

# Your guide to travelling the Oxford Canal

## from Oxford to Banbury

This leaflet aims to provide you with a guide to the attractions that can be enjoyed along the Oxford Canal Line as it travels between Oxford and Banbury through the countryside of north Oxfordshire. It includes details of a variety of walks and cycle rides along the Oxford Canal that allow you to explore places of interest and see outstanding views.



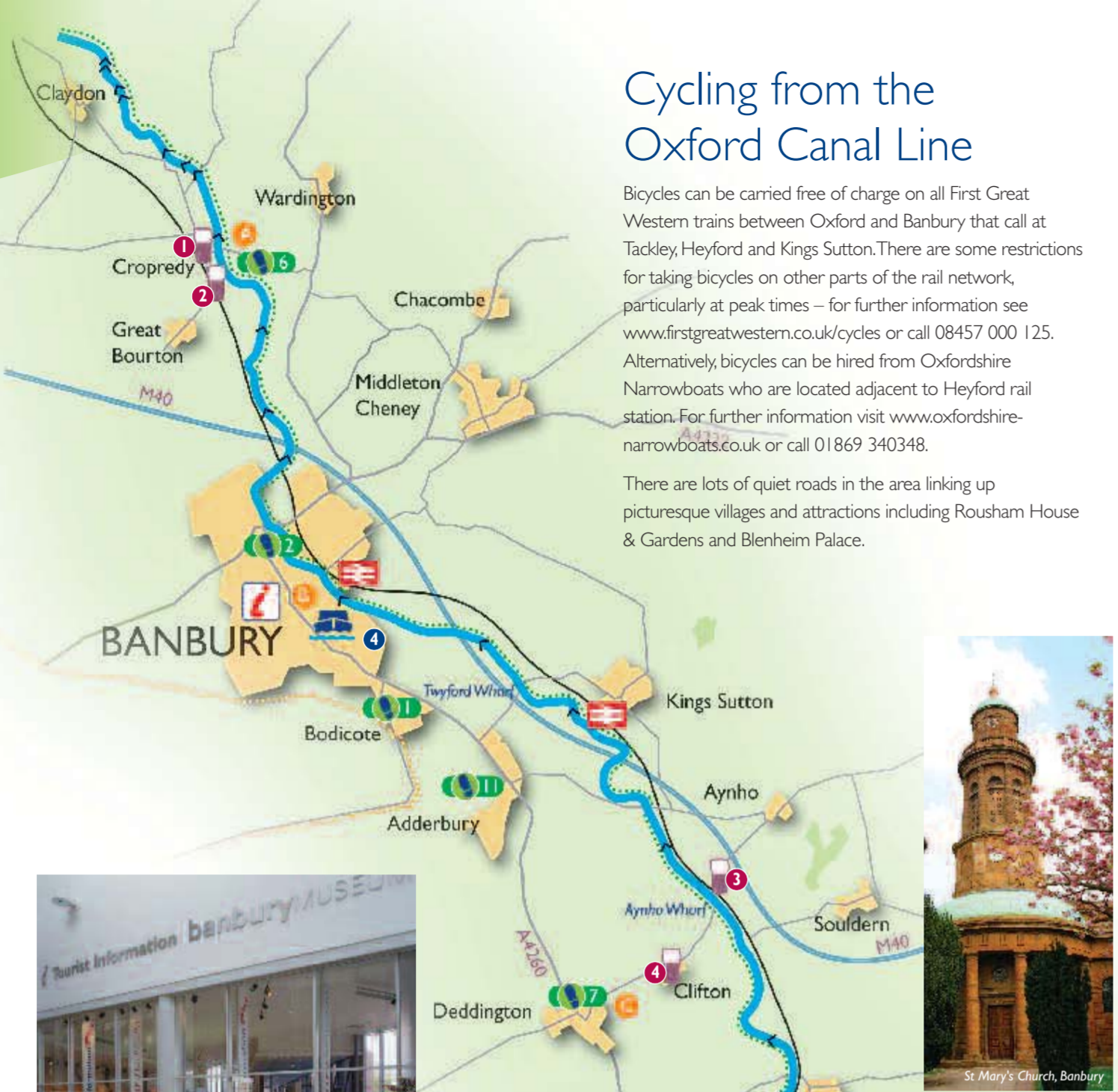
If you like walking, cycling, boating or even shopping, there is so much to see and do along the Oxford Canal. For further information about the activities and places along the Oxford Canal, please visit the British Waterways website at [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com) or [www.visitnorthoxfordshire.com](http://www.visitnorthoxfordshire.com) for more local information.

