

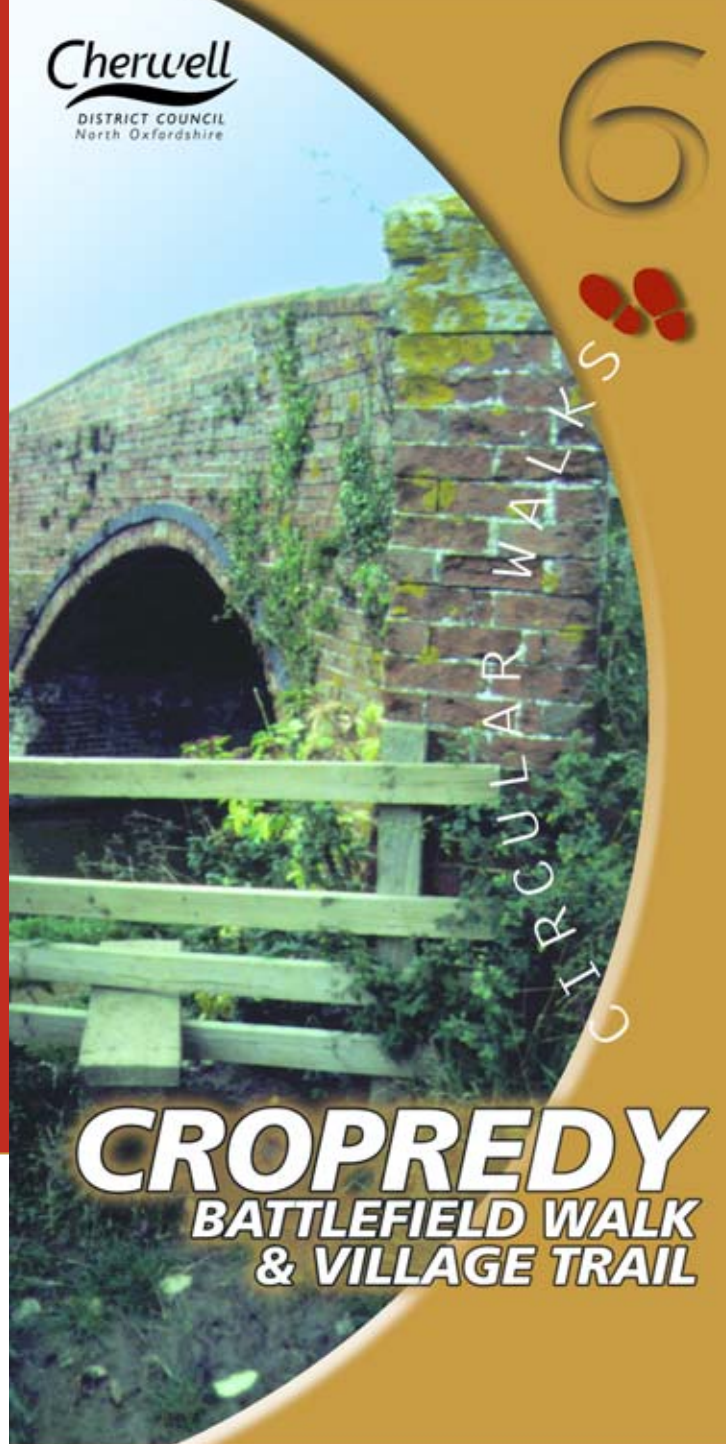
Acknowledgements

The production of this leaflet would not have been possible without the help of: Cropredy Parish Council and Cropredy Historical Society



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:-



CROPREDY BATTLEFIELD WALK & VILLAGE TRAIL

Cropredy Battlefield Walk

Approx 4.5miles / 7km

The Cropredy Circular Walk is one of a series of guided trails established by Cherwell District Council. The route takes in a stretch of the Oxford Canal and fieldpaths with views up and down the tranquil Cherwell Valley. Much of the ground covered was the scene of the Civil War Battle of Cropredy Bridge in June 1644.

