

Car Parking is available in the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon. For details of public transport, contact the County Council's Travel Helpline on (01926) 414140.

You may find it useful to take the O.S. Pathfinder maps 997 and 998 with you on your walk.

If you have any queries about this walk, or any other paths in Warwickshire, contact the Countryside Access Team

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FOLLOW THE COUNTRY CODE



Fasten all gates.



Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.



Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.



Guard against all risk of fire.



Make no unnecessary noise.



Protect wildlife, plants and trees.



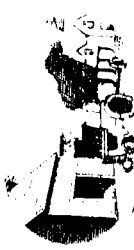
Keep your dogs under close control.



Take your litter home.



Keep to public paths across farmland.



Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.



Help to keep all water clean.



Take special care on country roads.

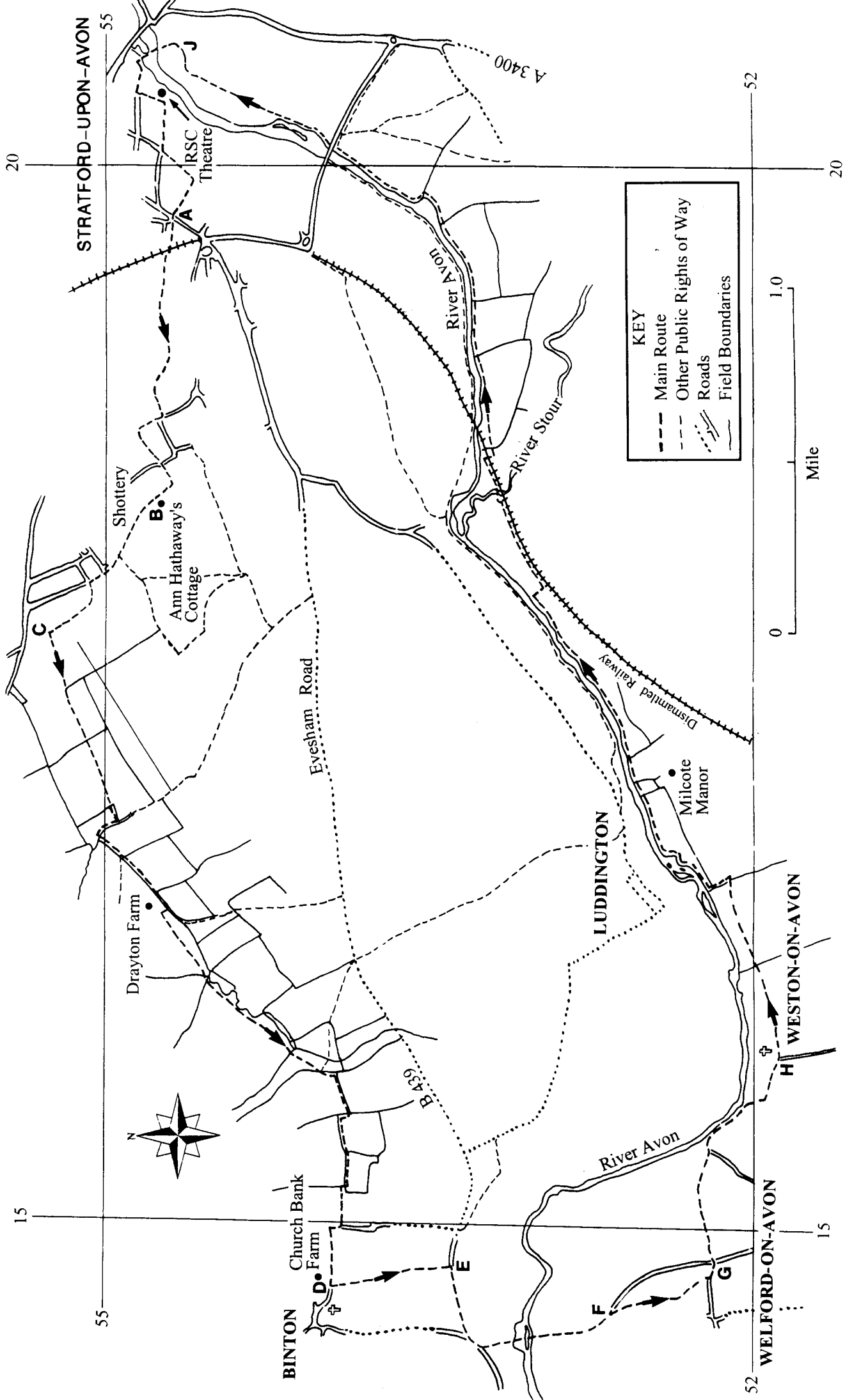
SHAKESPEARE'S STRATFORD

FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BARD



A 10 mile circular walk from Stratford and passing through the villages of Binton, Welford-on-Avon, Weston-on-Avon and following the banks of the River Avon.

FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BARD



This lengthy but easy going walk is in the heart of Shakespeare country. It passes through picturesque villages of black-and-white half-timbered Tudor cottages and medieval churches with attractive quiet countryside and riverside scenery.

