

Historic Montgomery

A Town for All Seasons

Trefaldwyn Hanesyddol

Tref ar Gyfer pob Tymor



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1. About Montgomery

Montgomery is an historic Border market town situated in the Welsh Marches and is the old county town of Montgomeryshire. There is a mixture of Georgian, Victorian and much earlier half timbered architecture . The whole town within the ancient walls is a **Conservation Area** and is the jewel at the heart of the designated **Outstanding Historic Landscape Area of the Vale of Montgomery** .

The town was granted a **Royal Charter in 1227** to enable it to build a wall and a ditch for protection and to hold fairs and markets. These continue today. The street plan has changed little in almost eight centuries; being laid out on the original medieval street pattern at the foot of an imposing cliff crowned with the ruins of Montgomery Castle which is a CADW protected site. It is only a mile from the Shropshire border and **Offa's Dyke Path National Trail** which attracts both national and international walkers.

Montgomery featured on the itineraries of many early gentleman travellers in Wales and remains today, little changed, one of the finest examples of an unspoilt medieval new town and probably no better base from which to explore scenic Mid Wales.

2. Historic & Architectural Heritage

Montgomery has many notable structures and buildings which stand as testament to its historical significance.



Montgomery Castle – CADW site

The building of Montgomery Castle on a commanding hilltop position started in 1223. While much of the castle was destroyed following the Civil War, significant ruins remain, and the site is managed by CADW. Entrance is FREE, closes at dusk.



St Nicholas Church

Grade 1 listed building dating from 1226. The interior has a late 15th / 16th century roof and a medieval rood screen, misericords and choir stalls removed from Chirbury Priory on its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539. A hand painted commemorative plate and a letter from the Prince of the Netherlands are displayed on either side of the Book of

Remembrance as an expression of gratitude from the Dutch resistance and armed forces to veterans who helped to liberate the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies

The church also houses the **tomb of Richard Herbert (d. 1593)**; Lord of Montgomery Castle and father of the poet and cleric **George Herbert**.



Outside there is the **Robber's Grave** where John Davies was buried following his execution in 1821. He protested his innocence and asked that God would not let grass grow on his grave to prove that innocence. It is now grassed over but no grass did grow for over a hundred years.



Broad Street

Following the Civil War, Montgomery prospered, becoming a busy market town. In the 18th and early 19th centuries many houses were given the Georgian frontages seen in Broad Street today.



Georgian Town Hall

Built in 1748 to replace an earlier Guildhall / Markethall and to house the county Assizes. It is the centre piece of the town, the Town Council's meeting place, the location for a host of musical, theatrical and historical events, a wedding venue and home to the weekly Thursday market.



The Town Walls

Montgomery was originally a walled town with 4 gates. The town defences were partially excavated in 1995-7 with 20m of the foundation of a tower near Arthur's Gate reconstructed and visible to visitors today.

Rhydwhyman Ford and the Treaty of Montgomery

Rhydwhyman is of considerable strategic importance in the history of Wales as the point where the Severn could be most reliably forded. It became the traditional meeting place for Welsh and English and on September 29th 1267, King Henry III of England and Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Gwynedd, signed the Treaty of Montgomery at the Ford. For the first time an English ruler recognised the right of a Welsh prince to rule over Wales and the Treaty effectively created Wales as a separate country.



Fridd Faldwyn

The strategic importance of Rhydwhyman resulted in the construction of a huge Neolithic camp on Fridd Faldwyn with a commanding view of the Ford. This was much extended in the Iron Age and the massive earthworks can still be seen. The site may be accessed by footpaths.



Offa's Dyke and the National Trail

Offa's Dyke lies 1 mile from Montgomery. The Dyke is a great frontier earthwork built by Offa, King of Mercia from 757 to 796 A.D. It gives its name to a long-distance footpath, one of **Britain's National Trails**, which runs from Sedbury, near Chepstow, through the landscapes of the Welsh Marches, to Prestatyn in North Wales. Guided walks to the Dyke are offered by Montgomery Walkers are Welcome by prior arrangement.



Town Hill

The landmark monument dominating Town Hill is the County War Memorial erected in 1923 to commemorate Montgomeryshire men who died in the Great War. Substantially rebuilt in 1990 following earthquake damage. Town Hill offers commanding views of the Mid Wales countryside.



Lymore Estate

Lymore is a 17th century landscaped park, just a short stroll from the town car park, with ancient oak trees, sweet chestnuts, and an unusual 18th century decoy pond. The park is working farm and private land but there is a Public Right of Way on the estate road. Visitors are welcome but please keep to the marked Right of Way only.



The House of Correction

The House of Correction and original County Gaol was built in 1735 and closed in 1830 when it was converted into a terrace of private houses.



'New' County Gaol

The 'New' Montgomeryshire County Gaol was built 1830-32 with a tall octagonal Governor's House, four prison wings and a treadmill and ducking pond in the courtyard. The Gaol closed in 1878 and now only the Governor's house, the gateway and a high wall of one cell block remain. It is now a private residence known as the Old Gaol.



