Stay a little longer in...

Ampthill

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visit**east**of**england**.com/ampthill

Enjoy magnificent views, following in the footsteps of Henry VIII and John Bunyan on this four mile walk ...

1 From 14th century St Andrew's church in Ampthill's pretty Church Square, follow the footpath sign left of the church beside red brick Georgian houses. Turn right at the fork. Facing the churchyard turn left along a track. Cross the stile, cross the field diagonally and cross another stile.

2 At the paved track turn left over cattle grid, continue for a few yards then fork right at the signpost, going diagonally across the field and through the kissing gate. Go up the hill with the field boundary on your left. Keep following signs, bearing right then left.

3 At the concrete farm track go left. Immediately go through the gate on your right, turn left and admire the view! At the houses divert to explore ruined Houghton House or turn left along the road. Cross the main road, turn left and walk down the footpath to Ampthill Great Park gate.

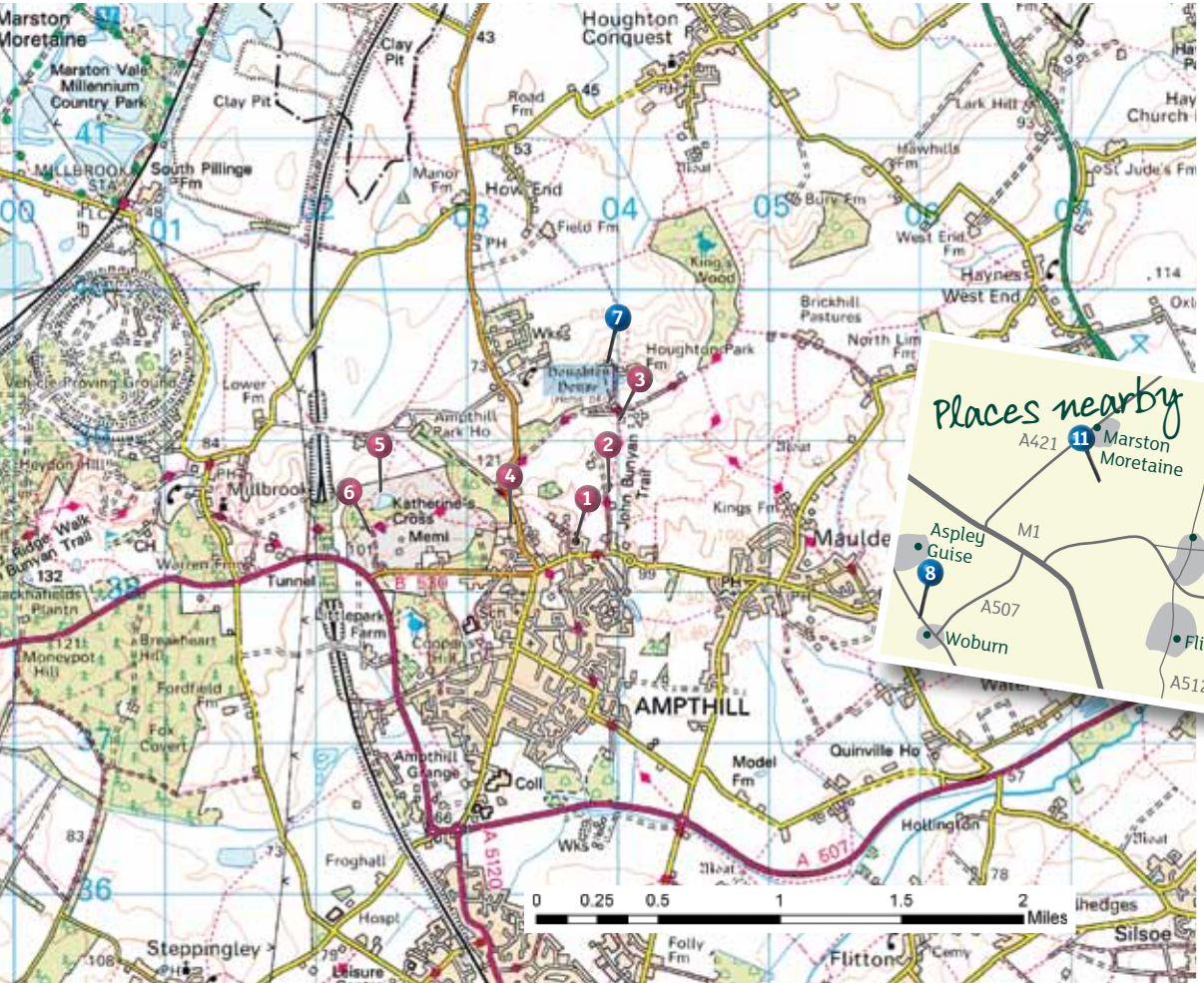
4 Enter the woods, bearing right. At the junction, go straight ahead along a deep gulley and follow the path until you emerge from the wood. At a fork bear right, cross the bridge and continue walking up the hill, crossing walkways along the park boundary, to reach a kissing gate on your right.

