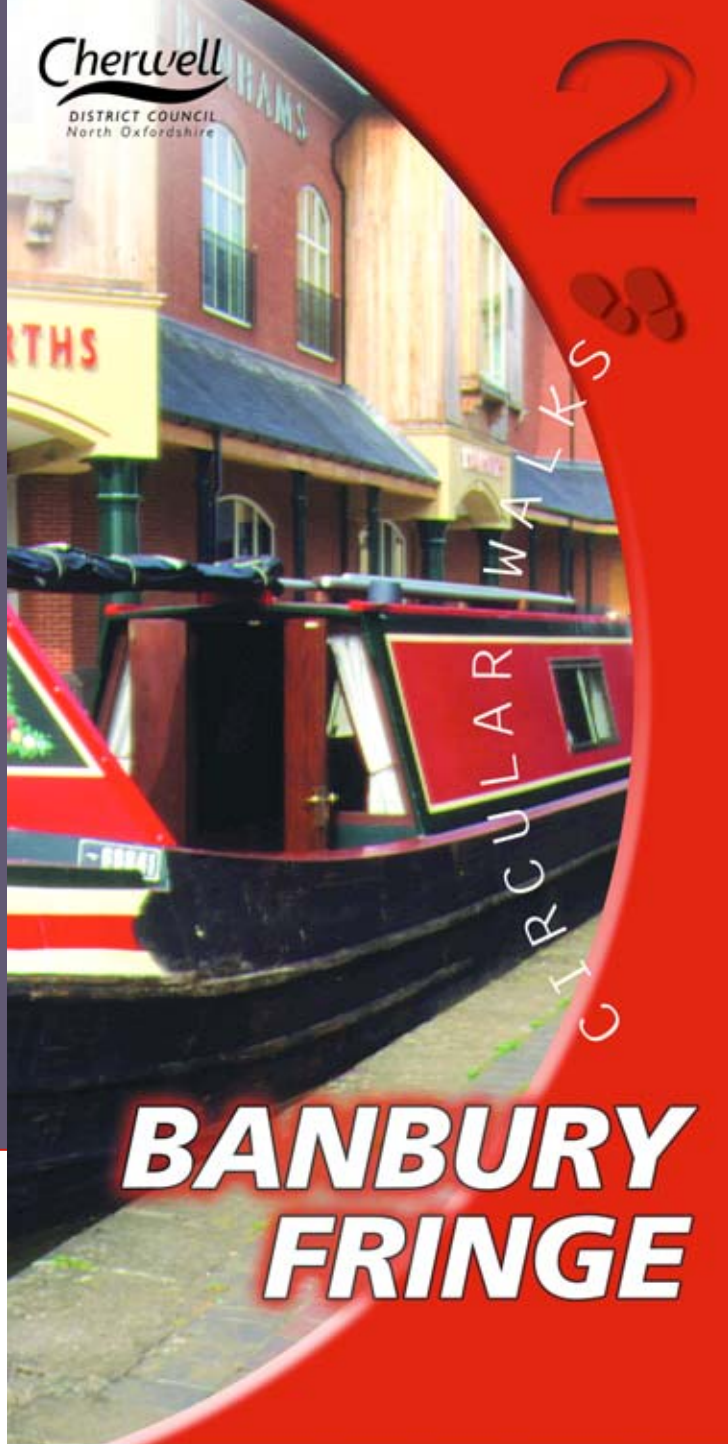




Additional Information

All of Cherwell District Council's circular walks and rides are published on the Council website and can be downloaded free. Leaflets can be purchased from Banbury Tourist Information Centre (01295 259855). For further information about circular walks and rides, guided walks and grants available for countryside access projects, please contact:-



Banbury Fringe Circular Walk

Approx 10miles /16km

As its name suggests, the **Banbury Fringe Circular Walk** will take you on a ramble right around the urban fringe, where town meets countryside. Look in one direction and you can see the bustling market town of Banbury, look the other way and you can enjoy the beauty and diversity of its rural setting.



From its start in the town centre you can set out for the full 10 mile walk. However, if you would prefer a more manageable ramble there are shorter options to enjoy, returning from one of the alternative starting points using the main roads of Banbury.

You are advised to wear stout, waterproof footwear as walking in the countryside can be muddy and wet, even in the summer months. The route is clearly waymarked in a clockwise direction along its full length but it helps to follow the information in this leaflet as you go. Please take great care when crossing the busy roads.

