



Discover Swindon's rich
Kingsdown Lane
landmarks and attractions
transport heritage,

Swindon Travel Choices



Swindon Travel Choices was part of Swindon's Local Sustainable Transport Fund project and offers advice on sustainable travel in the borough through its website, guidance, leaflets, maps and other resources.

For more information about walking and cycling routes, visit the website at www.swindontravelchoices.org.uk.

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StreetSmart

Report any maintenance issues (such as broken glass, fallen trees, potholes etc) along the route to Swindon Borough Council's StreetSmart team online at www.swindon.gov.uk



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Kingsdown Lane

Part of Kingsdown Lane is Swindon's only restricted byway.

A restricted byway allows a right of way on foot, on horseback, or leading a horse, cycling and for any vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles. Whilst this might sound identical to the definition of a bridleway, the historic distinction is that horse drawn vehicles are not permitted on bridleways, but would be allowed on a restricted byway. Therefore the width of a restricted byway must allow for horse-drawn carriages!



Kingsdown Nurseries

The nurseries provide trees, topiary and hedging plants to the trade (not the general public) and was founded by David Whiteside who spent his childhood amongst the farmers and sheep traders of the Marlborough Downs.

The team are proud to supply some high profile clients, including The Royal Parks, the National Trust, politicians and world famous entertainers.



Stratton Wood

Stratton Wood is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. It is designated as a County Wildlife Site and is one of 12 community forests created as part of the Great Western Community Forest Project (GWCF), a long-term programme to enrich landscapes in and around Swindon. The GWCF's primary aim is to increase tree cover to an average of 30% across the project area, working in urban, urban fringe and rural landscapes.

Here you will find a mixed, native broadleaf woodland, including oak, ash, field maple, goat willow and hazel; old hedgerows and two wildflower meadows. The meadows are home to ground nesting skylarks, as well as a host of wildlife including birds, bees, butterflies, moths and plants such as cowslips, kidney vetch and pyramidal orchids.

Birds to look out for include chiffchaff, bullfinch, buzzard and song thrush. Twenty-five species of butterfly have been recorded across the wood including small blue, comma, peacock and marbled white. Plant species include oxeye daisy, field scabious, birdsfoot trefoil, common knapweed and hawkbit.

There is a good network of paths throughout the site, including a 0.6-mile circular surfaced path, which starts and ends at the car park, plus a non-surfaced route linking to Stanton Country Park. Other routes within the site are unsurfaced and can be muddy during the winter months.



Kingsdown cemetery and crematorium

Kingsdown cemetery and crematorium is set in 30 acres of mature, open space, where visitors can easily find a place for quiet reflection.

A large, 10-bedroom manor house called Kingsdown House once stood on the grounds. In the mid-1800s, it was the only mansion in the neighbourhood, and some of the original garden walls and the ha-ha (sunken wall) are still in place. The gate pillars at either side of the lane leading to the crematorium also remain in situ. The derelict house was finally demolished and the crematorium opened in April 1966. Since then, it has carried out over 91,000 cremations.



Stanton Park

Stanton Park is a 74-hectare (185 acres) country park and Local Nature Reserve. It features extensive woodland and a large lake. Owned by Swindon Borough Council, the park also contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument - the site of a Roman Villa (although there are no visible remains).

Nature Reserve status was also acquired for 36 hectares of the park that includes the lake, woodland and grassland. The extensive woodland and large lake are ideal for exploring on the variety of footpaths and walks.

Once, the Swindon to Highworth railway ran through the grounds, and what was once the "Manor of Stanton" is now a private hotel. Swindon Borough Council bought the grounds with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund in 1996 and the park officially opened in 2000.

Did you know? There are over 900 species of fungi that can be found at Stanton Park!



Catsbrain Farm

Catsbrain Farm was the last working farm in Stratton, owned by Eric Barnes who came there in 1938, when he was aged 7. They had a small dairy herd as well as pigs. The name "Catsbrain" is nothing to do with our feline friends. It was a graphic description given to a field that had mottled appearance due to a mixture of soils or a large quantity of stone.

Mr Barnes recently sold the farm and its land, hoping it could be used to house some industrial units. However, a small housing estate is to be developed on the site during 2021.



South Marston Industrial Estate - The aviation history of South Marston

The Honda factory site, and parts of the South Marston Industrial Estate, have a connection to aviation that can still be found in the names of roundabouts, roads, cafes and rugby clubs in the area!

With the second world war looming, South Marston was chosen as a site for constructing training planes. Using the skilled workforce of the Great Western Railway, the factory started producing "South Marston Master" planes in 1940. It wasn't long before components of other planes were produced locally and assembled in South Marston at a factory called FS2. Two 1000-metre runways were added as take-off and landing facilities for the four-engine Stirling. These runways still exist as test tracks for the Honda manufacturing plant.

By 1942, the factory was manufacturing Stirling bombers, and soon after retrained workers in metal work so that Mark-21 Spitfires could be delivered to the RAF. The Spitfire story was short lived though, with only 121 being built at South Marston.

After the war, Vickers bought the factory and by the 1950s, the South Marston factory was part of the Vickers-Armstrongs (Aircraft) Ltd, Supermarine Division, building both jet-fighter planes for the Royal Navy and RAF fighter planes.

In the 1980s, Honda bought the site for their car manufacturing plant, and the old FS2 building remains, now operating as Berkeley House Business Centre on Hunts Rise. Vickers Roundabout, Spitfire Way, Supermarine Rugby Club and Scimitar Way are all nods to the past.

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Kingsdown Lane

Kingsdown Lane is a useful direct connection between the village of Blunsdon and the industrial area of South Marston. In 2020 it was chosen for improvement works as part of the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund, as it had become narrow in places and the surface rough.

The lane is just under two miles in length from its junction with Turnpike Road to the Highworth Road, with the Blunsdon end tarmac until Kingsdown Nurseries. The remainder of the lane is free of motorised traffic and provides access onto other footpaths and lanes to explore the surrounding countryside.

The improvement works widened the lane to allow for social distancing, and gives better light and visibility. The surface was improved to be more level and less rutted.

The lane is perfect for summer commuting by bike, or family wandering and dog walking to explore the countryside in the area.

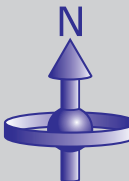
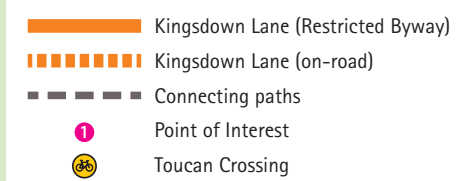
The benefits of cycling and walking include:



- Improves general health, helping to lower blood pressure and heart rate, as well as improving mental health and wellbeing
- Helps with weight and stress management
- Improves fitness
- In congested areas cyclists and pedestrians breathe in less fumes than drivers
- Saves money
- Produces no pollution so is good for the environment and tackling climate change
- Often quicker to get around in towns and cities
- Fewer cars on the road and more cyclists and pedestrians means safer roads
- Have fewer days being ill each year

So whether you cycle or walk for your whole journey, or simply part of it, you know you will be healthier as a result!

Kingsdown Lane



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