

Parks and Rides

A walk through lovely horsey parkland to a pretty village and return via a secluded valley.

Distance 9.2km (5.8 miles), Walking Time approx 2.5 hours (Grade A/B on scale A = easy to D = hard)

Starts & finishes at the Goods Shed, adjacent to the free long stay car park; point 1 on map

Refreshments: choice in Tetbury, or Cat and Custard Pot in Shipton Moyne



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- A** Goods Shed Arts Centre: this building is all that remains of Tetbury railway station, the terminus of the branch from Kemble. The railway opened in 1889 with but was one of the first to be closed in the Beeching cuts in 1964. It is now the arts and entertainment facility for the town.
- B** Market Hall: the grade I listed Market Hall is an attractively restored pillared building which dates to 1655. Originally three stories high, it was rebuilt and reduced to the present two stories in 1817. Over the years it has seen service as a market place, fire station, and gaol. The cupola on top was added to mark Queen Victoria's Jubilee.
- C** Bath Bridge: built in 1775 by a local mason, Thomas Webb, to ease the incline of the Bath to Cirencester road, it became the principal entry to the south of the town. It replaced the old packhorse bridge and is said to be the "most outstanding example of an arched dry stone road bridge in the country". Built of coarse rubble with arches of differing sizes for reasons unknown. Granted Grade 2 Listed Building status in 1985.
- D** Estcourt Park: the Estcourt family lived here from 1303 and the park was created as early as 1515. The original Manor House was replaced by the much larger Estcourt House in 1770 and the estate and pleasure gardens were enlarged and improved throughout the 19th century. The house itself was demolished in 1964, though the stables, farm buildings and several smaller houses remain. In 1996 the estate was sold, so passing from the Estcourt family after seven centuries. The estate (1400 acres) is now run by an international horse racing and thoroughbred breeding enterprise.
- E** St John the Baptist Church: medieval parish church of Shipton Moyne, largely rebuilt in 1865, it has close ties to the Estcourt family, several members of which are entombed within, as are many of the Hodges, another family important in the early history of the village.
- F** The Cat & Custard Pot: inn built in the early 1700s by the Estcourt family who owned much of Shipton Moyne. It has been an off-license and ale house / village store, a bakery and a post office until 1924 when the Estcourts sold it to the Stroud Brewery Co.
- G** Wiltshire Bridge: strictly a causeway, built to ease the steep incline into town. The stream running beneath marked the Gloucestershire/Wiltshire border until 1935 when the border was to where the old Roman road (Fosseway) crosses the Tetbury – Malmesbury road.



Description

- 1 Facing away from the Goods Shed main entrance, cross the footbridge over the stream directly ahead. Pass Millennium Green on the right, and turn left up Gumstool Hill (steep). At the top turn right, cross the road and turn left into Church Street just before the Market Hall. Continue along Church Street, passing St Marys' Church on the left, then over Bath Bridge. As the road levels out, pass through a metal kissing gate on the left (path signposted) continuing up the field with a dry stone wall to the right. Cross a wooden stile in a wire fence, then another wooden stile by a converted barn.
- 2 Turn right, then immediately left along a track (permissive path) until passing through a pedestrian gate next to a five-barred gate. Continue ahead between the avenue of lime trees until reaching a gate. Go through the gate, turn right before the next five-barred gate, and walk between the field's right hand side wall and wooden fence. Ignore the hunting gate on the right (the return journey passes this point).
- 3 Walk for 500m until path blocked by a gate, turn sharply right, then descend a steep slope (slippery after wet weather). The path turns left, then right across an old stone packhorse bridge, then a wooden bridge across a tributary of the River Avon. Cross the stile into Estcourt Park, and continue up the rising parkland towards a white marker post. Turn right on to a private drive, eventually passing through a gate and alongside the high stone walls of the old gardens of Estcourt House. Immediately after the last house on the right, leave the drive and bear right to a stile then a gate in the wooden boundary fence. Cross the field diagonally to a gate on the far side. (Optionally, if horses are in the field, take the permissive path around the field to reach the gate.) Go through the gate, over the stile ahead, and turn right to pass through another gate. Cross the field, then passing through a gate slightly to the left. Cross the ride and follow the path to the right, with the field fence immediately to the left. Cross the stile in the hedge ahead.
- 4 Turn left and follow this lane (ignore fork to Park Farm), turning sharply right to a wide gate just before a private house. Pass through the gate and cross a field, noting the squat tower of St John the Baptist church in the mid distance. Cross a stile to the left of the gate ahead, then cross the field to a stone stile between two gates. Pass through an avenue of trees to reach the churchyard through a kissing gate. Walk round the church, then take the lane to the main street of Shipton Moyne. Turn right, passing the Cat and Custard Pot pub.
- 5 Continue by following the road out of the village towards Tetbury for over 1km. Take the farm track to the right in front of two cottages, then turn left after passing a derelict building. Follow the waymarked route through a wide gate and drop steeply to cross a wooden bridge over a stream (possibly dry). Turn right along the valley, roughly following the course of the stream and passing through two gateways. At a third gateway cross an often boggy area of ground, then after 150m pass through a hunting gate on the bank to the right (this point was passed on the outward journey).
- 6 Turn left along the path that follows the field boundary until reaching large double wooden gates. Ignoring the left turn to the avenue of lime trees, go past the right-hand gate and follow the path straight ahead (signposted) with the fence to the left. Cross a stone stile and go on down through a kissing gate. Turn left to follow the road over a bridge and uphill to the Malmesbury Road.
- 7 Cross the road, go through a metal gate (signposted Tetbury Trail), and continue to the Goods Shed, passing the site of the old railway station.

