

## The Saracens Head Inn

### Food

We serve a wide variety of dishes that change from season to season from our Lunch Menu, Dinner Menu and daily specials board. Sandwiches and filled organic baguettes are also served during lunchtimes.

Our chefs use fresh ingredients which are locally sourced whenever possible.

Meals can be enjoyed in our informal dining room, the lounge area, the bar or on the riverside terraces.

### Drink

The flagstone-floored bar, with its scrubbed pine tables, has retained the feel of an authentic old English inn.

The bar is open all day every day and offers a fine selection of classic and local real ales, ciders and quality wines, by the glass or bottle.

The riverside terraces are the ideal place to watch the Inn's ancient hand ferry carry passengers across the Wye as it did in yesteryear.

### Accommodation

We offer great-value bed & breakfasts to our guests. We have ten rooms, of which eight look over the River Wye.

We serve delicious cooked breakfasts for our guests.

## Symonds Yat Rock (1½ miles: Moderate)

Allow 1 hour. The descent is steep and uneven: the way up is more gentle, and could be reversed to provide an easier return.

**1** From the front door, facing the river, turn left and walk past the Royal Lodge hotel to the end of the car park. **2** Join the wide track beyond the barrier and follow it parallel to the river. **3** At a fork after about 100 yards, take the left-hand track. **4** After a further 100 yards or so, turn sharp left onto a path that doubles back up the hillside. **5** Climb the hill until a path crosses, just short of a barrier and the road. **6** Turn right up the stepped path. **7** Bear right past a cave when the path approaches the road again, and climb more steps to emerge in a picnic area near the Forestry Commission café. **8** Cross the grass to a footbridge over the road. **9** Beyond the road, follow the boardwalk to the left to reach the viewpoint on Yat Rock. **10** Retrace your

steps to the picnic area, and descent the path you came up, past the cave. **11** When you reach the track below the barrier, cross over and follow the path steeply down through the woods. **12** At a wooden fence, bear left (still heading downhill). **13** The path eventually emerges between gardens at the car park at Symonds Yat East. Turn right to return to the Saracens Head.

## King Arthur's Cave (3¾ miles: Moderate)

Allow 2–2½ hours. Uses the hand ferry (fee payable) across the Wye on the outward journey, and the mildly unnerving Biblins footbridge on the return. Some steep ground in the first half.

**1** Take the hand ferry across the River Wye. **2** Once across, climb the steps and turn left. **3** Beyond a white-painted cottage on the right, and opposite Wyeside Cottage on the left, turn right up a narrow path signposted through the hedge. **4** This steep stony path cuts a corner in the road. When you regain the lane, turn right. **5** Opposite a turning place on the right, turn left into a narrow path beside a telegraph pole. **6** This path winds uphill between premises to meet a larger path in front of a cliff face, with a Woodland Trust sign at its left-hand end. Turn left and follow the path as it bears right. **7** At a path junction where the path ahead starts to descend, turn right (uphill). **8** Pass between a partly fenced-off cliff face with a cave on the right, and a rocky pinnacle on the left. **9** Again, before the path starts to descend, turn sharp right, to the right of a fenced-off pit. **10** At a further Woodland Trust sign, bear left, keeping the fence on your left. **11** Pass a small stone ruin on your right and then a mineshaft within a circular fence on your left. **12** Follow a generally level track along the top of the wood, with gardens and properties to your right. **13** At a junction of tracks, go straight ahead along a driveway to reach a house called Woodview. Follow the metalled lane beyond. **14** When you meet a junction of byways with a small car park and interpretation panel to your left, turn right. **15** At a road junction just beyond the entrance to Doward Park Campsite, turn left. **16** After about 100 yards, turn sharp left onto a signposted public footpath that cuts back downhill. Pass the remains of various small quarry buildings. **17** When you emerge in a disused quarry, bear right back into the trees. **18** Pass a shallow cave with a rock pillar and continue past further cliffs and caves until you reach the larger King Arthur's Cave, with its mound of spoil in front of the entrances. **19** Beyond the cave, follow a path that bears left to a waymark post. **20** Bear left at another waymark and scramble up through a low crag. **21** The path continues along the contour with regular waymarks, and at one point a short diversion to the right leads to a viewpoint at the top of a cliff overlooking the Wye valley. **22** The path continues before dropping down and up and then reaches the wide gravel drive to Biblins. **23** Turn right and follow the drive downhill (keeping right when a track forks left) until you approach the campsite buildings. **24** Turn left to a barrier, then turn right to the Biblins footbridge over the Wye. **25** On the opposite bank, turn left and follow the river for a little over a mile back to Symonds Yat East, using either of the main tracks or the path closer to the river.

