

Church House Inn Harberton

13th C inn in the heart of the county

Our coastline is popular for walks, golf, water sports and swimming both for holiday-makers and for residents of Bantham, Buckland and Thurlestone. Inland, we have some of Devon's most beautiful countryside. If a restaurant meal in a country inn, that's off the beaten track, appeals to you, consider Church House Inn at Harberton.

To reach it, drive with the sea behind you in the direction of Totnes. Now, in late spring, pink campions, bluebells, white cow parsley and wild garlic, make a colourful mix against the green of Devon's banks, along with vibrant yellow flowers like celandine, gorse, buttercups. Hawthorn and elderflowers are fabulously in bloom too.

Fields where cattle and lambs graze can be seen when a farm gate, or other gap in the hedge or bank, allows. A spectacular avenue of trees lines the approach to, and departure from, The Mounts on the A381 and, after that, the outlook to the left (one that is not dependant on a gap in the hedge) gives a long generous view of farmland across to Dartmoor and to the skyline.

Sat nav will explain it differently but, in our car, we enjoy how the road meanders in the way that Devon roads do. Once you've passed through the snug hamlet of Halwell, the road sweeps towards Harbertonford which is a couple of miles from your destination. The left turn down to Harberton is signposted for Church House Inn. In the village, look for another of the inn's signposts at the 3rd road to the right. Park in front of the inn, or use the car park up the lane that runs to the side of it.

Inside, you're greeted with light friendly service which is as much a statement about the inn's character as are the dark beams and wooden panelling. Candles on tables add to lighting that creates an Olde Worlde mood with logs burning in fireplaces bringing an added glow. Tables are comfortably tucked into nooks of bay windows and, against the walls, monks' benches provide some of the seating for 65 covers.

So, what's to eat? Delicious food. Good, generous servings of it.

If a daytime walk on nearby footpaths brought you, you may favour a Light Bite Basket Meal. The Church House special has hand-cut chips with strips of ham and melting cheddar cheese for £5.95, or you may prefer seafood medley, battered chicken, or deep-fried mozzarella sticks with fries. Various sandwiches, omelettes, or soup, are other lunch choices.

If you are dining, the Beef bourguignon is superb. Roasted lamb; Sirloin steak; beer battered fish and chips; hake with vegetables, are excellent choices. There's a burger on the menu for meat eaters, and one for vegans, as well as other vegan choices.

The service is not only relaxed and friendly, it's easy and speedy too so we didn't have long waits. In the feel-good ambiance we might not have even noticed if there had been a delay.

The prices are reasonable with main courses between £11 and £20. Deserts and starters are around £6.50. Servings were given with a generous hand.

Near the bar there's a sign for the conveniences in 'Devonian speak', *Toilets-In-Yer->*
Their phone number 01803840231