

# REACHING BOSWORTH BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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For purposes of this article, I'm defining "public transport" as a way of traveling around Great Britain without actually having to drive a car for oneself. There are several possible reasons that Americans may want to avoid driving in Britain: difficulty in adjusting to driving on the "other side of the road" or using roundabouts; lack of a driver's license; or visual impairment are just three of these.

The transport coverage provided by trains and buses in Great Britain is extensive, although transport to remote areas is on an infrequent or irregular basis. Therefore advance planning is absolutely essential to avoid becoming stranded. Getting to Bosworth Battlefield is the specific focus here, but certain generalizations apply to every situation where one attempts to see a remote site by public transport.

Narrowing down the choices of the areas and sights you want to visit, in this case, Bosworth Field, depends on how long you want to be in the general area.

Do you want to be in the vicinity of Bosworth Field two days or two hours? Do you want to take in Sutton Cheney Church, Dadlington, Stoke Golding, or the "new" Bosworth Field as proposed by Michael K. Jones? These choices, as well as the availability of public transportation and of lodging, will determine the best place for you to stay. It is generally true (in my experience) that, in remote locales, the availability of transportation should be determined before arranging lodging.

Before making specific plans, visit the "overall" transportation website, [www.pti.org.uk](http://www.pti.org.uk) to get an overview. It provides information about trains, buses, coaches, and ferries at both a national and a local level. Check out the frequency of train arrivals at a particular place (say, Hinckley) by using [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk). In addition to having a standard UK map which shows railway routes and stations, obtain small-scale (close-up) maps from [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com) online; they could prove invaluable.

Use [www.traveline.co.uk](http://www.traveline.co.uk) for more specific journey planning; it gives exact bus stops and times, and it will provide information about alternative connections (i. e., both direct routes and routes where changing between buses or between trains and buses is required.) In the UK, the phone number for Traveline public transport info is 0870 608 2 608. Make a note that many bus and train routes shut down or cut back on Sundays. Check out the timetables both online, if possible, and at the train station in advance. Bus schedules are sometimes included in county websites in conjunction with their public transportation plans.

Here are some scenarios in getting to Bosworth Field from the following nearby locations: (1) Market Bosworth—2 miles distant; (2) Leicester—13 miles; (3) Hinckley—4½ miles; and (4) Nuneaton—6 miles.

Market Bosworth: Once you arrive here, you'll be at leisure to explore the area—by foot or by bicycle. No further public transportation exists (with one summertime Sunday exception) to take you to Bosworth Battlefield, about a 2½-mile walk each way, plus about another 2 miles of walking around the battlefield. This is an occasion when having a bicycle available would be extremely convenient. Folding bicycles which can be treated as hand luggage generally can travel free and without booking restrictions on rail, bus, underground, or ferry services. There are models available with 16, 18, and 20-inch wheels.

Leicester: The [www.sceastmidstravel.co.uk](http://www.sceastmidstravel.co.uk) site reveals that the Arriva Fox Midlands (Fox) Route 153 travels from St. Margaret's Bus Station in Leicester to Market Bosworth, stopping at Kirby Muxloe, Desford, Barlestone, and Nailstone en route. The Traveline site, [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk), provides the exact schedules; this example covers only from 7-9 am on a weekday:

## Route Information for Leicester to Market Bosworth (just a few examples:)

1. Start from Leicester: St Margaret's Bus Station Stand 10 Take service 158 operated by Arriva Fox County Depart 07:05 Alight at Barwell: Shilton Road (The Square) Arrive 07:35 Transfer to Barwell: High Street (o/s 2) Take service 159 operated by Arriva Fox County Depart 07:40 Finish at Market Bosworth: Market Place (opp Wheatsheaf Co) Arrive 07:52
2. Start from Leicester: Eastgates Stand H7 Take service 152 operated by Arriva Fox County Depart 07:30 Alight at Newbold Verdon: Main Street (o/s 208) Est Arr 07:56 Transfer to Newbold Verdon: Main Street (o/s 187) Take service 159 operated by Arriva Fox County Est Dep 07:58 Finish at Market Bosworth: Market Place (opp Wheatsheaf Co) Arrive 08:02
3. Start from Leicester: Eastgates Stand H7 Take service 153 operated by Arriva Fox County Depart 07:50 Finish at Market Bosworth: Barton Road (o/s 7) Est Arr 08:39

This demonstrates that we're not limited to using service 153, which runs hourly between Leicester and Market Bosworth on weekdays and every 2 hours on Saturdays; it provides other options which require bus changes. It also reveals that service 159 serves Market Bosworth from some other origination point (more later about that). Because it's a good strategy to plan the exit before making the entrance, by check out the options for the return trip to Leicester.

