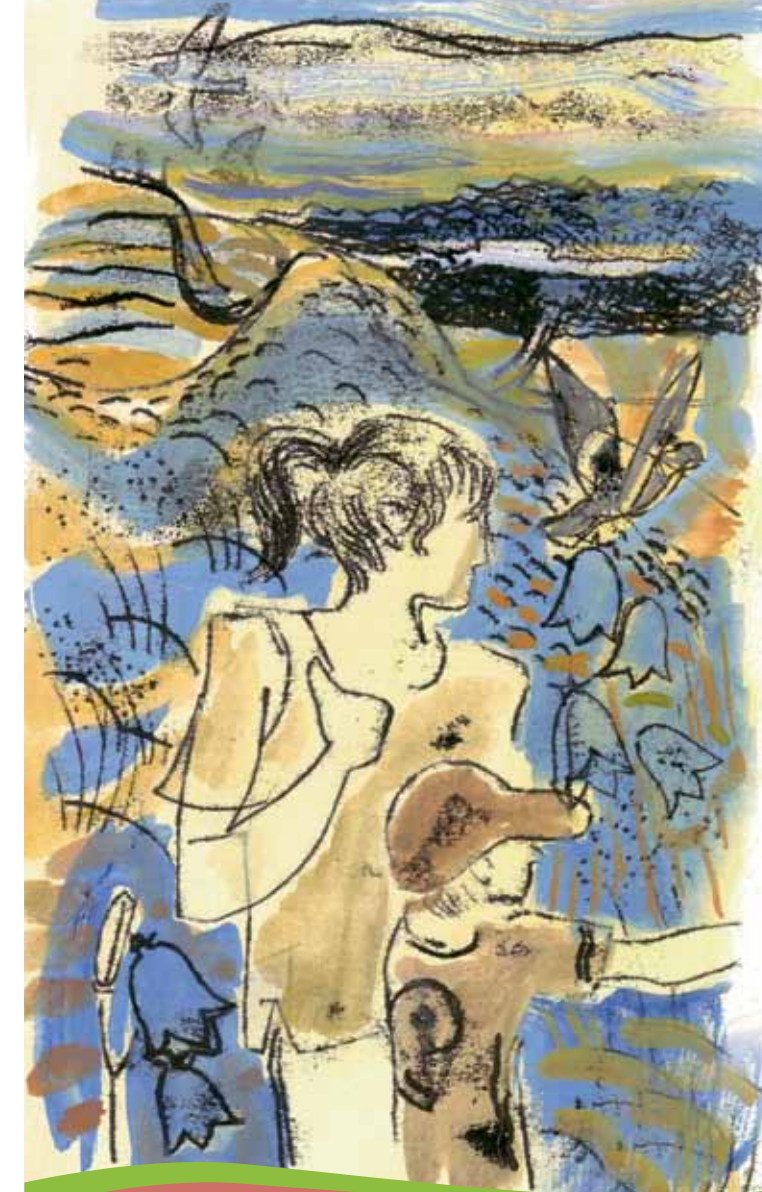


A circular walk around Eddisbury and Kelsborrow Hillforts



“I love to climb the ramparts and, in the evening gloom, sense the presence of all those who lived here long ago.”

Don Wilson, Eddisbury Hill resident

Beyond the café, turn right, downhill on Tirley Lane. Bear left at the junction with Waste Lane and follow the road downhill past **Roughlow Farm 6**. It's named after a long-since ploughed out Bronze Age burial mound, or 'low', that once dominated the nearby hill.

The lane winds downhill through a deep wooded clough called Pearl Hole. At the bottom of the slope, turn right, gently uphill again on narrow Gooseberry Lane. The lane runs above Willington Fruit Farm. (For a detour to the hidden Boot Inn, drop down the narrow footpath to the left, some 200 metres on.)