Car parking is available close to the start of the walk adjacent to Spiceball Park Sports Centre and in the Castle Quay car parks. Alternative starting points on the route also have provision for cars: roadside parking along White Post Road in Bodicote and along Ferriston near the mineral railway path.

Places to Eat & Drink

There are many opportunities for refreshment in Banbury town centre. You can find details of some of them by visiting www.visit-northoxfordshire.co.uk or asking at the Tourist Information Centre. There are three pubs and a farm shop in Bodicote, details are in the Bodicote Circular Walk leaflet. About two thirds of the way around the route is the Barley Mow Pub and Restaurant (01295 228981).

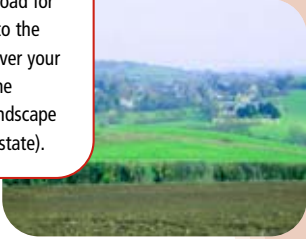
11 Turn right and walk along the road until you reach the pedestrian crossing opposite Drayton School. Cross over and continue to the junction with the Warwick Road.

12 Turn left, follow the road to the underpass and turn right through the underpass to join the Mineral Railway path.

13 Continue along the signed route (passing the turn to the park on your left), to Ironstones. Cross the road and bear right to walk along the grass track rather than keeping to the tarmac path.

14 Rejoin the tarmac path and a little further on, the route passes through a tunnel under Highlands. Continue on past a play area, bear left down a short slope then turn right. The path takes you through a small open space area and then up along the top of an embankment (alongside an industrial area).

10 Follow path, passing Withycombe Farm on your right, then continue along the farm road for about three quarters of a mile to the Drayton/Stratford road. (Back over your left shoulder you can see a stone archway, part of the original landscape design of the Wroxton Abbey estate).



9 At the bottom turn right and go uphill alongside a wooded area. At the next waymark post turn left.

8 Just past the remains of a stile on your left, bear left (look at the view!), then immediately right and walk downhill with the field edge on your right.

7 Climb the steps straight ahead and follow the signed route left then right around the field corner, then uphill through a wooded area along the field boundary. The village of North Newington can be seen over to your left along this stretch.

For those who would like to venture further afield we recommend the OS Explorer sheets 191 and 206.

Giant's Cave to the Mineral Railway Path
2.5miles /4km

6 Cross the road with care and take the wooden steps over the wall and into Giant's Cave park. Turn right and follow the path to the hardstanding area.

5 Rejoin Salt Way on the other side of the road and continue along the track for about another mile (note Crouch Hill through the trees over to the right) until you reach a waymarker post straight in front of you. Bear right and carry on to the Broughton road.

15 At the end of the embankment descend to the path which runs alongside the stream to the Southam Road. At the road turn right and walk along the grass verge. Cross the road with care opposite the canal bridge.

16 Go over the canal bridge, follow the walkway round and cross the stile. Turn left onto the canal towpath. (Turn right and you join the alternative route back to Spiceball Park around Grimsbury Reservoir).

17 Continue along the towpath which leads alongside Spiceball Park back to the start of the walk. Alternatively the park can be entered at an earlier point from the towpath.

