

Hooky Pubs by Bus



...or How to visit all 47 Hooky pubs by public transport starting from Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire...



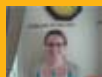
April



May



June



July



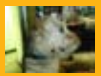
August



September



October



November



December



January



February



March



1 Warwickshire
Kings Head, Napton on the Hill. CV47 8NG.
Tel: 01926-812202
SP465619
Wed 30 Jul 08.

You need 3 buses (Mon-Sat) to reach this most northerly Hooky pub close to the Oxford Canal. Take the 9.15am Bus 50A from Shipston to Stratford and from the same stand catch the 10.10am Bus 15 to Leamington Spa. Stay aboard till you reach Upper Parade and cross over to find stand K for the 11.05am Bus 64 which will take you to Napton via Southam. The pub is half a mile beyond the village centre and the driver dropped me right outside at 12.20. It was now 3 hours since leaving Shipston and much as I enjoyed the Warwickshire countryside and its many villages I was ready for a beer and here I found some excellent Hooky Bitter alongside Old Hooky. Bus 64 returns at 1.50pm to Leamington Spa in time for the 3.26pm Bus 15 to Stratford from stand J and finally the 4.24 Bus 50A back to Shipston.

2 Warwickshire
George Hotel, Lower Brailes. OX15 5HN.
Tel: 01608-685223
SP313392
GPG 2006 p759,
GBG 2004 p473.
Thu 5 Jun 08.

Bus 50A towards Banbury at 11.37am stops opposite the George before opening time at noon so I was the first customer of the day. Two Hooky beers were available and a walking leaflet behind the bar showed me that I could have taken one of the shorter walks based on the pub before catching Bus 50A at 2.55pm back to Shipston. Some months after my visit new hosts



Sue & Dave took over and have reinstated 4 beers on handpump together with live music on Fridays and Saturdays.

3 Warwickshire
Cherington Arms,
Cherington. CV36 5HS.
Tel: 01608-686233
SP291365
[GPG 2007 p762.](#)
Thu 5 Jun 08.

There is a convenient bus service on a Thursday. Firstly you take Bus 50A towards Banbury at 11.37am and get off at the George in Lower Brailes (see 2 above). Then on a Thursday there is a Shipston Link minibus which has been to Morrisons in Banbury and on its return journey passes the George at 12.25pm en route for Cherington. Standing outside the George's front door I was ready to put my arm out and hitch a lift arriving at the pub after alighting at Featherbed Lane some 50 yards away. Two Hooky beers and a tasty menu made a memorable lunchtime before taking the 2.45pm Bus 23 also from Featherbed Lane back to Shipston.

4 Warwickshire
Red Lion, Ilmington.
CV36 4LX
Tel: 01608-682366
SP213436
[GPG 2009 p747,](#)
[GBG 2008 p483.](#)
Fri 22 Aug 08.

Bus 23 towards Stratford leaves Shipston Mon-Sat at 12 noon arriving opposite the Red Lion about 12.20. After some excellent Hooky beer and delicious food I took a walk around this interesting village before catching a return Bus 23 at 2.50pm. The Ilmington Morris Men celebrate May Day each year by gathering at sunrise on Ilmington Downs with a further 4 performances throughout the village ending up at the Red Lion as pic-



tured here before a hearty breakfast and a pint in the pub.

5 Warwickshire
Coach & Horses, Shipston on Stour. CV36 4EN.
Tel: 01608-661335
SP258403
[GPG 2006 p761.](#)
Wed 2 Apr 08.

No need to take a bus for this one. There are 6 pubs in Shipston on Stour all of which serve cask conditioned beer. The Coach has a range of Hook Norton beers and often includes a guest. On my recorded visit I found Jennings Cumberland and this later picture shows mother and daughter landladies Shiela and Sharon. The pub can be found on the A3400 towards Oxford just 80 yards from the Square. It is open all day every day.

6 Warwickshire
Bird in Hand, Newbold on Stour. CV37 8TR.
Tel: 01789-450253
SP246464
[GPG 2008 p770.](#)
Fri 29 Aug 08.

Bus 50 towards Stratford leaves Shipston Mon-Sat at 12.39pm and I arrived at the Bird in Hand about 12.50. The stop is just before the pub. (On Sundays Bus 50 leaves Shipston at 1.03pm). And here was my favourite summer beer Haymaker with an excellent guest in the form of Rev James. There is an hourly return bus and I carefully crossed the A3400 to catch the 2.25 pm Bus 50 back to Shipston. The Sunday service is every two hours.



7 Warwickshire
Gate, Upper Brailes.
OX15 5AX.
Tel: 01608-685212
SP304399
[GPG 2009 p750.](#)
Wed 15 Oct 08.

I caught the 11.37am Bus 50A towards Banbury and asked to be dropped at the Gate and arrived before opening time of 12 noon. Besides Hooky Bitter there was the excellent Morlands Original as guest. The Gate is well renowned for its fish & chips available Wed-Fri lunchtimes (also in the evenings). The George in Lower Brailes (see 2 above) can be reached from the Gate by a footpath including the 99 Steps and the “Ten Walks in Brailes” leaflet incorporates part of OS Explorer Map 191 which helps to locate the route. Return Bus 50A leaves the George at 2.55 and the Gate at 3pm. There are also later buses both 23 and 50A which pass both pubs en route to Shipston.

8 Warwickshire
Castle Inn, Edgehill.
OX15 6DJ.
Tel: 01295-670255
SP374474
[GPG 2009 p746,](#)
[GBG 2002 p472.](#)
Wed 4 Jun 08.

Edgehill lies on a bus route between Stratford and Banbury so I was able to make a circular tour with a break at the Castle Inn. Bus 50A leaves Shipston Mon-Sat at 9.15am arriving at the Wood Street terminus in Stratford in 25 minutes. Then from the same stand I took Bus 269 towards Banbury at 10.15am arriving close to the Castle Inn at 10.50. So there was plenty of time to explore on foot to see where the opening battle of the English Civil War took place. When the pub opened I found an interesting special beer called Banbury 400 in addition to other fine Hooky beers. Continuing my journey to Banbury I caught Bus 269 at 2.15pm for the 30 minute trip to Banbury bus station and then Bus 50A at 4.05pm back to Shipston.

