

Oxford Wellbeing Walk

Pigeons Lock to Heyford Wharf

walk time 2 hours

distance 6.4km / 4 miles

WALKING TIPS

- Walking times are approx, measured on an average pace of two miles an hour.
- Follow the water and enjoy walking at your own pace... but allow time to simply sit and stare along the way.
- Walk one way, hop on a train for your return, or turn around and walk back to discover a different view.

 towpath walk

 access point

 pub

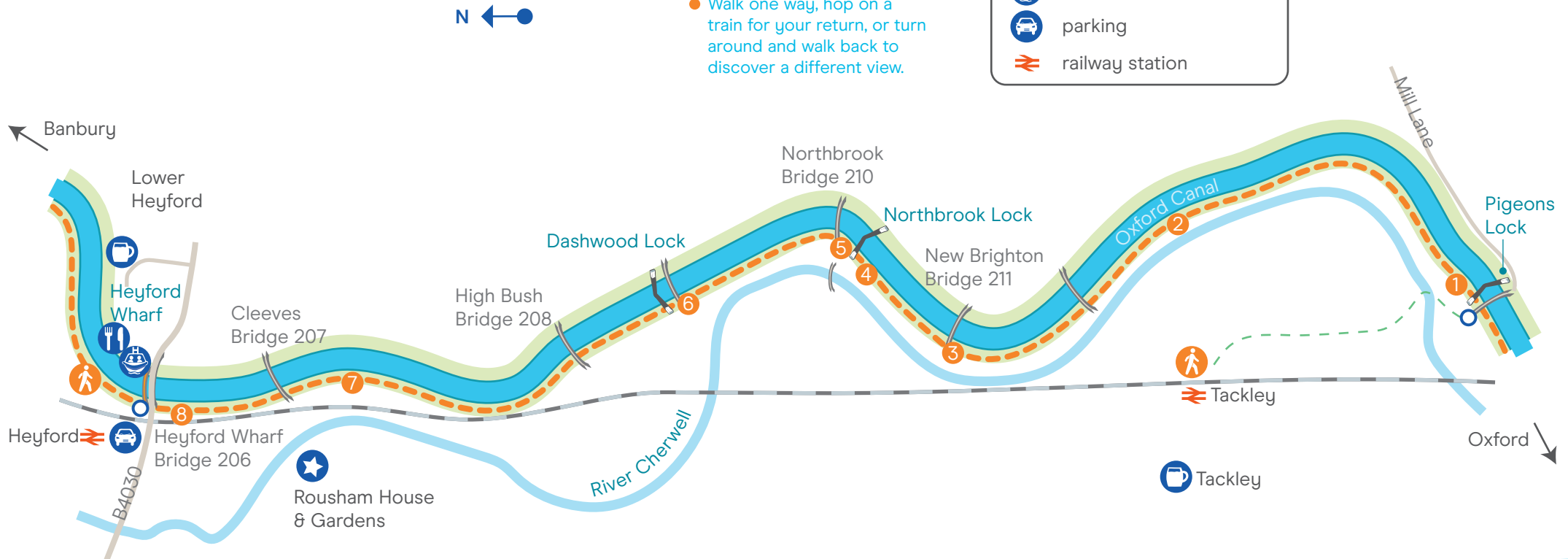
 food & drink

 point of interest

 hire boats

 parking

 railway station



The Walk - Step by Step

Along the quiet southerly section of the rural Oxford Canal, this walk from Pigeons Bridge to Lower Heyford makes the perfect leisurely amble. Because the route is easy flat walking, it's also unspectacular for canal engineering marvels, yet instead you tread through opulent greenery in an unspoilt waterways landscape worth every step you pace. This is real country walking and probably feels more remote than it actually is. Between manure wafts and summer sounds of birds twittering, you might hear occasional deeper bouts of rural gunshots and game squawks.



The walk can be done one way with the train back or you could park at Heyford station and get the train to Tackley (just under a mile from the canal and the walk's start). If you start your walk at Tackley station, take the footpath southwards. It crosses Akeman Street, an old Roman road, now a bridleway. Follow the signs towards Kirtlington for a short while before reaching the canal.

- 1 Turn left onto the towpath and head past Pigeons Lock. Ambling along this towpath, it's hard to imagine the Oxford Canal was originally part of a busy major freight route between London and the Midlands.
- 2 Continuing northwards, trees and bushes line the canal on both sides, with glimpses on the opposite bank of woodland trails and a small clearing by the canal.
- 3 The trees start to thin out beyond bridge 212 and, next to the attractive red-brick bridge 211, the surrounding farmland and grazing cows become more visible.
- 4 Leafy Northbrook Lock, the first of two locks on this stretch of canal, is blissfully solitary. Its locals are sheep, herons and perhaps even a buzzard or two.
- 5 Just beyond the lock, the River Cherwell running near the canal is very much evident. A Cotswold-stone

packhorse bridge crosses the river alongside the Grade II-listed stone bridge 210 which arches over the canal.

- 6 The canal's straight open approach now leads to the perfectly situated Dashwood Lock. This is a great spot for a picnic - there's a bench alongside the lock and 360-degree views of open fields full of munching cattle.
 - 7 Just beyond bridge 208, the river and railway re-join the canal as it swirls past the grounds of Rousham House and Gardens.
 - 8 A line of moored boats between bridges 207 and 206 marks your approach to Lower Heyford. The original stone bridge 206 is now a footbridge overshadowed by the newer road bridge alongside.
-  Most of the villages along this stretch of the Oxford Canal are back from the canal, but Lower Heyford seems embedded in it. Heyford Wharf is a hub of activity and life as it is busy with holiday and day hireboats. The railway station is right next to the canal here, offering an easy return to Tackley or Oxford, or northwards to Banbury. Alternatively you could turn round to walk back along the canal from a different viewpoint.

CANAL: Oxford

START: Pigeons Lock
OS Grid ref: SP486193 Postcode: OX5 3JY

FINISH: Heyford Wharf
OS Grid ref: SP483247 Postcode: OX25 5PD

DISTANCE: 6.4km / 4 miles

APPROX TIME: 2 hours

PUB/CAFÉ: Kizzie's Bistro at Heyford Wharf,
The Bell Inn in Lower Heyford, Gardiner Arms
in Tackley (limited opening)

PARKING: Nearest car park – Heyford station
(postcode: OX25 5PD)

TRAIN: Nearest train stations –
Heyford & Tackley
National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 03457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk

BUS: Traveline
Tel: 0871 2002233 www.traveline.info

