

The best way to see the Shropshire Hills is by bike! Cycle from the Secret Hills Centre in Craven Arms and in five minutes you are in the heart of the Shropshire Countryside. Discover for yourself superb views, hidden valleys, ancient castles, quiet woods and sleepy villages.

1 The Hopesay Hop – 14 MILES, allow 2½ HOURS. Hilly to start then easy cycling.

2 Bury Ditches Dynamo – 27 MILES, allow at least 4 HOURS. Hilly but easily achievable in a day. Partly off road on forest tracks. Not suitable for racing bikes.

3 Bishop's Castle Cracker – 30 MILES, allow 5 hours. Detour missing out forest tracks at Bury Ditches.

REFRESHMENTS



Clun, Bishop's Castle and Craven Arms have plenty of facilities for refreshments. The Bird on the Rock tea room at Abcott serves teas & light lunches.

WHERE TO START

All three routes start from the Secret Hills Centre in Craven Arms. The town is on the main line railway service connecting to Shrewsbury and Ludlow (see *Travel Information*).

Use the map and the numbered route descriptions to help you find your way. Stop occasionally to read the text in yellow boxes as it describes the special features of the Secret Hills.

Right, are you ready to go? Then read on...

START Your experience starts at the Secret Hills Centre, turn right out of the car park and


- 1** take the second left along Newton Street to the Corvedale Road. Turn right cycling out of Craven Arms on the Corvedale road (B4368). Cross the River Onny and take the first left to the village of Halford.
- 2** Continue past Halford church and fork left at the old 'School House', down a stony track and turn left through the 'kissing gate' into the watermeadows of the River Onny. Follow the path through to the next 'kissing gate' and cross the River Onny on a metal footbridge. Cycle up to the junction with the A49.
- 3** Cross straight over at the A49 (Take care) signposted for Long Lane Industrial Estate.
- 4** Go over the level crossing, past the industrial estate & straight on up a steep climb for just under 2 miles to the top at Wart Hill.




Wart Hill – site of an Iron Age Hillfort. At 324m the fort has excellent views of the surrounding hills and is the focal point of 'The Wart Hill Wander', a Secret Hills Walk.

- 5** Continue downhill to the hamlet of Round Oak (no sign, just a few houses).

The Hopesay Hop Route 1


Total 14 miles (22km). The shorter route turns left at Round Oak signposted for The Fish & Hopesay. From Hopesay, carry on down the valley to Aston on Clun. Turn right on the B4368, after ¼ mile take the first left. Follow the River Clun upstream along a narrow lane via Clunbury to join the main cycle route at the junction of the B4385, turning left continue to Twitchen. (Go to Point 20)

Hopesay –  A quiet village in a hidden valley. The church of St Mary's (built 1192) has a fine Norman doorway. Part of the churchyard is a Wildlife Meadow and picnic area.