The route is signed and described in a clockwise direction, although it can be walked either way. Ground conditions can be wet and muddy, especially in winter, so you are advised to wear stout footwear and take waterproof clothing.

Please take particular care when walking along the road verge into Williamscot.

Cropredy Village Trail

Approx 1mile / 1.6km

A short circular walk around the village centre describing some of the more interesting buildings and features. Most of the historical information is taken from the booklet "Cropredy, A Village Trail" by Pamela Keegan, which describes the whole village in detail.

Many of the buildings described are private dwellings. Please respect the privacy of the occupants by viewing from a polite distance.

Car Parking

Both walks start and finish at Cropredy Sports Ground, where free car parking is available every day during daylight hours. Walkers are requested not to park their cars elsewhere in the village.

Places to Eat & Drink



The Red Lion Inn
(01295) 750224

Traditional village pub serving real ales. Good beer guide listed. Restaurant serving traditional pub meals at lunchtime plus evening à la carte menu. Open every lunchtime and evening. Check for exact times and reservations



The Brasenose Arms
(01295) 750244

Traditional village pub serving real ales. Restaurant serving traditional pub meals at lunchtime plus evening à la carte menu. Open every lunchtime and evening. Check for exact times and reservations

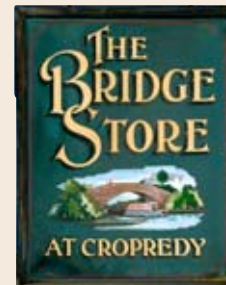


The Green Scene
(01295) 758203

Craft gallery and tea shop serving home made pastries and light lunches. Open Tues - Sat 10.30am - 5.30pm

Bridge Stores
(01295) 750354

Village general store, newsagent, off licence and bakery. Open Sat & Wed 8am - 7pm, Sun 8.30am - 5pm (1pm in winter), other days 8am - 6pm



The Battle of Cropredy Bridge - 1644

The mid-seventeenth century was a time of great constitutional, political and religious tensions. The struggle for control between King and Parliament reflected all of these and resulted in civil war.

On 28 June 1644 the two armies were on opposite sides of the River Cherwell at Banbury. The Parliamentarians, (led by Sir William Waller) had the stronger position on top of Crouch Hill but neither side was prepared to risk crossing the river.

On the morning of Saturday 29 June the King conspicuously began to march his troops northwards in order to "...observe Waller's motion and to expect a fitter opportunity and place to give him battell".

The Parliamentarian army followed until it reached the hilltop at Great Bourton. Seeing that the Royalists had become widely spread out along the route Waller sent two cavalry detachments to attack across the Cherwell, one at Cropredy Bridge and one at Slat Mill Ford.

After initial success the Parliamentarians were pushed back across the river, suffering heavy casualties and losing important artillery. For a day the two sides watched each other across the valley, then very early on Monday morning the King marched southwards. Waller's army depleted by widespread desertions and with low morale, was in such disarray that he did not attempt to give chase.

The significance of this battle lies in the effect it had on the Parliamentarian side. The unexpected failure to win at Cropredy Bridge was a cause for great concern and was one of the factors which influenced Parliament's decision to raise a professional or 'New Model' army, which was formed by the following year.



Points of Interest

A Cropredy Bridge

There has been a bridge on this site since at least 1312. It was last rebuilt in 1937, and prior to this, in 1884 by local builder Thomas Cherry. The Parliamentarian army crossed this bridge in the battle of 1644, heading east and north eastwards to engage the King's troops.



B Old Toll House

The canal narrows to the width of one barge outside the Toll House. This allowed a wooden beam to be passed across until tolls had been paid. The house of which it is part was "The Navigation Inn" around the time the canal was being built.



