Introduction

This ride explores the most westerly part of Huntingdonshire. The terrain is gently rolling, in total contrast to the fens in the east. We are in “stone” country; hence many of the churches have fine stone spires in a variety of styles. These can be seen for miles around, and provide another contrast to the fen country where there is no stone, and spires are few.

Cover photo shows Kimbolton.

Points of Interest

Spaldwick (A)
- This lovely village has a number of 17th century houses and a traditional village green, surrounded by chestnut trees. The High Street is noted for the period houses and the bridge over the brook dates from the 15th century. The village is dominated by the church whose spire soars to 152 feet and has an ornate Norman north doorway.
- The George Inn, a 17th century building, has quaint frescoes inside.
- The road through the village from east to west is part of the old A604 - see note G.

Kimbolton (N)
- This village is designated an “Outstanding Conservation Area”. It has a fascinating, wide main street, on which the buildings mostly date from the 17th and 18th centuries, although some are older.
- At one end is the rebuilt Castle where Katherine of Aragon, first wife of Henry VIII was imprisoned for 2 years after spending time at Buckden, and where she died in 1536. The former castle was extensively rebuilt in the 18th century by Vanbrugh, who built Castle Howard and Blenheim Palace. It is now a school and is occasionally open to the public. The north gate and gatehouse were designed by Robert Adam.
- The church, which dates from the 13th century, is usually open.

Tilbrook (O)
- The church has an outstanding feature - a painted rood screen which dates from the early 16th century. The church has a Norman doorway and both Saxon and 13th century chancel. There is a coffin lid from the 15th century. The village is dominated by the church.

Former Kimbolton Airfield (P)
- This was built in 1941 as a satellite to Molesworth and later used by the US Air Force as a bomber station. A memorial plaque remains and a Book of Remembrance is in Kimbolton church.

Stow Longa (Q)
- Note the 15th century village cross by the road and the church of St. Botolph nearby, which has a Norman tympanum on the priest’s doorway.

Barham (B)
- The church has a Norman arcade, a 12th century font, and 13th century chancel. There is a coffin lid from the 14th century and 17th century box pews and altar table.

Leighton Bromswold (C)
- To the rear of the church is a 15th century moated gatehouse, with a tower at each corner. It is now a private residence. A castle was to have been built, but only the gatehouse was constructed. In front of the church is a Hundred stone, thought to be 1,000 years old. It was a seat of judgement and of tax collection. Other Hundred stones are at Ixworth and at the Norris Museum in St. Ives.

Old Weston (D)
- The church has a north doorway from about 1200, and a sundial on one of the buttresses. Inside are 14th century wall paintings of St. Margaret, St. Catherine and John the Baptist.
- Its cottages are grouped beside a tributary of the Alconbury Brook.

RAF Molesworth (E)
- This was a bomber station constructed in World War II and used by the US Eighth Air Force.

Brington (F)
- A village of 300-year-old thatched cottages, old barns and a fragment of a wayside cross.
- The church has a 14th century tower and spire with 3 rows of dormer windows.

The Old A646 Road (G)
- The milestones “Thrapston 6” and “Thrapston 5” indicate what used to be the main A646 road. Other sections can be seen at Ellington and Spaldwick.

Molesworth (H)
- The old village is a contrast to the nearby RAF airfield which made the name famous. The church has some medieval wall paintings, including one of St Christopher, patron saint of travellers.
- Molesworth’s village hall was formerly the old school room.

Bythorn (I)
- This little village is gathered around its green, just off what used to be the main A604 road. The church has a 500-year-old roof, which is carved with foliage and faces.

Keyston (J)
- There are several 17th and 18th century buildings in this picturesque village. The church has one of the finest medieval wall paintings, including one of St Christopher, patron saint of travellers.

Covington (K)
- The church has a Norman doorway and both Saxon and Norman fonts.

Catworth (L)
- This pleasant village has 300-year-old cottages, gathered around a handsome 13th century church. St. Leonards has an octagonal spire and contains a monument to Rose Bryden, sister of the poet.

The Kimbolton Road (M)
- A short way along this road is a milestone “London 55 miles”, since this was the road to London from Oundle.

Getting Here...

Huntingdon or St Neots Tourist Information, or
For details of accommodation vacancies, contact Huntingdon or St Neots Tourist Information, or Huntingdonshire Association for Tourism’s Vacancy Line Tel: 0870 2254858 (national rate call).

If you require a large print version of this information, please contact Huntingdon Tourist Information.

Huntingdonshire

Drift Through Time...
**The Route**

1. **Spaldwick to Old Weston**
   Park at SPALDWICK (A), at the west end of the village, or on the lane beyond the A14 road bridge. Start by using this lane to BARHAM (B). At the church, turn left, signposted Leighton Bromswold and after a further 1 1/2 miles, at a T-junction, turn left again to LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD (C). Continue through the village to OLD WESTON (D).

2. **Old Weston to Tilbrook Grange**
   Cross the B660, bear left and continue forward to pass the church to emerge on the main road again. Turn right and where the B660 turns left, continue past RAF Molesworth (E) and through BRINGTON (F). About 1/2 mile beyond Brington turn right (G). At about 1/2 mile along this road detour right through MOLESWORTH (H) to rejoin this road and to continue to BYTHORN (I).
   Back on the old road, just before the derestriction sign, turn left on a concrete track to cross the A14 by a footbridge, (the A14 should not be crossed at ground level, under any circumstances) and then turn right on the concrete to join the B663 road. Turn left and through KEYSTON (J) and left to COVINGTON (K).
   Beyond Covington - at the foot of a hill, turn left towards Catworth for about 2 miles to a T-junction with the B660.

3. **Tilbrook Grange to Kimbolton**
   Unless you are detouring to CATWORTH (L), turn right on the B660 (M) to KIMBOLTON (N). On the way any rider interested in churches should seriously consider making the short detour to the right to TILBROOK (O).

4. **Kimbolton to Spaldwick**
   On reaching the outskirts of the village turn left from the B660 to pass a former airfield (P) and continue through STOW LONGA (Q) to reach SPALDWICK.
   A detour further into Kimbolton to see the imposing castle is recommended.

**Possible short cut**

From Brington to Tilbrook Grange, to omit 9 miles:
At Brington keep forward to the B660 and turn right and through CATWORTH (L) to rejoin the main ride to KIMBOLTON at Tilbrook Grange.