9 Warwickshire
Royal Oak, Whatcote.
CV36 5EF.
Tel: 01295-680319
SP299446
[GPG 2009 p751,](#)
[GBG 2006 p483.](#)
Sat 31 May 08.

There is a Saturday bus to Whatcote and after a lunchtime pint you have to walk a mile for a bus back to base. On a Saturday from Shipston Square outside the White Bear catch Bus 573 towards Tysoe at 11.30am. This reaches the Royal Oak in about 15 minutes and there I found landlord Rocket Ron seated in the May sunshine outside his pub.



Along with a selection of fine Hooky beers I found St Austell Tinnars as a guest. Returning to Shipston required a mile walk along the road to Oxhill where Bus 270 left for Stratford at 3.20pm from the stop outside the

Peacock pub. I set off from Whatcote at 2pm and was in good time for a glass of Timothy Taylor Golden Best at the Peacock. From Stratford I caught the 4.30pm Bus 50A back to Shipston.

10 Worcestershire
Trumpet, Evesham.
WR11 4BD.
Tel: 01386-446227
SP034437
[GBG 2002 p505.](#)
Wed 28 May 08.

Take the 10.27am Bus 50 from Shipston to Stratford. Cross over Wood Street (the terminus) and take the 11 am Bus 28 for the 40 minute ride to Evesham. From the bus station I walked further down the High Street to find Merstow Green and the Trumpet on the right. There is plenty to see and do in Evesham and after tasting the excellent Hooky beers I took a short riverboat trip on the Avon before returning to Stratford on the 4.05pm Bus 28 from Bay E and the 5.25pm Bus 50 back to Shipston. There are also Sunday buses.

11 Worcestershire
Cap 'n' Gown, Worcester.
WR1 1JZ.
Tel: 01905-28914
SO846558
GBG 2007 p516.
Wed 23 Apr 08.

With the pub at 27 miles distance it helps to use the train from Evesham to Worcester. First take the 9.15am Bus 50A to Stratford and the 10am Bus 28 to Evesham and ask to be dropped at the railway station. Then take the 11.21am train and enjoy the 26 minute journey to Worcester Foregate Street. Turn right when leaving the station and walk along Foregate Street which becomes Upper Tything to reach the pub (on the left) in about 5 minutes. I found 3 Hooky beers and a Spitfire as guest, all served



by the cheery landlady. There is plenty to see and do in Worcester and in due course I took the

4.02pm train back to Evesham and the 5.15pm Bus 28 to Stratford for the 6.25pm last Bus 50 to Shipston. Bus and train times are for Mon-Fri but on Saturday the train from Evesham leaves an hour later thereby reducing your time in Worcester. The Sunday journey is impracticable.

12 Worcestershire
Queens Head, Sedgeberrow.
WR11 7UE.
Tel: 01386-881447
SP022383
GPG 2009 p800,
GBG 2007 p515.
Thu 26 Jun 08

Three buses are needed Mon-Sat to reach this village a little beyond Evesham. First take the 10.27am Bus 50 to Stratford and the 11am Bus 28 to Evesham (as for pub 10 above). At the bus station transfer to Bus 540 at Bay B for the 12.22pm service towards Cheltenham which stops at the Queens Head after 15 minutes. I found Morlands Original as the guest together with Hooky Bitter and also Bulmers cider on handpump. During the floods of

2007 the landlady and her husband were rescued by boat from an upstairs window. The picture shows high water mark.



Bus 540 returns from opposite the pub at 2.31pm and I then caught the 3.05pm Bus 28 from Bay E in Evesham back to Stratford in time for the 4.24pm Bus 50A to Shipston.

13 Gloucestershire
Wellington,
Moreton in Marsh. GL56 0HN.
Tel: 01608-650936
SP212324
Tue 2 Sep 08

For towns only 6 miles apart there is a very poor daily bus service between Shipston and Moreton. You have to go via Stratford and the journey takes 2 hours or more. However on Tuesdays Moreton has a market and a minibus runs from Ship-

ston and takes only 25 minutes giving passengers almost 2 hours to shop in Moreton. So I took the Kimlan Coaches 11am bus from outside the White Bear in Shipston's square and on arrival made a note of where to board the return bus at 1.20pm. I then walked the half mile back along the A44 towards Oxford to reach the pub. The landlord recognised me and asked how the project was going. It turned out he was also landlord of the first pub I had visited (pub15) and was helping out whilst new tenants were preparing to move in.



I had some excellent Flagship which was brewed to commemorate

the Battle of Trafalgar. Note: new hosts Celia and Chris arrived in time for Christmas and although they do not open at lunchtime Mon-Fri the pub is open all day Saturday.

And on Saturday direct Bus 577

leaves Shipston from the White Bear at 12.30 and returns from Moreton at 5.35pm.



14 Gloucestershire
**Great Western Arms,
Blockley.** GL56 9DT.
Tel: 01386-700362
SP166351
[GPG 2009 p288.](#)
Tue 29 Jul 08.

One route is to take the 11am Tuesday bus to Moreton as for pub 13 above, have a look round the market and then take Bus 21 for Stratford from the Corn Exchange at 12.30pm which takes just 10 minutes to reach Blockley. But I chose to go via Stratford by taking the 11.40am Bus 50A from Shipston then crossing over Wood Street to catch the 12.12 Bus 21 from Stratford towards Moreton in Marsh. Blockley is reached in about an hour and the driver pointed out the pub when I asked. I found two Hooky beers on handpull and later walked around this interesting two pub village before returning to Stratford on the 4.39pm Bus 21 then the 6.25pm last Bus 50 to Shipston. Times via Stratford apply Mon-Sat.