C "Bridge"

Sculptor Michael Fairfax and Oxfordshire poet Jamie McKendrick have worked together on a unique series of artworks for the Oxford Canal funded by Cherwell District Council and Southern Arts. Michael has inscribed Jamie's poem 'Bridge' on four black iron "mileposts". The tops echo the shape of a hump-backed bridge, and the central motifs represent steps leading up to a lock.

D Panoramic View

To the north west you can see the village of Claydon on top of the hill. Down at the bottom of the field note the sculptures in the garden of the tall barn. The big house across the canal from Cropredy is Prescote Manor, which owns the estate through which you are now walking.

E Williamscot

Records first mention a settlement here in 1166. King Charles I slept in a "very poor man's house at Williamscot" after the Battle of Cropredy Bridge. In the early 19th Century, Williamscot had three inns, several small shops and a school, but by 1877 the population had fallen dramatically, with up to 35 buildings having been demolished. Poplars Farmhouse dates from the late 17th Century and is built from ironstone, which is the predominant building material in the hamlet.

F Slat Mill Ford

As you approach the double gated bridge, try to imagine the Parliamentary troops coming towards you across the river as they marched up the hill to engage the Earl of Northampton's Royalist Regiment.

G Oxford Canal

This was one of England's earliest canals (1790) and was the first to connect the industrial Midlands with London. It continued to carry commercial traffic until the 1950s, and now has a new lease of life as a recreational waterway. The entire 83 miles of towpath between Oxford and Coventry can now be walked.



'Bridge' by Jamie McKendrick



The Hump Backed Bridge
is taking umbrage
and making a bright
hoop



of its bricklined arch
like a dancer's sturdy instep
on the unbroken surface



where the quilled stumps
of pollarded willows
shiver like the steel
bristles



on a flea's armour
or rest head down like
sable
brushes in a jar of turps

Circular Walk Directions

4 At the bend, turn right on to the bridleway. Go through one field gate and then another. The path now runs diagonally across the middle of the field and up the hill. At the top of the hill stop for breath and take in the panoramic view.

3 Continue along the towpath until you reach the next lock at Broadmoor Bridge (Number 150). At the lock, turn right off the towpath on to Appletree Road. Turn left down Appletree Road, passing the tall barn on your right hand side.



2 Turn left, through a small gate and down onto the canal towpath. Turn right to double back underneath the bridge. Notice the Old Toll House on your left, then after the next bridge pause to read the poem "Bridge" inscribed on the black iron "mileposts" at the lockside.

1 From the car park turn left and walk along the path, over Cropredy Bridge to the canal bridge.

12 Turn right and follow the Oxford Canal towpath back to Cropredy canal bridge (No.153). At the bridge go up onto the road and turn right to head back to the car park.

KEY

- Route 
- Steep 
- Other paths 
- Points of Interest 
- Built Up Area 
- Wooded Area 
- Car Parking 

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



5 Follow the path down the hill and through the next field. Cross the farm road and follow the track over the River Cherwell and through the wood. Follow the field edge until the next boundary.

6 Follow the right fork of the path diagonally across the field and then turn right. Follow the field edge through the next three boundaries, heading towards a stone barn.

7 Go through the field gate and follow the hedgeline (now on your right) to the Williamscot Road.

8 Turn left and follow the road verge into and through the hamlet of Williamscot (Take care along this section). Turn right just before the National Speed Limit sign and follow the road straight ahead.

9 Walk around the traffic barrier up the concrete drive of Poplars Farm and through the farmyard (using the stile on your right if the gate is locked). Go through another gate, head diagonally leftwards across the top of the field and then walk downhill along the boundary and through the gate at the bottom.



10 Keeping the small stone barn ahead to your left, head straight across the field and through the gate in the middle of the hedge.

11 Bearing slightly to the right head to the double gated concrete bridge at Slat Mill Ford and cross the river. Cross a small field and rejoin the canal towpath using the stile beside the brick bridge.

