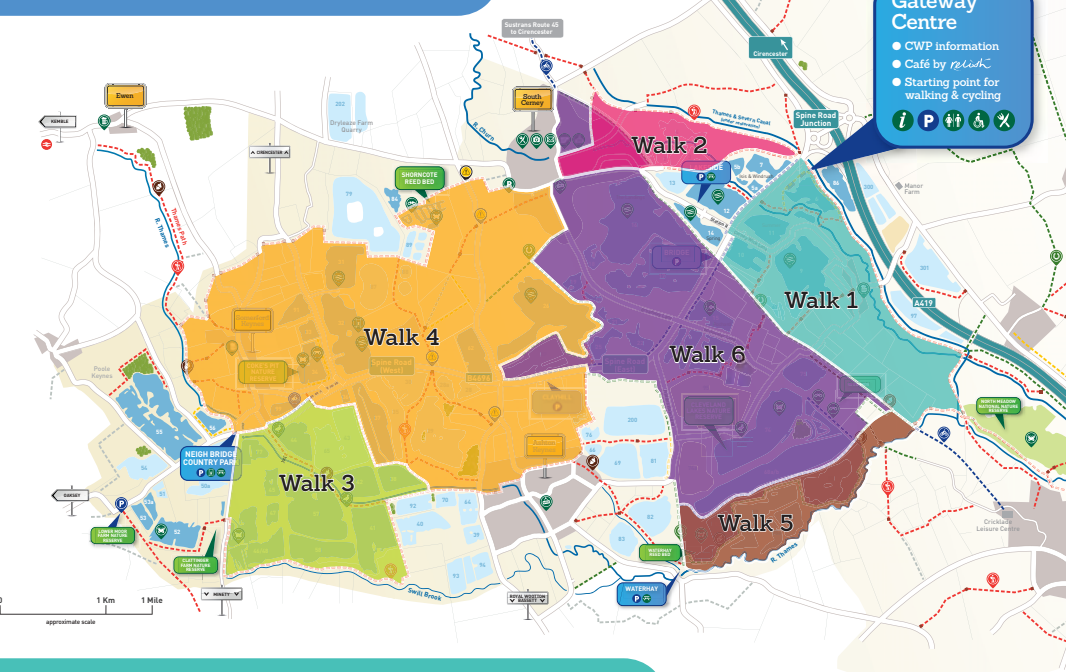


What is the Cotswold Water Park?

Set in 42 square miles of Cotswold countryside, with more than 180 lakes created by gravel extraction, the Cotswold Water Park offers a fantastic range of activities for everyone.

Location of walks 1-6



WALK 1 1.6km / 5km / 7.3km

Tow paths, train tracks and water meadows

An easy amble south along the old Thames and Severn canal towpath, then following the route back northwards up the route of the Swindon to Cirencester railway. See map for longer walks.

WALK 2 5.5km

From Bulrushes to Bow Wow (the Gateway to South Cerney)

Tracking the route of the canal tow path, past locks and cottages, this walk takes you to South Cerney, past Cotswold stone houses, tree lined lanes, into the bustling heart of the village.

WALK 3 5.8km / 7km

Rivers, brooks and lakes

All the Cotswold Water Park landscapes in one walk, the route begins and ends next to the infant River Thames, with wonderful wooded walks by the Swill Brook. See optional longer route.

WALK 4 14km

Three villages walk

A great opportunity to experience three delightful villages of the Western Water Park, and following part of the Thames Path National Trail, as it wends its way from the source at Kemble.

WALK/CYCLE 5 6km / 7km

Cleveland Circuit

One of the most peaceful circular walks in the area, along the historic Thames Path, winding around some of the oldest lakes.

WALK/CYCLE 6 16km / 18km

Bike it or Walk it!

Take your bikes and a picnic, and seek out some peaceful parts of the Cotswold Water Park on this great circular off road cycle route.

