

Around Shrivenham



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INTRODUCTION

This is an outline guide to some of the many places of interest in the neighbourhood of Shrivenham. A brief historical introduction to the local area is followed by notes on individual places. These are not intended to be comprehensive, but visitors from overseas in particular may be glad to have an initial idea of what the region has to offer. Further information can be obtained from local guidebooks, and the annual publication 'Historic Houses'.

The opening times mentioned in some cases may change from year to year, so it would be wise to check. The distances from Shrivenham are approximate.

Many minds have contributed to this compilation and Snave did the drawings. I would like to express our thanks to all who helped.

F J M Farley
Dean
January 1971

SOME LOCAL HISTORY

The beginning is hard to imagine. 100 million years ago this place was at the bottom of the sea and the clay and sand that had been deposited were being covered up by the remains of countless small creatures until a layer, several hundred feet thick, of chalk was over everything.

In those years no men existed anywhere on earth, but you can pick up fossil sea creatures that lived then.

With the passing of millions of years, the sea bed rose and became land, and there was time for rain and rivers to wash away some of the chalk, though you can see the edge of the remaining patch, which covers most of the country south as far as Salisbury, and stretches eastwards to Kent and north-eastwards to Flamborough Head.

The wearing away of the chalk was partly due to the glaciers of the Ice Ages which came nearly to the Thames. The glaciers retreated about 10,000 years ago, and by then there were men living on the Downs. For weapons and hammers they used the flints they found, sometimes chipping bits off them to improve the shape.

By 2500 BC, 4500 years ago, the men had learnt to chip flints to neat shapes, arrow heads, scrapers for preparing skins to wear, and pointed flints for boring holes. They could make and 'fire' pottery. They buried their dead with some ceremony. In fact, they left so much lying around that we can find out a great deal about them, though there are many things which still puzzle us.

THE RIDGEWAY

A grassy track runs along the northern edge of the chalk Downs. It was made by the feet of those who have walked along this comparatively dry, safe route for thousands of years, avoiding our valley which in Stone Age times was a swampy forest full of wild boar, wolves and bears.

BARROWS

On Ordnance Maps of this district there are many mounds of earth labelled tumuli. These are burial mounds of the ancient peoples. The oldest are 'long barrows' of the Stone Age, mounds sometimes as long as a football pitch and half as wide, heaped over a cavity of stone slabs made to contain the bodies.

One of these is to be seen in a clump of trees close to the Ridgeway and a mile and a half west of the White Horse. The weather of more than 4000 years has laid bare the stones, for this tomb is a thousand years older than Stonehenge. Many centuries later, the Danish invaders of the Dark Ages found these stone slabs and attached to them a story of their own blacksmith god, Wayland. Since then the place has been called Wayland's Smithy, and local legend says that if you leave your horse tied there overnight with a silver coin on the flat slab, you will find next morning that Wayland the Smith has shod the horse and accepted the coin in payment. It is odd that the stones, put there by men who had never seen iron, should come to be named after a blacksmith.

More recent peoples buried their dead in Round Barrows, some a plain mound such as the Korean natives still make, some in the form of a ring and some (Bell Barrows) with both. In them have been found bones, pottery and weapons of stone and bronze.

TEMPLES

The best known of the ancient temples is Stonehenge. As it is not far from Salisbury Plain District Headquarters, one of the stone arches is shown in the District flash. According to a recent book by Fred Hoyle the stones were used for predicting eclipses.

An older and more impressive temple than Stonehenge lies 12 miles south-west of Swindon at Avebury. This temple consists of a great ring of heaped earth, about a mile round, with a ditch inside it from which the embankment was dug. The makers had small picks of deer antlers and presumably baskets to carry earth. Inside the ditch again is a circle of great stones, and independent circles stand on the flat central space. An avenue of stones runs from the temple southwards for a mile.

Many of the stones were broken up by the farmers two or three hundred years ago, but when the site was carefully excavated by archaeologists just before the war, concrete markers were set up in place of the missing ones. Hollows in the solid chalk showed where they had been.

The village, which lies within the temple boundary, is largely built of the material of the broken-up stones. One farmer boasted that he had got two cottages out of one stone. Another stone fell and killed a man seven hundred years ago; nobody could remove the stone until the recent excavations were made. The contents of the man's pockets are in the Avebury Museum.

If you go to Avebury you should visit this little museum, after walking round the earthworks, and look at the collection of the belongings of the men who lived there 2000 years before the Romans came.

Near the Avebury temple is a huge mound of earth called Silbury Hill. Men piled it up thousands of years ago, but nobody knows why. It must have had something to do with the temple. Many barrows are visible on the hills round Avebury.

FORTS

Just above the Uffington White Horse can be seen the banks or earthworks of a fort, made probably about 300 years BC during the Early Iron Age. To appreciate the labour of the builders one has to climb over the earthworks into the fort. This one is called Uffington Castle. On Liddington Hill south of Swindon is another, and further west again, near Wroughton, is Barbury Castle.

THE WHITE HORSE

Reference has already been made to the strange creature cut in the turf on the crest of the Downs, called the Uffington White Horse. This is the oldest of the many White Horses of the chalk Downs. The local legend that it was cut to commemorate the victory of King Alfred over the Danes in 871 AD, must give an error of a thousand years in the date.

Other local traditions say that Dragon Hill, the strange flat-topped hill in the 'Manger' below the Horse, was the spot where St. George of England slew the dragon, and that the bare patch of chalk on the top is due to the poisonous effect of the dragon's blood. If you doubt this, go and see the grassless patch for yourself!

ROMAN BRITAIN

The first Roman attempts to invade Britain were those of Julius Caesar in 55 and 54 BC, but they did not establish control over much of the country before 50 AD.

There are several traces of the Roman rule near here. The Roman road, Ermin Street crosses the Shrivenham-Swindon road at the traffic lights at Stratton St. Margaret. Another stretch of Roman road is the straight one from Chisledon to Ogbourne St. George.

A site of a Roman farmhouse is known to exist at Woolstone, only 2½ miles south of the College. A tiled floor was discovered there, eight or nine inches below the ground in 1884.

In an ancient well discovered at Watchfield, Roman pottery was found with Roman coins minted between 293 and 296 AD.

MODERN TIMES

It is always interesting to guess the date of buildings. One can then try to imagine what the place was like before those buildings came. In 1953 the married quarters on each side of the road north-east of Shrivenham were started. During the war Zebra Camp, the Globe Cinema and the Nissen huts were built. The United States Army then occupied the College area, and during 1945 had a 'University' here for some months until hostilities ceased.

