

The Oakham Canal Trail

The Walk

The Oakham Canal Trail follows the route of the Oakham Canal for approximately 2 miles north of Oakham. Guided walks of the canal, detailing its history, are available to book online at www.oakhamcanal.org/canal-walks. Points of interest along the canal trail are shown in brackets and are detailed overleaf.

START: Church Street Car Park, Oakham. LE15 6XT. Pay and Display (Free on Sundays and Bank Holidays)

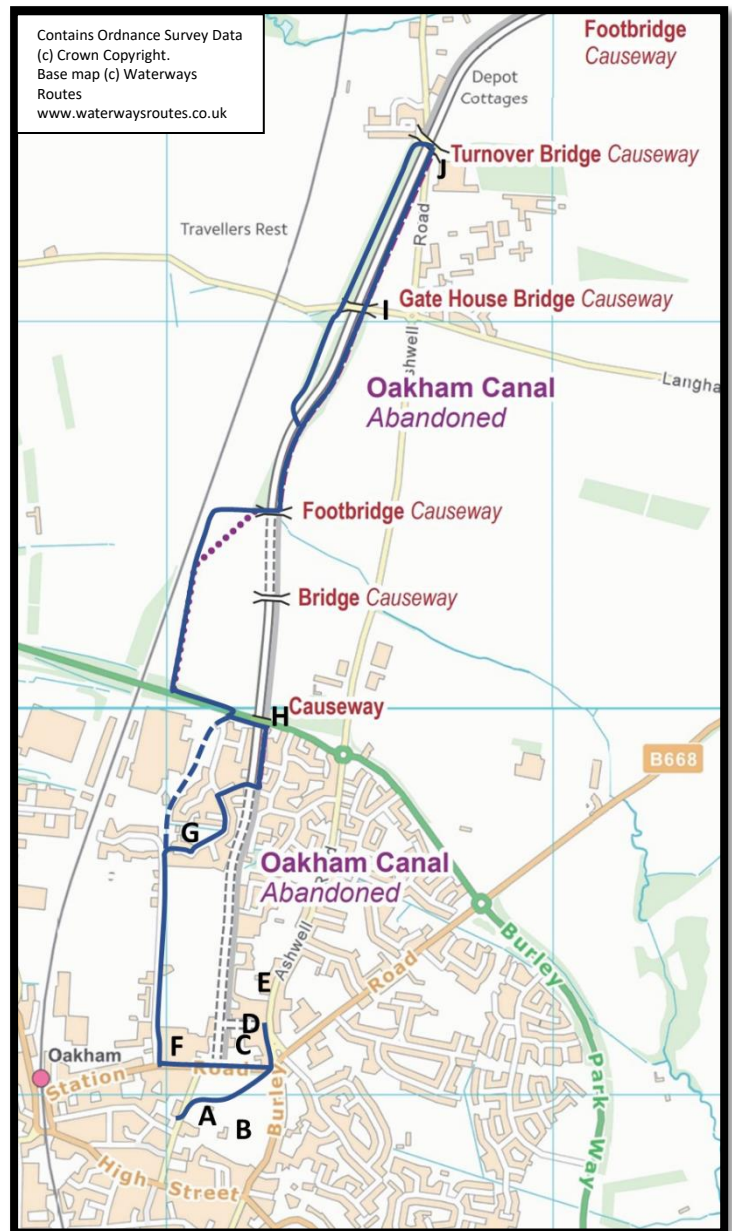
DISTANCE: Approximately 5 miles / 8 kilometres

TERRAIN: Public footpaths, permissive footpaths and minor roads. Footpaths can be very muddy in winter and after heavy rain. They are not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

MAP: OS Explorer 234

Route

1. Leave the car park at the exit next to the public toilets. Cross Church Street and turn left along the footpath opposite. At the gap in the wall on your right, turn into Cutts Close park.
2. Continue through the park on the footpath directly in front of you (A), keeping the children's playground on your left, then take the footpath diagonally off to your left (B) until you reach Station Road (C).
3. Cross Station Road, then turn right and immediately left into Ashwell Road. Continue on Ashwell Road until the stone entrance to Oakham School is reached on your left. **Please do not enter Oakham School grounds (D,E)**
4. Re-trace your steps along Ashwell Road towards Oakham, turning right into Station Road, then taking the first right into Kilburn Road (F).
5. Continue on Kilburn Road. Take the signed public footpath on your right shortly after the allotments. Turn immediately right, then right again into the modern housing estate. This is Gilmore Close. Continue on Gilmore Close, turning left at the end into Schofield Road.
6. Continue on Schofield Road (G), turning right into Griffiths Close. At the end of the close you will see a footpath to the right of the house in front of you. Proceed along the footpath, then turn left up the bank and onto the former canal towpath.
7. Continue on the former canal towpath until you reach the A606 Oakham Bypass (Burley Park Way) (H).
8. Turn left on Burley Park Way and cross the road at the pedestrian refuge.



