

Digital Editions

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This digital guide to Shropshire is published in PDF format which means that you can browse the guide page by page or simply search for specific villages or towns (see pages 4 and 5). You can also print off individual pages of your choice if you are planning a visit to a particular area of Shropshire or, alternatively, the whole of the digital guide.

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We do hope you like using this version of the *Country Living* rural guide and that it helps you enjoy exploring Shropshire. We are always interested in receiving comments on places covered (or not covered) in our guides so please do not hesitate to give us your considered comments by e-mailing us on info@travelpublishing.co.uk.

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Guide to Rural England

SHROPSHIRE



WHERE TO GO | WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO
WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHERE TO BUY

Fully illustrated with detailed directions and maps

LOCATOR MAP



Towns and Villages

Please click on any of the towns and villages listed below for information on that location.

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Shropshire

The tranquil, romantic face of Shropshire belies an often turbulent past that is revealed at scores of sites by the remains of dykes, ramparts and hill forts, and by the castles of the marcher lords, who seem to have divided their time between fighting the Welsh and fighting each other. The county boasts some of Britain's most important Roman sites, notably at Wroxeter, which at one time was the fourth largest Roman town in the land. Shropshire beckons with a landscape of great variety: the little hills and valleys, the lakes and canals of the northwest, the amazing parallel hill ranges towards the south, the rich farming plains around Oswestry, the forests of Clun and Wyre, Ironbridge Gorge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. This stretch of the Severn Valley is now a World Heritage Centre, ranking it alongside the Pyramids,

the Grand Canyon and the Taj Mahal. Add to this the historic towns of Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Oswestry, several interesting museums, the churches and the stately homes and the glorious gardens, and you have a part of the world just waiting to be explored, whether by car, bike or on foot. South Shropshire affords a trip through history, including the wonderful town of Ludlow and the spectacular scenery of Wenlock Ridge, Long Mynd and Clun.



Towns and Villages

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Ludlow

 Castle
  Church of St Laurence
 Museum
  Festival

Often called 'the perfect historic town', Ludlow is an enchanting place with more than 500 listed buildings and a medieval street pattern that has been kept virtually intact. There are some lovely walks along the banks of the River Teme with its plentiful wildlife, markets on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, a livestock market on Mondays, and regular flea markets on Sundays.

Ludlow Castle was built by the Normans in the 11th century, one of a line of castles along the Marches to keep out the Welsh. Under its protection a large town was

planned and built - and prospered, due to the collection and sale of wool and the manufacture of cloth. The Castle has been home to many distinguished families and to royalty: Edward V, Prince Arthur and other royal children were brought up in Ludlow, and the Castle became the headquarters of the Council of the Marches, which governed Wales and the border counties until 1689. The parish **Church of St Laurence** is one of the largest in the county, reflecting the town's affluence at the time of its rebuilding in the 15th century. There are fine misericords and stained glass, and the poet AE Housman, author of *A Shropshire Lad*, is commemorated on the outer wall of the church; his ashes lie outside the north door. Other places that should be seen include Castle Lodge, once a prison and later home

THE WOOL SHOP

13 Broad Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1NG
Tel: 01584 872988
website: www.ludlow-woolshop.co.uk

Owner Jean Brindley and her staff bring years of knowledge and experience to the **Wool Shop**, their specialist shop located in one of the oldest streets in Ludlow. The two rooms in the shop cater for all knitting and sewing needs, selling an amazing range of wools, yarns, threads, fabrics, haberdashery, tapestries, needles, patterns, books, sewing equipment and accessories that include all the best-known brands. The long-established business is based on the principles of selling and making quality products and services, growing the product range by following trends, improving standard products and listening to customers. The emphasis on providing help and advice as well as selling goods has earned the Wool Shop a large and loyal group of



happy customers; Jean knows her customers well and is always pleased to see new faces.

Their unique service lets them make distinctive and unusual garments for their customers, and other services include knitting-up and knit'n'natter Wednesday afternoons. Shop hours are 9 to 5 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 9 to 1 Thursday; 9 to 4 Saturday. Customers can also order by phone or e-mail.



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CHOCOLATE GOURMET

16 Castle Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AT
Tel: 01584 879332
e-mail: sales@chocolategourmet.co.uk
website: www.chocolategourmet.co.uk

John Betjeman called Ludlow 'the loveliest town in Britain', a view definitely shared by Janette Rowlett. She combined her love of the town with a long-held fascination for chocolate when she opened **Chocolate Gourmet** in 1999, providing the local area with the finest chocolate in its various forms from around the world. In an attractive Georgian brick building close to the Castle, the main museum and the open-air market she tempts the good people of Ludlow and visitors to the town with an amazing array of chocolate bars, chocolate boxes, truffles and fudge.

Bars include the El Ray range (up to 73% cocoa content), Valrhona, Michel Cluizel from Normandy (some 85% and a tiny bar with an incredible 99%), Amedei from Tuscany and the Cocoa Tree with organic fruit and nuts. Truffles come with a mouth-watering range of fillings - fresh cream, praline, marzipan, cherry and raspberry fondant, marc de champagne - and fudge by Burnt Sugar is made with unrefined Fairtrade sugar from a co-operative in West Kenya. Boxes can be filled with the customer's own choice for any special occasion and trimmed with exquisite ribbons. Shop hours are 10.30am to 5.30 pm (Sunday 11 to 4.30)

In 2004 Janette opened a second Chocolate Gourmet at 72 Wyle Cop, one of Shrewsbury's most prestigious shopping streets. Tel: 01743 343477 or sales@chocolategourmet.co.uk



ANDREW FRANCIS

1 Market Street, Ludlow,
Shropshire SY8 1BD
Tel: 01584 872008 Fax: 01584 711785

Andrew Francis has been a butcher for 25 years, 15 of them in Ludlow and the last two here in the centre of town a short walk from the Castle.

Quality is the keynote throughout the range on sale: Hereford and Welsh black beef, Berkshire and Gloucester Old Spot pork, prime local lamb, wild venison from Mortimer Forest in steaks, joints, casserole meat and sausages, wild duck, rabbit, pigeon, home-cured bacon and ham, free-range poultry and eggs. Andrew's award-winning sausages, pork pies and steak pies are all cooked on the premises.

Outside catering includes hog roasts and barbecues, and the shop supplies many of the top local pubs, restaurants and hotels, including the renowned Feathers Hotel a few streets away. In spring and summer, hanging baskets make a colourful sight outside the shop, which is open from 7am to 5pm (6am to 5pm Friday and Saturday; closed Sunday).



THE SILVER PEAR

68-69 Broad Street, Ludlow,
Shropshire, SY8 1NH
Tel: 01584 879096
Fax: 01584 879124
e-mail: sales@silverpear.co.uk
website: www.silverpear.co.uk



A beautifully restored 13th century building in Ludlow's finest street is home to The Silver Pear, an exciting contemporary emporium of design-led products and home accessories. Janet Tuffley opened her small department store in 1999 to fill a perceived gap in the market for such goods and created one of the best businesses of its kind in the whole region. The ever changing stock on display includes luxury bathroom goods from L'Occitane, Cath Kidston and Geo.F.Trumper. Stunning jewellery by Thomas Sabo, Coeur de Lion, Riley Burnett, Dower & Hall. Handbags by Orla Kiely and Lupo; scarves, watches, clocks, silk ties, wallets and gadgets. Interiors; candles, photo frames, cushions, rugs and lighting. Kitchenware by Alessi, Joseph Joseph, Sophie Conran and Maxwell Williams. Glassware by LSA; bowls, decanters, drinking glasses, vases and jugs. A children's department; toys, clothes, and shoes. Party paraphernalia; gardening accessories, books - the list is almost endless with gifts to suit every occasion and customers can also purchase online.

The Silver Pear also offers a comprehensive and personalised Wedding List Service including 2 free nights in one of the luxury self-catering apartments superbly situated above the store which are also available to let. Please visit www.silverpearapartments.co.uk.

BROMLEY COURT B&B

18-20 Lower Broad Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1PQ
Tel: 01584 876996
e-mail: bromley.court18@btinternet.com
website: www.ludlowhotels.com

'Luxury suites in the heart of Ludlow'



Bromley Court comprises three individual Tudor cottages clustered around an enclosed courtyard in the heart of Ludlow. Close to Ludlow's shops, square, castle and church, and within yards of the River Teme's stunning Horseshoe Weir and country walks. Each beamed cottage provides self-contained, private luxury, with an en-suite bedroom, a well-equipped sitting room and a breakfast bar. On sunny mornings, consider breakfasting al fresco in the sheltered courtyard. Perfect for a leisurely start at any time of day...



Each cottage is replenished daily with the finest local produce from Ludlow's award-winning

Deli on the Square (on the town square, reached in minutes through the 13th Century Broadgate). The Deli is at the forefront of forging Ludlow's foodie reputation and specialises in local, British and Continental cheeses – over 140 varieties. Plus local treats, charcuterie, hampers, olive oils, vinegars, mustards and more. A must-visit shop!

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THE ARCHWAY - S J ALLSOP

6 New Road, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 2NX
Tel: 01694 771371
e-mail: sandra-allsop@hotmail.co.uk
website: www.thearchwaycentre.co.uk

The Archway Centre is a lovely place to visit to refresh yourself from tip to toe within the one complex, easily found on the outskirts of historic Ludlow. A snapshot of each business is shown below, we also have a lovely informal courtyard and café to cater for visitors who would like to stay with us for the day.



Tone 'n' Shape offers a relaxing and enjoyable way to loose those inches. The 7 tables are dedicated to each muscle group and designed to improve flexibility, increase circulation and muscle tone. Trained staff help people of all ages to use the beds safely and effectively.
Tel 01584 879692



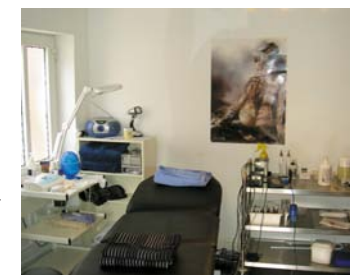
Amber Holistic & Beauty, Teresa offers liquid and powder nail care, facials, aromatherapy, Swedish and hot stone massage, reflexology, eye enhancements tanning treatments, manicure, pedicure and waxing.
Tel: 07817 561510

Red Hair Studio is a stylish, modern salon run by Lindsey Piper with her experienced team and offers a very friendly, relaxed environment, uses latest techniques in hair design and offers little extras like a complimentary blow dry with colours to keep clients loyal and happy. Tel: 01584879333



Epil Pro Hair removal, Jo Beadman offers a truly non-invasive, pain free treatment for all skin types and all hair colours. Tel: 07779 341586

Skin Solutions, Madelaine offers tattoos, non laser tattoo removal, body piercing, advanced facials, manicure and nail extensions, electrolysis and thread vein removal, eye lash treatment, full exfoliation and Hopi ear candling. Tel: 07869 132752



Additional treatment rooms are available at competitive daily/weekly rates for therapists in similar disciplines. General enquiries call Sandra Allsop 07967 976164, The Archway Centre, 6 New Road, Ludlow, SY8 2NX.

of the officials of the Council of the Marches, and the fascinating houses that line Broad Street.

Ludlow Museum, in Castle Street, has exhibitions of local history centred on, among other things, the Castle, the town's trade and special features on local geology and archaeology. At one time in the last century glove-making was one of the chief occupations in the town. Nine master glovers employed some 700 women and children, each required to produce 10 pairs of gloves a week, mainly for the American market.

The **Ludlow Festival**, held annually since 1960 and lasting a fortnight in June/July, has become one of the major arts festivals in the country. The centrepiece of the festival, an open-air performance of a Shakespeare play in the Castle's inner bailey, is supported by a number of events that have included orchestral concerts, musical recitals, literary and historical lectures, exhibitions, readings, workshops and food and drink celebrations.

Around Ludlow

CLEOBURY MORTIMER

8 miles E of Ludlow on the A4117

St Mary's Church

A famous landmark in this pleasing small town just west of the Forest of Wyre is the crooked spire of **St Mary's Church**, whose east window commemorates the 14th-century poet, William Langland. His best-known work is Piers Plowman, an indignant tract against rural poverty in a landscape still recognisable as south Shropshire.

It was in Cleobury Mortimer that Maisie Bloomer, a witch, gained notoriety in the 18th century. Curses and love potions were her

speciality, and the villagers were in no doubt that she was in league with the Devil.

Two miles east of Cleobury stands Mawley Hall, an 18th-century stone house with some very fine internal features.

CLEE HILL

4 miles E of Ludlow on the A4117

Brown Clee

The Clee Hills to the north of the village include the highest peaks in the county. The summit of **Brown Clee** is 1,750 feet above sea level.

STANTON LACY

2 miles NW of Ludlow off the B4365

This charming little village with its black and white cottages sits on the bank of the River Corve and is notable for its Church of St Peter, which has some Saxon features and Victorian stained glass.

BROMFIELD

3 miles NW of Ludlow on the A49

St Mary's Church Racecourse

Although the busy A49 runs through the centre of the village, **St Mary's Church** is beautifully sited close to where the River Teme joins up with the River Onny. Originally a priory, it became a private residence for one George Foxe following the dissolution of the monasteries. What is now the chancel was once the dining room, but the extraordinary painted ceiling was created after the building once again became a church in the mid 1600s. The swirling figures with their ribbons bearing biblical texts have been described as "the best example of the worst style of ecclesiastical art". Another striking feature here is the huge mural coat of arms of Charles II on the south wall.

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LUDLOW FOOD CENTRE

Bromfield, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 2JR

Tel: 01584 856 000

e-mail: greatfood@ludlowfoodcentre.co.uk

website: www.ludlowfoodcentre.co.uk

The **Ludlow Food Centre** offers a unique food shopping experience. The Centre's aim is to provide customers with fresh, local, seasonal and handmade food with exceptional taste and flavour. More than 80% of the produce on sale is sourced from Shropshire and the surrounding counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Powys. Much of the produce is purchased directly from the grower or producer thereby keeping food miles to a minimum and prices at a realistic level. The Food Centre is part of the Earl of Plymouth's Oakly Park Estate from which it sources all its beef, lamb and rare breed pork. The meat is brought back to the Food Centre's butchery to be matured and prepared with skill and attention to detail. The centre likes to buy from small artisan producers where quality and taste count. Daily deliveries ensure that produce arrives on the shelf in absolutely peak condition. By following the seasons, a mouth-watering array of different products are displayed throughout the year, supplemented where necessary by carefully selected produce from abroad. The centre also stocks a wide range of organic and fairtrade products.