The large buildings of the Royal Military College of Science were originally built to house two Royal Artillery units and bear the date 1938.

In 1935 Shrivenham was a small village with an infrequent bus service and did not stretch further than the lodge at Shrivenham House. Beckett Hall was rebuilt 150 years ago on the site of the older manor house.

SWINDON

Swindon is an industrial town which seems to have grown up in the wrong place. The country around is agricultural, the lower ground being used for mixed farming while in the old days, before people wore so much cotton, rayon or nylon, the Downs were covered with sheep. Most industrial towns are near coalfields, but this area has no coalmines, iron mines or any of the resources of industry. How did Swindon happen?

The town is in two parts. The old part at the top of the hill was a small market town or a village for a thousand years or more. Even one hundred years ago it was not as big as Faringdon is now and old maps, which show Marlborough as a bigish important place, omit Swindon. Eventually the tiny village grew. Charles II gave it a charter to hold a cattle market and farmers still come in from the surrounding country every Monday. At one time, so much trade was done by farmers that a solid stone-built Corn Exchange was provided. Its trade diminished until the building became a cinema, then a dance hall and sometimes a skating rink. However, if you ask a bus conductor for the Corn Exchange, he will still give you a ticket to the 'Locarno'.

New Swindon is the part at the foot of the hill, on the north side. It began just over 100 years ago when a famous engineer, Brunel, was choosing a route for a new railway to connect London with the West Country. He picked the flattest ground he could find, so, having cut through the chalk downs at Goring, he brought his line down the Vale of the White Horse, south of Shrivenham, north of Swindon and on to Bath and Bristol. He did not bend the line about to make it pass near little villages - he did not foresee the Royal Military College of Science!

He had to dig earth out of tunnels and cuttings to keep gradients slight and he dumped this earth where the ground dipped to make embankments. One of these runs beside the road from Swindon to Shrivenham. On the other side of the road lies the old canal which was put out of business by the new railway. It now provides space in Swindon for carparks, a site for an annual swan's nest, and a stickleback fishing-ground for small boys.

Halfway along this line, Brunel was going to build a factory to make rolling stock and equipment for his railway. The story goes that, having reached a certain spot where there were poorish fields, likely to go cheap, Brunel picked up and threw a stone. Where it landed he had a post driven in to mark the site of the future works. This was a mile and a half north of the little market town of Swindon.

Once the site had been decided, rows of new streets were made with closely packed houses for the workers, the streets you can see round the station and the works. People came from Wales and from London to live and work in the new town. Many farm workers left the surrounding countryside so that the villages declined. One village Snap (Grid Ref. 2276 on OS 1" Sheet 157), lost its entire population and the cottages were left empty by 1900; their roofless shells were still there in 1937 but have almost certainly vanished by now.

Swindon grew rapidly to become the largest town in Wiltshire. The Mechanics' Institute of the railway workers was installed in its own buildings, and had its own library, swimming baths, hospital (which is now demolished), recreation rooms and theatre: some of these have passed to outside control.

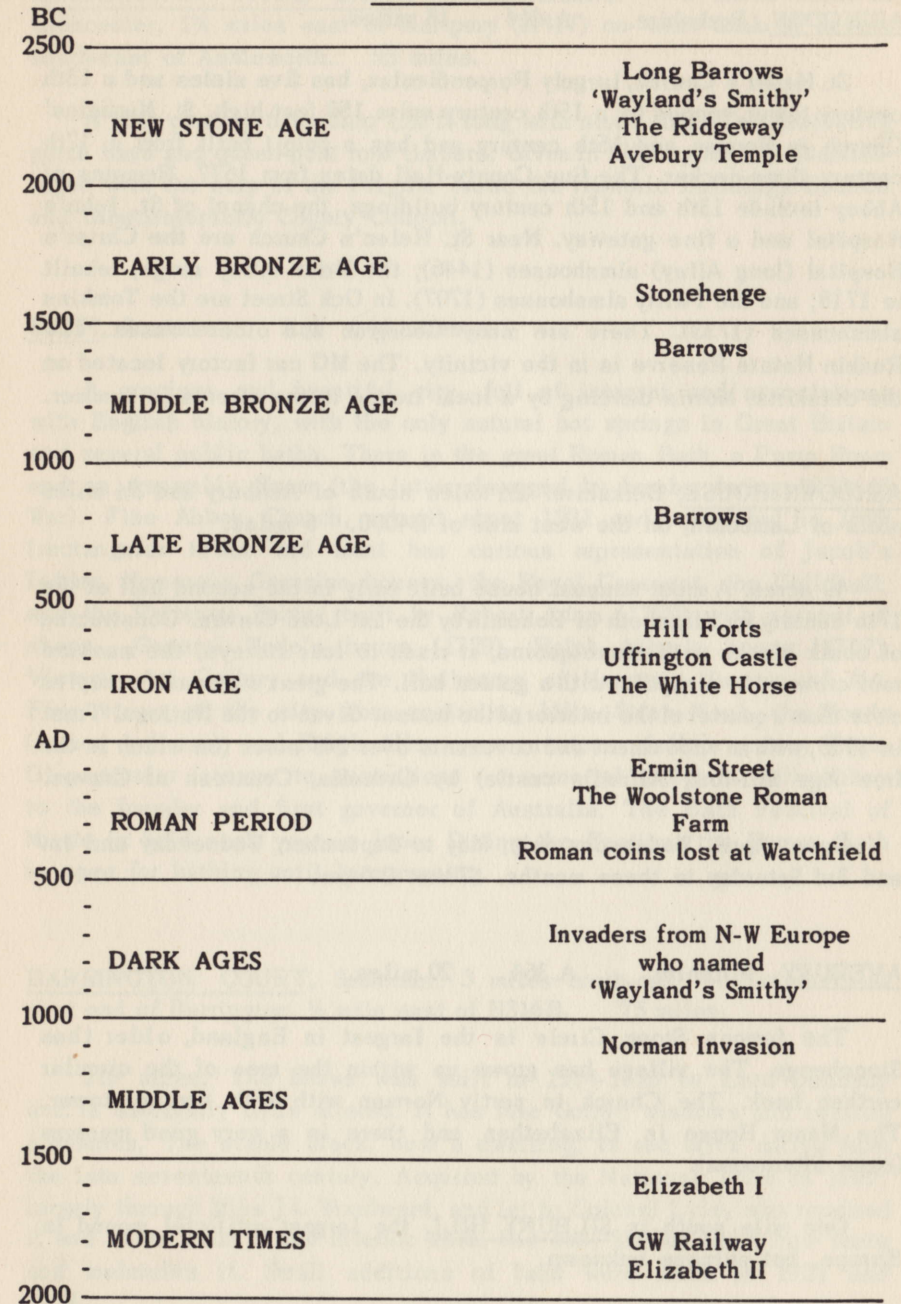
QUARRIES

The crest of the hill of Old Swindon is made of the same rocks as Portland Bill. The lower part of the town is on clay. You will notice a number of houses built of Portland stone; this came from quarries on the hill.

