

## Digital Editions

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## *Guide to Rural England*

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



WHERE TO GO | WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO  
WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHERE TO BUY

Fully illustrated with detailed directions and maps

## LOCATOR MAP



## Buckinghamshire

Devotees of the ITV drama series *Midsomer Murders* will already have a good idea of what Buckinghamshire looks like – all the major outdoor locations lie within the county with the impossibly picturesque villages of Quainton, Waddesdon and Long Crendon featuring frequently.

The south of the county, with the River Thames as its southern boundary, lies almost entirely within the chalk range of the Chiltern Hills, most of which is classed as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The county town since the 18th century has been Aylesbury, the market centre for the attractive Vale of Aylesbury, which runs from the Chilterns in the south to Buckingham in the north. Here, the visitor will discover a rural patchwork of secluded countryside, woodland and valleys, waterways, charming villages and busy market towns. A thousand miles of footpaths include the ancient

Ridgeway, and the quiet country lanes and gentle undulations make cycling a real pleasure; the Vale is at the heart of the new National Cycle Network. The area around the former county town of Buckingham is perhaps the least discovered part of Buckinghamshire, still chiefly rural, with a wealth of attractive villages and a number of fine houses, including Ascott House, a former Rothschild residence; Claydon House, where Florence Nightingale was a frequent visitor; Winslow Hall, designed by Wren; and Stowe, with its marvellous deer park. In this area are also two outstanding churches, the Saxon Church of All Saints at Wing and St Michael's Church at Stewkley, one of the finest Norman churches in the whole country. The northern region of the county is dominated by the new town of Milton Keynes, developed in the 1960s but incorporating several much older villages.

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## Chalfont St Giles

 Chiltern Open Air Museum  Milton's Cottage

Among the various ancient buildings of interest in this archetypal English village there is an Elizabethan mansion, The Vache, which was the home of friends of Captain Cook. In the grounds is a monument to the famous seafarer. However, by far the most famous building in Chalfont St Giles is **Milton's Cottage**. John Milton moved to this 16th-century cottage, found for him by his former pupil Thomas Ellwood, in 1665 to escape the plague in London. Though Milton moved back to London in 1666, he wrote *Paradise Lost* and began work on its sequel, *Paradise Regained*, while taking refuge in the village. The only house lived in by the poet to have survived, the cottage and its garden have been preserved as they were at the time Milton was resident. The building is now home to a museum that includes collections of important first editions of Milton's works and a portrait of the poet by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Another fascinating and unusual place to visit in the village is the **Chiltern Open Air Museum** (see panel opposite), which rescues



Milton's House, Chalfont St Giles

buildings of historic or architectural importance due to be demolished from across the Chilterns region and re-erects them on its 45-acre site. The 30-odd buildings rescued by the museum are used to house and display artefacts and implements that are appropriate to the building's original use and history. Also on the museum site is a series of fields farmed using medieval methods where, among the historic crops, organic woad is grown, from which indigo dye is extracted for use in dyeing demonstrations.

Madame Tussaud, famous for her exhibitions in London, started her waxworks here in the village, and another well-known resident was Bertram Mills the circus owner. His tomb stands beside the war memorial in the churchyard of St Giles.

## Around Chalfont St Giles

### JORDANS

*1 mile S of Chalfont St Giles off the A40*

This secluded village, reached down a quiet country lane, is famous as the burial place of William Penn, Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania. He and members of his family are buried in the graveyard outside the Quaker meeting house, which is among the earliest to be found in the country and has been described as the Quaker Westminster Abbey. In the grounds of nearby Old Jordans Farm is the **Mayflower Barn**, said to have been constructed from the timbers of the ship that took the Pilgrim Fathers to America.

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## Chiltern Open Air Museum

*Newland Park, Gorelands Lane, Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire HP8 4AB*  
Tel: 01494 871117  
web site: [www.coam.org.uk](http://www.coam.org.uk)



Visit **Chiltern Open Air Museum** in the parish of Chalfont St Peter, explore more than 30 rescued historic buildings and roam through 45 acres of beautiful woods and parkland.

Don't miss the chance to stroll along the woodland walk and relax at Wood End Cafe, where you can purchase light refreshments. The Museum organises a wide range of hands-on activities, demonstrations and special events for all the family to enjoy throughout the season. During the school holidays there are a series of themed weeks, special activities and demonstrations that focus on one aspect of the history of the buildings.

### CHALFONT ST PETER

*2 miles S of Chalfont St Giles on the A413*

 Hawk & Owl Trust

Now a commuter town, Chalfont St Peter dates back to the 7th century and, as its name means 'the spring where the calves come to drink', there is a long history here of raising cattle in the surrounding lush meadows. First mentioned in 1133, the parish Church of St Peter was all but destroyed when its steeple collapsed in 1708. The building seen today dates from that time as it was rebuilt immediately after the disaster.

Housed in a barn at Skipplings Farm is the **Hawk and Owl Trust's National**



Stoke Park, Stoke Poges

### Education and Exhibition Centre.

Dedicated to conserving wild birds of prey in their natural habitats, the Trust concerns itself with practical research, creative conservation and imaginative educational programmes.

### STOKE POGES

*6 miles S of Chalfont St Giles off the A355*

 Gray Monument

*The ploughman homeward plods his weary way  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.*

It was in the churchyard of this surprisingly still rural village that Thomas Gray was inspired to pen his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. He often visited Stoke Poges to see his mother and aunt who lived in a large late-Georgian house built for the grandson of the famous Quaker, William Penn, and he was seated beside his mother's tomb when he wrote the classic poem. The house is now the clubhouse of Stoke Poges Golf Club, where James Bond met Auric Goldfinger in the film *Goldfinger*. The statues seen in the film – one of them beheaded by Oddjob's bowler hat – are still there. To the

east of the church is the imposing **Gray Monument**, designed by James Wyatt and erected in 1799. The Church of St Giles itself is very handsome and dates from the 13th century, but perhaps its most interesting feature is the unusual medieval bicycle depicted in one of the stained glass windows. Dating back to the 1600s, the window depicts a naked man with a horn astride a vintage hobby horse. Behind the church is an Elizabethan manor house where Elizabeth I was entertained and Charles I was imprisoned.

## BEACONSFIELD

3 miles SW of Chalfont St Giles on the A40

 Bekonscot  Odds Farm Park

This is very much a town in two parts: the old town, dating back to medieval times; and, to the north, the new town, which grew up following the construction of the Metropolitan line into central London and consisting chiefly of between-the-wars housing. The old town is best known for its wealth of literary connections. The poet and orator Edmund Waller was born in the nearby village of Coleshill in 1606 and had his family home just outside Beaconsfield. His best-known lines are perhaps the patriotic



Bekonscot Model Village, Beaconsfield

*Others may use the ocean as their road  
Only the English make it their abode.*

Waller's tomb in the churchyard of St Mary and All Saints is marked by a very tall, sharply pointed obelisk with a tribute from fellow poet John Dryden. The church itself is one of the finest in the county and contains the grave of the statesman and political theorist Edmund Burke (1729–1797). Beaconsfield was also the home of the writer of the *Father Brown* books GK Chesterton (his grave is in the nearby Catholic church), the poet Robert Frost and the much loved children's author Enid Blyton.

