**Welcome**

**History**

The 13th century

In 1215, the Battle of Lewes was fought near the town, where King John was crowned. The town was later granted a charter in 1234.

**Attractons**


Compton Verney house is a centre of arts and unusual events. The RLS Polo Grounds and the Royal Show grounds are close by. Stoneleigh Abbey has been restored recently.

**Eat, Drink & Stay**

Southam has a large selection of take aways from Chinese to fish and chips. Several pubs and coffee shops offer traditional fare and snacks. Restaurants can be found on the town, at the Polo Grounds and at the Stoneythorpe and Turrus hotels. Several B&Bs and a local caravan and campsite are also available.

**Directions**

Easy access is gained from the M6, M40, and M1. The town is located at the junction of the A423 between Coventry and Banbury and the A 425 Leamington to Northampton.

Southam is ideally situated for discovering Shakespeare’s Stratford, Warwick and Kenilworth, with their ancient castles and Coventry with its impressive cathedral. It is also convenient for the spa town of Royal Leamington Spa with its modern shopping facilities and racecourses at Warwick and Stratford. Within a mile of the town centre there are probably the finest Polo Grounds in Europe.

**Information**

For details of events, accommodation, the Holy Well Walk and the Blue Lias Rings, please visit the library or:

- Telephone - 01926 812523
- Website - www.southamonline.co.uk.

For local information and a town map the Town Council office is open every morning 9am to 12 noon. Telephone - 01926 814004.

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**Town Trail**

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complete with waterside pubs.
walks at Bascote, Long Itchington and Napton
Blue Lias Rings and several interesting canal
There is a series of country walks known as the
Compton Verney house is a centre of arts and
(Old Lady of Warwickshire), the Dassett Hills
by-gones at Claydon, The Museum of Southam
Park and Farnborough Hall, The Museum of
Trust properties of Upton House, Charlecote
Gaydon, battle site at Edge Hill and National
The National Heritage Motor Museum at
Attractions
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HISTORY
Southam was first mentioned in a charter of
King Ethelred in 998, but there was an
Anglo-Saxon village before this, and Roman
coins found here hint at an even earlier
foundation. One possible origin of its name
is that it was the settlement (ham) in a bend
of the river Sowe (currently known as the
Stove).

The Holy Well has been in existence for over
a thousand years and was so important
that it was excluded from the Enclosure Act and
became the property of the people of
Southam. By the time of the Domesday
Survey of 1086 the population was about
170. During the next few hundred years
Southam prospered as a market town. In the
18th and 19th centuries Southam was a
centre on the coaching routes with many
inns and hostelries as it was on the main
London to Birmingham and the North road.
The Welsh Road was used by cattle drovers
and sheep or even geese following the Welsh
Road passing through the town on the way
to London markets. Every Tuesday the town
is very busy with the bustle of market day.
On the second Saturday of every month a
Farmers’ Market where local foods and
wines can be bought is held on Market Hill.

Southam was a winner of the Britain in
Bloom in recent years. Currently there are
plans to site a sculpture in the library
grounds where one can sit and relax and
watch the world go by. At Christmas time
there is a display of festive lights second to
none in the area. A wide range of activities
is held in Southam during the year
including a Carnival and the Mop Fair;
there are theatrical productions
and concerts mainly in the
Grange Hall. The town
is full of history and this
Town Trail guides you round
some of it.
TOWN TRAIL

A wide range of activities is held in Southam throughout the year to suit all interests.

The town is full of history and this Trail takes you to visit some of the most interesting places, but look out for what else there is to see in between.

Duration - ???? hr
The trail around Southam takes around?? hour. Please take your time.

Car Park - Wood St
Free parking.

OS Map - Explorer Map 222
Discover Southam on the Rugby OS map.

Refreshments - Market Hill
Food & drink can be found at cafes, restaurants and pubs around the town.

More Information - Southam
Please refer to Southam’s Town Trail leaflet.

**King Charles I & Southam cider (1-4)**
Start from Wood St car park. Turn left out of the car park noticing the Congregational Church (built 1839) opposite and then right along Daventry St with the Market Tavern, originally the Crown Inn on your right. Walk on to the Bull Inn where the old pig market was held and a cider press set up in the yard every autumn. Continue on to the main street with the Chemist’s shop on your left. This was the manor house of Southam and King Charles I stayed here in 1642 during the first year of the Civil War, issuing a Proclamation to restrain his troops from pillaging.

