

7-Night Explore Nature in the Shropshire Hills

Destinations: Shropshire Hills, United Kingdom & England
Trip code: CSWWS-7



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty encompasses a region of limestone escarpments, woodland and heather moorland – each with their own natural wonders. A walk along Wenlock Edge should reward with some real specialist species; spurge laurel and the rare wall brown butterfly. There is also an interesting colony of mining bees. In the woods there may be green woodpecker, nuthatch and marsh tit flitting about in the trees. Out in the open there's the chance to spot soaring red kites, red grouse, wheatear, stonechat, linnet and even a merlin – the UK's smallest bird of prey. In September, the heather on the Long Mynd will be in flower, creating a wonderful carpet of purple.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- High-quality Full Board en-suite accommodation and excellent food in our country house
- Guidance from a knowledgeable HF Holidays Leader, to ensure you get the most from your holiday
- All essential transport on a comfortable, good-quality mini-coach or other mode of transport, e.g. boat
- Entrance fees to venues included as part of your holiday's itinerary

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Leisurely walks with regular stops to watch wildlife
- Share enthusiasm and improve your wildlife ID skills
- Flexible itineraries will take into account prevailing weather conditions and any reported sightings

TRIP SUITABILITY

On our Natural World holidays we spend most of the day outdoors, exploring by mini-coach or on foot, walking up to 6 miles (9.5km) each day, stopping to enjoy the wildlife as we go.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

You can check in to your room from 2.30pm onwards (better rooms from 1pm). Please join us for afternoon tea. This is the first occasion when everyone in the country house meets together – an opportunity to meet your leader and fellow guests, and find out more about your holiday.

Day 2: The Stiperstones

The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve is noted for its gaunt quartzite rock formations reminiscent of the Devon tors. The contaminated soils of this former mining area do not re-vegetate readily and this favours the grayling butterfly for which the Bog car park, where we shall start our walk, is the best site in the area. The poor soils of the hill have a limited but interesting flora. We take an easy route through the heather to the tors where red grouse, wheatear, red kite and merlin top the bird list. On a fine day the views are dramatic and we finish our walk with some unusual mining bees. A splendid start to our holiday.

Day 3: Wenlock Edge

After a hearty breakfast, we head out to Wenlock Edge - a fine limestone escarpment facing north-west across Shropshire. The ridge is mainly wooded but for most of our walk from Much Wenlock to Presthope we shall be on the sunny edge of the wood and concentrating on limestone plants, such as spurge laurel, and butterflies – the rare wall brown is the star of these. Woodland birds are quiet in August but a small hide in the wood allows close views of such as marsh tit and nuthatch. The walk up to the wood from the car park provides an opportunity to see limestone grassland flowers like the dramatic woolly thistle.

Day 4: Rectory Wood And The Long Mynd

Armed with our tasty picnic lunches, we first walk through the Rectory Wood overlooking Church Stretton. Many fungi appear around the wonderful ancient trees of this historic wood, and last year we had excellent views of dragonflies around the old town reservoir. We then follow the path up the Townbrook Valley through the resplendent heather moorland to the top of the Long Mynd. On the way we'll find a variety of acid-loving plants, butterflies and dragonflies plus birds such as raven, red kite (now frequent in the area), green woodpecker, stonechat and linnet, all while enjoying yet more spectacular views of the Shropshire countryside.

Day 5: Ludlow – River Teme And Mortimer Forest

The River Teme is one of Britain's cleanest and a fine place to look for both dipper and kingfisher from the vantage point of Ludford Bridge – at least six kingfishers here in 2017! Before we leave the river we see the

grove of hornbeam trees famed among birdwatchers for its hawfinches in winter. We then follow the Mortimer Trail up to Mortimer Forest where in addition to the woodland birds we shall see a wide variety of fungi, some interesting plants and with a little luck silver-washed fritillary butterflies. A large bank of buddleia bushes is a great help!

Day 6: Clunton Coppice And Bury Ditches

Clunton Coppice is a hillside oakwood reserve above the River Clun, an important survivor of the charcoal industry. Woodland birds include marsh tit and stock dove, and the fungi can be dramatic. We then enter an area of open modern forest which proved excellent for butterflies in 2017 – and red kites! In the afternoon we cross the Clun Valley to Bury Ditches, a hill fort surrounded by one of the best butterfly sites in Shropshire; here we were successful in finding the rare wood white in 2017 along with a breath-taking display of other butterflies including wall brown. This is a wonderful way to round off our holiday!

Day 7: Departure Day

Depart after a leisurely breakfast

ACCOMMODATION

Longmynd House

Hidden in plain sight, there's a well-kept countryside secret in the heart of England that might just surprise you with its wonderful upland walking, trails, history and heritage. Discover the heart of Shropshire from striking Longmynd House, stood on a wooded hillside above Church Stretton, on the border of England and Wales. Wake early to watch the sunrise from your balcony; take a dip in the heated outdoor pool and gear up for a great day in the hills on walks full of rich variety. Stride out on the Long Mynd itself, a dramatic, isolated whaleback hill with an expanse of heather wilderness and deeply cut valleys, explore the Stiperstones and climb to the Iron Age fort on top of Caer Caradoc, or surround yourself with historic castles, market towns and trails of all kinds.