Montgomery Institute

The Institute is a delightful Arts and Crafts design building of 1924 situated on land sold by Robert Henry Bunner to the Borough of Montgomery. The site had previously been a half-timbered wheelwright's house. David Davies, 1st Baron Davies, was MP for Montgomeryshire 1906 - 1929 and was created the benefactor of the Montgomery Institute building. It is now home to the library, Made in Monty shop and a fine snooker table.

3. Literary / Musical Connections / Local Characters

George Herbert, metaphysical poet, Anglican Divine and, briefly, MP for Montgomery was born at Black Hall, the home of the Lord Herbert, in 1593. A friend of the celebrated poet **John Donne** who wrote the poem 'The Primrose, being at Montgomery Castle upon the Hill, on which it is situate' during a visit in 1613.

Peter Warlock, pseudonym of Philip Heseltine (1894-1930), lived at Cefn Bryntalch in nearby Llandyssil. A proud Welshman he referred to Cefn Bryntalch as 'this heavenly place' and much of his music, influenced by **Delius**, was composed in the garden. Warlock was Choirmaster at the church in Llandyssil, where it is believed Delius also played the organ and Bela Bartok also visited. Warlock was also a notorious frequenter of Montgomery pubs.

Janos Arany was Hungary's foremost national poet. His 19th Century allegorical ballad, 'The Bards of Wales', tells of the slaughter of 500 Welsh poets at the hands of Edward 1 at Montgomery Castle. All Hungarian school children learn the ballad that reflects on King Edward's invasion of Wales to crush the Welsh rebels analogous to their own suffering at the hands of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. Welsh composer, **Karl Jenkins**, wrote a symphonic poem based on the Ballad, premiered in Budapest. Arany was made a post-humus honorary Freeman of Montgomery in 2017 commemorated by a plaque given to the town and erected in the community garden in Arthur Street.

'A Child's Christmas in Wales' based on the poem by Dylan Thomas published in 1954 was filmed on location in 1987.

Montgomery will host the **Montgomeryshire Literary Festival** in 2022 **June 10th - 12th**



Town Crier

The Montgomery Town Crier is appointed at the annual Mayor Making with the present Crier in post for 17 years.

Historically, the Crier delivered royal and local news and proclamations including plague and war. An ancient craft, 16th century records identify Town Criers as royal messengers. The origin of the phrase 'don't shoot the messenger' refers to royal protection, through their Guild, from any accusations of treason. When many people didn't read, they were the earliest form of newspaper.

Town Crier costumes are distinctive and flamboyant. In keeping with the colours of the local Council Montgomery's colours are blue and gold. Two international Town Crier competitions have been held in Montgomery in recent years.

4. Town Museum

The town has two popular museums:

The Old Bell Museum



The Old Bell, a 16th century inn, was converted into a local history museum by Montgomery Civic Society. It is the winner of a **Prince of Wales Award in 1980** for the erection of informative plaques around the town. Accredited status from the **Museums Libraries and Archives Council** and a **Visit Wales Quality Assurance Attraction**. Special party visits can be arranged and the adjacent Gallery stages occasional exhibitions by local artists.

5. Montgomery Trails

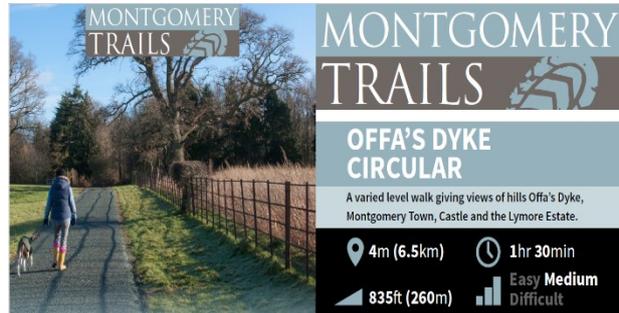


Walkers are Welcome Montgomery.

There are a number of **Walking Trails** of varying lengths also **Cycle Trails** and **Town Trail quizzes** for children.

Montgomery Walking Festival is held annually the first weekend October www.MontgomeryWalkingFestival.co.uk

Montgomery Walkers are Welcome group can provide guides to parties of visitors on walking routes on request.



All the Walking Trails start from the car park and Whitegates Pool. The local wildlife area has been extensively remodelled to maximise on habitats and biodiversity and improve access. A low maintenance regime helps nature to thrive and there are picnic tables and some well loved wooden animals to spot..



6. Restaurant, Hotel Accommodation, Cafes & Delicatessen



The Dragon Hotel

An old coaching inn, The Dragon has been recently refurbished and has an award-winning Bistro 7 restaurant. The Dragon offers visitors comfortable accommodation, fine dining, a swimming pool and bar meals in the heart of the town. a **Visit Wales 4 Star Award**.



The Checkers:

Fine dining restaurant with rooms. Noted chef proprietors Andrew and Rachel Birch offer gourmet lunches and dinners Wednesday to Sunday lunch. Booking required.



Ivy House Café and Montgomery Post Office:

A firm favourite with cyclists on National Cycle Route **81** and walkers on **Offa's Dyke Path** as a stop for lunch and refreshments. The café serves delicious homemade breakfasts, lunches and teas and sells local gifts and cards. Open 7 days a week.