When the good building stone was used up, the quarries made cement from the more crumbly limestone remaining, and many houses built between the world wars are of cast concrete blocks.

The Memorial Gardens in Groundwell Road are in a disused clay pit that served a brick and tile factory from which many of the Victorian, decorated house fronts must have come.

TIME SCALE



ABINGDON, Berkshire. A.414 18 miles.

St. Helen's Church, largely Perpendicular, has five aisles and a 13th century tower, topped by a 15th century spire 150 feet high. St. Nicholas' Church is Norman and 15th century and has a pulpit built from a 17th century three-decker. The fine County Hall dates from 1677. Remains of Abbey include 13th and 15th century buildings, the chapel of St. John's Hospital and a fine gateway. Near St. Helen's Church are the Christ's Hospital (long Alley) almshouses (1446); the Brick Alley range, rebuilt in 1718; and the Twitty almshouses (1707). In Ock Street are the Tomkins almshouses (1733). There are many Georgian and older houses. The Ruskin Nature Reserve is in the vicinity. The MG car factory located on the outskirts. Morris dancing by a local troupe in the streets in summer.

ASHDOWN HOUSE, Berkshire. 2½ miles south of Ashbury and 3½ miles north of Lambourn, on the west side of B4000. 6 miles.

40 acres. A most unusual house built early in the second half of the 17th century for Elizabeth of Bohemia by the 1st Lord Craven. Constructed of chalk blocks with stone quoins, it rises to four storeys, the mansard roof crowned by a cupola, with a golden ball. The great staircase occupies more than a quarter of the interior of the house. Given to the National Trust in 1956, with an endowment and covenants over 248 acres (on which is the Iron Age hill-fort, Alfred's castle) by Comelia, Countess of Craven.

Open: April, Wednesday only; May to September, Wednesday and 1st and 3rd Saturday in these months. Time: 2-6 pm.

AVEBURY, Wiltshire. A.361 20 miles.

The famous Stone Circle is the largest in England, older than Stonehenge. The village has grown up within the area of the circular earthen bank. The Church is partly Norman with 15th century tower. The Manor House is Elizabethan and there is a very good museum (open afternoons).

One mile south is SILBURY HILL the largest artificial mound in Europe, but purpose unknown.

Two miles north-west is WINDMILL HILL, a Neolithic site.

ASHLEWORTH TITHE BARN, Gloucestershire. 6 miles north of Gloucester, 1¼ miles east of Hartpury (A417) on west bank of Severn south-east of Ashleworth. 55 miles.

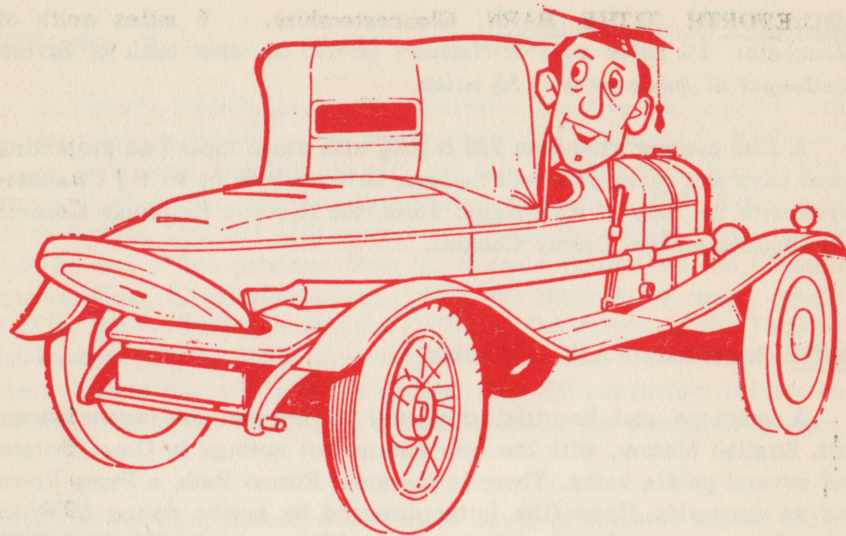
A 15th century tithe barn 120 ft long with stone roof. Two projecting porch bays and queen-post roof timbers. Given in 1956 by Mr F J Chamberlayne with the help of the Pilgrim Trust, the Historic Buildings Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

BATH, Somerset. A.4 44 miles.

A gracious and beautiful city, full of interest and associations with English history, with the only natural hot springs in Great Britain and several public baths. There is the great Roman Bath, a Pump Room and an Assembly Room (the latter damaged by bombs during 1939/45 War). Fine Abbey Church, rebuilt about 1501 and completed in 1609 (rectangular tower and front has curious representation of Jacob's ladder. Numerous Georgian houses, the Royal Crescent, the Guildhall, and the Pulteney Bridge built by Robert Adam (1770) with parapet of shops. General Wade's house (1720), Ralph Allen's house (1727). Victoria Art Gallery and the Holbourne of Menstrie Museum of Art. Fine views of the city from encircling hills. Beau Nash, the Woods (father and son), and Ralph Allen were creators of 18th century Bath. Of particular interest to Australians - a memorial tablet in Bath Abbey to the founder and first governor of Australia. The Bath Festival of Music is held each year in June. During the Festival the Roman Bath is open for bathing until late evening.

BARRINGTON COURT, Somerset. 3 miles north-east of Ilminster, at east end of Barrington, ½ mile east of B316B. 75 miles.

219 acres. The house was built in 1514-1520 by Lord Daubeny and is externally little altered. It has late Gothic windows and twisted pinnacles. The stable block, now a dwelling, is red brick dating from the late seventeenth century. Acquired by the National Trust in 1907, largely through Miss J L Woodward, and let to Colonel Lyle, who repaired it and added most of the interior work. His son, Sir Ian Lyle, now rents and maintains it. Small additions of land were made in 1921 and 1938.



