

# UNCOVER LEICESTERSHIRE'S HISTORIC TOWNS AND VILLAGES

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THE STORY TRAILS

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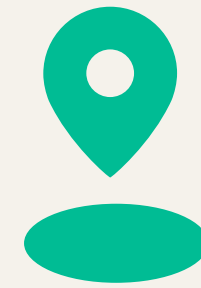


# WELCOME TO A NEW APPROACH IN TELLING OUR STORIES.

From North to South and East to West, every corner of Leicestershire showcases the centuries of history that have shaped its delightful market towns and pretty-as-a-picture villages.

There is so much to see and do as you admire ancient ruins and heritage buildings, explore idyllic landscapes and discover markets and inns that have been doing business for hundreds of years. Climb towers scarred by Civil War soldiers, journey back in time on heritage railways, and even enjoy a day at the 'beach' right here in landlocked Leicestershire. Just choose your destination and get ready for a day out to remember.

**JOIN US ON THIS FASCINATING  
TOUR TO FIND OUT MORE.**



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# POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Ashby de la Zouch
2. Woodhouse Eaves, Quorn, Rothley, Mountsorrel
3. Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth Beauchamp, Smeeton Westerby
4. Loughborough
5. Lutterworth
6. Market Bosworth
7. Market Harborough
8. Melton Mowbray
9. Cosby







## ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

Ashby de la Zouch may sound French, but this pretty town is located in North West Leicestershire and surrounded by the beauty of the National Forest.

At its centre, the remains of Ashby Castle are steeped in history. A setting in Sir Walter Scott's 'Ivanhoe', the castle was never finished and its master executed at the hands of king-in-waiting Richard III. Climb its Civil War-damaged tower for fabulous views, before exploring picturesque Market Street, with its Elizabethan timber-framed buildings and independent shops.

The town hosts festivals throughout the year, as well as regular open-air markets. Swimmers can also enjoy the open air, as Ashby is home to one of the few lidos in the Midlands, with its very own sandpit.



## CHARNWOOD VILLAGES

Wonderful places for a wander, Charnwood's picturesque villages ooze charm. Every building seems to blend into the surrounding countryside, with slate roofs and stone walls all crafted from locally quarried materials.

For refreshments after a cycle or a walk in Charnwood Forest, cafés and tearooms offer irresistible treats, and riverside pubs and ancient coaching inns welcome drinkers and diners alike.

For something extra special, Mountsorrel has the county's only Michelin starred restaurant. John's House is located at Stonehurst Family Farm, which is also open to visitors.

Trains on the historic Great Central Railway stop at 'home of the hunt' Quorn, and Rothley, where unique accommodation is offered in the 16th century Rothley Court Hotel.



## KIBWORTH VILLAGES

Known collectively as Kibworth Villages, Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth Beauchamp and Smeeton Westerby can be discovered via a trio of heritage walking trails.

The unlikely stars of BBC documentary 'Michael Wood's Story of England', they showcase aspects of history from as far back as the Bronze Age.

Kibworth Harcourt boasts many listed buildings, including 18th century coaching inn The Coach & Horses, and a mound thought to be a 12th century motte and bailey fortress.

A highlight in Kibworth Beauchamp is the remains of the old Grammar School, believed to have been founded around 1359, and in Smeeton Westerby you can walk down Beaker Close. The road is named after an ancient Beaker burial ground discovered here.





## LOUGHBOROUGH

Loughborough's market and annual fair were granted royal charter in 1221 by King Henry III. Both still hugely popular, stalls take over Market Place on Thursdays and Saturdays, and fairground rides move in every November for four days of dodgems and candyfloss.

The town's 19th century Grade II-listed Town Hall offers entertainment year-round, with plays, musicals, comedians and musicians all taking their turn in the spotlight.

Music is also beautifully made in the town's unique Victorian bell foundry. The only one of its kind in the UK, iconic commissions include Great Paul, the largest bell in Britain, which hangs in St Paul's Cathedral.



## LUTTERWORTH

An 18th century coaching town due to its central location, Lutterworth's links to travel and transport don't stop there.

It was here that engineer Frank Whittle famously worked on the development of the first jet engine. This explains the head-turning full-size replica aircraft that sits on a roundabout at the town's entrance.

Sir Frank's achievements are documented at Lutterworth & District Museum, which also tells the story of 14th century church reformer John Wycliffe. Whilst serving as Rector of Lutterworth, he encouraged the first translation of the Bible from Latin to English, and memorials to his life and work can be seen at St Mary's Church.



## MARKET BOSWORTH

It's impossible to think about Market Bosworth without thinking of Richard III, Henry Tudor and the bloody battle that took place right on its doorstep. The Middle Ages came to an end after the Battle of Bosworth Field, but nearby Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre and Country Park is not the only reason to visit.

The delightful market town itself is the definition of old-world charm. Its market square is lined with Georgian architecture, and refreshments can be enjoyed in former coaching inns, and listed buildings such as The Black Horse and Softleys.

For rail buffs, the town is a stop on the historic Battlefield Line, and walkers and cyclists can explore the great outdoors at Market Bosworth Country Park.





## MARKET HARBOROUGH

With ancient buildings, ample opportunities for shopping and a river flowing right through it, Market Harborough is a pleasure to explore.

Regular markets are held beneath the timber-framed Old Grammar School, and nearby Harborough Museum, housed in a Victorian corset factory, documents Harborough's past. Discover shops selling everything from organic meat and artisan chocolates to ladieswear and jewellery, and stop for a bite to eat in bars and restaurants full of character. The Three Swans Hotel, in the centre of town, is rumoured to have been visited by King Charles I on the eve of the Battle of Naseby. Further out of town, the Union Wharf Marina is a popular destination offering a range of leisure activities including narrowboat hire.



## MELTON MOWBRAY

When the Great North Road passed through Melton Mowbray so did 11 reigning kings between 1194 and 1487. The original road may be gone but connections to royalty and the aristocracy remain.

A Blue Plaque near St Mary's Church pinpoints Richard I's visit, and the Anne of Cleves pub tells the story of Henry VIII's fourth wife.

As the 'Fox Hunting Capital', it's where Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson cemented their relationship and his abdication, and where the boisterous behaviour of the Marquis of Waterford is said to have coined the phrase 'Painting the Town Red'.

Better known now as 'Rural Capital of Food', the chance to buy Melton Mowbray pork pies and Stilton cheese is reason enough to visit.



## COSBY

First mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, Cosby's original Scandinavian name, Cossebi, hints that the village probably existed several hundred years earlier.

Surviving historic landmarks include the mid-15th century Tithe Barn, now open as a deli café, and the older still 14th century St Michael and All Angels Parish Church. Both are a stone's throw from Brooks Edge House, which has fascinating links to the English Civil War. Home to the Armstons for more than 800 years, according to legend, it is where the son of this pro-Royalist family was questioned by Parliamentarians. This act was later depicted in the famous oil-on-canvas by William Frederick Yeames entitled 'When Did You Last See Your Father'.





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