At The House

- Excellent boot and drying rooms
- Extensive public rooms
- Large dining room with outstanding views of Stretton Valley
- Lounge bar with outstanding views of Stretton Valley
- Central lounge
- Three additional rooms, can be used for other purposes
- Free WiFi is available in some public rooms and bedrooms
- Range of board games and books
- Patio
- Large heated swimming pool (open May to September)
- Woodland walks on the slopes beneath the hotel
- Sculpture trail

Dining

All holidays at our Country Houses are full board accommodation including evening meal on arrival to breakfast on the day of your departure. All of our Country Houses have a well-stocked bar serving local beers, wine and spirits.

- Start your day with our extensive breakfast.
- Take your fill from our famous self-service picnic lunches
- A relaxed social dinner is a highlight of any stay at our Country Houses

Your Evenings

Just relax and take it easy, or if you'd like to continue to chat with our guides and fellow guests then why not grab a drink or take part in one of our optional evening activities.

All of our bars are stocked with locally sourced drinks so you can really soak up your surroundings.

Additional Information

- Assistance dogs accompanying visually or hearing impaired guests are welcome; dogs must be kept on a lead or harness at all times.
- Fire evacuation notices are displayed in the bedrooms and throughout the hotel. Each room has its own smoke sensor and fire alarm. In the event of a fire a very loud continuous alarm sounds and emergency lighting comes on. We have portable Deaf guard fire alarm system for those who are hard of hearing. This consists of a vibrating pad to go under the pillow and a bright strobe light. The Deaf guard is triggered when main alarm is activated.
- In the case of evacuation there are fire exits in every function room, bar and restaurant as well as the main front entrance. On the first, second and third floors there are fire exits at either end of the corridors which open to an emergency fire escape stairwell.
- Please advise reception on check in if you think you would require assistance in the event of an emergency. Door hangers are available in the rooms which can be used to indicate a need for assistance. Fire extinguishers are found throughout the building, as are fire call points. If you discover a fire please call 9-999 from your room phone, raise the alarm and alert a member of our team.

Matchless Country House Accommodation

Accommodation Info

Rooms

Tea & coffee-making facilities, TV, Hairdryer, Toiletries, Wi-Fi

Stay in the smartly presented rooms in the main house or in one of 8 brick-built lodges in the grounds. With 54 rooms, Longmynd House has plenty of space and there's a range of Good and Better Rooms to choose from. Chose Room 16 for the four poster bed and separate sitting area, with green leafy views or Room 44 with its compact balcony and outdoor eating area overlooking the heather-clad rise on the far side of the valley. The lodges away from the house offer a little more privacy and their own terrace looking out over the gardens.

All 'Good' rooms are ensuite and furnished to a high standard. There are also several 'Better' Rooms that are either larger or have a desirable view, a more luxurious mattress, larger television, enhanced toiletries and a fluffy bathrobe & slippers – upgrade your stay for just an extra £15-20 per person per night. You can choose a specific room for an extra £30 per room, subject to availability. Upgrade supplements still apply.

Facilities

Free Wi-Fi, boot room and drying room, extensive garden, lounge, bar, ballroom, library and board games to borrow

After a day exploring the Shropshire Hills, return to the house. Stroll through the extensive grounds and discover the woodland sculpture trail that threads through the trees, looking out for 'deer' and 'bears'. Dip into the heated outdoor pool to swim below the trees. Head to the long lounge with its wall of glass giving on to the view outside, or for a more intimate space, sit at the smart bar with its crouching lions and attractive jug lamps or surrender to the leather sofas around the fireplace and enjoy a local pint of Shropshire Lad or Lass with a lively conversation among your fellow guests.

Food & Drink

As at all our country houses, holidays are full board, from afternoon tea served as a welcome treat through that evening's meal to a hearty breakfast on the day of departure. Lunch is a chance to stock up on our famous picnic snacks. Food at Longmynd House is varied and tasty and has a strong emphasis on ingredients from the area and seasonal produce. Once a week the bright dining room with its wrap around windows hosts a Local Food Night, when, over a sociable evening, you might try a five-course feast of regional flavours.

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865

TRAVEL DETAILS

Our address is: Longmynd House, Cunnery Road, Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6AG

By Train:

The nearest train station is Church Stretton, which is less than a mile from Longmynd House. However the house is at the top of a steep hill (it has great views!) so a taxi is recommended.

For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or phone 03457 48 49 50.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All taxi companies in Church Stretton are booked for school runs between 2pm and 4:30pm therefore the only available transfer from the station between these times is our set transfer - see details below.