## Biblins, Monmouth and the Wye

2½ or 10½ miles: Easy/fairly easy

Allow 1–2 hours for the shorter walk and 4–5 for the longer (more if you plan to look round Monmouth). Both routes use the hand ferry (fee payable) to cross the Wye on the return (you are advised to check that it is running before setting off) and the shorter route crosses the mildly unnerving Biblins footbridge. Riverside paths may be muddy in places after rain. The outward route as far as Monmouth is accessible to cyclists (returning the same way).

**1** From the front door, facing the river, turn left and walk past the Royal Lodge hotel to the end of the car park. **2** Join the wide track beyond the barrier and follow it parallel to the river. **3** Follow either of the tracks, or the bankside path, for a little over a mile, until you reach the Biblins footbridge. For the shorter walk, cross over, turn right and skip to step 20. **4** For the longer walk, continue along the track without crossing the river. **5** At a fork, keep right (following the National Cycle Network route 423 sign) then follow the trail left and right (by a sign for Highmeadow Woods). **6** Beyond a house, follow the path to the right of the drive, before rejoining it to pass a second house, then leaving it again to follow another parallel path in similar fashion. **7** Beyond the old station, keep on along the cycle-track until it meets a road. **8** Follow the road, close to the river, through trees and then farmland for a mile, until you reach an industrial estate. **9** Follow the road as it bends to the left, away from the river and through the industrial estate, to a mini-roundabout. **10** Turn right and walk alongside the main road, passing another mini-roundabout to cross Wye Bridge and reach Monmouth. **11** Before the A40, turn right down a ramp past the subway entrance (if visiting Monmouth town centre, use the subway to pass under the road). **12** Walk upstream along the riverside, in front of the rowing club. **13** After a series of fields separated by gates, the path passes St Peter's Church, Dixon (detour highly recommended). **14** Continuing along the riverside path via further gates and footbridges, you leave the Wye briefly to cross Malley Brook, before resuming the riverside path. **15** After a series of fields, the path enters woodland and then passes to the right of a house and garden. **16** Ignore a path off to the left, keeping to the riverbank as it leaves the wood and passes through a field. **17** Beyond Kennels Cottage the path returns to the woods, passing a ruined building and an old metal gate. **18** After about a mile (keeping right at a fork with the Highmeadow Trail) the path emerges onto the campsite at Biblins. **19** Cross the field and follow the main track past the various buildings to the footbridge. **20** Continue through the camping fields and pass the canoe launching area. **21** Ignore a path to the left as you approach Symonds Yat West and pass the site of New Weir Forge. **22** The track eventually climbs a little and emerges between houses. **23** On reaching the road, turn right and follow the narrow lane round to the left. **24** Just beyond a white-painted cottage on your left, turn right down the steps to the hand ferry. **25** Hail the ferry and cross the river back to the Saracens Head.



King Arthur's Cave is also linked in legend with King Vortigern, a native British king who fought against the invading Anglo Saxons. More convincingly, the cave is known from archaeological excavations to have housed Stone Age people who left flint tools and mammoth bones behind. Material removed during the dig is still visible as a mound in front of the entrance.



The hand ferry at Symonds Yat is operated on request by the staff of the Saracens Head. In 1800 there were 25 similar hand ferries between Ross and Chepstow.



The footbridge at Biblins was built in the 1950s by the Forestry Commission, and refurbished in the 1990s. A sign advises that no more than six people should cross at once.