BEAULIEU, Hampshire. (See also New Forest). 80 miles.

Is on the River Beaulieu in the New Forest. There are remains of the 13th century Abbey and the refectory is now the Parish Church, preserving a beautiful Early English reader's pulpit. The Montagu Motor Museum, Palace House, contains over 200 veteran and vintage cars and motorcycles, as well as a pedal cycle section.

BERKELEY CASTLE, Berkeley, Gloucestershire. (Off A.38) 44 miles.

The castle is 12th century. King Edward II was murdered here in 1327.

BIBURY, Gloucestershire (A.436) 15 miles.

Picturesque village of typical Cotswold houses on the River Coin. A group of cottages - Arlington Row - is of particular interest. Fine old Church. Bibury Court is Jacobean. In days of Charles II, Bibury was the Headquarters of the oldest Racing Club in England, was another Newmarket. Trout pools and hatchery and a chalk stream containing many trout which are a pleasure to watch but hard to catch. Arlington Mill contains farm implements Victorian costumes and furniture, and is open during the summer.

BIRDLIP, Gloucestershire. A.417 30 miles.

On the edge of Cotswolds - altitude 900 feet. From the road along the escarpment to the north-east, a magnificent view can be had over the Severn Vale. At WITCOMBE, west of Birdlip, is a Roman Villa.

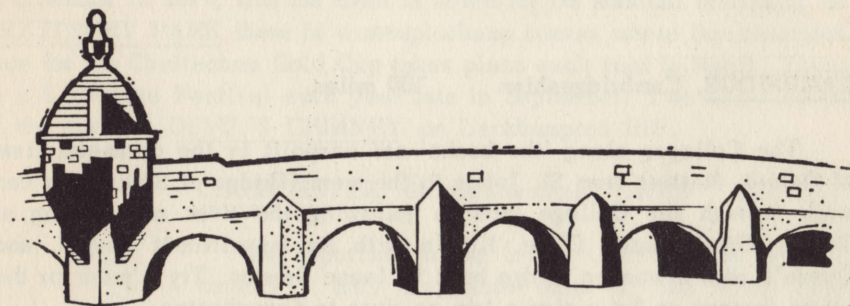
BLADON, Oxfordshire. A.4095 24 miles.

The burial place (in the local churchyard) of Sir Winston Churchill and his father, Lord Randolph Churchill.

BLenheim PALACE, (See Woodstock)

BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER, Gloucestershire. A.429 30 miles.

Situated on the River Windrush which is crossed by miniature bridges. There are some typical Cotswold houses, a bird garden, and an interesting model of the village in the garden of the New Inn.



BRADFORD-ON-AVON, Wiltshire. A.3053 38 miles.

Picturesque stone-built town reminiscent of Bath, with ancient bridge preserving a rare bridge chapel. There are old weavers' houses and quaint steep alleys. St. Lawrence's Church is perhaps the finest complete Saxon Church in the country. Places to visit are - The Hall (splendid example of a 17th century house), The Barton Tithe barn and nearby mediaeval bridge, and Belcom Court (a fine Georgian mansion).

BURFORD, Oxfordshire. A.361 17 miles.

Picturesque Cotswold town. There are restored 15th century almshouses. In Witney Street is The Great House (1690). Fine Norman to Perpendicular Church with memories of the Civil War. The Priory (a restored Elizabethan mansion). Several good inns.

BUSCOT, Berkshire. Between Lechlade and Faringdon. A.417 5 miles.

3,863 acres comprising a house, Buscot village, and farmlands and woods running down to the banks of the Thames. The house was built in 1780 in the Adam style and subsequently altered. It is let to Lord Faringdon and contains paintings of the Italian, Dutch, Flemish, Spanish and English Schools and a collection of fine furniture. The water gardens were laid out by the late Harold Peto. The house and 55 acres of park were given to the National Trust by Mr E E Cook in 1948; the remainder of the estate was acquired under his will in 1956. There is a small theatre attached to the house (about sixty seats) in which very occasionally plays and operas are performed and these are advertised in the local press.

CAMBRIDGE, Cambridgeshire. 100 miles.

The Colleges along 'the backs' are unspoilt by the commercialism of Oxford. Starting from St. Johns in the west (Bridge of Sighs) you can walk through the College grounds following the river and calling at Trinity Great Court, Clare, King's with its magnificent chapel, and Queen's with a wooden bridge built by Isaac Newton. Try a punt for the return journey or for a picnic trip up river to Granchester.

CASTLE COMBE, Wiltshire. off A.420 30 miles.

An exceptionally picturesque stone-built village in a wooded setting, with a market cross, numerous old houses and a partly Perpendicular Church (much rebuilt in 1851). Was the setting for the film Dr. Doolittle.

CHEDDAR GORGE, Somerset. A.371 68 miles.

Cliffs 450 feet high. The gorge seen at its best on the descent to the village of Cheddar. The famous Cox's and Gough's caves contain stalactites and stalagmites. No cheese!

CHEDWORTH ROMAN VILLA, Gloucestershire. 3 miles north-west of Fossebridge on the Cirencester-Northleach road - A.429. Approach by the Fossebridge-Yanworth-Withington road. 25 miles.

Perhaps the best-preserved Roman villa in England (AD 180-350), with mosaic pavements. In 6½ acres of woodland, with museum and caretaker's house. Discovered in 1864. Bought by public subscription in 1924.

CHELTENHAM SPA, Gloucestershire. A.435 40 miles.

A town with Anglo-Saxon origins. Cheltenham became popular in the 18th century and many of its fine buildings date from then. Montpellier Street is particularly attractive, being tree-lined, with many good shops. There is an Art Gallery and a Museum, also many fine Regency houses including the Montpellier Rotunda and the restored Pittville Pump Room. Several well-known schools. Gustav Holst the composer was born at Cheltenham in 1874, and the town is noted for its musical festivals. At PRESTBURY PARK there is a steeplechase course where the important race for the Cheltenham Gold Cup takes place each year in March. There is a Literature Festival each year late in September. Two miles south is the curious DEVIL'S CHIMNEY on Leckhampton Hill.