Purpose built using sustainable materials and the latest energy management systems the Food Centre has a unique layout that feels spacious and airy. The Food Hall is surrounded by eight kitchens that can be viewed through large picture windows. Among the kitchen units is a bakery making fresh bread 7 days a week, a dairy producing a range of ice-creams and award winning cheeses with milk from the Estate, a production kitchen that supplies the deli, a coffee roasting area and a jam and pickle kitchen that makes with the seasons.

You can sample some of this fare in the Conservatory Barn Café which offers seasonal food at sensible prices. Everything is home-made and includes freshly roasted and ground coffee, cakes and scones, ploughmans featuring the Centre's own cheeses, home-made pies and quiches and an ever-changing selection of freshly prepared hot lunches.

Overlooking the food hall is the Conference Centre which is equipped with all the latest audio-visual equipment and is available to hire to hire with catering being provided by the Centre's kitchen if required.

A rather unexpected amenity within the centre is a Post Office which offers all the usual counter services and also stocks a wide range of convenience goods as well as newspapers, stationery, hand-made cards and a small selection of eco-friendly cleaning products and is open 7 days a week.

The centre is located just off the A49, next to the Clive Hotel in the village of Bromfield, 2 miles northwest of Ludlow.



THE CLIVE BAR AND RESTAURANT WITH ROOMS

Bromfield, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 2JR
Tel: 01584 856565 Fax: 01584 856661
e-mail: info@theclive.co.uk website: www.theclive.co.uk

A handsome three-storey Georgian building attracts visitors with top-class cooking in friendly, relaxed surroundings, with ales and wines to match and excellent overnight accommodation. The former farmhouse has been developed to offer a delightful blend of traditional and contemporary, with original features in the bar and a more modern look in the restaurant. The chefs set great store by fresh local produce, seeking out the best local meat, vegetables and smoked products and fish fresh from Cornwall. Typical dishes on the ever-changing menus could include Wenlock Edge Farm air-dried beef and Ragstone cheese salad with a cassis dressing, rack of Welsh lamb with dauphinoise potatoes, pan-fried scallops with tomato salsa, strudel of lightly spiced summer vegetables on baby fennel and, to finish, summer fruit kebabs with creamed rice and a peach conserve. To accompany the superb food is an extensive list of wines from Old and New Worlds, with many available by the glass. The bar, with its adjoining courtyard, is a great place to meet for a drink and a snack, with local ales, a good choice of wines and organic cider and apple juice.

Fifteen en suite bedrooms in skilfully and tastefully converted outbuildings provide very comfortable up-to-date accommodation; all have TV, radio, hot drinks tray, mini-bar and free Wi-Fi, and some have facilities for disabled guests. A boardroom is available for meetings, with a range of presentation and communication facilities.



About a mile northeast of Bromfield is **Ludlow Racecourse** (National Hunt) where Bronze Age barrows have been brought to light.

ONIBURY

5 miles NW of Ludlow off the A49

The Wernlas Collection

"I didn't know chickens could be so beautiful," was the comment of one visitor to **The Wernlas Collection**, a living museum of rare poultry. The setting of this 20-acre smallholding is a joy in itself, and the collection is an internationally acclaimed conservation centre and vital gene pool where over 15,000 chicks, both traditional and rare, are hatched each year, all year round. Besides the 220 breeds of chickens there are rare breeds of goats, sheep and pigs, and some

donkeys. The gift shop is themed on chickens - a chickaholic's paradise, in fact - and eggs and vaccinated and salmonella tested chicks are also on sale.

STOKESAY

7 miles NW of Ludlow off the A49

Castle Church of St John the Baptist

The de Say family of nearby Clun began building **Stokesay Castle** in about 1240, and a Ludlow wool merchant, Lawrence de Ludlow, made considerable additions, including the Great Hall and fortified south tower. It is the oldest fortified manor house in England and is substantially complete, making it easy to see how a rich medieval merchant would have lived. Entrance to this magnificent building is through a splendid timber-framed gatehouse and the cottage-

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Stokesay Castle

style gardens are an extra delight. An audio tour guides visitors round the site.

The adjacent parish **Church of St John the Baptist** is unusual in having been restored during Cromwell's rule after sustaining severe damage in the Civil War. A remarkable feature in the nave is a series of biblical texts written in giant script on the walls. The 17th-century box pews and pulpit are still in use and, outside, the churchyard is managed as semi-wild, allowing some 88 species of wild flowers to flourish.

Centre, visitors can discover the heritage, wildlife and traditions of the area in a striking all-weather building with a grass roof made from 1,000 square metres of turf weighing more than 70 tons. Rocks that have travelled 7,000 miles from the equator over the last 560 million years; a mammoth skeleton from Shropshire's last Ice

Age 13,000 years ago, and a simulated balloon flight over the hills are just some of the attractions. Outside, visitors can wander through 25 acres of attractive meadows sloping down to the River Onny. The centre has a gift shop, café and information point, and there's a programme of regular events and craft exhibitions throughout the year. Brought on stream in May 2008, the Secret Hills Exhibition tells some stories of the Shropshire Hills, and there's a superb film panorama shot from a number of balloon flights.

Craven Arms

Secret Hills

The village takes its name from the hotel and pub built by the Earl of Craven. The coming of the railways brought expansion and development. Once at the centre of several roads that were used by sheep-drovers moving their flocks from Wales to the English markets, in its heyday, Craven Arms held one of the largest sheep auctions in Britain, with as many as 20,000 sheep being sold in a single day.

Shropshire's landscape has inspired the music of Vaughan Williams, the poems of AE Housman and the novels of Mary Webb. At the **Secret Hills**, Shropshire Hills Discovery

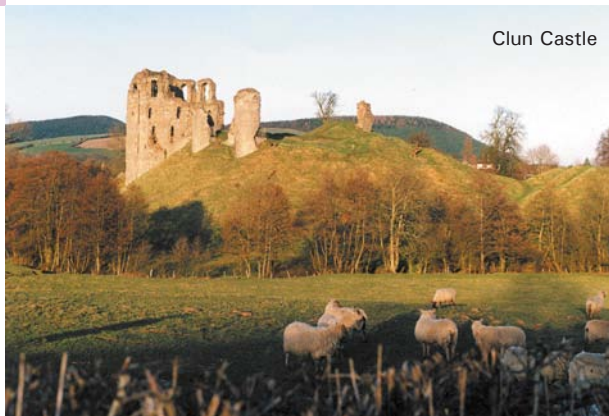
Around Craven Arms

ASTON ON CLUN

3 miles W of Craven Arms off the B4368

Arbor Tree Dressing

Not one of Housman's Cluns, but well worth a mention and a visit. The village's **Arbor Tree Dressing** ceremony was first held in 1786. Following the Battle of Worcester in 1651, King Charles spent some time up a tree (see under Boscobel page 110) and to commemorate his escape he proclaimed Arbor Day, a day in May, as a national holiday when trees were dressed. The custom generally died out but was revived here in 1786 when a local landowner married. As Aston was part of his



Clun Castle

are the main attractions in the little **Local History Museum** in the Town Hall, in a ground-floor area that was once an open jail. **Bury Ditches**, north of Clun on the way to Bishop's Castle, are an Iron Age fort on a seven-acre tree-covered site.

Down the valley are other Cluns: Clunton, Clunbury and Clungunford. The quartet were idyllically described by AE Housman

estate he revived the tradition of dressing the Black Poplar in the middle of the village, a custom that still survives.

CLUN

8 miles W of Craven Arms on the A488/B4368

- Castle Church of St George Museum
- Bury Ditches

A quiet, picturesque little town in the valley of the River Clun, overlooked by the ruins of its **Castle**, which was once the stronghold of the Fitzalan family. The shell of the keep and the earthworks are the main surviving features. The **Church of St George** has a fortress-like tower with small windows and a lovely 17th-century tiered pyramidal top. There are also some splendid Norman arcades with circular pillars and scalloped capitals. The 14th-century north aisle roof and restored nave roof are an impressive sight that will keep necks craning for some time. Some wonderful Jacobean woodwork and a marvellous medieval studded canopy are other sights worth lingering over at this beautiful church, which is a great tribute to GE Street, who was responsible for its restoration in 1876. Agricultural implements and geological finds, and in particular flints,

in *A Shropshire Lad*:

*In valleys of springs and rivers,
By Onny and Teme and Clun,
The country for easy livers,
The quietest under the sun.*

BISHOP'S CASTLE

9 miles NW of Craven Arms off the A488

- Museums Mitchell's Fold Stiperstones

This small and ancient town lies in an area of great natural beauty in solitary border country. Little remains of the castle, built in the 12th century for the Bishops of Hereford, which gave the place its name, but there is no shortage of fine old buildings for the visitor to see. The **House on Crutches Museum**, sited in one of the oldest and most picturesque of these buildings, recounts the town's history. Its gable end is supported on wooden posts – hence the name. Also in town is a **Railway Museum** that charts the rise and fall of the Bishop's Castle Railway, which ran between Craven Arms and Lydham from 1865 to 1935. Traces of the railway, including embankments, bridges and station buildings, can be seen along the A489. North of Bishop's Castle lie the **Stiperstones**, a

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POTS & DOTS

Penan Heath, Colebatch, Bishop's Castle,
Shropshire SY9 5LW
Tel: Yvonne: 01588 630285 Max: 01588 638961
Mob: 0781 0781 938

Yvonne's e-mail: potsanddots@orange.net Yvonne's website: www.potsanddots.co.uk
Max's e-mail: maxbaccanello@hotmail.com Max's website: www.maxbaccanello.com

Yvonne Baccanello and her son Max practise their manifold artistic talents in studios at their farmhouse home a short drive south of Bishop's Castle. At **Pots & Dots** Yvonne's speciality is ceramic kitchenware and tableware, including pots, jugs, mugs, bowls, salt & pepper sets, plates and butter dishes. They come in a range of colours with a variety of glazes, and all are microwave and dishwasher proof. The 'dotty' items are something of trademark, and with each dot glazed on three times, they are great to hold and feel as well as to look at. Yvonne's pieces make excellent gifts and can be named and dated to commemorate special occasions.

Yvonne's son Max, born in 1988, is rapidly making his mark as an artist in various media. After a scholarship to Shrewsbury School and a spell at Chelsea College of Art and Design he then began studying at the Charles H Cecil Studio in Florence, where tuition is focused on academic portraiture in the lineage of traditional representational art and sight size technique. Max works almost exclusively from life in his oil paintings, pencil and charcoal drawings and sculptures in clay, bronze and marble. He is happy to discuss commissions for portraits and also for landscapes and still lifes, and prints are available on a selection of his charcoal drawings. Many of his works can be seen on his website. Visits to the Yvonne's and Max's studios by appointment.



THE WHITE COTTAGE

Acton, nr Bishop's Castle, Shropshire SY9 5LD
Tel: 01588 630330

e-mail: staying@thewhitecottageacton.co.uk
website: www.thewhitecottageacton.co.uk



The White Cottage, the home of Tim Dicker and Mary Wraith, is situated halfway between Bishop's Castle and Clun in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty among the South Shropshire Hills. In the garden of their home stands The Bothy, a charming stone-built barn that provides a cosy retreat for B&B or self-catering guests.



Recently renovated and refurbished, it has a bedroom with a super kingsized bed, a shower room and a fully-fitted little kitchen with table and chairs. TV with DVD player is provided and guests will delight in the collection of interesting paintings, ceramics and sculpture. Ornamental pots with plants and trees, and more sculpture, decorate the private sitting area outside the French windows whilst the main cottage gardens provide additional sitting areas with outstanding views.

The breakfast menu is truly delicious and offers an interesting choice of local produce as well as home made yoghurt, fruit salads and compotes, preserves and main courses. It is served in the kitchen or garden at The White Cottage or can be delivered to the front door of The Bothy.

The setting, up a private track off a country lane, is both beautiful and peaceful, and the area is ideal for a touring, walking or cycling holiday – Offa's Dyke Path, the Shropshire Way and Jack Myton Way are all nearby. Birdlife abounds, and the sight of wild deer at the gate add to the charm of a stay in this lovely place.

theGALLERY

3 Market Square, Bishop's Castle,
Shropshire SY9 5BN

Tel: 01588 630128

website: www.thegallerybc.co.uk

In a prominent position on the attractive market square in Bishop's Castle, **theGALLERY** is a showcase for the very best of designer-made glass, ceramics and jewellery, along with original artwork and prints, woodwork and metalwork, textiles, studio pottery and home furnishings.



theGALLERY, previously known as Bishop's Gallery, was relaunched in March 2008 by Jacs Collins, who came here after a 20-year career in interior design in Surrey. A painter and designer with a degree in textile design, she has dedicated the display space to as many local artists and craftsmakers as possible, and each month brings a new exhibition on a wide variety of themes.

The applied art and craft work on display is carefully selected from makers with the skills and experience to be among the best in their field and everything in theGALLERY is handmade in the UK. Many pieces are unique or limited edition and most are signed by the makers as well as being instantly recognisable by the inherent signature of style and quality.

theGALLERY stock also regularly includes-

"Inside Knowledge" which is a small range of modern furnishings and accessories, showcasing a personal selection of contemporary designer style including hand printed fabrics, wallpapers, bags and cushions while "Rural Retro" is an eclectic collection of re-cycled, re-lived and re-loved items of mid century modern studio pottery, welsh blankets, fabrics and original 1960's Ercol or G Plan furniture items.

theGALLERY is usually open from 11.00am on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays-also occasional Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays.

Opening times and days might vary according to seasons, whim and weather- so it's best to call before making a special journey.

www.thegallerybc.co.uk lists current opening times as well as all of the exhibiting Artists and Makers, exhibition news and "one-off" vintage items to buy.



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MIDDLE WOODBATCH FARM

Woodbatch Road, Bishop's Castle,
Shropshire SY9 5JT

Tel: 01588 630141 mob: 07989 496875

e-mail: steven.austin5@btinternet.com

website: www.middlewoodbatchfarm.co.uk

The Austin family have lived and worked at **Middle Woodbatch Farm** since 1936. The farm stands in a beautiful tranquil spot on the English /Welsh border, 1.5 miles from the small market town of Bishops Castle, in a Designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. From its elevated rural location the farm commands breath-taking views of the Shropshire hills & The Long Mynd.

Mary & her husband Steve welcome guests to their 4 star 17th century farmhouse into an atmosphere of relaxed friendly hospitality.