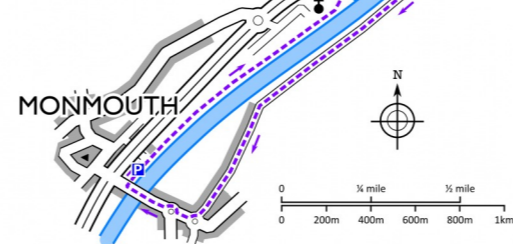
The view from Yat Rock.



Wye Bridge, Monmouth, carries the A466 over the river. The bridge was built in about 1615, and the original narrow arches can be seen beneath the wider arches and parapet added in the 19th century.



www.walksfromthedor.co.uk



St Peter's Church, Dixon, is flooded so often that a new gallery has been built inside to store valuables out of harm's way, and they don't even bother marking the flood height with a plaque unless it's more than three feet deep! The church dates back to Norman times though it may include some Saxon material. Despite being in Wales, the church belongs to the Church of England, and as an indirect result was the first in Wales to have a woman priest celebrate Holy Communion.



## The Saracens Head Inn

Symonds Yat East,  
Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 6JL  
tel 01600 890435  
website <http://saracensheadinn.co.uk>  
email [contact@saracensheadinn.co.uk](mailto:contact@saracensheadinn.co.uk)

Bar open all day, every day

food served  
lunch 12 noon–2.30pm  
dinner 6.30pm–9pm

seven circular walks from

# The Saracens Head

## Symonds Yat East

Yat Rock 1½ miles	Hurtsham Hill 2½ miles
King Arthur's Cave 3¾ miles	Hurtsham Bridge 4½ miles
Biblins & Monmouth 2½ or 10½ miles	Goodrich Castle 10 or 11 miles

## Huntsham Hill and Yat Rock

2½ miles: Moderate

Allow 1½–2 hours. Several moderate climbs, and the descent from Yat Rock is steep and uneven.

**1** From the front door of the pub, facing the river, turn right. **2** Turn off the road and walk through the car park and campsite on your left to the far corner, where a gate gives access to a riverside meadow. **3** Follow the riverbank as far as the ferry to the Old Ferrie Inn, then turn right, away from the river, to a gate into the road. **4** Take a few steps to the left, then take a path on the right. **5** This path leads obliquely up the hill below a line of low cliffs to meet another road. **6** Turn left (downhill) to a passing place on the right, where you take a signposted path through the woods. **7** This level path nears and eventually meets a broad track, which you follow around the end of Huntsham Hill, with rocks above and to your right. **8** Ignore a footpath on the left that descends to the river, keeping along the track as it bends to the right and starts to descend (passing another path leading downhill to the left). **9** Beyond a layby on the left, leave the main track on a less obvious track that forks right, uphill, passing a waymark post after 100 yards or so. **10** When the track hairpins right, the footpath leaves it, turning left by another waymark post along a narrow and indistinct path up through the trees. **11** At the top of the hill, turn left at another waymark post, and follow a more obvious path that descends gently. **12** Another similar path joins from the right, and shortly afterwards you pass a wooden barrier to meet the road. **13** Turn left and walk up the road past the old chapel on your left and between cottages. **14** Beyond the houses, keep on up the road until you pass under a footbridge. **15** Shortly afterwards, turn left and double-back on yourself along a boardwalk to the Yat Rock viewpoint. **16** Having admired the view, return as far as the footbridge and cross it into a picnic area. **17** A path opposite leads down rocky steps and past a small cave to a crossing with a wide track. **18** Go straight over and follow a steeply descending path through the woods. **19** Keep left at a path junction, and again at a second, until you emerge at the end of the car park in Symonds Yat East. **20** Turn right to return to the Saracens Head.

## Huntsham Bridge and Yat Rock

4½ miles: Moderate

Allow 2–2½ hours. Uses the hand ferry (fee payable) across the Wye on the outward journey. One stiff climb and the descent from Yat Rock is steep and uneven. Riverside paths may be muddy after rain, or impassable when the river is in flood.

