

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 **mobile phone**.
- 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.

FOR CYCLE TRAINING

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

FOR CYCLE HIRE

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



TRAVEL INFORMATION

Shipston-on-Stour is on the A3400 Stratford-upon-Avon to Oxford road. Moreton-in-Marsh is the nearest railway station which is served by First Great Western Trains. Shipston-on-Stour is accessible via the eight mile long Two Towns Cycle Route using National Cycle Network Route 48.

Southam is on the A423 Coventry to Banbury road. Leamington Spa is the nearest railway station which is served by Chiltern Trains and CrossCountry Trains. It is eight miles to Southam which is accessible via the Lias Line Cycle Route using National Cycle Network Routes 41 and 48 described in this leaflet

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

NCN Route Information
www.sustrans.org.uk

For details of accommodation attractions and events contact Stratford Tourist Information Centre

Tel. +44(0)1789 264293
Email: tic@discover-stratford.com
Web site: www.discover-stratford.com



Linking
Shipston-on-Stour
and Southam

FELDON AND IRONSTONE VILLAGES CYCLE ROUTE



Shipston to Southam Cycle Route

Approximately 28 miles including spur to Burton Dassett Hills Country Park at 18 miles. If returning from the Country Park to Shipston take care in descending into Avon Dassett. The route is signed in both directions by National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 5  and NCN Route 48 .

DIRECTIONS FROM SHIPSTON

From High Street follow the NCN 5  towards Banbury. Immediately after the river bridge turn left onto NCN Route 48 . Follow  to the Tysoes and to Radway. Take care when travelling and turning right on the A422 and B4086. Follow  to Arlescote, Avon Dassett and Farnborough. The spur to the Burton Dassett Hills Country Park  is after Farnborough. Follow  to Fenny Compton, Knightcote Bishop's Itchington and Southam. The route continues to NCN Route 41 .

FROM SOUTHAM TO SHIPSTON THE ROUTE IS IN REVERSE.

South of Knightcote is a return loop to Southam. Follow  through Northend to the Country Park and onto Fenny Compton then as above – distance approximately 20 miles.

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

Lias Village Farmland

- Varied undulating topography with steep scarp often wooded slopes
- Narrow incised river valleys
- Well defined geometric pattern of small to medium sized fields
- Numerous hedgerow and roadside trees
- Disused quarries with semi-natural grassland and scrub
- Villages of brick and blue and white lias stone

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

The Wold

- Broad rounded hills capped by limestone
- Deep secluded valleys
- Rich red soils supporting productive arable farmland
- A large scale geometric field pattern
- Steep hillsides with unimproved grassland and scrub

Plateau Redlands and Edge Hill

- Flat tableland deeply incised by steep-sided river valleys
- Steep wooded slopes at the edge of the marlstone escarpment
- Large arable fields with red soils
- Unimproved grassland and scrub on steep valley sides
- Small villages in local orange coloured ironstone



1

Brailes Hill This outlying hill is typical of the Cotswolds near Shipston-on-Stour. Note the landmark Highwall Spinney on the summit of 760 feet (262 metres)

2

Windmill Hill A restored 18th century windmill on the site of earlier medieval mills.

3

Well Point and Stone Seats at Vale Health Centre Tysoe One of four decorated well points, or fountains and seats set into walls around the village. Villagers were encouraged to use them instead of wells to prevent the spread of diphtheria.

4

Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground Formerly an agricultural field and now a natural burial ground and nature reserve which is evolving into a mosaic of wildlife habitats.

5

Milepost Erected by Stratford to Edgehill Turnpike Trust in the 19th Century. Incorrectly positioned on the wrong side of the road informing travellers from whence they have come rather than to where they are going.

6

Edgehill and The Castle A sham castle which was begun in 1745 by gentleman architect Sanderson Miller as one of several eye-catchers on his Radway estate. His ideas became fashionable and he designed further Gothic revival extravaganzas. The building is now the Castle Inn.

