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WELCOME TO ROSS TWYE

Known as the Gateway of the Wye Valley and the Birthplace of British Tourism, Ross-on-Wye is an attractive historic market town, sitting on a rocky outcrop of Old Red Sandstone, overlooking the Wye Valley. It is the only town within the boundaries of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is conveniently placed just off the M50 and A40. Its central location is perfect for visiting Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, including the nearby Forest of Dean and the Brecon Beacons National Park.



Origins - a potted history

Chase Hill, which forms a backdrop to the town, was the perfect site for an Iron Age fort, which seems to have been intensively occupied from the 5th or 4th century BC with a population of around I,400. Later (40 AD) the Romans had a settlement near **Weston-under-Penyard** called **Ariconium.** It was at this time they were pursuing the legendry British warrior **Caractacus** and, from descriptions by the Roman historian Tacitus, it is thought his final battle and capture may have been at the **Doward**, overlooking the Wye.

During Saxon times Ross was part of the small British Kingdom of **Ergyng**, which is thought to have stretched from the **Black Mountains** as far as the Wye, if not the **Malverns**. The eastern part (from the Wye) was gradually incorporated into the Kingdom of **Mercia**, leaving a small rump know as **Archenfield** as a buffer between England and Wales and frequently a battleground, making Ross a **frontier town**. Perhaps unsurprisingly the area had become known for the fiercely independent and rather prickly people. Archenfield means "land of the hedgehogs," which refers to these characteristics.



By the time of recording for **Domesday** (1068), Ross was listed as a small village. Part of the entry reads:

"There are 18 villans and 6 borders and a priest with 23 ploughs. There are 3 slaves and a mill rendering 6s 8d and 16 acres of meadow. The woodland is the King's preserve." The Bishop of Hereford was the overlord for the Manor of Ross and in 1138, King Stephen granted Bishop Robert de Bethune the right to hold a market in Ross and Ledbury.

The town was laid out in burgage plots giving the characteristic narrow building frontages still visible today, with a strip of land behind.

From 1745, a local vicar, the **Reverend John Egerton**, was arranging pleasure boat trips on the river for his high society visitors from London. By 1760, there were regular tourist excursions and boats were available to hire at Ross. **The Wye Tour** (a two-day journey to Chepstow) became very fashionable among the leisured classes following the publication of **William Gilpin's** book "**Observations on the River Wye."** By 1827, eight tourist boats a day were leaving Ross with trippers paying a guinea-and-a-half for the full journey. These trips gave rise to Ross-on-Wye gaining its moniker of "**Gateway of the WyeValley."** Visit **www.gilpin2020.org**



The railway arrived in Ross in 1855, and brought with it trainloads of tourists as the Wye Valley Tour was still very popular. By 1876, there were 24 hotels, inns and taverns listed in the town providing accommodation. Unfortunately the rail link only lasted for 104 years and was shut down in 1959. This was prior to the Dr Beeching closures.

Ross became Ross-on-Wye in 1931, to distinguish it from other towns with the same name. Today the town has a population in the region of 11,500 and remains a very popular destination for those who enjoy the outdoor life and exploring the area. There are a number of annual events that attract people from all over the country and some from abroad. These include the Rowing Club Regatta and the Walking Festival. There are several canoe hire companies locally and many of the town's restaurants and hotels are dog friendly.



NOTABLE CITIZENS OF ROSS

The name **John Kyrle** (1637-1724), frequently crops up around the town. This local hero and philanthropist was born in 1637, and carried out much good work in Ross. **Alexander Pope** describes his generosity in verse in his poem "Of the Use of Riches."

In addition to providing alms to the poorer residents, Kyrle laid on a water supply for the town, built the causeway to the Wilton Bridge, added pinnacles to the church steeple and laid out **The Prospect Gardens**. His house can be found just behind the market place, now divided into 2 shops.



Nathanial Morgan (1775-1854), was a Quaker and radical social reformer. He opened the Archenfield Bank in 1819, and was a generous supporter of the town's schools. He was responsible for introducing gas lighting to Ross in 1832 and is buried in the Quakers Burial Ground at The Friends Meeting House in Brampton St.

