

# Midlands Steam

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**Tour Organiser: John Upton**

**Friday 24th to Sunday 26th July 2026**

A chance to combine 2 passions over 1 long weekend: Group cycling through beautiful countryside, and 2 different heritage steam railways.

For those who can spare the time to cycle on Friday, there is an optional afternoon of cycling to a local English Heritage site (The Tithe Barn) on the other side of Worcester.

On Saturday we spend the morning cycling to Broadway, the end for the line for the GWSR (Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway) with various options for the afternoon such as:

- \* a short train ride or explore and then cycling back to the hotel
- \* a longer train ride or explore and catching the (mainline) train back

Sunday follows a similar theme, but heading to the Severn Valley Railway in Kidderminster instead

## Itinerary

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### **Friday 24th July 2026 Tithe Barn**

An optional afternoon ride, starting at 1:30 on the Friday from the hotel at which we are staying. We will meander along some of Worcester's many cycle paths, out the other side of town to the Tithe Barn near Bransford. Owned by English Heritage, this is "the largest cruck-framed structure in Britain"! We'll then head to a local cafe before returning to Worcester on a different route.

- Route distance: 35.0km
- Route altitude gain: 250m
- Accommodation: Premier Inn Worcester (M5,Jct6)
- Meals: (D)

## Saturday 25th July 2026 Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway

Setting off around 08:30am, we'll take mainly quiet country roads to Broadway on the edge of the Cotswolds where we'll pick up a picnic lunch, before heading to the GWSR heritage railway station. There are then various options, such as: 1. Have a ride on the train for a stop or two and then come back to Broadway, to cycle back to Worcester on a different route. 2. Enjoy Broadway railway station and/or explore Broadway for an hour or two, then cycle back to Worcester on a different route (with anyone taking option [1]). 3. Take the train all the way to Cheltenham and back again. Then make your way (cycling) the 10km to Honeybourne station and from there get the (mainline) train to Worcester Shrub Hill. 4. Mooch around Broadway, perhaps visiting the famous Broadway Tower. Then make your way (cycling) the 10km to Honeybourne station and from there get the (mainline) train to Worcester Shrub Hill.

Notes: \* I cannot guarantee at this stage that those that want to ride on the heritage line will be drawn by a steam train (it could be a heritage diesel), but based on the 2025 timetable, it should be. \* For those who wish to get the train back from Honeybourne - if there are a few of you, they are unlikely to let you take your bikes on the train. In this case, you will need to lock them up at the station and travel back without them, getting the bus from very near the Shrub Hill to very near the hotel. I will then pick up your bikes in the late afternoon as soon as I can (having ridden back to the hotel earlier). \* The cost of any travel (heritage or mainline trains and the bus) is not included in the price of the tour. 2025 prices are between £16 (1 station return) and £28 (day rover) on the heritage line, £10.20 on the mainline from Honeybourne to Worcester and £3 for the bus in Worcester. There is no charge for picking up your bikes if you leave them at Honeybourne. \* The distance and elevation gain stated are for cycling both ways - if you only cycle one way, then it's approximately 1/2, plus a bit extra for the cycle to Honeybourne. \* Cafe stops in the morning and/or afternoon are an option, depending on time.

- Route distance: 80.0km
- Route altitude gain: 780m
- Accommodation: Premier Inn Worcester (M5,Jct6)
- Meals: (B, L, D)

## Sunday 26th July 2026 Severn Valley Railway

Setting off around 09:00am, we'll take mainly quiet country roads to Kidderminster, where we'll pick up a picnic lunch. There are then various options, such as: 1. Enjoy Kidderminster's Severn Valley Railway station (there is a museum and other bits and pieces) and watch the trains come and go for an hour or two, then cycle back to Worcester on a different route. 2. Have a ride on the Severn Valley for 1 or 2 stops and then come back to Kidderminster, to cycle back to Worcester on a different route (with anyone taking option [1]). 3. Have a ride on the Severn Valley as far as Highley. Explore the visitors centre and engine house there, before getting the train back to Kidderminster. Then catch a train from the mainline Kidderminster station (next door) back to Worcester Shrub Hill. 4. Have a

ride on the Severn Valley all the way to Bridgenorth and back again. Then catch a train from the mainline Kidderminster station (next door) back to Worcester Shrub Hill.

Notes: \* I cannot guarantee at this stage that those that want to ride on the heritage line will be drawn by a steam train (it could be a heritage diesel) - it will depend on what's running on the day and what time the trains are that you catch. The 2026 timetable is not yet available.\* For those who wish to get the train back from Kidderminster to Worcester- if there are a few of you, they are unlikely to let you take your bikes on the train. In this case, you will need to lock them up at the station and travel back without them, getting the bus from very near the Shrub Hill to very near the hotel. I will then pick up your bikes in the late afternoon as soon as I can (having ridden back to the hotel earlier).\* The cost of any travel (heritage or mainline trains and the bus) is not included in the price of the tour. 2025 prices are between £15 (1 station return) and £26 (day rover) on the heritage line, £8.50 on the mainline from Kidderminster to Worcester and £3 for the bus in Worcester. There is no charge for picking up your bikes if you leave them at Kidderminster.\* The distance and elevation gain stated are for cycling both ways - if you only cycle one way, then it's approximately 1/2.\* Cafe stops in the morning and/or afternoon are an option, depending on time\* If you cycle back to the hotel, I plan that we will arrive by 17:00, but you should plan for 18:00 to allow contingency. If I need to collect your bikes from Kidderminster then I aim to have them back to the hotel by 18:00, but you should plan for 19:00 to allow contingency.