We hope you'll soon be enjoying the delights along the Oxford Canal between Oxford and Cropredy, and you are assured of a warm welcome wherever you go.

## History

The Oxford Canal is one of England's most peaceful waterways, running lazily through the countryside from Oxford to the outskirts of Coventry, a distance of 77 miles. It was granted Royal assent in 1769 and was built by the famous engineer James Brindley to link the industry heartland of the Midlands with London via the River Thames. But it was superseded soon after construction by the more direct Grand Junction Canal - now the Grand Union Canal.

The Oxford Canal escaped large-scale development and the southern section, opened in 1790, is particularly charming and remains largely unaltered. Whilst the coming of the railways in the 1840's and the gradual decline in commercial traffic almost caused the canal to close, its future was secured by committed supporters and today it is a great place to enjoy a range of leisure pursuits including walking, boating and angling in the scenic countryside of north Oxfordshire.



## Cycling from the Oxford Canal Line

Bicycles can be carried free of charge on all First Great Western trains between Oxford and Banbury that call at Tackley, Heyford and Kings Sutton. There are some restrictions for taking bicycles on other parts of the rail network, particularly at peak times - for further information see [www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/cycles](http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/cycles) or call 08457 000 125. Alternatively, bicycles can be hired from Oxfordshire Narrowboats who are located adjacent to Heyford rail station. For further information visit [www.oxfordshire-narrowboats.co.uk](http://www.oxfordshire-narrowboats.co.uk) or call 01869 340348.

There are lots of quiet roads in the area linking up picturesque villages and attractions including Rousham House & Gardens and Blenheim Palace.



If you want to cycle along the canal towpath, a free permit is needed which can be obtained from either [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com) or from Banbury Tourist Information Centre. Although cycling the towpath is allowed with a permit, the towpath is not primarily intended as a cycle path. Most of the towpath is unsurfaced and can become muddy, uneven and slippery during wet weather. Some sections can also become flooded and impassable during prolonged wet weather.

## Walking the Oxford Canal

A walk along the Oxford Canal towpath is an excellent way to see the beauty of the North Oxfordshire countryside. Almost the entire length of the canal between Banbury and Kidlington / Oxford travels through peaceful open countryside along the Cherwell Valley, which the canal shares with the River Cherwell and the railway line. There are many locks along the canal which are busy with boaters during the summer months. A number of picturesque villages can be seen in the distance from the towpath and are usually just a short walk away. Stop for a picnic on the towpath or take a walk to one of the nearby pubs for refreshments and food (see overleaf).

**The terrain along and surrounding the Oxford Canal is generally undemanding and not hilly, but as with all paths, some areas could be muddy and slippery after rain and there could be seasonal vegetation such as grass and nettles on the route as well.** There may also be a number of stiles or kissing gates on the paths. Make sure you are prepared by wearing appropriate clothing, taking refreshments and a charged mobile phone with you and making sure people know where you are.

### Key to main map

- Attractions**
- A Battle of Cropredy Bridge (1644)
  - B Banbury Museum
  - C Deddington Castle ruins
  - D Rousham House and Gardens
  - E Blenheim Palace
  - F Oxfordshire Museum

### Walks

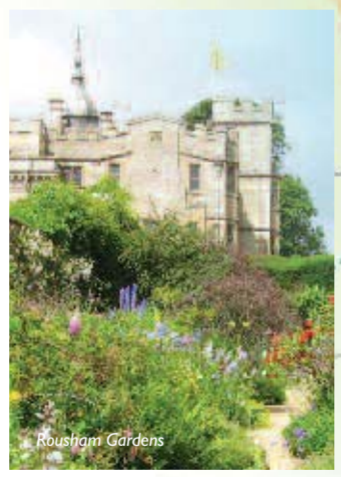
- 1 Bodicote Circular Walk and Salt Way Nature Trail 3 miles
- 2 Banbury Fringe Walk 10 miles
- 3 Cherwell Valley Walks and Heyfords Village Trail 3.5 - 14 miles
- 6 Cropredy Battlefield Circular Walk and Village Trail 4.5 miles
- 7 Deddington Circular Walks 5.5 or 6.5 miles
- 11 Adderbury Circular Walk and Village Trail 3.5 miles
- K Kidlington 3.5 miles

Further details of walks 1 to 11 can be found at [www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/circularwalks](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/circularwalks). Details of the Kidlington walk can be found at <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kidlingtonwalk>

