

Walk two overview

This turnpike-era themed walk along part of the old turnpike route includes historic mile markers, former tollhouses and evidence of an 1820s tramway.

Beginning in the market town of Shipston-on-Stour, it follows the route of the former Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Compton Turnpike north to Newbold on Stour traversing across country following the Shakespeare Way footpath for a while and then the Centenary Way before returning to Shipston. In all it is approximately 12 miles. There are shorter permutations, for example incorporating points of interest 7 to 17 only, perhaps centred on Newbold and taking in Halford Bridge (see map).

Start: Free public car park opposite The Old Mill, Shipston-on-Stour.

Lunch: White Hart Newbold on Stour (or start here on the shorter walk and return for lunch or the Halford Bridge Inn). You should normally be able to park in the White Hart car park but check with them first before doing so. There are also village shops at Newbold and Halford.

Getting there by car: From Stratford follow the A3400 south to Shipston-on-Stour (or Newbold for the shorter walk). From Chipping Norton follow the A3400 north to Shipston or further north to Newbold.

Getting there by bus: Stagecoach service 50 Stratford to Chipping Norton.

OS Map: Explorer 205



9 Carved milestone erected by the Shirley family of Ettington Park.



8 Newbold on Stour, the old turnpike in the 1910s.



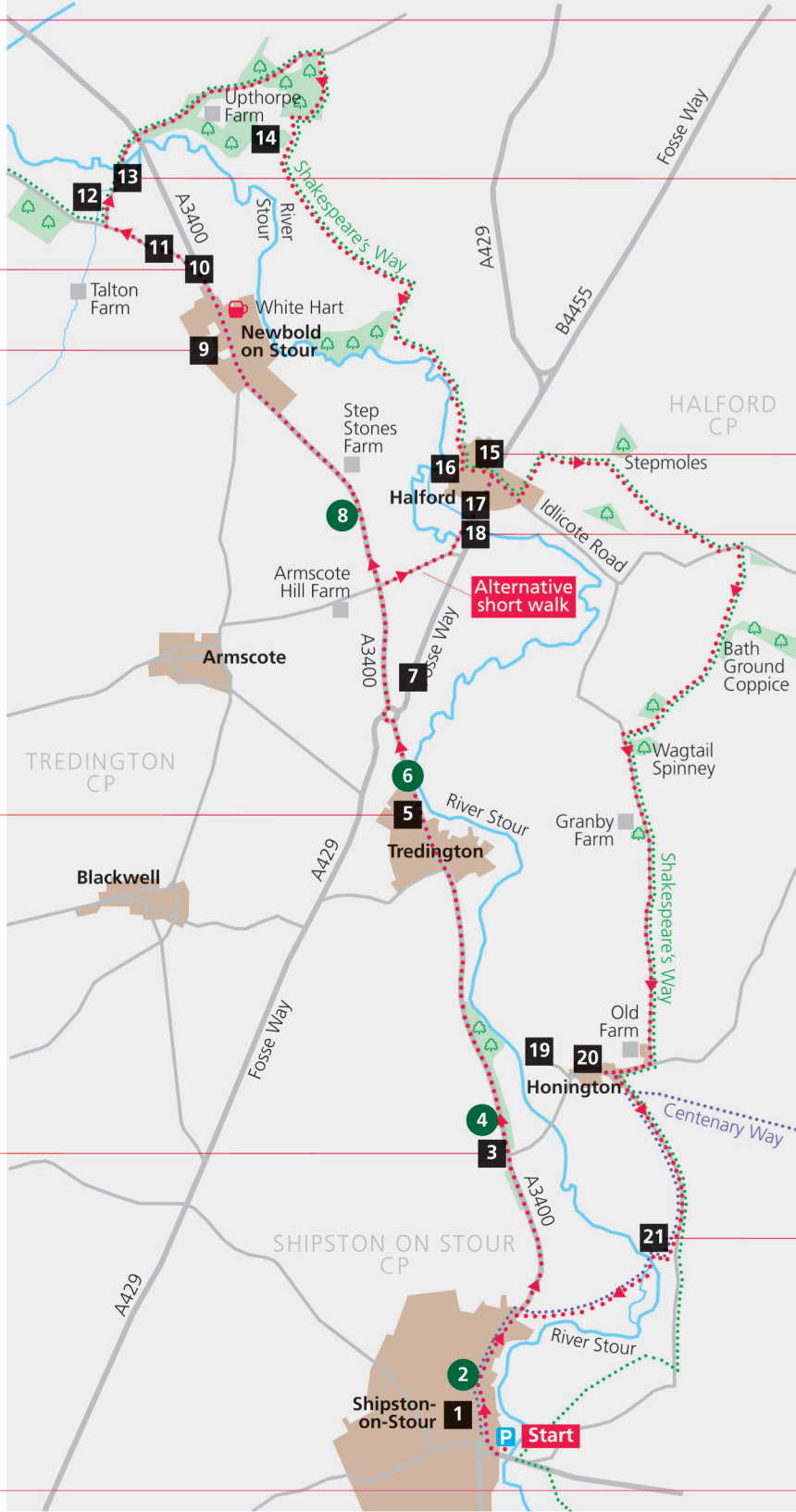
4 Tredington, The White Lion in the 1920s.



