

## **The Knighton town trail**

### *Discover secret Knighton (2 ½ miles)*

Start at the Offa's Dyke Centre (**marked (1) on the map**) in West Street (LD7 1EN) where there is ample car parking. The centre opened in 1999 and is run by the Offa's Dyke Association as a centre for information about the Offa's Dyke National Path which runs along the Dyke from Chepstow in the south to Prestatyn in the north. The centre is also Knighton's Tourist Information Centre, and sells maps, walking guides, and books about the area.

Start by taking the path behind the centre across the playing field and bearing left, to find the Stone **(2)** which commemorates the opening of the National Path in 1971 by Lord Hunt.

Return to the Centre and cross West Street into Norton Street and climb to the top. Here is the old Market Square, the centre of the town in medieval times and site of the old Butter Market and Market Hall **(3)**. There are many old cottages around the square, and across the square between Drovers Cottage and Hamars Cottage you can see the Castle Bank **(4)**, site of one of Knighton's Norman castles, which is now a private garden.

Opposite the top of Norton Street the square leads into Castle Road, then turn left down the High Street, known as "The Narrows". The houses are mostly 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although very narrow, this was the main road through the town until 1931 when West St was widened. The Clock Tower **(5)** built in 1873 is visible at the bottom.

Turn left into Russell St near the bottom of High St, to see Molly's Cottage which is 20 yards up on the left.

Return to the High St and go down to the Clock Tower.

The kebab house on the left is Chandos House, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Duke of Chandos, and part demolished in 1931 to widen West Street. Opposite is the Old House, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, cruck built with a later frontage.

Leading down from the Clock Tower is Broad Street, now the main shopping area with a range of general and specialist shops and several cafes. On the right the George and Dragon dates from 1637, and the bar is panelled with wood from the old parish church.

Walk down Broad St to Brookside Square **(6)** at the bottom of the hill. This was once the Bull Ring. Wylcwm Brook flows under the road here, and the War Memorial is on the left. Opposite is the Knighton Hotel, previously known as the Norton Arms and the Assembly Rooms. Beyond the square Bridge Street carries on up the hill: there are several old large houses- Whitehall and the Swan on the left, and the Great House on the right, opposite the incomparable Harry Tuffin's supermarket.

Turn left from Brookside Sq into Station Road and left again in front of the Horse and Jockey into Wylcwm Street. At the top on the right is Rutter's Warehouse an old wool

warehouse. Turn right into Church Street and you will see St Edward's Church (7)- one of only two dedicated to this Saint.

Parts of the church date from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but it was rebuilt in 1876. Opposite are the Green Price almshouses, built in 1900.

Turn right at the church into Church Road. At the bottom on the left is Ystrad House, an excellent example of 18<sup>th</sup> century building. Turn left here to visit the station (8). The Central Wales Railway Company brought trains to Knighton in 1861 and this was a big boost to the town's economy. Livestock could be moved straight from the town's markets into England, supplies brought back, and local people could visit the town to shop much more easily.

Return to Ystrad House and turn left into Bowling Green Lane. Today's livestock market is on your right, and the fine Community Centre in front of you. Walk straight ahead (past the public toilets) and follow the path to the left and uphill to reach the site of Knighton's other Norman castle, Bryn y Castell (9). The castle mound has a good position overlooking the river Teme and along the Teme valley into England.

Historians do not agree which of the castles is the older. The Domesday Book records that Knighton was held by Hugh the Donkey in 1086. Castle Bank castle was destroyed by Llewellyn ap Gruffydd in 1262.

Return to the Community Centre car park and bear left to the end of Bowling Green Lane by Harry Tuffins. Turn right down Bridge Street, passing the Great House (10) on your left, and back to Brookside Square. Turn left into Larkey Lane.

The car park behind the Knighton Hotel (11) used to be the sheep market, and the building behind it the old cinema. At the far end find a foot bridge over the Wylcwm Brook and follow the path beside the brook and into George Road. This part of town is known as "The Cwm". There are some lovely old cottages, including on your right "The Town Crier's House" (12)- who does indeed still live there.

Continue along George Road until you reach Cross Cottage and turn sharply right up a path with handrails, then bearing left into Plough Road.

Castle Bank is now to your right but not much can be seen from this side. By the fire station turn left into Market Street.

Turn right into Offa's Road to return to Offa's Dyke Centre and your car, or take a detour to see a part of Offa's Dyke (13).

From Market Street bear left into Penybont Road, passing immediately the Old Fire Station and The Laurels. In about 20 yards a footpath is on your left, follow this along the backs of the new houses for about 40 yards. By a metal tripod mast, step onto the bank and look over the hedge, where a very well preserved section of the Dyke is clearly visible. The ditch is on the Welsh side, from which you are looking.

As you return down Offa's Rd the bank on your right is another but less easily recognised part of the Dyke.

You might now deserve refreshment in one of the cafes in Broad Street!

