

Walking for Pleasure Leaflets

Bishop's Castle 1

The Wintles and Woodbatch

Bishop's Castle 2

Lydbury North and Oakeley Mynd

Bishop's Castle 3

Hell Hole, Acton Bank
and Brockton.



*Bishop's Castle is a
"Walkers are Welcome Town"*

Clunton 1

Bury Ditches, The Stepple
and Merry Hill

Clunton 2

Clunton Coppice, Sowdley Wood
and Purslow.

Bishop's Castle Short Walks

6, 7, 8, 9

Around the town.

The starting point for the Bishop's Castle walks is the town centre; the starting point for the Clunton walks is the Crown Inn car park.

Reporting Problems

Most of these walks have yellow,
numbered discs on every stile/
gate & way marking post.

Please report any difficulties to
jane.carrol@gmail.com
text 07966 720006

quoting the leaflet number, walk number and
the number of the nearest yellow disc.
Explain the problem. Give as much
identification information as you can.

Maps

OS Landranger 137, 2 cm to 1 km,

for a detailed overview of the whole area from Ludlow to Montgomery, Knighton, Presteigne and Church Stretton. Small roads and footpaths are all marked but not field boundaries.

OS Explorer 216, 217 and 201, 4 cm to 1 km,

for a close up with all the field boundaries. **216** covers Bishop's Castle, Welshpool and Montgomery with Offa's Dyke north, the Kerry Ridgeway and the Stiperstones, **217** covers the Long Mynd, Church Stretton, Craven Arms and Wenlock Edge and **201** covers Clun, the Clun Valley, Knighton, Presteigne and Offa's Dyke south.

Visitor Information

Bishop's Castle

The Town Hall, Bishop's Castle SY9 5BG
01588 630023 info@bishopscastletownhall.co.uk
Church Stretton – Church St. 01694 723133
Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre 01588 676000
Bog Visitor Centre, Stiperstones 01743 792747
bogcentre@hotmail.co.uk

There are information racks in most pubs and shops in the villages and display boards in Bishop's Castle

Buses

There is a scheduled service from
Bishop's Castle to Shrewsbury
bustimes.org/services/553-bishops-castle-shrewsbury
Other services are infrequent. travelinemidlands.co.uk/

Shuttle Buses

The Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle runs in a figure of 8 from Pontesbury on the A488 Shrewsbury road to Church Stretton, crossing at Bridges.

It operates at weekends and Bank Holiday Mondays from May to September

Timetables are readily available.

www.shropshirehillsshuttles.co.uk

Bishop's Castle Dial-A-Ride

which runs an 8 and a 13 seater bus,
both with disabled access. 01588 638350
dial.a.ride@hotmail.co.uk
<http://www.bc-dial-a-ride.org.uk>

Taxis

Bishop's Castle Rus Gromov 07551 825931/2
Craven Arms Arms Cabs 01588 672734.

Railways

The nearest station is Craven Arms.
Otherwise use Shrewsbury and the scheduled bus service.

Published by **Bishop's Castle Parish Path Partnership**
Group with support from
Shropshire County Council.
©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved, Shropshire County
Council 100019801 2007

WALKING FOR PLEASURE

Around Clunton

4

Bury Ditches, The Stepple And Merry Hill



Distance 2½ miles

Walk up the road signposted to Bury Ditches for about 200 yards to cross the stile on the left just before the road bridge (2) and take the path leading to the brook and the line of trees on your right. Cross the next three fields and stiles (3-5) and then through a field gate (6). Now go straight ahead and then slightly left (avoiding gate on right) to cross the next stile (7). Walk along the well defined track over stile (8) and on until you turn right in front of a small lake (9). Over the next stile (10) and follow the farm track uphill (towards the farmhouse) until it joins a lane (11). Turn right and follow lane downhill crossing a brook (12) after 1/2 mile and continue along lane until it meets the Bury Ditches road (13) where you turn right. Proceed down road and over bridge then as you come into Clunton the Crown Inn is ahead and starting point is on the right.

Walk 1b Distance 3½ miles

Follow instructions for walk 1a to point (11). Turn left uphill and bearing to the right of the farm buildings go through several gates and along a straight hedged track and through a gate. (14). Follow track around left hedge and then go right to cross stile (15). Follow the track to the right then downhill through a gate in front of a converted barn (16) across a stream and through another gate. Walk on uphill along the track to emerge on the Bury Ditches road and turn right (17). Continue down road to starting point.

