

## **Bishop's Castle – the best base for walking in the Shropshire Hills**

Want a change from planning your walking group holidays around a large hotel? Give your group something different where as well as marvellous walks in quiet unspoilt hill country they can experience the lively ancient market town of Bishop's Castle.

You can fix up accommodation for your group at the different Bed & Breakfasts in town. But because of its size no one will feel isolated or out of 'the loop'. There are plenty of eating spots and watering holes to get together after your days walking. In fact Bishop's Castle (population 1,800) has six pubs, two breweries (The Three Tuns & Six Bells) and four café/restaurants – all happy to take groups of hungry and thirsty walkers.

There are free car parks which can take coaches and all on street parking is free and unrestricted. There are two sets of public toilets, one at the bottom of the hill in the auction yard car park, which included a disabled toilet, and the Town Hall toilets at the top of the hill.

The bed & breakfast proprietors will work together to ensure that your group is booked in easily without problems and you can reserve tables at any of the pubs and restaurants in advance. If you want to know more about the town guided town walks can also be arranged. There is a local Museum – The House on Crutches - and a Heritage Resource Centre. Brewery tours can also be booked in advance.

Oh, and of course, there are the walks. The recently devised and opened long distance path, the bc ring is a must do 62 mile circuit of Bishop's Castle (check out the route at [www.bcring.co.uk](http://www.bcring.co.uk) or follow the link from [www.bishopscastle.co.uk/tourism/walking.htm](http://www.bishopscastle.co.uk/tourism/walking.htm) ). The best preserved section of Offa's Dyke also runs close to the town as does the ancient drovers road The Kerry Ridgeway. The Shropshire Way runs through the town on its way from Church Stretton to Clun across the magnificent Stiperstones and the Longmynd ridges and the upland beauty of the Clun Forest. Or you can plan your own walks in these peaceful hills.

Don't just take our word for the delights Bishop's Castle can offer your walking group read what Alan Garner of Secret Hills Walking has to say about the group walks he organised.

## **Bishop's Castle Ring a hit for Dorset Group**

South Dorset Ramblers visited the border town of Bishops Castle in May to complete the bc ring – a 62 mile walk around this ancient and lively market town.

The holiday of six days and nights was arranged by local guided walking company, Secret Hills Walking Holidays, who arranged all the administration and logistics of accommodating and feeding 30 people.

Secret Hills principal Alan Garner explains.

“ In a small town like Bishops Castle, an additional 30 people visiting does take up a lot of bed room spaces, but the various bed and breakfasts in the town worked together to fit

everyone in – we needed 17 rooms as there were several single people in the party. Despite being in different locations, the party were delighted with the arrangements”

South Dorset organizer Mo Green was fulsome in her praise for the tourist community of BC.

“Everyone made us so welcome – we lacked for nothing and really we did not have a problem being in different locations, it added to the week. We had a super time, we were well led, well fed, and we slept superbly in your brilliant guest houses after a long day on the hills”

Evening meals were arranged at six different eating houses in the town, and the different fare on offer added to the Bishop’s Castle experience. Lunch – mainly packed was prepared every morning in the town. Travel also each day to walk start and walk finish was effective, with the local bus company doing the honours.

Alan Garner stresses “It’s not a problem to manage this type of group, simply get the arrangements started early enough and be aware that there will be changes needed as the time approaches for the groups arrival – but the towns tourist providers need to, and they did, recognise that cooperating on this type of group approach is vital if the group is to have a superb time.

This group has paved the way, hopefully for many others in this growing market sector.”

**Ends**