For a unique step back in time to the 1930s, or for anyone wanting to feel like Gulliver in Lilliput, a trip to the model village of **Bekonscot** is a must. The oldest model village in the world, Bekonscot was begun in the 1920s by Roland Callingham, a London accountant, who started by building models in his garden. As the number grew, Callingham purchased more land and, with the aid of a friend from Ascot who added a model railway, created the village seen today. Within the 1½-acre site are six distinct miniature villages. When the model village first opened, people would throw coins into buckets for charity; the tradition continues and, even today, all surplus profits go to charity. Enid Blyton's house Green Hedges is depicted in Bekonscot, and she wrote a story about two children who visit the model village. Call: 01494 672919.

South of Beaconsfield, on the other side of the M40 at Wooburn Common, an entertaining day out is guaranteed at **Odds Farm Park**, home to many rare and interesting animals. The park was created with children in mind and the regular events include pigs' tea time, pat-a-

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pet, bottle-feeding lambs and goat milking. As one of 20 approved rare breed centres in the country, the farm combines the family attractions with the breeding and conservation of many of Britain's rarest farm animals. Open from 10am all year round.

## BURNHAM BEECHES

5 miles SW of Chalfont St Giles off the A355

A stretch of land bought in 1880 by the Corporation of the City of London for use in perpetuity by the public, and since then a favourite place for Londoners to relax. Burnham Beeches was designated a National Nature Reserve in 1993 and this extensive area of ancient woodland and heathland includes an important collection of old beeches and pollarded oaks.

## TAPLOW

8 miles SW of Chalfont St Giles off the A4

 Cliveden  Octagonal Temple

The name of Taplow is derived from Taeppa, a Saxon warrior whose grand burial site high above the Thames was excavated in 1883. Nothing is known of Taeppa himself, but the items discovered at the site are on display in the British Museum. To the north of the village lies the country house of **Cliveden** (National Trust), once the home of Lady Nancy Astor, the first woman to take her seat as a Member of Parliament. The first house on the site was built in 1666 for the Duke of Buckingham, but the present magnificent mansion, most of which is now a hotel, dates from the 19th century. It was in 1740 that *Rule*



Cliveden, Taplow

*Britannia* was first performed, in the presence of Frederick, Prince of Wales. Thomas Arne set to music words written by James Thomson. The splendid grounds include a great formal parterre with fountains, temples and statuary, a water garden and a wonderful rose garden. Some of the great names in architecture and garden design had a hand in the Cliveden of today: the house and terrace are the work of Sir Charles Barry, the rose garden was designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, and the renowned Italian country house architect Giacomo Leoni was responsible for the **Octagonal Temple**, now a chapel, where the American-born millionaire William Waldorf Astor, his son Waldorf and the ashes of Waldorf's wife Nancy are buried.

## PENN

4 miles NW of Chalfont St Giles on the B474

A centre of the tiling industry after the Norman Conquest, Penn provided the flooring for Windsor Castle, the Palace of Westminster and many churches. But the village is best known as the ancestral home of William Penn, the Quaker and American pioneer. There are several memorials to the family in the village church of the Holy Trinity. In the churchyard is the grave of the

diplomat spy Donald Maclean, who died in Moscow in 1983. His ashes, contained in an urn decorated with a hammer and sickle, were brought back to England by his brother and buried in the family grave.

## AMERSHAM

3 miles N of Chalfont St Giles on the A413

### Museum

Another town with a split personality. Top Amersham is a thriving commercial centre; Old Amersham is a popular tourist spot with a wide sweeping High Street, half-timbered buildings and picturesque period cottages. Set beside the River Misbourne, the Old Town boasts many fine old buildings, including Sir William Drake's Market Hall of 1682 and the Church of St Mary with some fine stained glass and monuments to the Drake family. The Old Town is well known for its shopping – there's a wide selection of antique and craft shops, designer boutiques, and an impressive range of restaurants, snack bars and coaching inns.

The Romans were farming around Amersham in the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Saxons called it Agmodesham and to the Normans it was Elmondesham. So the town has plenty of history, much of which is told in the **Amersham Museum**, which occupies a Tudor timber-framed building, Hall House, which is more than 500 years old. In 2009 the museum acquired a long-case clock made by Joseph Rogers of Amersham.

The town was an important staging post in coaching days, and The Crown Hotel, one of many coaching inns here, was featured in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. Close to the town is Gore Hill, the

site of a battle between the Danes and the Saxons in AD921. It is recorded that in 1666 the Great Fire of London could be seen raging from the hill.

## CHENIES

3 miles E of Amersham off the A404

### Chenies Manor

This picturesque village, with a pretty green surrounded by an old school, a chapel and a 15th-century parish church, is also home to **Chenies Manor**, a fascinating 15th-century manor house. Originally the home of the Earls (later Dukes) of Bedford, before they moved to Woburn, this attractive building has stepped gables and elaborately patterned high brick chimneys. Built by the architect who enlarged Hampton Court for Henry VIII, the house played host not only to the king, but also to his daughter Elizabeth I, whose favourite oak tree still stands in the garden. Naturally, there is a ghost here, that of none other than Henry, whose footsteps can be heard as he drags his ulcerated leg around the manor house in an attempt to catch Catherine Howard in the act of adultery with one of his entourage, Tom Culpeper. The house has much to offer, including tapestries, furniture



Chenies Manor House

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and a collection of antique dolls. The elaborate gardens contain a Tudor-style sunken garden, some fine topiary, a turf maze, a kitchen garden and a physic garden with a variety of herbs that were used for both medicinal and culinary purposes.

## High Wycombe

### Little Market House Museum

The largest town in Buckinghamshire, High Wycombe is traditionally known for the manufacture of chairs and, in particular, the famous Windsor design. It is still a centre of furniture manufacture today, as well as being a pleasant town in which to live for those commuting to London. Originally an old Chilterns Gap market town, High Wycombe still has several old buildings of note. The **Little Market House** was designed by Robert Adams in 1761 and is of a rather curious octagonal shape, while the 18th-century Guildhall is the annual venue for a traditional ceremony showing a healthy scepticism for politicians when the mayor and councillors are publicly weighed – to see if they have become fat at the expense of the citizens.

Located in an 18th-century house with a flint facade, the **Wycombe Museum** has displays that give the visitor an excellent idea of the work and crafts of the local people over the years. There is, of course, a superb collection of chairs, including the famous Windsor chair. Several skills and several woods were involved in the making of this classic chair: bodgers used the ubiquitous beech for the legs; benders shaped ash for the bowed backs; and bottomers made use of the sturdy elm for the seats.

In the landscaped grounds of the museum



Little Market House, High Wycombe

is a medieval motte, which would normally indicate that a castle once stood here but, in this case, the structure was probably little more than a wooden tower. The oldest standing building in the town is All Saints Church, a large, fine building dating from the 11th century.

## Around High Wycombe

### MARLOW

4 miles S of High Wycombe on the A4155

An attractive commuter town on the banks of the Thames, Marlow is famous for its suspension bridge built in 1832 to the design of Tierney Clarke, who built a similar bridge linking Buda and Pest across the Danube. The High Street is lined with elegant houses, and Marlow has a good supply of riverside pubs. In one of them, The Two Brewers, Jerome K Jerome wrote his masterpiece, *Three Men in a Boat*. Other literary connections abound: Mary Shelley completed *Frankenstein* while living here after her marriage to the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and TS Eliot lived for a while in West Street, as did the author Thomas Love Peacock while writing *Nightmare Abbey*. Marlow hosts

an annual regatta and is one of the places the Swan Uppers visit each year counting and marking the swans belonging to the Queen and to two London Livery Companies.