15 Gloucestershire
Oddfellows Arms, Cirencester.
GL7 1HF.
Tel: 01285-641540
SP026016
Tue 1 Apr 08.

At 28 miles distance this pub can be reached by just two buses but only on a Tuesday although the return journey is more complicated. Take the 11am Tuesday Kimlan market bus from outside the White Bear in Shipston Square as for pub 13 above. In Moreton take the 12.15 Bus 855 from the Corn Exchange which reaches Cirencester in less than an hour. There is a convenient street map on a display board at the terminus by the fine Parish Church of St John Baptist and this greatly helped me locate the Oddfellows in Chester Street about 10 minutes walk away. There were two Hooky beers and Jennings Golden Host as a guest in a bar with a lively group of locals discussing everything under the sun.

This later picture shows hosts Robert &



Elizabeth with yet more ales.
The return Bus 855 at 3.45pm

arrives in Moreton too late for buses to Shipston via Stratford so at Moreton I took the 4.51pm train for the 8 minute ride to Kingham where Railbus X8 at 5.20pm took me to Chipping Norton 15 minutes away. Finally the 6.25pm last Bus 50 took me back to Shipston. Note you can also make this journey on a Saturday by using Bus 577 at 10am from outside the White Bear which takes 20 minutes to reach Moreton in Marsh. Then Bus 855 as for a Tuesday and you can return to Shipston on the 577 at 5.35pm.

16 Northamptonshire
New Inn, Abthorpe.
NN12 8QR.
Tel: 01327-857306
SP649465
GBG 2006 p365.
Sat 14 Feb 09.

It's not often I catch a 7.36am bus on a frosty Saturday morning for a lunchtime pint at a pub but that was what was needed to reach the New Inn. Bus 50A took me to Banbury bus station and then at 9.30am SMS Bus 250 towards Northampton arrived in Abthorpe at the early hour of 10.15. My plan was to explore the village for a while

before a lunchtime pub visit but then I found a pavement board advertising an all day breakfast.



I was made most welcome at the New Inn by the farming family who run it. There

were three Hooky beers on hand-pump and I enjoyed a hearty lunch. Apparently the previous weekend the village had been cut off by ice and snow so it was as well I went when I did. The bus driver advised me to be ready for 2.30pm as his return journey from Northampton might be early and so he was. So I was able to catch the 4.05pm Bus 50A back to Shipston.



17 Northamptonshire
Three Conies, Thorpe Mandeville. OX17 2EX.
Tel: 01295-711025
SP530447
Mon 7 Jul 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station

and then the 1.13pm Bus 508 from Bay 1 towards Brackley which arrives at the pub in 15 minutes. I found Hooky Bitter and two guests in the form of Morlands Original and London Pride. The return Bus 508 from opposite the pub left at 2.43pm and I was in good time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A back to Shipston. Bus times apply Mon-Sat.

18 Northamptonshire
Great Western Arms,
Aynho Wharf. OX17 3BP.
Tel: 01869-338288
SP498323
[GPG 2009 p 492.](#)
Thu 26 Feb 09.

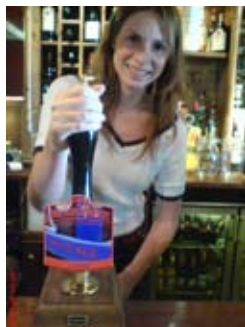
As there is no bus service past the door a good bit of walking is required for a visit to this pub. Put your boots on, take Explorer Map 191 and catch the 9.33am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station. Then take Heyfordian Bus 81 at 11am (Thu-Sat only) from Bay 1 towards Bicester and ask to be dropped at Nell Bridge Garage (about 20 minutes ride). Carefully walk back to the canal bridge and walk along the tow-path for a mile to find the pub beside the Oxford Canal at Aynho Wharf. On my visit there

was only one beer on handpump and this was the most expensive Hooky Bitter I encountered in all 47 pubs. So I began my return journey earlier than planned and set off along the road for the 2 miles to Deddington and a bus to Banbury. But on the way at the village of Clifton, the Duke of Cumberland's Head beckoned and I found some Dorothy Goodbody's on handpump and a tasty baguette. Eventually from the Market Place in Deddington I caught the 3.39pm Bus 59 to Banbury bus station in good time for the 5.10pm Bus 50A back to Shipston. Note the journey can only be made on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday.

On a subsequent visit (by car!) I met new hosts René (chef) and partner

Ali. I had met Ali once before at the Roebuck (see pub 27 below) and whilst leaving her Dad behind in

Drayton Ali appears to have brought her excellent ale with her.



19 Northamptonshire
**Marston Inn, Marston St
Lawrence.** OX17 2DB.

Tel: 01295-711906

SP536425

GBG 2008 p370

Wed 28 Jan 09.

Three buses and some walking are required to reach this pub. Take the 9.33am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station and then the 10.40am Bus 500 from Bay 5 for the 30 minute journey to Brackley. From Brackley Market Place take the 11.37am Bus 508 for a 15 minute journey to Greatworth. The bus stops at the Inn at Greatworth (see 24 below) and I resisted the temptation to call in because I had yet to walk the mile and a half along the road to Marston St Lawrence (the shorter footpath across the fields was waterlogged). And now for the disappointment. The pub was closed and apparently does not open weekday lunchtimes! But the good news was that I found the landlady chatting to the postman and when I explained my mission this kind person took pity on me and opened up especially for me. A pint of Old Hooky put me in a better mood for the walk back to Greatworth where the 2.21pm Bus 508 took

me directly to Banbury bus station in time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A back to Shipston. I made a note always in future to telephone each pub the night before to ascertain opening hours. Bus times apply Mon-Sat.

20 Northamptonshire
Butchers Arms, Kings Sutton.
OX17 3RD.

Tel: 01295-810898

SP499362

GBG 2006 p368

Wed 18 Feb 09.