The three guest rooms Owl, Badger & Fox, named after some of the farms regular inhabitants enjoy superb views of the surrounding countryside and are furnished to a high standard with luxurious bed linen, quality Egyptian cotton towels, hairdryers, TV, clock/radio, tea & coffee facilities and WI-FI internet access plus many other extras. All the rooms have fully tiled en-suite bathrooms with large spacious walk in showers and a complimentary basket of toiletries. The house also has a cosy guest lounge, but guests are welcome to use the family sitting room which has a lovely wood burner to thaw out by during the winter months.

Breakfast served in the dining room includes, fresh fruit, yoghurts, juices, cereals, local bacon & sausage, tomatoes and mushrooms and our own free range chicken and duck eggs, and there is always home baked bread using local organic flour. Full vegetarian options always available! This is a great way to start a days walking, cycling, mountain biking or just relaxing and enjoying the beautiful surroundings, our prime location suits all.

We are fortunate to be surrounded by an extensive network of footpaths & bridleways; The Shropshire Way & the Blue Remembered Hills bridleway that come through the farm yard, we are also a stones throw from the Offas Dyke, Kerry Ridgeway, Jack Mytton Way, BC Ring and The Long Mynd. Our secluded rural location is also perfect for bird & wildlife watching.

Guests arriving from Shrewsbury and the A5, take the A488 bishops Castle road (approx 22 miles). On reaching the 2nd town sign, turn right, past the high school, just after the church, keep to the left (do not go up into the town). After about 250 yds just past a high block wall turn left onto Woodbatch road, follow the road round to the right where it turns into a single track road, follow this to the end (approx 1.5 miles).



Nipstone Rock

Distance: 2.5 miles (4.0 kilometres)

Typical time: 90 mins

Height gain: 80 metres

Map: Explorer 216

Walk: www.walkingworld.com ID:2541

Contributor: Jim Grindle

ACCESS INFORMATION:

Stiperstones village and the Bog are signposted from the A488 near Minsterly; the A488 joins the A5 Shrewsbury bypass. There is ample free parking by the Bog crossroads. For travel information call 0870 608 2608.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

At the crossroads is an outdoor activity centre in an old school. At summer weekends, and mid-week at times, a volunteer group offers refreshments here; there are also toilets. For details e-mail info@thresholdscentre.co.uk or visit www.shropshire-cc.gov.uk/discover.nsf

Mary Webb, the Shropshire author, set one of her novels, *The Golden Arrow*, in the Stiperstones area and there are many legends concerning the rocks - don't spend the night in the Devil's Chair for instance, or else... A film of her novel, *Gone to Earth*, was made here. The district has been known since Roman times though, as an intensively industrialised mining area, mainly lead and barytes, and many chimneys and spoil heaps can be seen on the western slopes. The main geological feature is the quartz capping of the ridge, some 480 million years old and shattered by frost in the last Ice Age resulting in the huge outcrops we see today.

DESCRIPTION:

The walk starts from The Bog, an area that even 50 years ago had some fading signs of the intense industrial activity of Victorian days. The start is relatively high and gives good views for very little climbing. Some mapped areas of woodland have

been removed to restore the heather habitat, part of the Stiperstones Purple Project by English Nature.

FEATURES:

Hills or Fells, Pub, Toilets, Birds, Flowers, Great Views, Butterflies, Good for Kids, Industrial Archaeology, Tea Shop, Woodland.

WALK DIRECTIONS:

1 | At the higher end of the Bog car park is a signpost for two waymarked walks. Turn right, following The Mucklewick Walk. This takes you past a small pond where you are directed to the left through trees. You reach a flight of steps going up to the right. At the top is a stile next to the telegraph pole. Cross the stile and follow the line of poles uphill to a stile in a fence. After this the footpath goes diagonally left away from the line of poles and ends at a stile on a lane.

2 | Don't cross this stile but turn round and look across the large field. Go first just to the left of the telegraph pole in front and then follow the line of trees making for the extreme left end of the wood in front.

3 | At the end of the wood and to the right of the more obvious gate is a stile with signposts for the Shropshire Way (a buzzard) and the Mucklewick

Walk. Cross this and follow a path along the edge of the wood to a stile at its far end. At the moment you can go around the stile. Just in sight is a crossing track with signposts.

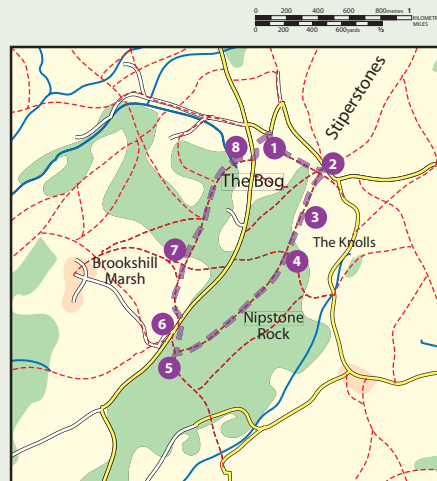
4 | Cross the track and go through the gate. The route is now well signposted both for the Mucklewick Walk and the Shropshire Way (the buzzard symbol). It leads past the Nipstone Rock, the last of the Stiperstones over to your right across the fence. After this it goes into another plantation where you must watch for a signpost at the bottom of a drop in the ground.

5 | At this point the two waymarked routes divide - our route goes to the right, following the Mucklewick Walk. 100m away it comes to a stile and a lane. Cross the lane to the far stile and then go to the hedge and fence beyond. At the fence the Mucklewick Walk is signposted to the left, but our route goes to the right, following a farm track for a very short distance almost as far as a gateway with a cattle-grid.

6 | Leave the track and follow the hedge to a stile. Continue by the hedge (really a line of trees with some laburnum) until you see the way into the next field. There is no gate, just a gap. When you have gone through it you will have a fence on your right with a farm behind it. Follow the fence, which bends a few times, to its corner where there is a stile leading into a wood.

7 | The path goes along the edge of the wood but soon ends at a newish forest road. Cross this onto a grassy firebreak and continue when the surface is stony. The route is well signposted at all junctions. There is no change in direction, but several gates. After passing a reedy lake, which you can just about make out on your left, the forest paths end at a metal gate. Keep straight ahead over the crossing track and you will come to a lane.

8 | Turn left and after about 20m you will see the wide open area which is the car park. Turn right and cross to the far side where the walk started.



SOL DELICATESSEN

*The Main Shop, The Porch House,
35 High Street, Bishop's Castle,
Shropshire SY9 5BE
Tel: 01588 638190*

Bishop's Castle is an ancient little town with a number of fine old buildings, two museums and two breweries. It's well worth a leisurely stroll, and food-lovers will make sure that the stroll includes a stop at **Sol Delicatessen**.

This excellent place has been owned and run by Robin Fox since 2006, in one of the oldest shop premises in town. Robin cooks all the quiches, vegetarian dishes and cakes, whilst meat pies and pâtés are all supplied by a local chef. Fresh bread is baked daily and sandwiches are made to order. Locally sourced chutneys, jams and honey, together with a fine selection of European wines are complemented by an extensive range of classic cookware essentials.

Sol Delicatessen is open from 9 to 5 Monday to Saturday. Bishop's Castle lies off the A488 9 miles northwest of Craven Arms.



THE HERBERT ARMS

Chirbury, Montgomery, Ponsy SY15 6BG

Tel: 01938 561216

website: www.herbertarmschirbury.co.uk

The Herbert Arms is a pleasant old inn located in the village of Chirbury, at the junction of the A490 and B4386 close to Montgomery on the border with Shropshire. Sisters Kathryn and Sarah acquired the premises in 2008, and with Sarah's partner Stéphane they have expanded its role from country local (a role it still fulfils admirably) to a destination dining pub that attracts lovers of good food from all over the region.

The interior is inviting and unpretentious, with cosy fires and quarry-tiled floor, and in the restaurant at the rear happy diners return time after time to savour a memorable culinary experience. 'The Frenchman and the Farmers' Daughters' wow the customers with classic-inspired cuisine bringing top-notch cooking (Stéphane's CV includes 7 years at Michel Roux's Waterside Inn) based on the very best seasonal produce, sourced locally wherever possible. A typical evening menu, with about half a dozen choices for each course, might include homemade black pudding with caramelised apples and Madeira sauce; vintage cheddar cheese soufflé with pickled beetroot salad; crisp pork belly, roasted pear & braising jus, roast lemon sole, crushed potato & bouillabaisse, dark chocolate & caramelised walnut delicé and iced prune & armagnac parfait. Special dietary requirements can be catered for with a little notice.

The Herbert Arms is open for food lunch and dinner Wednesday to Saturday and lunch on Sundays. The bar is open Tuesday evening, Wednesday and Thursday lunchtime and evening and all day Friday to Sunday.



rock-strewn quartzite outcrop rising to a height of 1,700ft at the Devil's Chair. A bleak place of brooding solitude, the ridge is part of a 1,000-acre National Nature Reserve and on the lower slopes gaunt chimneys, derelict buildings and neglected roads and paths are silent reminders of the lead-mining industry that flourished here from Roman times until the 19th century. To the west, on the other side of the A49 near Chirbury, is **Mitchell's Fold** stone circle, a Bronze Age circle of 15 stones. This is Shropshire's oldest monument, its origins and purpose unknown.

ACTON SCOTT

5 miles NE of Craven Arms off the A49

Acton Scott Historic Working Farm

Signposted off the A49 just south of Church Stretton, **Acton Scott Historic Working**

Farm offers a fascinating insight into daily life on an upland farm as practised in the South Shropshire hills at the close of the 19th century. Owned by Shropshire County Council, it is a living museum with a commitment to preserving both traditional farming techniques and rural craft skills. Every day visitors can see milking by hand and butter-making in the dairy. There are weekly visits from the wheelwright, farrier and blacksmith, while in the fields the farming year unfolds with ploughing, sowing and harvesting. Special attractions include lambing, shearing, cider-making and threshing with steam and flail. The waggoner and his team of heavy horses provide the power to work the land, while the stockman looks after the farm's livestock, among which are many rare breeds of cattle, sheep and pigs. The farm is open to visitors from 10am - 5pm Tuesday to

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Sunday and Bank Holidays between April and October.

Church Stretton

Church of St Laurence Long Mynd

Carding Mill Valley Rectory Wood

The town has a long history - King John granted a charter in 1214 - and traces of the medieval town are to be seen among the 18th and 19th-century buildings in the High Street.

Elsewhere in the town, many of the black-and-white timbered buildings are not so old as they look, having been built when the town had ideas of becoming a health resort. Just behind the High Street stands the **Church of St Laurence**, with Saxon foundations, a Norman nave and a tower dating from about

1200. Over the aisle is a memorial to a tragic event that happened in 1968 when three boys were killed in a fire. The memorial is in the form of a gridiron, with flakes of copper simulating flames. The gridiron is the symbol of St Laurence, who was burnt to death on one in AD258. The Victorian novelist Sarah Smith, who wrote under the name of Hesba Stretton, was a frequent visitor to nearby All Stretton, and there is a small memorial window to her in the south transept.

A mile from the town centre are **Carding Mill Valley** reservoir and the extensive ridge known as **Long Mynd**. The valley and the moorland into which it runs are National Trust property and very popular for walking and picnicking. This wild area of heath affords marvellous views across Shropshire to the Cheshire Plains and the Black Mountains. Just

PLAISH PARK FARM - TURNIP HOUSE, CORN HOUSE, OLDE COW HOUSE & SPINNEY RETREAT

Plaish, Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 7HX

Tel: 01694 771262/07970295761 Fax: 01694 771847

e-mail: plaishparkfarm@hotmail.co.uk

website: www.plaishparkfarm.co.uk

Turnip House, Corn House, Olde Cow House and Spinney Retreat are luxury five star, self-catering barn conversions situated in the idyllic rural hamlet of Plaish - central to all of Shropshire's attractions. Plaish is ideal for sightseeing, with miles of lovely country walks in all directions, not to mention the beautiful Shropshire hills, a draw for walkers, riders and nature lovers alike. No expense has been spared to create a 'home-from-home' hideaway for discerning guests. Woodburners in the lounges, exposed beams throughout and expansive views of the surrounding farm woodland provide the background for a perfect tranquil retreat.

The properties can be booked individually or combined for larger parties of up to 31, perfect for a family reunion or wedding celebration. The conversions are considered very special by guests who have stayed and many return again. Enhancing the tranquil setting there is a conservation area with natural pools on the farm. The owners can offer fishing and horse riding locally. For those with their own horses stabling is available together with hacks and cross country courses with access to Jack Mytton Way. Good food pubs 1.75 miles, well behaved dogs welcome. Ideal group location or wedding reception venue all year round.



historic building museum historic site scenic attraction flora and fauna

stories and anecdotes famous people art and craft entertainment and sport walks

HEATHER BRAE

Leebotwood, nr Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6LU
Tel: 01694 751757

website: www.heatherbraeshropshire.co.uk

Jane Tyler and Mary Mullock renovated an old garage and turned it into a delightful lifestyle shop that has quickly won many loyal friends. **Heather Brae** is filled with a carefully chosen, eclectic selection of items large and small for the house and garden, and a wide variety of gift ideas. On display are chinaware and pottery, tins and jars and other kitchenalia, brooches, vintage and contemporary jewellery, semi-precious stones, home-made soaps, candles and lanterns, embroidery, dolls and toys and mobiles, leather goods, watercolours and cards for all occasions.

For the outside and garden there are sculptures and ornaments, benches, and superb locally made wrought-iron arches. It's a great place for browsing and the stock is constantly changing, so every visit is guaranteed to reveal new and delightful surprises. Hard to beat when looking for a personal treat or an unusual present, Heather Brae is open from 10 to 5.30 every day except Sundays in the winter.



below Long Mynd is **Rectory Wood**, which once formed part of the rectory church at Church Stretton. Three marked walks in the vicinity of the woods include a sculpture trail, and the woodland itself provides a valuable habitat for birds, bats and other wildlife. The area is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Around Church Stretton

LITTLE STRETTON

2 miles S of Church Stretton on the B4370

All Saints Church

The village of Little Stretton nestles in the Stretton Gap, with the wooded slopes of Ragleth to the east and Long Mynd to the west. It is a peaceful spot, bypassed by the A49, and

is a delightful place for a stroll. The most photographed building is **All Saints Church**, with a black and white timbered frame, a thatched roof and the general look of a cottage rather than a church. When built in 1903 it had an iron roof, but this was soon found to be too noisy and was replaced with thatch (heather initially, then the straw that tops it today). Among many other interesting buildings are Manor House, a cruck hall dating from 1500, and Bircher Cottage, of a similar vintage.

"Switzerland without the wolves and avalanches" is a description sometimes applied to this beautiful, serene part of the world.

ACTON BURNELL

7m NE of Church Stretton off the A49

This charming small village takes its name from Robert Burnell who was Bishop of

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Bath and Wells and Lord Chancellor to Edward I. In his latter role he entertained the king here in 1283 and one of the first true Parliaments took place in the castle (more of a fortified residence, really) whose ruins of bright red sandstone stand behind the church. Burnell had built the church of St Mary only a decade before the king's visit. It's an elegantly proportioned early Gothic building with a simple interior that shows off to advantage the impressive late 16th-century alabaster tomb of a later Lord of the Manor, Sir Richard Lee.

Bridgnorth

Castle Bishop Percy's House
 Museums Castle Hill Cliff Railway
 Severn Valley Railway

The ancient market town of Bridgnorth, straddling the River Severn, comprises Low Town and, 100 feet up sandstone cliffs, High Town. The year 1101 is a key date in its history – the year in which the **Norman Castle** was built by Robert de Belesme from Quatt. All that remains of the castle is part of the keep tower, which leans at an angle of about 17 degrees (more than that of the Leaning Tower of Pisa) as a result of an attempt to demolish it after the Civil War. The castle grounds offer splendid views of the river, and when King Charles I stayed here in 1642 he declared the view from the Castle Walk to be the finest in his dominion. The **Northgate Museum** is a good place to start a tour of this interesting town. It occupies rooms over the arches of the North Gate, which is the only one of the town's original fortifications to survive – though most of it was rebuilt in the 18th century. The **Costume and Childhood Museum** incorporates a costume gallery, a

complete Victorian nursery, toys from Victorian times to the 1960s and a collection of over 700 rare minerals from all over the world. It's a really charming place that appeals to all ages, and its popularity is a great tribute to the four generations of a local family who have assembled the childhood collections. The Civil War caused great damage in Bridgnorth and the lovely Town Hall is one of many timber-framed buildings put up just after the war. The sandstone arched base was completed in 1652 and later covered in brick; Charles II took a great interest in it and, when improvements were needed, he made funds available from his own purse and from a collection he ordered be made in every parish in England.

St Mary's Street is one of the three streets off High Street that formed the planned new town of the 12th century. Many of the

Bishop Percy's House, Bridgnorth



THAT'S NICE!

High Street (Posterngate), Bridgnorth,
Shropshire WV16 4BX
Tel: 01746 768020
e-mail: Michael.southall@btinternet.com

'Timeless Interiors, Stylish Accessories, Inspirational Gifts'

Owners Wendy and Mick pride themselves on seeking out the very best in home furnishings for their clientele to create the Country Living look in their homes and gardens. In **That's Nice!** their attractive premises on Bridgnorth High Street, Mick and Wendy assemble an ever-changing array of lovely things for the person and home in a variety of styles ranging from fabulously elegant to shabby chic! That's Nice! stocks bags and baskets, jewellery, clocks, frames, mirrors, lamps and gorgeous



chandeliers, garden accessories and furniture from armoires to lamp tables. That's Nice! stock is ever changing to keep the shop looking fresh with several exclusive one-off ranges and if a piece is not in stock - just ask! - And Mick and Wendy will do their best to find it. They also specialise in restoring and revamping vintage furniture giving it a fresh, up-to-date look whilst offering a quality service.

That's Nice! is open seven days a week.



houses, brick faced over timber frames, have side passages leading to gardens that contained workshops and cottages. **Bishop Percy's House** is the oldest house standing in the town, a handsome building dating from 1580 and one of the very few timber-framed houses to survive the fire of 1646. It is named after the Reverend Dr Percy, who was born in the house in 1729 and became Bishop of Dromore.

For many visitors the most irresistible attraction in Bridgnorth is the **Castle Hill Cliff Railway**, a funicular railway built in 1892 to link the two parts of the town. The track is 200 feet long and rises over 100 feet up the cliff. Originally it operated on a water balance system, but it was converted in 1943 to electrically driven colliery-type winding gear. John Betjeman likened a ride on this lovely little railway to a journey up to heaven. For all

but the very energetic it might feel like heaven compared to the alternative ways of getting from Low to High Town - seven sets of steps or Cartway, a meandering street that's steeped in history.

The bridge across the Severn, rebuilt in 1823 to a Thomas Telford design, has a clock tower with an inscription commemorating the building, in 1808, of the first steam locomotive at John Hazeldine's foundry a short distance upstream.

Talking of steam locomotives, Bridgnorth is the northern terminus of the wonderful **Severn Valley Railway** (see under Bewdley in Worcestershire).

One of the stations on this marvellous railway is at Highley, where a popular attraction is the Visitor and Education centre in the Engine Shed, with an exhibition and a large display of steam locomotives.

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Dudmaston, Bridgnorth

rhyme wood sculptures (01299 841255). The longest bridgeway in Shropshire, and one of the longest in the country, passes close by. This is the **Jack Mytton Way**, named after a 19th-century hard-living squire and sometime MP for Shrewsbury. It runs all the way to Llanfair Waterdine in the Teme Valley, a distance of some 70 miles.

Around Bridgnorth

QUATT

4 miles SE of Bridgnorth on the A442

Dudmaston Hall

Quatt is the location of the National Trust's **Dudmaston Hall**, a late 17th-century house with fine furniture, Dutch flower paintings, modern pictures and sculptures (Hepworth, Moore), botanical art, watercolours, family and natural history and colourful gardens with lakeside walks, a rockery and a wooded valley. The church at Quatt contains some splendid monuments and memorials to the Wolryche family.

BILLINGSLEY

5 miles S of Bridgnorth on the B4363

Rays Farm Country Matters Jack Mytton Way

In eight acres of ancient woodland in a beautiful valley near the village, **Rays Farm Country Matters** is home to many farm animals including Highland cattle, deer, reindeer, donkeys, goats, llamas, alpacas, pigs, ferrets, red squirrels, and more than 50 owls. Other features include a bird viewing hide, myth and magic woodcarvings and nursery

MUCH WENLOCK

8 miles NW of Bridgnorth on the A458

Guildhall Holy Trinity Church

Museum Priory of St Milburga

The narrow streets of Much Wenlock are a delight to explore, and among the mellow buildings are some absolute gems. The **Guildhall** is one of them, dating from 1540 and added to in 1577 with a chamber over the stone medieval prison. The Guildhall was until recently used as a courtroom, and the Town Council still meets here once a month. The **Museum** is housed in the former market hall, which was built in 1878. There are interesting displays on the geology, flora and fauna of Wenlock Edge (see below), as well as local history items including Dr William Penny Brookes' Olympian Games. A forerunner of, and inspiration for, the modern Olympic Games, they are an annual event in the town every year, having started in 1850. The good doctor lived in Wilmore Street.

Holy Trinity Church, "mother" to ten churches in villages around Much Wenlock, is a dominant presence in the town, though less conspicuous than it was until 1931 when its spire was removed. Its nave and chancel are Norman, the porch 13th century. The Parish

IPPIKIN GALLERY & SHOP

59 High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6AE

Tel: 01952 728371

e-mail: ippikin@googlemail.com website: www.ippikin.com

Ippikin was a highway man who robbed passing travellers along the Wenlock Edge. It is said that Ippikin hid his stolen treasure under a rock on the Wenlock Edge. On a particularly stormy night Ippikin was standing on his rock marvelling at his riches when an untimely lightning bolt struck him down. The legend of Ippikin and his treasures lives on and Ippikin's rock is a popular place to visit along the Wenlock edge just out of the town of Much Wenlock.

Inside the town however a different type of treasure trove exists.

Ippikin Wool Gallery is a shop that is abundant with bright buttons, hand dyed yarns, contemporary knits, locally handmade jewellery, rag rugs, funky ribbons, fair trade products and embroidery threads. Lesley Butler started Ippikin wool shop with help from her sister Belinda Logan in 2006. Now three years on Lesley continues to run Ippikin and it has now become a family affair with help from friends too. The helpers range from Lesley's mother, Janet Jones, who contributes with the knitted garments to local artist with their own style of art including free formed knits and handmade jewellery. Ippikin is a welcoming shop and offers friendly advice. Workshops are available throughout the year classes range from knitting for beginners to freeform knitting and crocheting.

Ippikin is open from 10 to 4 Monday to Saturday.



THE WENLOCK COLLECTION

53 High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6AE

Tel: 01952 728285

e-mail: margaret@wenlockcollection.co.uk

website: www.wenlockcollection.co.uk

Set in a splendid medieval building in the charming market town of Much Wenlock, the **Wenlock Collection** is a must for both collectors and those who enjoy items of beauty. There is a wealth of wonderful Moorcroft Pottery. Moorcroft pottery has been enriching homes since 1912 and is still a world leader in art pottery. There is a beautiful collection of Elliot Hall enamels in small limited editions each one free hand painted by the artist, alongside Bronte porcelain, Tula handbags and a kitchen room full of useful and decorative items ideal for gift giving. Items from the short-lived but much sought after Cobridge Pottery are featured, along with many pieces from the Spode factory in Stoke. Many of the goods are displayed on handmade furniture by professional craftsmen (these pieces can be customised for individual clients) and also there is an extensive collection of reproduction chairs. The owner Margaret Himsworth will give you a warm welcome and can talk to you about all of the products if you so wish.



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twenty twenty

3-4 High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6AA

Tel: 01952 727952 e-mail: info@twenty-twenty.co.uk

website: www.twenty-twenty.co.uk

Twenty Twenty is a contemporary art and craft gallery with an excellent reputation. The gallery is based in the delightful and historic town of Much Wenlock, on Wenlock Edge. Owner Mary Elliott has selected some of the best artists and makers in all disciplines from all over the British Isles; many are from Shropshire and the surrounding counties.

Paintings & Prints:

Original members of the Brotherhood of Ruralists, such as David Inshaw often exhibit at the gallery and Annie Ovenden is represented by Twenty Twenty so there is a good selection of her paintings, drawings and prints available. Sue Campion R.B.A., a great colourist and well known for her Shropshire landscapes is a regular exhibitor. Artists linked with the South and South West such as Alfred Stockham R.W.A and Margot Bandola, frequently have original paintings on show. Local artists with big reputations, include Bob Bates, Peter Tarrant, Betsy Smith, Norman Lampitt and Frans Wesselman.

Jewellery and Silverware:

Twenty Twenty has gradually built a fine collection of British jewellers many of whom are part of the permanent display. Catherine Hills produces beautiful gold and silver pieces, inspired by natural forms; silversmiths Louise Chesshire and Victoria Delany make silver bowls and spoons as well as original hand-made jewellery.

Ceramics and Glass:

From whimsical, hand-modelled work by Helen Kemp and Janet Creed, to painterly, sculptural forms by Dennis Farrell and decorative but practical pots by Elspeth Soper. Wonderful stained glass by Tamsin Abbott and hand-blown glasses by Tim Casey make great gifts.

Furniture:

Hugh Elliott designs beautiful occasional tables which are made in Shropshire in solid oak, each piece is signed and numbered and stamped with his Curlew brand.

Twenty Twenty has regular exhibitions featuring new artists and old favourites, by joining the mailing list you can be invited to private views and get first choice of new work available. You can also check out the website to see what is on.

Twenty Twenty is part of the Arts Council -run Own Art scheme to make art ownership accessible to a wider selection of the public.

The gallery is open Tues-Sat from 10am to 5pm.



TWICKEL HOUSE

23 Barrow Street, Much Wenlock,
Shropshire TF13 6EN
Tel: 01952 727165

e-mail: jemima@twickel-dental.co.uk

Twickel House is one in a million and whatever you choose from here you will come away with a one in a million piece. This unique shop is situated just off the high street in the beautiful Shropshire town of Much Wenlock.

Owner Jemima Willis has much experience in interior design and fashion and left the urban jungle of London for this olde English town where she has created a truly individual shop where everyone can find the perfect item. She stocks a massive range of products from women's designer clothes, jewellery, furniture, beautiful home accessories, mirrors, greeting cards and gift ware. Inside the doors you will find hundreds of trinkets, each individual with many items being handmade and one of a kind. You will find anything from funky felt baby booties for your kids to elegant light fixtures, beautiful carpentry or extraordinary textile tea cosies to make your home as individual as you are. Jemima works tirelessly to ensure that the stock is constantly changing meaning that you won't find anything like the stuff from Twickel House anywhere in Shropshire. The shop spans over two floors full to bursting of gift ideas and trinkets. There is plenty of parking just behind the high street.

A contented potter in Twickel House will surely leave you happy with your purchase and ready for an afternoons happy browsing in Much Wenlock. The small town itself is full of quaint little shops catering for both young and old, collectors of all sorts, readers, gardeners and anyone who just likes to window shop. Much Wenlock is a medieval town that offers a pleasant trip down memory lane with plenty of historic attractions with some areas dating back to 680 AD and a range of medieval, Victorian and Georgian architecture all crafted from locally quarried limestone, timber frames and bricks. It is a fantastic place to sit back and watch the world go by underneath the Jubilee Clock tower on the main high street and Twickel House is a fantastic addition to it, adding a funky and individual twist to what is one of the most character filled towns in Shropshire.



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THE RAVEN HOTEL

Barrow Street, Much Wenlock,
Shropshire TF13 6EN
Tel: 01952 727251 Fax: 01952 728416
e-mail: enquiry@ravenhotel.com
website: www.ravenhotel.com

The Raven Hotel is at its heart a 17th century coaching inn, built round a courtyard and incorporating parts of several older buildings. Always the hub of the local community, it has evolved with the town of Much Wenlock – its architecture, its people, its spirit – and has added period charm, genuine warmth and high levels of service, hospitality, comfort and cuisine for today's discerning guests. Its lofty and hard-earned reputation is safe in the hands of the present owners, management and staff, and return bookings and comments in the visitors book are testimony to the quality of the product offered at The Raven.

The guest accommodation comprises 20 superbly appointed bedrooms, each individual in style, décor and furnishings, in harmony with the various architectural features of the building. All the rooms have sparkling en suites with powerful showers, TV with satellite channels, internet connection and tea/coffee tray. All the bedrooms are highly desirable, and among the most sought after are No 2, a romantic four-poster room, and No 15, a galleried suite with its bedroom area overlooking the roomy living space.

Though not quite old enough to have witnessed Henry the Eighth's dissolution of Wenlock Priory, The Raven has seen a number of royal visitors down the years and has also been closely connected with the Much Wenlock Olympics and the birth of the modern Olympic Games. The man responsible for the Much Wenlock Olympics was William Penny Brookes, and news of the venture brought none other than Baron de Coubertin to the town and the hotel. Guests can see artefacts from those years, including original letters from the Baron to Brookes. And in 1994 the connection was again affirmed by a visit from Juan Antonio Samaranch, the then President of the International Committee, who laid a wreath at Brookes' grave.

Food is a vital part of The Raven's success, with a reputation for fine dining based on the talented team in the kitchen who source fresh seasonal ingredients from the top producers/suppliers in the region. Menus combine the best traditional and contemporary elements of British and European cooking, with inspirational menus matched by discreet, attentive service and well-chosen wines.

The restaurant is located in what is thought to be the town's original 15th century almshouses. The Raven is a popular venue for functions, parties and social events and also offers an outside catering service, bringing its culinary and presentation skills to the client's chosen location with anything from a cold buffet to a seven-course banquet.



MEMORIES ANTIQUES & COLLECTABLES

1 Wilmore Street, Much Wenlock,
Shropshire TF13 6HR
Tel: 01952 728368

Mary Nicklin was born in Much Wenlock and ran an antiques business in the Malthouse before setting up **Memories Antiques & Collectables** here in Wilmore Street. Much of the stock comes from the region, and virtually all from the UK. Mary has a keen eye for products to enhance the home – some pieces pretty, some unusual, some nostalgic, some quirky, all interesting – and since Mary is constantly on the look out for interesting pieces you never know what you'll find from one visit to the next: whether it's a napkin ring or a substantial piece of furniture it will always be an item of interest and quality. The majority of what's on display comes from out of production lines. Porcelain is something of a speciality, and Mary always has a variety of Coalport on show. Furniture ranges from occasional tables to bookcases, dining chairs and dressers. In the two cabinets of silver you might find anything from spoons, knives and salvers to lighters, compacts and hair brushes. Other items run from tea sets and display plates to ceramics, glassware, lighting, pictures and prints, along with costume and some silver jewellery. Mary is always interested in buying interesting antiques and she can also arrange house clearances. This browser's delight is open from 10 to 5 Monday to Saturday and from 2 to 4 on Sunday.



Registers date from 1558.

The sight that simply must not be missed on a visit here is the ruined **Priory of St Milburga**, maintained by English Heritage. The Priory was originally a nunnery, founded in the 7th century by a Mercian princess and destroyed some 200 years later. Leofric, Earl of Mercia and husband of Lady Godiva, re-established it as a priory in 1050, and the current spectacular ruins belong to the Clunian Priory rebuilt in the 12th and 13th centuries. The best remaining features are the wall carvings in the cloisters and the Norman interlacing of arches and doorways in the Chapter House. The Prior's Lodge, dating from about 1500, is particularly impressive with its steeply pitched roof of sandstone tiles above the rows of mullioned windows. Away from the main site is St Milburga's Well, whose waters are reputed to cure eye diseases.

WENLOCK EDGE

7 miles W of Bridgnorth on the B4371

Wenlock Edge is one of the most spectacular and impressive landmarks in the whole county, a limestone escarpment dating back 400 million years and a paradise for naturalists and lovers of the outdoors. It runs for 15 miles all the way down to Craven Arms. For centuries its quarries have produced the stone used in many of the local buildings; it was also a source of lime for agricultural fertiliser and much went into the blast furnaces that fired the Industrial Revolution.

EARDINGTON

2 miles SW of Bridgnorth on the B4555

Daniel's Mill

Eardington is a southern suburb of Bridgnorth where, a mile out of town on the

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B4555, stands **Daniel's Mill**, a picturesque working watermill powered by an enormous (38ft) wheel. Family-owned for 200 years, the mill still produces flour.

MORVILLE

2 miles W of Bridgnorth on the A458

Morville Hall Dower House Garden

Morville Hall, 16th century with 18th-century additions, stands at the junction of the A458 and B4368. Within its grounds, the **Dower House Garden** is a one-and-a-half acre site designed by Dr Katherine Swift and begun in 1989. Its aim is to tell the history of English gardens in a sequence of separate gardens designed in the style of different historical periods. Particular attention is given to the use of authentic plants and construction techniques. Old roses are a speciality of the garden. Parking is available in the churchyard of the fine Norman Church of St Gregory, which is also well worth a visit.

Telford

Steam Railway Trust

Hoo Farm Animal Kingdom Wonderland

Telford is a sprawling modern development that absorbed several existing towns in the region of the Shropshire coalfield. Wellington, Hadley, Ketley, Oakengates, Madeley and Dawley were among the towns to be incorporated, and the name chosen in the 1960s commemorates Thomas Telford, whose influence can be seen all over the county. Thomas Telford was a Scot, born in Eskdale in 1757, who came to Shrewsbury in 1786. Appointed County Surveyor, he quickly got to work on such enterprises as Shrewsbury jail, Bridgnorth, a host of bridges, an aqueduct, canals and the Holyhead Road. He designed

distinctive milestones for the road, one of which is now at the Blists Hill Museum. Telford's many ambitious developments include the huge (450 acres) Town Park, with nature trails, sports fields, lakes, gardens and play areas. **Wonderland** is an enchanting and enchanted woodland whose fairytale attractions include Snow White's Cottage, the Three Little Pigs and the Wrekin Giant. On the northern outskirts, at Preston-on-the-Weald Moor, is **Hoo Farm Animal Kingdom**, which numbers among its inhabitants ostriches, chipmunks, deer and llamas. Events include lamb feeding, milking and the famous sheep steeplechase.

Telford Steam Railway Trust keeps a number of vintage locomotives, some of them ex-Great Western Railway, in working condition at the old shed and yard at Horsehay. It operates over a section of the old Wellington & Severn Junction Railway.

Around Telford

OAKENGATES

1 mile NE of Telford on the A5

Oakengates, on the eastern edge of the metropolis of Telford, is the birthplace of Sir Gordon Richards, perhaps the greatest jockey this country has ever produced. His father was a miner and the young Gordon first learned to ride on pit ponies. When he retired from the saddle, he had ridden 4,872 winners and was champion jockey for 20 years. Frankie Dettori and Kieren Fallon have a long way to go!

SHIFNAL

3 miles E of Telford on the A464

RAF Museum

Once a staging post on the Holyhead Road,

Shifnal has an unexpectedly large church with a Norman chancel arch, a 14th-century east window, carved Italian pulpit and an Italian reredos.

On the A41, at Cosford near Shifnal, the **RAF Museum** is home to an important collection of aircraft, from the little Red Arrows Folland Gnat to Hurricanes, Spitfires, Messerschmitts and the mighty Belfast, along with aero engines and missiles from all over the world. Attractions include a Fun 'n' Flight Centre and the National Cold War Exhibition, reflecting the social, cultural and political history of the Cold War era, c1947 to 1991. The museum also features Britain's three famous V Bombers, the Vulcan, Victor and Valiant, and others suspended as if in flight, including a Dakota, Canberra, Meteor and Lightning.

NEWPORT

6 miles NE of Telford off the A41

A handsome town which lost many of its buildings in a fire in 1665. Most of the buildings on the broad main street are Georgian or early Victorian. There's plenty to keep the visitor active in the area, including the Lilleshall National Sports Centre and the ruins of Lilleshall Abbey, the extensive and evocative remains of an Augustinian abbey.

TONG

5 miles E of Telford on the A41

 Church of St Bartholomew

Tong is an attractive village that once had a castle, founded, according to legend, by the wizard Merlin. Where was he when the castle



Old Church Ruins, Tong

was blown up in 1954? The Vernons and the Durants were the Lords of the Manor in Tong for many years and they are commemorated in the 15th-century **Church of St Bartholomew**. The Vernons were a particularly distinguished lot: one was a Speaker of the House of Commons and another was Lord High Constable to Henry V. In the Golden Chapel, which has a superb gilded, fan-vaulted ceiling, there is a bust of Arthur Vernon, who was a don at Cambridge University. Venetia Stanley, descended from the Vernons and the Earls of Derby, was a famed beauty who was lauded by poets and artists. She counted Ben Jonson, Van Dyck and the Earl of Dorset among her lovers, but in 1625 she made the unfortunate move of marrying Sir Kenelm Digby, whose father had been executed for his part in the Gunpowder Plot. She died tragically young, some say at the hands of her jealous husband.

BOSCobel

7 miles E of Telford off the A41

 Boscobel House

After Charles II was defeated by the Roundheads at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, he fled for his life and was advised to

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seek refuge in a remote hunting lodge called **Boscobel House**, already known as a safe house for royals on the run. By day the King hid in the branches of an old oak tree, while at night he would creep into the house and hide in secret rooms with one of his trusty officers. He eventually escaped and nine years later was restored to the throne. The house has changed considerably since Charles's time, but it's still full of atmosphere and interest, with an exhibition giving a vivid account of the King's adventures. Every visitor naturally wants to see the famous oak in which he hid, but it is no longer standing, destroyed by souvenir-hunting loyalists. Today there stands a descendant of the original, itself now more than 300 years old.

BROSELEY

5 miles S of Telford on the B4373

 Benthall Hall  Pipe Museum

Broseley, which stands on the south side of the River Severn opposite Ironbridge, was the headquarters of John Wilkinson, the great ironmaster and head of a giant empire. He built a coke smelting ironworks here and it was while he was living at The Lawns in Broseley that he commissioned the Shrewsbury architect Thomas Pritchard to design the world's first iron bridge. He also launched the first iron boat, The Trial, on the Severn in 1787 and even designed his own iron coffin. His name lives on in Wilkinson Sword razor blades. Just north of Broseley, off the B4375, on a plateau above a gorge, stands **Benthall Hall**, a 16th-century building in the care of the National Trust, with mullioned windows and a magnificent interior with a carved oak staircase, elaborate plaster ceilings and the Benthall family's collection of furniture, ceramics and paintings. There's a carefully restored plantsman's garden and, in the

grounds, an interesting Restoration church. Broseley was the centre of an ancient local industry in clay products and tobacco pipes, and the **Broseley Pipeworks Clay Tobacco Pipe Museum** in the Hall, untouched for more than 40 years, is a time-capsule factory where the famous Broseley Churchwarden pipes were made for 350 years until 1957. Tools lie on benches where they were left, clay is stacked in the yard ready for use, and saggars lean against each other waiting to be filled.

IRONBRIDGE AND IRONBRIDGE GORGE

4 miles SW of Telford on the B4373

 Museums  Buildwas Abbey

 Bridge  Tar Tunnel

This is it, the town at the centre of Ironbridge Gorge, an area that has been designated a World Heritage Centre by UNESCO, ranking alongside the likes of the Pyramids, the Grand Canyon and the Taj Mahal. It was the first British site on the list. The **Bridge** itself is a pedestrian right of way with a museum in the tollgate at one end, and the series of museums that spread along the banks of the Severn in Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, Coalport and Jackfield pay tribute to the momentous events that took place here 250 years ago. The first iron wheels were made here, and also the first iron rails and the first steam railway locomotive.

The **Museum of the Gorge** offers the ideal introduction to the attractions, filled with stories of how industry changed the Gorge. The **Museum of Iron** in Coalbrookdale in the most historic part of the valley shows the whole story of how the Darby family revolutionised early iron making. The Great Warehouse is full of surprises, including classical statues, garden ornaments,

magnificent furniture and curious objects, all made of iron. Next to it is the original furnace used by Abraham Darby when he first smelted iron with coke; a little way north are Rosehill House, one of the homes of the Darby family,

and Dale House, where Abraham Darby's grandson made his plans for the iron bridge.

Also in Coalbrookdale is **Enginuity**, where visitors can become apprentice engineers for the day, free to experiment with all the gadgets

The Jackfield Tile Museum

Ironbridge Gorge, Shropshire TF8 7LJ

Tel: 01952 435900

e-mail: marketing@ironbridge.org.uk

website: www.ironbridge.org.uk

The Jackfield Tile Museum in Shropshire's Ironbridge Gorge has re-opened its doors after major restoration with a spectacular new suite of tiled period room settings which capture the extravagance and beauty of Victorian 'tile mania' – a great source of inspiration for room designers today.

Also on offer are galleries filled with thousands of sumptuous tiles, hands-on workshops where families can decorate their own tiles and visits to the Craven Dunnill tile factory alongside. Here skilled crafts people can be seen making intricately designed tiles by hand for private homes, historic houses and public spaces.

For anyone who has broken or damaged a special tile, the Craven Dunnill team offer a custom service to restore or replicate the design to bring the display back to its original splendour – a great bonus for today's interior designers as well as those restoring historic buildings. Alternatively visitors can create their own designs, or order from the extensive selection of British hand-made tiles displayed in the museum shop.

Jackfield Tile Museum is housed in the original Craven Dunnill factory built in the 1870s. Visitors can view five themed galleries starting with the history of tile making in the Severn Valley followed by the restored 19th century, gas-lit Tile Trade Showroom. This large vaulted room would have been used by commercial buyers and architects to select ranges of tiles for retailing and decoration prior to the production of trade catalogues. Other galleries display examples of different decorative styles and art pottery as well as explain the various tile making processes, such as encaustic production, tube lining, embossed and hand painted designs.

The museums are open seven days a week from 10am until 5pm; activities and workshops vary day-to-day, for further information, contact the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre visit www.ironbridge.org.uk.



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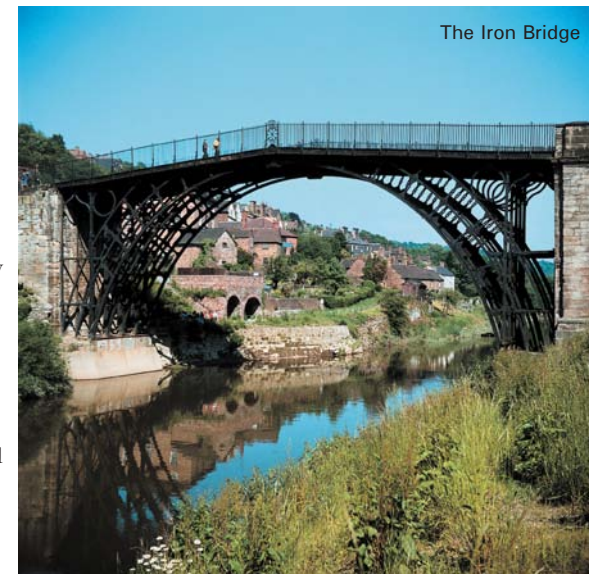


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and acquire the know-how involved in producing everyday items. You can find out whether you can pull a real locomotive; test your speed and accuracy against a robot; control water to generate electricity or work as a team to make the Crazy Boiler blow its top!

The **Old Police Station**, owned by John and Lynn Youngman, is one of Ironbridge's less well-known museums, but one that is well worth a visit, and for a variety of reasons. The Victorian station and its cells have been painstakingly

restored to provide a fascinating insight into the judicial and prison systems at the turn of the century. After it closed for duty in 1964, it was used for various purposes before becoming home to police memorabilia from handcuffs and truncheons to uniforms and documents. The cells are particularly arresting – Cell 4 was the birching centre for Shropshire, and a birching stool still stands in the middle of the room. In the upper-floor theatre, using the unique backdrop of the former station and courthouse, Courthouse Productions puts on a wide variety of corporate and personal events, from plays with a buffet supper to Courtroom trial re-enactments; from Victorian Music Halls to jazz and other musical events. Also on the premises is a tearoom where home baking, traditional afternoon teas and a Victorian buffet are among the offerings. Weddings are catered for at the station, and for an eve-of-wedding



The Iron Bridge

night with a difference, the groom and best man can spend a night in the cells after the evening's celebrations, then wake up to a healthy breakfast before being delivered in style to the church! Also to be found in the Police Station is the Left Centre, which holds a vast stock of knives, scissors, kitchen tools and writing aids for left-handers, plus anti-clockwise clocks and "the best of ambidextrous".

Also at Coalbrookdale is the **Ironbridge Open Air Museum of Steel Sculpture**, a collection of 60 modern steel sculptures of all shapes and sizes set in 10 acres of beautiful countryside.

The **Jackfield Tile Museum** (see panel opposite), on the south bank, stands on the site of a world centre of the tile-making industry. The museum houses a fine collection of wall and floor tiles from Victorian times to the 1950s. Demonstrations of traditional tile-making take place regularly, and visitors can

have a go in one of the hands-on workshops. Back across a footbridge, the Coalport China Museum has marvellous displays of two centuries of porcelain. The National Collections of Coalport and Coughley China are displayed in the original riverside buildings in which many of the pieces were made. Coalport was once one of the country's largest manufacturers of porcelain, starting life here but moving its factory to Stoke in the 1920s. Nearby is the extraordinary **Tar Tunnel** with its pools of natural bitumen. It was a popular attraction for tourists in the 18th century, and it remains one of the most interesting geological phenomena in Britain. The tunnel was started in 1786, under the direction of ironmaster William Reynolds, who intended that it should be used for a canal to reach the shafts to the coal seams three quarters of a

mile away on Blists Hill. After they had driven the tunnel about 300 yards the miners struck a spring of natural bitumen. Reynolds immediately recognised the importance of the discovery and sent samples of the bitumen to eminent scientists, who declared that the properties of the bitumen were superior to those of tar made of coal. The tunnel was almost forgotten over the years, but in 1965 the Shropshire Mining Club persuaded the owner of the village shop in Coalport to let them explore the darkness that lay beyond a door opening from his cellar. They rediscovered the Tar Tunnel, but it was another 18 years before visitors were allowed access to a short stretch.

At **Blists Hill Victorian Town** visitors can experience the atmosphere and way of life of a working Victorian community; there's a

THE GOLDEN BALL INN

Newbridge Road, Ironbridge, Shropshire TF8 7BA
Tel: 01952 432179 Fax: 01952 433123
e-mail: goldenballinn@yahoo.co.uk
website: www.goldenballinn.com

The **Golden Ball** is an independently owned hostelry in the unique World Heritage Site of Ironbridge Gorge. These are the oldest licensed premises in the area and started brewing ale some 50 years before the Iron Bridge was built. Many original features survive from brewhouse days, including the water pump, the fireplace where the 'mash' was prepared and beams and floors in the gaggle of little rooms. The inn is equally popular with the local community and with the visitors who flock throughout the year to this extraordinary hub of England's industrial heritage.

The bar is open all day for a fine selection of real ales and other draught and bottle beers and cider, and there's an extensive choice of wines to accompany the excellent food served lunchtime and evening and all day Saturday and Sunday. Prime seasonal produce, much of it local, is prominent on the daily changing blackboard menus of dishes such as rack of Welsh Borders lamb, Wenlock Edge Farm faggots with onion gravy, steaks, beer-battered cod and gammon & leek pie. When the sun shines, food and drink can be enjoyed out in the courtyard and garden. Ironbridge is much more than a quick tourist stop, and the Golden Ball is the perfect base for exploring the numerous museums and other fascinating sites. The inn has four well-equipped en suite bedrooms for B&B guests – a double, a twin, a four-poster room and a twin with a separate sitting area.



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shop, domestic animals, a squatter's cottage, a schoolhouse and a bank that distributes its own tender.

Passport tickets are available to admit holders to all the Ironbridge Gorge Museums. Call 01952 884391 for details.

Two miles west of Ironbridge, on a minor road off the B4378, stands **Buildwas Abbey**, one of the finest ruined abbeys in England. After 850 years the church is virtually complete except for the roof, and the setting, in a meadow by the Severn against a backdrop of wooded grounds, is both peaceful and evocative. The place is full of things of interest, like the lead-glazed tiles depicting animals and birds in the Chapter House. Just north of Ironbridge stands the village of Cawley, birthplace in 1848 of Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel. This feat earned him great fame, but another adventure cost him his life: he died in 1883 attempting to swim through the whirlpools at the foot of Niagara Falls.

WELLINGTON

2 miles NW of Telford on the A442

Sunnycroft Aqueduct The Wrekin

Wellington is part of the new town of Telford but still retains much of its Victorian look. The Church of All Saints is the work of George Steuart, better known for St Chad's in Shrewsbury. Among the town's attractions is the National Trust's **Sunnycroft**, a late-Victorian gentleman's suburban villa typical of the kind that were built for wealthy business and professional men. The house and its contents are largely unaltered, and in the grounds are pig sties, stables, a kitchen garden, orchards, a conservatory and a Wellingtonia avenue. Call 01952 242884 for details of opening times and guided tours.

A couple of miles north of Wellington, at Longdon-on-Tern, stands the **Aqueduct** built by Thomas Telford as a pilot for other, better-known constructions.

South of here, on the other side of the M54/A5, is one of the best-known landmarks in the whole country. **The Wrekin**, which reaches up over 1,300 feet, is the site of a prehistoric hill fort, visible for many miles around and accessible by a network of public footpaths. The reward for reaching the top is a beautiful panoramic view stretching to the neighbouring counties. In Roman times it was used as a base by the Cornovii tribe before they were moved to Viroconium. Shropshire folklore tells us that it was put there by a malicious giant who was carrying a huge load of earth to dam the Severn and flood Shrewsbury, simply because he didn't like the people. The giant met a cobbler who persuaded him against this evil act, whereupon the giant dropped the load he was carrying – and that's The Wrekin.

WROXETER

7 miles W of Telford on the B4380

Viroconium

In the village of Wroxeter, beside the B4380, is one of the most important Roman sites ever brought to light. **Viroconium** was the first town to be established by the Romans in this part of the country and developed into the fourth largest city in Roman Britain with more than 5,000 soldiers and civilians living here. It's an absolutely fascinating place, where the highlights include extensive remains of a 2nd-century bathhouse complex. Some of the major excavated items are on display here, many more at Rowley's House Museum in Shrewsbury. Also in the village is Wroxeter Roman Vineyard where there is not only a

vineyard producing both red and white wines, but also additional attractions in the shape of rare-breed animals and a lavender field.

ATCHAM

7 miles W of Telford on the B4380

Attingham Park Attingham Home Farm

The village stands at the point where the Severn is crossed by the Roman road. The splendid old seven-arched bridge is now redundant, having been replaced by a new neighbour some time ago, but is still in situ. The old bridge was designed by John Gwynne, who was a founder member of the Royal Academy and the designer of Magdalen Bridge in Oxford.

Attingham Park, run by the National Trust, is perhaps the finest house in Shropshire, a splendid neo-classical mansion set in 250 delightful acres. Designed by

George Steuart for the 1st Lord Berwick, and altered by Nash, it has the grandest of Regency interiors, ambassadorial silver, Regency furniture and Grand Tour paintings hanging in the John Nash gallery. The tearoom is lined with paintings of the 5th Lord Berwick's Herefordshire cattle. An ongoing restoration project continues in 2010 with the Dining Room and Picture Gallery. Humphry Repton landscaped the park where visitors can enjoy woodland and riverside walks and see the deer.

From the park, visitors can take a trailer ride to **Attingham Home Farm**, the original home farm of the grand house. It comprises buildings dating mainly from about 1800 and the yard retains the atmosphere of a traditional Shropshire farm. Many breeds of farm animals are represented: Oxford, Sandy, Iron Age, Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs; Jacob,

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Shetland and Ryeland sheep and Jerseys, Longhair, Dexter, Red Poll and British White cattle. The rabbit house is particularly popular with youngsters, and there are usually some orphaned lambs for children to bottle-feed. The farm makes its own ice cream from milk from the Jerseys – milking at 3.30pm.

Shrewsbury

Castle Abbey Lord's Hill Column
 St Chad's Church St Mary's Church
 Quarry Park Brother Cadfael Walk
 Coleham Pumping Station Bear Steps
 Battlefield Shropshire Regimental Museum

*High the vanes of Shrewsbury gleam,
 Islanded in Severn stream*

So wrote AE Housman in *A Shropshire Lad* and the town is indeed almost an island,

caught in a wandering loop of the River Severn. It was on two hills within this protected site that the Saxon town developed. The Normans under Roger de Montgomery took over after the conquest, building the castle and the great Benedictine abbey. In the 15th and 16th centuries Shrewsbury prospered through the wool trade, and evidence of its affluence shows in the many 'Magpie' black and white timbered buildings that still line the streets. In Victorian times steam made Shrewsbury an important railway centre, while at the same time Charles Darwin, born and educated in the town, was rocking the world with his theories. Everywhere there is a sense of history, and the Museums do a particularly fine job of bringing the past to life, in terms of both human and natural history. Rowley's House is a glorious timber-framed building of the late

WHEAT HALL

Dorrington, nr Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 7NF

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e-mail: lucy@wheathall.co.uk

website: www.wheathall.co.uk

Lucy Hinds and her family welcome self-catering guests to a luxuriously appointed cottage in the grounds of **Wheat Hall**, their home in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the heart of Shropshire. A lot of time

and thought went into the conversion of the Hall's former coach house, which combines a number of original features with a fresh contemporary feel. Two bedrooms with double or twin beds and an optional extra bed provide very comfortable accommodation for up to five guests. The cottage has an entrance hall, a semi-open-plan sitting room with TV and DVD player and a well-equipped kitchen with a modern dining table and six chairs. There's ample on-site parking, cycle storage space and a small barbecue area, and guests can also use the family garden.

The cottage is an ideal place to relax and unwind, enjoying the views and meeting the owners' Dalmatians, horses and chickens. It's also an excellent base for a walking, cycling or touring holiday, with Shrewsbury and many historic and scenic attractions close by.



CHATFORD HOUSE BED & BREAKFAST

Chatford, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 0AY

Tel: 01743 718301 / 07841990179

e-mail: b&b@chatfordhouse.co.uk

website: www.chatfordhouse.co.uk



Chatford House is a Grade II listed 17th century building, a place of charm and character on a small holding in a hamlet in beautiful Shropshire countryside five miles south of Shrewsbury. It's the home of Christine and Rupert Farmer, who have the warmest of welcomes for their guests – the hospitality starts with tea or coffee and home-made cake greeting arrivals in the sitting room or outside in the pretty country garden.

The guest accommodation comprises of three recently refurbished first-floor rooms, all decorated and furnished in a style that respects the origins and pedigree of the house. The Wrekin and The Lyth have super king-size/twin beds and en suite power showers, while the master bedroom, The Lawley, has a luxurious king-size brass bed and an oak-floored bathroom with power shower and corner bath. A delicious Aga cooked breakfast using locally sourced meats, eggs fresh from the hen run and fruit from the orchard, is a fine way to set out on a day's walking, cycling or sightseeing. Though quiet and secluded, Chatford House is an easy drive from Shrewsbury and the A5/A49 junction – take the A49 towards Hereford for two miles and turn right onto a country road leading you to Chatford. All guests must prebook before arrival.



OCACIA

18 St Mary's Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1ED

Tel: 01743 365003

St Mary's Street is a busy lively shopping street just north of Shrewsbury's High Street (A5191). It offers a wide variety of retail outlets, from familiar chains to interesting independent shops. Prominent among the latter is **Ocacia**, a small shop filled with gift ideas and nice things for the home.

Owner Jenny Carson welcomes browsers in the three rooms of homeware and gifts, and the friendly, relaxed atmosphere makes it a pleasure to look for things to enhance the home. The constantly changing stock covers ceramics that's both decorative and practical, kitchenware, clocks, lamps, bags and baskets and storage boxes, cushions and textiles, soaps and toiletries, gift wrap and a wide selection of cards for all occasions. There's also plenty to delight the kids, including puppets, teddies, rag dolls and soft toys. Shop hours are 9.30 to 5 Monday to Saturday.

Shoppers should find time to visit St Mary's Church just across the road from Ocacia. This fine building is noted for its tall spire and some magnificent stained glass and memorials.



16th century, with an adjoining brick and stone mansion of 1618, the home of William Rowley, 17th-century draper, brewer and leading citizen. The collection of pieces from Viroconium and spectacular displays of costumes, natural history and geology that were until the end of 2006 housed here will be shown in the Music Hall, which already has the Tourist Information Centre and is still being developed. Rowley's house remains a building of some significance. A short walk away is Clive House, where Clive of India lived in 1762 while he was Mayor of the city. It is now a private house.

Noted for its commanding position and wonderful views, **Shrewsbury Castle** was founded in 1083. That was when Roger de Montgomery, a kinsman of William the Conqueror, was granted Shrewsbury and much of Shropshire as a reward for loyalty,

and the Castle was part of the Norman attempt to control the lawless Welsh border. By the time of Elizabeth I it had become a virtual ruin, and of the original structure only the gateway survives, along with one side and two towers dating from the 13th century. It last saw action in the Civil War and was converted by Thomas Telford into a private residence. It now houses the **Shropshire Regimental Museum**, which tells the story of the four Shropshire regiments – the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the Shropshire Yeomanry Cavalry, the Shropshire Royal Horse Artillery and the 4th Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry TA. Among the many treasures on display are colours bearing battle honours, regimental silver and china, weapons and medals, including three Victoria Crosses.

