

MEMORABLE MG ROUTES

Places to visit.

Details of opening times and entrance fees etc, can be obtained by visiting the websites.

Silverstone Motor Racing Circuit

Silverstone was created as a World War Two airfield in 1943 close to the village of the same name. Once the war had ended in 1945, Britain was left with a number of redundant airfields. The Royal Automobile Club approached the Air Ministry and a lease was arranged and, on October 2 1948, amid straw bales and ropes, the first event, the RAC Grand Prix took place.

In 1951 the lease was taken over by the British Racing Drivers' Club who set about turning the temporary airfield track into something more permanent, which is the circuit we see today.

www.silverstone.co.uk

Stowe

The current house was built on the site of an earlier structure in the 1680s and remodelled by Earl Temple in 1770.

In the 1740s, 'Capability Brown' swept away the formal gardens and created the Landscape Garden that we see today, which are now cared for by the National Trust and can be visited.

www.stowe.co.uk www.nationaltrust.org.uk

The Oxford Canal

Canals were introduced into Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the Oxford canal was one of the earliest to be constructed.

It runs for 78 miles between Coventry and Oxford and is one that maintains a horizontal course by traversing around the hillsides in a meandering route and consequently is considered to be one of the most attractive in the country.

www.waterscape.com

Broughton Castle

This delightful fortified manor house was built in 1300 by Sir John de Broughton, and was subsequently purchased in 1377 by William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. A later relative of William Wykeham married into the Fiennes family in whose hands the castle still rests. In the seventeenth century, Sir William Fiennes was one of the leading activists against Charles I, who allowed Broughton to be used as a meeting place for those plotting against the King, and later raised troops to fight against the King at Edge Hill in 1642.

www.broughtoncastle.com

Upton House

One of the National Trust's most important collections of Old Masters, Tapestries, Sevres Porcelain, Chelsea & Derby figures and eighteenth-century furniture can be found in this house.

Built in 1695 of mellow local stone and remodelled in 1928 by Walter Samuel, 2nd Viscount Bearsted, son of the founder of the Shell Oil Company and Chairman from 1921-1946.

With a motoring theme, there is a display of paintings and publicity posters commissioned by Shell during Viscount Bearsted's Chairmanship.

A stunning garden, with terraces, ornamental pools, herbaceous borders complete the attractions of this fine country house.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-uptonhouse

Burton Dassett Country Park

The remains of a windmill thought to have been constructed in 1664 dominates this group of hills which cover 100 acres and are some 200m. The nearby twelfth-century church, of All Saints in Burton Dassett hamlet is well worth a visit. The MGCC Midland Centre holds its Autumn Trial here.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk



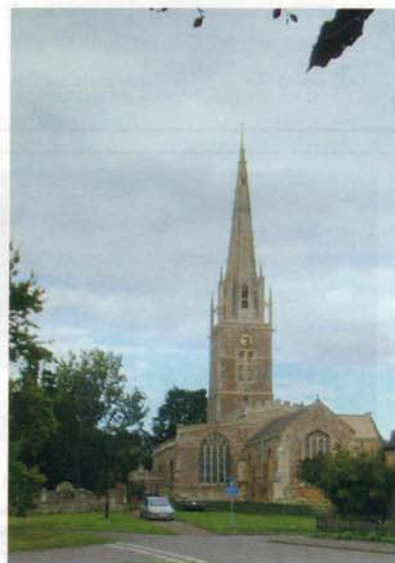
This Memorable Route was used as the 2008 'Tour de Silverstone', which took place in June as part of the Silverstone International weekend. A circular tour of 80 miles starting at Silverstone, journeying to the Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon and returning, by a different route, to the home of British motorsport.

The route leaves Silverstone Circuit, heads in a south-westerly direction through the villages and gently rolling countryside of Buckinghamshire, crossing at Twyford four generations of transport systems: the River; the Canal; the Railway; and the Motorway. Skirting Banbury, passing Broughton Castle, then swinging northwards through the attractive lanes of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire to the halfway point and a lunch stop at the Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon. Re-crossing the M40, the return route proceeds eastwards through the green and pleasant fields of Northamptonshire, with both Canons Ashby and Sulgrave Manor on the route, before returning to our base at Silverstone.

You should allocate a full day for this route as each leg takes about two hours, at country lane speeds, together with a good two hours for the Museum (more if you take lunch), and then possibly visiting some of the other attractions along the way.

The countryside is pleasant, the villages are attractive, the views stunning and delightful country houses combine with rural lanes to make this a truly Memorable MG Route.

As soon as you have left the circuit, we enter Buckinghamshire where the impressive building that is Stowe School appears on the horizon, you pass through the small hamlet of Dadford before turning at the main entrance to Stowe with its delightful lodge cottages. A brief spell in Oxfordshire, leads on through pleasant countryside passing several small villages



before re-entering Northamptonshire at Evenley, with its large attractive village green. After crossing the busy A43 dual carriageway, the route is soon in open countryside again passing through Charlton and on to Kings Sutton. The church of St Peter & St Paul is particularly noteworthy.