## Route Information for Market Bosworth to Leicester (examples)

1. Start from Market Bosworth: Barton Road (o/s 7 - HandO) Take service 153 operated by Arriva Fox

County Est Dep 07:16 Finish at Leicester: St Margaret's Bus Station Stand 9 Arrive 08:10

2. Start from Market Bosworth: Market Place (opp Wheatsheaf Co) Take service 159 operated by Arriva Fox County Depart 07:52 Alight at Newbold Verdon: Main Street (o/s 208) Est Arr 07:57 Transfer to Newbold Verdon: Main Street (o/s 187) Take service 153 operated by Arriva Fox County Est Dep 08:02 Alight at Kirby Muxloe (LFE): Kirby Lane (o/s 32) Est Arr 08:15 Transfer to Leicester Forest East: Hinckley Road (o/s Red Co) Take service 63 operated by Arriva Fox County Est Dep 08:17 Finish at Leicester: High Street Stand H14 (SDO). As you look at Traveline's printout, you'll see that chart icons appear to the left of the route number. Click on these to bring up the entire daily schedule of that bus route, which should be printed out and carried with you.

Hinckley: As mentioned earlier, service 159 was shown to access Market Bosworth, so by clicking on the icon contained in the Leicester information, the entire day's schedule was available. Here is a sample:

#### **Route Information, Hinckley to Market Bosworth: Hourly schedule on weekdays.**

1. Start from Hinckley: The Borough (o/s United Reform Church) Take service 159 operated by Arriva Fox County Est Dep 14:31 Finish at Market Bosworth: Market Place (opp Wheatsheaf Co) Arrive 14:52
2. Start from Hinckley: The Borough (o/s United Reform Church) Take service 159 operated by Arriva Fox County Est Dep 15:31 Finish at Market Bosworth: Market Place (opp Wheatsheaf Co) Arrive 15:52

#### **Route Information Returning from Market Bosworth to Hinckley (Hourly, weekdays)**

Start from Market Bosworth: Market Place (opp Wheatsheaf Co) Take service 159 operated by Arriva Fox County Depart 07:02 Finish at Hinckley: Regent Street Est Arr 07:24

In the spring of 2003, the Leicestershire Rural Partnership announced that a new Bosworth Battlefield bus service, 159A, was being launched to connect the towns of Coalville and Hinckley, serving Barwell, Stepleton, Sutton Cheney, Bosworth Battlefield Visitor Centre, the Battlefield Line Railway at Shenton Station, Market Bosworth, Newbold Verdon, Barlestone, Nailstone, Ibstock, and Ellistown.

This was an all-day service on SUNDAYS and BANK HOLIDAYS which was to run throughout the summer. (The brochure at Bosworth Battlefield noted that the bus would run every 90 minutes, beginning at 9:30 am and ending at 5:00 pm.)

See additional bus route information in conjunction with Nuneaton, below.

Nuneaton: The [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk) site has bus schedules available online.

Service 86, operated by Country Hopper (phone: 01530 260888) leaves from the Nuneaton Bus Station, Stand A five times daily, stopping at Stoke Golding, Dadlington (the closest access point to Bosworth),

Stoke Convent, and Hinckley Bus Station. The schedule, Mondays to Saturdays, runs:

Nuneaton: 8:25 am 9:25 am 12:35 pm 14:35 17:45  
Dadlington 8:52 am 9:52 am 13:02 15:02 18:12  
Hinckley 9:03 10:03 13:13 15:13 18:23

Hinckley 7:50 am 10:00 12:00 14:00 16:00 17:10  
Dadlington 8:00 10:10 12:10 14:10 16:10 17:20  
Nuneaton 8:24 10:30 12:30 14:30 16:30 17:40

Service route 7, from Nuneaton (Bus Station Stand A4, as this is written) to Ashby-de-la-Zouche, runs Mondays to Saturdays on an hourly basis from 7:10 am until 18:10, stopping on the last route of the day at Twycross. The closest stop to the traditional Bosworth Field is at Sibson, at 52 minutes past the hour. This route also works nicely for seeing the site of Bosworth Field as proposed by Michael K. Jones: From Nuneaton, it stops at Fenny Drayton, Atterton, Witherly, Atherstone Bus Station, Ratcliffe Culey, Sheepy Magna, Sheepy Parva, Sibson, Twycross, Twycross Zoo, etc. on to Ashby Market Street.

The operator is Cresswell's Coaches (phone: 01283 217215).

Another route, which operates daily, including Sundays, is service 57/157, with stops at Leicester, Earl Shilton, Barwell, Hinckley, and Nuneaton. The schedule is available as a pdf file at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk).

On SATURDAYS ONLY, the Arriva Fox County service 20 leaves Nuneaton Bus Station three times: 10:45 am, 13:20, and 15:45, reaching Market Bosworth at (respectively) 11:09 am, 13:44, 16:09. The latter two runs also continue on to Shackerstone, should one be interested in taking the railway to Bosworth Battlefield, although the return would have to be by a different bus route.

From Market Bosworth to Nuneaton, the departure times are 10:16 am, 11:37, and 14:27, and the respective arrival times are 10:40, 12:01, and 14:51.

#### **Bikes, Taxis, Boats, and the Shackerstone Railway**

Taxi services are not a prohibitive cost for short distances, and [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com) shows that Hinckley's train station is the nearest to Bosworth Battlefield at a distance of 4.5 miles. To check for the availability of taxi services from a given train station, along with the phone numbers of reliable companies, visit [www.traintaxi.co.uk](http://www.traintaxi.co.uk) online. When the taxi driver drops you off at Bosworth, make arrangements with him or her to pick you up and return to Hinckley (or another town).

Bicycling by train: Three of the train companies serving this general area are Central Trains, GNER, and Midland Mainline. All of them allow folding bikes to be travel free without restriction, but bikes must be folded and bagged and be able to fit into the regular luggage racks. Regular bicycles are also usually carried without charge, but space is limited and advance reservations (by at least one day) are advised. Some lines will refuse to take bikes during peak travel times.

The best choice (usually, though not necessarily, depending on your priorities) is to get as close as you can to your intended destination by rail, which, for Bosworth, is Hinckley. When disembarking from a train, get oriented by looking at a local area map which is likely to be posted somewhere near the exit. Always have all your area maps along. The short distances between the battlefield and Market Bosworth (2½ miles), Dadlington (around 2 miles), or Hinckley (4½ miles) make a day trip to Bosworth via bicycle entirely feasible. A National Cycling Network trail to the west of Bosworth Field, running north and south, is planned for the area. See the area map at [www.sustrans.org](http://www.sustrans.org).

The Shackerstone Battlefield Line: Shackerstone Station is open on Saturdays

12.00 noon to 5.30pm and Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays 10.30am to 6.00pm all year round, except Christmas. Check the website [www.battlefield-line-railway.co.uk](http://www.battlefield-line-railway.co.uk) to obtain exact schedules; when open, there are 4-6 departures daily from Shackerstone, generally in the afternoons. It takes 20 minutes to reach Shenton Station, where the train remains for 15 minutes before returning.

One strategy for reaching Bosworth Field would be to take a bus to Shackerstone and catch the train to Shenton Station, which is part of the battlefield trail.

However, the return bus schedules must be carefully checked to avoid becoming stranded.

Narrowboats and Canals: An alternative, though not inexpensive, way to see the Bosworth Battlefield area is by renting a narrowboat and traveling along the Ashby Canal, 22 miles long and lock-free. Not only does the canal run immediately adjacent to the battlefield, it also passes by Stoke Golding (where the Ashby Boat Company is based) Dadlington, Market Bosworth, and Shackerstone.

Allow 20 minutes per mile to navigate the canal, and schedule in time for exploration and pub lunches. For more information, visit [www.ashbyboats.co.uk](http://www.ashbyboats.co.uk).

### Conclusion

The information presented merely serves to introduce ideas for traveling by public transport to the more

rural areas of the UK, in this case, Market Bosworth and Bosworth Battlefield. Therefore, you'll want to have the most recent information available; browse through the websites listed at the end of this article. Online research should be supplemented by researching the latest-available travel books and magazines in your library or bookstore.

One should never solely rely on a printed source of information as being the final word, as train and bus services are subject to changes in scheduling or even cancellation altogether. Upon arriving in the UK, take advantage of the travel information centres which exist in almost every town.

Pick up the relevant maps and train and bus schedules. Don't hesitate to ask questions to the personnel who work there; they enjoy the opportunity to share their knowledge for the benefit of guests in their country. It pays to be knowledgeable about the geography and the transport systems, as well as observant, inquisitive, and adaptable.

### Online References

Maps [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com) [www.streetmap.co.uk](http://www.streetmap.co.uk)

Overall travel planning sites [www.pti.org.uk](http://www.pti.org.uk) [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) [www.jplanner.org.uk](http://www.jplanner.org.uk) [www.visitbritain.co.uk](http://www.visitbritain.co.uk) [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)

Bosworth area travel planning

[www.hinckleyandbosworthonline.org.uk](http://www.hinckleyandbosworthonline.org.uk)  
[www.sbeastmidstravel.co.uk](http://www.sbeastmidstravel.co.uk) [www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk) [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)

Rail Travel [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) [www.battlefield-line-railway.co.uk](http://www.battlefield-line-railway.co.uk) [www.centraltrains.co.uk](http://www.centraltrains.co.uk) [www.gner.co.uk](http://www.gner.co.uk)  
[www.midlandmainline.com](http://www.midlandmainline.com)

Taxis [www.traintaxi.co.uk](http://www.traintaxi.co.uk)

Buses [www.carlberry.co.uk](http://www.carlberry.co.uk) [www.ukbus.co.uk](http://www.ukbus.co.uk) [www.arriva.co.uk](http://www.arriva.co.uk)  
[www.findtransport.net/buses](http://www.findtransport.net/buses) [www.showbus.com](http://www.showbus.com)  
[www.metrobus.co.uk](http://www.metrobus.co.uk) [www.buses.info](http://www.buses.info) [www.busstation.net](http://www.busstation.net)

Bicycle Routes [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) [www.atob.org.uk](http://www.atob.org.uk)  
[www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk) [www.atob.info.net](http://www.atob.info.net)

Canal Travel [www.waterways.holidays.com](http://www.waterways.holidays.com) [www.canaljunction.com](http://www.canaljunction.com)  
[www.calcuttboats.com](http://www.calcuttboats.com) [www.ashbyboats.co.uk](http://www.ashbyboats.co.uk)