

Village Location

Bloxham is located 3 miles South of Banbury on the A361 towards Chipping Norton. There is a limited bus service (Stagecoach Service 488) that operates between Banbury and Bloxham. (www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables)



Bloxham Village Museum is a small friendly museum located in the perfect setting of the Old Court House adjacent to St Mary's Church. For more information including museum opening times visit www.bloxhammuseum.com

For further information regarding the village of Bloxham and the latest information on the Circular Walk and the Village Heritage Walk, please visit: www.bloxhamparishcouncil.co.uk



Bloxham Parish Council thank the private landowners who have kindly granted permissive path rights, and the kind support of the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2) and Grondon Waste Management Ltd through the Landfill Communities Fund.



Bloxham

Circular Walk and Village Heritage Walk

Welcome to Bloxham

Bloxham is a large village of dark honey coloured cottages built from the local ironstone. It has a bustling High Street with several local shops behind which are narrow lanes lined with historic buildings. The village still retains much of its medieval street plan. Under Roman rule between the 1st and 5th centuries there were several farms and a burial site in Bloxham. The village name derives from the Old English Blocc's Ham (the home of Blocc) from the 6th century. The village became Bloxham in 1316.

Car Parking

With kind permission of the landlord, car parking is available at the Joiners Arms which is the start point for both walks.

Bloxham Circular Walk

The main walk is 4.5 miles and the shorter walk approximately 1 mile. Both walks start and finish at the Joiners Arms. The two walks can be combined and both routes include attractive views of the village church and the surrounding countryside with pleasant undulating meadows and farm land. Kissing gates have been installed on both routes. Dog walkers please ensure that dogs are kept on leads and under close control at all times especially when there are livestock in the fields. The walks are way marked so keep wherever possible to the described route respecting the landowner's property.



Village Heritage Walk

The Heritage Village walk is 1.5 miles and is a tour around some of the most interesting buildings and historic features of this medieval village. Some of the buildings described are private property so please respect their privacy and view from a polite distance. The Village Walk can be enjoyed on its own or as part of the Circular Walks.

Accessibility and Terrain

Prior to starting your walk, we strongly recommend visiting our website www.bloxhamparishcouncil.co.uk for any route changes and important safety information. The circular walks include surfaced tracks, field and permissive paths. Some footpaths may be muddy after a period of poor weather. The Village Heritage walk is mainly on pavements and quiet village roads but take particular care when crossing the A361 main road and also along the Goggs footpath.

Places for Food and Drink in Bloxham



The Joiners Arms is a 14th century pub set back from the old green alongside the main road. Bar meals and an a la carte restaurant available, open every day from 10am. **Tel 01295 720223.**



The Elephant & Castle is an old village pub with a friendly atmosphere. Originally a coaching inn built in the 15th Century. There is a large open garden, ideal in the summer months. **Tel 01295 720383.**

About Bloxham

Welcome to Bloxham, a village with considerable heritage and fine architecture including a splendid 14th century church. Following on from the Romano British settlers the Anglo Saxons established the site of the modern village on the valley slopes of the Sor Brook tributary.

To a large extent Bloxham retains its medieval street plan. This was extremely irregular and consisted of a network of winding streets or alleys. The Domesday survey of 1086 recorded the village as having six mills and trading in wool and corn. After the Norman Conquest, Bloxham continued to expand and at this time, the north and south of the village were quite separate. All roads into Bloxham were gated until 1802 and travellers were required to pay a toll to enter the village.

The row of 8 cottages in Kings Road including one with a thatched roof are among the earliest and least altered. They are two storied, built of coursed ironstone rubble, and have a number of original stone-mullioned windows in moulded frames with square moulded labels over them. Campbell Cottage in Workhouse Lane and the cottage opposite are good examples of the period; so also is the end cottage in Sycamore Terrace. This last house and the rest of the terrace were used as weavers' cottages in the 19th century. In 1956 they were completely modernised.

The 19th century saw the demolition of institutions for the poor such as the Almshouses next to the parish church, the Workhouse, the pest house and the poor houses on the green.



About Bloxham continued

The village Pest House where inmates with highly infectious diseases were isolated was situated by the Slade Nature Reserve. Public contact was not allowed and a pedestal stone with a hollow top was filled with vinegar. Inmates left money in the vinegar (thought to be a disinfectant) in exchange for food left nearby by friends and relatives. It was in use from 1765 and eventually abandoned in 1890. The principal road in the parish is a route of historic importance for it ran from Banbury to Chipping Norton and the wealthy wool producing area of the Cotswolds where some houses retain a mediaeval core. Bloxham contains a large number of well-built yeoman's houses dating from this period. Many have been comparatively little altered, retaining their original details and plans.