Town Centre to Bodicote Village
2.75miles /4.5km

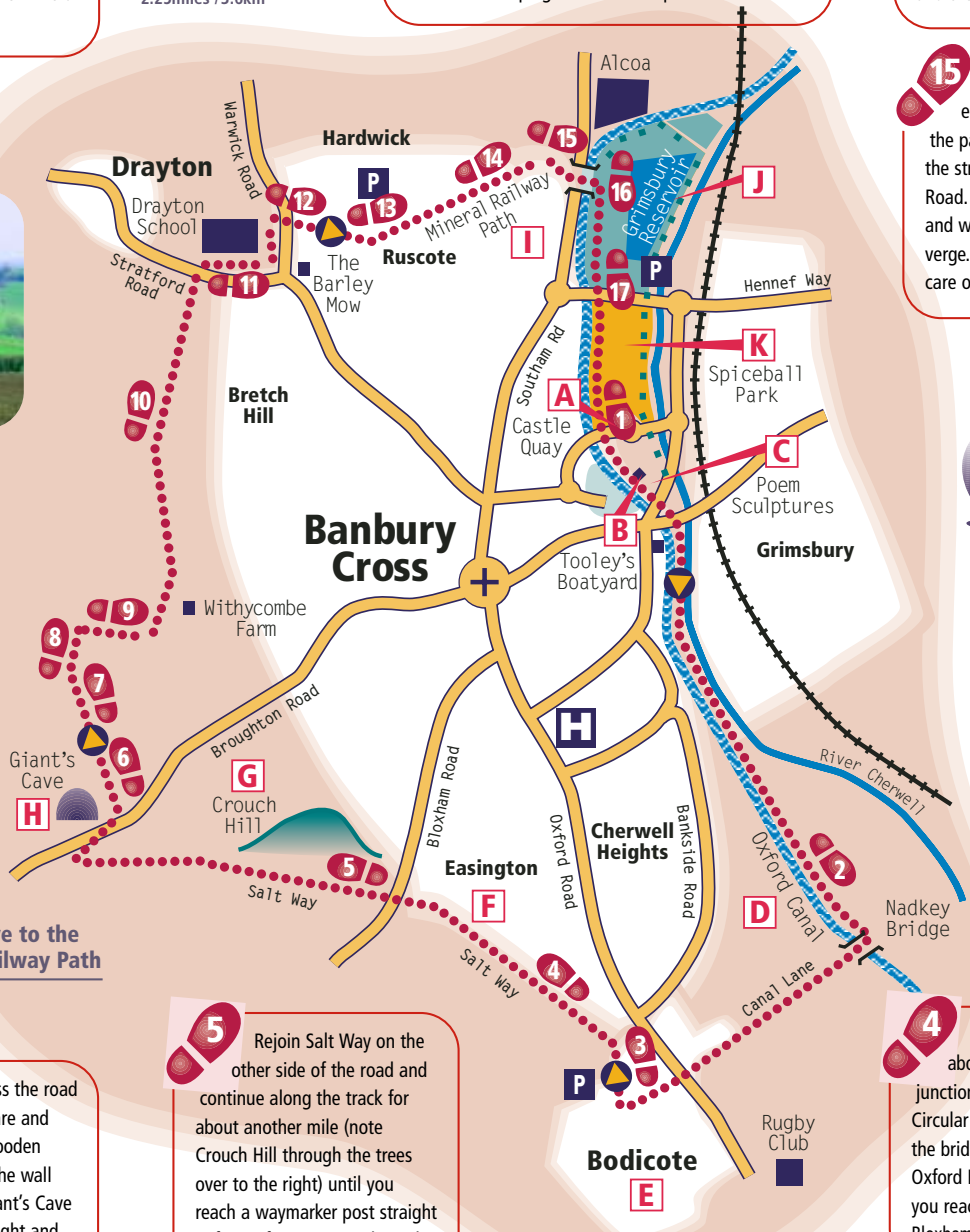
1 Join the Oxford Canal towpath opposite BHS, beside the green metal pedestrian bridge. Walk along the towpath and under the covered bridge (which links the Castle Quay shopping centre to Banbury Museum). Note Tooley's Boatyard across the canal on your right. Then the Poem Sculptures on your left just after the lock.

2 Continue along the towpath through Banbury and then alongside fields, for approximately 1.75miles / 2.8km, to 'Nadkey bridge', a brick arch bridge. Turn right over the bridge and walk straight up the hill along the path. Go through a gateway and follow the farm track (Canal Lane) to the Oxford Road.

4 Follow Salt Way for about a mile, (passing the junction with the Bodicote Circular Walk on the left and the bridleway link to the main Oxford Road on the right) until you reach the junction with Bloxham Road. Cross with care.

3 Cross the road using the pedestrian island and continue straight on along Broad Gap into Bodicote village. At the end turn right along High Street. Pass the playing field on your left and the Council Offices and School on the right. Salt Way starts on the left, just before the roundabout.

Bodicote to Giant's Cave
2.5miles /4km



KEY

Route	
Urban Area	
Wood Nature Reserve	
Spiceball Park	
Points of Interest	

Points of Interest

A The **Castle Quay** shopping centre was opened in 2000. The ground on which it is built includes the site of Banbury Castle, which was the subject of two intense and bloody sieges during the English civil war. Soon after the war the castle fell into disrepair and the stone was gradually carted away by local people for their own uses. You can find out more about Banbury Castle and Banbury's part in the civil war by visiting Banbury Museum (main entrance from Castle Quay shopping centre).



