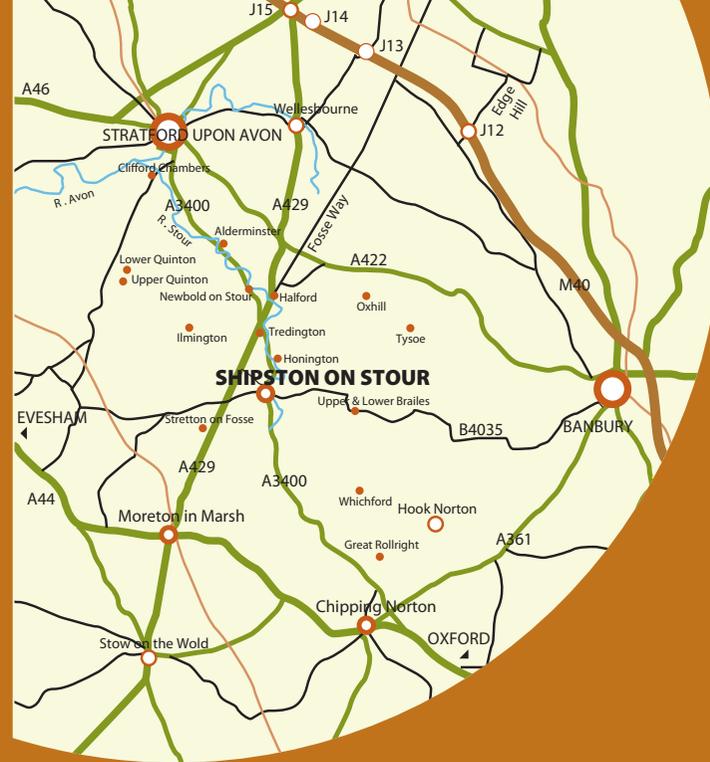


Be Safe

To enjoy your bicycle ride to the full, please follow our safe cycling code:-

- 1 Wear **bright clothing**; it makes you more visible to motorists.
- 2 Signal clearly to let other cyclists, pedestrians and motorists know your intention. **Be Aware and Be Alert.**
- 3 Wear a **helmet** to help protect you against head injury.
- 4 Is your bike safe? - Check the **brakes, wheels, tyres and lights**. If in doubt, consult a bicycle mechanic.
- 5 Carry a **lock, tool kit, puncture repair kit, spare inner tube and loose change** in case you need to use a public payphone.
- 6 It is a good idea to carry a **first aid kit** and some **identification**. Let somebody know your planned route and when you expect to return home - just in case!
- 7 On busy, narrow or twisty roads, it is safest to **ride in single file**. Always give yourself enough time to finish the route before it gets dark.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

Shipton-on-Stour is on the A3400 Stratford-upon-Avon to Oxford Road.

Stratford-upon-Avon is served by London Midland Trains from Birmingham and Chiltern Trains from London.

Moreton-in-Marsh is on the A429 Fosse Way and is served by First Great Western Trains.

Cycles carried on trains. Some restrictions apply – check with train operators.
www.londonmidland.com
www.chilternrailways.co.uk
www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk

For details of accommodation attractions and events contact South Warwickshire Tourist Information
tel.no. 08701607930
email info@shakespeare-country.co.uk
or Cotswold Tourism
www.cotswold.com

FOR CYCLE TRAINING

Road Safety Unit
tel. 01926 412776
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/roadsafety