The main road was straightened in 1815 when the trustees of the Banbury and Chipping Norton turnpike purchased two cottages on the brook in order to alter the tortuous line of the old road. It originally turned left at the church, passed along Unicorn Street, and came out by the Green. It then ran down Old Bridge Street to the Great Bridge and on to the 'Elephant and Castle', where it again turned left to join the present stretch, of the main road.

The Church of England parish church of St Mary's is one of the grandest in England. Its 14th century tower and spire is a local landmark. The church tower has a ring of eight bells including one cast in about 1570 and a tenor bell cast in 1648.

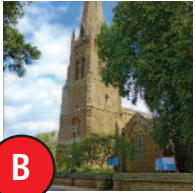


Village Walk

Points of Interest



Hand Pump. Prior to 1908 when mains water was introduced, villagers without their own water supply depended upon public pumps. Fortunately Bloxham had a plentiful supply of wells, springs and village ponds and pumps were installed around the village. One of the remaining hand pumps is located close to the New Bridge (completed in 1855) adjacent to the Red Lion. Nearby was an old community laundry where the women came to do their washing on a large flat stone. Later the pump had many uses for the supply of water for cattle and for steam traction engines as well as washing sheep.

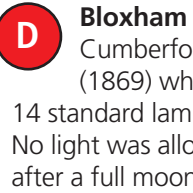


St Marys Church. One of the many highlights of St Mary's is the superb 198 foot tall spire, a local landmark and claimed to be the tallest in Oxfordshire, pinpointing the village for miles around. The church is an excellent example of Decorated Gothic style. Parts of St Mary's date back to the 12th century, but most of the current building dates to the 14th and 15th centuries. Over the west door of the tower is a carving of the Last Judgment. The doorway itself is heavily carved, with depictions of animals, foliage, birds, beak heads, and traditional ballflower ornamentation. There is a 12th century doorway, reset in the north wall of the chancel.

Alongside St Mary's churchyard is the **Court House**, rebuilt in the 1680s and retaining some 14th century details. Over the years the property has had many uses including an infant's school, a soup house and in 1879 the downstairs area became a fire station. The Court House is now **Bloxham Museum** and the old fire engine purchased in 1749 is on display. Bloxham Museum is open at weekends and bank holidays from April to October. For more information and to check opening times visit www.bloxhammuseum.com.



Sycamore Terrace, originally a yeoman's house was subdivided into a row of thatched cottages where weavers lived and worked. The terrace has a long history dating back to the 8th century when yarn was delivered from Banbury and collected from the weavers once woven into cloth. The looms were on the second floor above the bedrooms. In 1838 it was recorded that a man working nine and half hours a day, 6 days a week could weave 44 yards of cloth a month, for which he received £3.



Bloxham Gasworks. Situated by the bridge in Cumberford Hill is the site of Bloxham Gasworks (1869) which had its own gasometer. In 1870, 14 standard lamps and 9 bracket lamps lit the village. No light was allowed 4 nights before and 4 nights after a full moon. In December of 1905 the manager unfortunately blew himself up while inspecting a faulty meter. By 1908 the Bucks and Oxon Gas Company owned the site and began promoting the use of gas for cooking with a display of gas cookers and cookery demonstrations. The original lamps were converted to electricity in 1937.



The Old Jail located at the corner of Workhouse Lane and Courtington Lane was the most secure 18th century building available with iron bars at the windows. It housed felons prior to their appearance in front of his Lordship Bloxham Beauchamp at the Court House. It later became a barn before conversion into a dwelling.

Village Walk

Points of Interest continued

F

Park Close is said to be the site of the Beauchamp Manor House. When Edwin Earl of Mercia rebelled against William he forfeited his lands to the king and Bloxham became a Royal Manor. In 1156 it was divided into two manor houses. Later, with the growth of the wool trade the site was acquired by Sir Thomas Garaway who rebuilt a fine 17th century house, later remodelled in the 19th century.

Oriel Cottage the site of **Old Workhouse** housed 24 inmates as recorded by the master in 1736.

The adjoining cottage on the north side is reputed to have been the workhouse infirmary and mortuary.

The Old Co-op Hall (red brick building) was the first village hall built in 1899 by the Co-operative Society and used as a social centre. The first recorded committee meeting was held in 1902.



G

Bloxham School, formally All Saints School in the north of the village was founded in 1853 by Philip Reginald Egerton, a local curate. The main school building, designed by George Edmund Street is neo-gothic style.

It was largely funded by Egerton's wealthy wife, Harriet, and had the backing of several notable academics and clergymen. In the public school tradition, the school initially provided education for middle class boys, although classics was originally not widely taught. Bloxham's first non-clergy headmaster was not appointed until 1925. Like many public schools, Bloxham suffered disproportionately high casualties during the First World War. Girls started to be admitted into the sixth form in small numbers in the early 1970s and the school became fully co-educational in 1998. Bloxham School has grounds which cover approximately 60 acres in the village of Bloxham.



