

Beating the Bounds.

A country walk around the parish boundary of Overseal in South Derbyshire and through a corner of the National Forest with a rich industrial heritage and a long diverse history.

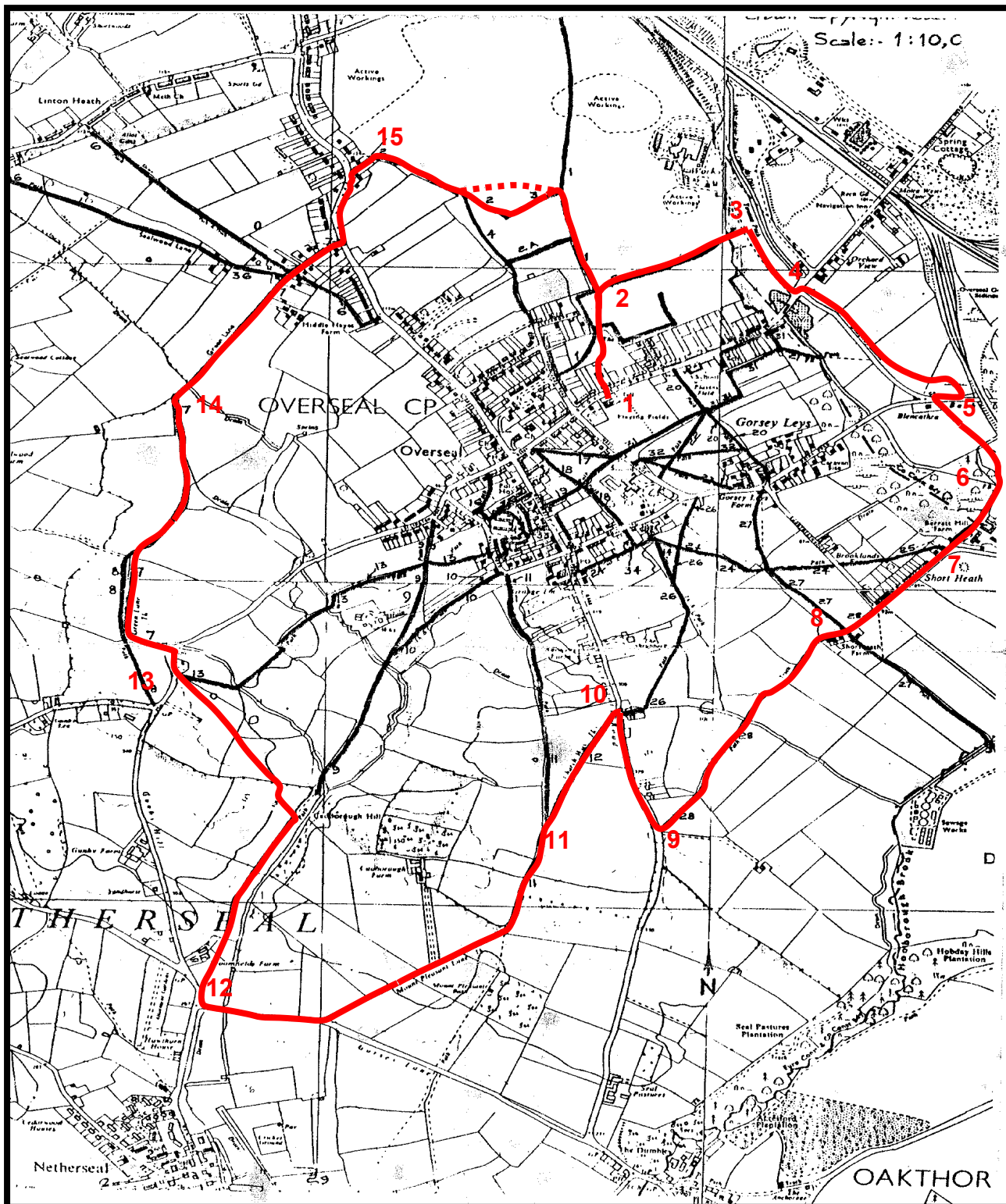
A brief history...

Overseal is an ancient settlement, once part of the Parish of Seale which comprised of Netherseal, Overseal, Grangewood, Gunby, Boothorpe, Seale Pastures and part of Donisthorpe. People have lived here since at east the Bronze Age. Since the Industrial Revolution it has always stood on the periphery of the industrialised area to the North and East and the agricultural area to the South and West as such has been a boundary between the two. Indeed, the area has been a buffer zone for millennia, first between the British tribes and the advancing Saxons, then between the Anglians and Saxons; and then the Danish Vikings from the North and the Saxons to the South. The area was harried by the Normans and was on opposing sides during the English Civil War. It has changed counties and the current county boundary sweeps along the east and south of the village; part of the walk will follow this. Its most recent change to a holiday destination in the heart of the National Forest may be seen as a continuation of this borderland between sometimes conflicting requirements.

The Walk

Cars may be parked in the car park on Woodville Road. Walk up the hill to the Village Hall (1) where the walk begins. There is a Public Convenience next to the Village Hall which is open during daylight hours.

Cross the road and walk into Forest View, following the road as it bends to the right. After 200 yards, cross the green in a northerly direction keeping 10 yards out from the garden fences on your left. Cross the stile in the hedge and continue straight down the field through (or around) the marshy area and cross the stile and narrow footbridge over the ditch (2). Once past the boggy ground, follow the obvious path through the fence and continue to the right past the Newt ponds on either side. The ponds were created for the Great Crested Newts that were moved when the towpath site was opencast and the newt's original home was destroyed. The path bears ENE and down through the nature reserve.