### Boat Hire

- 1 Oxfordshire Narrowboats (Heyford)
- 2 Oxfordshire Narrowboats (Thrupp)
- 3 College Cruisers
- 4 Tooleys Boatyard

- National Cycle Network
- Oxfordshire Way
- Oxford Canal Walk
- Train Station
- Public House Numbers refer to pub guide overleaf
- Tourist Information
- Boat Hire
- Bike Hire
- Locks



## Banbury Tourist Information Centre

Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury  
 Tel: 01295 259855  
[www.visitnorthoxfordshire.com](http://www.visitnorthoxfordshire.com)  
 Email: [banburytic@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:banburytic@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)  
 Tickets on sale for local events  
 Accommodation booking service available  
 Local gifts, crafts, books on sale  
 Local maps & walks information on sale

### Banbury Museum

Banbury Museum is a modern canal-side museum offering hands on displays, special exhibitions and events for the whole family.

**Exhibitions Activities**

- Petrol trails
- Digging activities
- Activity backpacks for 3-5 year olds
- Art Cart - craft activities

Visit museum website for dates and details  
[www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/banburymuseum](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/banburymuseum)  
**01295 259855**  
 Spiceball Park Rd, Banbury, Oxon OX16 2PQ  
 Museum open every day. **Free Admission**

## The North Oxford Canal Partnership

The North Oxford Canal Partnership brings together Oxfordshire County Council, British Waterways, First Great Western, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Councils and Oxfordshire Narrowboats. It aims to get more people to visit and stay in north Oxfordshire by promoting easy access to the Oxford Canal as a tourist and leisure destination, with an emphasis on linking waterway activities and walking and cycling opportunities with the local train service.

# Walks from the Oxford Canal Line



Using the Oxford Canal Line to get into the heart of the countryside is easy with a series of walks from stations along the line. For the more enthusiastic walker, there is the 77-mile Oxford Canal Walk from Oxford to Coventry. Wherever you choose to walk along the Oxford Canal, you have the opportunity to see abundant wildlife and birdlife, as well as picturesque villages, wild flowers and the outstandingly beautiful countryside.

To suit everyone's ability, there are long-distance and shorter self-guided walks that all have clear signposts or

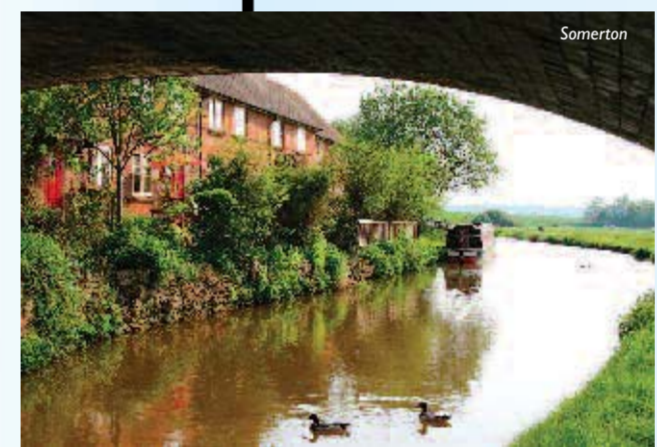
waymarks to guide you on your way. To introduce you to the area we have included details of some of the walks in this leaflet.

There are many other paths waiting to be explored. Ordnance Survey Pathfinder maps (1:25,000 scale) show public footpaths and bridleways, sheets 25 (Chilterns and Thames Valley) and 33 (Shakespeare Country) cover the route of the canal, as does Landranger series map sheet 164. Remember to follow the Countryside Code.

The Ramblers Association has helped put together a number of walks along the canal, and more details of these can be found on the British Waterways website [www.waterscape.com/canals-and-rivers/oxford-canal](http://www.waterscape.com/canals-and-rivers/oxford-canal)