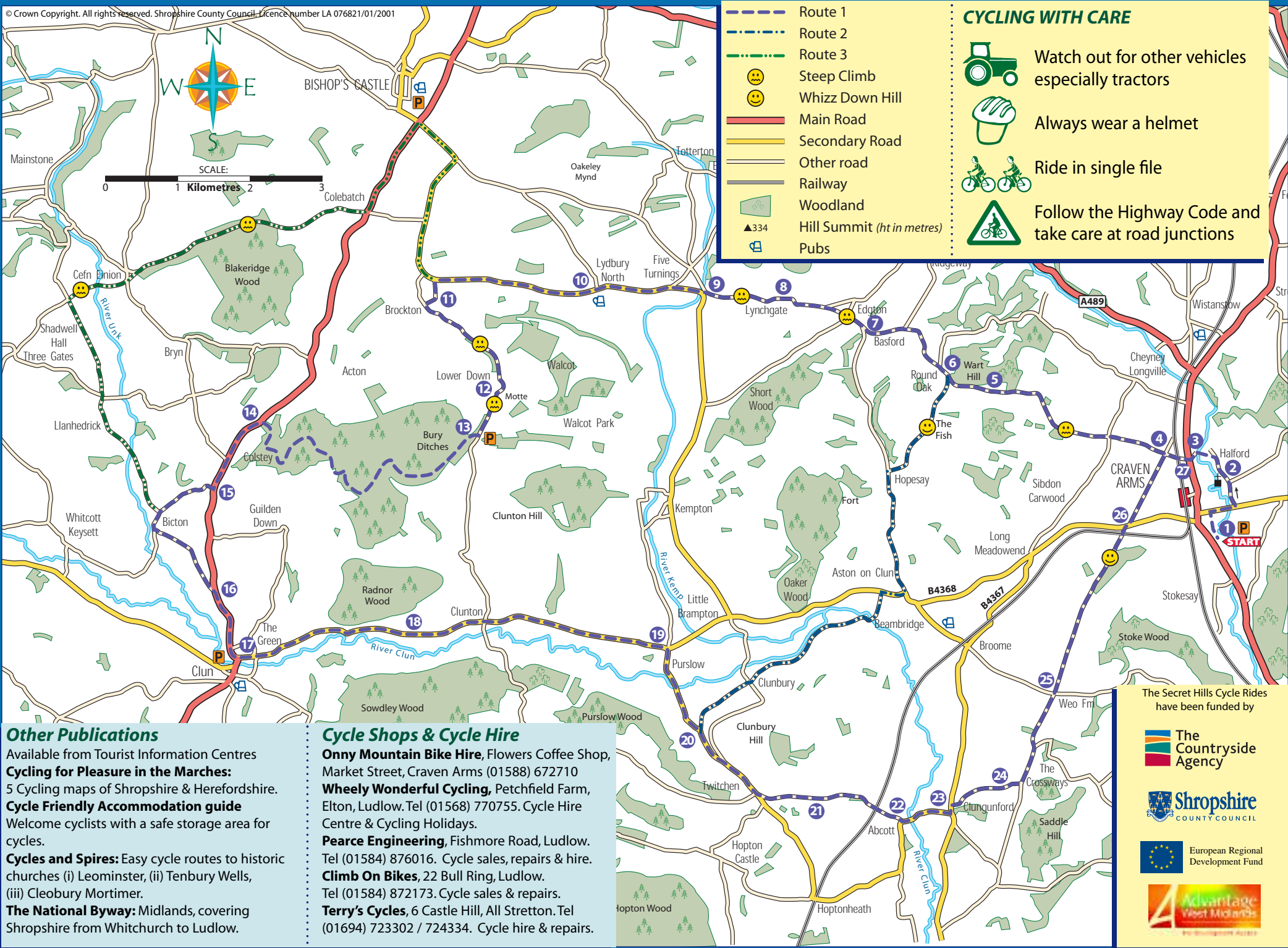
Aston on Clun –    Every May the villagers decorate their rare Black Poplar 'Arbor Tree' to commemorate a local 17th century wedding. But the custom may originally go back much further, to honour a Celtic goddess. This is the last tree dressing ceremony in England.

- 6** To continue on Route 2 and 3 go straight on through Round Oak, past the telephone box and up a short hill (wonderful views of the Long Mynd & Clee Hills). Down a very steep hill (take care) to Basford and then up again towards Edgton.

At the top of the hill you will find an old Milestone, left over from the days when this narrow road would have been an important link between Bishop's Castle and Craven Arms.

Edgton –  You can make a diversion here to the lovely hill top village of Edgton. A Pottery in the Old Schoolhouse (next to the church) is open daily 10–5pm. The village well is covered in a willow arch and is 'dressed' each year.

- 7** Cycle past the milestone & Edgton Village Hall. Go straight on at the next junction, signposted for Lydbury North.
- 8** A very grand vicarage is on your left hand side as you go up one last hill. Lydbury North can be seen straight ahead, the church is exactly in the centre of your view. Downhill now (past Lynchgate) all the way to the valley bottom and the junction with the B4385.
- 9** Turn right on the main road towards Lydbury North.



- Route 1
- Route 2
- Route 3
- Steep Climb
- Whizz Down Hill
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Other road
- Railway
- Woodland
- Hill Summit (ht in metres)
- Pubs

CYCLING WITH CARE

- Watch out for other vehicles especially tractors
- Always wear a helmet
- Ride in single file
- Follow the Highway Code and take care at road junctions

Other Publications

Available from Tourist Information Centres
Cycling for Pleasure in the Marches:
 5 Cycling maps of Shropshire & Herefordshire.
Cycle Friendly Accommodation guide
 Welcome cyclists with a safe storage area for cycles.
Cycles and Spires: Easy cycle routes to historic churches (i) Leominster, (ii) Tenbury Wells, (iii) Cleobury Mortimer.
The National Byway: Midlands, covering Shropshire from Whitchurch to Ludlow.