Wildlife...

is wonderful all year round in the Water Park! In the summer look out for hobbies, sand martins, orchids, dragonflies and perhaps catch a glimpse of water voles and otters. In winter over 20,000 water birds of 40 different species visit the lakes, including smew, goosander and bittern. For up to date information and local sightings check out the website: www.waterpark.org

Best foot forward...

this walks guide offers the chance to explore footpaths and lanes around the Western section of the Cotswold Water Park. For more detailed information please refer to OS map 169.

Refreshments...

are never far away on any of these walks! On most of the walks the location of the nearest café/pub is mentioned.

Please note that whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is accurate, Cotswold Lakes Trust cannot accept responsibility in respect of errors or omissions that may have occurred. Cotswold Lakes Trust has no control over when paths are closed or impassable. This map is a representation of the area and should be used as a general guide. For detailed navigation please use the appropriate OS maps for the area which are Explorer 169, Landranger 163 and 173. © Map copyright Cotswold Lakes Trust.

Map key:



WALK 1

Time: 45 mins / 1.5 hrs / 2.5 hrs

Distance: Shortest 1.6km (1m), Middle 5km (3.1m), Longer 7.3km (4.5m)

Tow paths, train tracks and water meadows

An easy amble south along the old Thames and Severn canal towpath, then following the route back northwards up the route of the Swindon to Cirencester railway. For a longer walk follow the tow path down to North Meadow, a National Nature Reserve where the largest population of the purple snakeshead fritillaries in the UK abound in early Spring, and walk across lush green meadows by the banks of the Thames.



Start: Gateway Centre

Walk between the Gateway Centre and Cotswold Outdoor, and head along the tow path of the Thames and Severn Canal (A).

Shortest route

After 700m, (B) at the finger post marker, turn right across wooden bridge, and along shore of lake to far left corner of field, (C) and go through metal kissing gate. Turn right and follow footpath with river on right. Cross over river, and pass through metal gate into hotel grounds (D) and turning left, follow hotel car park all way back to Gateway.

Middle route

Follow the tow path to Cerney Wick lock and round house, turn right along road, (E) past pub and through stile in hedge opposite. Continue across field, over stile, and cross road to next kissing gate (F). Continue straight through next kissing gate and over stile to reach footpath along edge of lake (Cotswold Sailing Club). Follow footpath across small footbridge, along path to stile, (G) then turn right onto old railway track (and Sustrans National Cycle Route 45), signposted South Cerney and Ashton Keynes. Go passed quarry workings then turn right (H) across small bridge signposted to Gateway Centre. Go through metal gate across quarry road, and another metal gate, watch out for vehicles. Follow this path to road, turn right, taking care around bend to Churn Pool to footbridge on left (I). Follow path along side of lake, to river, go sharp left to follow footpath with river on right. Follow path over footbridge and go through metal gate (D) straight ahead into hotel grounds, and turning left, follow building all way back to Gateway.

Longer route

Continue on tow path to Latton Basin (J). Turn right at the gate and walk down the drive and along a narrow path to the left of the building, then continue along the towpath. At the next point (K) you can enter North Meadow National Nature Reserve, or continue the walk along the Thames Path. (NB This route is often flooded and impassable in wet weather). Follow the Thames Path along through the meadows until you reach an embankment and up onto the old railway track (L) and head right towards the Spine Road (M).

Option to explore Cricklade: Leave the main entrance to the NNR and follow pavement into Cricklade, and along High Street. Turn right down side of Vale Hotel, past St Sampsons Church, school and fire station, at end turn right then left to Leisure Centre in Stones Lane. Take a footpath to the right of the Leisure Centre, which is the start of the old railway line from Swindon to Cirencester. This will take you all the way back to the Spine Road.

Refreshments: Great choice of pubs & cafés in Cricklade.

Become a member of Cotswold Lakes Trust and enjoy a host of great benefits including FREE PARKING*.

Your support will help fund the important work of the Trust including wildlife conservation, improving public access and maintaining countryside sites. Join online at www.cotswoldlakestrust.org Registered charity 1120518
*Bridge, Clayhill, Lakeside, Neigh Bridge, Waterhay and Riverside Park in Lechlade.

