

**Oxford Green Belt Way around Kidlington
Saturday 28 September 2013**

This walk will be led by Gillian Pick. (Please check the REMS web-site for any updates before setting out on this walk)

This walk is about 9 km and forms part of the way-marked Oxford Green Belt Way. The complete circuit around Oxford is some 80km and has been created by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). This section starts on the Oxford Canal at Yarnton Lane Kidlington, which is followed via Thrupp to Shipton on Cherwell. The path then goes east past Hampton Gray and then heads south back to east Kidlington via Hampton Poyle.

The Oxford Canal was constructed in several stages over a period of more than twenty years. In 1769 an Act of Parliament authorising the Oxford Canal was passed, having been promoted in Parliament by Sir Roger Newdigate MP, who chaired the canal company. The intention was to link the industrial English Midlands to London via the River Thames. Financial problems meant that work on the final stretch to Oxford did not begin until 1786.

The stretch of the canal from Banbury to Oxford was built as cheaply as possible. Many economy measures were used. Wherever possible, wooden lift or swing bridges (unique to the Oxford Canal) were built instead of expensive brick ones. Deep locks were used wherever possible, with single gates at both ends instead of double gates. A stretch of the River Cherwell at Shipton-on-Cherwell was incorporated into the canal. The Oxford Canal reached the outskirts of Oxford in 1789. For the next 15 years the Oxford Canal became one of the most important and profitable transport links in Britain, with most commercial traffic between London and the Midlands using the route. Its principal traffic was coal from Warwickshire. It also carried stone, agricultural products and other goods.

Thrupp is a small hamlet, where the canal company bought the manorial watermill, demolished most of it, and built a row of cottages beside the canal in its place. They used to be called Salt Row, and one historian suggests that they served as salt warehouses. This is also the home of The Boat Inn, which has also featured a number of times in the popular, detective drama series Inspector Morse, based on a series of novels by Colin Dexter. The Boat Inn houses some of the best Greene King Cask Ales, including IPA, Old Trip, and Old Speckled Hen and they have a constantly changing guest ale. We stop here for lunch.



After lunch we follow the canal to reach Shipton Manor. Shipton Manor House was built in the 16th or 17th century. William Turner lived there from 1804 with his uncle, also William Turner. In 1896 a memorial chancel screen was installed in the church, with a brass plaque reading "Erected in memory of William Turner of Oxford, Water Colour Painter and architect

of this church." In the 20th century Richard Branson owned the manor house and turned it into The Manor Studio, a recording studio for Virgin Records.

We next come to Hampton Gay (settlement in a bend of a river). Only the Manor Farm, church and the somewhat neglected ruins of the manor house remain. At Hampton Poyle we cross the Cherwell on a footbridge to reach St Mary's Church Kidlington, then by Evans Lane to arrive on the Oxford Road by the Thames Valley Police HQ.



We meet at Oxford station for an 11.00 start and take the frequent number 2 bus to Kidlington to alight at Broad Close on Yarnton Road close to the canal. Return is by the same bus service from Oxford Road Kidlington.

Gillian can be contacted on the day by mobile phone number 00447733555113