Thomas Blake (1825-1901), is the 3rd of the great benefactors of the town we remember here. A Methodist and a Liberal MP, Thomas Blake is not as well remembered as John Kyrle, but arguably achieved more for the wellbeing of the town's people by improving the supply of freshwater, providing a library and leisure facilities in addition to many other large and small acts of kindness.

Short walking tours of the town, that take in significant points of interest associated with each of these historic figures, are available from the Tourist Information Sites.

In addition to Alexander Pope, other literary visitors to Ross have

included Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle (who set the Sherlock Holmes tale "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" in the area) and playwrite Dennis Potter who lived in Ross and whose ashes are buried in the churchyard.

Admiral Nelson, his mistress Emma Hamilton and her husband visited Ross in 1802, on their way to Wales. They arrived on Sunday 25th July for breakfast at an inn in High Street (now Falcon Chambers), and then, watched by cheering crowds of the town's people, made their way down to the river via the gardens of Merton House in Edde Cross St. (now the Merton House Hotel). At the river the party embarked on a river trip to Monmouth. They hoped to pass quietly through Ross on their return journey in August but the people heard they were coming and erected a triumphal arch of oak and laurel, which Nelson and his party obligingly drove through in their carriages. They stayed for 3 nights at nearby Rudhall Manor, Phocle Green, as the guests of Mr & Mrs Westfaling where a grand ball was held in their honour.

Fans of "Crossroads Motel" might also be interested to note the actress **Noel Gordon** lived near Ross for many years and is buried in the cemetery at St Mary's.

THE RIVER WYE AND BEYOND

A short distance from the town centre is the riverside, a great place to relax and stroll and take in the beautiful scenery. To reach it from the town centre follow the High Street west, cross over to The Man of Ross PH and head down the hill. There are a number of sculptures by the internationally renowned, Herefordshire based artist, Walenty Pytel sited on the open spaces by the river. You will pass "Leaping Salmon" by the same artist as you make your way from the town centre to the riverside. It stands outside The Man of Ross PH at the top of Wye Street.

At the riverside you will find a large public green space, seating, a small children's play area, a pub, the canoe launch, public toilets and the bandstand. Wheeled access to the riverside is via Wye St.



THE TOWN

Ross-on-Wye is well known for its excellent independent and specialist shops and galleries where crafts, clothing, gifts and outdoor equipment sit alongside, restaurants, cafes and hotels, many of which are dog friendly. Much of the town centre is designated a conservation area and at its heart is the historic Market House.



Excellent accommodation with a warm welcome awaits you in the town and outlying villages and there is always something to do. Take a look at www.playross.com for information on events and activities.

Ross is a Walkers are Welcome town.

The Tourism Association at **www.visitrossonwye.com** is a member of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association. For details of where to go in town for visitor information see the Local Information section.







The Market House

In the centre of the town is the 17th Century Market House, a listed Ancient Monument that has recently passed from the County Council to ownership of the Town Council. Built in 1650, the Market House has had many uses including as a council chamber, school, law court, dance hall and public library. Today it is occupied by Made in Ross, a group of fine artists and craftspeople selling their beautifully handmade wares. It is also one of the 3 Tourist Information Sites in the town where visitors can find maps, trails, accommodation information and leaflets. Disabled access is via a lift.

Mock Gothic Walls and Gazebo Tower

Built in the picturesque style in 1833, by Ross Turnpike Trustees as part of a redevelopment that included a new road from High Street to Wilton Bridge, the Gazebo Tower is one of the finest follies in Herefordshire and was originally intended as a viewing point. Previously bequeathed to the town it is now in private ownership and has been converted into living accommodation. It is occasionally open to the public.



St Mary the Virgin Parish Church

Standing proudly overlooking the Wye, this beautiful, predominantly Gothic, church of St Mary the Virgin dates back to 1280. It is built of the local red sandstone and dominates the skyline for many miles around. The tower was built in the 14th Century and the internal nave arcades were created in 1743.

Many local family monuments lie within the church, as do references to the **hedgehog** – you can follow a hedgehog trail around the church. Open daily. There is a ramp for wheeled access.



Prospect Gardens

On the west side of the church is The Prospect, a pleasant garden from which to view the famous horseshoe bend in the river and the countryside beyond. The creation of the garden was the idea of the "Man of Ross," John Kyrle, in the 17th Century but the land was only leased by him from the owner. In the 19th century it was the site of a riot when the proprietor of the Royal Hotel tried to take some of the land and incorporate it into the hotel's grounds. As a result Thomas Blake, another great benefactor of Ross, bought the land and gave it to the town in perpetuity.