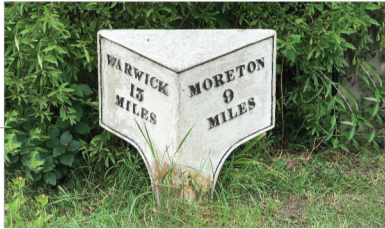
3 Honington Toll House in the 1920s.



Shipston-on-Stour Horsefair horse trough c1910.



12 Talton Mill with two workers and carts in the 1920s.



14 Halford, cast iron milepost at the junction of Queen Street with Fosse Way.



17 The Old Fosse Bridge at Halford in the 1930s.



Thomas Walton (carrier 1852-1936). During the 1850s and 60s Mr. Walton would have been using the Turnpike.



20 Fell Mill Farmhouse.

1 Shipston-on-Stour, once an important sheep market, derives its name from 'sheepwashtown'. During the c18th and early c19th the town was an important stagecoach staging post. Many former coaching inns remain in evidence here.

2 Restored cast iron milepost, shown in the front cover photograph, has formed the basis for the restoration of the remaining 6 mileposts along the former Stratford to Long Compton turnpike.

3 Honington Toll House at Honington Turn Gate, now Old Tollbar Cottage. Thought to have been built for the Turnpike Trust in the c19th.

4 Cast iron milepost discovered in Kenilworth in 2017 and restored in 2023.

5 St. Gregory's church, Tredington has Saxon origins and the tallest spire in Warwickshire. The front door shows the remains of bullet marks from the English Civil War.

6 Restored cast iron milepost.

7 Fosse Way. For the first few decades after the Roman invasion in AD43 the Fosse Way marked the western frontier of Roman rule in Iron Age Britain.

8 Restored cast iron milepost.

9 Former toll house at Newbold on Stour Gate, now Tollgate. The principal structure is thought to have been built for the Turnpike Trust in the c19th as a lodge house with protruding front.

10 Carved milestone erected by the Shirley family of Ettington Park replacing an earlier cast iron milepost of the type restored along the former turnpike. Note the inscription on one of the shields which reads: '6 Miles/To Shakspeare's [sic] Town whose Name/ Is known throughout the Earth/To Shipstone 4 whose lesser Fame/ Boasts no such Poet's Birth.'

11 Line of the **Stratford to Moreton Tramway** where it crosses the original route of the Turnpike road. The tramway was established in 1825, one of the first railways. At Newbold there was a wharf which was the site of Thomas Hutchings' lime kilns until about 1895. There is a restored wagon by Cox's Yard in Stratford displaying his name.