WALK 2

Time: 1.5 hrs

Distance: 5.5km [3.4m]

From Bulrushes to Bow Wow

Tracking the route of the canal tow path, past locks and cottages, this walk takes you to South Cerney. Pass Cotswold stone houses, tree lined lanes, into the bustling heart of this vibrant village, then back along the old drover's route of Wildmoorway (pronounced Wilmer) Lane to the Gateway Centre.

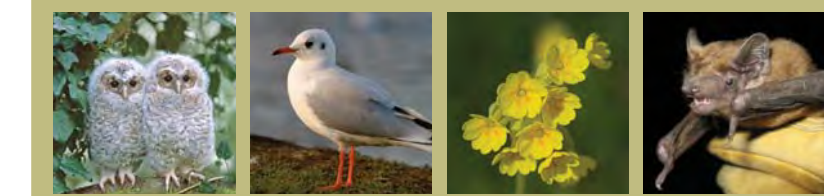


Start: Gateway Centre

Start at North East corner of Gateway Centre car park (A) turning left along tow path under Spine Road bridge. Continue along canal tow path, and after 1.50km and crossing a stile you will reach Boxwell Spring Lock, then a crossroads of track and tarmacked footpath. Turn left (B) along the tarmac track signposted South Cerney, leading to Bow Wow with the river Churn and the mill race on either side. At end of lane, (C) turn left past pubs and Post Office, and at crossroads turn left along main road passing the 17th Century cottages on the right. Continue along this road for 750m to (D) and go straight ahead up Wildmoorway Lane, where the road rises over a railway bridge.

Follow the lane and fork right onto a narrow footpath signposted Cerney Wick 1.5m. Cross over the river Churn (E) and follow the path through the kissing gate. After 800m you will reach Wildmoorway Lower Lock (F). Turn right towards the bridge and the Gateway Centre, passing safely under the Spine Road back to the car park.

Wildlife Watch

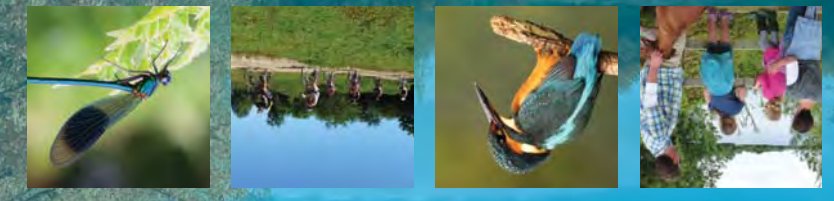


From left to right: Tawny Owl chicks, Black Headed Gull, Cowslips and Noctule Bat.

Refreshments: A variety in South Cerney, including pubs & takeaways.

Thames Path NATIONAL TRAIL

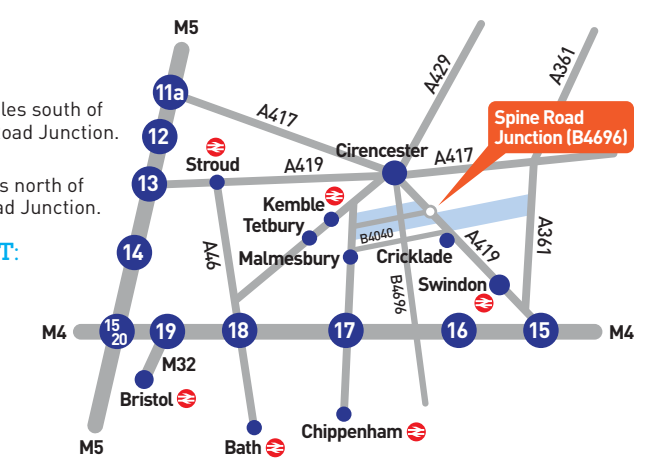
The Thames Path is a wonderful 184-mile (294km) walk and one of only 13 National Trails in England. It follows the River Thames from its source near Kemble in the Cotswolds to the Thames Barrier near Greenwich in London, travelling through some of the finest countryside, including right through the heart of the Cotswold Water Park.