7

Edgehill Battlefield The first and inconclusive battle of the English Civil War fought between the armies of King Charles I and the Parliamentarians on Sunday 23 October 1642.

8

Farnborough Hall Purchased by Ambrose Holbech in 1684 and still occupied by the same family who administer the property for the National Trust. The Terrace Walk, Obelisk and buildings, which were probably designed by Sanderson Miller of Radway, are memorable.

9

Burton Dassett Hills Country Park Once a quarry with a light railway the 100 acre park was created in 1971 from a group of ironstone hills. A medieval tower, known as The Beacon set in the Country Park, was possibly first used as a windmill and later converted to a look-out tower.

10

Weddington Hill Near the entrance to Weddington Farm, and the likely location of a medieval windmill.

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To publicise a Cycle Route between
Shipston-on-Stour and Southam

A Cycle Way between the Two Market Towns of Shipston-on-Stour and Southam following National Cycle Network Route 48

The Cycle Way passes through stunning countryside between the landscapes of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Warwickshire Feldon

A spur off the route takes the cyclist to the Burton Dassett Hills Country Park with breathtaking views of magnificent countryside

Photographs and descriptions feature interesting items which are passed including the National Trust's Farnborough Hall and the site of the first Civil War battle of Edgehill

The route mainly follows rural roads with some hills which can be taken at leisure. It is signed in both directions and there are intermediate return loops for those not wishing to make the complete journey

South of Shipston-on-Stour the route connects to Moreton-in-Marsh by the Two Towns Route described in a companion leaflet

North of Southam the route is signed to National Cycle Network Route 41 travelling northwards to Rugby or southwards to Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon

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

Enjoy your cycle ride in Warwickshire.

Shipston and Southam 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 leaflet Shipston-on-Stour Heritage Walks

The first mention of Southam is in 998 in a charter of King Ethelred but it is likely that an Anglo-Saxon village existed well before then. Originally it developed on ground rising from the Stowe valley where fishing and animal watering holes would have been available in the Rivers Stowe and Itchen. The name may derive from 'ham' (a settlement) on the River Sowe now the Stowe. In the Domesday Book it appears as Suham.

In 1227 a Charter was granted for a fair and market to sell local produce and animals. Another Charter was obtained in 1257 for a hiring or 'mop' fair which is still held annually in October. In the 18th and 19th centuries Southam became an important town on the coaching routes from London towards Birmingham and the north. The Welsh Road which runs to the east and west of the main Coventry Street was used from medieval times until the end of the 19th century as a drove road for cattle, sheep and geese on their way to the London markets from Wales.



Fires in the 18th century resulted in new development in the Georgian style and examples remain around the town. The Manor House, used by Charles I in 1642 during the Civil War, and now the chemist shop still exists as does the Olde Mint.

For further information see the leaflets Southam Town Trail and Holy Well Walk

Landscape Information

The visual character of a landscape is shaped by historical, ecological and physical (soils, rocks and landform) factors. This cycle route 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 route.

Vale Farmland lies between Shipston and Knightcote to the west of the route. It is a flat, open, hedged landscape with few roads or settlements and has wide views to rising ground on one or more sides.

Lias Village Farmland lies between Bishop's Itchington and Southam. This is an area of varied undulating topography dissected by the valley of the River Itchen and tributaries. The cement industry based on the lias clays has left an industrial imprint on the agricultural landscape

From Shipston-on-Stour to Arlescote the route is alongside the western boundary of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This area consists of two Cotswold landscapes known as Cotswold Fringe, and the Wold. 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.

Between Tysoe and Fenny Compton is the one area of Plateau Redlands and Edge Hill which is present in Warwickshire. Though physically an extension of the Cotswolds the character of the escarpment changes as the Jurassic limestone gives way to the underlying reddish marlstone which is also known as ironstone. This area has many similarities with the Northamptonshire Uplands.

