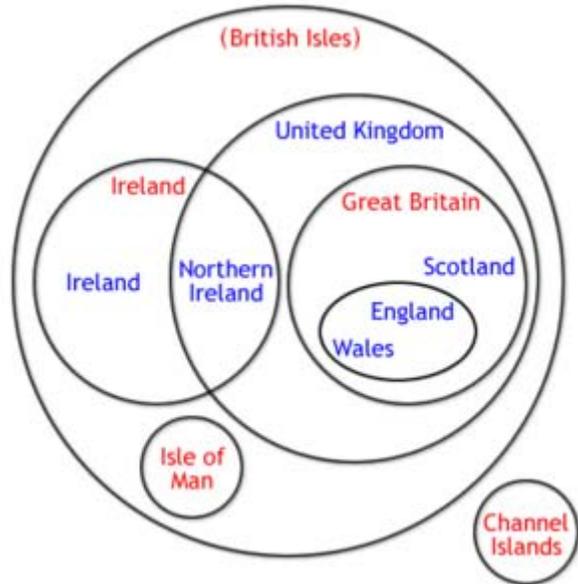


**Heritage Tour of Southwest England**  
**Sunday, 16 September 2007 - Saturday, 29 September 2007**

The **United Kingdom** is a sovereign [state](#). Its four [constituent countries](#), whilst having equal rights to elect [Members of Parliament](#) on (nominally) the same terms, are sometimes considered to be of different status. This view may be supported by the existence of [devolved](#) governments with different levels of power in Scotland and Wales. [This is an example of [Asymmetrical federalism](#), a constitutional structure under which some of the units (such as states or provinces) within a federal system have more extensive powers than others, not relative to each other but relative to the central government.]

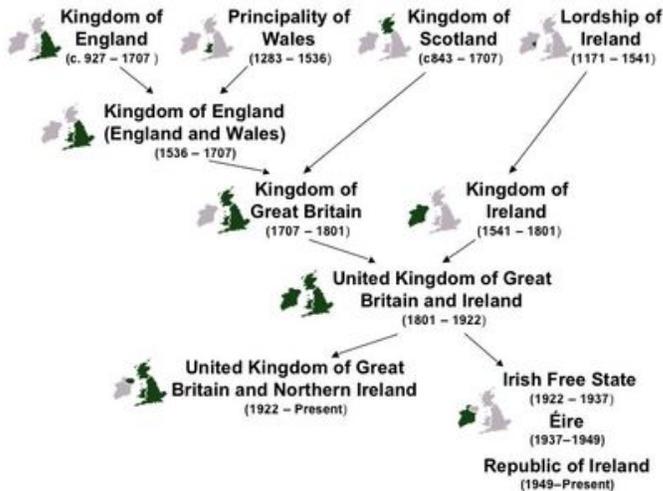


Due to historical precedent, [England](#), [Scotland](#), and [Wales](#) are [countries](#) and [nations](#) in their own right (although none of these is sovereign today). Wales is also a [principality](#) of the United Kingdom ([Prince of Wales](#) is a title usually given to the [heir apparent](#) to the [British throne](#)).

Wales is located in the south-west of [Great Britain](#).

**Wessex** was one of the seven major [Anglo-Saxon](#) kingdoms (the [Heptarchy](#), i.e., [Northumbria](#), [Mercia](#), [Kent](#), [East Anglia](#), [Essex](#), [Sussex](#) and [Wessex](#)) that preceded the [Kingdom of England](#).

It was named after the West Saxons and situated in the south and southwest of England. It existed as a kingdom from the [6th century](#) until the emergence of the English state in the [9th century](#), and as an [earldom](#) between [1016](#) and [1066](#). [The earldom was recently revived for [His Royal Highness The Prince Edward](#) (the youngest child and third son of [Queen Elizabeth II](#); he has held the title of [Earl of Wessex](#) since [1999](#).)]



"Wessex" has never had any official existence since that time, but it has remained a familiar term since [Thomas Hardy](#) (1840-1928) revived it for his [West Country](#) novels and poetry. Today some

wish to see it restored as a [region of England](#). [The **West Country** is an informal term for the area of south-western [England](#), sometimes associated with the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of [Wessex](#).]

