

# St Martin's Circular Walk

8

Stan's, skylarks, the 'stute' and views of the Clwydian Hills



This is an attractive walk of considerable natural and historical variety. It starts at Stan's **1** – a substantial local supermarket with a coffee shop, decent parking and a filling station, to the side of which lies our path.

Soon you join a lane that takes you towards Ifton Meadows **2**, a local nature reserve reclaimed from Ifton Colliery which at one time employed 1357 men and closed in 1968. Spoil heaps and industrial clamour have been replaced by rolling rough grassland providing summer nesting for skylarks – listen out for their extended and varied tumbling trill.

A descent into a deep valley **3** leads to a sharp climb levelling alongside a plantation of poplars, originally planted by Lord Trevor's Brynkinalt estate for the production of matchsticks. The timber is now felled and processed for wood chip heating fuel.

You cross Morlas Brook **4** by an 18th century road bridge (it's not obvious) and briefly join Wat's Dyke at Escob Mill, where there was once an extensive network of leats and pools linking at least three water sources.

The old Ellesmere/Oswestry railway embankment **5** offers only a minor challenge, before the path joins the canal and leaves Wat's Dyke at Preeshenlle Bridge. The towpath affords a good view of St Martin's from below and to its left a former POW camp – now Bank Top industrial estate.

Leaving the canal **6**, the path takes you back up into the village and round the church **7** dedicated to St Martin of Tours. After crossing to Stan's look to your left to see the old Miners Institute – the 'Stute' – a genuine reminder of St Martin's industrial past.



Llangollen Canal at St Martin's Moor