12 Talton House is a grade II listed building – late c17th with c18th additions.

13 Talton Mill is mentioned in 1308. Corn milling ceased in 1938. All that remains is the wheelpit. There is a cafe and farmshop here.

14 Ettington Park and Manor has been held by the Shirley family since the Domesday Survey in 1086 and possibly long before. No other family in England is known to be able to make such a claim.

15 Cast iron milepost at junction of Fosse Way with Queen Street.

16 Halford village is where the Fosse Way crosses the river Stour. By the river, but very difficult to see, are the earthworks and buried remains of Halford Castle.

7 Halford Bridge Inn is a grade II listed c18th former coaching inn.

18 Halford Bridge is first mentioned in the c13th, and it is during the English Civil War that the bridge's significance becomes obvious. Demolished first by the Royalists in 1644, it was later destroyed by the Parliamentarians.

19 Honington Hall can be seen in the distance to the west. It is a grade I listed building constructed in 1682.

20 Honington village is worth a short detour. It is centred around a triangular green. The River Stour flows west of the village and the road to the south crosses it by a bridge of c1685.

21 Fell Mill Farmhouse and attached mill is a grade II listed building. It has a Datestone 'WP/1697'.

Design: www.richardmarshall-hardy.com



Finding the Way

Heritage Lottery funded Milepost restoration projects along the former Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Compton Turnpike. Discover these unique, restored mileposts while exploring the attractive countryside of South Warwickshire on two walks.



This photograph is the only evidence, to date, of a complete milepost. It was taken in Church Street, Shipston on Stour c1913.

The HLF funded Projects have restored the remaining seven mileposts to their functioning state.



History of Milestones and Waymarkers



Roman waymarker.

The Romans laid good metalled roads to move soldiers and supplies quickly across their Empire: they measured distance to aid timing and efficiency, marking every thousandth double-step with a large cylindrical stone. 117 still survive in the UK. After Roman times roads developed to meet local community needs and by the middle of the c16th local parishes were made responsible for their upkeep.

At this time travel by road was slow and difficult. The sunken lanes became quagmires in wet weather and occasionally both horses and riders were drowned. It took 16 days to cover 400 miles from London to Edinburgh. So Turnpike Trusts were set up, by Acts of Parliament from 1706 to the 1840s.

Groups of local worthies raised money to build stretches of road and then charged the users tolls to pay for it.

The name ‘turnpike’ comes from the spiked barrier at the Toll Gate or Booth. The poor bitterly resented having to pay to use the roads and there were anti-turnpike riots.

From the 1840s, rail travel overtook road for longer journeys and many turnpike trusts were wound up. In 1888, the new County Councils were given responsibility for main roads and rural district councils for minor routes. As faster motorised transport developed so the importance of the milestones waned.

‘Milestone’ is a generic term, including mileposts made of cast iron. Such waymarkers are fast disappearing; around 9000 are thought to survive in the UK. Most were removed or defaced in World War II to baffle potential German invaders and not all were replaced afterwards. Many have been demolished as roads have been widened, or have been victims of collision damage, or have been smashed by hedge-cutters or flails. Nowadays, roadside milestones generally fall within the remit of the local Highways Authority or the Highways Agency and their contractors.

The Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Compton Turnpike Trust

The Turnpike Trust was set up by an Act of Parliament granted in 1729, one of the earliest Trusts. It was modified by subsequent Acts. The last Act (1818) included provisions for the length of the Turnpike to be extended from Long Compton to the Inn at Chapel House, just south of the Banbury-Chipping Norton crossroads along a new stretch of road also sanctioned in the same Act.

The Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Compton Trust ceased functioning in the 1860s when responsibility for roads passed to Highways Boards and then to County Councils. It was wound up finally in 1877.