**Anglo-Saxons** is a collective term usually used to describe culturally and linguistically related groups of people living in [Great Britain](#) from around the mid-[5th century AD](#). They spoke [Germanic languages](#) and included people known as [Angles](#), [Saxons](#), [Frisians](#) and [Jutes](#). These people, their culture and language came to southern Britain at about the same time as [Roman rule](#) ended.

It is a matter of some debate as to whether they completely displaced the existing population, or merely

contributed to it. It is also not known how strong a presence Germanic-speaking peoples had in Britain before the abandonment of the island by Rome. It is known, however, that German auxiliary troops had been used for centuries by Rome. If Germanic garrison soldiers had retained their language and culture, this may have facilitated any migration.

Over time the different people coalesced into a more unified [culture](#). Perhaps under [Offa of Mercia](#), and certainly under [Alfred the Great](#) and his successors, a kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons existed, which developed into the kingdom of [England](#) in the [10th century](#), one of the main developments of [Anglo-Saxon history](#).



[Cotswolds](#) – Britain’s largest “Area of Natural Beauty” (AONB), similar to a National Park, but less restrictive with regard to development. The Cotswolds is a hilly spine that runs southwest to northeast. It is referred to as “the heart of England”.

The highest point in the Cotswolds is Cleve Peak at 330 m elevation.

The Cotswolds are actually an escarpment with layers of exposed yellow oolitic limestone (CaCO<sub>3</sub>), similar to the limestone near Cumberland, TN, forming a steep cliff face, or cuesta. (Escarpments form Niagara Falls in NY, and the Onondaga area in Ontario,

Canada.)

The Cotswold Stone from this area contains many fossilized sea creatures, especially sea urchins, and it is commonly used in construction of picturesque stone bridges and homes in the area.

[The Cotswolds](#) in the heart of England is an area of outstanding beauty and famous picturesque villages made from the golden local stone. It is an area rich in history and one of the most popular regions of England to explore. From Stratford upon Avon in the North, to the beautiful Roman city of Bath in the South, the Cotswold journey takes you through magical little villages and places that have remained untouched and immaculately preserved throughout the ages.



**Wool Churches** refer to churches built in the Cotswolds region during the Middle Ages. Wool was the primary source of national prosperity for more than 1500 years, from Roman times. Also deriving from this connection between wool and national prosperity, the large red seat of the Lord Speaker of the Upper House in the British Parliament (the House of Lords) is called the [woolsack](#). It resembles a mattress, with no arms or back, and the Lord Speaker, complete with powered wig, and resting his mace behind him, sits on the woolsack while Parliament is in session.

[Bath](#). [Bailbrook Lodge](#)-- Georgian architecture (i.e., classic [architectural styles](#) current between about [1720](#) and [1840](#), named after the four [British monarchs](#) named George) country house with working waterwheel near riverside restaurant.



- Bath is a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage City between the Cotswolds and the Mendips Hills, with 2,000 years of history tied to Britain’s only natural

hot mineral springs.

- World Heritage Sites have been nominated and confirmed for inclusion on the list maintained by the international World Heritage Program administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 State Parties (countries) elected by the General Assembly of States Parties for a fixed term.
- The program aims to catalogue, name, and preserve sites of outstanding cultural or natural importance to the common heritage of humankind.
- The thermal waters rise from a depth of about 3000 meters at a daily rate of around 1.17 million liters (¼ million gallons), at a constant temperature of 116F.
  - The waters are thought to originate as rainwater which fell on the Mendip Hills to the south between 20— 80,000 years ago.
  - They reach the surface in three places in the city centre, and baths have them built over each of them.
- The Roman bath house (43 AD) museum has remarkably intact structures and artifacts. Romans knew Bath as *Aquae Sulis* (literally "the waters of Sulis"), identifying the Celtic goddess Sulis with Minerva, Roman goddess of crafts and wisdom. In ancient Celtic polytheism, Sulis was the deification of spring-water, especially of thermal spring-water, conceived as a nourishing, life-giving Mother goddess. She is known especially from Bath, where she was worshipped as Sulis Minerva.
- The Saxons and Normans also made use of the thermal waters for curative purposes and in the 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> C., they became very popular, attracting people of all sorts, from lepers to Royals.

There are 5,000 buildings in Bath “listed” for their architectural significance. The most prominent architectural features of the city of Bath include the [Kings Circus](#) (built 1754-1767, a circular space surrounded by large townhouses, in three segments) and the [Royal Crescent](#) (built 1767-1774, 30 houses). These features were designed by father-and-son architects, John Wood the Elder and the Younger.