Although there is a bus to Kings Sutton the return timings suggest taking the train from Banbury instead. Take the 9.33am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury and cross the canal on the footbridge at the bus station to walk the 200 yards along the towpath to the train station. I took the 12.27pm train for the 5 minute journey to Kings Sutton and a short walk into the village brought me to the pub in Whittall Street. Three Hooky beers were served by the chatty temporary landlord. I caught the 2.45pm train back to Banbury and the 4.05pm Bus 50A to Shipston. Times apply Mon-Sat except that the return train on Saturday departs at 2.38pm.

21 Northamptonshire
**Rose & Crown, Chipping
Warden.** OX17 1LF.
Tel: 01295-660216
SP498488
Thu 12 Feb 09.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station and then the 1.10pm Bus GA01 from Stand 2 outside Debenham in Bridge Street (i.e. at the entrance to the bus station). This stops outside the pub in about 20



minutes and I found two Hooky beers plus a guest in the form of Nethergate Suffolk County. The good value house bitter which Hook Norton provide with a pumpclip designed by the pub must surely win a prize here for originality. It was named Chirpy Chippy. The bus returns hourly and I could have stayed longer because the pub is open all day every day. But I chose to return (from opposite the pub) on the

2.45pm GA01 bus in good time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A to Shipston. Bus times apply Mon-Sat and the last return bus is at 4.45pm which may be in time for the 5.10pm Bus 50A else the 6.10 back to Shipston.

22 Northamptonshire
**Carpenters Arms, Lower
Boddington.** NN11 6YB.
Tel: 01327-260451
SP480521
Fri 20 Feb 09.

The nearest bus stop is over two miles away so there is a lot of walking involved. I decided to make a cross country tour and armed with boots and map (Landranger 151) took the 9.33am Bus 50A to Banbury and the 11.10am Bus GA01 from Debenhams as for pub 21 above. Stay on board through Chipping Warden and alight at the next village, Byfield. Now take the



road towards Upper Boddington and at the Boddington canal reservoir bear left onto a bridleway which leads over the hill to Lower Boddington. I reached the village at 1.15pm and leaving my boots outside took a large thirst and moderate hunger into the pub. A charming young lady



pulled an excellent pint and I was soon back on form. The return target was pub 21 (see above) by means of a walk along the road to Aston le Walls and a right turn onto a footpath skirting the airfield to Chipping Warden. The Rose & Crown acts as a handy bus shelter and the hourly GA01 gave me a choice of 3.45pm or 4.45pm to connect with Bus 50A at 5.10 or 6.10pm from Banbury to Shipston. Bus times apply Mon-Sat but the Carpenters Arms may not be open Mon-Thurs lunchtimes so it is a good plan to phone the night before.

23 Northamptonshire
Star Inn, Sulgrave. OX17 2SA.
Tel: 01295-760389
SP558455
[GPG 2009 p500](#),
[GBG 2009 p379](#).
Thu 17 Jul 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A to Banbury bus station and then the 1.12pm Bus 508 from Bay 1 towards Brackley. This reaches Sulgrave village in 25 minutes and the pub is just a 2 minute walk from the stop. I found three Hooky beers on handpump including my favourite summer tipple, Haymaker. The return Bus 508 leaves at 2.33pm which gets to Banbury in good time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A to Shipston. Bus times apply Mon-Sat.

24 Northamptonshire
The Inn, Greatworth.
OX17 2DT.
Tel: 01295-710976
SP551424
Thu 17 Jul 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station and then the 1.12pm Bus 508 towards Brackley as for pub 23 above. This time stay on board at Sulgrave continuing through Helmdon to arrive in Greatworth at about 1.50pm. The pub is close to the bus stop and I found three Hooky beers including the excellent Haymaker. The return Bus 508 leaves at 2.21pm so only a brief visit is possible on this route. But I was able to reach this pub again whilst visiting Marston St Lawrence (see pub 19 above).

25 Oxfordshire
Coach & Horses, Banbury.
OX16 5JH.
Tel: 01295-273552
SP455405
Mon 7 Jul 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston and ask to be dropped at the Post Office in Banbury. The pub is just one minute's walk away in Butchers Row off the pedestrianised High Street. I found 3 Hooky beers here and much admired the recent conversion. There is plenty to see in Banbury and on this occasion I visited the other Hooky pub (see 26 below) before catching the 2.26pm Bus 50A from the bus station back to Shipston.

26 Oxfordshire
Reindeer Inn, Banbury.
OX16 5NA.
Tel: 01295-264031
SP454406
[GPG 2009 p548](#),
[GBG 2009 p399](#).
Mon 7 Jul 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston and alight at the Post Office in Banbury as for pub 25 above. Stroll along White Lion Walk to Church Lane and then

Parsons Street where you will find the pub immediately opposite. There were 4 Hooky beers on handpump when I visited and a look round this ancient pub revealed the historic Globe Room. Letting bedrooms may not now be available but Oliver Cromwell booked himself in here for the first round fixture of the Civil War (see pub 8 above). I walked down Parsons Street to the Market Place and continued to the bus station where, whilst awaiting the 2.26pm Bus 50A back to Shipston, I spied much activity at the canal lock.



27 Oxfordshire
Roebuck, Drayton.
OX15 6EN.
Tel: 01295-730542
SP428419
Sat 1 Nov 08.

Drayton lies on a bus route between Banbury and Stratford so

you can get there and back Mon-Sat on a circular route either way round but it takes a long time. However on a Saturday there is a shorter way of getting there involving a brace of peacocks. This is what to do. Take the 11.30am Bus 573 on a Saturday from outside the White Bear in Shipston square and break your journey for an hour in either Oxhill or Tysoe which you reach in 20 and 25 minutes. Now each of these villages has a pub called the Peacock and both serve excellent cask beer. Then Bus 270 to Banbury will take you from the Peacock in Oxhill at 1.05pm or the Peacock in Tysoe at 1.10pm and by this means I reached the Roebuck at 1.30pm. There were two Hooky beers available and hosts father and daughter had recently both been awarded Cask Marque accreditation and the house beer had been named Ali's Ale in celebration. I continued to Banbury bus station on the 2.35pm Bus 269 and then the 4.05pm Bus 50A back to Shipston.

