



Clun

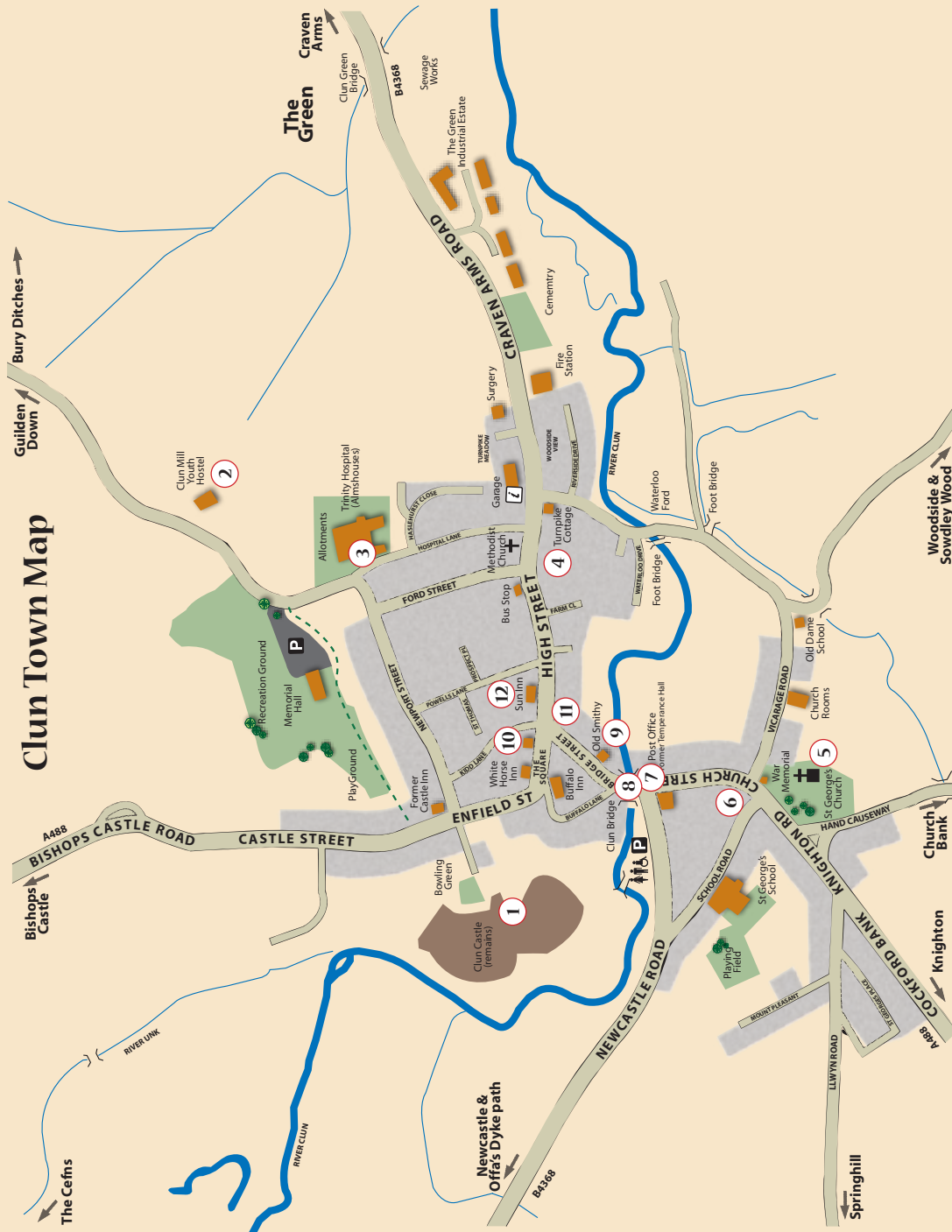
Heritage Trail

Enjoy our heritage trail, a journey by foot
through the ages of Clun.



All proceeds to Clun Town Trust - Museum

Clun Town Map



Welcome to Clun

Clun is a very ancient town. The Saxon community was a hamlet on the south side of the river built round the church. Clun was listed in the Domesday Book and was obviously a place of some prosperity even at that time. The Normans planned their new town north of the river, beside their castle and the grid pattern of their streets still survives. Clun was granted its town charter in the fourteenth century. Clun lies in a recognised Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has a protected landscape.