The architects were fascinated by the occult, and together, the Circus and Crescent resemble Masonic symbols for the sun and moon. The architects’ vision was to lay out a Palladian architecture for the city,

with the Queen Square and the simple magnificence now known as the North and South Parades.

Georgian architecture includes the broad categories: Palladian, and its whimsical alternatives, Gothic and Chinoiserie. Together, these were the English-speaking world's equivalent of European Rococo styles. Palladian refers to a European style of architecture derived from the designs of the Italian architect Andrea Palladio (1508–1580).

- Palladianism became popular briefly in Britain during the mid-17th century. When the style was falling from favor in Europe, it had a surge in popularity in North America, most notably in the buildings designed by Thomas Jefferson.
- The term "Palladian" normally refers to buildings in a style inspired by Palladio's own work, all of which is in Venice and the Veneto. They include Villa Capra and Villa Badoer, as well as the [Chiesa del Santissimo Redentore \(Church of the Most Holy Redeemer\)](#), dedicated in 1592) in Venice--the most prominent site of any of Palladio's structures and one of the pinnacles of his career--the very church that was directly across the canal from our hotel room when we visited Venice in September 2005!



Author Jane Austen (“Pride and Prejudice”) lived in Bath from 1801 to 1806. Her parents were married in Bath and her father is buried there.

## Things to See and Do In and Around Bath



- Visit the [Roman Baths](#). The Roman Baths is below the modern street level and has four main features, the Sacred Spring, the Roman Temple, the Roman bath house and finds from Roman Bath.
  - The Georgian Pump Room is on the ground level.
  - Roman engineers surrounded the Spring with an irregular stone chamber lined with lead. To provide a stable foundation for this they drove oak piles into the mud.
  - At first this reservoir formed an open pool in a corner of the Temple courtyard but in the second century AD it was enclosed within a barrel vaulted building and columns and statue bases were placed in the Spring itself.
  - Enclosing the Spring in a dimly lit building in this way and erecting statues and columns within it must have enhanced the aura of mystery that surrounded it.
- Offerings were thrown into the Spring throughout the Roman period. Eventually the vaulted building collapsed into the Spring itself. We do not know when this was, but it is likely to have been in the sixth or seventh century.
- The oak piles sunk into the mud two thousand years ago continue to provide a stable foundation for the Roman reservoir walls today.
- Take the waters at the new [Thermae Bath Spa](#). Twenty-eight years after the last person bathed in Bath's natural thermal waters, Thermae Bath Spa is now open.
- "Pride of Bath" riverboat tour
- [Punt](#) (like a flat-bottomed gondola) on the Avon River
- Go on the comedy walk tour
- Gardens at Royal Victoria Park, Prior Park, and Sydney Gardens (the oldest park in Bath)
- Artisans blowing glass at Bath Aqua Glass workshop in Walcot Street
- Poet's corner--with a great view of Bath from Alexandra Park (up Wells Rd past Bear pub, then left up Shakespeare Ave)
- Solsbury Hill (200 meters) (London Rd to Betheaston, half way through the village, then sharp left) with circular traces of a Saxon camp used during the siege of Bath.
  - Solsbury Hill is a possible location of the [Battle of Mount Badon](#), in which [Romano-British](#) and [Celts](#) severely defeated an invading [Anglo-Saxon](#) army some time in the decade before or after 500 AD. It is a major political/military event of the 5th and 6th centuries in [Britain](#), but there is no certainty about its date or place. The earliest source does not name the commanders of the opposing forces, but by the 9th century the victory was attributed to [King Arthur](#).
  - Featured in Peter Gabriel's first solo release (in 1977) after leaving the rock band, Genesis. (From [songfacts.com](#)): Solsbury Hill is located near Bath, England, where Gabriel would often walk or jog. According to legend, a temple was built there to honor Apollo, god of light, music, and poetry.
    - Gabriel used an unusual 7/4 time signature on this. Another quirk: More instruments are added on each verse. Gabriel considers this one of his favorites. It's almost always included in his live shows.
    - While the song is about Peter Gabriel going out on his own from the rock band Genesis, Steve from Belmont, CA believe, as others do, that it talks to the life of Jesus Christ in 3 parts.
      - The first stanza about hearing from God on the mount about his final fate in life (he was something to observe - had to listen had no choice - couldn't believe the information). The middle stanza about his life with this knowledge - a bit depressed and going through the motions (keepin' silence I resigned, So I went from day to day) and finally the last stanza



about his torn feelings about his crucifixion that he knew he was pre-ordained to be part of, with the Romans around him and his eventually triumphant break to heaven (liberty she pirouette-when I think that I am free - who close their eyes but still can see - I will show another me).

- Each chorus has a version of 'Son, I've come to take you home' -- God calling him home from mortal man to God. People think the last version, where it is "they" have come to take me home - is the holy trinity. I and others believe that this is the most human version of what a real Jesus Christ might have felt. And being allegorical to his leaving mortal genesis for his heavenly solo career to boot (an amazing song writer).

- **Glastonbury Abbey** -- This is believed to be the site of the oldest Christian Church in the world, for centuries it has been the focus of Christian worship, visited by pilgrims from all corners of the earth, they are drawn here not simply for the abbey ruins, but because this is also the place where Joseph of Arimathea is believed to have buried the chalice used at the Last Supper.



- Glastonbury Abbey is set within beautiful parkland at the centre of this wonderfully atmospheric, ancient market town. Many believe the Holy Thorn tree that can be seen in the grounds sprang from Joseph of Arimathea's staff.
- Saint David and Saint Patrick are said to have visited here, and others believe the legends surrounding King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, that they lie buried amongst the substantial ruins of this once great abbey church.
- [From another website:] Magnificent Ruined Abbey set in 36 acres beautiful Somerset Parkland. Legendary burial place of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere.
- Visit our war winning museum to see model of pre. reformation abbey and the Othery Cope, Holy Thorn Tree, Gift Shop.
- Open Daily (except Christmas Day) 9.30am 6.00 pm (or dusk if earlier).  
Admission: Adult £3 From Bath & Bristol A37/A39  
Tel 01458 832267

**Cheddar Gorge** -- 9 miles from Wells, this spectacular gorge with its caves and wonderful walks has an attraction all of its own. Often called "England's Grand Canyon" Cheddar Gorge was carved out by a river that now runs underground. It is the tourist attraction of the vast underground caverns that causes thousands of visitors to flock to Cheddar. They queue in their hundreds to see the spectacular underground chambers which feature crystalline formations that have been created by water action. The caves are beautifully lit and present the visitor with a magical spectacle which is well worth seeing.



**Wookey Hole Caves and Papermill** – Britain's Most Spectacular Caves, on the outskirts of Wells. Once owned by Madame Tussaud's, along with the oldest working paper mill and a marvelous 19th Century penny arcade!

The caverns are breathtaking and guided tours are available. Awesome vaulted caverns and exquisite rock formations, with light & sound shows. Easily accessible on your guided tour. The Ravine of the River Axe Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors and learn of the prehistoric mammals that once roamed the valley floor. These dazzling show caves offer a glittering experience in floodlit chambers deep underground.

This is the spiritual home of the Witch of Wookey, a huge stalagmite associated to the legend that a witch once lived in the caves, and interestingly in excavations of 1912 the skeleton of a woman was found deep in the floor, close to a dagger!

**Wookey Hole Papermill** -- Last home of the ancient craft of hand-made papermaking. Here you can try it for yourselves. Free parking, scenic riverside picnic areas, self service restaurant & bar. Open 10 am- 5 pm

Tel 01749 672243

[Avon River Valley](#) -- The Avon River is the eastern tributary of the River Severn that rises near Naseby in central England and flows generally southwestward for 96 miles (154 km) through the counties of Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. The river shares the name Avon with several other rivers in Great Britain. The name *Avon* is a cognate of the Welsh word *afon* meaning "river" (f is pronounced as v in Welsh). "River Avon", therefore, literally means "River River". This explains the several English rivers with the name *Avon*.



The Avon River has a total fall of about 500 feet (150 metres). The river valley widens through the Vale of Evesham, especially below Warwickshire, where its fertile soil supports extensive agriculture. The river is known for its scenic beauty especially in the Vale of Evesham, which is flanked by the Cotswold Hills on the south and by the wooded Arden district on the north. The river abounds in coarse fish.

The Avon is continuously navigable from its mouth at Avonmouth as far as [Pulteney weir](#) in the centre of the city of Bath. The [Kennet and Avon Canal](#) connects with the Avon just below this weir and [Bath Locks](#). Together with the [Kennet Navigation](#) and the [River Thames](#) it provides a through route for [canal boats](#) from Bristol to [London](#). This navigable stretch can be split into three sections. It has locks (now decayed) and formerly carried some trade but now is used only by pleasure boats.

Important towns along the river include Rugby, Leamington Spa, Warwick, Stratford, and Evesham. The River Avon has literary associations with William Shakespeare, who was born and died at Stratford.

The [Kennet and Avon Canal](#) in southern [England](#). It is joined to the [Bristol Avon](#) at [Bath](#), and the Rivers [Kennet](#) and [Thames](#) at [Reading](#). The canal, which was built between [1794](#) and [1810](#), is 57 miles (92 km) long, but together with the [Avon Navigation](#) and [Kennet Navigation](#) it totals 87 miles (140 km).

In the later 19th and early 20th centuries the canal fell into disuse following competition from the [Great Western Railway](#) who owned the canal. In the later half of the 20th century the canal was restored largely by volunteers and today is a popular [heritage tourism](#) destination, for boating, [canoeing](#), [fishing](#), [walking](#) and [cycling](#). The canal is also important for [wildlife conservation](#).

The idea of an east-west waterway link across southern [England](#) was first mooted in [Elizabethan](#) times based on the fact that the Avon and Thames are only 3 miles (4.8 km) apart at one point. The sea route between [Bristol](#) and [London](#) was hazardous during the 18th and early 19th centuries, because [Atlantic](#) storms and the rugged coast line took their toll on the small coastal [sailing ships](#) of the day, and also because a succession of conflicts with [France](#) and her allies, frequently made British cargo ships navigating the [English channel](#), the prey of both [privateers](#) and [warships](#) of the [French navy](#).<sup>[1]</sup>



Although plans had been discussed for a canal, no action was taken until the early 18th century when the Avon navigation from Bristol to [Bath](#) and the Kennet navigation through [Reading](#) were built to meet local needs, independently of each other, but both under the supervision of surveyor-engineer [John Hoare](#).

The canal opened in [1810](#) after 16 years of construction, including the building of a number of [aqueducts](#) (including [Dundas](#) and [Avoncliff](#)), [locks](#) and [pumping stations](#). The pumping stations, at [Claverton](#) and [Crofton](#), were needed to overcome water supply problems. The final, and perhaps most impressive engineering feat being the completion of the [Caen Hill Locks](#) at Devizes.

The opening of the [Great Western Railway](#) in [1841](#) relieved the canal of much of its traffic, and in [1852](#) the railway company took over its running, levying high tolls until the canal was hardly used. The [Somerset Coal Canal](#) and [Wilts and Berks Canal](#) which supplied some of the trade for the Kennet and Avon closed in 1904 and 1906 respectively.

During [World War II](#) a large number of [concrete bunkers](#) known as [pillboxes](#) were built as part of the [GHQ Line](#) to [defend against an expected German invasion](#), and many of these are still visible today.

In [1990](#) Queen [Elizabeth II](#) reopened the canal. In 1996 the ongoing problem of water shortage was resolved when new [backpumps](#) were installed at the [Caen Hill Locks](#) flight of 29 locks in Devizes at a cost of [UK£1](#) million. The pumps raise water 235 feet (72 m) at a rate of 300,000 imperial [gallons](#) per hour (380 L/s).



The Kennet & Avon Canal Partnership, attracted the largest single [National Lottery](#) grant ever to be awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund - [UK£25](#) million towards a [UK£29](#) million project, to complete the restoration and to make it operational, sustainable and accessible for the enjoyment of future generations. The completion of restoration was celebrated in May 2003 with a visit from [HRH Prince Charles](#).

[Bath Locks](#) mark the divergence of the river Avon and the canal, 600 m south of [Pulteney Bridge](#). Alongside the bottom lock is a side [pound](#) and pumping station which pumps water up the locks to replace

that used each time the lock is opened. The next lock, Bath Deep Lock, is numbered 8/9 as these two locks were combined when the canal was restored in 1976. The new chamber has a depth of 19 feet 5 inches (5.92 m), making it [Britain's](#) deepest canal lock. Just above the Deep Lock is an area of water enabling the lock to refill and above this is Wash House Lock, followed by Abbey View Lock, by which there is another pumping station and, in quick succession, Pultney Lock and Bath Top Lock.

Above the Top Lock the canal passes through [Sydney Gardens](#) including two short [tunnels](#) and under two cast iron footbridges dating from [1800](#). Cleveland tunnel is 173 feet (52.73 m) long and runs under Cleveland House, the former headquarters of the Kennet and Avon Canal Company. A trap-door in the tunnel roof was employed to exchange paperwork between clerks above and barges below.



In the Avon valley south-west of Bath, the classic geographical example of a valley with all four forms of ground transport is found: road, rail, river, and the canal.

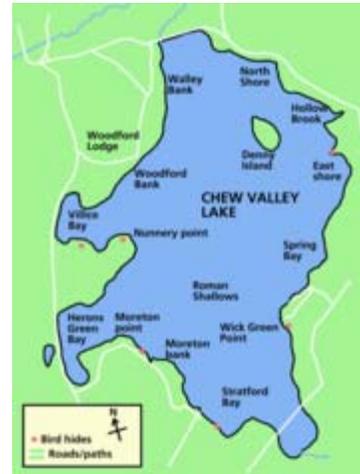
The canal passes [Claverton Pumping Station](#), which was built by [John Rennie](#) and worked continuously from [1813](#) until [1952](#). It then lay derelict until restored by a group of volunteers and re-opened in [1978](#).

There is a working model of the pumping station at the Kennet and Avon museum at [Devizes](#). The pumping station was used to pump water from the river Avon into the canal. Then the path crosses over the river and railway at [Dundas Aqueduct](#) and back over them again at the [Avoncliff Aqueduct](#). At the western end of the Dundas Aqueduct the canal is joined by the remains of the [Somerset Coal Canal](#), of which a short stretch has been restored to form the Brass Knocker basin.

It was in [Bradford on Avon](#) that the first sod was cut for the Kennet and Avon Canal in [1794](#) and soon afterwards there were wharves above and below [Bradford Lock](#). Next to the canal, a little way west of the lock, is a huge 14th century tithe barn. Further east are [swing bridges](#) and locks at [Semington](#), where the [Wilts and Berks Canal](#) joined, and [Seend](#).

[Chew Valley Lake](#) is a large reservoir in the Chew Valley, Somerset, England, and the fifth-largest artificial lake in the United Kingdom (the largest in south-west England), with an area 1,200 acres (4.9 km<sup>2</sup>). The lake, created in the early 1950s and opened by Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom|Queen Elizabeth II 1956, provides much of the drinking water for the city of Bristol and surrounding area, taking its supply from the Mendip Hills. Some of the water from the lake is used to maintain the flow in the River Chew.

It is relatively shallow, with an average depth of only 14 ft (4 m) top level and a maximum depth of just 37 ft (11 m). It is fed by several small rivers, and it flows into the River Chew for 17 miles (27 km) before it joins the Avon to head out to sea. The deepest part is near the dam and the outlet tower, where the steeply sloping shores of Walley Bank and the north shore result in depths of up to 20 ft (6 m). "Denny Island", above the surface throughout the year, is wooded and provides a habitat for wildlife.



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In 2002 a 1.9-mile (3 km) safe cycle route, the Chew Lake West Green Route, was opened around the western part of the lake. It forms part of the Padstow to Bristol West Country Way, [National Cycle Network](#) Route 3. It has all-weather surfacing, providing a smooth off-road facility for ramblers, mobility-challenged visitors and cyclists of all abilities. It was funded by Bath and North East Somerset Council with the support of Sustrans and the Chew Valley Recreational Trail Association. Minor roads around the lake are also frequently used by cyclists.

Prior to the flooding of the reservoir, archaeological excavations were carried out by Philip Rahtz and Ernest Greenfield employed by the Ministry of Works, from 1953 to 1955. The excavations found evidence of people belonging to the consecutive periods known as Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic (Old, Middle and New Stone Age), Bronze Age and Iron Age, including implements such as stone knives, flint blades and the head of a mace, along with buildings and graves. The artifacts from this period are held at [Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery](#).