Cycle Shops & Cycle Hire

Onny Mountain Bike Hire, Flowers Coffee Shop, Market Street, Craven Arms (01588) 672710
Whely Wonderful Cycling, Petchfield Farm, Elton, Ludlow. Tel (01568) 770755. Cycle Hire Centre & Cycling Holidays.
Pearce Engineering, Fishmore Road, Ludlow. Tel (01584) 876016. Cycle sales, repairs & hire.
Climb On Bikes, 22 Bull Ring, Ludlow. Tel (01584) 872173. Cycle sales & repairs.
Terry's Cycles, 6 Castle Hill, All Stretton. Tel (01694) 723302 / 724334. Cycle hire & repairs.

The Secret Hills Cycle Rides have been funded by

- The Countryside Agency
- Shropshire COUNTY COUNCIL
- European Regional Development Fund
- Advantage West Midlands

Further Information

SECRET HILLS, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Ludlow Road, Craven Arms SY7 9RS, Tel: (01588) 676040.

Discover the wonders of the Shropshire Hills from the splendour of the scenery to the complexity of their history and heritage.

Tourist Information Centres in the area

LUDLOW – Castle Street, Ludlow SY8 1AS Open all year, accommodation booking service. Tel: (01584) 875053

SHREWSBURY – The Music Hall, The Square, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LH open all year, accommodation booking service. Tel: (01743) 350761 E-mail: tic@shrewsburytourism.co.uk

CHURCH STRETTON – The Library, Church Street, Church Stretton (Closes in winter). Tel: (01694) 723133

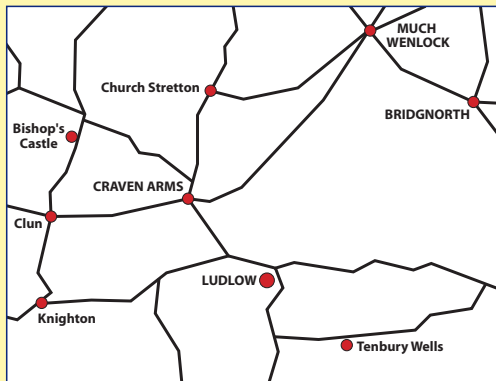
KNIGHTON – Offa's Dyke Heritage Centre, West Street, Knighton. Tel: (01547) 528753

BISHOP'S CASTLE – 29 High Street, Bishop's Castle Tel: (01588) 638476

Travel Information

Mainline Railway stations are at Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Craven Arms and Ludlow. Trains carry 2 bikes per train (Reservations are essential). For information on all bus, coach and train services in the Shropshire area call:

0870 608 2608



The Ordnance Survey map covering this area is: Landranger 137 – Ludlow, Wenlock Edge and Surrounding Area

Lydbury North – 🚰 🗺️ 🚶 🚲 🚗

The village is dominated by the large estate of Walcot Hall. A Georgian House with Arboretum, once occupied by Clive of India. Open May & June (limited days). The Norman parish church has a massively buttressed clock tower with a unique carved bell frame, holding a peal of 6 bells.

- 10 Cycle through Lydbury North and after 1½ miles turn left signposted to Brockton and Bury Ditches Hillfort.

Bishop's Castle Cracker – Route 3

Total 30 miles (46 km). You can extend the route to Bishop's Castle, by missing out the forest tracks (and very steep hill) at Bury Ditches. Don't turn left to Brockton but continue on the main road to Bishop's Castle. From Bishop's Castle take the A488 to Colebatch and turn right to Cefn Einion, Shadwell, Llanhedrick, Bicton and Clun. (Go to point 16)

Bishop's Castle –

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- 11 To continue on Route 2, the Bury Ditches Dynamo, go through Brockton, past the Highland Seeds buildings and then up a very steep hill to (would you believe) Lower Down.
- 12 Another very steep hill (you might have to get off & push here) to Bury Ditches car park.

Bury Ditches – 🚰 🗺️ A spectacular Iron Age Hillfort. Cycling is not allowed on the Hillfort, but a short walk from the car park takes you to the summit with excellent views over the whole area.

- 13 Continue through the car park taking the main forest road past the wooden barrier, to follow a signed cycle trail through the forest to the Colstey Woods entrance on the A488. Easy level cycling on graded forest roads (take care if tree felling is being carried out).
- 14 At the main road (A488) turn left uphill (only a short bit) and then downhill for ½ mile. Turn right at Harp (house on the corner) signposted for Bicton.
- 15 Cycle past a small lake and downhill to Bicton. At the valley bottom keep left, signposted for Clun. Your first views of Clun Castle are straight ahead.
- 16 At the T junction with the main road, turn right and continue onto Clun.