5 At the gate bear left, following the path up the slope with a fishing lake on your left and a view of Katherine's Cross on the ridge above. Continue up through the trees to the top of the ridge. Look out for a very old oak, one of the oldest trees in the park.

6 Turn left towards Katherine's Cross, enjoying the view landscaped by Capability Brown. Follow the ridge. There are many paths: keep to the left for the best views. Follow the woodland boundary past the gate, bear right down the slope. Go through the park gates, along a track and turn right to return to town.

A royal view

Gaze across at a king's view of his favourite hunting grounds. Look down to the site of Ampthill Lodge, where Henry VIII stayed with his second wife, Anne Boleyn. See grand Ampthill Park House, built in the 1770s, and see 'Capability' Brown's landscaped beech trees, sweet chestnut, limes and pines on the slopes below you.



Enjoy amazing views on the Greensand Ridge Walk.

Key: walking route points of interest

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Welcome...

Welcome to Ampthill on the Greensand Ridge

The woods and heathlands of the Greensand Ridge are a haven for walkers and wildlife. Sandstone from the ridge has long been used as building material, creating the distinctive character of local towns and villages. Links with Tudor history add to the fascination of the area.

Henry VIII stayed at Ampthill at least once a year, bringing prosperity to the town. His whole court came with him, dealing with affairs of state before Henry set off for the hunt from Ampthill Castle. His first queen, Katherine of Aragon, lived here for a year during the trial at Dunstable which ended their marriage, and the Katherine Cross, erected in her memory, marks the place on the ridge where the castle once stood.

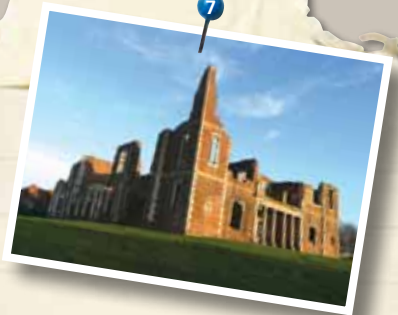
Today the market town of Ampthill has many Georgian buildings, narrow streets and antique shops. From Ampthill Park, there's a grand view north across the Marston Vale towards Bedford. For over a hundred years, the local clay was used for brickmaking. In the 1960s, Stewartby, recognisable by its remaining four chimneys (once there were 130), was the largest brickworks in the world. It closed in 2008 and a million new trees are now transforming the landscape.

Discover

Stay a little longer and find out about the nature, heritage and flavours of this fascinating countryside. Here are some hints and highlights to help you explore slowly, on foot or by bike.

"What could be better than sitting outside in the sun with a locally-produced lunch of fresh sliced ham from Woburn Country Foods, a nice chunk of tomato and rosemary focaccia from Redbornbury Mill, a generous nobble of Wobbly Bottom's soft goats cheese with sweet peppers and not forgetting some of my own finest Bedfordshire pickled shallots and green tomato chutney? Perfect!"