Excavations have also uncovered Roman remains, indicating agricultural and industrial activity from the second half of the first century to third century AD. These finds included a moderately large [villa](#), where wooden writing tablets (the first in the UK) with [ink](#) writing were found. The tablets were sent to the [British Museum](#), but other Roman material is on display at the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery with the lake's other historical artifacts.

[The Mendip Hills](#) are a range of [limestone hills \(karst\)](#) situated to the south of [Bristol](#) and [Bath](#) in north [Somerset, England](#). The hills are bounded by the [Somerset Levels](#) in the south and west, and the [River Avon](#) and [Chew Valley Lake](#) in the north. The hills give their name to the roughly analogous local government district of [Mendip](#), but some of the northern slopes are located in the bordering Unitary Authorities of [North Somerset](#) and [Bath and North East Somerset](#), part of the former [County of Avon](#) which was dissolved in [1996](#). 200 km<sup>2</sup> of the Mendips are an [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#), a designation which gives the area the same level of protection as a [national park](#). The Mendip Hills AONB Service and visitor centre is at the Charterhouse Centre near [Blagdon](#).



The Mendip Hills are the most southerly Carboniferous Limestone Upland in Britain and are comprised of three major anticlinal structures, each with a core of older [Devonian sandstone](#) and [Silurian volcanic](#) rocks. The latter are quarried for use in road construction and as a [concrete](#) aggregate..

The response of the limestone to weathering has resulted in a range of surface features, including [gorges](#), dry valleys, [scree](#)s and [dolines](#). These are complemented underground by a large number of [caves](#), including [Wookey Hole](#) both beneath the [plateau](#) and at the base of the southern [escarpment](#). There are also [limestone pavements](#), and a number of [gorges](#), most famously [Cheddar Gorge](#) and [Burrington Combe Springs](#), a number of which deposit [tufa](#), are a particular feature of the eastern part of the hills. The Devonian and Silurian rocks are generally more resistant to weathering and form some of the highest points on the hills.



The highest point of the Mendip Hills is [Beacon Batch](#) on [Black Down](#) at 325 [metres](#) (1068 [feet](#)) above sea level.

[Wells](#). [The White Hart](#) in Wells. 15<sup>th</sup> C. lodging house for the church. Wells, situated at the foot of the picturesque Mendip Hills, is most certainly one of England's most delightful cathedral cities.

The cathedral buildings date 13th - 15th century and the impressive cathedral west front is adorned with many statues. The hallowed interior of the cathedral is an absolute joy for it has a wonderful branching staircase which leads to the chapter house and a 14th century clock.

There are many other buildings associated with the cathedral among which is the famous Vicars Close with its beautifully preserved 14th century houses each topped with a magnificent tall chimney. Cross the cathedral green and you will find the moated Bishop's Palace where the famed Well's swans ring a bell sited near the draw-bridge for food. All of these very fine buildings form part of one of England's largest medieval ecclesiastical precincts. There are many other interesting buildings in and around Wells, not least the buildings which form the well known Royal Wells School of Music.

[Wells Cathedral](#) -- Probably the finest example of a gothic cathedral anywhere in Europe, and along with Vicars Close and the moated Bishop's Palace next door makes a memorable visit. Wells Cathedral is the most perfect example of an ecclesiastical city from the days when the order of life was God, King and country. It is the most superb place, with an exterior showing the finest array of medieval statues to survive from the 12th and 13th centuries in this country.



Here, you gaze in wonder at niches containing 365 figures carved from mellow Doulling stone. Soaring skywards are three magnificent towers, although these were not added until later in the 14th and 15th centuries. Even the collection of buildings belonging to the cathedral are spectacular, from the row of cottages crowned with elegant tall chimney pots in Vicars Row, to the dramatic splendour of the walled and moated Bishop's Palace. Around the wide green fronting the cathedral are other church properties, all speak of the wealth and power of the church, which in medieval times was without parallel.

Once inside the cathedral you are immediately overwhelmed by its awesome size and grandeur.

- In the aisles beneath intricate arches, lie the remains of a long line of Bishops of Wells.
- The art of the early stone mason is evident as you look down the nave past lofty columns and decorative arcades to the triumphant "Scissor-Arch" at the crossing. This elaborate feature was designed to assist with the weight of further enhancement of the 14th century.
- In the south transept there is a stone Saxon font. This is still in use today, and is believed to be a relic from the first cathedral.
- The north transept shows what for many is a complete oddity from the 14th century. It is a painted clock which on the quarter of the hours shows jousting knights and two medieval warriors striking a bell with giant battleaxes. If the cathedral is a wonder, the clock is a delight!