The Turnpike Trust existed for over 130 years and during that time mile markers were erected along its course. However there is a mystery as to why the very decorative and nationally unique cast iron mileposts were erected along the Turnpike, why they appear to stop at Newbold on Stour rather than Stratford, who designed them, who instructed their manufacture and when were they erected?

What possible evidence is there? One of the contractors for the new road south of Long Compton, completed in 1825, was a John Roe (or Rowe), who was also a contractor for the Moreton-in-Marsh to Stratford-upon-Avon Tramway, constructed at around the same time. He received large sums from the Trust, recorded in the Accounts but without any detail. Did his work include providing and erecting the new mileposts? There was certainly much communication between the Turnpike Trustees and the promoters of the Tramway since they shared some of the route.

Another helpful pointer has come from the Victoria and Albert Museum, who have dated the acanthus leaf design of the decoration on the mileposts to 1810 to 1840.

Notes on the long distance footpaths featured along these walks:
Shakespeare’s Way – follows a path that Shakespeare may have followed between Stratford and London.
Centenary Way – marks the centenary of the governance by County Councils 1889-1989.

Walk one overview

This turnpike-era themed walk includes three restored mileposts, a former tollhouse, and evidence of an older turnpike route.

Starting at Long Compton the route briefly follows the former turnpike north before heading west and then diverting to glimpse the second restored milepost. It then turns north to Little Welford where, just beyond, lies the third restored milepost. Turning east the route is mainly tarmac road with wonderful views passing through Weston Park before descending from Harrow Hill back to Long Compton. In all it is approximately 7 miles.

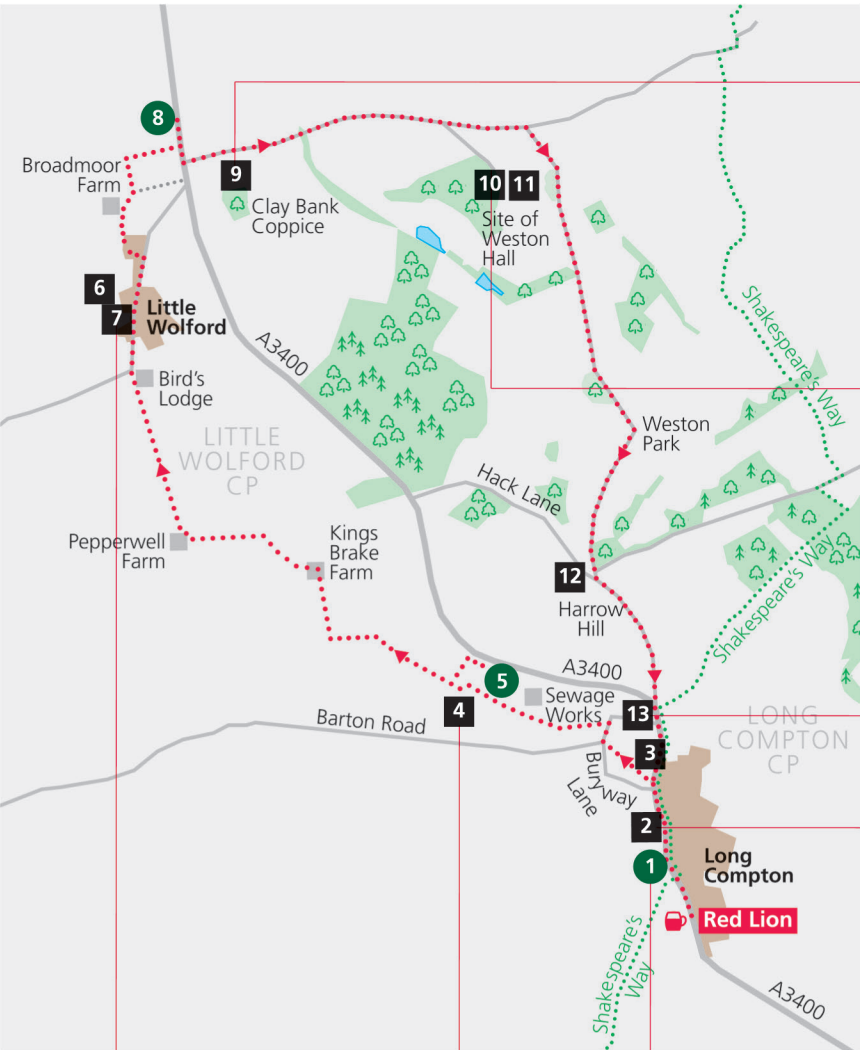
Start: You should normally be able to park in the Red Lion car park but check with them first before doing so – you might like sustenance here before you set off or on your return (see below) later on. Note: Other than the Red Lion and the Village Store, a few hundred metres north, there are no other facilities on the walk.