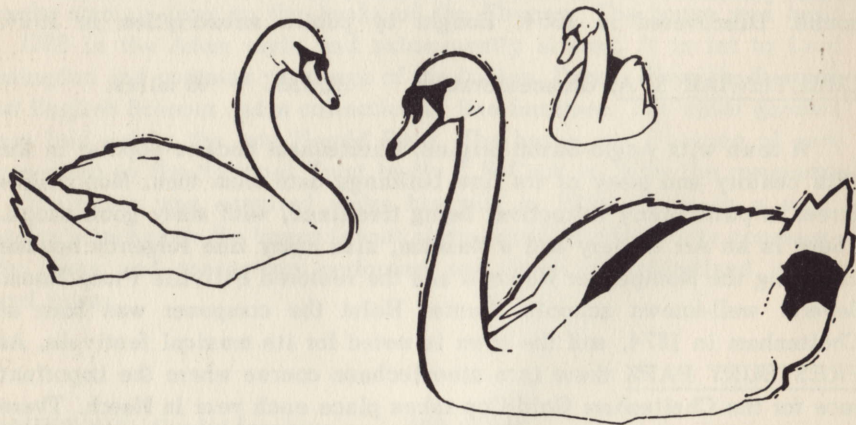
CIRENCESTER, Gloucestershire. A.419 23 miles.

An important Roman town, 'Corinium', in the 2nd century - only fragments exist of the once large defences. Now a typical Cotswold market town and hunting centre with many old houses. The magnificent largely Perpendicular Church, has a unique three-storied porch built in the 16th century by the local guilds. Museum contains Roman relics. CIRENCESTER PARK (3,000 acres) surrounds 18th century house - no cars admitted. Four miles south-west, off the Tetbury Road, is THAMES HEAD BRIDGE adjacent to what is usually accepted as the source of the River Thames.



CLEVEDON COURT, Somerset. 1½ miles east of Clevedon on the Bristol road B.3130. 70 miles.

11½ acres. A manor house, once fortified, with additions made in every century since the twelfth. 14th century chapel, 18th century terraced garden. Transferred to the National Trust through the Treasury in 1961 and endowed by Sir Arthur Elton, Bt, who lives at Clevedon and whose family has owned the house since 1709. Covenants over 16 acres given by Sir Arthur Elton. Open: April to September - Wednesday, Thursday, Sunday and Bank Holidays. Time: 2.30 to 4.30 pm.



COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK, Near Burford, Oxfordshire. A.361
14 miles. (on road between Lechlade and Burford)

Opened for the first time during 1970. Large grounds with animals and birds. Good parking area and refreshments at large house near car park.

DEVIZES, Wiltshire. A.361 28 miles.

Some Georgian and older houses and inns, notably the Bear, remain. Has an interesting Museum. There is a Market Cross with a curious inscription recording Ruth Pierce's sudden death here in 1753 after cheating at the market. A 17th to 18th century house in the market place has a carved statue of Aesculapius set in an alcove.

DINTON, Wiltshire. 9 miles west of Salisbury on the north side of B.3089.
55 miles.

Dinton Park, Phillipps House. The property includes a farm, three cottages and the eastern rampart of Wick Ball Camp, an Iron Age hill fort. 205½ acres. Given to the National Trust in 1943 by Mr Bertram Phillipps. Phillipps House, formerly a seat of the Wyndham family, was completed in 1816 by Jeffrey Wyatt (later Sir Jeffrey Wyattville), in the neo-Grecian style. It is let as a holiday home to the Young Womens' Christian Association. Lord Milford gave the furniture. Open: Wednesday 2 to 6 pm or dusk if earlier.

Little Clarendon and Lawes Cottage. ¼ mile from Dinton Church. 29 acres. Little Clarendon is a stone Tudor House of the late 15th century. Lawes Cottage is a 17th century stone building, once the home of William Lawes, the composer. The property is noted for the daffodils bred by Mr G Engleheart. Given to the National Trust in 1940 by Mrs Engleheart, with a collection of furniture, other contents and an endowment, in memory of her husband. Covenants over the chapel. Little Clarendon open on written application to Mrs Streader, who lives there. No charge.

EASTLEACH, Gloucestershire. Off A.361 or A.417. 12 miles.

Beautiful Cotswold village. Well worth a special visit at daffodil time. Many old houses, church and a picturesque clapper bridge.

FARINGDON, Berkshire. A.420 4 miles.

A pleasant town with a fine Church (Church of All Saints) and a Market Place. On Boxing Day each year the hunt meets in the Market Place.

GLOUCESTER, Gloucestershire. A.417 48 miles.

A former Roman city (Colonia Glevum) on the River Severn. The fine Cathedral is Norman to early Perpendicular, with notable 14th century east window. The tomb of the murdered King Edward II, the crypt, the choir stalls, the noble central tower and the lovely cloisters, are of special interest. The Close is entered by two old gateways and there are some Georgian houses. Many old houses and inns.

GREAT CHALFIELD MANOR, Wiltshire. 2½ miles north-east of Bradford-on-Avon, via B.3109. 35 miles.

Given to the National Trust in 1943 by Major R Fuller. The moated house is an example of late Gothic domestic architecture, c.1480. There is a great hall with screen and contemporary mural portrait of the builder. Restored for Major Fuller by Mr Harold Breakspear, from drawings made by a pupil of Pugin a century ago. Open in the summer on Wednesdays only.

GREAT COXWELL, Berkshire. A.420 3 miles.

Here there is a 13th century, stone built, stone tiled, roofed tithe barn, with interesting timber roof construction. Length 152 feet, width 44 feet and height 48 feet. Acquired by the National Trust in 1956 under the will of Mr E E Cook.

HENLEY ON THAMES, Oxfordshire. A.423 40 miles.

A favourite Thames Valley resort, famous for its regatta held each year for about one week at the beginning of July. Some Georgian and older houses.

HIDCOTE MANOR GARDEN, Gloucestershire. At Hidcote Bartrim, 4 miles north-east of Chipping Campden, one mile east of A.46 and of B.4081. 40 miles.

289 acres, including other land and the house (not open). A series of formal gardens many of which are enclosed within superb hedges of different species, including hornbeam on stems. They contain many rare trees, shrubs, plants and bulbs and a collection of 'old' roses. In spite of lime in the soil, rhododendrons and camelias have been made to thrive. Given to the National Trust in 1948 by Major Lawrence Johnstone, who created it unaided during the previous forty years. Open: Easter Saturday to end of October on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Time: 11 am to 8 pm or dusk if earlier. Afternoon tea available.

