

# Welcome to Castle Cary and Ansford

Castle Cary is an historic market town set in the triangle of the A371, A303 and A37, but hidden away from the rush of traffic up and down to the West Country. Thus, it retains its delightful charm and is relatively unspoilt and a haven for the travellers who “happen” to come across it just by chance.

Many of the houses were erected from the local Cary stone (a close relative of the hamstone which comes from Ham Hill near Ilchester where the Romans quarried). So, on entering Cary on a sunny day this gingerbread stone gives a wonderful soft glow to the whole town. Castle Cary takes its name from the River Cari or Carith which rises in Park Pond and then meanders to Sedgemoor, giving its name to Babcary etc. If you stand by the bookshop, you will hear a tributary of the river running beneath the road.

There have been settlements here since pre-Roman times, the area originally being called Cari. Soon after the Norman invasion William de Percheval (a Roman baron) built a castle here. Only defensive earthworks remain, seen by walking up the path to the right of The George Hotel. It is reputed that some of the Doulling stone from the keep was used in the building of the hotel. The same path also leads you up to the top of Lodge Hill, where there is the Millennium Observation Point and telescope, giving a wonderful panorama over Ansford and Cary.

The Manor House behind the Horsepond was said to house Charles II on his escape from Worcester, or he may have been hidden in a covered way in Ansford. Local residents have spent much time compiling books on local history, distant and recent. These can be seen in the Market House and Museum and purchased in the local bookshop and Museum.

The town centre is dominated by the Market House, built in 1855 of Blue Lias stone and Castle Cary stone and dressed with Doulling stone. The lower floor sold corn and cheese and the Shambles meat and bacon. There was also a police station. Nowadays the lower floor houses the Information Office and the Town Clerk's Office. Above you will find the Museum which certainly is worthy of a visit. Woollen cloth was woven in the town and these still remains a working horsehair weaving factory, making fabrics for Royal Palaces.

Castle Cary retains many small friendly shops which rarely remain empty and are sufficient to meet all everyday shopping needs, and there is no large supermarket. There are also several venues for meetings, functions, concerts etc, including the Methodist Church and Schoolroom, All Saints' Church, Castle Cary Primary School, and the Market House itself.

In Ansford there are several fine old buildings, including St Andrew's Church and Parson Woodforde's cottage. More modern additions to the settlement, catering for community needs, include Caryford Community Hall, Ansford School and Caryford Leisure and Fitness (our sports centre).

Wincanton, Yeovil, Wells, Glastonbury, and Street are within easy reach by bus or car. London can be reached by train from Castle Cary or Templecombe and by Berry's coaches from Wincanton. Timetables may be obtained from the Market House Information Office.

*We hope that you will enjoy living in Cary and come to love and respect it as we all do.*

# What goes on at the Market House

## *ON THE GROUND FLOOR:*

**The Market House Local Information Centre (LIC)** on the ground floor is very multipurpose – our volunteers dispense information not only to tourists but to local people on local matters too. The Town Diary is in the office window providing information about forthcoming local events.

In summary, a visit to the Market House Local Information Centre will enable you to: -

- Bring children to visit the cell and see the well (and then go to the museum upstairs in the summer months – see below)
- Collect a Castle Cary and Ansford leaflet (including a map) and leaflets on local attractions
- Find out “What’s On” locally
- Make bookings for the Shambles, Assembly Room and Undercroft and book the Sports Pavilion
- Put your events in the Town Diary (this can also be done by the website)
- Collect bus timetables and bus pass forms
- Find out about local walks, gardens, horse riding etc.
- Access general information on Southwest events
- Look at copies of local interest books, which may be for sale in the Book Shop
- Leave messages for the Town Clerk or her deputy
- Look at Council Minutes
- Find out about special support for people with disabilities.

The Local Information Centre opening times are: -

Monday to Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm

Friday = 2.00 – 4.00pm

Saturday 9.30am – 12 noon

The Local Information office telephone no. is 01963 351763.

### **The Town Clerk’s Office**

This is also on the ground floor of the Market House, and details of opening hours and contact details can be found on the separate Town Council page.

### **The Shambles**

Our ground floor meeting space, “The Shambles”, previously open to the elements, is now resplendent with a glass roof and is warm and comfortable. It is used for meetings, special events, music, classes, craft workshops and so on – keep a lookout for information about all the exciting things going on there. It is available for hire and has an alcohol licence.

**The Undercroft and Cobbles**

Almost every Saturday there is a coffee morning in the Undercroft put on by one of our many local groups – do come along and join in. Often there is also a cake stall, or plant sale, or other activity, and everyone is welcome.

**Tuesday Market.** On a Tuesday from 8.30am – 1pm we have our Market Day in the Undercroft and on the Cobbles with stalls selling an assortment of vegetables, meat, fish, herbs, and spices etc. etc.

*UPSTAIRS YOU WILL FIND*

**The Museum** on the first floor, details of which are in the Castle Cary leaflet and on the separate Museum sheet.

The Museum exhibits change from year to year, so it is always worth a visit. The opening times are: - April to October, Monday to Saturday, please check opening hours, Also open on Bank Holidays. Entrance is free but donations are appreciated!

**The Assembly Room** is on the second floor