### BOURNE END

4 miles SE of High Wycombe on the A4155

A prosperous commuter town on the banks of the Thames, Bourne End began to expand in the late 19th century as the Victorians developed a passion for boating on the river. It was once the home of the writer Edgar Wallace, who died in Hollywood during work on the screenplay for *King Kong*. He is buried in the village cemetery at nearby Little Marlow.

### HAMBLEDEN

6 miles SW of High Wycombe off the A4155

 Church of St Mary

This much-filmed village was given to the National Trust by the family of the bookseller WH Smith, who later became Viscount Hambleden. He lived close by at Greenlands, on the banks of the River Thames, and is buried in the village churchyard. The unusually large **Church of St Mary**, known as the Cathedral of the Chilterns, dates from the 14th century and, though it has been altered over the years, it still dominates the area with its size and beauty. Inside the building's 18th-century tower is a fascinating 16th-century panel, which is believed to have been the bedhead of Cardinal Wolsey – it certainly bears the cardinal's hat and the Wolsey arms.



West Wycombe Park

### WEST WYCOMBE

2 miles NW of High Wycombe on the A40

 West Wycombe Park & Caves

 Church of St Lawrence

 Dashwood Mausoleum

This charming estate village, where many of the houses are owned by the National Trust, has a main street displaying architecture from the 15th through to the 19th century. Close by is **West Wycombe Park**, which, although owned by the National Trust, is still the home of the Dashwood family, local landowners who built it in the 1760s. The magnificent house has appeared in several film and TV productions, including BBC-TV's 2008 production of *Cranford*.

Of the various members of the Dashwood family, it was Sir Francis who had most influence on both the house and the village. West Wycombe house was originally built in the early 1700s, but Sir Francis boldly remodelled it several years later as well as having the grounds and park landscaped by Thomas Cook, a pupil of Capability Brown. Very much a classical landscape, the grounds contain temples and an artificial lake shaped like a swan, and the house

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### The Hell-Fire Caves

West Wycombe Caves, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 3AJ

Tel: 01494 533739

website: [www.hellfirecaves.co.uk](http://www.hellfirecaves.co.uk)



The **Hell-Fire Caves** at West Wycombe offer a totally unique experience. The Caves are owned by Sir Edward Dashwood, a direct descendent of Sir Francis Dashwood, who originally excavated them in the 1750's on the site of an ancient quarry. Throughout the 1700's and 1800's, the caves, which are quarter of a mile underground, were reputed to have hosted the Hell-Fire Club whose membership included some of Britain's most senior aristocrats and statesmen.

Today, the caves are a popular tourist attraction and a wonderful insight into our history. A tour of the caves includes a long winding passage that leads past various small chambers to the Banqueting Hall, down over the River Styx to the Inner Temple, which is about 300 feet beneath the church at the top of the hill. The Caves are scattered with statues in costume and a commentary with sound effects are included throughout the tour.

has a good collection of tapestries, furniture and paintings.

Hewn out of a nearby hillside are **West Wycombe Caves** (Hell-Fire Caves – see panel above), which were created, possibly from some existing caverns, by Sir Francis as part of a programme of public works. After a series of failed harvests, which created great poverty and distress amongst the estate workers and tenant farmers, Sir Francis employed the men to extract chalk from the hillside to be used in the construction of the new road between the village and High Wycombe.

The village **Church of St Lawrence** is yet another example of Sir Francis' enthusiasm for remodelling old buildings. Situated within the remnants of an Iron Age fort on top of a steep hill, the church was originally constructed in the 13th century. Its isolated position, however, was not intentional as the church was originally the church of the village of Haveringdon, which has long since disappeared. Dashwood remodelled the

interior in the 1760s in the style of an Egyptian hall and also heightened the tower, adding on the top a great golden ball where six people could meet in comfort and seclusion.

The **Dashwood Mausoleum** near the church was built in 1765; a vast hexagonal building without a roof, it is the resting place of Sir Francis and other members of the Dashwood family. Sir Francis had a racier side to his character. As well as being remembered as a great traveller and a successful politician, he was the founder of the Hell-Fire Club. This group of rakes, who were also known as the Brotherhood of Sir Francis or Dashwood's Apostles, met a couple of times a year to engage in highly colourful activities. Though their exploits were legendary, and probably loosely based on fact, they no doubt consumed large quantities of alcohol and enjoyed the company of women. Traditionally, the group meetings were held in the caves, or possibly the church tower, though between 1750 and

## PARK PARADE SHOPPING CENTRE

Western Dean, Hazlemere, Buckinghamshire HP15

### CARMEN LADIES FASHIONS

Tel: 01494 716555

This ladies fashion clothing store has a range of clothes on offer for ladies of 30 and above, from seasonal general day wear, to evening and cruise wear, from t-shirts to posh frocks. Whatever your style, Carmen Ladies Fashion has it all. Exclusive hand crafted jewellery can be found here, made by a local designer to suit individual tastes, giving it a truly unique look. Suppliers include: Poppy, Fabrizio, Casamia, In Town, Signature, Saloos, Paramount and many more.

### THAMESIDE CARPETS AND GIFTS

Tel: 01494 711726 / 01494 714775

Thameside Carpets and Gifts have been offering a friendly and professional service for over thirty years. The business is family owned and offers their own fitting team and installation service for all flooring needs. An impressive range of quality floors is available with wood grain patterns, stone tiles, bathroom, kitchen, hall and landing styles to choose from. The family also stocks an interesting range of clocks, lamps and other items for gifts or to help guests complete the perfect look for their home.

### THE CUTTING STUDIO

Tel: 01494 714204

We warmly welcome you to one of Buckinghamshires premier salons. Established over 19 years ago, our reputation is built on fantastic service, brilliant hairdressing, and fabulous value for money. With on going training, all our team specialise in creative hairdressing and client care.

As a way of introduction, we would like to offer you 25% discount off your first visit to us, just call our reservation team.

### CHILDS TOYS

Tel: 01494 711425

Alan took over Child's Toys in 2004 from one of the country's most reputable toy retailers, continuing a 125 year tradition for quality and fun. Alan offers a friendly and knowledgeable service about all the toys he stocks, which are displayed over the shop's two floors. Children can expect to find all the best brands with various Scalextric, Lego and Mechano sets alongside an adorable range of teddy bears and the largest range of jigsaws and board games in the area. Open Monday to Saturday 9am-5:30pm and on Sundays in the run up to Christmas.

The shopping centre is just 10 minutes from High Wycombe and Beaconsfield with free parking, coffee shops and other retail outlets.



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1774, their meeting place was nearby Medmenham Abbey.