FOR CYCLE HIRE

Stratford Bike Hire
tel. 0771 1776340
www.stratfordbikehire.com

The Toy Shop High Street
Moreton-in-Marsh
tel. 01608 650756

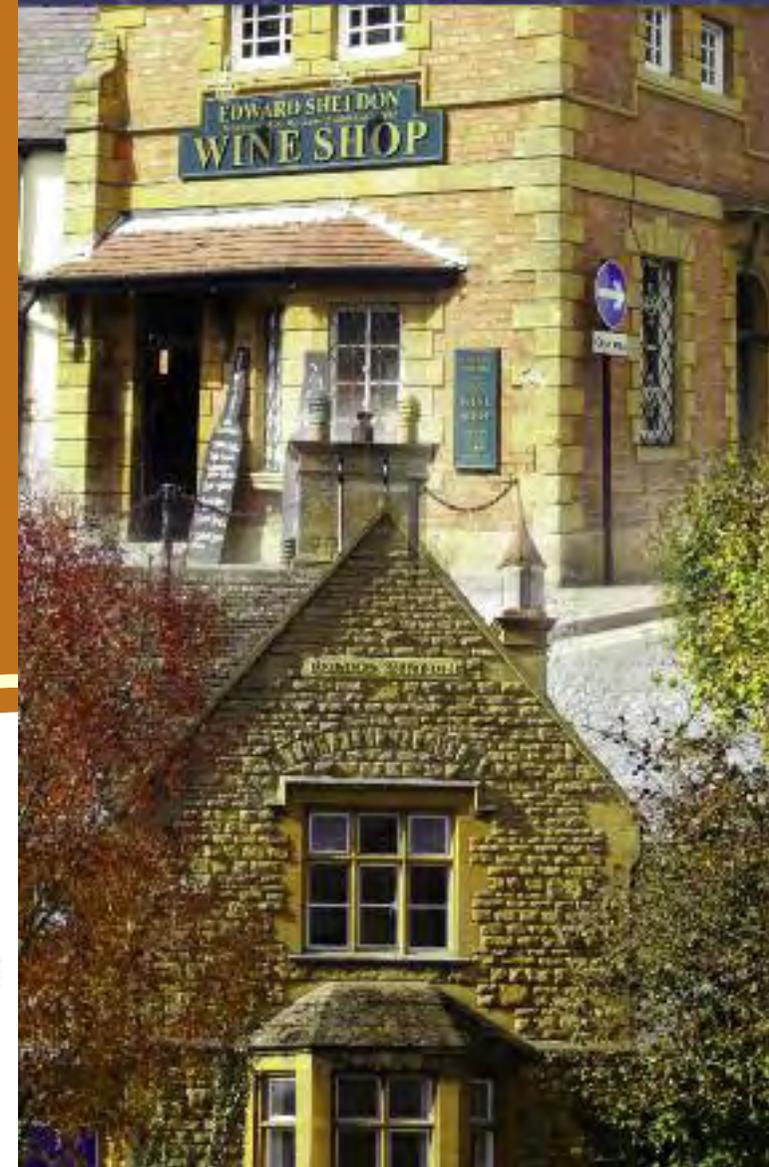
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THE TWO TOWNS CYCLE ROUTE

Linking Shipston-on-Stour and Moreton-in-Marsh



A Cycle Tour of Two Towns

Shipston-on-Stour to Moreton-in-Marsh

SHIPSTON TO MORETON Distance approximately 8 miles
 Signs National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 5  NCN Route 48 
 From Shipston High Street follow the NCN 5  towards Banbury.
 After the recycling centre turn right, with care to Barcheston and Willington.
 South of Willington leave NCN 5  and join NCN 48  to Moreton.
 Take care when crossing the A3400 and when using the A429 into Moreton.

Return by the same route or alternative route below

ALTERNATIVE RETURN ROUTE via Four Shire Stone

Distance approximately 10 miles

Signs  (Only towards Shipston) NCN 48  NCN 5 

Cycle south on the A429 Fosse Way turning left opposite the lavatories following 

On the A44 (30 mph speed limit) cycle with care and when turning right to Evenlode.

For safety reasons do not continue on the A44 but follow 

After crossing the A44 again with care, the Four Shire Stone is on the right.

Continue to follow  join the NCN 48  at Todenham.

Return to Shipston following NCN 48  and NCN 5 

DETOUR TO ST LEONARDS CHURCH at Lower Lemington. Distance approximately 1 Mile

Leave NCN 48  and follow the road signs to Lower Lemington. Return by same route.

MAP COLOUR KEY

Feldon Parklands

- A large scale rolling landscape
- Occasional steep scarp slopes
- Large woodlands often on rising ground
- Many small coverts and belts of trees
- Mature hedgerow and roadside oaks
- Large isolated brick farmsteads

Vale Farmlands

- Broad flat vales with occasional small rounded hills
- A medium to large scale geometric field pattern
- Pockets of permanent pasture often with well preserved ridge and furrow – good example at entrance to St Dennis Farm
- Wide roadside verges typically bounded by a thick hedge and ditch

Cotswold Fringe

- A varied undulating landscape of small rounded hills and valleys bounded to the south, east and west by steeply rising ground
- Pockets of permanent pasture often with well-preserved ridge and furrow; particularly good examples occur in the fields around Upper Brailes
- A medium to large scale geometric field pattern
- Many small stone villages eg Sutton-under-Brailes

The Wold

- Broad rounded hills capped by limestone
- Deep secluded valleys
- Rich red soils supporting productive arable farmland
- A large scale geometric field pattern
- A remote landscape of small stone villages and hamlets eg Whichford
- Steep hillsides with unimproved grassland and scrub



1 The George, High Street, Shipston

Built as a coaching inn during the early 18 century. Victoria before becoming Queen is recorded as taking refreshments while her carriage horses were changed.