Continue to the end of Gooseberry Lane before bearing left, on a narrow waymarked footpath, immediately before a concrete drive. From here, an unusual hanging path ascends the lovely wooded combe of **Boothsdale 7**. From the opening of the Cheshire Lines railway until the First World War, the surrounding hills were popular with visitors from industrial Manchester — who nicknamed the area 'Little Switzerland'.

Go through the kissing gate at the head of the combe to emerge in open pasture dominated by the ramparts of **Kelsborrow Castle 8**. Protected originally by a timber and earthwork bank and palisade, this prehistoric promontory fort takes advantage of a natural headland between Boothsdale and the steep scarp to the west.

Primrosehill Wood

The path follows the fenceline across three fields to enter Waste Wood, ahead. Beyond the trees, turn right, uphill on Waste Lane. Follow the lane around to the right, turn left into Primrosehill Wood at a broad parking area called King's Gate, and head down the broad forestry track.

Within 250 metres, turn left, into the trees, on a signposted path to 'Nettleford Wood'. Bear left at the next T-junction of paths to rejoin the Sandstone Trail as it heads north. When Primrosehill Wood ends at the corner of the Organsdale Farm horse-training track, follow the waymarked path across the isthmus of pines, ahead.

Roman Road

Drop down into Organsdale valley, and climb the flight of steps up to Gresty's Waste car park, on the A556 Chester-Manchester road. Cross the busy road with care and continue straight ahead, uphill into Nettleford Wood.

Within 300 metres, turn right, onto a narrower path signposted to 'Stoney Lane'. The path leaves the woods to skirt the upper edge of Organsdale Field, parallel with the route of the **old Roman road 9** between Chester (*Deva*) and Manchester (*Mamucium*). Later called Watling Street, the military road traversed the slopes below the native hillfort, high above the boggy valley.

When the field ends, turn left through a narrow gate and bear left, uphill on a grassy ride onto the Old Pale.

Then turn right, onto a curving, surfaced path that rises through an old hedgeline, back onto Pale Heights. When the path forks below the masts, continue straight ahead, and bear gently uphill to the right.

Nearby are the grassy mound and ventilation shafts of an **old civil defence bunker 10**.

It was part of a system of dispersed regional seats of government set up during the Cold War but mothballed in 1992.

Head for the standing stones around the hilltop viewpoint. Admire the panorama once more, and head downhill to the left, to retrace the outward route back to the Linnere car park.



Roman Road

A Victorian excavation uncovered a well preserved stretch of Roman Watling Street just below Eddisbury Hill

A series of other guides is available. Look out for four walks leaflets, four habitat leaflets, and six hillfort leaflets.

Glacial Landscape

Follow the road to the bottom of the hill and turn left around the bend into what is now Stoney Lane. At the bottom of the lane, cross the A556 Chester-Manchester road with care. Go straight ahead, on another short section of Stoney Lane, to cross the A54 Chester-Winsford road. Continue through a gap beside the double gate, and bear diagonally right on a path across the undulating field ahead. The path heads for the tip of a communication mast poking above the trees.

Climb over a pair of waymarked stiles at the top of the field, and bear right, gently uphill on a broad track beneath tall beeches. When it meets a wider forestry track at the crest of the slope, turn right, and follow the winding track downhill into a dip, some 300 metres later. A signpost here points to **'Urchin's Kitchen' 5**, a narrow sandstone gorge hidden amid the trees. This atmospheric, 30-foot deep glacial outwash channel was formed deep beneath the ice towards the close of the last Ice Age.



Among the Trees
Crossbills and siskins are regular winter visitors to Delamere Forest

Take the footpath opposite Urchin's Kitchen, signposted 'Summertrees' and 'Beeston'. The path bears to the left at a T-junction and then traces the forest edge uphill before turning right, through a kissing gate, into a sloping field. The path follows the hedge line across three small fields to the Summertrees Tearoom.