## HUGHENDEN

2 miles N of High Wycombe off the A4128

Hughenden Manor Bradenham Woods

This village is famous for being the home of Queen Victoria's favourite Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli; he lived here from 1848 until his death in 1881. He bought **Hughenden Manor** (National Trust) shortly after the publication of his novel *Tancred*. Though not a wealthy man, Disraeli felt that a leading Conservative politician should have a stately home of his own. In order to finance the purchase, his supporters lent him the money so that he could have this essential characteristic of an English gentleman. The interior is an excellent example of the Victorian Gothic style and contains an interesting collection of memorabilia of Disraeli's life as well as his library, pictures and much of his furniture. The garden is based on the designs of Disraeli's wife Mary Anne; the surrounding park and woodland offer some beautiful walks. Disraeli, who was MP for Buckinghamshire from 1847 to 1876, and

Prime Minister in 1868 and from 1874 to 1880, is buried in the churchyard of St Michael. In the chancel of the church is a marble memorial erected in his memory by Queen Victoria. Disraeli was the son of a writer and literary critic, Isaac d'Israeli, who lived for a time in the village of Bradenham on the other side of High Wycombe. The Bradenham Estate, also owned by the National Trust, includes **Bradenham Woods**, an area of ancient beech that is among the finest in the whole Chilterns region. Although beech predominates, other trees, including oak, whitebeam, ash and wild cherry are being encouraged.

## Chesham

A successful combination of a commuter town, industrial centre and country community, Chesham's growth from a sleepy market town was due mainly to its Metropolitan underground railway link with central London. Chesham was the birthplace of Arthur Liberty, the son of a haberdasher and draper, who went on to found the world famous Liberty's department store in London's Regent Street in 1875.

Another resident of note was Roger Crabbe who, having suffered head injuries during the Civil War, was sentenced to death by Cromwell. After receiving a pardon, Crabbe opened a hat shop in the town where he is reputed to have worn sackcloth, eaten turnip tops and given his income to the poor. Perhaps not surprisingly, Crabbe was used by Lewis Carroll as the model for the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*.



Bradenham Woods, Hughenden

## Around Chesham

### LACEY GREEN

8 miles W of Chesham off the A4010

 Smock Mill  Home of Rest for Horses

 Rupert Brooke

Lacey Green is home to one of the county's preserved windmills, this one a **Smock Mill**, in which only the cap carrying the sails rotates to meet the wind. As a result, the body of the mill where the machinery is housed can be bigger, heavier and stronger. Built in the mid 1600s, and moved from Chesham to this site in 1821, it is the oldest Smock Mill in England.

It was at Lacey Green that the young poet **Rupert Brooke** used to spend his weekends in the company of friends at a local pub. The

son of a master at Rugby School, and a student at Cambridge University, Brooke began writing poetry as a boy and travelled widely in the years leading up to the First World War. Early on in the war his poetry showed a boyish patriotism, but his later works were full of bitter disillusion. He died in 1915 while on his way to the attempted landings at the Dardanelles in Turkey.

Close to the village is Speen Farm and the **Home of Rest for Horses**, whose most famous patient was Sefton, the cavalry horse injured in the Hyde Park bomb blast of the early 1980s. A society was founded in 1886 as a retreat and rescue for working horses from the streets of London. It moved here in 1971 and each year some 200 horses, ponies and donkeys pass through, some to rest, others, like Sefton, to retire.

### Widmer Feeds Country Store Lacey Green

Visit Widmer Feeds Country Store for a local family run business. We sell a massive variety of products from locally produced honey and eggs to wet weather clothing and wellington boots.

Visit our chicken and rabbit house show room with over 50 arks, hutches and runs!



Open 7 days a week

Pink Road, Lacey Green, Bucks, HP27 0PG

Call us on 01844 344765

or visit [www.widmer.co.uk](http://www.widmer.co.uk)



### Widmer Equestrian Centre



Widmer Equestrian Centre is simply one of the best riding locations around. Based in the heart of Chiltern Hills we offer riding lessons and hacking all year round plus outdoor polo in the summer.



Open 7 days a week

Pink Road, Lacey Green, Bucks, HP27 0PG

Call us on 01844 275139

or visit [www.widmerequestrian.co.uk](http://www.widmerequestrian.co.uk)



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### GREAT MISSENDEN

3 miles W of Chesham off the A413

 Old Court House

 Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre

Great Missenden boasts an attractive medley of 16th and 17th-century buildings, which have been adapted over the years to changing needs and tastes. At the southern end of the village High Street is the medieval George Inn, behind which is the old manorial **Court House**. Also in the village is a handsome flint and stone church and the site of Missenden Abbey, which was founded in 1133 by the Augustinian order. A daughter community of St Nicholas's Abbey in Normandy, the abbey has long since gone and in its place stands a fashionable Gothic mansion dating from 1810.

Great Missenden is probably best known as being the home of Roald Dahl, the internationally recognised author particularly loved for his children's books. He lived here for 30 years and is buried on the hillside opposite his home, Gipsy House, in the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul. His daughter Olivia, who died at the age of seven, is buried at Little Missenden in a plot that was intended for Dahl himself and his first wife, the actress Patricia Neal. But this plan was changed when Dahl and Neal were divorced in 1983, seven years before his death.

At the **Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre**, aimed at six to 12-year-olds, visitors can delve into the author's archives on touch-screen monitors, visit his writing hut and make up 'phizz-whizzing' words and stories using the interactive exhibits. A charity was established in 2001 to promote education in literature, and a sister charity, the Roald Dahl Foundation, was founded by his widow Felicity, providing grants to

individuals, charities and hospitals, and assistance to children and families in the fields of neurology and haematology. There's also a shop and café on site.

### PRINCES RISBOROUGH

9 miles W of Chesham on the A4010

 Manor House

A busy little town with many 16th century cottages, 17th and 18th-century houses and, at its centre, a brick Market House of 1824. The ground floor is an empty space providing shelter for occasional market stalls. The Prince in the name of this Chilterns Gap market town is the Black Prince, the eldest son of Edward III, who held land and had a palace here. The town stands on the Icknield Way and was a major stopping place during the stage coach era. The last regular stage-coach service to run in England ended its journey from London here in 1898. Off the market square, opposite the church, the **Princes Risborough Manor House** (National Trust) is a 17th-century redbrick house with a handsome Jacobean staircase. Viewing appointments can be made by contacting nearby Hughenden Manor. More details can be found at the Risborough Information centre on Horns Lane.



Manor House, Princes Risborough

**WENDOVER**

6 miles NW of Chesham on the A413

[Wendover Woods](#) [Coombe Hill](#) [Go Ape](#)

This delightful old market town is situated in a gap on the northern escarpment of the Chiltern Hills, in the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has an attractive main street of half-timbered, thatched houses and cottages of which the best examples are Anne Boleyn's Cottages. A picturesque place, often seen as the gateway to the Chilterns, Wendover has a fine selection of antique and craft shops, tearooms and bookshops. In 1300 the town was granted the right to send two representatives to Parliament; these have included John Hampden, George Canning and Edmund Burke. The right was extinguished by the Reform Act of 1832. The town is twinned with Liffre in Brittany, and the Twinning Stones outside the library are permanent reminders of the close ties.

The town also offers visitors an opportunity of seeing the glorious countryside through the medium of **Wendover Woods**. Created for recreational pursuits – there's a mountain bike course at Aston Hill – as well as for conservation and timber production, these Forestry Commission woods offer visitors numerous trails through the coniferous and broadleaved woodland. It is one of the best sites in the country to spot the tiny firecrest, a bird that is becoming increasingly rare. **Go Ape** is an award-winning high wire forest adventure course of rope bridges, Tarzan swings and zip slides, all set high up in the treetops.

Off the B4010 a short drive west of Wendover, **Coombe Hill** is the highest point in the Chilterns and affords superb views across the Vale of Aylesbury, the Berkshire Downs and the Cotswolds. On the summit is a

monument dedicated to the men who died in the Boer War. The National Trust has introduced a flock of sheep on to the hill to control the invasion of scrub and to encourage the grass.