Six Circular Walking Routes...

Directions...

BY ROAD:
M5 Exit J11a
Follow A417/9 Cirencester. 4 miles south of Cirencester take B4696 Spine Road Junction.
M4 Exit J15
Follow A419 Cirencester. 3 miles north of Cricklade take B4696 Spine Road Junction.
BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT:
TRAVELINE:
T: 0871 2002233
W: www.traveline.info
NATIONAL RAIL:
T: 03457 484950
W: www.nationalrail.co.uk
NATIONAL EXPRESS:
T: 08717 818181
W: www.nationalexpress.com



Where can I find out more?
For more information visit the Cotswold Water Park website: www.waterpark.org



Cotswold Water Park Visitor Centre
Spine Road E, South Cerney GL7 5FP
An information point is available at Ashton Keynes Community Shop.

Who manages the Cotswold Water Park?

Many of the lakes are privately owned, by gravel companies, leisure operators, clubs and individuals, but a large number of lakes have public access of some kind.

Cotswold Lakes Trust is a registered charity working to improve public access

and to make the Cotswold Water Park a better place for wildlife and people.

The Trust's team of staff and volunteers help to manage a number of nature reserves, country parks, and car parks. We also work with mineral companies, land owners, leisure providers, local businesses, councils, and communities to create a more accessible and sustainable future for the Cotswold Water Park.




Cotswold Lakes Trust is a charity dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswold Water Park for the benefit of wildlife and people.
If you would like to find out more about the work of Cotswold Lakes Trust, become a member, volunteer or to donate please visit our website at: www.cotswoldlakestrust.org
Registered charity 1120518.



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Thank you to photographers: David Hall, Andrew Parkinson, Dave Kilbey, Andy Rouse, Dave Soons, Andy Sharpe, Richard Tyler, Nigel Gardener, Dave Collins, Russell Savory and Jill Bewley. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission from Cotswold Lakes Trust.



WALK 3

 **Time:** 2 / 2.5 hours

 **Distance:** Shorter 5.8km (3.6m),
Longer 7km (4.3m)

Rivers, brooks and lakes

A delightful walk at all times of year, with plenty of chance to see and hear excellent examples of Water Park wildlife such as dragonflies in summer, nightingales in Spring, and visiting water birds in winter. Please note that in winter and time of wet weather the section between E and F can be flooded.



Start: Neigh Bridge Country Park

At **(A)**, from the car park cross over the main Spine Road and go down Minety Lane opposite for 800m – please proceed with caution as road is narrow with no footpath. Turn through wooden gate at entrance to Swillbrook Lakes Nature Reserve on left opposite small layby at **(B)**.

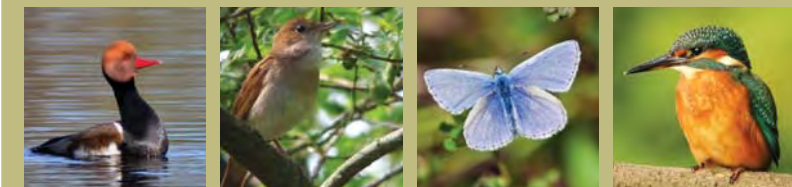
Follow narrow path along lake edge, go through small gate at point **(C)** and follow footpath with Swill Brook on right. Continue through wooden gate on right at edge of lake. Follow path to **(D)**, going over bridge to interpretation panel, then path across field. Route turns away from lake, with woods on left. At **(E)**, where trees converge, go into next field and take right hand path around field boundary to footbridge over brook, along Otter Corridor towards Pike Corner **(F)** and turn left at interpretation panel.

Follow path straight on to **(G)**, go over stile to join Thames Path.

Shorter route

Turn left along River Thames with river on right, ignoring gateway on right, to metal footbridge at **(H)**. Over footbridge turn left along lane to meet Spine Road, and left, cross road to Neigh Bridge.

Wildlife Watch





From left to right: Red Crested Pochard, Nightingale, Common Blue Butterfly and Kingfisher.