**1** Take the hand ferry across the River Wye. **2** Once across, climb the steps and turn right. **3** Walk between cottages on your left and your riverside gardens on the right, and pass a restored limekiln on your left. **4** Continue past further cottages to the Old Ferrie Inn, where a narrow flight of steps leads under the building to the riverbank. **5** Turn left through the car park and pick up a path in the far right-

hand corner. **6** Follow the path alongside the river and pass below a caravan park. **7** Keep along the riverside to the church at Whitchurch, where the path diverts away from the river; either walk round the churchyard or enter it, passing a medieval cross, to visit the church. **8** Turn right in the church car park to a bridge over a side-stream, then turn right to return to the riverbank. **9** Keep on along the river, passing some large glasshouses and an industrial plant. **10** Beyond the works, leave the river and cross a scrubby field diagonally to the road. **11** Turn right along the road, crossing the Garren Brook. **12** Keep right at the junction with Newmills Hill. **13** After a mercifully short stretch of road walking, a stile on the right gives access back to the riverside. **14** Follow the river through a series of fields to Huntsham Bridge; just before the bridge, keep left of a fishing compound to the road. **15** Turn right and cross the river. **16** On the other side, turn immediately left and continue with the river now on your left. **17** Enter woodland and follow the narrow and slightly overgrown path as it twists and turns between boulders; ignore a footpath off to the right, keeping close to the river. **18** Pass the white-painted Huntsham Cottage. **19** At the end of an open, bracken area, the path leaves the river, bearing right into the trees. **20** Initially indistinct, the path heads uphill to a waymark post then bears left, passing a ruined stone building to a series of steps. **21** When you reach a broad forest drive, take a few steps to the left, then continue up a staircase of reconstituted plastic board on your right. **22** Follow the path beyond to a signpost, where you turn right (uphill, signposted to “Yat Rock ¼”). **23** After a hairpin bend left, pass a cottage, before bending right to the end of a drive. **24** Walk out to the road. **25** Turn left and walk up the road, until you pass under a footbridge near the top of the hill.

Now follow steps **15** to **20** of the **Huntsham Hill and Yat Rock** walk (above) for directions to Yat Rock and then back to the Saracens Head.