- Route distance: 54.0km
- Route altitude gain: 570m
- Accommodation: None
- Meals: (B, L)

## Dates and Prices

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### Cost

- Land only price: £280

### Payment Schedule

A deposit of £50 per person is required as soon as possible once the Tour Organiser has confirmed your booking, with the final balance to be paid by 01-Jun-2026

Price includes:

- 2 Nights hotel accommodation
- All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Bike storage (hotel room or hotel storage room)
- Bike transportation where specified on Saturday and Sunday

Price does not include:

- Travel to the start or from the finish
- Any snacks, drinks or cafe stops
- Travel or bike insurance - you leave bikes at your own risk
- Single room supplement - £100

## Cancellations

Written Notice Received	Cancellation Charge
01-Jun-2026	£50 (deposit)
02-Jun-2026 onwards	Full price of tour

The price of £280 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 5 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Monday 01st June 2026, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

## Holiday Information

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### Grade and Area Covered by the Holiday

This Holiday is classed as Moderate Energetic.

From our base near Worcester, we will explore the surrounding countryside in a series of day rides.

The terrain varies ie is rolling. Although there no hills that are particularly steep or long, equally there are few sections of any length that are entirely flat,. E except for around the Severn, this is what Worcestershire is mainly like.

### Travel and Communication

The tour starts and finishes at the hotel where we will be staying: the Premier Inn, right on the edge of Worcester by junction 6 of the M5.

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. It is very important that you note that neither your Tour Organiser nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead.

Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been told



the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

We will use WhatsApp to communicate details like café stops, meal arrangements, places of interest and any emergencies on route. Ideally everyone will bring a smart phone and be happy to be included in the group.

If you are unable to join the WhatsApp group I can only communicate with you in an emergency.

### Accommodation

The maximum number of participants will be 13 including the Tour Organiser.

We will stay in a Premier Inn.

All of the rooms I have booked are twins. If you request single occupancy, you will get a twin to yourself. If you would prefer a double to a twin (either on your own or sharing), then let me know and I will do my best to swap it for you, though there may be an addition charge for this as room prices tend to increase as we get nearer the date.

Rooms will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis. Therefore, if you wish to share a twin but there are no twins left, you would have to take a single room and pay the supplement.

Prices are based on two people sharing a room.

Although we may be able to store our bikes overnight in a store room, be prepared to have them in your bedroom. I will try to ensure that all rooms are on the ground floor, but I cannot guarantee this. Having said that, I don't mind helping you with your bike.

### Meals, Health and Diet

Meals are provided and included in the price of the tour, as specified in the itinerary for each day. Snacks, drinks (as well as non-lunch cafe stops) are not included in the price.

In addition to lunch, I plan on stopping at at least 1 cafe per day, depending on how we are doing for time on the consensus within the group.

You should buy and carry sufficient food and drink in case of emergencies.

Check that you have informed the Tour Organiser of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form. If in doubt, let them know again!

Please remember to pack any medications that you need to take regularly.

### Cycles and Equipment

A touring cycle, hybrid, tandem, recumbent or lightweight road bike would all be suitable for this holiday.





You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes.

A low bottom gear (eg. small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended; if unsure about gears, please talk to the Bikexplore Organiser about them.

Mudguards are optional but demonstrate respect to those who are following you in wet weather.

Lights are recommended in the very unlikely event of arriving back late and useful if walking outdoors at night. A bell is advised and bring a bike lock for security. Water bottles are required to ensure you are hydrated at all times.

You will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs, including two inner tubes, a spare gear cable, split link and spare brake pads. There may not be many bike shops on route and they are never when you need them.

You are advised to use 28mm tyres, or larger, to suit the variable terrain.

### **Rides, Rest Days and Fitness**

The holiday is for 2.5 days and has no rest days.

This is a centre based holiday with led rides available each day.

Most of the roads are minor and used by rural/tourist traffic. We may need to use some busier roads at times but avoid them as much as possible.

Part of the route may take in greenways, canal towpaths and/or bridleways.

Most of each cycling day may be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 15-20 km per hour on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. You will be notified of the two or three available or recommended refreshment stops each day.

It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore and this is okay. You are on holiday.

Inevitably, you might consider parts of the route hilly, and there is no back-up vehicle to carry your luggage, so you need to be fit to get the most out of this tour.

It is essential to get out on your bike and do some xx-mile/80km rides before the tour starts.

There may be steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.



Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to road works or weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements.

The Organiser will not always be at the front of the group but may be anywhere within it, as circumstances require, so you will need to be aware of the route and likely stopping places each day.

### **Weather and Clothing**

Lightweight clothing, suitable for a range of temperatures is needed and possibly smarter, warmer clothing for the evenings.

Lightweight waterproofs/windproofs will be needed.

Sun cream, lip balm and sun glasses are recommended.

My packing list is available on request - advisable if this is your first tour.

Come prepared for UK May temperatures – I recommend you keep an eye of the weather forecast, but not bank on it being accurate!

The best protection from the sun is to cover up.

### **Maps and Guides**

A gpx, or an online link to a gpx, of each day's route and/or detailed route notes, will be provided before the start of the tour.

If you have any other mapping requirements, let me know before the start of the tour and I will do my best to accommodate.

### **Travel Insurance**

Travel insurance is not mandated for tours in the UK, but it is recommended.

### **Passport, Visa and Monies**

N/A

### **Tour Organiser contact details**

John Upton

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