Some months later I met Ali again with partner René running another Hooky pub (see 18 above).

28 Oxfordshire
Bell Inn, Great Bourton.
OX17 1QP.
Tel: 01295-750504
SP455455
Wed 4 Feb 09.

Two buses will get you to this pub but the timetable permits only a brief visit of less than half an hour. Take the 9.32am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station then at 11.50 from Bay 2 take Bus 277 which stops opposite the Bell at 12 noon. On my visit I found two Hooky beers on handpull together with the excellent bottle conditioned Double Stout. Bus 277 returns from the Bell at 12.28 pm so you could take the opportunity of visiting more Hooky pubs in Banbury (see 25 & 26 above) as these stay open all day. Bus 50A to Shipston leaves Banbury bus station Bay 8 at 2.26, 4.05, 5.10 and 6.10pm. Bus times apply Mon-Sat.

29 Oxfordshire
Butchers Arms, Balscote.
OX15 6JQ.
Tel: 01295-730750
SP389417
[GPG 2006 p582](#),
[GBG 2007 p389](#).
Sat 30 Aug 08.

You can reach this pub at lunch-time Mon-Sat but a return bus to Banbury is not till the next morning. However there is a bridleway to Shenington which enabled me to return to Shipston via Stratford. The pub did not open at lunchtime during the week so I chose a Saturday, put on my boots and took OS Explorer Map 191. The 9.32am Bus 50A took me from Shipston to Banbury bus station and then from Bay 8 the 12.10pm Bus 270 towards Stratford stopped at the Butchers Arms about 12.30. I enjoyed some Hooky Bitter straight from the barrel and an hour later set off in search of the bridleway to Shenington some two miles away. With just one map reading error I was still in time for a glass of ale at the welcoming Bell Inn and then caught the 3.07pm Bus 270 from across the road to the Bell and this took me into Stratford in good time for the 4.30pm Bus 50A back to Shipston.

30 Oxfordshire
Chandlers Arms, Epwell.
OX15 6LH.
Tel: 01295-780344
SP353402
GPG 2003 p599,
GBG 2009 p402.
Sat 28 Mar 09.

You can get to Epwell at lunch-time Mon-Fri by requesting Bus 50A back from Banbury at 12.45pm to make the detour on its way to Shipston. However you cannot then leave by bus until the next morning. A lot of



walking was going to be needed to visit this pub so donning boots and taking OS Explorer Map 191 I caught the 11.37am Bus 50A towards Banbury and asked to be

dropped in Burdrop. Here the Darcy Dalton long distance foot-path crosses the road and I soon picked up the trail heading north. This path passes the door of the Chandlers Arms and so leaving my boots at the door I quenched my thirst shortly after 1pm. There were two Hooky beers and Bombardier as guest and I made a note that this welcoming country pub was open all day every day. I sampled all the beers, had a tasty sandwich and set off again at 3pm. The journey back to Shipston included some more good walking this time via Epwell White House and footpaths across more fields via Winderton to Lower Brailes where the George (see pub 2 above and open all day on Saturdays) made a convenient bus shelter from where I caught the 5.42pm Bus 50A back to Shipston.

31 Oxfordshire
Albion Tavern,
Chipping Norton. OX7 5DZ.
Tel: 01608-642860
SP316265
Wed 22 Oct 08.

With three Hooky pubs and a further half dozen watering holes in this town the people of Chipping Norton are well served. There are plenty of interesting buildings to see, a market day on Wednesdays, a delightful theatre and an antiques centre in the old station yard. The only thing lacking is a good bus service from Shipston. That is why I reached the town at 10am after catching the 9.33am Bus 50 from Shipston. The next bus Mon-Sat is 5 hours later. So after exploring the town I walked the half mile down the A361 Burford Road to the Albion Tavern for a most refreshing glass of Albion Ale. There was also Hooky Bitter on handpull. The return Bus 50 leaves at 3.02pm from the same stop at which you arrived. There is also one final return service at 6.25pm. However there is a better bus service to Chipping Norton on a Sunday (see pubs 32 & 33 below).

32 Oxfordshire
Fox Hotel, Chipping Norton.
OX7 5DD.
Tel: 01608-642658
SP313270
[GPG 2009 p571](#)
Sun 1 Feb 09.

My plan was to visit the Fox on the same day as the other Hooky pubs (see 31 & 33) but the Fox was closed for refurbishment. So I returned some months later and chose a Sunday because the bus timetable is more tourist friendly. Bus 50 leaves Shipston at 12.43pm and takes 25 minutes. Cross over West Street and walk just 20 paces towards the town centre to find the Fox round the corner on the right. Two Hooky beers were available and the refurbished pub now had a log fire and a most comfortable sofa. I made use of both. From the same stop at which I arrived I caught the 2.42pm Bus 50 back to Shipston. There are a further 3 return services so a Sunday is a good day for a visit to Chipping Norton.

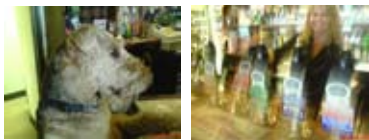
33 Oxfordshire
Red Lion, Chipping Norton.
OX7 5BJ.
Tel: 01608-644641
SP314270
Wed 22 Oct 08.

The bus timetable is more generous on a Sunday (see 32 above) than Mon-Sat (see 31 above) but the 3 Hooky pubs in Chipping Norton are worth visiting whichever day you choose. The Red Lion is about 50 paces up the hill past the Fox (see pub 32 above) and on my visit I found two Hooky beers including the aptly named house beer Roaring Lion. There was also Old Speckled Hen as guest. Bus times are shown for pubs 31 & 32 above.

34 Oxfordshire
Pear Tree, Hook Norton.
OX15 5NU.
Tel: 01608-737482
SP350332
[GPG 2009 p574,](#)
[GBG 2008 p395.](#)
Tue 23 Dec 08.

Hook Norton lies on a bus route between Banbury and Chipping Norton so you can go either way. Although it is quicker to travel via Chipping Norton there are

more choices via Banbury. So I took the 11.37am Bus 50A to Banbury bus station and then the 1.05pm Bus 488 from Bay 7 towards Chipping Norton which reached Hook Norton in 40 minutes. It stops outside the Sun Inn (see pub 36 below) and then will stop on request at the Pear Tree some 500 yards towards Chipping Norton. The Pear Tree is renowned for serving all available Hooky beers and I was not disappointed. I sampled the excellent Twelve Days and planned a return and longer visit on another day (see pub 35 below). I continued to Chipping Norton on the next Bus 488 at 2.33pm which connects with the 3.02pm Bus 50 (from the same stop in West Street) back to Shipston.



Colonel Rigsby likes to keep an eye on the pints as they are being pulled.

35 Oxfordshire
Gate Hangs High,
Hook Norton. OX15 5DF.
Tel: 01608-737387
SP355349
[GPG 2009 p558.](#)
Tue 31 Mar 09.

No bus comes nearer than the 488 through the village a mile or so to the south of this pub. But if you like walking across the fields there is a most attractive route using the Darcy Dalton Way. First take the 9.32am Bus 50A towards Banbury and ask to be dropped in Sibford Ferris. The Darcy Dalton is well sign-posted from the road and leads through the Sibford School grounds and after about 2 miles sometimes through woods and sometimes across open fields you will reach the ridge where you must turn right onto the road for a half mile walk to the Gate Hangs High. Here I arrived after



making a map reading error (the Darcy Dalton is well signed at the roads but not on the paths and bridleways between them) and much enjoyed the house beer which by popular vote had been named "Unhinged". As this was the final one of 47 Hooky pubs visited I treated myself to a delicious 3 course lunch for £10. Donning my boots again I walked down the road to Hook Norton, had a look round the village and in due course called in at the Brewery's most interesting Visitor Centre. Bus 488 runs almost hourly to both Banbury and Chipping Norton and the last two services which connect to buses for Shipston are:

Sun Inn (opp church)	5.38pm
Chipping Norton	arr 5.56pm
Bus 50	dep 6.25pm
Shipston	arr 6.47pm

Or:

Hook Norton Church	5.28pm
Banbury bus station	5.55pm
Bus 50A from Bay 8	6.10pm
Shipston	arr 6.57pm

Conveniently, the Pear Tree, aka the Brewery Tap (see pub 34 above), is open all day every day and you can flag down Bus 488 as it passes in either direction. Remember to take Explorer Map 191 for the Darcy Dalton Way.

36 Oxfordshire
Sun Inn, Hook Norton.
OX15 5NH.
Tel: 01608-737570
SP355331
GPG 2009 p574,
GBG 2008 p395.
Tue 23 Dec 08.



There are two bus routes from Shipston to Hook Norton and the timings are described for pub 34 above. There were four Hooky beers available when I visited including the seasonal Twelve Days. The Sun has an unusual feature of an indoor skittle alley.

37 Oxfordshire
White Swan, Wigginton.
OX15 4LE.
Tel: 01608-737322
SP387334
GPG 2003 p606,
GBG 2008 p399.
Sat 28 Jun 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A to Banbury bus station then from Bay 7 take the 1.05pm Bus 488 towards Chipping Norton. This reaches Wigginton at 1.35pm and the stop is opposite the pub. I chose a Saturday for my journey as the pub stayed open longer and after enjoying the two

excellent Hooky beers I continued on the 3.35pm Bus 488 towards Chipping Norton. The landlady and her two children (all three called Jo) caught the bus also as they were going to the sports day in Hook Norton leaving husband (also Joe) in charge of the pub. There was time for me to break my journey in Hook Norton and attend the sports day too and I eventually continued to Chipping Norton and Shipston as described in pub 35 (see above).

38 Oxfordshire
Peyton Arms, Stoke Lyne.
OX27 8SD.
Tel: 01869-345285
SP567284
GPG 2009 p577,
GBG 2009 p406.
Fri 6 Mar 09.

You can reach Stoke Lyne at lunchtime by bus but there is no return till the next morning! However, a 2 mile bridleway leads to the village of Fringford where a Friday afternoon bus will take you to Bicester and then a train to Banbury. So pick a Friday, put on your boots and put Explorer Map 191 in your pocket. Here is what to do: Take the 9.32am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station and then the 11 am Bus 81 from Bay 2 towards Bicester. Stay on board at Bicester as the bus then proceeds to Stoke Lyne arriving at the church at 12.15pm. The pub is close at hand and landlord Mick The Hat made me most welcome. Two Hooky beers and a guest (Directors) were on tap straight from the barrel and the beef rolls were good too. At 1pm I located the bridleway and much enjoyed the walk to Fringford where the bus stop is close to the Butchers Arms (Grid Ref SP604285). This excellent pub

with jolly landlady was open all day and I just had time to sample one of the three handpulls before catching the 2.55pm Bus 37 to Bicester North train station just 15 minutes away. With 3 trains an hour back to Banbury I was in good time to catch the 5.10pm Bus 50A back to Shipston.



On arrival at Fringford the author stood next to the fingerpost and with arms at full stretch looked into the camera lens and pressed the button. This was the result.

39 Oxfordshire
Crown & Tuns, Deddington.
OX15 0SP.
Tel: 01869-337371
SP466314
[GPG 2009 p572,](#)
[GBG 2009 p402.](#)
Thu 22 Jan 09.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury bus station and then from Bay 6 catch the 12.45pm Bus 59A towards Oxford. This will drop you in the Market Place in Deddington after a 20 minute ride. The pub is just a minute's walk away on the main B4260 road to Oxford and

Stout on handpull. There are 3 return buses which connect with a bus back to Shipston and I caught the first, the 2.09pm Bus 59A from Deddington Market Place which was in good time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A from Banbury to Shipston.

40 Oxfordshire
Bell, Adderbury. OX17 3LS.
Tel: 01295-810338
SP471354
[GPG 2009 p569,](#)
[GBG 2009 p398.](#)
Thu 3 Apr 08.



Bus 59A from Banbury passes through Adderbury so set off from Shipston at 11.37am as described for pub 39 above and take the same bus towards Oxford at 12.45pm which takes 15 minutes to reach the Bell. I found four Hooky beers on my visit including the intriguingly named Cheers Darling which had the delicious flavour of Double Stout and was apparently a sarcastic reference to the duty raising Chancellor of the Exchequer. Bus 59A returns at 2.15pm in plenty of time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A from Banbury to Shipston. Bus times apply Mon-Sat.

here I found two Hooky beers including the excellent Double

41 Oxfordshire
Red Lion, Steeple Aston.
OX25 4RY.

Tel: 01869-340225

SP471257

[GPG 2009 p565.](#)

Thu 3 Apr 08.

Take the 9.32am Bus 50A to Banbury bus station and then from Bay 6 catch the 11.45am Bus 59 towards Oxford which takes half an hour to reach Steeple Aston where there is a stop close to the pub. Only one cask beer was available when I visited but Hooky Bitter is always most welcome. The 1.44pm Bus 59A will take you back to Banbury in time for the 2.26pm Bus 50A to Shipston but there are later buses.

42 Oxfordshire
Elephant & Castle, Bloxham.
OX15 4LZ.

Tel: 01295-720383

SP432359

[GPG 2006 p583,](#)

[GBG 2009 p399.](#)

Fri 31 Oct 08.

Take the 11.37am Bus 50A to Banbury bus station and then from Bay 7 catch the 1.05pm Bus 488 towards Chipping Nor-

ton. This reaches Bloxham in 15 minutes and you should ask to be dropped by Bloxham School because the bus turns right here and avoids the High Street. A two minute walk down the High Street brought me within sight of the pub on the left and here I found two excellent Hooky beers. The 2.37pm Bus 488 took me back to Banbury in good time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A to Shipston.

On a return visit I learnt sadly that landlord Chas Finch had died in November. He had been landlord of the Eli for over 35



years and will be fondly remembered every time we raise a glass of the house beer.

43 Oxfordshire
Eagle Tavern, Witney.
OX28 6BL.
Tel: 01993-700121
SP355095
GBG 2009 p407.
Wed 7 May 08.

ney at 5pm. However, you can also return via Burford by catching the 12.05 or 1.25pm Bus 233 from Stand B for a 20 minute ride and thereby visiting another Hooky pub (see 45 below).

You can get to Witney Mon-Sat using two buses. Take the 9.33am Bus 50 from Shipston to Chipping Norton and cross to the other side of West Street to take the 10.12am Bus X9 to Witney. The journey takes 40 minutes and there is plenty to see in this Oxfordshire town before a lunchtime beer although the pub does open at 11. From the bus stop in Witney Market Place (stand B) you can see Corn Street immediately ahead on the right and the Eagle Tavern is 80 yards along on the right. I found four excellent Hooky beers on handpump, a hexagonal pool table and a window into the cellar so you can see all the firkins. Note: Do not confuse this pub with the Eagle Vaults in Market Place which on my visit had keg only beer and not a cask conditioned ale in sight. The return X9 bus operates hourly so you can take the 2pm from stand C back to Chipping Norton and then the 3.02pm Bus 50 to Shipston. The last connecting X9 leaves Wit-

44 Oxfordshire
Volunteer, Grove. OX12 0DH.
Tel: 01235-769557
SU410912
GBG 2006 p392.
Wed 10 Sep 08.

To reach this second most distant Hooky pub you need to catch a bus from Oxford and to get to Oxford you can go by bus via Chipping Norton or go by train from Banbury. I decided on the train option and so took the 9.32am Bus 50A from Shipston then walked the 200 yards along the canal towpath from Banbury bus station to the train station. The 11.19am train took only 20 minutes to reach Oxford and I was in good time to take the 12.20pm Bus X30 from Stand R9 in Frideswide Square (opposite the train station). I asked to be dropped at the pub and was there within 30 minutes and was given a hearty welcome by Scotsman Rod whom I had met before. Here was the relief

manager almost permanently hired by the Brewery to look after any Hooky pub which was awaiting new tenants. Both Hooky beers were in excellent condition and as there was no food available during the interregnum I walked further into the village to find the convivial Bell pub together with some shops. The return X30 bus left at 3.23pm from Mayfield Avenue (near the shops) and the train left Oxford at 4.32pm and I was in time for the 5.10pm Bus 50A back to Shipston. Bus and train times apply Mon-Sat and there is a final return Bus 50A from Banbury at 6.10pm.



45 Oxfordshire
Angel, Burford. OX18 4SN.
Tel: 01993-822714
SP253121
[GPG 2009 p570.](#)
Wed 7 May 08.

You can get here Mon-Sat by taking three buses with changes at Chipping Norton and Milton under Wychwood. So take the 9.33am Bus 50 from Shipston to Chipping Norton and cross over West Street to take the 10.35 Bus X8 which stops opposite the Quart Pot pub in Milton at 11.05. Cross over to the bus shelter and take the 11.15am Bus 233 towards Witney and you will be in Burford High Street in a quarter of an hour. There is plenty to see in this Cotswold village before a lunchtime beer at the Angel, located 50 yards along Witney Street (the road off the High Street first left after the pedestrian crossing). Two Hooky beers were available on my visit and the day was warm enough to sit in the garden and enjoy a delicious roast beef ciabatta. The return Bus 233 to Milton leaves at 3.05pm and stops opposite the Quart Pot which, on a Saturday, is open all day. So if you choose the right day you can call in here whilst waiting for the 3.39pm or 4.24pm Bus X8 back to Chip-

ping Norton (from the stop on the same side as the Quart Pot). Whichever bus you take, there is just one Bus 50 back to Shipston from Chipping Norton at 6.25pm. Note that from Burford you can return via Witney by continuing on Bus 233 at 12.59pm or 2.14pm for the 20 minute journey and thereby visiting another Hooky pub (see 43 above).