Chickabiddy & stables (5)
Turn left down Market Hill. On the right hand side at the far end in front of the variegated style of buildings are the remains of the tethering wall and rails from the old cattle market. Look down the narrow alley Chickabiddy Lane where there used to be a poultry market. Also on your left is what was the Craven Arms Hotel. In the 18th and 19th centuries it was the main inn having stabling for 80 horses.

**Cinema & Saucy Six (6-8)**
Up the yard between the gift shop and the supermarket the building right at the back is the old Court House - once a magistrates’ court, a cinema and a venue for concerts. Cross the supermarket car park and the row of brick built cottages facing you are known as the Saucy Six and were built to house the postillions from the Craven Arms. From the Saucy Six cross over at the corner and take a short detour down Banbury Rd past the thatched cottages to Brown’s Bridge. The older pedestrianised bridge was built in the 17th century.

**The ‘Pudding Bell’ (9-11)**
Turn back and walk past the early 19th century houses on Oxford St (9) Look for the Old Bakery (opposite the supermarket entrance). Here townsfolk used to bring their Sunday dinners to be roasted. A bell rung at the end of the Church service was known as ‘pudding bell’, people then collected their dinners from this and other butcheries in the town. Go down the jitty at the side of the Old Bakery into Warwick St. Turn left and over the bridge, then walk along Abbey Lane where there are more old cottages with nos. 47 and 49 being 15th/16th century.

**The first Provident Dispensary (12-16)**
Return to Warwick Rd and walk up the hill. Along here are several old and imposing houses (the white cottages nos. 24 and 26 are the oldest cottages in Southam with roof timbers dating back to 1418). The Stoneythorpe Hotel with the Lilley Smith Memorial urn within its walled enclosure is where Henry Lilley Smith established the first Provident Dispensary in the kingdom in 1823 and built a hospital for the treatment of eye and ear diseases. Left again down Watton’s Lane next to the Memorial and over the narrow river bridge. To your left here is the start of the Holy Well Walk (see separate leaflet) - it takes about 10 minutes to walk as far as the Well itself. To the right is the recreation ground - walk round or across it to St James’ Church which was built in the 14th century. The list of Rectors dates back to 1296. Inside, four ‘green men’ can be seen in the corners of the nave. Seth Bond, who took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade later moved to Southam and is buried in the churchyard. His memorial is in the form of a cavalry sabre attached to a cross.

**St James Church**
The church has a spire rising to 126 feet and bells dating back to 1552. Look out for the ‘green men’ in the Church.

**The Chemist**
King Charles I stayed here when it was the Manor House during the first year of the first year of the Civil War in 1642.

**The Olde Mint**
Local trading tokens were once minted here, a few still survive in private collections.

**Merestone Park**
The original Merestone was one of the boundary markers of the Manor of Southam.

**Chickabiddy Lane**
Down this lane used to be the poultry market used to be held.

**Food & drink can be found at cafes,**
**Refreshments - Market Hill**
Discover Southam on the Rugby OS map.

**OS Map - Explorer Map 222**
Free parking.

**Money, meetings & markets (17-20)**
Back at the main street turn left; pass the library and find the Olde Mint public house, reputedly built in the 15th century. Local trading tokens were once minted here, a few still survive. Farther along, the Bowling Green public house is where, in the 19th century, open air meetings were held by Joseph Arch the founder of the Agricultural Workers’ Trades Union. Continue in this direction with interesting properties on both sides of the road. On your left Welsh Rd (West) is part of the old drovers’ road where thousands of sheep, cattle, geese etc passed this way en route from Wales to London. Further up Coventry Rd is The Grange which was used for wounded soldiers in the First World War. Behind it The Grange Hall contains embroidery pictures showing Southam’s history, created by local needle women for the Millennium and completed in 2003.

**Millions of years ago (21)**
Cross the road and turning towards the town, take the footpath between nos. 10 and 11. Follow this path crossing the junction of Tollgate Rd and The Furrows past the bollards. When you get to the end, just before the field gate turn left into Merestone Park. Walk right up to the Merestone for a wonderful view across the fields towards Napton. The original Merestone was one of the boundary markers of Southam - this replacement stone is 360 million years old.

**Exquisite embroidery by nuns (22-23)**
Leave the Park where you came in and take the other path between the hedge and the fence, walk down...
The town is full of history and this Trail takes you to visit some of the most interesting places, but look out for what else there is to see in between.

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the Battle of Southam on the 23rd August 1642 was the first official skirmish of the Civil War when the town was visited by both Parliamentarian and Royalist troops. King Charles I stayed in the then Manor House during the first year of the Civil War.

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