HOLT, Wiltshire - The Courts, 3 miles east of Bradford-on-Avon, 3 miles west of Melksham. 35 miles.

The Courts, where the weavers brought their disputes for arbitration until the end of the 18th century, was presented to the National Trust by Major R C E Goff in 1943, with 7 acres and an endowment. The richly decorated facade dates from about 1700. The garden with its hedged vistas and fine trees is most attractive. Open from April to October on Wednesday and Thursday from 2 to 6 pm.

KINGSTON LISLE, Berkshire. Off B.4507 5 miles.

The Church is Norman to Decorated and contains some old wall paintings and Jacobean woodwork. The manor house is 18th century and situated in a fine park. To the south of the village stands the curious 'Blowing Stone', a perforated Sarsen Stone, described in 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'.

LACOCK ABBEY AND VILLAGE, Wiltshire. 3 miles south of Chippenham, just east of A.350. 30 miles.

316 acres, including the abbey, most of the village, Manor Farm and Bewley Common. The abbey has 13th century cloisters, sacristy, chapter house and nuns' parlour. After the Reformation, Sir William Sharington (c.1540) adapted the monastic remains to make a Tudor mansion. Its chief features are the octagonal tower overlooking the Avon, twisted chimney stacks and large courtyards with half-timbered gables and clockhouse. In 1753 Sanderson Miller made changes in the 'Gothic' taste; and the house saw further changes in 1828. Here Fox Talbot in 1835 invented the photographic process named after him. There are fine black walnut trees in the approach to the abbey.

LACOCK VILLAGE is one of the most beautiful in England. Miss Matilda Talbot gave Lacock to the National Trust in 1944, Bewley Common and Green were bought by the Trust in 1951 and an additional cottage in 1960. Lacock Abbey is let to the family of the donor as private tenants.

Open: Cloisters April to October, every day except Friday, 2 to 6 pm; November to March, Monday, Wednesday and Boxing Day 2 pm until dusk; House, April to September on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Bank Holiday Monday from 2 to 6 pm.

LITTLECOTE HOUSE, Near Hungerford, Berkshire. Off A.419 21 miles.

A fine 16th century house associated with the notorious crime committed by 'Wild Darell'. Contains a Jacobean Chapel in which there is some beautiful linenfold woodwork. There are some original uniforms and firearms from the private army of the house and they are in excellent condition. In the Great Hall there is the longest 'shove halfpenny' board in existence, a set of finger stocks, and many other articles of interest as in the rest of the house. Reputed to be haunted. The beautiful gardens can be visited without visiting the house.



LONGLEAT HOUSE, Near Warminster, Wiltshire.
Off A.362 48 miles.

A splendid 16th century mansion in a great park and is the home of Lord Bath. The parkland has lions, giraffes, sea lions, etc. The house is open to the public and well worth a visit. Nearby are the Shear Water Lake and the viewpoint of Heaven's Gate.

LYTES CARY, Somerset. On west side of the Fosse Way A.37, 2½ miles south-east of Somerton; turn west off the Fosse Way along A.372 towards Longport for about 400 yards, then north towards Charlton Adam; house is ½ mile up on east side. 70 miles.

300 acres. A typical Somerset manor house. The chapel is of the 14th century, the great hall of the 15th; additions in later centuries. The home for 500 years of the Lyte family. Here was the garden upon which Sir Henry Lyte based his Niewr Herball, published in 1578, the most important horticultural work of that time. Acquired by the National Trust in 1949 with its furniture, under the will of Sir Walter Jenner, Bt. Open from March to October, Wednesday and Saturday from 2 to 6 pm.

MARLBOROUGH, Wiltshire. A.4 18 miles.

On the River Kennet. The broad High Street preserves many old houses and inns, the Five Alls Inn having an interesting sign. Marlborough College, at the western end of the High Street, incorporates the Castle Inn, associated with Stanley Weyman's novel. St. Peter's Church has a fine and lofty late Perpendicular tower.

To the south-east is SAVERNAKE FOREST (16 miles in circumference), containing the Grand Avenue (four miles long) and the Ailesbury Column commemorating the recovery of King George II from mental disorder. There are hides in the forest from which you can see deer feeding.

MINCHINHAMPTON COMMON, Gloucestershire. (Off A.419) 30 miles.

Large Common well kept - very good for picnics. Minchinhampton itself has a restored cruciform Church with a 14th century octagonal tower and many brasses. The pillared Market Hall is 17th century.

MONTACUTE, Somerset. 4 miles west of Yeovil, on north side of A.3088. 70 miles.

This house was begun in 1588 by Thomas Phelips, and completed about 1600 by his son, Sir Edward Phelips, Speaker of the House of Commons and Master of Rolls under James I. It has an H-shaped ground plan and is built of Ham Hill stone. Its external features include oriel windows, curvilinear and finialled gables, open balustraded parapets, carved statues of the Nine Worthies standing in niches on the east front and fluted angle columns. Fine heraldic glass, plasterwork and panelling. Some fine tapestries, English portraits and furniture are shown - a bequest from Sir Malcolm Stewart Bt. The remainder of the furniture is a collection of gifts or loans. The contemporary garden, one of the most complete examples of early Jacobean layout to survive, contains two garden pavilions in the eastern forecourt. The property, which includes twenty-four cottages in the village and 303 acres, takes its name from the *Mons Acutus* (St. Michael's Hill). Given to the National Trust by Mr E E Cook, through the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in 1931. Gardens can be visited separately. There are refreshments.

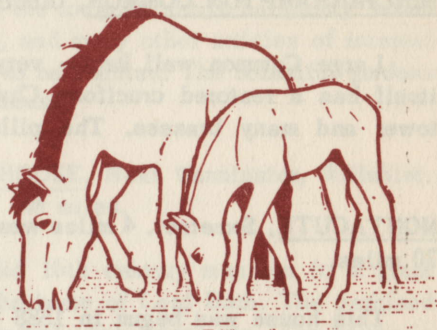
NEWBURY, Berkshire. A.4 24 miles.

On the River Kennet, with memories of the Civil War in 1643-44. The Church was rebuilt in the 16th century by the famous Jack of Newbury and has an ornate buttressed tower. The ancient Cloth Hall has been restored and is a museum. A number of Georgian and older houses. There is a racecourse just outside the town and to the south-east are the commons of Greenham and Crookham. About ¾ mile north-east is

the fine Elizabethan Shaw House, now a school and preserving relics of the second battle of Newbury in 1644. Two miles south is the 18th century Sandleford Priory, where many famous people were entertained by its builder, Mrs Montagu, whose gatherings in 1781 gave rise to the name of 'Blue Stockings'. Many stud farms can be seen along the B.400.