2 Mill Street Bridge, Shipston - Two Bridges in One

The bridge is divided longitudinally into two distinct forms of construction. View the bridge from the adjacent car parks. Note the northern (downstream) side has unusual pointed stone arches built in 1698 whereas the southern (see photograph) side has circular brick arch barrels added in 1826. The ends of tie-bars installed in 1984 are clearly visible.

3 The Vale between Shipston and Moreton

The broad vale includes many small hills and ridges formed from the boulder clay deposited by melting glaciers.

4 Mitford Bridge

The bridge was named after the 2nd Lord Redesdale of Batsford Park near Moreton. A member of the Mitford family he was master of the Heythrop hunt which often met at the bridge for a day's hunting.

5 Cotswold Fringe/Lakeside

A view across the Cotswold Fringe towards the church at Great Wolford which is passed on the alternative return route via Four Shire Stone.

6 Ridge and Furrow - Fox Farm, Todenham

Ridge and furrow is evidence of arable farming before the introduction of sheep to the Cotswolds. It was formed by the medieval ploughing technique, of always turning the soil in the same direction. Over a period a ridge was created with a depression on either side. The reasons for the technique are obscure.

7 Brailes Hill

A view towards this outlying hill which is typical of the Cotswolds near Shipston-on-Stour. Note the landmark Highwall Spinney on the summit which at 760 feet (262 metres) is visible from much of the tour route.

8 Crossing Cottage, Moreton

The crossing keeper's cottage at the junction of the Todenham Road and the Tramway. This carried horse-drawn carts containing coal and goods, delivered by canal to Stratford, from the industrial areas of the West Midlands. The Tramway was opened in 1826 and there was a branch to Shipston which was subsequently used for a railway link.

9 Tollgate Lodge, Moreton

The Fosse Way was a major Roman road running from near Exeter towards Lincoln. It was built for troop movements and before AD 47 was the temporary frontier. The road was turnpiked in 1755 to raise money for maintenance which previously was the responsibility of the parish and poorly undertaken. The lodge was accompanied by an iron gate across the road which was opened upon payment of the toll.

10 Fosse Way, Moreton

The broad street widened by Abbot Richard of Barking for the market now held on Tuesdays.

11 Redesdale Hall, Moreton

Built in 1887 by Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford in memory of his cousin the 2nd Earl Redesdale from whom he inherited Batsford Park but not the title. Originally constructed, with open arches as a market it is now a public hall. A B Mitford became Lord Redesdale upon revival of the title as a barony in 1901 in King Edward VII's Coronation Honours List. The King with Miss Keppel made a visit to Batsford Park in 1905.

12 Four Shire Stone

A boundary marker has existed at this site for over 1200 years. A Saxon charter of AD 722 refers to Cetta's Tree near various village boundaries. One of 922 refers to four close but separate stones. The present stone erected in the 17th or 18th century marked the boundary of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. In 1931 Evenlode Parish, once owned by the Bishops of Worcester, was added to Gloucestershire.

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 To publicise a Cycle Tour between Shipston-on-Stour and Moreton-in-Marsh

A Cycle Tour of Two Towns Shipston-on-Stour and Moreton-in-Marsh

Two attractive country towns with histories which date from Saxon times are visited.

Heritage buildings and structures with interesting associations are identified.

Between the towns the route passes through varied rural landscapes shaped by geological and human activity. The landscape types are described with feature photographs.

The Four Shire Stone is visited by a return route including Great Wolford Church.

A detour includes the small church of St Leonard with its Saxon chancel arch and Norman southern doorway in the ancient hamlet of Lower Lemington.

The tour mainly follows rural roads with some hills which can be taken at leisure. It is signed in both directions, except the alternative return route is signed towards Shipston.

To fully enjoy the tour allow between a half and a full day.