**Aylesbury**

[County Museum](#)

[Roald Dahl's Children's Gallery](#)

Founded in Saxon times and the county town since the reign of Henry VIII, Aylesbury lies in rich pastureland in the shelter of the Chilterns. Post-war development took away much of the town's character, but some parts, particularly around the market square, are protected by a conservation order. At various times in the Civil War, Aylesbury was a base for both Cromwell and the King, and this period of history is covered in the splendidly refurbished **County Museum & Art Gallery**. The museum, housed in a splendid Georgian building, also has an exhibit on Louis XVIII of France, who lived in exile at nearby Hartwell House. Also within the museum is the award-winning **Roald Dahl Children's Gallery**, an exciting hands-on gallery for children that uses Dahl's characters to introduce and explain the museum's treasures.

**Around Aylesbury****MENTMORE**

6 miles NE of Aylesbury off the B488

[Mentmore Towers](#)

The village is home to the first of the Rothschild mansions, **Mentmore Towers**, which was built for Baron Meyer Amschel de Rothschild between 1852 and 1855. A splendid building in the Elizabethan style, it

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Mentmore Towers

was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, the designer of Crystal Palace, and is a superb example of grandiose Victorian extravagance. However, the lavish decoration hides several technologically advanced details for those times, such as central heating, and, as might be expected from Paxton, there are large sheets of glass and a glass roof in the design. In the late 19th century the house became the home of Lord Rosebery, and the magnificent turreted building was the scene of many glittering parties and gatherings of the most wealthy and influential people in the country. However, in the 1970s the house was put up for auction and, while the furniture and works of art were sold to the four corners of the world, the building was bought by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and became for a time the headquarters of his University of Natural Law.

**IVINGHOE**

7 miles E of Aylesbury on the B488

[Ford End Watermill](#) [Ivinghoe Beacon](#)

[Ridgeway National Trail](#)

As the large village church would suggest,

Ivinghoe was once a market town of some importance in the surrounding area. In this now quiet village can be found **Ford End Watermill**, a listed building that, though probably much older, was first recorded in 1616. It is the only working watermill with its original machinery in Buckinghamshire, and on milling days stone-ground wholemeal flour is on sale. The farm in which it stands has also managed to retain the atmosphere of an 18th-century farm. Limited opening times – call 01442 825421.

To the east lies the National Trust's **Ivinghoe Beacon**, a wonderful viewpoint on the edge of the Chiltern Hills. The site of an Iron Age hill fort, the beacon was also the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. The Beacon is at one end of Britain's oldest road, the **Ridgeway National Trail**. The other end is the World Heritage Site of Avebury in Wiltshire, and the 85-mile length of the Ridgeway still follows the same route over the high ground used since prehistoric times. Walkers can use the whole length of the trail (April to November is the best time) and horse riders and cyclists can ride on much of the western part.

**PITSTONE**

7 miles E of Aylesbury off the B489

[Pitstone Windmill](#) [Pitstone Green Museum](#)

Though the exact age of **Pitstone Windmill** (National Trust) is not known, it is certainly one of the oldest post mills in Britain. The earliest documentary reference to its existence was made in 1624. It is open to the public on a limited basis – call 01442 851227. Also in the village is **Pitstone Green Museum**, where all

manner of farm and barn machinery, along with domestic bygones, are on display in farm buildings dating from 1831. There are two model railways and a full-size reconstruction of a section of a Second World War Lancaster bomber, and additional entertainment includes tractor rides, pottery demonstrations and occasional craft fairs.

A delightful hour or two can be spent cruising from Pitstone Wharf along a lovely stretch of the Grand Union Canal.

## STOKE MANDEVILLE

2 miles S of Aylesbury on the A4010

### Bucks Goat Centre

The village is best known for its hospital, which specialises in the treatment of spinal injuries and burns. Just south of Stoke, on Old Risborough Road, **Bucks Goat Centre** has the most comprehensive collection of goat breeds in the country, along with llamas, donkeys, rabbits, guinea pigs, sheep, pigs and birds. Visitors can groom, cuddle and feed the goats with vegetables from the Farm Shop. Also here are the famous Aylesbury ducks and other poultry.

## GREAT KIMBLE

5 miles S of Aylesbury on the A4010

### Chequers

Though the village is home to a church with an interesting series of 14th-century wall paintings, its real claim to fame is the nearby 16th-century mansion, **Chequers**, the country residence of the British Prime Minister. Originally built by William Hawtrey in 1565, but much altered and enlarged in the 18th and 19th centuries, the house was restored to its



Pitstone Windmill

original form by Arthur Lee in 1912. Later, in 1920, as Lord Lee of Fareham, he gave the house and estate to the nation to be used as the prime minister's country home. The first Prime Minister to make use of Chequers was Lloyd George, and many who came to know the house later moved to the area: Ramsay MacDonald's daughter lived at nearby Speen; Harold Wilson bought a house in Great Missenden; and Nye Bevan owned a farm in the Chilterns.

## WOTTON UNDERWOOD

8 miles W of Aylesbury off the A41

### Wotton House

In this secluded village stands the privately owned **Wotton House**, a charming early 18th-century building said to be practically identical to the original Buckingham Palace. The gardens, which feature more than a dozen follies, were laid out between 1757 and 1760 by Capability Brown.

## BOARSTALL

12 miles W of Aylesbury off the B4011

### Boarstall Tower Duck Decoy

A curious feature here is the 17th-century **Duck Decoy** (National Trust) set on the edge of a lake to catch birds for the table. There are

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Boarstall Tower

regular demonstrations by the Warden and his dog of how the device works. The site also contains a nature trail and exhibition hall. The National Trust is also responsible for **Boarstall Tower**, an imposing 14th-century stone gatehouse of a long demolished fortified house. The gatehouse was updated in 1615, and the exterior and many rooms remain virtually unchanged. There are guided tours around the atmospheric rooms with some colourful tales from the 11th century to the present day. Call: 01280 822850.

## WADDESON

4 miles NW of Aylesbury on the A41

### Waddesdon Manor

The village is home to another of the county's magnificent country houses, in this case **Waddesdon Manor** (National Trust). Built between 1874 and 1889 for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, in the style of a French Renaissance château, the house is set in rolling English countryside and borrows elements from several different French châteaux. The Manor is surrounded by formal gardens and the landscaped grounds contain, among many treasures, a French-style aviary in a part of the gardens designed by the popular 20th-century

American landscape artist Lanning Roper. Also within the grounds are hundreds of trees both native and foreign, a fabulous parterre, Italian, French and Dutch statuary, and a huge pheasant named Ferdinand made from 15,000 bedding plants on a steel frame. The French influence even extended to the carthorses used on the site – powerful Percheron mares that were imported from Normandy. The house contains

one of the best collections of 18th-century French decorative art in the world, including Sèvres porcelain, Beauvais tapestries and fine furniture. There are also paintings by Gainsborough, Reynolds and 17th-century Dutch and Flemish masters. The Manor has two restaurants, a coffee shop, gift shop, a wine and food shop, and a plant centre.