Longer route

Turn right along River Thames. After 450m, left at footpath sign over footbridge at **(I)** and follow path. At junction of paths **(J)**, turn left, follow path (not gravel track) keeping Lake 37 on right. Walk along bank for 500m – after metal hut turn left through gap in the hedge **(K)**. Turn right, follow path through scrub. Keep straight ahead to gravel track. Turn left then take path and follow to stile in hedgerow onto Spine Road. Cross road with extreme care, and turn left back to Neigh Bridge car park.

WALK 4

 **Time:** 3.5 hours

 **Distance:** 14km (8.7m)

Three villages walk

A great walk passing through three picturesque villages of the Western Water Park, all with their own charm and fascinating past. The route follows part of the Thames Path National Trail as it wends its way from the source at Kemble to London 184 miles downstream.



Start: Neigh Bridge Country Park

From the car park entrance right towards the Spine Road, **(A)** then left on the path to the Thames Path signpost, cross road and follow the lane, with lake on left and River Thames on right. Past holiday homes, continue to end of lane, right over metal bridge, and stay on Thames Path for 1 km, until you reach main road. **(B)** Cross road to wooden gate with care, keep straight on with river on left. At end of Church Walk, on corner turn left, then immediately right onto Back Street **(C)**.

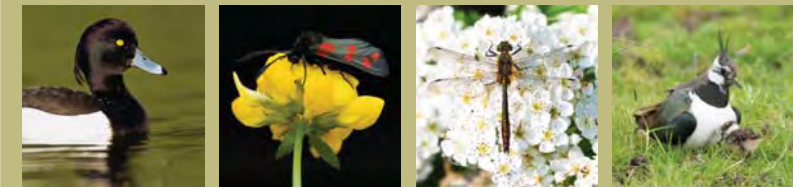
At end of road, before bend **(D)** straight ahead onto narrow public footpath with houses on left. Through two wooden kissing gates, then straight ahead and follow path with hedge on left. Continue around left turn keeping hedge on left, head over stile into Clayhill car park. **(E)** Leave car park at entrance, cross the road, turn right for 50m, and take path left at signpost. Follow path through trees until a stile at **(F)** Cross stile and turn right.

Follow track around lake, to grassy path. When track reaches a more grass/scrub area, keep lake on left then bear right with telegraph poles on right to **(G)**. At 'T' junction, right over small bridge through trees & ahead to road. Turn left into village, to War Memorial ahead. Turn left along road until you reach the bend & Upper Up Car park **(H)**.

Take path across playing field, exit is in top right-hand corner. Over bridge & two gates, cross road with extreme caution! Follow fenced path to Shornote bird hides, may be flooded following wet weather **(I)**. Continue past quarry workings and follow this path around until you reach a Country Park, with lake straight ahead. **(J)** Right along footpath and follow path until it divides at end of lake – take right hand path through woods, to stile.

Then it's woods-stile-field-bridge-field-stile-road! Cross over to bridge at **(L)** go immediately right through path in woods until stile at next road. Turn left along verge and cross over to stile next to gate. Follow edge of field to the small gate, cross over road to next stile, then take path diagonally across the field. **(M)** At junction of paths, turn right signposted Even and follow path through field gateway, then over narrow footbridge to river and join Thames Path, following river downstream (left). Follow path until **(N)** reach wooden bridge in to northern corner of Neigh Bridge Country Park, and path to car park.

Wildlife Watch



From left to right: Tufted Duck, Burnet Moth, Downy Emerald and Lapwing.

 **Refreshments:** White Hart (Ashton Keynes), Royal Oak (South Cerney) and Bakers' Arms (Somerford Keynes).

WALK/CYCLE 5

 **Time:** 2 - 2.5 hours (walking)

 **Distance:** 6km (3.8m)
with detour 7km (4.3m)

Cleveland Circuit – by foot or bike

One of the most peaceful circular walks in the area, along the historic Thames Path, winding around some of the oldest lakes, and returning next to one of the largest lakes in the CWP and our flagship nature reserve. This route is suitable for walking or cycling, although in winter wellies are advisable as the route can often be flooded. The route is also stile free, so could be suitable for heavy duty buggies.

(NB if Waterhay car park is under water, then the path nearest the Thames could be impassable).



Start at Waterhay car park

Follow path straight ahead from car park until you reach a junction **(A)**. Take right path along Thames Path, with open field on your right. Follow this path as it twists and turns around lake edges for almost 3km. The last part of this section takes you through a lightly wooded area **(B)**, and when the path turns northwards you will reach a junction with a five bar gate and kissing gate straight ahead of you **(C)**.

Go through the kissing gate, designed to accommodate bikes and buggies. [At this point **(C)** you can take a short diversion (500m) to visit the delightful Reed Hide **(D)**, an artist designed bird hide overlooking swathes of established reedbed, and one of the largest heronries in the south west of England].

At point **(C)**, if you have not taken the diversion, turn sharp left and follow gravel path keeping lake on right. At point **(C)**, if you have taken the diversion, bear right along gravel path with lake on right.

Stay on this path for approx 2km until you reach another kissing gate **(E)**. Go through gate and turn left onto bridlepath, meeting up with point **(A)** after 400m, and follow path back to Waterhay car park.


Wildlife Watch



From left to right: Mediterranean Gull, Banded Demoiselle and Little Egret.

WALK/CYCLE 6

 **Time:** 2 - 3 hours

 **Distance:** 16km (10m) or 18 km (11m)

Circular Cycle Route

Take your bikes and a picnic, and seek out some peaceful parts of the Cotswold Water Park on this great circular off road cycle route. If you have time take a detour to the Reed Hide at the Cleveland Lakes Nature reserve. Suitable for competent cyclists. The route can be rough and around the Thames Path it can be flooded in times of wet weather.



Start: Gateway Centre

Cross Spine Road **(A)** (slightly right) with care from Gateway Centre towards Lakes Care Centre, then left onto cycle path following signs and crossing roads (care) until opposite Bridge car park after 1.2km.

Cross road **(B)** (care) into car park through arches onto bridleway, and at end crossing over at top of Station Road. **(C)** Follow signs NCN45 for 2.3km, under more brick arches, past houses, along embankment until steep slope down to road. **(D)** Turn left back into South Cerney past pubs & shops. Bear right, turn right then left at memorial cross (Broadway Lane) **(E)**.

Wildlife Watch



From left to right: Hobby, Glow Worm, Yellowhammer and Great Crested Grebe.

(F) At end of houses after Beverstone Close take bridleway on right (wooden motorcycle barrier). After narrow wooden bridge/400m **(G)** take immediate left, keep stream on left. Follow grass then gravel track around lake past Whitefriars Sailing Club then tarmac to road.

Turn left onto road (extreme caution). Next left (Spine Road), join cycle path after 50m, **(H)** follow for 800m. At Clayhill Car Park (on right) cross road (care) to bridleway sign (motorcycle barrier) **(I)**. Follow track ahead, then bear right with hedge on left, then at the end go through gap in hedge ahead (motorcycle barrier). Onto permissive bridleway to end. Cross **(J)** road on bend (extreme caution) to gate and bridleway.

(K) (Wet weather alternative: after 200m, take kissing gate on left (Cleveland Lakes), follow gravel track for 2km to rejoin Thames Path **(M)** through kissing gate on right.

(L) Main route: go past kissing gate, then left at track junction joining Thames Path following around lakes for 2 miles until you reach a humped wooden bridge taking you over the stream **(M)**.

(Detour here to Reed hide – a great picnic stop!)

Continue Thames Path, left at first T junction, right at second T (Elmlea Meadow) then left onto Old Railway Line **(N)** Follow to main Spine Road, turn right onto cycle track and retrace route back to Gateway Centre (care road crossings).

 **Refreshments:** Gateway Centre café, Eliot Arms (South Cerney) and JR's Bistro (Ashton Keynes).