Lunch: The Red Lion, Long Compton. The Village Store, Long Compton has limited takeaway sandwiches but you can normally order in advance.

Getting there by car: From Stratford-upon-Avon follow the A3400 south to Long Compton; from Chipping Norton direction follow the A3400 north to Long Compton.

Getting there by bus: Stagecoach service 50 Stratford-upon-Avon to Chipping Norton.

OS Map: OL45



7 Public drinking fountain.



4 Long Compton Mill in the 1900s.



1 Line drawing of the restored milepost in Long Compton.



9 The original Turnpike route sweeping up to Clay Bank Coppice



10 Long Compton, Weston Hall, 27 May 1931.



13 Long Compton Toll House.



Long Compton village street in the 1910s. Compare with the scene today.

1 On the verge by the **Long Compton Village Hall** is a restored cast iron milepost, aided by Heritage Lottery funding.

2 Just south of the **village shop** is a drinking fountain above which has been preserved the base of the medieval village cross.

3 **Long Compton Church** is easily recognisable from the thatched lychgate formerly part of a row of cottages.

4 **Long Compton Mill**, by the Nethercote Brook, probably sits on the site of the Mill mentioned in the Domesday Survey.

5 Restored **cast iron milepost** (dangerous to walk to directly because of narrow unpaved verge, so best to view from footpath gate by the A3400).

6 **Little Welford Manor House** has a probable c15th stone north range and a c16th west wing addition, but by 1840 was in decay. It was bought and restored by Sir George Philips.

7 In a wall on the road side by Little Welford Manor House is a **public drinking fountain** set in a recess partly made up of architectural fragments including pieces of c15th windows and a number of early c17th carved stones.

8 Restored **cast iron milepost**, a grade II listed building.

9 The original turnpike road sweeping up to **Clay Bank Coppice**. A new route to the SW (now the present route of the A3400) was built c1845 instigated by Sir George Philips allegedly because the original route allowed public views across to his new house at Weston Park which he wanted to prevent.

10 **Weston Park** occupies the site of the depopulated hamlet of Weston-by-Cherington. The old seat of the Sheldon family was pulled down and a new Weston Hall was built by Sir George Philips about 1830 in the style of the Gothic Revival. It was demolished in 1932.

11 The **Sheldon Tapestry Map** of Warwickshire, commissioned in the late 1580s by Ralph Sheldon to decorate his newly built house at Weston Park, can be seen at the Market Hall Museum, Warwick. It is one of the earliest surviving maps showing roads in the County, some of which would later become turnpiked.

12 A small section of the **original turnpike** road near the summit of its route over Harrow Hill prior to the construction of the new road around the base of the hill.

13 **Long Compton Toll House**, a grade II listed former toll house at Long Compton Gate, now Toll Cottage. The principal structure is thought to have been built for the Turnpike Trust in the c19th.

Please honour The Countryside Code (www.naturalengland.org.uk)

While every effort has been made to ensure that the details given in the Society’s walks are accurate, no liability can be accepted by the Society for any inaccuracies or omissions.

You can find more details of the routes and information about the Milepost Restoration Project on www.findingtheway.org.uk and www.findingthewaynow.com