## QUANTON

5 miles NW of Aylesbury off the A41

### Tower Mill Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

A pleasant village with the remains of an ancient cross on the green, a number of fine Georgian houses, and a row of almshouses built in 1687. Here, too, is another of the county's windmills, **Quanton Tower Mill**, built in the 1830s and 100 feet high. Quite early in its life it was fitted with a steam engine, but despite this innovation the mill's working life extended barely 50 years. Just south of the village, at Quanton Railway Station, is the **Buckinghamshire Railway Centre** (see panel on page 64), a working steam museum where visitors can relive the golden age of steam. The centre boasts one of the largest collections of preserved steam and diesel locomotives in the country, including

## Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

Quainton Road Station, Quainton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 4BY

Tel: 01296 655450

website: [www.bucksrailcentre.org.uk](http://www.bucksrailcentre.org.uk)

A working steam museum set in a 25-acre site, the **Buckinghamshire Railway Centre** was established in 1968 and boasts one of the largest collections of preserved steam and diesel locomotives in the country, including items from South Africa, the USA and Egypt as well as from Britain. Visitors can ride behind full-sized steam locomotives and on the extensive miniature railway. The Railway Centre is also home to the beautifully restored Rewley Road Station, which dates from 1851 and was moved here from Oxford, and is now the main visitor centre. Open Wednesdays to Sundays from March to the end of October, the steam trains operate on Sundays and on Wednesdays in the school holidays.



engines from South Africa, the USA and Egypt, as well as from Britain (a Hall, a Castle and a pannier tank from the GWR and an ancient well tank from the LSWR). Rolling stock on show includes a coach from the Royal Train of 1901 and another used by Winston Churchill and General Eisenhower for wartime planning meetings in 1944. Visitors can ride behind full-sized steam locos and on the extensive miniature railway. The beautifully restored Rowley Road Station (1851), moved here from Oxford, also serves as the main visitor centre. Call: 01296 655720.

## Buckingham

Chantry Chapel Old Gaol Museum

This pleasant town, the centre of which is contained in a loop of the River Ouse, dates back to Saxon times and was granted a charter by Alfred the Great. Although it became the county town in AD888, when Alfred divided the shires, from an early date many of the functions of a county town were performed

by the more centrally located Aylesbury.

Thanks to a disastrous fire in 1725, this lively little market town is characterised by a fine array of Georgian buildings, including Castle House in West Street, the impressive Old Gaol, one of the first purpose-built county gaols in England (built in 1748 in the style of a castle, with additions by George Gilbert Scott), and the Town Hall, located at either end of the Market Square. The **Old Gaol Museum** not only illustrates the building's history, but also has displays on the town's past and the county's military exploits. A high-tech glass roof was added in 2000, spanning the original prisoners' exercise yard to create a new light-filled area for special exhibits and an educational resource centre. The recently added exhibition about local author Flora Thompson has attracted visitors from all over the world. There is an annual craft fair, occasional talks, and children's activity days are held throughout the year. One building that did survive the devastating fire of 1725 is the **Buckingham Chantry Chapel**

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Old Gaol, Buckingham

(National Trust). The chapel was constructed in 1475 on the site of a Norman building whose doorway has been retained. Well worth a visit, the chapel was restored by George Gilbert Scott in 1875.

A more recent addition to this delightful town is the University of Buckingham, which was granted its charter in 1983.

## Around Buckingham

### MIDDLE CLAYDON

5 miles S of Buckingham off the A413

Claydon House

The village is home to **Claydon House** (National Trust), a Jacobean manor house that was remodelled in the 1750s at a time of great enthusiasm for all things Oriental. The home of the Verney family for more 350 years, the house contains a number of state rooms with magnificent carved wood and plaster decorations on an Oriental theme. What makes the house particularly interesting is its associations with Florence Nightingale. Florence's sister married into the Verney family, and the pioneer of modern hospital

care spent long periods at the house, especially during her old age. Her bedroom and a museum of her life and experiences during the Crimean War can be seen here. Florence died in 1910 after a long career that embraced concerns of public health as well as the training of nurses; she was the first woman to be awarded the Order of Merit.

### WINSLOW

5 miles SE of Buckingham on the A413

Keech's Meeting House

A small country town of ancient origin, where Offa, the King of Mercia, stayed in AD752. The village's most prominent building is Winslow Hall, a delightful Wren house set in beautiful gardens. House and gardens are open for visits by appointment only. Another building of interest is **Keech's Meeting House**, a minuscule Baptist Chapel, which has remained virtually unaltered for 300 years.

### STEWKLEY

10 miles SE of Buckingham on the B4032

Church of St Michael

Stewkley, renowned as being the longest village in England, is even better known for its wonderful **Church of St Michael**, one of the finest Norman churches in the land, with spectacular zigzag patterns and a massive tower. Built between 1150 and 1180, this mighty building has remained virtually unaltered. In the 1970s, when neighbouring Cublington was being considered as the site for London's third airport, the government proposed to move it elsewhere, stone by stone.



Ascott House, Wing

## WING

12 miles SE of Buckingham on the A418

All Saints Church Ascott

Wing's church faced the same threat as Stewkley with the proposed Cublington Airport development. **All Saints Church**, standing on a rise above the Vale of Aylesbury, retains most of its original Saxon features, including the nave, aisles, west wall, crypt and apse. The roof is covered in medieval figures, many of them playing musical instruments. This remarkable church also contains numerous brasses and monuments, notably to the Dormer family who came to Ascott Hall in the 1520s.

Just east of the village, **Ascott** (National Trust) was bought in 1874 by Leopold Rothschild who virtually rebuilt the original farmhouse round its timber-framed core. The house contains a superb collection of fine paintings, Oriental porcelain and English and French furniture. The grounds are magnificent too, with specimen trees and shrubs, a herbaceous walk, lily pond, Dutch garden, an evergreen topiary sundial and two fountains, one in bronze, the other in marble, sculpted by the American artist Thomas Waldo Story.

## THORNBOROUGH

3 miles E of Buckingham off the A422

This lively and attractive village is home to Buckinghamshire's only surviving medieval bridge. Built in the 14th century, the six-arched structure spans Claydon Brook. Close by are two large mounds, which were opened in 1839 and revealed a wealth of Roman objects, many of which are on display at the Old Gaol Museum in Buckingham.

Though it was known that there was a Roman temple here, its location has not been found.

## STOWE

3 miles N of Buckingham off the A422

Stowe School & Gardens

**Stowe School** is a leading public school that occupies an 18th-century mansion that was once the home of the Dukes of Buckingham. Worked upon by two wealthy owners who both had a great sense of vision, the magnificent mansion house, which was finally completed in 1774, is open to the public during school holidays. Between 1715 and 1749, the owner, Viscount Cobham, hired various well-known landscape designers to lay out the fantastic **Stowe Landscape Gardens** (National Trust – see panel opposite) that can still be seen. Taking over the house in 1750, Earl Temple, along with his nephew, expanded the grounds and today they remain one of the most original and finest landscape gardens in Europe. Temples, alcoves and rotundas are scattered around the grounds, strategically placed to evoke in the onlooker a romantic and poetic frame of mind. It is one of the more intriguing quirks of fate that Lancelot

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Brown, always known as Capability Brown because he told his clients that their parks had capabilities, was head gardener at Stowe for 10 years. He arrived here in 1741 and began to work out his own style, a more natural style of landscape gardening, which was to take over where gardens like the one at Stowe left off.

## SILVERSTONE

5 miles N of Buckingham off the A43

The home of British motor racing, Silverstone is best known as the venue for the British Formula 1 Grand Prix, now secure after Donington Park was briefly considered as its successor. The first Grand Prix was held here in 1948 on the former RAF Bomber Command airfield, with victory going to the Italian Luigi Villorosi in a Maserati. In 1950, the first World Championship Formula 1 race was held in the presence of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth; the winner was Giuseppe Farina at the wheel of an Alfa Romeo. The 2010 renewal was won very easily by the Australian Mark Webber in a Red Bull.