Following the collapse of a wall in 2008 excavations revealed substantial Roman remains including the foundations for what could have been a stone lookout tower. Also situated here are the town War Memorial and beacon.



Thomas Blake Memorial Gardens

These terraced gardens were opened in 1907, by the town's folk to commemorate this great Victorian benefactor. They link the town to the riverside via a series of paths and steps. In recent years it has been cared for by a group of volunteers.

To reach it from the Market House follow the High St west to Wye St and the Man of Ross Public House. Then take a short walk down the hill. You can meander through the newly restored Blake Garden to the riverside. There is limited access for those on wheels.



museum without walls

www.museumwithoutwalls.uk

An exciting new initiative, a 'Museum without Walls' is being developed to celebrate the vibrant history of the town using cutting edge technology to bring the past to life for residents and visitors alike.

Augmented reality enables us to construct digital, animated, threedimensional representations of buildings and features that have been lost to time. Using smart devices you will be able to walk around the town and see it as it once was: Ross-on-Wye will literally become a digital 'Museum without Walls'.



Over the next few years a group of volunteers from the town who have banded together in an organisation called 'CreateROSS' intend to design and deliver a minimum of 12 augmented reality exhibits that between them celebrate the town through the ages. The first exhibit has now been created and you can see for yourself how the 'Museum without Walls' will work. It is called the Lost Fountain and it exists digitally on the Prospect.

IN ADDITION ROSS HAS THE:



Phoenix Theatre, The Old Fire Station, Palace Pound, St Mary's St Ross HR9 5HT T:01989 564570

www.phoenix-theatre.org.uk

A well equipped 64 seater theatre and cinema with air-conditioning and a bar.

The local Amateur Dramatic Society is host to many high quality productions and performances including plays, concerts and musicals. Screen at The Phoenix shows fortnightly films, often the latest releases, and is equipped with digital surround sound.

Ross-on-WyeTennis Centre Walford Rd, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5AR T:07851 246035(answerphone) Website: www.rosstenniscentre.org Ross Tennis Centre is run by volunteers and welcomes non-members. 4 floodlit tarmac courts - reservations can be made via the website. Friendly group sessions for all ages and individual lessons available.





While you are here why not visit:

Goodrich Castle,

(English Heritage) Castle Lane Goodrich HR9 6HY T: 01600 890538 or 0370 333 1181 www.english-heritage.org.uk

Dramatically set on a rocky outcrop with stunning views over the Wye Valley this is a fascinating insight into medieval castle life with its 12 Century keep, chapel and battlements. Open daily April -October, Nov-March Sat and Sun Closed 24th - 26th Dec and 1st Jan



The Laskett Gardens

Laskett Lane, Much Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8HZ. Tel: 07513 124947 www.thelaskettgardens.co.uk

Welcome to what, up until earlier on this century, was one of England's most hidden and private gardens. Private it still remains but now it is shared more widely than ever before with visitors coming from all over the world to see one of the most remarkable and inspirational gardens in England.

Opening dates for 2020 will be: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 21st April through to 30th July and from the 1st to the 25th September.



Hellens Manor

Much Marcle, HR8 2LY T: 01531 660504 www.hellensmanor.com One of England's oldest homes.

Also Hellen's Music and Hellen's Garden Festival.

Open in the afternoon from Easter Sunday to September on Wednesdays and Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays.

Eastnor Castle Ledbury HR8 IRL T: 01531 633160 www.eastnorcastle.com Built in the romantic style, the 200 year old home of the Bathurst family. Visit us • Stay with us Weddings • Corporate



Symonds Yat

Approximately 6 miles southwest of Ross is Symonds Yat, a village divided by the Wye, with a rope ferry connecting the two sides. It's popular for canoeing, river cruises and walking and has some good pubs and hotels.



Yat Rock - Admire the picturesque views of the River Wye and surrounding area from this internationally famous viewpoint. Discover the ancient hill fort, spot birds of prey and enjoy a snack from the log cabin cafe.