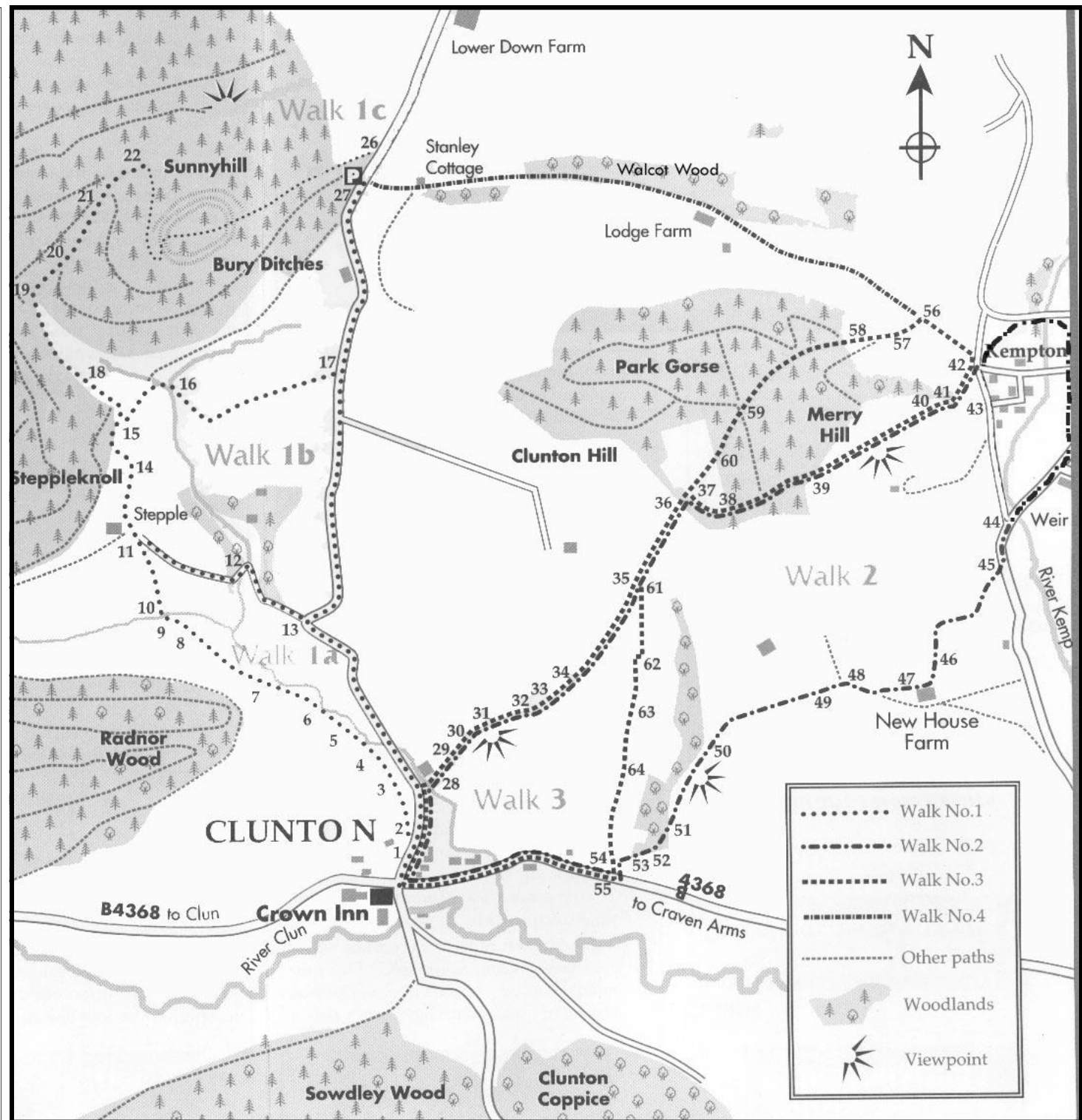
Walk 1c Distance 5 miles

Follow instructions for walk 1b to point (15) and watch out for your footpath leaving the farm track in the middle of the right hand bend. Walk around left hand edge of field until you find a stile (18) and cross over into the forestry plantation (Stepple Knoll). Turn right along track uphill until a point where it is crossed by another broad track (19). Turn right and a short distance further (just before track bends sharply to the right) turn left up path (20) passing bench beside large conifer on way up hill. Turn left at top of path and then right to join proper forest track (21).

Take the next right turn (22) which will take you on the Shropshire Way through Bury Ditches with its hill fort and surrounding views of the surrounding hills.



There are views across to Bishop's Castle and views in all directions from Bury Ditches.




Follow path to Bury Ditches car par entrance (26)


Continue along road and past the left hand footpath to Stanley Cottage (27). Continue along road and around left bend to see impressive views of your earlier route into the woods. Continue along road and descend 1 3/4 miles to your starting point.

Walk 2 Distance 4 1/4 miles

Head north up the road signposted for Bury Ditches. Continue past the stile in the left hedge (2) and turn up the next lane on the right, immediately after the bridge. At the end of the short straight go through the gates in front (28) (just as the track diverts around to the right). Head straight up the field and cross stile (29) to continue through a small plantation, exiting at stile (30). Proceed diagonally left uphill, keeping the small tree plantation to your left, and continue over next stile (31).