## Goodrich Castle and Welsh Bicknor

11 miles (10 miles if omitting the Castle): Strenuous

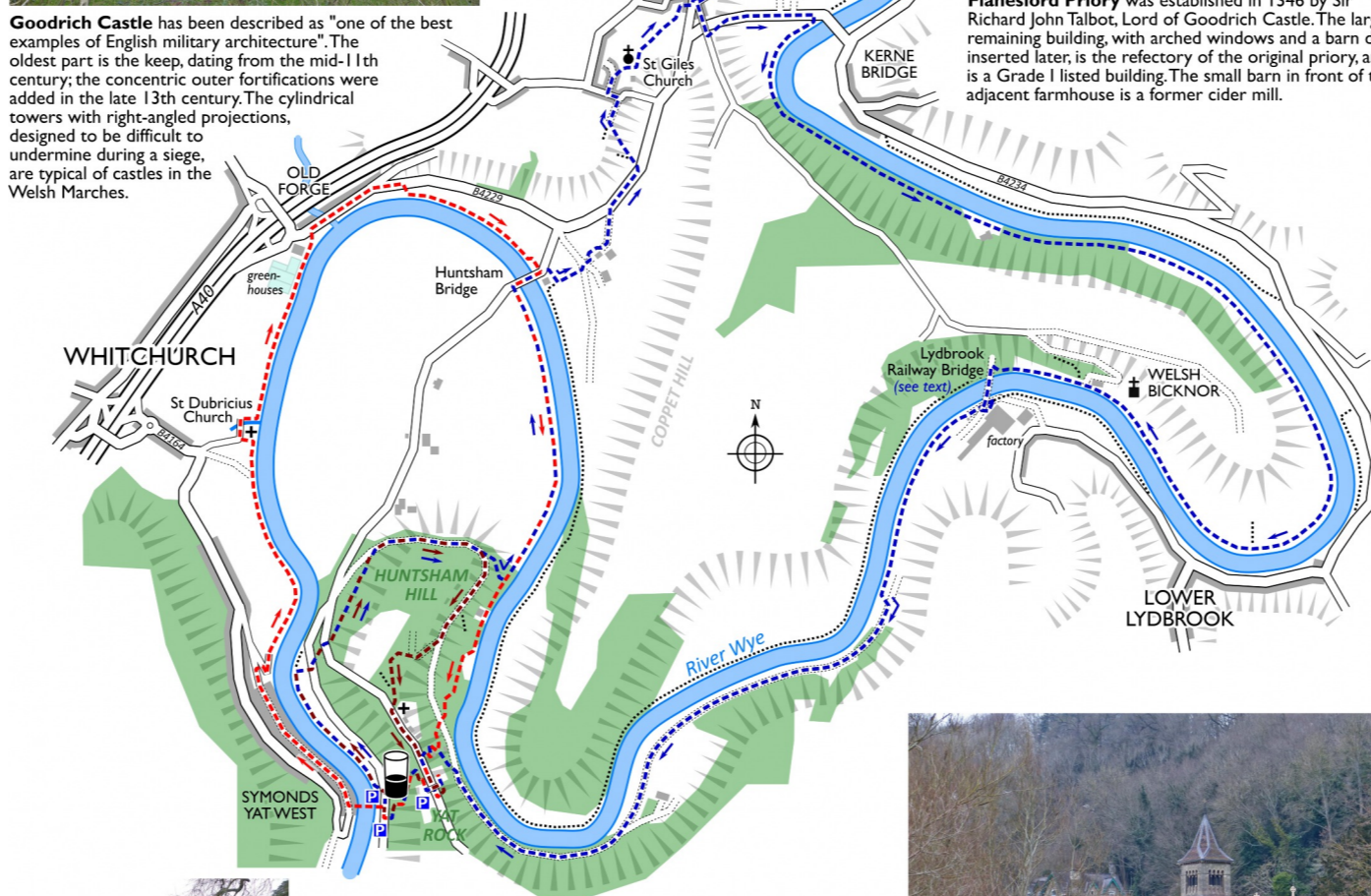
Allow 5 hours plus extra time to visit Goodrich Castle (open summer only, though the moat and exterior are freely visible year round). Muddy paths after rain; riverside paths may be impassable at times of flood. One steep climb to and descent from Yat Rock at the end.

**NB.** This route uses **Lydbrook Railway Bridge** to cross the Wye below Welsh Bicknor. At the time of writing (autumn 2020) this crossing is via a temporary walkway, pending funding for a more permanent solution. Please enquire before setting off as to the availability of this crossing. If the bridge is closed, to avoid a long diversion you are advised to cross Kerne Bridge at step **31** and use riverside paths and roads on the eastern side of the river to Lower Lydbrook and resume the walk as described from step **37**.

**1** From the front door of the pub, facing the river, turn right. **2** Turn off the road and walk through the car park and campsite on your left to the far corner, where a gate gives access to a riverside meadow.



**Goodrich Castle** has been described as “one of the best examples of English military architecture”. The oldest part is the keep, dating from the mid-11th century; the concentric outer fortifications were added in the late 13th century. The cylindrical towers with right-angled projections, designed to be difficult to undermine during a siege, are typical of castles in the Welsh Marches.



The riverside **Church of St Dubricius** at Whitchurch was rebuilt in the 14th century and restored in the 19th.



**Peregrine Falcons** nest on the cliffs east of Yat Rock, but can be seen year round.



**Huntsham Cottage**, surrounded by rocky boulders, is a key element of the view from Yat Rock.



The tiny village of **Welsh Bicknor**, tucked between wooded hills and the River Wye, consists of little more than an isolated Victorian church, a railway tunnel and bridge, and the former rectory, now a Youth Hostel.



**Flanesford Priory** was established in 1346 by Sir Richard John Talbot, Lord of Goodrich Castle. The largest remaining building, with arched windows and a barn door inserted later, is the refectory of the original priory, and is a Grade I listed building. The small barn in front of the adjacent farmhouse is a former cider mill.