Silverstone hosts many other motorsport events throughout the year, including the Silverstone Historic Festival, British F3, GT, Touring Car and Superbike championships. It is also the place of dreams for boy racers, who can try their hand at driving a wide range of cars round the circuit, including single-seaters, rally cars, 4X4s, E-type Jaguars, Lotus Elises and Porsche 911 Carrera Supercars.

## Milton Keynes

Christ Church Museum

Most people's perception of this modern town is of a concrete jungle, but the reality of Milton Keynes could not be more different. The development corporation that was charged, in 1967, with organising the new town has provided a place of tree-lined boulevards, uncongested roads, spacious surroundings, and acres of parkland. It is of course a modern town, with new housing, high-tech industries, modern leisure facilities, and a large covered shopping centre. One of

## Stowe Landscape Gardens

Buckingham,  
Buckinghamshire MK18 5DQ  
Tel: 01494 755568  
website: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Stowe** is a breathtakingly beautiful work of art, created by the leading architects, sculptors and gardeners of the 18th century.

In 1989 the largest and most celebrated landscape gardens in the world were handed to the National Trust. The gardens were overgrown, lakes silted up, temples and monuments crumbling. Now two-thirds underway, the restoration project has seen the gardens slowly return to their former glory.

Stowe has lots to offer all ages, from the perfect picnic spot to a fascinating tale of wealth, politics and power. With the changing seasons, continuing restoration and a calendar of events for all the family, each visit provides something new to see and do.



## MAGICKAL TREASURES

178 Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2SW

Tel: 01908 643439

e-mail: [admin@magickal-treasures.co.uk](mailto:admin@magickal-treasures.co.uk)

website: [www.magickal-treasures.co.uk](http://www.magickal-treasures.co.uk)

**Magickal Treasures** provides an exhaustive range of specialist crystals, Geode's, tumblestones and semi-precious natural gemstones jewellery. It is a real treasure trove for collectors, enthusiasts and alternative therapists alike.

Jewellery lovers spend hours browsing the shelves here, which are filled with beautiful gemstone jewellery set in sterling silver as well as many unique handmade items.

Magickal Treasures can be found in the traditional town of Bletchley, which runs by the River Ouzel towards the southwest of Milton Keynes. The town is most famous for Bletchley Park, which housed the secret enigma code-breakers during World War II.

The shop stocks a wide range of traditional Celtic silver jewellery as well as a wide range of unique and unusual gift ideas. Fairies, dragons and all things mythical and magical can be found here alongside unicorns, gothic gargoyles, witches and wizards.

Magickal Treasures is a 'must visit' for anyone looking for that unique gift or unusual crystal at a reasonable price. It has to be seen!



the town's most notable buildings is **Christ Church**, built in the style of Christopher Wren; the first purpose-built ecumenical city church in Britain, it was opened in March 1992 by the Queen. While Milton Keynes is certainly a place of the late 20th century, it has not altogether forgotten the rural past of the villages, which are now incorporated into the suburbs of the town. Housed in a beautiful Victorian farmstead, **Milton Keynes Museum** is run by a large and active group of volunteers. Its displays include a large collection of industrial, domestic and agricultural by-gones illustrating the lives of the people who lived in the area in the 200 years leading up to the creation of the new town. A Victorian house features a working kitchen and laundry, and among other eye-catching exhibits are a local tramcar and an impressive collection of working telephones.

## Around Milton Keynes

### BLETCHLEY

2 miles S of Milton Keynes on the A421

Bletchley Park

Now effectively a suburb of Milton Keynes, Bletchley is famous for **Bletchley Park**, the Victorian mansion that housed the wartime codebreakers who beat odds of 150 million million to 1 and cracked the Nazi Enigma cypher, the crucial key to German military and intelligence communications. Along with a display of military vehicles and a wealth of Second World War memorabilia, there is a Cryptology Trail that allows visitors to follow the path of a coded message from its interception through decoding to interpretation. At the height of the war, more than 12,000 people worked at Bletchley Park.

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Volunteers have reconstructed one of the vast electro-mechanical decoders that broke the Enigma code. The first of these machines were installed in 1940, and by 1945 more than 200 were at work. Bletchley Park hosts a year-round programme of exhibitions and events. Call: 01908 640404.

Though Bletchley is now all but merged with its larger neighbour, it still retains a distinctive air. The original village here dates back to Roman times and was first recorded as a town in 1108.

### STONY STRATFORD

3 miles NW of Milton Keynes off the A5

Often considered to be the jewel in the crown of the villages around Milton Keynes, Stony Stratford was a popular staging post on the old Roman road, Watling Street. Richard III, as the Duke of Gloucester, came in 1483 to detain the uncrowned Prince Edward before committing him to the Tower of London. Other notable visitors include Charles Dickens, Samuel Johnson and John Wesley, who preached under the tree that still stands in the market place.

### GAYHURST

4 miles N of Milton Keynes off the B526

Built during the reign of Elizabeth I, Gayhurst House was given to Sir Francis Drake in recognition of his circumnavigation of the world, though the building seen today was not the one that Drake lived in. It was later occupied by Sir Everard



The Lake, Bletchley Park

Digby, one of the conspirators behind the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

### OLNEY

8 miles N of Milton Keynes on the A509

Church of St Peter & St Paul

Emberton Country Park William Cowper

Cowper and Newton Museum Pancake Race

*Variety's the spice of life; Monarch of all I survey; God made the country and man made the town...*

All these familiar phrases are now embedded in the language but how many could name the writer? In fact, they all came from the pen of the 18th-century poet **William Cowper** who



William Cowper's Garden



Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney

spent the last 20 years of his life in the elegant market town of Olney.

He came to the town to be near his friend the Reverend John Newton, a former slave trader who had repented and become “a man of gloomy piety”. The two men collaborated on a book of religious verse, the *Olney Hymns*, in which Cowper’s contributions included such perennial favourites as *Oh! for a closer walk with God; Hark, my soul! It is the Lord; and God moves in a mysterious way*.

The house in which Cowper lived from 1768 to 1786 is now the **Cowper and Newton Museum**, a fascinating place that concentrates on Cowper’s life and work, but also has some exhibits and collections concerned with the times in which he lived and the life of Olney.

### LOVE LANA

23 Market Place, Olney, Buckinghamshire MK46 4BA  
Tel: 01234 714537  
e-mail: sbaronds@btmail.co.uk

With a carefully selected range of divine fragrances on offer, **Love Lana** is the perfect place to spoil yourself or a friend. The perfume and gift boutique is owned by retail professional Sharon Cross and was founded in October 2009. There are fragrances to suit all occasions from fizzy bath bombs to luxury perfume brands including Annick Goutal. It isn’t just women who are pampered here; men can treat themselves too choosing from Hermès, Bulgari, Narciso Rodriguez and more.



Each of the rooms of the large early 18th-century town house has been specially themed and there are numerous displays of Cowper’s work, including the *Olney Hymns*. Cowper was also a keen gardener and the summerhouse, where he wrote many of his poems, can still be seen in the rear garden. Here he experimented with plants that were new to 18th-century England. Also at the museum is the nationally important Lace Collection, and items particular to the shoemaking

industry, which was another busy local trade in the 19th and early 20th century.