The walk starts at Shakespeare's statue. Walk across the riverside gardens towards the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, passing to the right of the Guild Chapel, turn left into Church Street, continue to the end and turn right along Chestnut Walk to a road junction. Here cross two converging roads and take the tarmac path ahead, signposted 'Anne Hathaway's Cottage' (A).

The path keeps in a straight line between garden walls and fences, crossing several roads before continuing across a recreation ground. At a fork, take the right-hand path, passing to the right of the school buildings and continue, bearing left at the next fork - signposted 'Anne Hathaway's Cottage via Shottery' into Shottery Village. Turn right along Tavern Lane which contains some photogenic, black-and-white thatched cottages, following it around a left-hand bend. Keep ahead to a cross-roads and continue ahead along Cottage Lane following the road past Anne Hathaway's

Cottage (B). This half-timbered, thatched farmhouse must be one of the most photographed buildings in the country, adorning thousands of calendars, birthday cards and chocolate boxes.

Follow the road, soon passing Shottery Hamlet, another picturesque group of thatched, black-and-white cottages, turn left at the T-junction and then almost immediately right, along Hathaway Green Lane through a modern housing area. At the first cross-roads turn left, follow the road as it curves to the right and by a public footpath sign to Drayton (C), turn left over a stile and keep in a straight line across a large field, passing the end of a hedgerow and a waymarker post. Continue through a gap into the second field and keep ahead underneath the power cables to a stile into a small pasture field. Follow the hedge on your left and then turn right (not left over the stile!) to exit the pasture field via a stile on your left, next to a gate. Continue along the right-hand hedge of the next field. Go over a stile next to a metal gate, keep ahead, passing to the left of farm buildings and go over a stile, along a grassy lane.

After about 50 yards (46m) turn tight over one stile, climb another in front and bear slightly left to follow the direction of a waymark along a faint path across a field to the far end, where the field tapers. Here bear right through a metal gate, cross a brook, go ahead over a stile built in a metal gate and continue along the left-hand side of a field, by the brook and a line of trees on the left. Climb two stiles in quick succession and continue in the same direction across the next field. Go through a metal gate and keep ahead, looking out for a waymarked stile on the right about 50 yards (46m) before the end of the field. Climb this; turn left along the field edge, following it around to the right and at the far end turn right again, turning left through a hedge gap. Continue along a track by the right-hand edge of the next field, over a stile next to a gate, following it as it curves first to the right and a few yards ahead, to the left. Keeping to the right of farm buildings, follow the track through two metal gates and over a stile to a lane.

Turn right and follow the lane as it bends left into Binton. Just before the Victorian church, turn left over a waymarked stile (D) and head gently downhill along the left-hand edge of a field, by a hedge on the

left. Ahead is a fine view across the Avon valley to the Cotswolds on the horizon, with the tower of Welford on Avon church clearly visible. Climb a stile onto a road (E), turn right along this busy road for 1/4 mile (0.5 km) and take the first turning on the left - signposted to Welford and Long Marston - to cross the River Avon. Continue into Welford and, just after the road curves left, bear right by a half hidden footpath sign (F), onto a narrow hedge-lined path - which later keeps along the left-hand side of fields - to reach a stile. Climb this, cross a lane and bear left to continue along a tarmac, hedge-lined path, going through a metal kissing-gate and keeping ahead to a lane in the centre of Welford on Avon, one of the most idyllic of villages. To the right, a street of thatched, half-timbered cottages leads to the medieval church, which boasts a twelfth-century Norman nave, fourteenth-century chancel and fifteenth-century west tower.

The route continues to the left to the village green (G); crossing the road here and taking the waymarked path opposite. Follow it between hedges - later between wire fences - to reach some houses, keep ahead along a drive and shortly bear left to

continue along a parallel path to a T-junction. Here follow a yellow waymark to the left along a tarmac drive and, after passing a thatched house on the left, continue along a hedge-lined track with the river below.

The track curves gradually to the right and keeps by the river, before heading gently uphill away from it into Weston on Avon, a smaller and quieter village than Welford - indeed little more than a hamlet - but with more black-and-white thatched cottages and a small fifteenth-century church. On reaching a lane turn left and, where the lane bears right (H), bear left along a track, passing to the right of the church. Keep in a straight line along this track, first between fields and later across them, following the regular waymarks until one of these directs you to turn left to the riverbank.

Turn right at the river to follow the riverside path for 3 miles (4.75 km) back to Stratford - a superb finale to this walk. The route is well waymarked and easy to follow, keeps by the river for most of the way, goes through a series of gates and over stiles and traverses lush, tree-fringed meadows. The only time you leave the river is where a waymark directs you first

to the right, then to the left along the edge of a field below the embankment of a disused railway in order to cross a footbridge over the River Stour, after which you pass under a disused railway bridge, soon to rejoin the Avon. The spire of Holy Trinity Church is in sight for most of the time.

On approaching Stratford, the path climbs above the wooded, riverside bank before passing under a bridge and along the edge of a recreation ground with grand views across the river to Holy Trinity Church and later the Royal Shakespeare Theatre - an impressive entry into the town. Finally, just before the road, turn left over the early nineteenth-century Tramway Bridge (J), built to carry the horse-drawn Stratford to Moreton-in-Marsh Railway over the Avon, to return to the Shakespeare statue.