Walks around Tetbury

Parks and Rides
Through lovely horsey parkland to a pretty village and return via a secluded valley
Distance - 8 kms (5 miles)
Walking Time – 2.5 hrs
Starts and finishes at the Market Hall: point 1 on the map
Grade A on a scale where A is easy and D difficult (note there are ten stiles to cross, some of which are a little tricky)
Description

Turning right you will come to the quaintly named Cat and Custard Pot public house, a recommended stopping point for both drinks and meals.

Points of Interest

1. Market Hall
   This fine two storey, attractively restored pillared building, dates back to 1665 and was part of the prosperous wool trade of that time. It has had various uses and has undergone considerable alteration over the years but is still regarded as the finest example of its kind in the Cotswolds. The Cupola on top was added to celebrate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

2. Bath Bridge
   In 1774 the Turnpike commissioners employed a local mason, Thomas Webb, to build a new bridge to provide an easier entrance into the Town for the Bath – Grellas coach road and it was completed two years later. It is built of coarse rubble and all the arches are of different size although no one seems to know why. It is said to be the ‘most outstanding example of an arched dry stone road bridge in the whole of the country’. In 1985 it was granted Grade 2 Listed Building status.

3. Estcourt Park
   The Estcourt family lived here from 1303 and the Park was created as early as 1515. The original Manor House was replaced by the much larger Estcourt House in 1770 and the estate and pleasure gardens were enlarged and improved throughout the 19th Century. The house itself was demolished in 1963, though the stables, farm buildings and several small houses remain. In 1996 the estate was sold in its entirety, with planning permission for a new principal residence. Thus after seven centuries in their hands, it passed out of the hands of the Estcourt family. The estate, some 1400 acres, is now owned by Prince Khalid bin Abdullah Al Saud. He maintains a low profile and runs this large important stud farm as his hobby.

4. Church of St John the Baptist
   This medieval church, much of which was rebuilt in 1865, has close ties to the Estcourt family and several family members are entombed within as are some of the Hodges, another family important in the early history of Shipton Moyne.

5. The Cat & Custard Pot, Shipton Moyne
   This was built in the early 1700s by the Estcourt family who built and owned much of this village. The building was an off – license and ale house / village store, a bakery and a post office until 1934 when the Estcourts sold it to the Stroud Brewery Co. The name brings to mind ‘Handley Cross’ or ‘Mr Jorrocks’s Hunt’ and the five other books celebrating life in the English countryside in a bygone age.

6. Wiltshire Bridge
   Strictly a causeway as it was built to ease the steep incline into town. The stream running beneath marked the Gloucestershire / Wiltshire border until it was moved in 1939 further out of town to where the old Roman road (Fosseway) crosses the Tetbury to Malmesbury road.

Distance – 8 kms (5 miles)

1. From under the Market Hall make your way along Church Street, go past (or pop into) the Parish church of St. Mary’s which is said to be one of the earliest and best examples of a Georgian Gothic church. Carry on down the hill and over Bath Bridge. As the road levels out you will see, to your left, stone steps and stile. Go over these and continue up the field with the dry stone wall on your right and cross a wooden stile in a wire fence followed by another wooden stile and a third stile just across the driveway leading to a converted barn.

2. Keeping the hedgerow on your right, continue to yet another wooden stile. Go over this and into a spinney where you shortly cross first an old stone and then a wooden stile. You are now in a large field; your route lies straight ahead between the trees, after which you will come to two wide wooden gates and a stone stile in a cluster. Go over the stone stile and turn immediately right, crossing a green lane known a Grange Lane, and walk alongside the field’s right hand-side wall and wire fence until you come to a wooden stile in a post and rail fence. (Ignore the hunting gate on the right just before this. You will make use of this on the return journey.) Some 50 metres further on turn sharply right through a gate and descend a steep slope (very slippery after wet weather). It turns left and then right to lead across an old stone packhorse bridge to a wooden bridge across a tributary stream of the River Avon. Go over the stile into Estcourt Park, up the rising parkland to a private drive and eventually pass through a gate and alongside the high stone walls of the old gardens of Estcourt House. Immediately after the last house on the right, leave the drive and bear right to a gate in the wooden boundary fence. Cross that field diagonally towards a gate on the far side. (If there are horses in these fields you may prefer to take the permissive path round the fence to reach the gate.) As you proceed note the tidy orderliness of the Park with its neat open-fenced fields with their curved corners to avoid injuries to the sheikh’s valuable stud horses. Go through this gate, over the stile ahead and turn right to another gate. Cross this field to yet another gate slightly to your left. Go through this and follow the field fence; go over the stile in the hedge ahead.

3. Turn left and follow this lane (ignore fork to Park Farm) until just before a private house. Turn sharply right to a wide gate. Pass through the gate and as you cross this field note the squat tower of St John the Baptist Church in the mid distance. Arrive at, and cross a stone stile; follow the broad green lane to reach the Churchyard. Pass round the Church, or pop in, and take the lane to the main street of the village of Shipton Moyne.