HF Station Transfer - Great Value!

Our station transfer operates every Friday and Monday between Church Stretton station and Longmynd House. **The pickups from 2020 are at 2:25pm and 2:45pm** from Church Stretton station (2019 pickup is at 3:15pm from the train station). On departure day the transfer will get you back to the station for 9.15am, 9.45am or 10:25. This transfer costs just £10 return, however a place must be reserved 14 days in advance by calling 020 8732 1220.

By Taxi:

If you can't meet our station transfer it is possible to pre-book a taxi. Taxis can be limited so please pre-book. Details of our current recommended taxi company and rates (approximately £18) will be sent to you with your final dispatch documents, four weeks before departure.

By Car:

Follow the A49 to Church Stretton. At the traffic lights turn off the A49 into the town. At the first T junction turn left into the High Street. Go straight over the mini-roundabout, and then take the next right into Cunnery Road. Follow the road up a steep hill and around a hairpin bend. Longmynd House is at the top of the hill on the left hand side. Look out for our sign. A car park is available in the grounds with free parking.

Travelling From Overseas

Manchester Airport has the quickest onward connections to Church Stretton. Trains from the airport take 2 hours. See www.nationalrail.co.uk for train times. (See **IMPORTANT NOTE** above)

Flying to London Heathrow airport is another option, but has a longer onward train journey - allow at least 4½ hours to reach Church Stretton by train. There are a variety of routes. See www.nationalrail.co.uk for train times. (See IMPORTANT NOTE above)

LOCAL AREA

During your stay at Longmynd House you may enjoy visiting the following places of interest, either in your free time, or on your journey to and from Shropshire:

The attractive small town of Church Stretton is around 10 minutes' walk away. After the arrival of the railway, the town grew in the Victorian and Edwardian eras and became known as 'Little Switzerland' due to the dramatic hills on both sides of the valley. Today the town retains its bygone charm and has a range of facilities including a variety of small shops, banks, cafés, pubs and a supermarket.

Ludlow

Easily reached by train, or around 20 minutes' drive away, Ludlow is a particularly attractive market town. The historic centre retains many of its medieval buildings, and is towered over by its well-preserved castle. In recent years the town has developed as something of a gastronomic centre, being home to celebrated Michelin-starred restaurants and many acclaimed local food producers. www.ludlowcastle.com

Ironbridge Gorge

A little further afield, about 45 minutes' drive from Church Stretton, are the many excellent museums of Ironbridge Gorge. Known as the 'birthplace of the Industrial Revolution' it was here that Abraham Darby perfected the manufacture of cast iron which was later used to build the area's iconic iron bridge across the River Severn. Today there are 10 museums in the gorge including the Museum of Iron, the Coleport China Museum and the excellent Blists Hill Victorian town. www.ironbridge.org.uk/

Severn Valley Railway

The Severn Valley Railway is one of Britain's premier steam railways. This lovingly recreated Great Western Railway branch line is now run largely by volunteers and is home to an impressive collection of locomotives. As its name suggests the line follows the rural valley of the River Severn from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster. The nearest station at Bridgnorth is about 40 minutes' drive from Church Stretton. www.svr.co.uk

Acton Scott Working Farm

Situated just 10 minutes' drive from Church Stretton, the Acton Scott Working Farm Museum is a living museum based around a restored Victorian farm. In recent years this has featured in the BBC2 series Victorian Farm and Escape in Time. www.actonscott.com

Shrewsbury

Also easily reached by train, or a 30 minute drive, Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire. The town centre is particularly attractive featuring many black and white timber houses dating from the 15th and 16th centuries.

Much Wenlock

The small town of Much Wenlock, about 30 minutes' drive from Church Stretton, is particularly attractive with many black and white timbered houses. Despite its small size the town can claim to be the birthplace of the modern Olympic Games.

Hereford

The cathedral city of Hereford, is just under an hour's drive away, and can also be reached by direct train from Church Stretton. Hereford Cathedral houses a chained library and the famous Mappa Mundi, a 13th century map of the world. www.herefordcathedral.org

Attingham Park

A grand 18th century house surrounded by an extensive deer park, located outside Shrewsbury, around 25 minutes' drive away. Now managed by the National Trust you can visit the ornate rooms and explore the walled garden and grounds. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park

Powis Castle

This former medieval fortress has been remodelled over more than 400 years – each generation adding to the magnificent collection of paintings, sculpture, furniture and tapestries. The world-famous garden is overhung with clipped yews, and shelters rare and tender plants. The castle is located near Welshpool, about 45 minutes' drive from Church Stretton. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/powis-castle

Chirk Castle

Just under an hour's drive north of Church Stretton, Chirk Castle is a fine medieval fortress completed in 1310. As well as military displays, the castle was also a domestic home for many centuries, and is surrounded by excellent gardens. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chirk-castle

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska

Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62
IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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