Vickie Humber of Humbers Homemade



House Beautiful

High on the Greensand Ridge is the ruin of Houghton House, believed to be 'House Beautiful', described in 'Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan. He wrote the book during his twelve years in gaol in Bedford, almost certainly basing some of the places he describes on those he visited in his earlier life as a tinker and secret preacher.

Woodland

Walk, cycle or ride horseback on a network of tracks in Maulden Wood, exploring ancient woodland and remnants of heath. Here, and at nearby Chicksands Wood, you can see miles of medieval wood banks, some as high as five feet, marking historic ownership boundaries.

Visit nearby Woburn for shopping, golfing, then a delicious meal and glass of wine at the Birch - phew!

Enjoy alfresco dining on the patio at the Black Horse at Ireland on a spring or summer's day.

Heathland

Heathland was once common along the Greensand Ridge. Cooper's Hill in Ampthill is the largest of the few remaining heaths. Heather and gorse thrive on the sandy soils and bright green tiger beetles and lizards can be seen in summer. Finger-wide holes in the ground are signs of the burrows of the Rhinoceros beetle.

taste

On the farm with David Catlin of Flitton Hill Organics ...

At our family farm we grow organic vegetables and salads including an acre of asparagus – always a best seller for its short season in the farm shop. For the environment we are restoring and planting hedgerows and trees and we have set aside land on Flitton Moor to revert to natural grassland.

8 The Birch
20 Newport Road,
Woburn, MK17 9HX
01525 290295
birchwoburn.com
Exciting English food with a Mediterranean and New World twist, made with the freshest ingredients. Steaks and fish served from our open griddle. Plus our impressive wine selection and real ales.

9 The Black Horse
Ireland, Nr Shefford,
SG17 5QL
01462 811398
blackhorseireland.com
This 17th century restaurant offers fresh, seasonal food cooked by highly qualified chefs, served by attentive, friendly staff in a contemporary yet cosy environment. Fully air conditioned. Extensive wine list and real ales.

LOCAL PRODUCE

AJ's Fresh Fruit & Veg, Silsoe
01525 860078
Fruit and veg, local eggs and meat.

The Cottage Bakery, Ampthill
01525 402348
Amazing range of freshly baked bread and cakes.

Farmers' Market
01525 750246
In the town centre on last Saturday of every month except December.

Flitton Hill Organics, Flitton
07885 625745
Farm produce.

Humbers Homemade Preserves, Flitwick
01525 750246
Jams and chutneys made from locally-grown produce.

Priestley Farm Shop, Flitwick
01525 712397
Vegetables, salads, free range eggs and more.

Silsoe Horticultural Centre, Silsoe
01525 860999
Seasonal vegetables, jams & flowers.

Woburn Country Foods, Haynes West End
01234 740300
Local meat and farm shop.

PLACES TO EAT

Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine
01234 767037

Menzies Flitwick Manor, Flitwick
01525 712242

Establishments in this guide share the values of quality and sustainability.

These establishments provide services to support the local area and wider environment.

See... do...

Go by bus

There are occasional buses from Ampthill to out-of-town attractions at Silsoe, Flitton and Clophill, although some involve a 30-minute walk from the bus stop. For details visit traveline.org

10 Wrest Park
Silsoe, Nr Luton, MK45 4HS
01525 860000
english-heritage.org.uk
Experience one of England's most enchanting and beautiful gardens. Wrest Park's formal gardens provide a fascinating history of gardening styles inspired by the great gardens of Versailles.

Ampthill Great Park
01525 404355
Historic landscape with veteran trees and grassland.

De Grey Mausoleum, Flitton
01223 582700
A large mausoleum with 17 monuments to the de Grey family of Wrest Park.

7 Houghton House, Ampthill
01223 582700
17th century country house ruin on the Greensand Ridge.

King's Arms Garden, Ampthill
Small woodland garden, limited opening times.

Maulden Wood, Clophill
01780 444920
Ancient semi-natural woodland.