When Cowper died in 1800 he was buried at East Dereham in Norfolk, but his associate Newton, the reformed slave-trader, is interred in the churchyard of **St Peter and St Paul**, where he had been the curate. This church is a spacious building dating from the mid 14th century and its spire rises some 185 feet to dominate the skyline of Olney.

For more than 300 years Olney was a centre of lace-making by hand, using wooden or bone bobbins. When lace was at its most expensive, in the 1700s, only the well-to-do could afford to buy it, but the rise in machine-made lace from Nottingham saw a fall in prices and a sharp decline in Olney lace. A

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### DODO ANTIQUES

The Old Cock Inn, Silverend, Olney, Buckinghamshire MK46 4AL  
Tel: 01234 240505  
e-mail: [info@dodoantiques.co.uk](mailto:info@dodoantiques.co.uk)  
website: [www.dodoantiques.co.uk](http://www.dodoantiques.co.uk)

Formerly a pub, **Dodo Antiques** opened its doors to the public in the historic town of Olney at the end of 2010. Its Georgian rooms have already been bustling with customers and word is spreading about the fine selection of antiques on offer here.

The rooms are fabulous, and each one has a theme making it easier to find the item you are looking for, be it for yourself or a gift for a friend or relative. Art deco furniture, mirrors, glass, paintings and clocks are just some of the items you will find at this excellent independent shop. It stocks an innovative collection of items from specialist antique dealers and there is something to suit all tastes and budgets.

Dodo Antiques offers a search service if you cannot find what you are after in its constantly changing stock. House clearance and restoration is also part of the shop’s fully complimentary service. Ask for details.

There is plenty to see in Olney, which is close to the M1, and free parking close to Dodo Antiques and a spacious loading area to the side is a bonus.



### LEO ANTIQUES

19 Market Place, Olney, Buckinghamshire MK46 4BA  
Tel: 01234 240003  
e-mail: [shop@leoantiques.co.uk](mailto:shop@leoantiques.co.uk) website: [www.leoantiques.co.uk](http://www.leoantiques.co.uk)

Located in an impressive Georgian building overlooking the busy market place in Olney, **Leo Antiques & Collectables** is a shop that people can easily spend an hour or so browsing its homely rooms, and get a good idea of how an item would look in their own home. It opened in the historical town in October 2003 and has built up a good reputation with locals and visitors.

Inside, Leo Antiques is period decorated and many people visit to view the gallery of artwork from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The shop stocks a good range of Dining furniture, chairs, desks and other occasional furniture.

On the ceramic side, dinner services, and decorative ornaments from the best of our potteries can offer with Royal Doulton, Worcester, Crown Derby and Moorcroft to name a few. Our selection of clocks and watches are provided by a local Horologist, are fully serviced and in working order.

There is a specialist Glass section with pieces dating back to the 1700’s, and a large selection of everyday glassware to grace your dining table. A good variety of mirrors to add some impact to your room, vintage costume jewellery and silver items, something for everyone. With items from as little as £5 we are sure you will find something as a souvenir of your visit to Olney. We look forward to welcoming you to Leo Antiques.

Parking in Olney is mainly free and the market place can be used with the exception of Thursday, which is market day. Open six days a week Tuesday to Saturday 10.30am to 5pm and Sundays and Bank Holidays from 11 am to 4pm.



## THE OLD STONE BARN

Home Farm, Warrington, Olney,  
Buckinghamshire MK46 4HN  
Tel: 01234 711655 Fax: 01234 711855  
e-mail: [info@oldstonebarn.co.uk](mailto:info@oldstonebarn.co.uk)  
website: [www.oldstonebarn.co.uk](http://www.oldstonebarn.co.uk)

The **Old Stone Barn** is positioned peacefully within 600 acres of a family run arable farm. It offers four star accommodation in apartment style cottages sleeping between 2-6 people. The apartments combine old character and modern facilities with computer room and wifi available on site.

Guests can relax in the gardens and enjoy the heated outdoor swimming pool, children's play area and croquet lawn in the summer months.



revival of the trade was tried by Harry Armstrong when he opened the Lace Factory in 1928 but, although handmade lace is still produced locally, the factory only lasted until Armstrong's death in 1943.

Amongst the town's claims to fame is the annual **Pancake Race**. Legend has it that the first 'race' was run in the 15th century when a local housewife heard the Shrivings Service bell ringing and ran to church complete with her frying pan and pancake.

Nearby **Emberton Country Park**, located on the site of former gravel pits, is an ideal place to relax. Not only are there four lakes and a stretch of the River Ouse within the park's boundaries, but also facilities here include fishing, sailing, and nature trails.

## NEWPORT PAGNELL

3 miles NE of Milton Keynes on the A422

Modern development hides a long history at Newport Pagnell, which local archaeological finds indicate was settled in the Iron Age and during the Roman occupation. It was an important administrative centre, and in the 10th century the Royal Mint was established

here. Lace-making was once an important industry, and the town is also associated with the car-maker Aston Martin, which started life in the 1820s as a maker of coaches for the nobility. The marque will be forever associated with James Bond, and as we went to press one of the original Bond DB5s – FMB 7B – was due to be sold at auction, with an estimate in excess of five million dollars.

## CHICHELEY

5 miles NE of Milton Keynes on the A422

### Chicheley Hall

This attractive village is the home of **Chicheley Hall**, a beautiful baroque house that was built in the early 1700s for Sir John Chester and which remains today one of the finest such houses in the country. Down the years it was used by the military and as a school, but in 1952 it was bought by the 2nd Earl Beatty and restored to its former state of grace. The earl's father, the 1st Earl, was a particularly courageous naval commander and, as well as receiving the DSO at the age of just 25, he was also a commander in the decisive battle of Jutland in 1916.

Looking for somewhere to stay, eat, drink or shop? [www.findSOMEWHERE.CO.UK](http://www.findSOMEWHERE.CO.UK)



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## WILLEN

1 mile NE of Milton Keynes on the A509

The village Church of St Mary Magdalene, built in the late 17th century, is an elegant building in the style of Sir Christopher Wren. Willen is also home to another house of prayer, the Peace Pagoda and Buddhist Temple, opened in 1980. It was built by the monks and nuns of the Nipponzan Myohoji, and was the first peace pagoda in the western hemisphere. In this place of great tranquillity and beauty, 1000 cherry trees and cedars, donated by the ancient Japanese town of Yoshino, have been planted on the hill surrounding the pagoda in memory of the victims of all wars.

## GREAT LINFORD

2 miles NE of Milton Keynes on the A422

### Stone Circle

Situated on the banks of the Grand Union Canal, this village, which is now more or less a suburb of Milton Keynes, has a 13th-century church set in parkland, a 17th-century manor house, and a **Stone Circle**, one of only a few such prehistoric monuments in the county.



Despite the encroachment of its much larger neighbour, the village has retained a distinctive air that is all its own.

The central block of the present manor house was built in 1678 by Sir William Pritchard, Lord Mayor of London. As well as making Great Linford his country seat, Pritchard also provided a boys' school and almshouses for six unmarried poor of the parish. The manor house was extended in the 18th century by the Uthwatt family, relatives of the Lord Mayor, and they used various tricks to give an impressive and elegant appearance to the building. The Grand Union Canal cuts through the estate, whose grounds are now a public park.