Begun in the same year as the castle,

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POPPY'S TEA ROOM & RESTAURANT AND POPPY'S SWEET SHOP

With its narrow streets and alleyways, historic buildings, churches and museums, Shrewsbury is a marvellous place to visit. Just off the High Street and close to Wyle Cop shopping street, Geoff and Anne Meredith run two real gems in this gem of a town – a traditional tea room offering exceptional value for money and a sweet shop like sweet shops used to be.

POPPY'S TEA ROOM & RESTAURANT

8 Milk Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1SZ

Tel: 01743 272709

e-mail: celticfoodbar@btopenworld.com

In an attractive Grade II listed building, **Poppy's Tea Room & Restaurant** is open from 8am to 5pm Monday to Saturday for a wide variety of freshly prepared, wholesome hot and cold snacks and meals. The menu includes all-day breakfasts, soups, salads, baguettes, panini, jacket potatoes, mid-morning specials, kids' dishes, cakes and cream teas. Drinks include Poppy's own brand teas and coffees, which can also be bought to take away in packets. Waiters and waitresses provide friendly, efficient service. Poppy's is a great place to take a break from work, shopping or sightseeing, but it's well worth a special visit in its own right, and for those who don't have time to spare many items on the menu can be ordered to take away. There are seats for 90 on two levels inside and 30 more in the pleasant courtyard that links the tea room to the sweet shop.

POPPY'S SWEET SHOP

18 Princess Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1LP

Tel: 01743 272709

e-mail: poppyssweet@btinternet.com

'The Way Things Used To Be'

Children will be in seventh heaven and grown-ups are certain to get a nostalgic kick from a visit to **Poppy's Sweet Shop**. The shelves are stacked with 100 or more different goodies, many of them in old-fashioned jars. There are sherbet lemons, acid drops, pear drops, jellies, Everton mints, fudge, aniseed balls and aniseed twist, licorice, flying saucers and dozens more, all guaranteed to bring back childhood memories to grown-ups and win over new generations of young sweet-lovers. The shop also stocks Penny sweets, sugar-free sweets and Shugbury's super ice cream made on a farm at Hurlleston in Cheshire. Poppy's can supply wedding favours and party bags for boys and girls. The shop is open from 10am to 4.30pm Monday to Saturday.



THE GOLDEN CROSS HOTEL

14 Princess Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1LP
Tel: 01743 362507 Fax: 01743 362577
e-mail: info@goldencrosshotel.co.uk
website: www.goldencrosshotel.co.uk

The **Golden Cross Hotel** is the oldest licensed premises in Shrewsbury, with an unbroken history of hospitality that dates back to 1428. First recorded as the Golden Cross in 1780, it had been previously called the Sextry – it was the sacristy for St Chad's Church, where the church plate and vestments were kept. (The ruins of the old church stand across the road from the hotel; it collapsed in 1788 and was replaced by the present St Chad's, which stands nearby on a hilltop above the River Severn.) The hotel's fascinating history has seen it as an alehouse and tavern and, for a while in the 18th century, as a takeaway sausage shop. During the Civil War it was a regular meeting place for a group of Royalists from the town, and in 1796 a corrupt Tory politician used the place to ply the locals with food and drink in an attempt to buy their votes. For some years at the beginning of the 20th century it was owned by the Worthington Brewery and in 1962 it welcomed the former jump jockey Michael O'Dwyer as one of its most popular landlords. The tradition of hospitality is being maintained in fine style by Gareth and Theresa Reece, who have enhanced its standing as a hotel, a restaurant and a favourite place for locals and visitors to meet for a drink.

The guest accommodation under the eaves of this splendid old building comprises five very comfortable en suite rooms, each with its individual charm and character. Top of the range is a luxurious four-poster room. The convivial bar offers a full range of real ales, beers, ciders, wines, spirits, liqueurs and soft drinks, and eighty covers in the two dining areas provide a stylish setting for enjoying the excellent food prepared from local produce by a talented kitchen brigade. Typical dishes range from Cornish crab, smoked salmon & avocado torte with sesame tuille to British stalwarts like beer-battered haddock and slow-cooked belly of pork. Desserts such as orange crème brûlée with iced rhubarb parfait round things off in style, and the food is complemented by an eclectic wine list.

The restaurant is open lunchtime and evening seven days a week. The hotel is also a popular venue for functions, parties and other celebrations. Shrewsbury is a wonderful place to visit, and with its sense of history, comfort, service and fine food the Golden Cross is the perfect base from which to explore the wealth of the town's historic buildings, churches and museums.



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Shrewsbury Abbey survived the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540 and still serves as the parish church. The Abbey was founded, like the Castle, by Roger de Montgomery, on the site of a Saxon wooden church. In 1283 a parliament met in the Chapter House, the first national assembly in which the Commons were involved. The Abbey Church remains a place of worship, and in 1997 a stained glass window depicting St Benedict was dedicated to the memory of Edith Pargeter. Writing under the name of Ellis Peters, she created the character of Brother Cadfael, who lived at the Abbey and became one of the country's best-loved fictional characters when portrayed by Derek Jacobi in the television series.

To the east of the abbey, in front of the Shire Hall, rises the lofty **Lord Hill's Column**. Four magnificent sculpted lions

guard the base of this, the largest Grecian Doric column in the world, which reaches a total height of 133 feet 6 inches. Inside, there's a spiral staircase that unfortunately is not open to the public for safety reasons. Completed in 1816, the column celebrates Rowland Hill who was born in Shropshire and achieved distinction as a soldier in the Napoleonic wars, notably at Waterloo. He was created a viscount and later succeeded the Duke of Wellington as commander-in-chief.

Shrewsbury has more than 30 churches and among the finest are **St Mary's** and **St Chad's**. St Mary's, the town's only complete medieval church, originated in the late Saxon period, but the earliest features of the present building are of the 12th century. The stained glass, monuments and fittings are quite out of the ordinary, and the spire has claims to being the third highest in the land. One of the

OBERON

25 Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury SY1 1XB
Tel: 01743 246534
e-mail: oberon.shrewsbury@hotmail.co.uk

In the historic shopping street of Wyle Cop is one of Shrewsbury's best known fashion shops Oberon, which has been a firm fixture on the street for more than 25 years. Established by Stacey Hill the shop has become a destination of choice for hundreds of loyal customers drawn to it from throughout the country. It sells an eclectic mix of contemporary clothes which are individual and inspiring. There range includes the very popular Great Plains, Noa Noa, Nougat, and Sandwich and also lesser known but very individual brands such as Out of Xile and Masai. Oberon was one of the first shops in the country to discover the Spanish brand Desigual. As well as the beautiful clothing Oberon also stocks an impressive range of bags shoes and other accessories including the famous Radley bags and the Spanish shoe brand Unisa.

Oberon staff are always happy to help ladies choose something and are great with coming up with ideas for those who are a little unsure. Stacey is also passionate about jewellery and in the offshoot of Oberon immediately opposite she sells a selection of sterling silver and stone set jewellery from all corners of the globe including a superb range of amber. With beautiful pendants necklaces rings earrings you would be very hard pressed not to find a perfect gift or be tempted for yourself!

Oberon is open 6 days a week 9.30-5.30 also Sundays and late night Wednesdays during December.



HERITAGE HOUSE

18-19 Castle Street, Shrewsbury SY1 2AZ

Tel: 01743 231300

e-mail: info@heritagehouse.uk.com

website: www.heritagehouse.uk.com

'Welcome to the Home of 100% Solid Oak Furniture'

Only 100 yards from the Train Station, on the main thoroughfare into the centre of Shrewsbury, Heritage House is one of the town's largest independent furniture retailers, specialising in 100% solid oak furniture, the vast majority of which is designed within the company.

Their extensive showroom covers 2 floors of one of the town's many period properties and showcases furniture designed for both contemporary and traditional environments.

Complimenting their wonderful furniture is a wealth of accessories, including, lighting, gifts and soft furnishings all inspired to transform a room into a space for living.

On hand are well informed, helpful staff, whose knowledge and enthusiasm will ensure a visit to Heritage House is as enjoyable as it possibly can be.

How to order:

Orders can be placed online, by phone or by visiting their showroom. Out of County delivery is available from as little as £25, ensuring almost everyone in the UK can benefit from the outstanding quality and value Heritage House offers.



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memorials is to Admiral Benbow, a national hero who died in 1702 and who is also remembered in innumerable pub signs. St Chad's is the work of Attingham Hall's designer George Steuart, who was commissioned to design a replacement for the original church, which fell down in 1788. His church is very unusual in having a circular nave.

The best examples of Shrewsbury's Tudor buildings are to be found in **Bear Steps**, close to the main square. This charming group of Tudor cottages and a timbered hall now houses two floors of paintings and craft exhibits, usually featuring local artists and images.

Guided tours and suggested walks cover all aspects of this marvellous town, including a **Brother Cadfael Trail** and walks in the surrounding beautiful countryside. One walk takes in the spot to the north of town now known as **Battlefield**, where in 1403 the armies of Henry IV and the insurgent Harry Percy (Harry Hotspur) met. Fifty thousand men were deployed in all, and in the brief but bloody battle Hotspur was among the many casualties. A church was built near the mass grave, where 1,600 bodies are buried, a monument to the fallen and also an oasis of wildlife in the town environment. Battlefield Church is open at weekends during the summer.

Complementing the town's Museum and Archaeological Services, a records and



research service was opened in a new building in 1995. Shropshire Archives has 5.5 miles of material relating to Shropshire past and present, including many original records and extensive microfilm records.

A museum with a difference is **Coleham Pumping Station** at Longden Coleham. The station, which looks like a Victorian chapel, was built in 1900 to house the two massive steam-driven beam engines to pump sewage. The engines, which were built by Renshaws of Stoke, powered Shrewsbury's sewage system until 1970.

Shrewsbury Flower Show is a wonderful two-day summer show. Each August for more than a century the show has been held in the picturesque grounds of **Quarry Park**, which slope down to the Severn. At the centre of the 29-acre site is The Dingle, a colourful sunken flower garden.

Around Shrewsbury

WOLLASTON

8 miles W of Shrewsbury on the A458

The church here has a memorial to Thomas Parr, widely claimed to be the longest-lived Englishman, dying at the ripe old age of 152. He lived through 10 reigns, married for the first time at 88, raised a family and married again at 122. He is buried in Westminster Abbey, so someone must have believed his story.

MONTFORD

4 miles W of Shrewsbury off the A5

It's worth pausing at Montford to look at the church where Charles Darwin was buried for a time. His body was subsequently moved to Westminster Abbey, showing that the furore caused by his theories had largely died down soon after his death – but not entirely, as *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* can still arouse fierce debate. Just beyond Montford are the ruins of Shrawardine Castle.

MELVERLEY

10 miles W of Shrewsbury off the B4393

 Church of St Peter

Country lanes lead to the remarkable **Church of St Peter**, which stands serenely, if somewhat precariously, on the banks of the River Vyrnwy. From the outside, flanked by two massive yew trees, the church looks rather like a black and white manor house; the interior reveals one of England's few timber-framed churches. It was built in 1406 after its predecessor was destroyed by Owen Glendower. Great open screens of oak divide the interior into three areas and most of the furnishings - pulpit, altar table and chairs - are Jacobean.

NESSCLIFFE

9 miles NW of Shrewsbury on the A5

 Country Park

Near the village of Nesscliffe, which lies halfway between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, is **Nesscliffe Hill Country Park**, where paths lead up through woodland to the summit and fine views over Shropshire. The hill is a sandstone escarpment, popular for walking and rock climbing; cut into the face of an abandoned quarry are caves, one of them reputedly the lair of the 16th-century worthy-turned-highwayman Humphrey Kynaston.

A short distance north of Nesscliffe, on the B4397, is the village of Ruyton-XI-Towns, which acquired its unusual name in medieval times when 11 communities were united into the borough of Ruyton.

HADNALL

5 miles NE of Shrewsbury on the A49

Hadnall is the burial place of Rowland Hill – not the man who conceived the idea of the Penny Post in Victorian times, but the distinguished soldier who was Wellington's right-hand man during the Peninsula War and covered himself with glory by routing Napoleon's Imperial Guard at the Battle of Waterloo. Hill was created a viscount and after succeeding Wellington as Commander-in-Chief retired to Hardwicke Grange near Hadnall. That house no longer stands and the viscount himself is buried beneath the church tower.

Oswestry

 Church of St Oswald	 Croeswylan Stone
 Heritage Centre	 Wat's Dyke
 Cambrian Museum of Transport	
 Old Oswestry	 St Oswald's Well

Close to the Welsh border, Oswestry is an

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important market town whose look is mainly Georgian and Victorian, due in part to the fires that regularly ravaged timber-framed buildings. The town grew up around St Oswald's Well. Oswald was a Saxon king who was killed in a battle in AD642 against a rival Saxon king, Penda of Mercia. Oswald's body was dismembered and hung on the branches of a tree. An eagle swooped and carried off one of his arms and where the limb fell to the ground a spring bubbled up to mark the spot. **St Oswald's Well** soon became a place of pilgrimage renowned for its healing powers.

There are many fine old buildings in Oswestry, none finer than the **Church of St Oswald**. It played an important part in the Civil War, when it was used as an observation point during the siege of the town by the Parliamentarians. The oldest section is the tower, which dates back to around 1200. The interior is beautiful, and among the treasures are a font presented by Colonel Lloyd of Llanforda as a thanksgiving for the restoration of the monarchy, a Gilbert Scott war memorial and a memorial to Hugh Yale, a member of the family that founded Yale University.



Old Oswestry

Standing in the grounds of the church is the 15th-century Holbache House. Once a grammar school, this handsome building now houses the Tourist Information Centre and the **Heritage Centre** showing displays of local interest and exhibitions of arts and crafts. Ferrequinologists (railway buffs) will make tracks for the **Cambrian Museum of Transport** on Oswald Road. Oswestry was the headquarters of the Cambrian Railway Company until it amalgamated with the Great Western Railway in 1922, and as late as the 1960s there were over 1,000 railwaymen in the area. Locomotives, carriages and wagons have been built and repaired in Oswestry for over 100 years, and the maintenance of 300 miles of track was directed from offices in the station building. One of the old engine sheds now houses a small museum with a collection of railway memorabilia as well as some old bicycles and motorbikes. One of the locomotives is regularly steamed up by the volunteers of the Cambrian Railway Society. At Llyncllys South Station a short section of track has been restored.