46 Oxfordshire
Falcon, Thame. OX9 3JA.
Tel: 01844-212118
SP711053
[GPG 2009 p578,](#)
[GBG 2009 p406.](#)
Wed 25 Jun 08.

At 36 miles this is the most distant of the 47 Hooky pubs. If you enjoy bus travel you can spend some three hours aboard three buses via Oxford in reaching Thame. Alternatively catch a train from Banbury as I did. Take the 9.32am Bus 50A from Shipston to Banbury and walk the 200 yards along the canal towpath from the bus station to the train station.

Then take the 11.12am towards London Marylebone with a ticket to Haddenham & Thame Parkway arriving at 11.40am. Regular buses between Aylesbury and Oxford make a stop in the station forecourt and I caught the 11.55am Bus 280 towards Oxford for the 10 minute journey to Thame and got off in the High Street. The Falcon is about 5 minutes walk along the High Street on the right past the Spread Eagle and here I found



two Hooky beers and the excellent Hardys & Hansons Olde Trip as guest. There is plenty to see in this Oxfordshire market town and eventually I took the 3.20pm Bus 280 back to the station for the 4.06pm train to Banbury in good time for the 5.10pm Bus 50A back to Shipston. A later train at 4.49pm (5.07pm Sat) from Haddenham & Thame arrives in Banbury in time for the last Bus 50A at 6.10pm.

47 Oxfordshire
Hare & Hounds, Wardington.
OX17 1SH.
Tel: 01295-750645
SP491468
Thu 12 Feb 09.

There is an hourly service Mon-Sat from Banbury which leaves from the stop in Bridge Street outside Debenhams store near the entrance to the bus station. So take the 11.37am Bus 50A from Shipston and then the 1.10pm Bus GA01 towards Byfield for the 15 minute ride to the pub. On my visit I found Old Hooky and the well named house bitter “Hare of the Dog” on handpull and I enjoyed an excellent sandwich. The return bus GA01 at 2.50pm arrives in Banbury in good time for the 4.05pm Bus 50A back to Shipston. However you could continue towards Byfield on the 2.24pm and visit another Hooky pub less than 5 minutes ride away in Chipping Warden (see pub 21 above).

48 Oxfordshire
**Hook Norton Brewery and
Visitor Centre.** OX15 5NY.
Tel: 01608-737210
SP349333
GBG 2009 p768.

A tour of all 47 Hooky pubs would not be complete without a visit to the brewery itself. The Visitor Centre and Shop are open Mon-Sat and a tour of the magnificent steam engine driven Victorian tower brewery is available for a charge and should be booked in advance.



Picture courtesy of Hook Norton Brewery

The tour and tasting takes about 2 hours so a morning visit could fit in well followed by a lunch-

time pint at either the Sun or the Pear Tree or both (see pubs 34 & 36 above).

From Shipston you can get to Hook Norton via Banbury but it is quicker via Chipping Norton. So take the 9.33am Bus 50 to Chipping Norton then from the same side of West Street take the 10.05am Bus 488 towards Banbury. This reaches Hook Norton in 20 minutes. Ask to be dropped at the Pear Tree and walk the short distance along Brewery Lane.

Return buses in the afternoon are as described for the three Hooky pubs in the village (see 34,35 & 36 above).

Holidaying in Shipston?

Over half the pubs have accommodation and there are also B&Bs in the town. If you are coming by public transport and can reach Banbury by train there are regular buses to Shipston on Stour from the bus station (5 mins walk away). The last bus Mon-Sat leaves Banbury at 6.10pm from Bay 8 and takes 45 minutes.

You can easily walk everywhere within Shipston and when you start off on a visit to a Hooky pub the bus stops are close at hand at Pettiphers Garage in Church Street (the A3400) for buses to Stratford, and opposite for buses to Banbury or Chipping Norton. When you get back (always before 7pm) there is a good choice of cask conditioned beers to try in the town's 7 pubs. On a recent survey 17 handpumps dispensed 14 *different* beers.

The Shipston pubs are:

Black Horse, Station Road. CV36 4BT.

Coach & Horses, 16 New Street. CV36 4EN.

Falcon, Church Street. CV36 4AS.

George Hotel, High Street. CV36 4AJ.

Horseshoe, Church Street. CV26 4AP.

Old Mill Hotel (yet to reopen following the 2007 floods)

White Bear, High Street. CV36 4AJ.

Check before setting out

Although the bus and train times were correct at the time of writing (summer 2009) try and check them out before starting. If you have access to a computer the website www.transportdirect.info can be most helpful because it allows you to enter the postcode of both the pub and your home and works out how to get between the two. If you are a visitor to Shipston you can use the library computers for a small charge. As a library member the author made free use of their computers and Transport Direct to do nearly all his planning. Finally, try and phone the pub the night before to see that they will be open when you arrive for that lunchtime pint.

About the author

Jim Sargeant lives in Shipston on Stour and developed an enthusiasm for cross country journeys whilst delivering and collecting cars from Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire. When the senior bus pass became 'access all areas' in April 2008 he set himself the task of visiting all 47 Hook Norton pubs in one year or about one a week. And how did he do? With only one day to go and one pub still to visit he took a bus to Sibford Ferris and walked along the Darcy Dalton Way to reach his goal at the Gate Hangs High (see pub 35).

KEY:

GBG: Good Beer Guide

GPG: Good Pub Guide

SP123456: OS Grid Reference

The author thanks the members of all 8 CAMRA branches together with the individual contributors to the Good Pub Guide for their help in creating this guide. Ver 2009/2.

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