

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



RESTAURANTS AND PUBS SERVING FOOD AND TEA ROOMS

Before setting out to eat we recommend that you call ahead to check that the restaurant or pub is open and serving food. We have been caught out before now by odd holidays, restaurants running out of fuel and family crises. A lot of pubs in the area also seem to close on Monday. Also, even though we're out in the sticks here, many of the pubs and restaurants get fully booked at weekends and busy times such as festivals and holidays, so please book to avoid disappointment.

We prefer not to recommend as everyone's tastes are different! However, if we were staying here at Hopton House as guests our first choice of place to eat would be the **Jolly Frog**. We'd then probably go up **The Castle** in Bishops Castle (beautiful gardens in the summer and lovely fires in the Winter). Our third evening would be at the **Riverside Inn** in Aymestry (sit by the river and watch the trout in summer and enjoy the massive log fire in winter). If we were staying for a 4th evening we'd probably head down to Ludlow and eat at **The Unicorn, The Thai Restaurant or Shapla Balti** Curry House.

Name	Telephone No.	Comments	Distance from Hopton House
Rocke Cottage Tea Rooms (formerly bird on the rock) Clungunford	01588 660631	1920s style atmospheric tea room closed on Mon & Tues – Booking recommended at the weekend but not essential.	1.5 miles
The Jolly Frog	01547 540298	Our favourite local restaurant. French and Italian themed fishy menu. Book before 7 and choose from a cheaper menu booking essential at weekends and on 1 st Wednesday of the month when they do a gourmet French evening	3 miles
Baron of Beef Pub and Restaurant Bucknell	01547 530549	Country Pub and Restaurant which previous guests have given good feedback on. Good pub grub with vegetarian options.	3 miles

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



Name	Telephone No.	Comments	Distance from Hopton House
The White Horse, Clun	01588 640305	Good atmosphere and food with separate restaurant.	6 miles
Milebrook House Knighton	01547 528 632	More formal dining (AA 2 rosette) – get 10% off a 3 course meal for 2 with a voucher from us	8 miles
The Clive Restaurant Bromfield	01584 856565	More formal dining than it used to be.	8 miles
Riverside Inn Aymestry, Herefordshire	01568 708440	Award winning riverside pub/restaurant in pretty location. Booking essential	9.5 miles
Shapli Balti, Broad Street Ludlow	01584 875153	Excellent Balti food, contemporary style and young energetic waiters. Booking recommended	10 miles
Mr Underhills	Ludlow 01584 874431	Another of our excellent Michelin starred restaurants ADVANCE booking essential	10 miles
Koo	Ludlow 01584 878462	A Japanese restaurant recently voted No. 1 in the country in the Times Top 10 Japanese Restaurant	10 miles
La Becasse	17 Corve Street, Ludlow TEL: 01584 872325	Used to be Hibscus – upmarket restaurant. Just received Michelin star Booking essential	10 miles
Chang Thai Restaurant	3 Market Street Ludlow 01584 874212	Thai restaurant in Ludlow – good food and nice lunchtime menu	10 miles
The Castle Pub, Bishops Castle	01588 638403	Our Favourite pub to eat in – the gardens are beautiful in the summer and the snug with its coal fire cosy in winter. Excellent good English food – booking essential	11 miles

There are many more good restaurants and pubs in the local area – these are just a few of the ones we've visited or have been recommended to us by guests.

There are also fish and chip shops in Leintwardine, Craven Arms, Bishops Castle and Knighton. Takeaway Indian and Chinese in Bishops Castle and takeaway Chinese in Craven Arms.

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



TRAVEL INFORMATION

Train Station	HOPTON HEATH Request Stop Heart of Wales Line	4 trains Mon-Sat Shrewsbury to Swansea and return www.heart-of-wales.co.uk
Buses	HOPTON HEATH GREEN	Buses run to Ludlow and back about 4 times a day

TOURIST INFORMATION

Ludlow	01584 875053
Knighton	01547 529424
Shrewsbury	01743 281200
Church Stretton	01694 723133

OTHER LOCAL AMENITIES

Nearest Bank / Cash Dispenser

HSBC Bank, Leintwardine	3 miles
HSBC Bank, Craven Arms	6 miles
Tuffins Cash Point, Craven Arms	6 miles
Most Major UK Banks, Ludlow	10 miles

Nearest Petrol Station and Shop

Griffiths at Leintwardine	3 miles
Tuffins at Craven Arms	6 miles
Tuffins at Knighton	8 miles

Nearest Post Office

Leintwardine	3 miles
Bucknell	4 miles
Craven Arms	6 miles

Nearest Public Telephone

Hopton Heath Station Platform	100 metres
-------------------------------	------------

Nearest Post Box

Hopton Heath Village Green	150 metres
----------------------------	------------

Outdoor Sports Shops

Base Camp, Ludlow	01584 875755	10 miles
Millets Shrewsbury	01743 353686	25 miles

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



TAXI COMPANIES

It is very difficult to get a taxi out here. If you want one then you must book in advance.