NEW FOREST, Hampshire
(See also Beaulieu). A.337 -
66 miles to Lyndhurst.

A beautifully wooded district, between the River Avon and Southampton Water, enlarged by William the Conqueror and now about 140 square miles of undulating forest and heath, owned partly by the Crown. Verderers administer the forest laws and their Courts are held at the King's House at Lyndhurst. Ponies range the forest in small herds. The deer are the red, the fallow and the roe. Some of the loveliest parts of the forest are near Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst.



OLD SARUM, Salisbury, Wiltshire. A.345 47 miles. (See also Salisbury).

The site of an ancient city on a hill (on the outskirts of Salisbury) with foundations of the former Cathedral and a castle, surrounded by Norman earthworks. The See was transferred to Salisbury in 1220. The Cathedral was taken down in 1331 and the material used in the present building.

OXFORD, Oxfordshire. A.420 21 miles.

An ancient and picturesque university city on the Rivers Cherwell and Thames, the latter known locally as the Isis. There is much to see at Oxford; the town itself is 300 years older than the University. Some points of interest are the Bodleian Library, the Sheldonian Theatre, the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, the Radcliffe Theatre and the many Colleges; Magdalen and Merton being two fine examples. The Ashmolean Museum, one of the oldest in Europe, contains priceless treasures, including the

unique King Alfred's Jewel. Madrigals are sung from Magdalen tower at 6 am on May morning. Eights Week, at the end of May, is a famous spectacle on the river, and the College barges are of much interest. Punts are for hire on the river Cherwell.

RIDGEWAY, THE, Berkshire.

A prehistoric trackway extending for some twenty miles along the crest of the Berkshire Downs, overlooking the Kennet Valley. Access to the Ridgeway is well signposted from the B.4000. Due south of the College, on the Ridgeway, is Wayland's Smithy, a megalithic long barrow. A little further east, cut in the chalk downs, is the oldest of the many 'white horses'.

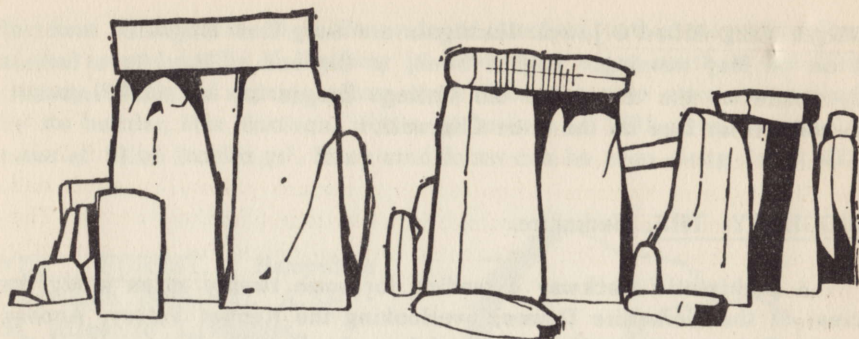
RODE, Near Frome, Somerset. Off A.361, between Trowbridge and Frome. 42 miles.

Rode itself is a very small village, but to the right just over the little hump-back bridge there is a very good Tropical Bird Garden, which also has a fine collection of sea shells. Refreshments are obtainable.

SALISBURY, Wiltshire. (See also Old Sarum). A.345 47 miles.

Salisbury has a Cathedral with the loftiest tower and spire in England (404 feet). The Cathedral was commenced in 1220 following the abandonment of Old Sarum. Contains a dialless clock, dating from 1325 and is probably the oldest in England. The library contains one of the four copies of the Magna Carta. There is a beautiful Close with houses dating from 14th to 18th century. The Joiner's Hall in St. Ann Street, was formerly the hall of a livery company, but the timbered facade, dating from about 1550 is all that is left of the original. Mompesson House, on the north side of Choristers' Square is one of the finest houses in the Close and has its original panelling and plasterwork. It was built in 1701 for the Mompessons, merchants of that day. Given to the National Trust in 1952 by Mr Denis Matineau. Several interesting old Public Houses, including the Haunch of Venison by the Poultry Cross, and the Red Lion.

SAVERNAKE FOREST, Wiltshire. (See Marlborough).



STONEHENGE, Wiltshire. Off A.303, 1-3 miles west of Amesbury. 40 miles.

A famous prehistoric megalithic monument, the origin and purpose of which are unknown, though it may have been used for sun worship and for computing eclipses. It consisted originally of several circles and two horseshoes, surrounded by a ditch and earthwork 300 feet in diameter. It was built in several stages from about 1800 BC. Between 1650 - 1500 BC, great bluestones were brought from the Prescelly Hills in Wales. Later further stones were brought from the Marlborough Downs and erected as they are today. Two of the fallen stores were re-erected in 1958. Numerous instruments of Neolithic age have been discovered, and there are many barrows in the vicinity.

STOURHEAD, Stourton, Wiltshire. B.3092. 3 miles north-west of Mere A.303. 60 miles.

2,507 acres, including the pleasure grounds, the house with its contents, the villages of Stourton and Kilmington, some 300 acres of woodland and King Alfred's Tower. The pleasure grounds with their lakes and temples are among the finest examples of 18th century landscape design. The shores and lower woodlands contain some of the most magnificent specimens of conifers, tulip trees (liriodendron), beeches, and rhododendrons in the country, and include many rarities. Beautiful throughout the year. There are collections of works of art, notably furniture designed by Thomas Chippendale the younger. The estate includes the greater part of the Neolithic causewayed enclosure on White Sheet Downs and half an iron age hill-fort.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON, Warwickshire. A.429 46 miles.

Shakespeare's birthplace and home. His birthplace (1564) is in Henley Street, and he was both baptised and buried in Holy Trinity Church. His Grammar School forms the upper storey of the old Guildhall. The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre has a picture gallery, museum and restaurant. Anne Hathaway's cottage is a few miles from the centre. The town dates from the 12th century but the buildings are predominantly Elizabethan and Jacobean. If you wish to see a performance at the theatre it is advisable to book well in advance. Punts are available on the river.

SWINDON, Wiltshire. A.420 7 miles.