From mediaeval times until the mid-20th century Clun was a bustling and lively centre boasting countless shops and pubs as well as its famous livestock markets. It was the market town serving a wide area stretching right up into the Welsh hills. The advent of motorised transport made it easier to access larger and more diverse market places and changes in social conditions led to a gradual decline of Clun the business town. We are now left with a quiet and rural village with town trappings and a population of around 750 as opposed to the year 1851 when the population peaked at about 1200.

Residents of Clun insist that we live in a town, not a village, and can get very defensive about it. We do have a town hall of course. Case proven m'lud.

This trail guide shows our visitors some of the more interesting corners of Clun and starts from the Castle. It should take about 1½ hours if you follow whole route.

To help identify some of the most important places there are plaques on most of the buildings with a number corresponding to their position on the town map on the facing page. 1 Number 1 is of course the castle, but like the bridge number 8, is so obvious as to not require a number on site.

For further and more detailed information about Clun visit the website. www.clun.org.uk



The Green Man Festival



Clun Castle



From the Castle take the footpath near the bowling green and follow the track (50 yds) to the tarmac, which is Enfield Street.

Almost directly opposite is the former pub, the Castle Inn, now Castle House. As a pub it had a 'Penny Reading Room' and Assembly Rooms for dances.

Turn left and 50 yds on turn right through the barriers on the footpath leading to the Memorial Hall. Pass the children's play area, turning left at the end of the car park and walk down to the Youth Hostel, about 200yds. on the right. Number 2 on the plan.



This is the site and original buildings of the old water mill, which was powered by a lake, which covered the whole of the current Memorial hall site, its playing fields and car park over which you have just walked. The hostel has gone through many changes in its accommodation provision but the most recent update has enabled the original mill machinery to be exposed and this can be viewed at any time the hostel is open, providing due respect is given to the privacy of the users of the hostel. We are grateful for this decision by the YHA as the only other

complete workings of this nature are in a museum in the far reaches of the North and are therefore quite unique.

Retrace your steps past the car park and take the left hand fork off the road as far as the entrance to Trinity Hospital, number 3 on your town guide.

Above, the original mill machinery
Below, the Old Mill now a Youth Hostel



Enter through the iron gates on the left hand side of the road and directly in front of you is the sculpture of Joe the Bear, based on a photo of a resident of Trinity and one of his compatriots dressed in the uniform of the day, a livery gown of blue emblazoned with a red and silver badge wearing his top hat for Sundays. The sculpture created by Gemma Pearson, a local artist. Built in 1614 by the Earl of Northampton who was a trusted servant of James I and brother of the Duke of Norfolk who owned Clun Castle, Trinity Hospital was intended to provide charitable accommodation for twelve men of good character. Fortunately the rules were changed some years ago to allow married couples to occupy some of the larger cottages. Visitors may walk to the quadrangle archway and admire the quiet atmosphere but please have consideration for the residents. The Chapel is always open and there is a Communion Service held there on Tuesdays at 10.00am.

Turn left out of the main gates and proceed to the T-junction at the bottom

The Visitor Information Point is located in Clun Garage. To your right you will see two important buildings. Although not especially grand and certainly not old these are the first six houses built as shared equity homes, part owned part rented and an attempt at making houses in Clun affordable to our young folk. Next door to them you will see the Victorian houses known as Jubilee House with the Meredith's Temperance Hotel on the gable end. This is number 4 on your map. It was built in 1870 by Edward Vaughan who was the main carrier, horse and cart of course, in the Clun Valley



Above and below, Trinity Hospital



Sculpture of Joe the Bear and one of his compatriots, Billie Cantie.





Waterloo

and would meet travellers, mainly salesmen, at Broome railway station. He saw an opportunity to provide temperance accommodation, very popular at the time, dare I say with salesmen's wives, and the house is named after his daughter who carried on the business after he died. It is rumoured that he owned the first horseless carriage in the Clun valley but I suspect that this was a well-kept secret at the time.

Immediately in front of you as you leave Hospital Lane and directly opposite the Methodist Chapel is Turnpike Cottage, originally the tollhouse for the old turnpike road to Craven Arms, the stone tiles on the roof are of interest, smaller at the top and larger at the bottom.