Wye Valley Visitor Centre

Symonds Yat West HR9 6DA www.wyevalleyvisitorcentre.co.uk Play hide and seek or tag in the maze, experience the Butterfly Zoo where the most beautiful and delicate creatures fly around you then play the 12 hole miniature golf course set amongst fantasy Roman ruins or blast away at laser tag.

The Amazing Hedge Puzzle The Wye Valley Butterfly Zoo WyeValleyWarfare Laser Ops www.laserops.co.uk WyeValley Miniature Golf

www.mazes.co.uk www.butterflyzoo.co.uk www.wyevalleyminigolf.co.uk



The Forest of Dean

Drive south from Ross and you will find yourself in the Forest of Dean. There are many attractions within the forest including:

Puzzlewood Perrygrove Rd,

Coleford GL16 8QB

T: 01594 833187 www.puzzlewood.net

A unique and atmospheric ancient woodland that conjures up thoughts of magic, dragons and unicorns. A popular film location inc. Harry Potter and StarWars. Fun for families and groups. Photography workshops from building activities or the

Fun for families and groups. Photography workshops, team-building activities or the perfect place to stay - accommodation sleeping up to 4 or 8.





Contact Forest of Dean Adventure 07584 710202 www.forestofdeanadventure.co.uk











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ANNUAL EVENTS

May Ross Beerfest at Ross Rowing Club
May – September (Sundays afternoons)
Bands in the Park and Proms in the Park
July Linton Music and Beer Festival
July Ross Country Music Festival
August Ross Carnival
August Ross Rowing Regatta

For more information on events go to www.playross.com

August Ollie Fest
August / September Broome Farm Cider Festival
September h.Art Open Studios
September Ross Walking Festival
November Ross Christmas Light Switch-on and Market
December Ross Christmas Carnival

Hereford
20 minutes

FREE

Ago

Murow Bringe

Cardiff
1 hour

LOCAL INFORMATION

There are a number of businesses in Ross that offer information to visitors, including maps, leaflets and accommodation details.

Tourist Information Sites can be found at:

Made in Ross, The Market House in the town centre,

Mandy Moo's Café in Cantilupe Road,

Truffles Delicatessen in the High Street,

There is a Tourist Information Point

at The Corn Exchange in High Street.

The Tourism Association can be contacted on 01989 769454

www.visitrossonwye.com

Bus Station - Cantilupe Rd opposite the Library.

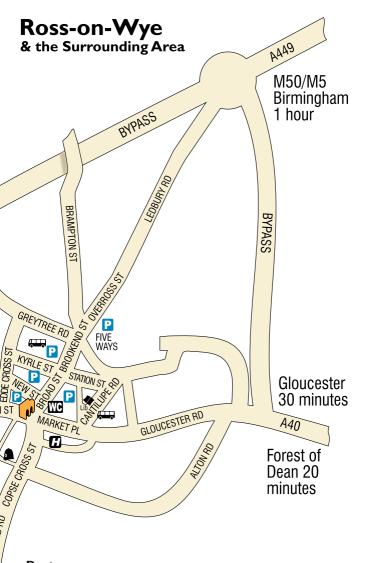
Don't look for a building. There are bus stops here for all the major routes to and from Ross.

Coach Parking – Red Meadow car park.

See www.visitross.com

in the **Location** section for more information.

Forest of Dean 20 minutes



Doctors

Alton St Surgery, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5AB T:01989 563646
Pendeen Surgery, Kent Ave, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5AH T:01989 763535
Out of Hours call Taurus from 8am Mon - Sun on 0800 121 7221
Taurus are based at Pendeen Surgery between 8am and 12 midday on Saturdays and Sundays.

Library – 7 Cantilupe Rd, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7AN T:01432 383280 Includes public toilets during opening times.

Shopmobility – 22 Henry St, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7AA T:01989 76338To borrow mobility scooters

Public Toilets – toilet blocks can be found at The Crofts off Broad St, in Red Meadow car park, at Caroline Symonds Garden by the bandstand and at The Library (during opening hours).





f you find city shopping stressful and soulless, Ross-on-Wye has a lot to offer.

Home to interesting and unique independent shops offering a diverse range of products with a warm and friendly service.