This leaflet was originally produced as part of the Habitats & Hillforts Project (2008-12) with the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

To learn more about the work of the Sandstone Ridge Trust and its partners, visit

www.thesandstoneridgetrust.co.uk

For other walks, visit

www.sandstonetrail.com

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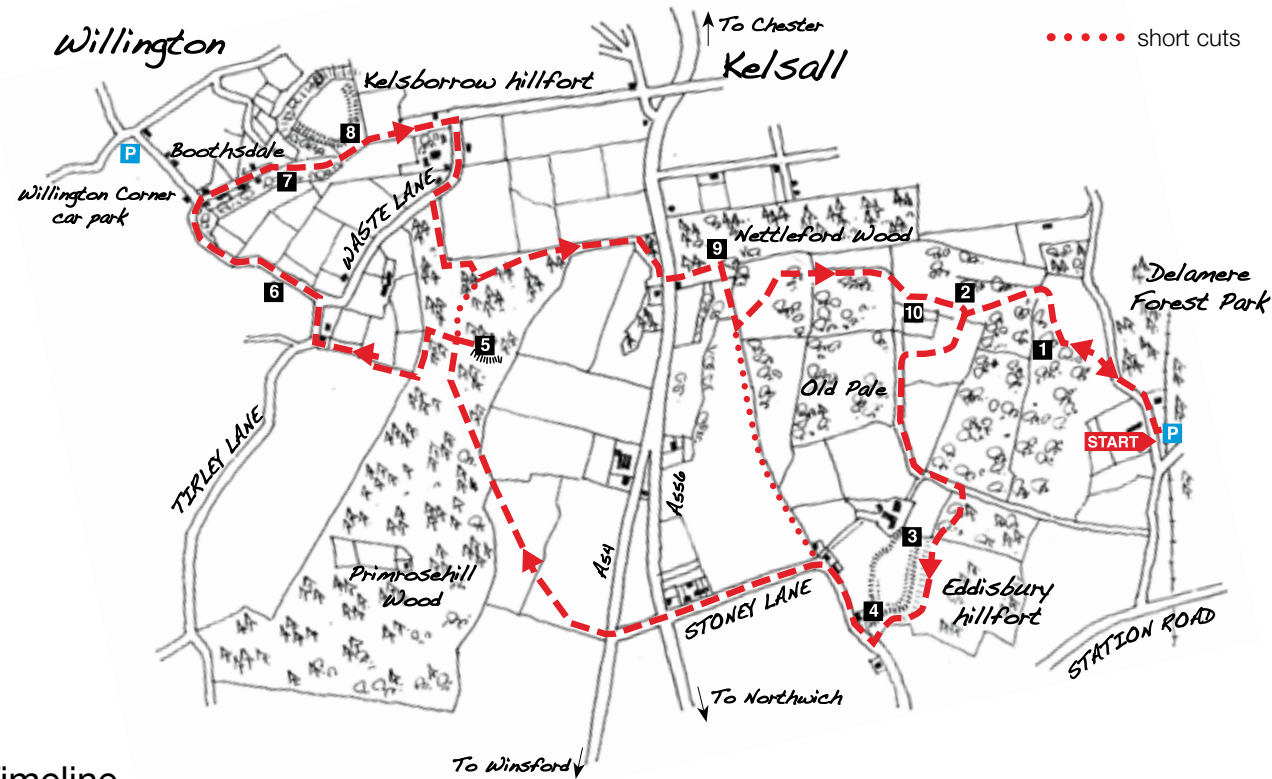
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Around Eddisbury Hill and Kelsborrow Castle

A longer loop exploring Eddisbury hill, on the edge of Delamere Forest, and Kelsborrow promontory fort, above Willington

THIS LONG HALF-DAY OR FULL DAY LOOP explores two contrasting mid-Cheshire hillforts. Eddisbury is the largest and most complex of the ridge's prehistoric hilltop enclosures, while smaller Kelsborrow overlooks the lovely wooded combe of Boothsdale with its hidden pub. Together with a Roman road, Saxon burh, and medieval hunting lodge, they make for a fascinating circuit.