There are a variety of restaurants, pubs, teas and food shops in the towns and along the route to refresh and revitalise.

Enjoy your Cycle Tour of Two Towns.

Shipston and Moreton Town Information

Shipston is a small town of great antiquity. It was originally a Saxon settlement near a ford that was used as a sheep wash. The area around the ford was grazing for sheep. The name for Shipston in the 11th century had evolved to 'Scepwaestune' (sheepwashtown). In the Domesday Book the settlement was mentioned as 'having two hides that pay geld'.

In 1268 Henry III granted a charter to 'Shepeston' (as it was then spelt), giving the town the right to hold markets and a three-day fair (10th – 12th June). During the 17th and early 18th centuries the town experienced a period of industrial prosperity as a result of the lively plush and shag weaving industry. These were versatile materials used for all manner of goods from labourers' trousers to lavish curtains.

Shipston still retains interesting Georgian houses and inns with fine doorways and doorknockers, harking back to the industrial boom period, and a wealth of architectural features that are to be found on exploration of this vibrant market town. It is an interesting place for visitors with its quaint alleyways, and the centre boasts a wide range of individual shops and galleries.

For further information see the companion leaflet Shipston-on-Stour Heritage Walks.

Moreton is of Saxon origin, and like Shipston may well have been founded in the 7th century by a party of the Hwicce, an Anglo-Saxon tribe who moved west from Wychwood Forest after the battle of Deorham near Bath in 577. Moreton provided an excellent site, offering meadowland near the River Evenlode where oxen could forage, and there was fertile plough land and rough grazing for flocks. The word 'Moreton' is Saxon, meaning 'farmstead on the moor'. The first Moreton was located where the church is today.

The derivation of the name Moreton-in-Marsh is controversial. Recent research suggests it is topographical. In the 13th century the area consisted largely of marshy heath and it became known as the 'Hennemerse', the 'haunt of wild fowl'. The marsh disappeared with drainage but memories survive in the village name Barton on the Heath. The original form persisted with Moreton, and went through many transformations – 'in Hennemersh', 'in Henmarsh', 'Hinmarsh' – before becoming Moreton-in-Marsh.

The dying King Edward the Confessor granted Moreton to his new Abbey of Westminster in 1065. William the Conqueror confirmed the grant and Moreton began 750 years as part of the Abbey Estate. By the 12th century, the Abbey's finances were in difficulties and Richard of Barking, Abbot from 1222 to 1246, decided to develop the agricultural hamlet of Moreton as a market town to rival Stow and Campden. He was adviser to the young King Henry III and obtained from him a charter for a weekly market. After the men of Batsford gave up common rights he began in the 1220s to build a new town on common land by the Fosse Way, which he widened into today's long market.

Moreton retains its centuries-old position as an agricultural town, meeting the needs of travellers and as an economic and communications centre for the surrounding villages.

Landscape Information

The visual character of a landscape is shaped by historical, ecological, and physical (soils, rocks and landform) factors. This cycle tour takes in several landscape forms.

Shipston lies at the southern tip of the Feldon which comprises most of the south eastern part of Warwickshire. Feld is an old English word meaning open cleared land. It is a lowland agricultural region strongly influenced by Tudor and Parliamentary enclosures.

Feldon has four different landscape types, two of which occur along the tour:

Feldon Parkland is found along the Stour valley towards Tidmington. It is wooded estate landscape with large country houses set in mature parkland.

Vale Farmland is found east of Shipston to the base of Brailes Hill. It is a flat, open, hedged landscape with few roads or settlements with wide views to rising ground on one or more sides.

Around Burmington the landscape changes to Cotswold Fringe which continues to Moreton. Here there is a varied undulating agricultural landscape which often merges imperceptibly with the more steeply rising Wold. This is a varied large scale undulating landscape of rounded hills and ridges separated by broad valleys.

The limestone of the Cotswolds was laid down in a shallow sea which covered most of Britain before the land was tilted up to form the hills.

About 2 million years ago the northern hemisphere was in the grip of an ice age. The glaciers formed reached as far as this area of Britain before melting and depositing large quantities of boulder clay. This is a widely varying material ranging in size and consistency from boulders to sand with some clay. It was formed by the crushing action of the glaciers which carried it along in the ice until melting. The broad vale between Shipston and Moreton contains many small hills and ridges formed from glacial deposits.