Try Ludlovian Taxis whose number is 0800 108 8787. She is a one woman taxi firm. The cost to Ludlow is about £15. If you call her to go to any of our local restaurants she'll charge that plus extra.

Also worth trying are Knighton Taxis 01547 528165

If you're coming for a wedding quite often the bride and groom book minibuses to drop off guest after the reception, so it might be worth checking with them in advance.

CYCLE HIRE

Wheely Wonderful Cycling is a local company and a member of Shropshire Tourism and have won quality awards for their service. As well as cycle hire, they also offer a wide range of cycling and walking holidays in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Mid-Wales. Including the Wye Valley and Lon Las Cymru (Welsh National Cycle Route).

Address: Petchfield Farm, Elton, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 2HJ

Phone: 01568 770755

e-mail: info@wheelywonderfulcycling.co.uk

Web: www.pearcecycles.co.uk

Deposit: A refundable damage deposit is required for each bike and identification for each booking (i.e. driver's licence).

Bookings: It's best to book your bikes in advance, either by email or phone.

Opening Times: Easter to the end of October 09:00-17:00, 7 days a week. November to Easter open by special arrangement.

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



LOCAL WALKS

This is wonderful walking country and we are lucky to have access to hundreds of miles of footpaths accessible by foot, bike, car, bus and train.

The house has a whole variety of maps and guidebooks for you to browse, but if you need a starter we can give you a few suggestions.

We offer a packed lunch from £5 ahead – please book in advance.

If you just want to walk out from the house, try **walk 20 Clungunford** in **Tea Shop Walks in Shropshire**. Part of this walk passes just half a mile from Hopton House.

Another walk accessible from the house is **Walk 45 And So to Bedstone** in the **AA's 50 Walks in Shropshire**, again you'll need to walk about a mile to join the walk.

We also have an 8 mile circular dog friendly walk from the house produced for us by the www.dogpeople.co.uk

If you'd like to take the train (google Heart of Wales line for up to date timetable) then lots more walks are open for you. Take the train to Knighton and do a circular walk on Offa's Dyke (**Walk 47 An Offa at Knighton in AA's 50 walks in Shropshire**).

Take the train to Craven Arms and enjoy the following walks from the **AA's 50 walks in Shropshire**:

- ☺ **Walk 43 Folly on Wenlock Edge**
- ☺ **Walk 42 Steaming up Wart Hill**
- ☺ **Walk 41 Over the Edge at Stokesay**

Go up to Church Stretton and enjoy one of the many routes over the Long Mynd including

- ☺ **Walk 37 Sheep Shape the Mynd**
- ☺ **Walk 38 Shapely Seductive Strettons**

Also available is the 15 Walks from the **Heart of Wales Line** – no explanation needed! One of the walks in this book is from Hopton Heath to Broome, over the very beautiful Clunbury Hill. You can then have lunch or early evening drink at the Engine and Tender Inn, then get the train back. There are trains from Broome to Hopton Heath at 13.45 and 18.07 (not Sunday) and the walk takes about 4 hours. Alternatively you could get the 12.20 train from Hopton Heath to Broome, have lunch and walk back! Note the Engine and Tender closes on Monday.

If you're willing to drive there are many lovely walks around Clunbury, Clunton and Clun. We would thoroughly recommend Bury Ditches and Clunton Coppice.

If you wish to head down into Herefordshire there are many more beautiful walks. In the AA's 50 Walks in Worcestershire and Herefordshire previous guest have recommended

- ☺ **Walk 36 Aymestry: Quarrying the Rocks of Ages**

This walk is particularly good as it can be combined with a trip to the Riverside Inn, Aymestry for Lunch

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



Offas Dyke is a big attraction for keen walkers in the area.

It's possible to get the train to Knighton and to do a circular walk on the Dyke from here – the Offas Dyke visitors centre is also located in Knighton.

We have also found a lovely circular Offas Dyke Walk just North of Clun – please ask us for details as it's not in a book. It covers what is apparently the best preserved bit of Offas Dyke.

If you enjoy nature and peace and quiet, the Rhos Fiddle Nature Reserve is well worth a visit. We spotted a brown hare there one weekend in September.

You can walk to Clun from Hopton House – about 6 miles and 3 hours duration. The views are stunning (ok all views round here are stunning – but you can see as far as the Malverns on a clear day from this one) and the reward when you get there is a visit to one of the 2 pubs or tearooms (best check which are open before you leave).

Shropshire is part of the Ramblers Association. With information about events, walks, local footpaths etc. They have their own webpage <http://www.shropshireramblers.org.uk/> and can be contacted by phone on 01952 462855 or email marionlaw@rapidial.co.uk.

SHOPPING

Shrewsbury is the biggest shopping centre locally. If you drive (will take about 45 minutes) we suggest you use the park on ride at Meole Brace - £1 return for over 16s and over. We normally take the train from Craven Arms which takes 20 minutes to the town centre. You can of course take the train from Hopton Heath, but there are fewer trains to choose from.

If you like antiquing then a trip to **Church Stretton** is a must. There is a massive antiques shop with 3 floors containing antiques from lots of different antique dealers. There is also the antique and flea market every other Sunday in **Ludlow**.