A unique place in a unique setting ROSS GARDEN STORE

Open Daily









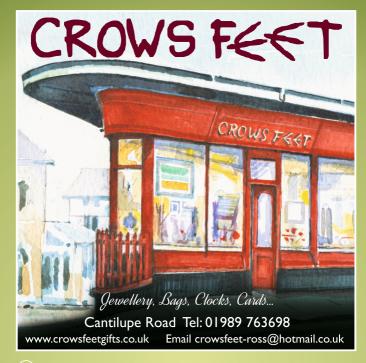




The Engine Shed, Station Approach, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7BW

Phone: 01989 568999 www.rossgardenstore.com



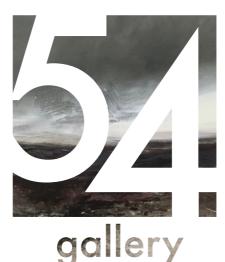


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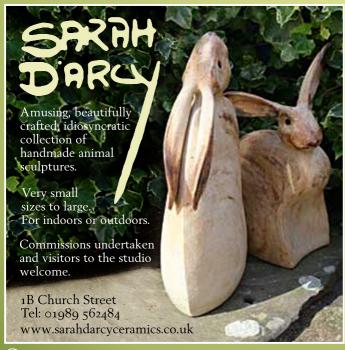




contemporary abstract paintings, ceramics and glass

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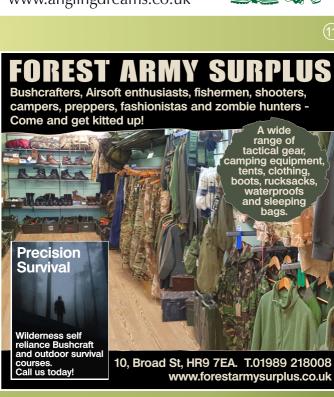
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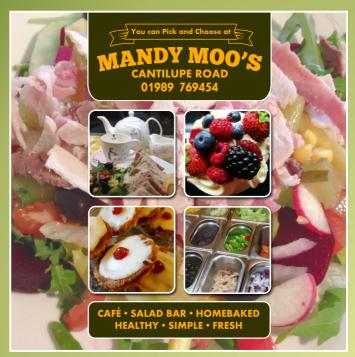




18 -19 Broad Street, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7EA www.field-fayre.co.uk







2) Dine out in ross



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Hotel & Restaurant, Wilton, Ross on Wye, HR9 6AE 01989 218081 www.Orlesbarnhotel.co.uk

DINE OUT IN ROSS









DINE OUT IN ROSS

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For those with pure food indulgence in mind, we offer a relaxed, modern, European menu for light lunches, dinner and fine wines.

Tuesdays - Saturdays Lunch 12.00pm - 2.30pm Dinner 6.30pm - 9.00pm Bar until 10.45pm

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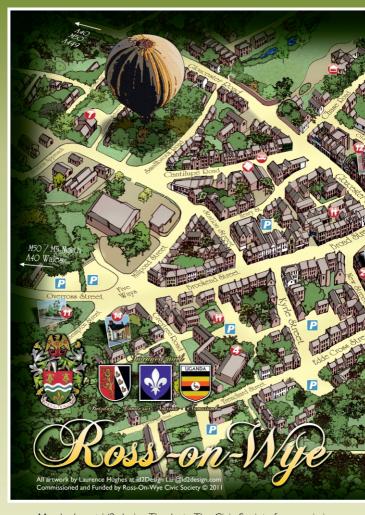


10 High Street, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5HL Tel: 01989 769222 www.avellinorestaurant.co.uk

DINE OUT IN ROSS



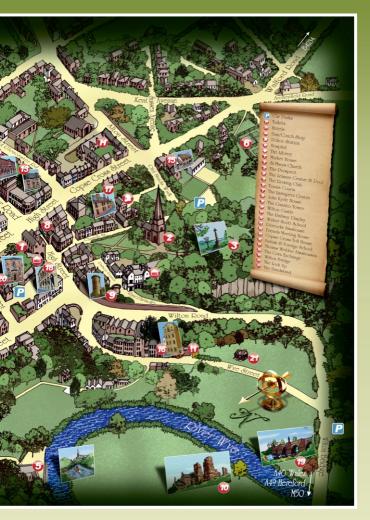




Map by Lar at id2 design. Thanks to The Civic Society for permission



www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk









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