## Cherwell Valley Walks

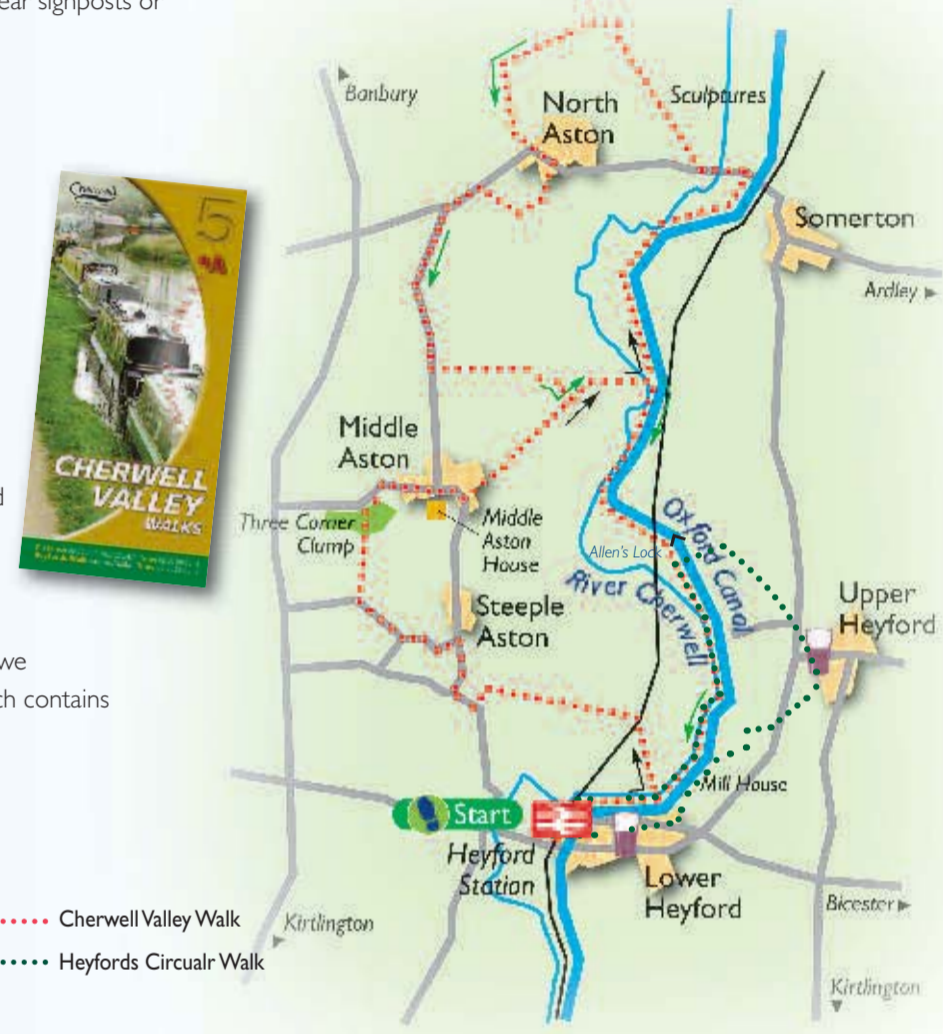
The Cherwell Valley Walks offer you a wide choice of rural rambles through the heart of the Cherwell District, where the historic Oxford Canal parallels the beautiful River Cherwell for much of its length. The main start and finish point is Heyford Station, which is adjacent to Heyford Wharf where there is a village shop and Kizzies bistro.



Full details of the walks are contained in the Cherwell Circular Walks leaflet number 5, which is produced by Cherwell District Council and available to download from [www.cherwell.gov.uk/circularwalks](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/circularwalks).

The leaflet contains details of a long 14 mile walk which can be shortened to 7 miles, and also details of the Heyfords Circular Walk which is a 2 mile walk devised by Lower Heyford Parish Council.

The routes are waymarked throughout but we recommend taking a copy of the leaflet which contains detailed route instructions and maps.