 *Looking back over stile (31) and across the valley there are good views of Clunton Coppice to the left and Sowdley Wood on the right (see Walking for Pleasure around Clunton 2) and with back to the stile you see Stepple Knoll to the left (see walk 1) and your route to the right!*

Turn right and walk along the fence/tree line to the end of the field and across next two stiles (32/33). Go diagonally left up field and over the following stile (34). Head diagonally right towards the top right corner of the field and over the stile in the hedge on your right (35). Turn left along the hedge to the top of the field to cross the waymarked fence (36) and into trees. Cross the stile (37) and turn right along the edge of the clearing and through the waymarked gate (38). Continue along the track straight ahead through Merryhill Plantation until you emerge through gate (39). Head downhill diagonally left over the brow towards the end of the tree line in bottom left corner of the field to find the next stile (40).


 *As you move into the middle of this field there are spectacular views across South Shropshire. Looking hard to your left you can see on the horizon the tor-like shapes of the Stiperstones and as you turn back in front your eye will pass along the Long Mynd and further away the distinctive summit of Caer Caradoc in the Stretton Hills and finally to Short Wood in front of you. Looking on the horizon slightly to the right (between the wood/hill to your right*

and Short Wood) you can see the Clee Hills (Shropshire's highest land) whilst the village of Kempton lies down below.

Cross stile (40) and walk around the edge of the wood to your left and over next stile (41) then head diagonally left to the corner of the field and exit onto a small road (42). Continue straight on (onto the Shropshire Way) crossing two stiles, turning right at the building and crossing the bridge. Halfway down the track to the road, turn right over the stile into the field and head diagonally across the field to exit at a gate on the far side of the field. Continue in the same direction for a few yards along a short farm track which leads to a road. Turn right and follow the road across a ford. The road bends left, then right and the next left bend is point (43) turn left and follow lane. At road junction for Kempton turn right (44) following the sign to Purslow, and a short distance further cross the stile in the right hedge (45). Head diagonally left to walk alongside the ditch (keep ditch on your left) until the trees lining the ditch stop, at this point turn left across the ditch and head up the bank slightly to the left of the trees in front. Cross the stile in the fence (46) and head for the farm buildings in front. Pass behind the farmhouse and as the track turns left go straight on up the bank in front and over the stile above you (47). Go straight across the field and join the stone track (on left) and turn right up the track. Continue uphill along the track until the path divides, the right branch going over cattle-grid (48).

 *Looking behind and slightly to the right down through the trees you can see the remains of Hopton Castle.*

Your path is left through the gateway and along the right edge of the field, through the next gate (49) and continue to the bottom right corner of the field where there is a gate. Do not go through gate but turn left along the edge of the field to find a stile in the next corner (50). Cross the stile and turn left.

 *Excellent views across the valley where in front you can see Clunton Coppice and River Clun to the left (see Walking for Pleasure around Clunton 2)*

Go down the grass track until you find a waymarker just before a gate in front (51). Turn right as indicated by the waymark and proceed downhill through the trees and across the next track (look for yellow waymarks to help you). Cross next two stiles (52/53) then head across bottom edge of field to cross the stile in the corner (54). Go straight down the lane and turn right onto the B4368 Craven Arms-Clunton road

(55). Walk along road 1/4 mile back to Clunton passing the chapel on the left before you find the Crown Inn. Across the main road from the Inn is the starting point. (1)

Walk 3 Distance 4 1/4 miles

Follow instructions for walk 2 up to point (42). NOTE- if you do not relish the steep descent from point (39) and the climb back from point (56) go as far as the viewpoint in the middle of the field and then re-trace your steps to point (36) and join route 3 instructions (return stage) from there.

At point (42) turn left and continue along the road bearing to the left and turn down the first left junction through gate (56). Proceed along track to waymark post on the right (57), bear right as indicated by waymark straight up bank following the direction of the deep furrows and through trees to the stile at the top (58). Over the stile and cross the forest gravel track to walk straight up forest track in front. Stay on this track around Clitterpit Hollow until you reach a 'cross roads' of forest tracks (59). Turn left along track and after about quarter of a mile turn right onto the waymarked path through the trees. Follow the waymarks to stile (60) at the forest clearing. Go diagonally left across clearing and over a stile you crossed earlier (37) through trees and out into field over fence (36).

Make your way down the right hedge to the stile in bottom right corner (35) but do not cross the stile. Turn left along bottom edge of field to cross the stile in opposite corner (61). Head straight down the field and over stile in bottom right corner (62). Turn left down field and cross stile in front (63) then down left edge of following field to next stile (64). After crossing stile head straight down track in front until you reach a gate/stile at the bottom (54) and rejoin instructions for Walk 2.