In 1559 a plague killed almost a third of the town's population and the **Croeswylan Stone** commemorates this disaster, marking the spot to which the market was moved during the plague. It is sometimes referred to as the Cross of Weeping.

On the northern edge of town, **Old Oswestry** is an impressive example of an Iron Age fortress,

first occupied in about 300BC. It was on the border of the territory held by the Cornovii and is one of several in the region. At the southwest corner of the fort can be seen **Wat's Dyke**, built at the same time and for the same purpose – delineating the border between Saxon Mercia and the Welsh – as the better-known Offa's Dyke. Who was Wat? We don't know, but he could have been one of Offa's officers. The World War I poet Wilfred Owen was born in Oswestry in 1893.

Around Oswestry

MAESBURY

2 miles S of Oswestry off the A5 or A483

The village was one of the main transit points on the Montgomery Canal, and many of the

canal buildings at Maesbury Marsh are still standing, along with some boatmen's cottages.

Immediately south of Maesbury Marsh is the village of Woolston, where St Winifred's Well is said to have been a resting place for saints' bones being carried to their final destinations.

LLANYMYNECH

7 miles S of Oswestry on the A483

 Llanymynech Hills  Offa's Dyke

 Montgomery Canal

A small diversion is well worthwhile to visit Llanymynech, once a town of some standing, with a major canal and a thriving industry based on limestone. It was also a railway junction. The Llanymynech Hills, which include a section of Offa's Dyke, make for

WHITE HOUSE

Maesbury Marsh, nr Oswestry,
Shropshire SY10 8JA
Tel: 01691 658524

e-mail: whitehouse@maesburymarsh.co.uk
website: www.maesburymarsh.co.uk

Standing in 7 acres alongside the historic Montgomery Canal, **White House** sit off a country road off the A483, just south of the Oswestry. A delightful stone cottage, over the years extended to now offer quite, comfortable Bed & Breakfast accommodation in three en-suite guest bedrooms. The large Master Suite, on the ground floor, has a four poster bed, a sofa bed, to create a family room, a whirlpool bath and a "wet room" shower. The other rooms are on the first floor and have pleasant views over the courtyard or garden.

All rooms have state-of-the-art TV (Freeview + DVD/CD + iPod connections), the Master Suite has full Sky. All rooms have a fridge; hot drinks tray and free Broadband Internet, phone calls to UK landline phones are free. Resident owners Ross and Isabel Southwell, who bought the house in April 2009, provide evening meals. Vegetarian cooking is a speciality but meat eaters and vegans are also catered for and the menu always offers two starters, three mains and two desserts (bring your own wine). Breakfast, a tour-de-force, is a perfect way to prepare for a day's touring, cycling, walking (Offers Dyke runs nearby), canoeing or just relaxing with a stroll in the garden or the canal towpath. Complementary afternoon tea can be taken in the sun-trap courtyard, the only place where smoking is permitted. Drying and ironing facilities are available and there is good selection of books, magazines, maps and local information. **White House** does not accept credit card, just cash or personal cheques.



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THE MANSE B&B

North Road, Llanymynech, North Ponys SY22 6EN

Tel: 01691 831075

e-mail: info@stayatthemanse.co.uk

website: www.stayatthemanse.co.uk



The Manse B&B offers comfortable, reasonably priced accommodation in a handsome Edwardian house dating from 1906.

It stands just 200 yards from the Offa's Dyke path so is particularly popular with walkers for whom a drying area is available for wet clothes and equipment. They also appreciate the hearty breakfasts provided by owners Jenny and Peter Wright. The Manse has a choice of double, twin or single room with en suite facilities. All rooms have colour TV, tea/coffee making facilities, hairdryer, internet wi fi and thermostatically controlled radiators.

good walking, with the old limestone workings to add interest – you can still see the old bottle lime kilns and an unusual Hoffman rotary kiln. The quarried limestone was taken to the kilns on a tramway and, after processing, to the nearby canal side wharf. Part of the quarry is now a designated nature reserve and supports abundant bird life. On top of the hill are traces of an ancient hill fort. The Montgomery Canal was built at the end of the 18th century mainly for the transportation of limestone from the Llanymynech quarries. Large sections of it are now unnavigable, indeed dry, but a restoration project aims to open 35 miles of waterway from Oswestry through Welshpool to Newtown. Until the boats return there are some delightful walks along the towpath, as well as fishing where it is possible.

winner of the Britain in Bloom competition in both 2000 and 2001 and along its medieval streets rise Georgian and half-timbered buildings. The **Old Town Hall** and the **Old Railway Station** are two of the most striking buildings, but nothing except the mound remains of the castle. The most impressive of all is the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, built by the Knights of St John. It is particularly beautiful inside, with an exceptional 15th-century carved roof in the chapel.

The church overlooks **The Mere**, largest of several lakes that are an equal delight to boating enthusiasts, anglers and birdwatchers. Herons, Canada geese and swans are among the inhabitants of The Mere. For an insight into the creation some 15,000 years ago of the Shropshire meres, a browse around the Meres Visitor Centre is recommended. From the centre, there's a pleasant half-mile promenade along the lakeside and through Cremorne Gardens.

Ellesmere forms the hub of a regional canal network with the **Llangollen Canal** linking the Shropshire Union Canal to the Mersey. It was from his offices in Ellesmere that Thomas Telford designed and supervised the building of the entire canal whose most spectacular

ELLESMERE

8 miles NE of Oswestry on the A495

 Old Town Hall  Old Railway Station

 Welshampton Church  Llangollen Canal

 The Mere

The centre of Shropshire's Lakeland, Ellesmere is a pretty market town where the market is held every Tuesday, just as it has been since 1221. The town has been regional

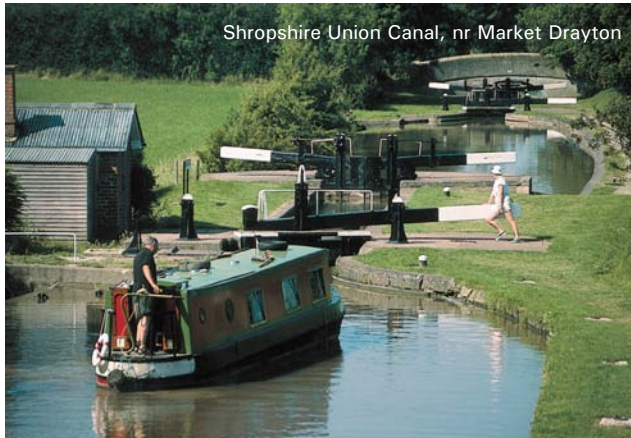
feature is the aqueduct, 125 feet high and 1,000 feet long, which spans the Vale of Llangollen. The project was initiated by the Duke of Bridgewater who in just one day raised over a million (18th-century) pounds at a hotel in the town to fund the scheme.

A mile or so east of Ellesmere, on the A495, is Welshampton, whose **Church** was built by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1863. One of its memorial windows is dedicated to a Basuto chieftain; he had been a student of theology at Canterbury and part of his studies brought him to Welshampton, where he lodged with the vicar. Unfortunately he fell ill and died in the same year that saw the completion of the church.

Market Drayton

🏰 Butter Cross 🚶 Shropshire Union Canal
🚶 Newcastle Way 🚶 Discovery Trail

Market Drayton was mentioned in the Domesday Book as Magna Draitune. It changed its name when Abbot Simon Combermere obtained a Royal Market Charter in 1245:



Shropshire Union Canal, nr Market Drayton

Know that we have granted and by this our present charter confirmed to Brother Simon Abbot of Combermere and the monks serving God there that they and their successors forever shall have a weekly market in their manor of Drayton on Wednesday.

And so they have, every Wednesday since.

The fire of 1651 razed most of the town, so there is now quite a diversity of styles among the buildings, including black and white half-timbered residences and former coaching inns. One of the most interesting structures is the **Butter Cross**, built in 1842 to enable farmers' wives to display their wares protected from the weather. The crest it carries is of the Corbet family, Lords of the Manor since 1650.

Market Drayton is often referred to as 'The Home of the Gingerbread'. Gingerbread was baked here for more than 200 years. The bakery no longer exists but traditional Billington's Gingerbread can still be bought in local shops in the town. Traditionally it was dunked in port. Also available is a selection of Gingerbread figures made in all shapes and sizes by a local business called Image on Food. Gingerbread is very good to nibble on the

Discovery Trail that takes in the sights of the town. Gingerbread dates back far more than 200 years, of course, and Shakespeare had a good word for it:

*An' I had but one penny in the world
thou shouldst have it to buy gingerbread.*

Just a few hundred yards from the town centre, the **Shropshire Union Canal** gives

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boaters the chance to moor up and explore the town, while the towpath walk takes in flights of locks, wharfside cottages and the breathtaking 40-steps Aqueduct.

Market Drayton's most famous son (actually born just outside) was Clive of India, whose childhood escapades in the town included climbing the church tower and sitting on one of the gargoyles, and building a dam to flood a shop whose owner was unwilling to pay protection money. Baron Clive of India, Governor of Bengal, was MP for Shrewsbury from 1760 until his death. He is buried in St Margaret's Church, Moreton Say, 12 miles northwest of Shrewsbury. The **Newcastle Way** is a long-distance walking route that runs for 25 miles between Market Drayton and Mow Cop in Staffordshire. It links the Staffordshire Way at Mow Cop with the Shropshire Union Canal towpath at Market Drayton.

Around Market Drayton

HODNET

4 miles SW of Market Drayton on the A53

🏰 Hodnet Hall

The sizeable village of Hodnet is overlooked by the church of St Luke from its hilltop position. The church is Norman, with some unusual features including a christening gate and wedding steps, and it has a very distinctive octagonal tower. There are some ornate carvings around the 17th-century font, and a chapel is dedicated to the Heber-Percy family, owners of **Hodnet Hall**. The most illustrious member of the family was Bishop Heber, who wrote, among many other hymns, From Greenland's Icy Mountains. Hodnet Hall is an Elizabethan-style mansion built in the 1870s, but the real reason for a visit here is the

wonderful gardens, which extend over 60 acres and were carefully planted (Brigadier Heber-Percy masterminded the transformation) to provide a show of colour throughout the seasons. The gardens are only open to the public on certain weekends during the summer. Call 01630 685786 for dates.

MARCHAMLEY

4 miles SW of Market Drayton on the A442

🏰 Hawkestone Hall

The beautiful Georgian mansion **Hawkestone Hall** was the ancestral home of the Hill family from 1556 until 1906. The Hall is now the seat of a religious order, but the principal rooms, including the splendid Venetian Saloon, are open for a short time in the summer (01630 685242). The Pleasure Gardens comprise terraces, lily pond, herbaceous borders and extensive woodland.

MORETON CORBET

6 miles N of Shrewsbury on the B5063

🏰 Castle

Take the A53 to Shawbury and turn left on to the B5063 and you'll soon come across the splendid ruins of **Moreton Corbet Castle**, seat of the local bigwig family. Its stark greystone walls are an entrancing and moving sight, and not at all like a castle. In fact, what remains is the shell of a grand Italian-influenced mansion that was never completed (Corbet's funds ran out) and was severely damaged in the Civil War.

WEM

11 miles N of Shrewsbury on the B5476

🏰 Astley House

A peaceful enough place now, but Wem has seen its share of strife, being virtually

destroyed in the Wars of the Roses and attacked in the Civil War. On the latter occasion, in 1643, Lord Capel at the head of 5,000 Royalist troops got a pretty hostile reception, and his defeat by a much smaller band, including some townswomen, gave rise to this mocking couplet:

*The women of Wem and a few volunteers
Beat the Lord Capel and all his Cavaliers.*

It was another woman – actually a 14-year-old girl called Jane Churm – who nearly did what Capel proved incapable of doing. In setting alight the thatch on the roof of her home she started a fire that destroyed 140 properties in one hour. Some notable buildings survived, including **Astley House**, home of the painter John Astley. This and

many of the town's most impressive houses are in Noble Street. Famous people associated with Wem include Judge Jeffreys of Bloody Assize fame, who became Baron Wem in 1685, with his official residence at Lowe Hall. Wem is the home of the modern sweet pea, developed by the 19th-century nurseryman Henry Eckford. The Sweet Pea Show and the carnival are great occasions in the Wem calendar.

WHITCHURCH

17 miles N of Shrewsbury on the A49

 St Alkmund's Church

First developed by the Romans as Mediolanum, Whitchurch is the most important town in the northern part of the

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county. Its main street is dominated by the tall sandstone tower of **St Alkmund's Church**, in whose chapel lies the body of Sir John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury, who was killed at the Battle of Castillon, near Bordeaux, in 1453.

The Shropshire Way passes nearby, so too the Llangollen Canal, and nature-lovers can explore the local wetland habitats – Brown

Moss is two miles to the south off the A41. Whitchurch is the home of Joyce Clocks, the oldest tower clockmakers in the world, and is also, somewhat oddly, where Cheshire cheese was created.

Hidden away in the heart of the town are the Old Town Hall Vaults, where the composer Edward German (*Merrie England*, *Tom Jones*) was born in 1862.

LOCKSIDE CAFÉ

Bridge 29, Llangollen Canal, Grindley Brook,
Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 4QH
Tel: 01948 663385

e-mail: jane@lockside.biz website: www.lockside.biz

The Llangollen Canal is a 47-mile picturesque stretch of the Shropshire Union and **Lockside Café** enjoys a wonderful setting at Grindley Brook where the canal descends to meet the Cheshire plain. Grindley Brook, the most northerly settlement in Shropshire, stands on the main A41 trunk road a mile and a half north of Whitchurch. It is best known for its staircase of 6 locks. The Café serves the local community as well as boaters on this, one of the most popular and busiest stretches of canal on the whole of the British Waterways network.

It is also a great part of the world for walkers, with the Sandstone Trail running alongside the canal at this point. The Bishop Bennett Way, the Marches Way and the Shropshire and Cheshire Ways, also start or meet close to here. Lockside is, as the name suggests, set right alongside the locks and sells snacks, light meals and a selection of home baking. As well as seating inside there is plenty of seating outside in the Café garden where you can relax the time away with a cappuccino or even a glass of beer or wine watching the comings and goings on the locks only a few feet away. The café compliments this by stocking a range of local produce and specially made jams and pickles, plus a selection of canal gifts and mementoes. Lockside is open 7 days a week from 9am – 5pm – Easter through to November. *Images courtesy of Sheila Halsall of Vision Cards.*



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