## Station to Station

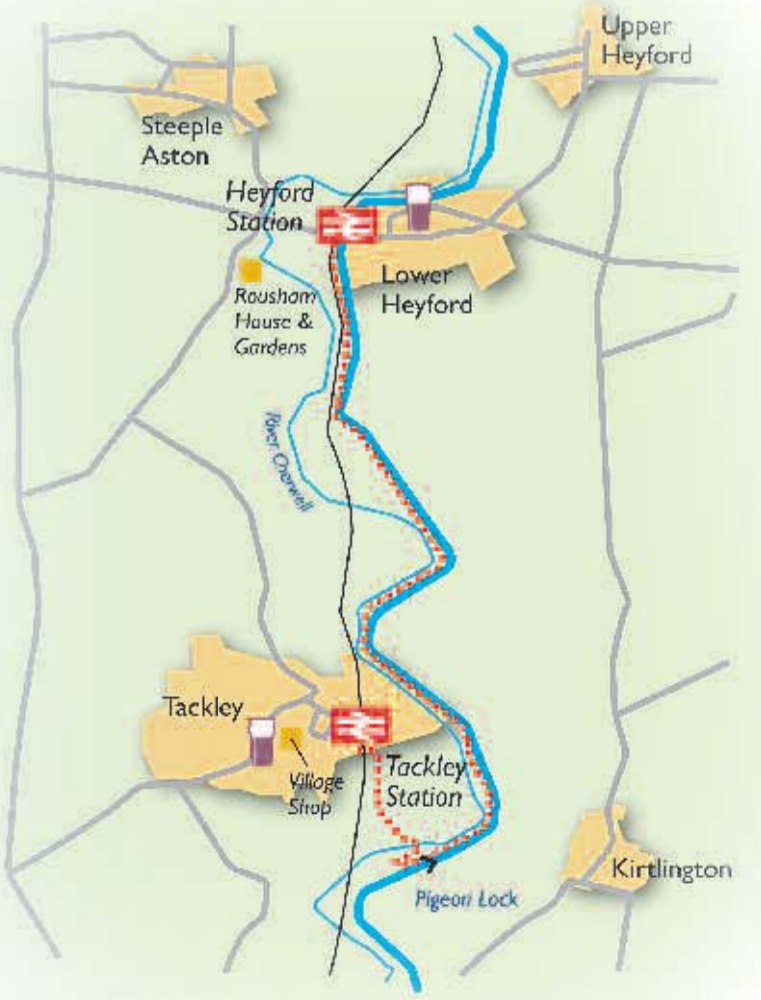
### Walk the canal towpath between Tackley and Heyford

Make the most of travelling by train by walking from station to station - no need to walk back to your starting point! The Oxford Canal is about one mile from Tackley station and is adjacent to Heyford Station. This walk is about 4.5 miles long.

#### Directions:

- At Tackley station you'll see a large sign pointing towards "Oxford Canal Walk" next to the railway crossing (if you've got off a train from Oxford you'll need to cross the railway here taking extreme care). Follow the path away from the station and the village.
- After about half a mile you'll reach a junction. Turn left here (signposted towards Kirtlington).
- Follow the path for about half a mile and you'll arrive at Pigeon Lock on the Oxford Canal. Turn left and follow the towpath.
- After about 3.5 miles of walking the towpath you'll arrive at Heyford Wharf alongside Heyford station. There is a shop selling refreshments, or why not relax alongside the canal with a cream tea from Kizzies bistro while you wait for your return train?

- This walk can be enjoyed in either direction. Starting at Heyford station, leave the station from Platform 2 and turn right. From Pigeon Lock Tackley station is signposted with cycle route signs: Refreshments can be purchased from Tackley village shop which is a few minutes away from the station, or the Gardiner Arms pub which is about 10 minutes away.





from Oxford to Banbury

## Banbury

Banbury is the most northerly town in Oxfordshire and famous for its Banbury Cakes and the 'Ride a Cock Horse' nursery rhyme based on the famous Banbury Cross.



An impressive bronze statue of the 'Fyne Lady upon a White Horse' was unveiled in 2005. Among the many interesting places to visit are the 17th century St Mary's Church, the modern Banbury Museum and Tooley's Boatyard dating back over 200 years and the oldest working dry-dock in the country. The Oxford Canal passes through the centre of the town, with its own lock and canal basin, and narrowboats can often be seen moored up or queuing to pass through the lock.



Castle Quay Shopping Centre, built on the site of Banbury's historic castle, is alongside the Oxford Canal and provides a friendly and relaxed shopping experience with over 80 shops and restaurants. This is a thriving market town with excellent



leisure and shopping facilities, as well as an extensive range of cafes, restaurants and bars, including several old coaching inns such as the Unicorn and the Olde Reindeer Inn. All of this makes Banbury an ideal destination for any visit to the area.

There are many other smaller villages to explore along the way, from Thrupp and Kirtlington in the south to Somerton and Cropredy, the famous scene of a English Civil War Battle in 1644, and home of the annual music festival, which is just five miles north of Banbury on the Oxford Canal.

## King's Sutton



King's Sutton is a quaint little village of tree-lined streets and thatched cottages on the border of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. Set around the village green, many 16th and 17th-Century houses and cottages still stand, some converted into bed & breakfast and hotel accommodation. The 198 feet tall spire of St Peter and St Paul Church dominates the skyline and the oldest part of the church dates back to 662AD. The village also has three pubs - The 18th-Century Butchers Arms, The White Horse and the famed Three Tuns. The village holds an annual classical music festival during the summer months that draws performers from around the world, and there is also an annual literary festival usually held in March.