Temperance Hall sign above the post office

Take the road to the left of Turnpike Cottage down to Waterloo, called Waterlow on some old maps

Cross the river by the footbridge and, please, if you have the company of dogs keep them on a lead, as there are often very tame ducks at this point. The road then goes up a short hill at the top of which can be seen traces of an arched window in a cottage, which used to be a 'Dame School' a small private school now a private house. Take the right hand fork in the road down to the lychgate of Clun church, number 5 on your guide. Before arriving at the church you will pass the former vicarage, now a private dwelling, built in 1700.

Our church has a fascinating history all of its own and a leaflet is available in the church and gives many details not included here. Briefly it has a tower of which the lower part is Norman and probably intended for defence. The upper part, of a typically Welsh Marches design, is 17th Century. There is a ring of ten bells – one of only four in the Hereford diocese. The churchyard is raised and



Clun Church

circular, an ancient Welsh and Irish traditional form for sacred sites. Christian churches on such sites have often been continuously used for religious purposes since Celtic times and the ancient yew to the NE of the church supports this as its girth of 33ft suggests an age exceeding 2000 years - Clun's oldest living inhabitant.

A tragic memorial on a tomb SE of the yew records seven brothers and sisters, aged 4 to 24, carried off in 1811 within the short space of 3 weeks by a 'putrid fever'. More unusual inscriptions can be seen on the stones commemorating John Osborne the playwright and his wife Helen. They can be found just to the W of the church. The Osborne's home at the Hurst, just outside Clun, is now a centre for writers run by a charitable trust.



The grave of John Osborne

Leave the lychgate and war memorial behind you and walk down Church St towards the river.

Church St is lined with some of the oldest houses in Clun and used to house four or even five pubs as well as a number of craft workshops, which were necessary in a town of this importance.

No 8 Church St was a tailors shop as far back as 1851 at least. Number 10 Church St. (number 6 on your map) was for many years a boot maker and cobblers workshop. The 1800's was a time when almost every street in Clun boasted a craftsman or two. Seven cobblers are listed in the census of 1851, not all in Church St but number 10 is well documented because bills were found in 1988 which credited a widow named Ann Clements starting work on her workshop in 1865 with two thousand five hundred bricks, no doubt transported by Mr Vaughan, costing £4.15s.0d and seven hundred slates £2.3s.9d. There is a great deal of detail about the building works at number 10 Church St on the



View from the lychgate down Church Street

Clun website and it makes fascinating reading, particularly as this lady seems to have been a female entrepreneur well before equal opportunities arrived. Ann's investment provided a home and workshop for boot and shoemakers until at least the 1940s and is remembered by the name Cobblers Cottage to this day. A similar commemorative name can be seen with Drapers Cottage a little further down the street. The car park at the end of the street was once the farm, which housed the thirty or so horses used by Mr Vaughan of Jubilee House in his transport business. He rented a lot of land around the castle on which he grew his fodder. You can see the wooden bridge, which crosses the Clun at the car park to the castle grounds. This was built with a generous donation from Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Number 7 on your map is the Post Office and tea rooms which used to be the Temperance Hall and was built in 1870 to provide a meeting place and social centre for the Clun Temperance Society. The building itself set a trend and the coloured and patterned brick design was copied in the Market Square and Ford St and was considered very ambitious at the time. The original sixteen trustees of the Temperance Society had to sign and promise that the rooms would never sell intoxicating liquor and would be used as lecture, coffee and refreshment rooms and public meetings in furtherance of the cause of Temperance. This is still, almost, all true and this booklet and the car park signs were all invented and discussed using the facility provided by the tearooms.

Number 8 on your plan is Clun bridge. Probably the top of the 'have seen list' the bridge was built as a mediaeval packhorse crossing but has the modern misfortune of being on an A road. The arches and all below road level are mostly original but the parapet has been knocked so often that much of it has been

replaced, all strictly in accordance with the original design. It is easy to spot brown trout from the bridge and a careful observer can, with patience, spot a king fisher or a dipper. If you spot our elusive otter, here or anywhere else for that matter, please tell someone local. Alder trees that grow along the riverbank were a source of wood for the many clog makers who lived in Clun and who sent their wooden 'patterns' to be 'finished' elsewhere and sold on mainly to the mills of Lancashire until at least the mid 1940s. One is the wisser for crossing Clun Bridge.