Leaving the village you pass over the railway and the road drops down to cross the river Cherwell and the Oxford Canal, as we re-enter Oxfordshire, and then steeply up over the M40, before proceeding to the A4260. A short distance on the main road leads into Adderbury, a delightful village of mellow Oxfordshire ironstone.



Onwards through Milton and Bloxham our route winds its way to Broughton and, after passing the Saye & Sele Arms, we come to the castle itself. Sadly, it is not actually visible from the road, but that is a further incentive to stop and explore.

The road, now very narrow with grass growing in the middle, climbs and winds its way over a ridge with stunning views to the distant horizon.

Continuing through pleasant lanes we leave Oxfordshire and enter Warwickshire, dropping down into the villages of Upper & Middle Tysoe complete with attractive houses, pubs a village green and church, then onwards till we meet the A422, where the road ascends the steep slope of the Edge Hill ridge.



Although not on our route, a short (1/4 mile) detour takes us to Upton House, a National Trust property with motoring connections, being the former home of Viscount Bearsted, the Chairman of Shell from 1921–46.

Back on our route, the road traverses the ridge of Edge Hill where tantalising glimpses of the plain below can be had through the screen of trees, past the Castle Inn, with its striking octagonal tower built in 1742 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Civil War battle of Edge Hill. Now flowing down the scarp, the road descends onto the plain where the actual battle took place and past the memorial cairn by the roadside and onto the village of Kineton. In a further five miles we reach our halfway stop, the Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon.

The collection here, is the world's largest of British cars including some 21 or so MGs, from the very first MG 'Old No. 1', to a 2005 MG SV, together with several record breakers.

Being refreshed and amazed by the MG exhibits we begin the second half of our route, which soon crosses the M40 heading Eastwards and, in a few miles, we come across the Burton Dassett County Park. The remains of a windmill sit upon the crest of a hill (203m) peppered with quarry workings, and stunning views over four counties, where on a clear day you can see the Malvern Hills.

Dropping down through Fenny Compton, we traverse the A423 and immediately cross the Oxford canal for the second time on our route at Wormleighton. Note the interesting gatehouse as you drive by.

The attractive villages of Priors Hardwick and Priors Marston are passed through before entering Northamptonshire with pleasant countryside and quiet roads which lead us on to Canons Ashby.



The house and its gardens are a delight, together with its attendant church, which is all that remains of the 12th-century Augustinian Priory, whence the house gets its name.

Soon we come across Sulgrave, this delightful Northants village displays a variety of charming cottages and grand houses, a fine pub, together with the fabulous Sulgrave Manor. Built in c. 1500 this is the ancestral home of George Washington, first President of the USA.

A further 10 miles takes us through the villages of Helmdon, Wappenham and Abthorpe then finally to Silverstone, and on to our finishing point back at the circuit.

Edgehill and the English Civil war

In the 1640s, England was split asunder by a bitter civil war.

The King, Charles I, believed strongly in the right of the monarch to rule as he saw fit and to raise taxes for whatever purpose. The Parliament on the other hand, believed equally strongly in their right to deny funds to the Crown. This resulted in armed conflict between 'Roundheads' the Parliamentarians and 'Cavaliers' the supporters of the Royalist cause.

The first battle of the war took place close to Edge Hill, but the result was inconclusive. The narrow wood on the scarp of Edge Hill, some 700ft (200m) high, overlooks the plain on which the battle was fought. The Castle Inn stands on the summit of the hill on the spot where King Charles raised his standard and summoned his officers to war. The octagonal tower was constructed in 1742 to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the battle, and the bar in the pub has much civil war memorabilia.

Heritage Motor Museum

The museum houses the largest collection, over 250 cars, of British motor vehicles in the world, encompassing models from 1890 up until the present day. There are 21 models representing the MG marque from 1925 until 2005, including several record-breaking cars.

A 'time line', ever-changing temporary exhibitions, an 'off road' experience and a Go Kart track, together with a library, film shows, cafe and shop make this an interesting destination for the motoring enthusiast.

www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk

Canons Ashby

This country house derives its name from the priory of Augustinian Canons established here in the late twelfth century.

In about 1550 John Dryden built the core of the present house, probably incorporating an earlier structure on the site and it remained in the Dryden family ownership, until it was acquired by the National Trust in 1980.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-canonsashbyhouse

Sulgrave Manor

The original Tudor house was built in 1540–60 as the home of Laurence Washington, a wool trader of Northampton.

The most interesting fact is that it has been identified as the home of the great, great, great, great, grandfather of George Washington who was destined to become the first President of the USA. The Stars and Stripes flag still flies on the flag pole.

www.sulgravemanor.org.uk

Pubs

You can be sure of a warm welcome, together with good beer and food at the following establishments: Red Lion – Evenly, Butchers Arms – Kings Sutton, Coach & Horses – West Adderbury, Saye & Sele Arms – Broughton, The Peacock – Tysoe, The Castle – Edge Hill, The Holly Bush – Priors Marston, The Star – Sulgrave

Paul Plummer

Route Data

The route is around 80 miles long and the approximate MG driving time is about 4 hours. Allow a full day, if you wish to visit some of the attractions and have lunch together with some liquid refreshment.

More detailed route instructions are available from the MG Car Club's website (www.mgcc.co.uk).