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Start: Delamere Forest Park, Forest Centre car park (pay and display), off Station Road, Delamere CW8 2JD. Map ref: SJ 548704

Distance: 13 kilometres/8 miles

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Allow 4½ — 6 hours

Map: OS 1:25,000 Explorer 267 Northwich & Delamere Forest

Dogs: Dogs should be kept under close control, and preferably on a lead — especially near livestock. Please consider other walkers and clean up after your dog

START: DELAMERE FOREST PARK, Forest Centre car park (pay and display), off Station Road, Delamere CW8 2JD. When the road narrows, turn left at a large wooden sign for 'Old Pale Woodland'. Follow the surfaced path as it zigzags uphill to the right, heading for the communications mast on the top of Pale Heights, ahead. The oval enclosure known as the **Old Pale 1** was created in 1338 when Edward, the Black Prince, ordered 450 acres of forest to be fenced off to 'protect vert and venison'.

Beyond a gap in an old hedge-line, the path emerges onto the summit. It's dominated by a **viewing platform 2**. Seven standing stones, representing the seven old counties visible on a clear day, surround the central Cheshire sandstone pillar. The panorama takes in the Clwydian hills, Liverpool and the distant Pennines.

Iron Age Hillfort

From the summit, turn left, downhill on a surfaced path that heads east towards Eddisbury Hill. Bear right at the next fork, and then left, onto a tarmaced access road.

Follow the lane downhill until it kinks left and right past Old Pale Farm. Within 200 metres, turn right, off the lane, through a gateway. Head down the grassy slope and turn almost immediately right, on a path beside an electric fence. Soon the ramparts of **Eddisbury Hillfort 3** loom up the slope to the right. The largest and most complex hilltop enclosure on the ridge, Eddisbury overlooks the strategic Kelsall Gap. The prehistoric ramparts may later have been refortified by King Alfred's daughter, Aethelflaeda, to protect Chester's flanks from marauding Danes.

Follow the broad grassy path around the hillfort's eastern flanks, and bear right at a fork to emerge opposite Eddisbury Hill Farm. Turn right on Eddisbury Hill Road. Up to the right here, within the south-east corner of the hillfort, are the stone foundations of the **'Chamber in the Forest' 4**. From here the head forester and his eight under-foresters could keep a sharp eye on the royal hunting grounds below.

Overlooking the Forest

From the grassy ramparts of Eddisbury hilltop enclosure, panoramic views extend north over ancient Delamere Forest



Timeline

c. 12,000 BC Urchin's Kitchen formed by glacial meltwater towards end of last Ice Age	c. 900-400 BC Eddisbury hilltop enclosure probably used for seasonal gatherings	c. 80-70 BC Roman Watling Street constructed between Chester (Deva) and Manchester (Mamucium)	c. 915 Aethelflaeda (lady of the Mercians) builds a burh (fort) at Eadesbyrig	1338 Old Pale enclosed on orders of the Black Prince as a refuge for deer and other 'beasts of the chase'	1745 Locals dig ditch across Chester-Manchester road below Eddisbury during the Jacobite Rebellion	1769 Northwich-Chester road becomes a private toll road, or turnpike	1851 Bronze Age burial urn containing cremated human bones found close to the old Roman road	1885 Cheshire antiquarian, WT Watkin, excavates section through Roman road below Eddisbury	1896 Five wedge-shaped stone hammers found at foot of Eddisbury Hill	1935-8 Archaeological excavations at Eddisbury by Liverpool University uncover pottery, stone axe-hammers, and a bronze mirror	2000 Forestry Commission plants trees on 340 acres/137 ha of former farmland on the Old Pale	2010 New excavations at Eddisbury uncover a massive inturned Iron Age gateway
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