Cross the bridge and just round the corner on the right is number 3 Bridge St, now a private house and number 9 on your route. This was the home of Clun's last traditional working blacksmith who retired in the 1950s. He was the fourth recorded blacksmith to have operated from here and the premises were used since before 1778 as a tanyard, known in later years as Clun's Oak Bark Tannery. Whilst the evidence of the blacksmith workshop is still visible they are part of the private dwelling. It is not quite the case that the blacksmith's art is not practised in Clun today as an ironworker and a leather worker, both living locally, have joined forces in a retail enterprise in the Square at Clun. There is no historical connection between no 3 Bridge St and these two craftsmen except for their trade, although I doubt whether the decorative nature of the iron work and leather craft done now would be easily copied by the tanners of 1778 or the blacksmith more used to shires than signs.

Instead of following the sweep of the road around No 3 take the road known as Buffalo Lane, which comes directly off the bridge. It is steep but quite short and leads into the town square.

On your left as you enter the square is the local supermarket which is easily recognised as a former



Clun Bridge

The Post Office and tea rooms



Messrs Fothergill and Hatt





Buffalo Lane

bank. The Buffalo Head is an ancient hostelry which tradition claims was the home of Sir Walter Scott whilst he wrote 'The Betrothed', inspired by Clun Castle. The town pump once stood outside the White Horse Inn and Caractacus was once a bakery, the oven lids of which are in the Sun Inn restaurant. Markets used to be held in the square on Tuesdays and many of the houses were shops. The stocks once stood outside the town Museum and this is number 10 on your route.

Edward Clive originally built Clun museum as a town hall with all the usual uses in 1780. He was the son of the famous Robert, Clive of India. It has been used as a courthouse and a gaol but was converted to a museum some 70 years ago. The museum was opened officially on 2nd September 1932 with a display of over 1000 items including 4000-year-old flints and tools dating back to the Bronze Age, all collected around Clun. The museum now shows exhibits which cover the ages of Clun life to the present day and it is worth taking a copy of the life and times of Bill Lock, a fact sheet which we believe gives a valuable insight into Clun life over the last 100 years.

Over the road from the museum on the crossroad and behind the railings is Creswell House Number 11 on your guide. This important house was the home of the vicar of Newcastle on Clun, Henry Creswell, for fifty years [1855-1906] whilst the house was owned by the Earl of Powys. Prior to that it was the home of Clun's first surgeon, James Watkin Cullis throughout the 1840s. It is quite probable the Bothy, now a holiday cottage next door, was the first Clun surgery. Creswell House was the home of the celebrated cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather during 1941. He created the 'Old Bill' wartime cartoon character.

Take the High St toward the Sun Inn which is number 12 on your guide.

The old stables have long since been converted but there is still plenty of evidence of the antiquity of the 16th Century Inn with its wealth of beams and a genuine 'feel' of old Clun from its fireplace to its wattle and daub walls evident in the smaller dining room.

Just before the Sun is the old malthouse once used for storing hops and beer in the upstairs room. This is now occupied by a master wood carver who not only carved the dragons round the door of the tearoom but was also responsible for some of the restoration work for Windsor Castle and the carvings in the New Globe Theatre in London. Opposite, on the east side of the Ironmongers shop was the path leading to the old workhouse. By 1840 paupers were sent to Bishop's Castle and the only remaining evidence of Clun Workhouse is some wood panelling displayed in the museum. In the newsagents shop you can see the base of a 12th Century Cruck Beam, which is typical of the construction of many older Clun houses. St Catherine's a little further down the High St was the Dower House of the Hurst, a large residence just outside Clun. It became a Cottage Hospital and then a Maternity Unit until conversion to flats. Continue down the High St past the Old Surgery, gallery for many local artists and once a fish and chip shop, to Lower House on the left. Dated 1687 it has been the home of at least three generations of farmers whose family still produces food in the Clun valley, against the odds it has to be said. Continue down to the junction with Ford St and turn left. You will see Ship House on the corner which was once a pub named after an 18th century Man o' War called 'The Royal George' and always referred to locally as the ship. Follow the length of Ford St, passing the Thatch, the last thatched cottage in Clun, which was once a one up one down and is no longer thatched.



Bruce Bairnsfather creator of 'Old Bill' pictured below



At the T-junction with Newport St turn left and this will take you back to where you started.

We hope that you have enjoyed your journey round Clun. Please find time to explore the lovely countryside and heritage around the town and the other villages of the Clun Valley. We look forward to welcoming you back.

Bust of Bill Lock can be found in Clun Museum



Clun

Heritage Trail



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