**3** Follow the riverbank as far as the ferry to the Old Ferrie Inn, then turn right, away from the river, to a gate into the road. **4** Take a few steps to the left, then take a path on the right. **5** This path leads obliquely up the hill below a line of low cliffs to meet another road. **6** Turn left (downhill) to a passing place on your right, where you take a signposted path through the woods. **7** This level path nears and eventually meets a broad track, which you follow around the end of Huntsham Hill, with rocks above and to your right. **8** Before the track bends right, take a signposted footpath on the left that descends, winding between boulders and ruined buildings, to the riverside. **9** Turn left, along a slightly overgrown path which twists between boulders along the riverbank. **10** Emerge into fields and continue along the riverside to Huntsham Bridge. **11** Cross the river and walk past the first driveway on your right. **12** Follow a path through a wooden gate on the right, following a line of poplars. **13** On emerging into a field, turn left and walk up to a metal gate. **14** Follow the driveway opposite to the left of the castellated Rocklands House, then go through a gate on the left before the entrance to the farm. **15** Beyond another gate, follow the drive between horse paddocks out to the road. **16** Turn right for a short distance, then cross over to a wooden hand-gate into a field. **17** Bear half-right up the hill to a stile, and then head for the top right-hand corner of the second field. **18** Beyond a gate, follow a short walled track out to the road. **19** Turn left then right into a driveway opposite the timber-framed Old Court (late 1500s). **20** When the driveway bends left, go through a hand-gate on the right and cross a field into the churchyard. **21** Walk to the right of the church, passing a stone bench to an exit from the churchyard beyond. **22** Pass a well on the left, then walk along the bottom edge of a field to a metal gate into Moors Meadow, a local open space. **23** Cross a footbridge and pass an interpretation board, before bearing right past the primary school and out to the main street in the village. **24** Turn left to a junction, then turn right. *If omitting the visit to Goodrich Castle (1 mile in total), go straight on and skip to step 29.* **25** If visiting the castle, turn left as signposted and follow the drive for 400 yards. **26** Turn right and pass to the left of the Visitor Centre. **27** Continue up a track alongside a wood for a further 400 yards to the castle. **28** Return to Goodrich village the same way and turn left on regaining the road. **29** Pass a no-through road sign and the delimit signs and cross the Dry Arch, then turn immediately left (signposted to Kerne Bridge) down steps. **30** Follow the road beyond, passing Flanesford Priory on the left, to Kerne Bridge. **31** *If Lydbrook Railway Bridge is unavailable (see preamble), cross Kerne Bridge and see map for alternative route to Lower Lydbrook, rejoining at step 37.* If you know that the Railway Bridge is available, turn right *before* Kerne Bridge and walk downstream with the river on your left. **32** Enter woodland and climb steps before continuing along the riverside. **33** Pass below a half-timbered house and proceed along the wooded riverbank. **34** Emerge into fields and continue along the right-curving river to Welsh Bicknor, ignoring a track off up the hill on the right. **35** Pass below the church and youth hostel at Welsh Bicknor, following the riverbank (wooded once again) to Lydbrook Railway Bridge.

**36** Cross the railway bridge then, once over the river, drop down to your left. **37** Pass under the bridge, with the river on your right. **38** Pass a green-painted hut on the left and then go through a gate into open fields. **39** At the end of this long field, turn left through a kissing gate and up some steps to the disused railway; turn right. **40** Cross a further field, passing below a wood on your left. **41** Pass below a barn conversion and then a conifer plantation to a radar gate into woodland. **42** Continue along the obvious track below the cliffs of Coldwell Rocks (keeping an eye open for Peregrines overhead). **43** Shortly before a tunnel entrance, take a signposted footpath on the left which leads obliquely uphill through the trees. **44** A path joins from the right at a wooden fingerpost; keep straight on, signposted “Yat Rock ¼”. **45** After a hairpin bend left, you pass a cottage, before bending right to the end of a drive. **46** Walk out to the road. **47** Turn left and walk up the road, until you pass under a footbridge near the top of the hill.

Now follow steps **15** to **20** of the **Huntsham Hill and Yat Rock** walk (above) for directions to Yat Rock and then back to the Saracens Head.



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