## The Heyfords

The Heyfords are two small and peaceful villages situated twelve miles south of Banbury near the Oxford Canal. Soon after the canal opened it became a highway for goods travelling between Oxford and Coventry and a major wharf to handle coal from the Midlands was opened at Lower Heyford. The highly picturesque Heyford Wharf is still a proper working boatyard and remains a firm favourite with tourists arriving to hire canal narrowboats for holidays and day trips during the summer months. Bed & breakfast accommodation is available. The 12th century St Mary's Church sits in the centre of Lower Heyford. There are two village pubs - The Bell Inn in Lower Heyford and The Barley Mow in Upper Heyford, where many of the cold war buildings remain protected as a reminder of the past.

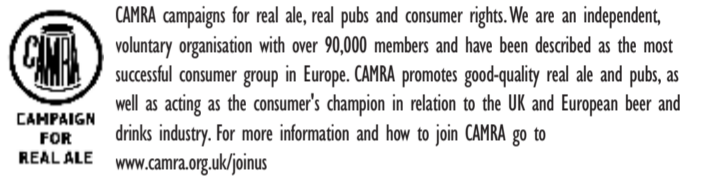


## Pub Guide (numbers refer to map overlay)

- Red Lion – Cropredy (1)**  
50 yards from canal – Tel: 01295 750224  
A warm welcome awaits at this cosy thatched village pub which is beloved by locals, walkers and boaters alike. Four rooms, two with heated by log fires in winter, are served off the bar where two of three handpumps dispense changing guest ales. The 'Prudes' restaurant is popular with diners.
- Brasenose Arms – Cropredy (2)**  
400 yards from canal – Tel: 01295 750244  
This two roomed popular pub features a separate bar and dining area. The pub has recently been refurbished and offers an excellent menu, and it features two or three changing guest ales from a comprehensive list. There is ample seating outside for warmer months.
- The Great Western Arms – Aynho Wharf (3)**  
40 yards from canal – Tel: 01869 338288  
Large ivy covered pub dating to the 1850's. Serving two real ales always including Hooley Best. Food available lunchtime & evenings except Sunday evening. Accommodation also available.
- Duke of Cumberland's Head – Clifton (4)**  
1/2 mile from the canal – Tel: 01869 338534  
17th century freehouse selling up to 5 real ales. Food available lunchtime and evenings; with 6 en-suite letting rooms. With a large pleasant garden children and dogs are most welcome.
- Barley Mow – Upper Heyford (5)**  
0.35 miles from the canal – Tel: 01869 232300  
This large Fuller's pub sits at the end of the runway at the now defunct RAF base. Selling up to 3 real ales, with food available lunchtimes and evenings all week.
- Bell – Lower Heyford (6)**  
1/4 mile from the canal – Tel: 01869 347176  
A large multi-roomed pub at the village centre. 4 handpumps dispense an ever changing range of ales. Food is available lunchtime & evenings. The large garden is well used in summer.
- Horse & Groom – Caulcott (7)**  
1.5 miles from the canal – Tel: 01869 343257  
Small cosy freehouse with a warm welcome, selling 4 real ales including Hooley Best. Garden very popular in sunny weather, no under 10's. Food available lunchtime and evenings except Sunday evenings and all day Monday.

- Oxford Arms – Kirtlington (8)**  
0.8 miles from the canal - Tel: 01869 350208  
A smart gastro pub on the main road through the village, selling 2 real ales. Food available lunchtime and evenings and the pleasant patio garden is well used in good weather.
- Rock of Gibraltar – Enslow Wharf (9)**  
10 yards from the canal – Tel: 01869 331373  
Popular canal side pub selling 2 constantly changing real ales. Their annual CanalFest is held at the end of summer. Food is served lunchtimes except Tuesday and evenings except Sunday. There are 3 moorings available for hire.
- White Lion – Steeple Aston (10)**  
1/4 miles from the canal - Tel: 01869 340307  
Single room pub, opposite the village shop, dating from the mid 19th century selling 2 real ales. The large garden is popular in good weather and food is available lunchtimes & evenings every day. The pub has satellite TV, pool table and chess.
- The Jolly Boatman – Thrupp (11)**  
Alongside the canal - Tel: 01865 377800  
An attractive canal-side pub with a range of beers and food. Enjoy a drink by the canal in summer, or inside by the fire in winter.
- Gardiner Arms – Tackley (12)**  
1.5 miles from the canal – Tel: 01869 331266  
A large Greene King pub in the centre of the village selling 3 real ales, including a guest ale. Food available lunchtime and evenings, except Monday, with snacks also available all day Friday & Saturday. Pleasant garden is well used in good weather.
- Kizzies – Heyford Wharf (13)**  
Alongside the canal - Tel: 01869 340348  
A relaxed canal-side bistro serving breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea. Fully licensed offering a wide variety of bottled ales. For opening times call 01869 340348