NOT TO SCALE

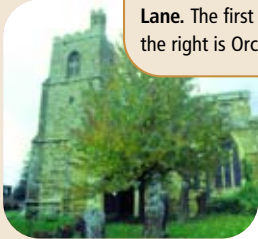
Cropredy Village Trail

Approx 1mile / 1.6km

Walk into the village from the Sports Ground Car Park. After crossing the canal bridge turn right, walk up the lane known as Round Bottom until you see The Wharf House on your right.

7 Orchard House

Notice the unusual architectural style of this house, which was originally built to be the new vicarage when the old one was demolished to make way for the Vicarage Flats.



8 The Church Rooms

This brick building was put up in 1887 for John Allitt (the butcher and baker who owned the business next door) as a Sunday School and reading room. The Birmingham Post would arrive each day by train and be placed in the Church Rooms for evening reading by the men of the village.

9 The Old Bakehouse

Before electricity came to Cropredy in the late 1930s, villagers would often bring their Sunday joint here to be cooked in the large ovens. The bakery closed in the 1980s. At the end of Church Lane turn left onto High Street and follow the road around, keeping to the right.

10 Cobbler's Corner

This used to be the Post Office and telephone exchange. Until after the war there was no outside telephone kiosk, so one had to wake the post-mistress in order to make a call during the night. A shed to the side of the building housed the village shoemaker.

6 St Mary's Church

Inside the Church there is a leaflet to guide you around. The pendulum clock (which can be seen from the Nave), is one of many interesting features. On coming out of the Church porch turn right towards the double gates into Church Lane. The first building on the right is Orchard House.

5 Tradesmen's Row

This line of cottages is sometimes called "Tradesmen's Row" because it was occupied for many years by masons, carpenters, saddlers and tailors amongst others. You can see their surnames (Smith, Lambert and Gardner for example) on many of the gravestones across the road. The cottages would have originally been built from timber, but those which survived were re-faced in stone. At the end of Red Lion Street turn left down the path towards St Mary's Church.

4 The Red Lion Inn

The first record of the pub being called "The Red Lion" dates from 1786, but it had been licensed to sell ale for many years before this.

3 The Malt House

This cottage was built in 1814 for a shoemaker. Notice the extra window in the frontage where the shop door used to be. It was the village Co-op from 1873 to 1963. Some local people still recall that if a Bargee's wife rushed into the shop she would be let to the front of the queue. This would enable her to buy supplies and rush back to the boat by the time her husband had taken it through Cropredy Lock.

2 Riverside Cottages

This area was the site of Cropredy Mill. The two cottages (originally three) were built on the filled-in mill pond to replace homes demolished to make way for the canal. Looking northwards, the mill yard stood where the lock is now. The remains of the Mill House are under a hump in the bank between the canal and the river. Head into the village along Red Lion Street. The first house before the Red Lion Inn is The Malt House.



1 The Wharf House

This was built in 1778 as the Navigation Inn to serve the navigators or "navvies" constructing the canal. It remained an inn until about 1796. The wharf keepers who lived here afterwards would have been farmers or builders' merchants as well as supplying the village with coal. The brickwork of this house is in the style known as "Flemish Bond". Continue walking to the end of the lane and at the bridge look across the canal to Riverside Cottages.

14 The Old Coal Wharf

Formerly known as Bott's Wharf, this is now an arts centre. Over the canal and river bridges brings you back to the start of the trail.

12 Peartree House

This was the Manor House between the 1680s and 1780s. At the centre of each black chimney is a cruciform pattern of four red bricks which denotes that this house was once owned by the Lamberts, a prominent local family.

13 The Brasenose Arms

Originally three cottages, by 1700, it had become an inn. Church Courts were held here and wills proved. The name reflects Cropredy's strong links with Brasenose College, Oxford, which has owned land in and around the village since 1524. Carry on along The Plantation following the signs for Williamscot. On your left is The Old Coal Wharf.

