

Clipstone / Vicar Water



Distance	6 miles (9½ km)
Stiles	0
Route summary	The majority of the ride uses public bridleways and a small stretch of former railway line. There is a busy main road to cross and some small sections of minor road through a housing estate. There are some steep hills and some of the tracks can get muddy.
Start point	Vicar Water Country Park, Clipstone
Parking	Vicar Water Country Park Visitor Centre, Clipstone.
Dogs	Please keep dogs under close control at all times.
Additional information	Drinking water for horses is limited en route. A collapsible bucket is recommended.

Map/Directions overleaf.

Along the Way.

Vicar Water Country Park.

Opened in 1982, the park is largely made up of reclaimed spoil tips from the adjacent Clipstone Colliery. Its area has more than doubled recently, as tipping from the pit stopped in 1998. This has allowed a large area to be managed as part of the Country Park, which is now approaching 200 acres. The gradual process of reclamation has begun – to give you an idea of how long it takes, compare the more wooded parts of the site that were reclaimed some 20 years ago with the more recently seeded areas where grasses and heathland plants are trying to get a foothold. The Visitor Centre was opened in spring 2000. It makes a good place to reflect with a cup of tea and a piece of cake!

Vicar Pond.

Vicar Pond was created around 1870 by the damming of Vicar Water. It was designed to be a fishery for the Duke of Portland to stock his lakes at Welbeck Abbey, 8 miles north. Whilst it is a pleasant spot to watch the birdlife, you may be surprised to hear that it soon became a favourite spot for swimming and boating with locals. With the arrival of hundreds of colliers to work the neighbouring pit, bathing in the pond increased in popularity and became well organised, with roped off sections for swimming and marquees on the lakeside for changing.

Spa Ponds Nature Reserve.

The Reserve is a bit of an oddity; springs and ponds are rare in this district, due to the porous nature of the underlying Sherwood Sandstone rocks. It was established in 1984 and is managed by Notts Wildlife Trust. Three of these spring-fed ponds are medieval, dug in the 14th century when the area was part of the royal hunting grounds of Clipstone Park, a particular favourite of King John.

If you watch and listen carefully you will see many different birds and animals, even kingfishers if you are lucky.

Clipstone Drive.

One of the Duke of Portland's estate roads, this was the site of the first ever motor race. The long straight and the good surface made it ideal for trials of speed, where motorcycles pushed past the 100mph mark!

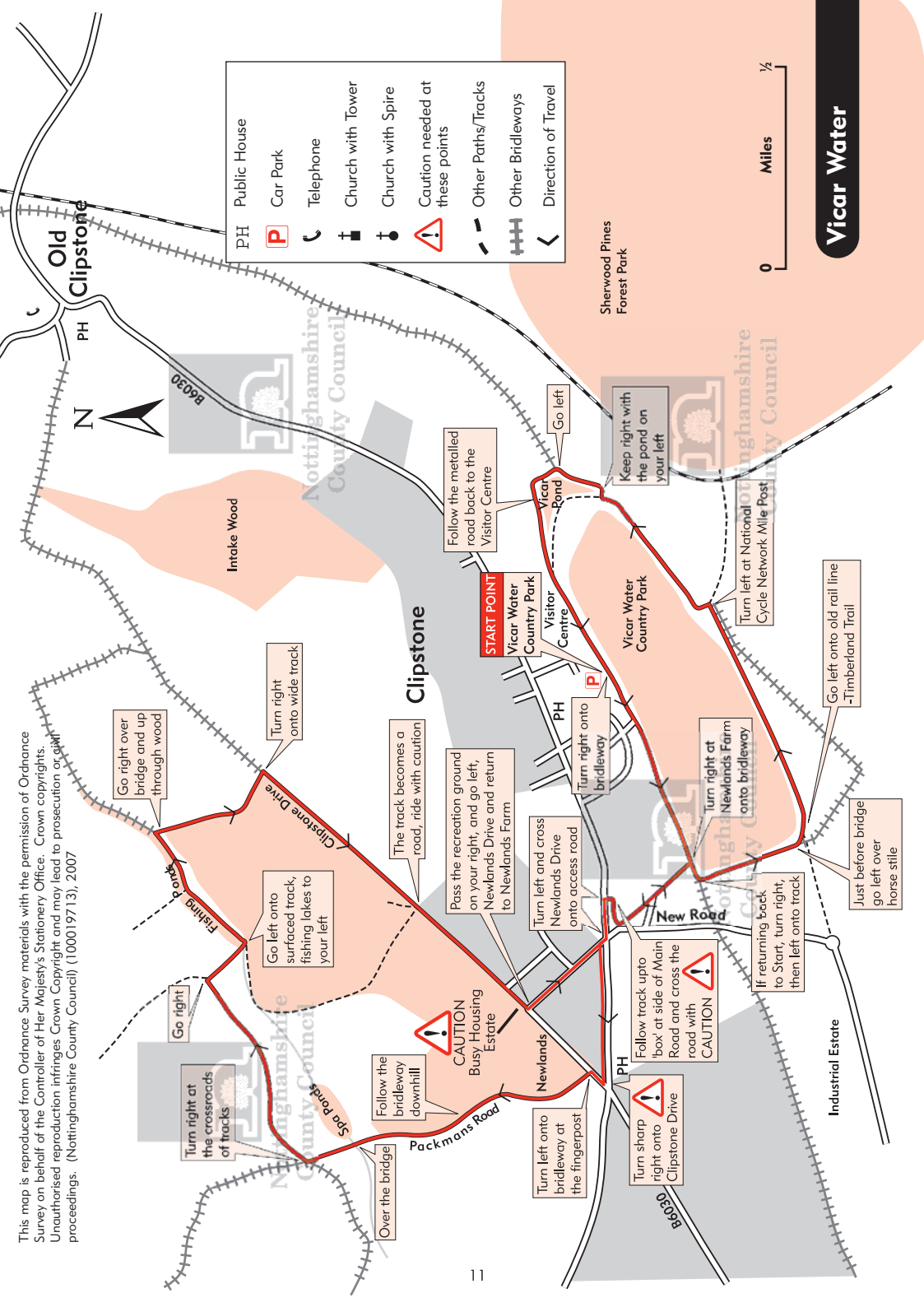
Needless to say, this was a dangerous pursuit and during one race there is an account of onlookers hearing a crash and seeing a body fly over the hedge.

Clipstone Colliery.

The colliery was sunk by the Bolsover Mining Company and went into production in 1922. The company also built the new village for the mineworkers and their families. This included houses, a school, and a chapel, a pub and stores. Miners were attracted to the pit from across Nottinghamshire and other coalfields including Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Northumberland and Scotland. By 1930, the population had topped 2000.

This route is taken from 'Exploring Nottinghamshire on Horseback' a compilation of 6 circular horse rides across the county, priced £2.50. For ordering details please see the back page of this leaflet.

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PH	Public House
P	Car Park
☎	Telephone
⚓	Church with Tower
⚓	Church with Spire
⚠	Caution needed at these points
—	Other Paths/Tracks
—	Other Bridleways
↙	Direction of Travel



Vicar Water