The pub information and pictures provided here have been provided by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)



Your guide to travelling the Oxford Canal

## North Oxford Canal Partnership

- British Waterways
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Cherwell
- First Great Western
- waterscape.com

**ROUSHAM HOUSE & GARDENS**

Totally uncommunal 17th Century house with fine contemporary furniture. Rare William Kent (18th Century) designed landscape garden with classic buildings, cascades, statues and wonderful herbaceous borders, pigeon holes and portico. Picnic anywhere in garden. Groups by arrangement for house and garden from May to September inclusive

Nr Steeple Aston, Bicester. Tel: 01869 347 110 www.rousham.org  
Gardens: open daily all year 10am - 4.30pm (No dogs or children under 15)

**Heyford Wharf & Kizzies Bistro**

Just 20 minutes drive from Banbury or Oxford takes you to the idyllic village of Lower Heyford, with its convenient railway station alongside. Our 200 year old working boatyard offers a village shop, gifts, bistro cafe. Day hire, holiday boats and cycle hire available. Excellent walking. Rousham gardens nearby.

Station Road, Lower Heyford  
Tel: 01869 340348  
www.oxfordshire-narrowboats.co.uk  
Open: November- March, Mon-Sat, 9am-4pm  
March-October 9am-5.30pm 7 days a week

**THE HOLT**  
THE HOTEL AT HOFRGETTS HOLT  
www.holt-hotel.co.uk

Sumptuous Restaurant Menu • Bar Food • Afternoon Tea's  
'Bacon Butties' • relax after a refreshing walk along the canal  
Weekend Breaks From £60.00 per person per night  
(Dinner, Bal & Breakfast, vat)

The Holt Hotel nr. Steeple Aston, Oxford Road, Oxfordshire OX25 5QQ  
Telephone 01869 340 259 Email info@holt-hotel.co.uk

## Tackley

This picturesque village, situated ten miles north of Oxford close to the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal, has an 11th century church dedicated to St Nicholas, as well as many old stone cottages. It is the site of "The Battle of Tackley" - an English Civil War skirmish on the banks of the Cherwell. The village pub, the Gardiner Arms, is an idyllic pub serving traditional ales, located in the centre of the village. The attractive patio area makes an ideal place to stop for a rest during a walk or ride around the

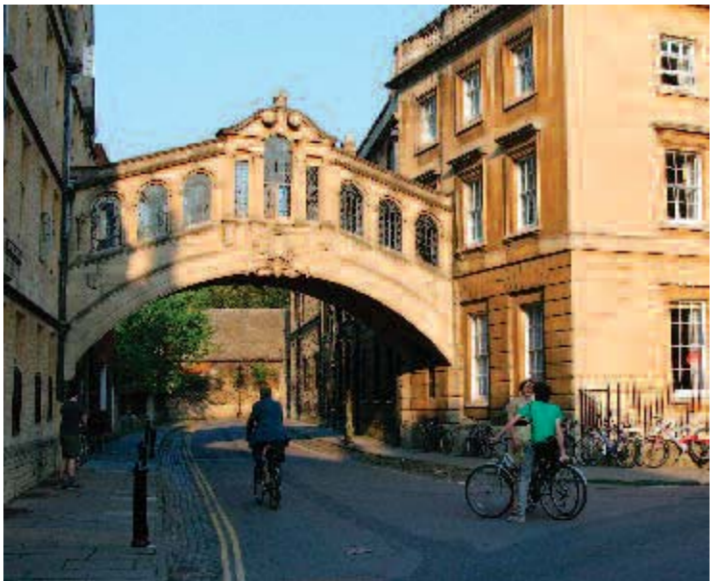
local area. Tackley also has village shop run by community volunteers selling refreshments, freshly baked baguettes, local produce and much more.

A few miles away is the town of Woodstock, famed for Blenheim Palace, the home of the Duke of Marlborough and the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. For visitor information, go to www.wakeuptowoodstock.com



## Oxford

A magnificent mix of ancient architecture and youthful buzz, Oxford is known throughout the world as the City of Dreaming Spires.