Clun – 🚰 🗺️ 🚶 🚲 🚗 🚰 🗺️ 🚶 🚲 🚗

One of the 'Quietest places under the Sun' according to the poet AE Housman. An unspoilt village dominated by its Norman castle. The ancient packhorse bridge is a reminder of Clun's importance as an old droving route. A good place for a lunch stop with three inns and three tea shops!

- 17 Cycle out of Clun on the B4368, past The Sun Inn towards Craven Arms.
- 18 Follow the Clun valley through Clunton to Purslow.

Clunton – 🗺️ The Crown Inn. Another of those 'quietest places' in the beautiful Clun Valley. The Crown Inn is a rarity, it's a community owned village inn. A consortium of local people banded together to buy it when it was threatened with closure.

- 19 At Purslow and the Hundred House Inn turn right signposted for Leintwardine on the B4385 and continue across the River Clun.

Purslow –  Hundred House Inn. The oddly named pub is a reference to the old taxation boundary.

20 At the hamlet of Twitchen turn left at the small crossroads signposted for Abcott. You can make a short diversion here to visit Hopton Castle (see map).

Hopton Castle – Built in the 14th century on the site of an earlier castle. It was the scene of a very bloody siege in the Civil War, when all the occupants were massacred & thrown into the ditch nearby. The nearby Hopton Wood is excellent for mountainbiking, with over 15 miles of specially developed off road paths.

21 Cycle up a short hill, then a good roll downhill to the main road at Abcott and the very welcome sight of 'The Bird on the Rock' tea-room (open Wed to Sun 10-5pm).

22 Turn left at the main road (B4367) towards Clungunford.

Clungunford – 13th century church on a Saxon site. Next to the church is the remains of a 'Motte' and bailey fort probably used to defend the bridge crossing the River Clun.

23 Cycle past the church and into the village. Take the sharp left hand bend then turn right up School Lane.

24 Up a short hill to the T junction at Crossways (two white cottages). Turn left to follow the line of the old Roman road towards Craven Arms.

Roman road – part of the Roman *Watling Street West* which links Caerleon with Chester. Local places linked were the roman garrison town of Bravonium (now called Leintwardine) and Viroconium (Wroxeter) near Shrewsbury.

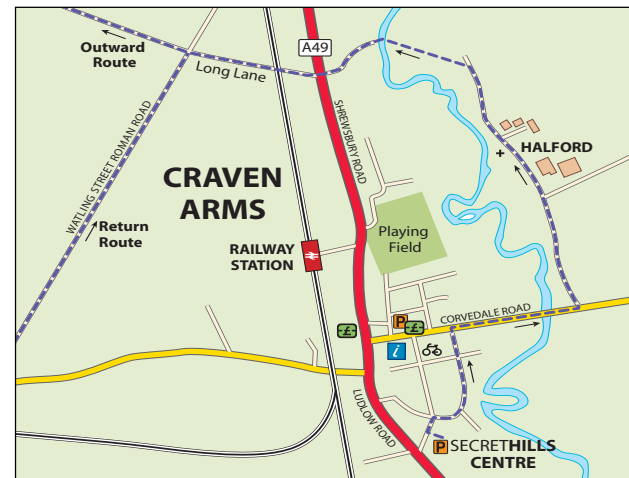
25 Carry straight on along this road and down a long steep hill (**take care**). Cycle under the railway bridge to the junction of the main road (B4368).

26 Turn right and then immediately left (just before the Craven Arms sign). Carry on along this narrow lane and turn right at the crossroads (next to Long Lane Industrial Estate). You are now back on the outgoing cycle route. Go over the level crossing to the junction with the A49.



















27 Cross the A49 (**take care**) and cycle back through the watermeadows to Halford and Craven Arms.

Well done, we hope you enjoyed this cycle route. Look out for the other Secret Hills Cycle Rides leaflets to Church Stretton, available from the Secret Hills Centre.

CRAVEN ARMS TOWN MAP and symbols used in the text



----- Cycle route in/out of town

	Café		Pub/Inn		Restaurant
	Toilet		Tourist Information		Shops
	Post Office		Bank/Cash Point		Museum
	Crafts/Pottery		Gardens		Monument
	Picnic Area		Rail Station		Car Park
	Petrol		Accommodation		Cycle Hire



**Craven Arms to Clun,
Bishop's Castle & Bury Ditches**