H

The Elephant and Castle is a 15th century coaching inn. The main route for horse drawn traffic ran through the archway before continuing northwards. It is believed that there was a toll house under the arch at one time. After long journeys, passengers

rested for refreshment at the inn while horses were changed. This created a hive of local industry and close to the archway several trades operated including a blacksmith, wheelwright and a cooper. The wheelwright was Charlie Taylor who kept the Elephant and Castle: a landlord was not allowed to earn a living from the inn alone and often had another occupation.



I

Ellen Hinde Hall, built by daughter of the founder and first headmaster of All Saints School initially as a memorial to her son who fought in the First World War. Ellen Hinde promised to give the hall to the village ex-servicemen but later changed her mind. After her death in 1943, the hall was given to the village by her son and daughter. It is currently used mainly as a sports hall.

The Slade Nature Reserve

At the South-west corner of the village and close to the now disused railway line is the Slade Nature Reserve. Despite its small size (2.2 acres) it has supported a large diversity of habitats. The reserve is partly wooded, marshy with rich flora and fauna including Common Spotted Orchids and Ragged Robin. The stream flowing through the reserve is lined with pollarded White Willows. On the south edge many bird species have been recorded including Sparrow Hawks and all three species of British Woodpeckers. Refer to the Circular Walk instruction for access information.

Circular Walk

Directions

Start at the Joiners Arms and go uphill towards the church. Carefully cross the A361 entering the path by the telephone box. Continue down path, turn left, walk 50m then turn right along the cobbled path (No Motor Vehicle signs). Go left and walk along Queens St for 200m.

A

Cross to Station Rd continuing to Colesbourne Rd. Turn left into Orchard Grove to Recreation Ground and follow path on right alongside hedge line to a kissing gate.

B

Continue for 200m. You can optionally enter the Slade Nature Reserve on RHS here. Bear left to two gates over a stream, continue on path to a gate opposite. Keep to path to another gate then bear left crossing field through a gap. Continue to a stile opposite by a bridleway. Turn right and follow bridleway. Cross disused rail line and proceed straight on through two more gates over a stream.

C

Follow path on right uphill and then downhill. Cross the stream using the footbridge, turn right and left through a livestock gate keeping to left towards Tadmarton Road via two gates.

D

Continue to follow bridleway directly over the road going uphill. At the top of the hill take the gate on right and go left downhill to a gate on left. Go directly through gap to the bridleway gate opposite. Follow the bridleway for 600m and then go right on permissive path keeping to the hedge line on right.

E

Exit via the kissing gate then go right on road (Ells Lane). Continue past entrance to Nayland Farm and just past Ells Farm go right through kissing gate on path sp Bloxham 1, up Hobb Hill. By trees on right take diagonal route left towards centre of hedge at the top of the hill.

F

Go through the double gates and follow fence/hedge line proceeding straight on then downhill through 4 kissing gates following path to road. Turn left then right into Workhouse Lane. Carefully cross A361 at pedestrian crossing and walk back towards the start.

G

Short Walk

The shorter village walk is approximately 1 mile. From the Joiners Arms, walk right towards the Elephant & Castle then turn right in Chapel Street.

A

Turn right at the Ridgeway and continue to the kissing gate on right. Go through gate on the permissive path following hedge line to a kissing gate.

B

Go over bridge to kissing gate walking uphill to double set of gates on right. Walk in direction of church towards the kissing gate and continue to kissing gate by the church. At the road turn right returning to start point at Joiners Arms.

C

Public Paths

Permissive Paths

Disused Rail Track



Village Walk

Directions

Walk a short distance up Chapel Street to view **The Ellen Hinde Hall**. Retrace steps and return to the start point by walking down Old Bridge Road

START at the Joiners Arms, open from 10am for breakfast tea and coffee.

Bear right and walk to Rosebank then on to Chapel Street. Turn left and view the archway of the **Elephant & Castle**.

Turn left up the main road and cross carefully to **Bloxham School**. Walk along the front of the building to Water Lane.

From the car park. Cross the old green towards the war memorial and turn right a short distance downhill to view the **Hand Pump**.

Turn right down Workhouse Lane passing the site of the **Old Workhouse** and **Co-op Hall**.

Retrace your steps uphill to **St. Mary's Church** and **The Court House**. Then carefully cross the main road entering the path by the telephone box.

Follow the Goggs path taking care by the stream. Do not cross the footbridge, walk to Little Bridge Road. Go uphill turn right towards the **Old Jail House**.

Go left and continue to **Sycamore Cottages**, then take the cobbled path to enter Queens Street.

Turn right down Cumberford Hill to **The Old Gasworks** and then take the path known as The Goggs on the right just past the bridge