11 Millennium Country Park, Marston Vale
01234 767037
Countryside day out with award-winning visitor centre and adventure playground.

Museum of Military Intelligence, Chicksands
01462 752896
Find out about spies and the Enigma Code. Open by appointment.

Summerfields Miniature Railway, Haynes
01234 301867
Miniature railways, limited opening times

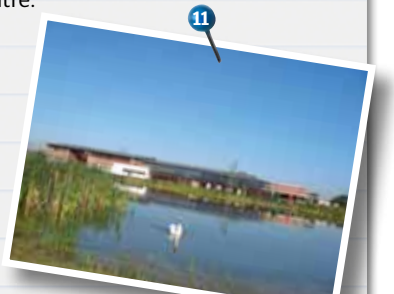
Please check attraction opening times before you visit and remember some are closed in winter.

Greensand Ridge Walk

Discover more of the local landscape and wildlife on the 40-mile Greensand Ridge Walk or just explore a small section, heading west from Katherine's Cross in Ampthill Great Park to the attractive village of Millbrook. The Duke of Bedford built the cottages in the traditional estate style, and the sandstone church is at one of the highest points on the Greensand Ridge.

Reviving a lost landscape

Hire a bike at the Millennium Country Park in Marston Vale to explore five miles of traffic-free paths. Walk the wetland trail and watch the birds from a bird hide. Then find out about the project to build a new forest, reviving a landscape damaged by years of brickmaking, and enjoy local produce on the menu at the state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly visitor centre.



All the other things that might help...

Win a hamper of local produce

Simply go to **visiteastofengland.com/prize** to receive other guides in this series and enter the prize draw at the same time. Two winners will be drawn every three months up to December 2012.

Recycle it!
If you have found this guide useful, please return it after use to the tourist information centre or other outlet or pass it on to a friend. Find this and other similar guides online at **visiteastofengland.com**

Responsible tourism
This is one of a series of guides to rural areas in the East of England. It encourages visitors to be more responsible by suggesting things to do in the immediate area on foot or by bike and by promoting local produce and responsible tourism businesses.

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For information about places to visit please call the nearest tourist information centre at Bedford on 01234 221712. For more information about the Greensand Ridge visit **greensandtrust.org**. For information about Bedfordshire visit **experiencebedfordshire.co.uk**

Walking
Greensand Ridge Walk, **greensandridgewalk.co.uk**
Timberland Trail, **marstonvale.org**
John Bunyan Trail and other local walks, **letsgo.org.uk**

Cycling
National Route 51, **sustrans.org.uk**
Local routes, **letsgo.org.uk**
Chicksands Bike Park, **chicksandsbikepark.co.uk**
Millennium Country Park, **marstonvale.org**

Bus
Buses run to Ampthill from Bedford and Flitwick, stopping in Dunstable Street, two minutes' walk from the town centre. Contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or **traveline.info**

Train
The nearest station is two miles away at Flitwick. Buses from Flitwick to Ampthill run Monday-Saturday (approximately four per hour), departing from Filtwick High Street, nine minutes' walk from station, arriving two minutes' walk from Ampthill centre.

There are direct trains to Flitwick from London, Luton and Bedford and bikes are allowed free of charge, subject to space available. Contact **firstcapitalconnect.co.uk** or **nationalrail.co.uk**

The Marston Vale Line runs from Bedford to Bletchley stopping near Ampthill at Stewartby, Millbrook, Lidlington and other stations. Visit **marstonvalecommunity rail.org.uk**

Cycle hire
Route 51 Cycles, 01234 767451

Food and drink
tastesofbedfordshire.co.uk

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas.

This project is supported under the Rural Development Programme for England by EEDA, Defra and the EU.

Photography courtesy of Ampthill Town Council, English Heritage, East of England Tourism and other tourism colleagues. Words by Elizabeth Woolnough. Information in this guide is provided in good faith. While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the contents, East of England Tourism cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions herein.

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