B **Tooley's Boatyard** has been in use for repairing narrow boats since the 1790s. It is a rare survivor and now adjoins Banbury Museum and is protected by Scheduled Ancient Monument status. Today boats are still repaired at the boatyard as they have been for over 200 years. Guided tours are arranged by Banbury Museum (Tel: 01295 259855).

C **Poem Sculptures** Sculptor Michael Fairfax and Poet Jamie McKendrick worked together on a series of artworks for the Oxford Canal Funded by Cherwell District Council and Southern Arts. For the Banbury installation Michael has inscribed Jamie's poem 'Flow' on four black iron 'mileposts'. The tops represent hump backed bridges, immediately below are lock gate cogs, and under the inscriptions are ripples on the surface of the water.

'Flow' by Jamie McKendrick



The Greek who said you
can never

Step into the same river

Twice hadn't dreamt of

The slow seepage of
canals

With their oil and graphite
sheen

Liquid packed solid as a
pencil lead



Where time is cased in a
long cabinet

Stowed with the ownerless
archives

Of two centuries of weather



The lump of coal from
Warwickshire

The tipcat, the fender, the
bleached horse's tail

Once tied to a painted
tiller



D Oxford Canal Running from Coventry to Oxford, the Oxford Canal was a thriving commercial success from its completion in 1790 until the rise of competition from the railways in the late 19th century. It continued to carry commercial traffic up until the 1930s and now has a new lease of life as a recreational waterway. The vegetation alongside the towpath provides food and shelter for a wide variety of animals.

E Bodicote is a large village with the original centre (now a conservation area) set amidst more recent development. Three village pubs provide the walker with an opportunity for refreshment. Bodicote House is Georgian, with modern extensions to house the administration headquarters of Cherwell District Council. Bodicote provides the focus for another circular walk which connects with the Fringe Walk along the Salt Way.

F The Salt Way was once the main road from Droitwich to London and it is thought to have been for the carrying of salt to the South-East. From North Newington to the Broughton Road it is now a normal road but from there, right through to Bodicote, it has retained its green-lane character. A Salt Way nature trail is described in the Bodicote Circular Walk leaflet. Since 2000 Salt Way has been part of the National Cycle Network.



G Crouch Hill, the highest point in the immediate area, has a Celtic name from 'crug', meaning hill, which possibly indicates that there was a British settlement here as early as 400 B.C. Its conical top is artificial and was raised for the purpose of communicating with the earliest settlements such as those at Madmarston and Tadmarton. During the English civil war Crouch Hill was strategically important. In June 1644 it was occupied by roundhead forces (under Sir William Waller) prior to the battle of Cropredy Bridge. In October of the same year Colonel Henry Gage's royalist cavalry used it as their base to relieve the besieged Banbury Castle.

H Giant's Cave forms part of an area of old pasture known as the Bretch - 'a stony spot full of hills and hollows'. Local legend has it that the cave was the secret entrance of a tunnel to Broughton Castle (nearly a mile away), used during the Civil War of the 1640s. An image on the flag flown at the Good Friday fair held on this until the last century is thought to be 'the Giant'. Today, little of the cave is now visible.

I When operational, the **Mineral Railway** line formed part of the route serving ironstone quarries in the Wroxton Area. It was constructed in 1917 by German prisoners of war to carry the ironstone to the main Great Western Railway line east of the Southam Road. Operations ceased in 1967 when rail transport became too costly but ironstone is still quarried in the area and transported by lorry. Roads on the Hardwick estate are reminders of this past industry (Ironstones, Ferriston). One of the exposed rock faces which can be seen has been designated as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest.

J Grimsbury Reservoir A walk around two sides of the reservoir has been established linking up with the canal towpath. This extends the Spiceball Country Park land trail by approximately 1.5 miles/2.4km and also provides an alternative route back to the centre of town for those following the Banbury Fringe Circular Walk. During the building of the reservoir in the mid 1960s, the potential importance of the area to birds was recognised by the Banbury Ornithological Society which negotiated with Thames Water for a four hectare area to be set aside and developed as a wildlife sanctuary (the woodland area adjacent to the towpath). The Grimsbury complex has therefore become an ideal place for birdwatching. The reservoir is also used for sailing and fishing.

K Spiceball Country Park is a 'green link' from the centre of Banbury to the open countryside. It offers easy access along a footpath circuit of about 1-2 miles/2-4km around a series of open fields with a fitness trail, children's play and activity areas and picnic site. Woodland and wild flora areas have been established and fishing is available by permit in the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal.