

BICESTER a local history



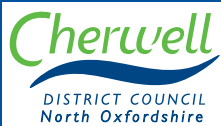
Bicester is an historic market town set in the agricultural landscape of north east Oxfordshire. Close by is the site of the Roman Town of Alchester. The present town was founded as a frontier fort on the border between Mercia and Wessex. Its parish church was founded by St Birinus, and is dedicated to St Edburg the daughter of Edward the Elder.

It was originally two separate townships. Kings End, on the site of the Saxon fort, and Market End to the west on the other side of the River Bure. An Augustinian Priory was founded in the late 12th Century, and its Church with its shrine became a pilgrimage centre. With its charter of 1239, the growth of the town as a market centre reflected its dependence on the agricultural area it serves.

Local crafts included saddlery, bell founding, rope making and brewing. In the 19th Century, the area became famous for local horseracing and as good foxhunting country, and a hundred years later was better known for its military establishments.

After the war the town became one of the expanding 'Country Towns' of Oxfordshire. New businesses arrived, as did the M40 and the new dual carriageway to Oxford.

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LOCAL
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

Tourist Information Centres

The two Tourist Information Centres listed below provide a wealth of information, and exciting ideas on what to see and do in the area. The Centres also operate a local accommodation booking scheme, the Book a Bed Ahead service, and stock a broad range of maps, local books and souvenirs. A warm, friendly welcome awaits you - we look forward to meeting you.

i **BICESTER:** Unit 86a, Bicester Village, Pingle Drive, Bicester.
(Look for *i* sign in shopping village)
TEL: (01869) 369055 FAX: (01869) 369054
Email: bicester.vc@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

i **BANBURY:** Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Banbury.
TEL: (01295) 259855 FAX: (01295) 269469
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For further information contact:

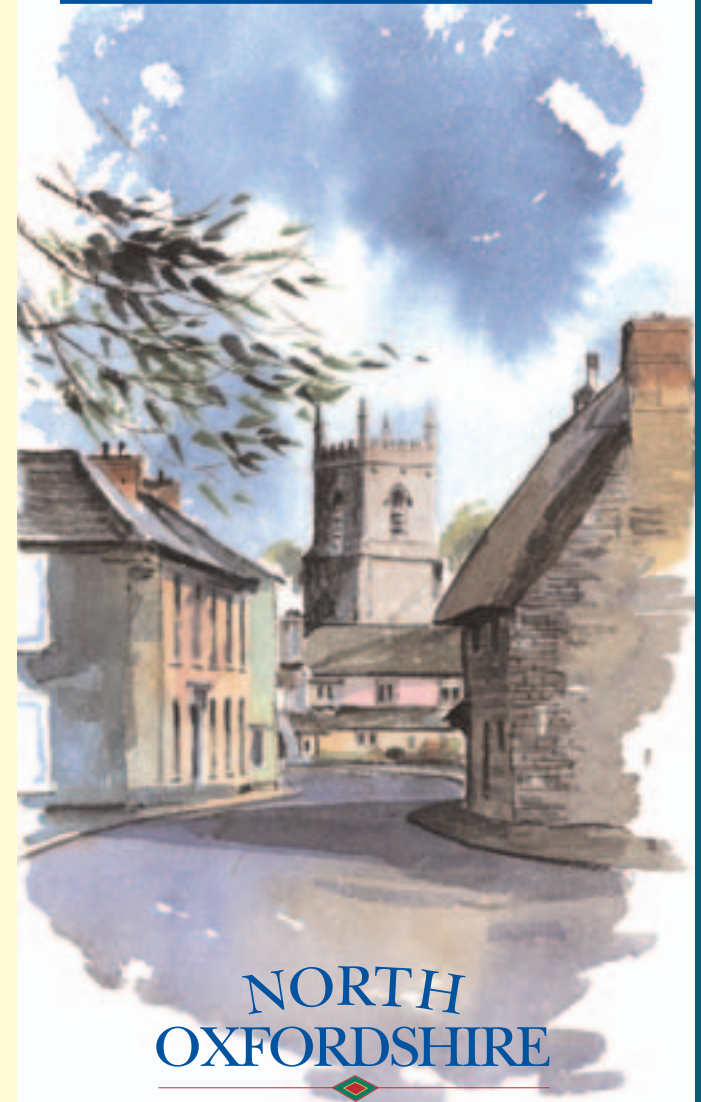
Bicester Village,
Pingle Drive,
Bicester,
Oxon OX6 7WD,
Tel: 01869 323200,
Fax: 01869 323201
www.BicesterVillage.com

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BICESTER

Historic Town Trail



**NORTH
OXFORDSHIRE**

THE CHERWELL VALLEY

www.visit-northoxfordshire.co.uk



3 Old Place Yard House. This 16th century farmhouse was converted from the entrance gatehouse of the Priory.



2 The Dovecote. A 17th century structure for keeping pigeons for the table. It stands in the centre of what was the the main courtyard of the medieval Priory.



4 St Edburgs Church. This Church was founded as a Saxon Minster. It was rebuilt and extended between the 11th and 14th Centuries.

1. Pingle Field. 'Pingle' is a dialect word meaning 'small area of land'. In Saxon times this area was border land between Wessex and Mercia.



5 The Old Vicarage. The oldest house in Bicester. Built around 1500 so that the Vicar could live outside the Priory. It has a fine timber roof structure over what was originally an open hall.



6 Manor Farmhouse. When built in the late 17th Century the Farmhouse would have been very close to open fields.

7. Kings End. This was the original site of the early Saxon fort. Its name refers to King Edward the Elder, the founder of the town.



BICESTER

Historic Town Trail



18 The Old Priory. This house was rebuilt sometime after 1587 on the site of the Priory guesthouse. It contains reused medieval masonry.



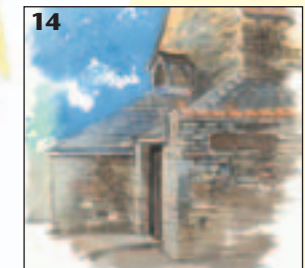
17 The Priory. Site of a medieval watermill. Formerly a convent and the towns first Catholic Church since the reformation.



16 St Edburgs Hall. A Victorian Gothic Church Hall



15 The Garth. This house was built as a hunting box by the Keith-Falconer family who were members of the Bicester hunt. The grounds contain a cemetery for horses and hounds. Now the offices of Bicester Town Council and also the site of the town park.



14 Town Lockup. This tiny 17th century prison its walls three feet thick, held local prisoners overnight before their journey to court.



12 Market Square. Not a square but a triangle. Commercial heart of the Town and site of the market since 1239 The island buildings in the centre were built by wealthy townspeople in the 16th and 17th centuries.



Bicester House. First built in 1582 by John Coker as the Manor House. It was rebuilt in 1780 and again in 1820. It remained the home of the Coker family until 1978.

9. Catholic Church. Built in 1963, to an Arts and Crafts Movement design by Desmond Williams.

10. The Causeway. This narrow medieval street was built along an embankment by the canons of the Priory to link the two parts of the town.

11. Town Bridge. Site of the medieval Bridge over the River Bure.

Bicester North

Bicester Town