Ludlow has a market on Friday, Saturday, Monday and, in the summer, Wednesday. There are lots of different little shops in Ludlow selling clothes, antiques and crafty items, though none of the usual chain stores with the exception of a small Boots and Tesco's.

Bishops Castle has a few antique and craft shops.

NATIONAL TRUST AND OTHER HISTORICAL PLACES OF INTEREST

Please check the internet for latest opening times for all of the following as some are closed in the winter and on odd days during the week.

Powis Castle NT near Welshpool is just a 40 minute - very scenic - drive away. A magnificent red brick building situated on a steep hillside, with the most glorious gardens. The gardens at Powis change throughout the year so it benefits from several visits. Close to Powis is the newly opened Coed-Y-Dinas Garden Centre which could be a day trip in itself.

Croft Castle NT is about a 20-25 minutes south of Hopton House is North Herefordshire. This is another superb building with lovely cottage gardens. Croft Castle is set in hundreds of acres of Woodland which visitors are welcome to explore. In the grounds is Croft Ambrey Hillfort, a 45 minute walk from the castle car park and well worth trip for the views, which take in 14 counties apparently.

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



Berrington Hall NT is just a few miles further on from Croft Castle. It is a Neo-classical mansion with fine interiors, set in landscape grounds and was the last garden that Capability Brown designed.

Shropshire has the highest concentration of Hill Forts in the UK, with other 50 situated around the county. There is one at Chapel Lawn and probably the most easily accessible and most recommended to visit is the one at **Bury Ditches**, about 10 minutes drive from Hopton House. Follow the signs from Clunton, then park at the car park and walk about 10 minutes to the fort. There are magnificent views from the top.

English Heritage's **Stokesay Castle** at Craven Arms is just a 10 minute drive away. It is the finest and best preserved 13th Century Manor House in England.

Ludlow Castle is one of the finest in the land. Originally a Norman fortress it was extended over the years to create a royal palace. The Princes in the Tower spent most of their childhood at Ludlow and Henry VIII's brother, Arthur, died there in 1502 leaving the way for Henry to marry his wife Katherine and become king.

There are several smaller castles in the area including Wigmore, Clun and our own Hopton Castle. **Hopton Castle** has its own bloody history with a famous and bloody siege in 1644, after which nobody ever lived in it again, and for more than 350 years, it's been falling apart. The good news now is that English Heritage has received £880,000 to buy and make good the castle. It is currently on private land but easily seen from the road – a 20 minute walk from Hopton House.

Much Wenlock, a very pretty village about 45 minutes drive from Hopton House, is home to English Heritage's Wenlock Priory and the very beautiful Guild Hall which dates from 1577. Do take a look inside if you get the chance. Much Wenlock is also famous as the home of the man who invented the modern Olympic Games in the 19th Century.

Just a few miles on from Much Wenlock is **Ironbridge** with a plethora of museums and shops as well as pretty walks along the river near the bridge itself.

Drive back from Much Wenlock along **Wenlock Edge**, which is a famous geological ridge full of fossils that used to be alongside the Seychelles a few years back! For those of you interested in earlier history, Shropshire is full of other places of significant geological interest including the **Long Mynd** and the **Stiperstones**.

If you prefer gardens then, as already mentioned, those at Powis Castle and Croft Castle are a must to visit. Another beautiful garden is down at Kington at **Hergest Court** – about 30 minutes from Hopton House and good combined with a visit to the **Judge's Lodgings** at Presteigne and lunch or dinner at the famous Stag Inn at Title – the first Michelin Starred pub in the country.

If you enjoy bird watching then a "must do" trip is the 50 minute drive to **Girgin Farm at Rhayader** in Wales to see the **Red Kites** being fed at 14.00 in the winter and 15.00 in the Summer. This is a great trip combined with a visit to the Elan Valley Reservoir, with some beautiful drives and walks into the Welsh mountains.

If you're staying with us for a bit longer and fancy exploring Wales then Aberystwyth is just 66 miles away. We'd recommend you drive via the Elan valley and the mountain road as it's a beautiful drive. Alternatively you can drive out to Aberdovey 64 miles away, which has miles of beautiful long beaches – great for dog walking. Bear in mind that those distances are on windy Welsh roads so it will take a couple of hours to drive.

There is also a new Kite feeding centre at the Forestry Commission Bwlch Nant yr Arian just a few miles out of Aberystwyth on the main A44. The kites are fed at 3pm BST (2pm in winter). There are also walks from here and a rather nice café looking over the lake

Hopton House B&B

Guest Information



Another bird lover's must is the **Small Breed and Owl Centre at Kington**, where you get up close to owls – being able to stroke a few - goats, alpacas, pigs etc.

The Rare Breed Chicken Poultry Farm is at Onibury, a few miles from Hopton House. Here you can see an astounding number of different hens, as well as being able to see and hold chicks.

The base for the Shropshire Wildlife Trust (of which Hopton House is a member) is at the Abbey in Shrewsbury.