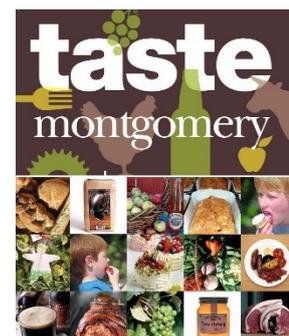
Castle Kitchen & Delicatessen



Café and delicatessen in a quirky old half timbered building. Has a lovely selection of homemade food and produce from local artisans. Seating available on two floors or in the pretty courtyard garden.

7. Montgomery Food & Drink

Montgomery is home to several Award-winning food and drink producers. **Taste Montgomery** is a consortium of innovative, high quality local producers and a selection of their produce can be regularly found at Thursday market and in local shops, cafes and restaurants



Monty's Brewery



Monty's Brewery and Visitor Centre is a family business exporting multi- award winning Welsh ales around the world. The brewery has been featured on BBC's Countryfile, in beer books by the great beer writers, Ben McFarland, Pete Brown and Roger Protz. Monty's is SALSA plus Beer accredited.

Other Food and Drink:

Montgomery Fish Bar, Broad Street. Open every day from midday until 2300

Spar on Broad Street - general store plus sandwiches and hot drinks and outside table area

Crown Inn, Bishop's Castle Street 01686 668533

Dragon Hotel, behind Town Hall 01688 888746

Accommodation - there is a good range of excellent accommodation in the town and surrounding area including Hotel, AirBnB, Bed and Breakfast and Self-catering.

8. Local Stores

Bunners' Traditional Ironmongers



No visit to Montgomery would be complete without a visit to Bunners family run business established in 1892. The shop is a rabbit warren of rooms stocking everything imaginable. Whether you need something for the kitchen, garden or workshop, for decorating, fixing or building, need petrol from traditional over the pavement pumps or are just gift hunting Bunners will have it. A firm favourite with visitors..

Eaves and Lord Bookshop



A charming independent bookshop with a warm welcome and a carefully selected eclectic choice of new books displayed in an immaculately restored 16th century house . Books can be ordered and a range of art greetings cards and wrapping papers are stocked

Gifts, crafts and Interiors

Window Dressers, Wynstay House, Arthur Street

The Flower House, Broad Street

The Little Gallery, Broad Street

Made in Monty – local crafts and gifts, The Institute , Arthur Street

Claudia Lis Ceramics on Princes Street, Central, Princes Street - studio and shop



Thursday Charter Market

The Charter for a Thursday Market dates from 1227 and thrives today. Offa's Veg and Simon's Fresh Fish are regulars and have served the town well for over 40 years. A popular and growing market that now features various local artisan and craft stalls. Offa's Veg are also at the Town Hall Saturday mornings plus Coffee and Cakes organised by a local group.

9. Montgomery has a surprisingly wide range of facilities:

Library - Arthur Street. The volunteer run library is open most weekdays and Saturday morning. **Computer access available and a wide range of Tourist Information.**

Local Tourist Information and Trail leaflets always available at the old telephone box at junction of Arthur Street and Princes Street

Cash Points at the Post Office (Ivy House) and the Spar

Post Office Ivy House, Church Bank 01686668746

Hairdressers Rootz on Arthur Street and Chameleon on Broad Street

Leisure

Bowls and Tennis Club - Church Brow. Open to non-members, see noticeboard at Club House

Swimming Pool - at The Dragon Hotel

Children's Play Areas - Old Gaol Road and Maldwyn Way (near car park)

Public Toilets: rear of Town Hall

Petrol and Diesel from Bunnors on Arthur Street open Monday - Saturday and Church

Stoke shopping Centre (4 miles) open 7 days

Places of Worship: Parish Church of St Nicholas (Church in Wales)

Presbyterian Chapel, Princes Street

Quakers Meeting Place, Activity Centre School Bank

Montgomery Medical Practice: Well Street 01686 668217

Trefaldwyn Veterinary Clinic: Pool Road 01686 668234

Public Transport:

Buses to Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Newtown , Welshpool. Bus timetables available from the Library and displayed at Town Hall

Nearest Rail Stations: Welshpool 8miles; Newtown 9 miles; Shrewsbury 21 miles

10. Car Parking : Free parking available at the Castle for Castle visitors only (closes 1600 in Winter and 1800 in Summer months). Tan y Mur carpark (recycling point), Maldwyn Way

11. Annual Fairs, Shows and Events



The town has a busy and popular schedule of events throughout the year including:

- Easter Sunday and Monday – Antiques and Collectables Fayre Town Hall
- May - May Fair on Broad Street
- June (second weekend) - Montgomeryshire Literary Festival
- July (first Saturday) - Street Fair
- July – Open Gardens
- August - Shakespeare at the Castle
- August (third weekend) - Annual Show preceded by a Fun Run
- October (first weekend) - Walking Festival
- October/November Half Term – Town Scarecrow Trail
- November / December - Winter Fair and Christmas Lights

There are also regular Jazz Evenings, first and third Wednesdays of the month at the Town Hall and a programme of concerts organised by Montgomery Music Live.