Walk 4 Distance 5 1/4 miles (extension to walk 3)

Take the route of walk 3 to point (42) then turn left and walk all the way along the footpath past Lodge Farm. Immediately after Lodge Farm, fork left onto the grassy path in front a row of cottages and follow the path through Walcot Wood. Follow the waymarked path to climb out of the wood and rejoin the farm track. Continue along the track past Stanley Cottage to join walk 1 from point (27).

Please Remember the Country Code

- ❖ Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- ❖ Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.
- ❖ Keep to public paths across farmland.
- ❖ Help to keep water clean and protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- ❖ Leave gates as you find them.
- ❖ Take special care on country roads.
- ❖ Keep dogs under close control.
- ❖ Use gates and stiles to cross fences
- ❖ Do not make unnecessary noise.
- ❖ Guard against all risks of fire.

Farming in this area is mainly beef and lamb production with herds of cattle and flocks of sheep on the hillsides. There is arable land, partly to support the livestock farming. Peas and beans are grown as manure crops to fix nitrogen.

Bulls loose in fields with cows are NOT dangerous. Cows with calves can be, especially if you have a dog with you. Give them plenty of space and if the cows try to chase the dog, let the dog go.

Remember to wear suitable clothing and footwear, especially in wet weather. The climate can change quickly in the hills!

Other Places to Walk in the Area

Clun

Quaint old village with picturesque bridge, Norman Church, 12c, castle remains, craft shop, post office, shops, tea shop, walks, museum and information point.

Bishop's Castle

Ancient town with interesting buildings (eg House on Crutches - museum), tourist information point, shops, tea/coffee shops, railway museum, small brewery, swimming pool, Walking for Pleasure routes.

Clunbury

Interesting hamlet with Norman church. Nearby Twitchen is where 3000 year old Clun-Clee Ridgeway, an old drovers road, passed.

Bury Ditches

Iron Age hill fort, forest walk and picnic facilities.

Hopton Castle

13th century castle remains and forestry mountain bike trail.

Stokesay Castle

Excellent example of 13th Century fortified manor house (English Heritage).

Clunton Coppice

Shropshire Wildlife Trust managed woodland.
Colstey Wood Forestry bicycle trails and walks.

Walcot Hall

Once home of Lord Clive of India. Parkland open to public on various days - check with information centre.

The Walks in this Leaflet

This set of three walks concentrates on the area to the north of Clunton, all three requiring varying amounts of uphill climbing, (allow extra time for this if necessary). The greater uphill effort definitely pays for itself with the reward of outstanding views across South Shropshire and the Welsh Borderlands.

Walk 1

Is split into three levels of distance and elevation with 1a being the easiest to The Stepple and back and 1c the longest/highest but offering the best views and the opportunity to walk through Bury Ditches Iron Age Hill Fort.

Walk 2

Does not climb as high as walk 1c but still offers superb views across Shropshire from Clunton Hill. After leaving the Merryhill forestry plantation you are rewarded with clear views of the Stiperstones, Long Mynd, Stretton Hills and the Clee Hills - a walk well worth taking.

Walk 3

Also takes you to the same views as offered by walk 2 but takes you further into the woodland and brings you back to Clunton by an alternative route. Finally a suggestion for adding a further 1 1/4 miles to route 3 is made which effectively gives a 4th route, for those with the enthusiasm, linking walks 1 and 3. You can of course combine sections from any of the routes to make your own walks - there is plenty of potential!!

From all of these walks you see views across the valley to Sowdley Wood and Clunton Coppice which are featured in Walking for Pleasure around Clunton 2.

The Clunton Area

Clunton is a quiet little hamlet nestling in the Clun Valley only two miles from the village of Clun itself - forever remembered in the poems of Housman.

Clunton could easily be missed as you pass through on your way to Craven Arms or Clun but for the fact it serves as an important crossroads for those in pursuit of history and nature.

To the north of Clunton lies the well preserved and impressive Iron Age hill fort of Bury Ditches hidden high amongst the trees of Sunnyhill (managed by the Forestry Commission). There are several forest walks around the site, one of which takes you through the middle of the fort allowing you access to a splendid panoramic diagram. The forest walks are waymarked from the car park (at the top of the Bury Ditches road).

South of the hamlet beyond the River Clun lies the important natural history asset of Clunton Coppice protected and managed by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The wood contains hazel, holly, birch and yew but is dominated by sessile oak - rather different from the usual conifer woods in the area - this encourages more interesting flora and fauna.

Clunton Coppice is an all-season wood, dominated by sessile oak, a legacy of its past management for coppicing for charcoal. In the late spring it is particularly attractive with the song of returning woodland migrants such as wood warbler and pied flycatcher, the drumming of woodpeckers and the mewing call of buzzards overhead.