Its city centre of mellow, golden stone is shaped largely by the graceful Oxford colleges, most of which open their shady quadrangles, chapels and halls to visitors in the afternoons. The University adds more major attractions. These include the Bodleian Library, dating from 1427, Sir Christopher Wren's Sheldonian Theatre, Britain's oldest botanic garden and five, free museums of international acclaim covering the arts, science, natural history, anthropology and music. Visitors should also allow time for The Christ Church Picture Gallery, cutting-edge installations at Modern Art Oxford, the Museum of Oxford, the 11th-century Oxford Castle and former prison site and some stunning bird's eye views from historic high-points such as St Michael at the Northgate and Carfax Tower.

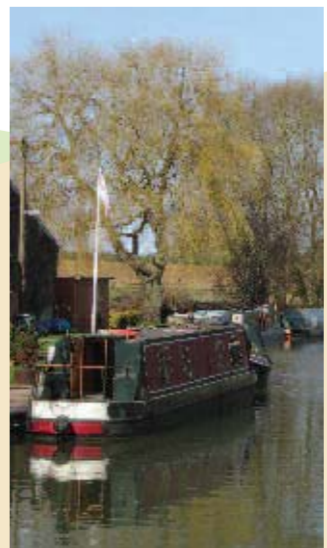
In Oxford, culture and entertainment abound. Boards propped in college doorways announce lunch-time talks,



concerts and recitals while evenings offer music, theatre, comedy and cinema for the most lively or traditional tastes. For lunch or dinner, there are more than enough pubs, restaurants and bistros to please every palate, ranging in style from haute cuisine to Tolkien's favourite student pub. A choice of excellent guest houses, a youth hostel and prestigious hotels allows everyone to budget for an overnight stay.

## Thrupp

Thrupp is a classic canal-side hamlet located to the north of Oxford on the Oxford Canal, and was often featured as a location in 'Inspector Morse'. A new Canal Centre and tearooms are due to open in Spring 2009, offering boat and cycle hire. Stagecoach buses stop nearby which can be caught from Tackley or Oxford (call 01865 772250 for times).



## Getting there...

Getting to the Oxford Canal is easy, with regular train services from Oxford to Banbury, some calling at Tackley, Heyford and Kings Sutton.

- Heyford Canal is adjacent to the station
- Tackley Canal is about one mile walk from the station
- Banbury Canal is a few minutes walk from the station (clearly signposted)
- Oxford Canal is a few minutes walk from the station (clearly signposted)
- Kings Sutton Canal can be reached from the station but is over a mile away and not signposted

A Sunday train service operates during the summer months with special Day Ranger tickets allowing unlimited train travel to explore the area.

For information on train times telephone National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk. Tickets may be bought in advance at www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or from telesales on 08457 000 125.

## What ticket shall I buy?

If you are travelling on off-peak train services, usually after 0930 then off-peak return tickets will offer you the best value for a day out.

## GroupSave

GroupSave allows groups of three or four adults and children to travel off-peak for the price of two adults. One adult must be part of the group. Up to four additional children can travel for £1 each return. GroupSave can be purchased from your local station or from telesales. Terms and conditions apply. Please enquire at time of booking.

The 'Oxford Canal Line Ranger' allows unlimited travel on First Great Western train services between Oxford and Banbury at any time on Saturdays and Sundays between May and September (it is not valid on CrossCountry trains).



Alternatively, the 'Oxfordshire Day Ranger' gives you the freedom to make as many journeys as you like, on all train services, in an area bounded by Banbury, Bicester, Reading, Didcot Parkway and Moreton-in-Marsh. If you feel like heading into the historic city of Oxford for an evening out in one of the many bars, theatres or restaurants then the

'Oxford Evening Out' ticket is the one for you, giving unlimited travel after 1850 from most Oxfordshire stations. For timetables and fares visit www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk

If you're venturing farther afield, the 'Thames Rover' is valid for three or seven consecutive days, giving you the freedom to go where you want by train throughout the Thames Valley area between London, Reading, Didcot, Oxford and Moreton-in-Marsh. You can also use it to visit other places in the region such as Windsor, Henley-on-Thames, Basingstoke and Newbury.

Ranger and Rover tickets can be purchased at most staffed stations anywhere in Britain. You can also buy them from telesales. Ranger and Rover tickets are valid for unlimited travel (within the relevant validity period and area of each ticket) after 0930 Mondays to Fridays, and at any time on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays.

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