Keep the two largest of the three ponds to your left and follow the path between the two southernmost ponds, crossing the Hooborough Brook and heading directly to the reinstated section of canal. There are yellow topped marker posts to guide this section. Turn right at the towpath **(3)** and follow this to the road. Cross the road and turn left.

Cross Slackey Lane and then turn right onto the footpath **(4)** through the Youth Hostel and caravan site, which you will pass on your left. On your right is a raised bank which is the former site of the canal which once linked the colliery and pipeyards to the main canal network.

Once past the Youth Hostel follow the drive to the road (Bath Lane) and turn right. **(5)** After 50 yards Cross Bath Lane (do not cross Slackey Lane by mistake) entering the lane through the brick wall immediately before the red brick house- keep this to your right and follow the lane into the field where once stood Barratt Pool. Follow the raised footpath which was once a causeway across a shallow mill pool and turn right at the end of the field **(6)**. Go through the gate and through the lane overhung with trees, crossing the Hooborough Brook a second time. Follow the path past the modern house which stands on the site of the ancient Barratt Mill. Please keep to the pond side of the driveway and avoid disturbing the occupants. Walk up the drive (keeping to the left) to Shortheath Road and turn right **(7)**, then up the road keeping the houses and cottages to your right. When the road takes a sharp right hand turn, continue straight ahead, cross over the road and follow the farm track **(8)**.

Keep the farm and outbuildings on your left and follow the lane through a gate onto a footpath, keeping the hedge to your right. Carry straight ahead in a westerly direction, down the hill then still to the left of the hedge up the hill on the other side of the valley (known locally as *Spang*) to the gate and stile at the top of the hill. Cross the stile and follow the short lane to the main A444 road **(9)**. Turn right (North) back towards Overseal and walk down the hill. At the bottom of the hill is a white cottage **(10)** - here you can follow the main road back into the village, or cross the road and take the path to the left across the large field. This is *Church Walk* and

was once the processional route for funerals carrying the recently deceased to their final resting place at St Peter's Church at Netherseal.

Follow the path diagonally to your left across the field, heading first toward the telegraph pole and then on the same bearing (South) towards a footpath crossing a stile **(11)** through an overhung lane that gradually opens out and joins a farm track where you will see the farm and small wood on the top of Cadborough Hill across a field to your right. Continue down the metalled farm lane until it joins Heath Lane. Turn right onto Heath Lane (beware of traffic as there is no footway along this section) and follow this to the T-junction, passing a bungalow to your right. Turn right at the T-junction **(12)** and then immediately right across the stile into the field. Follow the track across the field (to the right of the farm) and cross the stile into the next field. Follow the track as it turns right and then left around the enclosed plantation and follow the path along the valley known as *Dead Danes Bottom*, so called as it was the burial ground for the Danish Viking settlement of Gunby (on the top of the hill to your left).

As you begin to pass the pond on your right (caused by mining subsidence in the 1990's) you will see an established hedge sweeping down the hill to your left. Walk up the hill, keeping the hedge to your left and when you reach a stile on your right, cross into the plantation and follow the path diagonally up and over the hill. The view of Cadborough Hill to your right allows more of an appreciation of why the site was chosen for an Iron Age settlement (which probably followed an earlier Bronze Age one- the plantation you are walking through was once home to a barrow- the exact site of which is now lost). Follow the path out of the plantation, crossing the stile and then out of the gate immediately in front of you out onto the road **(13)**. Turn right.

At the bottom of the hill cross the road and go through the gate, entering Green Lane- once a favourite stop for Tinkers and Gypsies but now a bridleway. Follow the lane around the plantation on your right and bear right (North), again keep in the plantation on your right but eventually follow the lane through the hedge on your left but then bear right.

You should pass a pond in an enclosed plantation to your

left but follow the hedge which is now on your right until you eventually come to a five bar gate **(14)**. Go through this and turn right into what is now a clear lane and follow this for half a mile or so until you reach the main A444. (Here you may wish to cut short the walk and follow the main road back into Overseal by turning right). If you wish to complete the last section of the walk, turn left and then cross the main road. Take care! It can be very busy!

Bearing left, after 100 yards or so you will come to a lane and public footpath on your right (on a left curve of the A444)- take this path (Broomy Lane) and at the bottom, cross the stile into Wadlands Wood **(15)**. Follow the clear path to your right, keeping the established hedgerow of Oaks and Holly to your right and the wood (single species woodland of White Poplar) to your left. After 200 yards or so you will come to a clear bend to the right in the path, but here turn left and follow the track down through the wood (dotted line on the map). It curves gradually to the left but as you exit the trees, turn right and keeping the trees on your right walk to the stile in the corner of the field. Go through the gap and turn right, keeping the hedge to your right and the fence into the Nature Reserve to your left. Follow the path down to the footbridge **(2)**, cross the stile and you are now retracing your steps back up the hill through the marshy ground up to the stile which you cross and walk over the green in Forest View. On your left you will see a small Yew tree sapling- this is the Millennium Yew, blessed by the Bishop of Derby and presented to the village to mark the passing of the second millennium. Follow the road back around to Woodville Road and immediately across Woodville Road you will see the Village Hall and the end of the walk.

Note about the map.

The map used has been specifically chosen because it shows "active workings" industrial buildings and railway sidings that no longer exist. Please note that the railway line in the North East sector of the map is still active and in use! Much of the area is now under plantation.

The footpath description follows the numbers around the line marked in red, which in turn uses both public footpaths and permissive paths. The bold black numbered lines indicate public footpaths through the village.