9. Follow the signed public footpath along the north side of Burley Park Way and along the field edge. Go through the wooden gate and turn left along the path at the field edge until you reach the railway line fence. Turn right, then follow the path along the field edge keeping the railway line on your left.
10. At the first field boundary, go through the gap in the hedge and continue ahead along the field edge. At the next field boundary turn right and follow the path along the field edge towards the trees in front of you.
11. At the footpath waymarker, turn left up the slight rise, and over the wooden bridge ahead.
12. Continue on the former canal towpath passing the dam on your left.

Continued overleaf



The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project

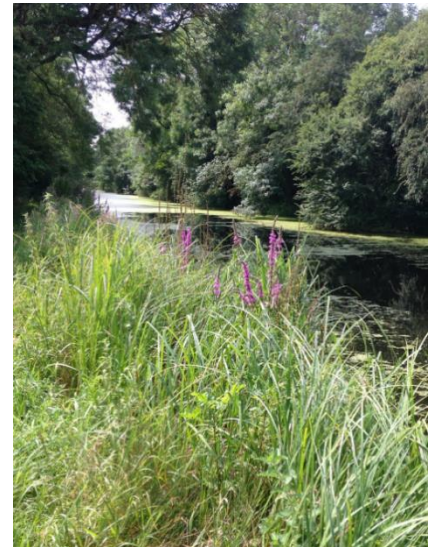
The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project aims to:

- engage the local community in developing and maintaining this important leisure corridor;
- preserve the remains of the Oakham Canal as a heritage asset and provide historical interpretation; and
- Improve footpaths and public access while developing habitats and diversity.

The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registered Charity Number 1192074. To make a donation to the Project, scan the QR code.



13. Continue ahead on the former canal towpath, exiting through the wooden gate at the end (I). Cross the road and descend the steps on the other side.
14. Continue on the former canal towpath, exiting through the wooden gate at the end and up the slope ahead. Turn left and walk along the path in the grass verge until you reach the layby (J).
15. Follow the layby round to the left and take the signed permissive footpath on your left. Proceed up the slope and along the path through the woodland until you reach the road once more.
16. Cross the road and take the signed permissive access footpath ahead, to the left of the steel gate. Proceed along the path until you reach the next permissive footpath sign, then take the path to the left which slopes down to the dam.
17. Cross the dam and turn right heading back towards Oakham. After the wooden bridge, turn right along the field boundary, re-tracing your steps until you reach Burley Park Way.
18. Cross Burley Park Way using the pedestrian refuge then either:
 - a) Turn left and re-trace your steps along the former canal towpath, turning right into Griffiths Close at the end of the canal, then left into Schofield Road. Follow the road round to the right at the end of Schofield Road and into Gilmore Close, then take the footpath left and left again into Kilburn Road; or
 - b) Enter Schofield Road immediately ahead and take the signed public footpath on the right. Follow the footpath until it emerges into Kilburn Road.
19. Continue on Kilburn Road to the end. Turn left into Station Road, then cross the road at the zebra crossing. Turn right into Church Street where the car park will be found on your right.



Points of Interest

- A. Original Oakham School Building, founded in 1584.
- B. Oakham Castle.
- C. Former Odd House Public House, contemporary with the canal operation, with stabling to the rear.
- D. Oakham School main site, originally the Oakham canal wharf. The former canal warehouse, constructed in 1840, now the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. To the left of the school entrance, two former Oakham Canal Company cottages.
- E. In the distance, 44 Ashwell Road, formerly the Boat Inn (closed 1881-1891). The 'other' Boat Inn at the former Melton Mowbray canal basin still trades.
- F. The 'New Gaol', opened in 1811 and closed in 1878 due to a lack of inmates!
- G. Site of the former Oakham Lido.
- H. Oakham Canal milepost, originally sited at Edmondthorpe.
- I. Site of Gate House Bridge. Once a fine brick-built, hump-backed bridge, long since demolished.
- J. Site of Turnover Bridge, which enabled the towpath to transfer to the opposite bank. Again, long demolished.

The Oakham Canal

The Oakham Canal opened in 1802 linking Oakham with the Melton Mowbray Navigation which joined the Grand Union Canal at Cossington Meadow near Syston. The canal allowed coal and building materials to be transported to Oakham, and agricultural products to be sent in return. The canal suffered greatly from a lack of water, especially in the summer months. When the canal company proprietors learned of the planned Syston to Peterborough railway, they were quick to enter into discussions with the Midland Railway Company, to whom the canal was eventually sold in 1847. All of the original locks and bridges were removed, and land that was not used by the railway company was sold or returned to private ownership. Despite the canal being disused, and in the hands of multiple private owners since 1849, much of it remains visible in the landscape. Sadly, only a small section of canal between Oakham and Ashwell retains a public footpath, although the canal can be seen in a number of other locations.