The Brunel Museum in Faringdon Road commemorates one of England's most brilliant engineers and contains many relics and drawings of the 19th century Great Western Railway.

TEWKESBURY, Gloucestershire. A.38 48 miles.

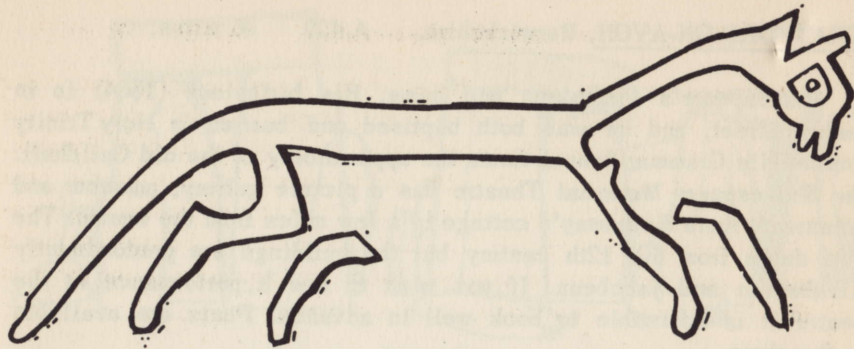
Has a fine Abbey Church, and many houses and inns finely timbered. Boating and fishing are available. Half-a-mile south is the site of the famous battle in the Wars of the Roses, fought in 1471, in which Queen Margaret was defeated and her son killed.

THORNBURY CASTLE, Gloucestershire. Off A.38 46 miles.

Stands on the Severn estuary, with a fine unfinished Tudor Castle built by Henry VII, Duke of Bollingbroke, and the country seat of the dukes. The castle is floodlit at night and is now one of the finest restaurants in England, with memorable food and faultless service. Expensive, but memorable.

TINTINHULL HOUSE, Somerset. 5 miles north-west of Yeovil, half a mile south of A.303, on eastern outskirts of Tintinhull. 70 miles.

A fine small house, c.1700, with a pediment and hipped roof. The beautiful formal garden was largely created by Mrs F E Reiss, who gave the property to the National Trust in 1954.



UFFINGTON, Berkshire. Off B.4508 4 miles.

Lies in the Vale of the White Horse, with views of the prehistoric 374 foot long White Horse cut on the slopes of the 856 foot high White Horse Hill, a viewpoint on the Downs. Nearby are the earthworks of Uffington Castle and the line of the ancient Ridgeway. The Church is a very notable example of Early English work, with an octagonal tower and set of eleven consecration crosses and numerous lancet windows. The district is associated with 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' and 'Scouring of the White Horse'.

WALLINGFORD, Berkshire. A.4130 27 miles.

With a charter dating back to 1155, Wallingford is one of the oldest Boroughs in England. There is a fine old bridge of fourteen arches over the Thames. There are numerous old houses and inns, and several pleasant areas along the river. Launches can be hired for Thames cruising but it is advisable to book in advance.

WANTAGE, Berkshire. A.417 13 miles.

The birthplace of King Alfred the Great (AD 849). His statue stands in the Market Place. The Bear Inn is an old hostelry. The first steam tramway in England linked Wantage with Wantage Road in 1873 and was not closed down until 1948.

WARWICK, Warwickshire. 52 miles.

A picturesque town on the River Avon. Many Georgian and older houses, some half-timbered, notably in Mill Street. The four gates to the town are still standing and Warwick Castle, home of the Earl of Warwick, is 14th and 15th century with later additions and is one of the best preserved in England. In the courtyard the 7th century Danish fortification, Ethelfreda's mound, is still visible. The armoury, banqueting halls and state apartments can be visited. There are peacocks in the grounds and there is a moat, drawbridge and portcullis.

WESTONBIRT, Gloucestershire. A.433 30 miles.

A few hundred yards from Westonbirt down the A.433 towards Bristol is the Arboretum, said to contain a specimen of every tree that will grow in this climate; it is especially fine in autumn.



WHIPSDANE ZOOLOGICAL PARK,
Bedfordshire. B.489 60 miles.

The Park is a branch of the London Zoological Gardens, showing wild animals in their natural surroundings. There is a miniature coach service. Cars may be driven around the park at the Superintendent's discretion, (except on Bank Holidays).

WILD FOWL TRUST (SLIMBRIDGE), Cambridge, Gloucestershire.
Off A.38 45 miles.

Peter Scott's fine collection of geese and birds, with wild geese feeding on the mudflats on the Severn estuary.

WILTON, Wiltshire. A.30 43 miles.

On the junction of Rivers Nadder and Wylde. Once the capital of Wessex. The original home of the Wilton carpet. Wilton House has famous double cube room, and is partly Holbein and Inigo Jones, and is the ancestral home of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke. It has associations with Shakespeare, Spenser and Ben Jonson. Wilton Church is in rich Lombardic style and contains pillars from Rome.

WINCHESTER, Hampshire. 46 miles.

On the River Itchen, was a former Roman centre and a one-time capital of Wessex and England: statue of King Arthur in the main street. Has a splendid mediaeval cathedral - one of the finest in England. About a mile south of the centre is the Hospital of St. Cross (founded 1133) the most ancient charitable institution of its kind and a home for selected pensioners. By tradition the traveller's 'dole' of bread and cheese and a glass of beer is still given to anyone on request. In the courtyard is a perfectly preserved very fine Norman church. Many schools (including Winchester College), old houses and inns.

WOBURN ABBEY, Bedfordshire. Off A.418 66 miles.

Stands in a great deer park, and is the ancestral home of the Duke of Bedford. There is a zoological park.

WOODSTOCK, Oxfordshire. A.34 26 miles.

A Royal Palace was once situated here. Chaucer's son is said to have lived in a house near the park entrance. Woodstock was the birthplace of the Black Prince, son of Edward III. BLenheim PALACE, a palacial house in a magnificent park was commenced in 1705 by Vanbrugh for the great Duke of Marlborough. Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim in 1874. The beautiful gardens are laid out over several acres, and with the park and lake, offer pleasant surroundings for family visits. A '*Son et Lumiere*' performance is held on summer evenings.

WORCESTER, Worcestershire. A.44 64 miles.

On the banks of the River Severn, Worcester has an 11th to 15th century cathedral, some Georgian and older houses, and the Royal Worcester Porcelain Factory. The Dyson-Perrins museum, with its excellent collection of ceramics, is worth a visit. The reject shop of the porcelain factory can sometimes yield a bargain.