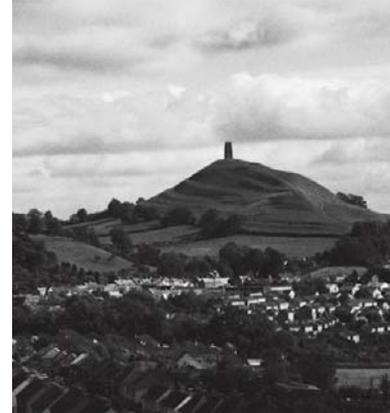
**Glastonbury Tor** -- Swirling mists rise over the Somerset Levels, where approaching the town of Glastonbury, suddenly above the mist you catch a glimpse of Glastonbury Tor, an ancient place of pilgrimage which has for centuries been a source of mystery and legends.

Of the legends, two important ones concern Joseph of Arimathea, and King Arthur.

Joseph, is said to have come from the Holy Land bringing with him - the Holy Grail - the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper. The cup is supposedly buried on Tor Hill.

King Arthur's body is reputed to have been brought to Glastonbury for burial after being slain by Mordred or Medraut, his illegitimate son. Thus, ending his invincibility.

Glastonbury Tor is claimed to be the legendary Avalon, seat of the Knights of the Round Table. Other Glastonbury traditions include Arthur receiving the Excalibur sword from the Lady of the Lake at Mere Pool.



In Glastonbury Arthurian legends are kept alive, and from almost every shop you can buy present-day memorabilia of this mysterious magical time. Even in the Palace of Westminster there are said to be Arthurian paintings in the Queen's robing room!

Whatever you choose to believe, the climb up Glastonbury Tor is well worth the effort. From the top there are magnificent views in all directions, and if on descent your spirits feel uplifted and your heart a little lighter, then that too is part of the magic and mystery of historic Glastonbury Tor.

**Somerset Levels peat bogs** -- A **bog** is a [wetland](#) type that accumulates [acidic peat](#), a deposit of dead plant material. The term **peat bog** in common usage is not entirely redundant, although it would be proper to call these **sphagnum bogs** if the peat is composed mostly of acidophilic [moss](#) (peat moss or *Sphagnum* spp.). [Lichens](#) are a principal component of peat in the far north. [Moisture](#) is provided entirely by [precipitation](#), and for this reason bog waters are acidic and termed ombrotrophic (or [cloud-fed](#)), which accounts for their low plant nutrient status. Excess rainfall outflows, with dissolved [tannins](#) from the plant matter giving a distinctive tan colour to bog waters.

A bog is a very early stage in the formation of [coal](#) deposits. In fact, bogs can catch fire and often sustain long-lasting smouldering blazes, producing smoke and [carbon dioxide](#), thus causing health and environmental problems. After drying, peat is used as a [fuel](#).

The other major use of dried peat is as a [soil amendment](#) (sold as *moss peat* or *sphagnum*) to increase the soil's capacity to retain [moisture](#) and enrich the soil. It is also used as a [mulch](#). These industrial uses of peat threaten the continued existence of bogs and thereby [biodiversity](#). More than 90% of the bogs in England have been destroyed.



**Wiltshire County** -- Wiltshire is a beautiful County situated in the South-Western parts of England, with much of the [county](#) designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Trowbridge is the vibrant, industrial and commercial county town. Salisbury is a stunning medieval city with the beautiful Salisbury Cathedral boasting the highest spire in England. Boating along the famous Kennet and Avon Canal is a popular and relaxing pastime. Wiltshire has a multitude of exciting attractions including, the worldwide famous ancient

monument 'Stonehenge' symbolizing mystery, power and endurance. Other local places of interest are Swindon, the biggest town in the county, Chippenham, and the quaint old town of Devizes.

**Longleat House and Estate** -- On entering the great grounds of Longleat House through the entrance known as "Heaven's Gate" visitors are immediately struck by the awesome beauty of the place, as it appears to be more castle than house. This is one of the loveliest of all the great Elizabethan houses, the stimulus for which came from the Queen herself. Each summer she made her Royal progress through the land to visit her most favoured subjects, particularly those who had attained great wealth and power through serving the Tudor throne. These men of high position vied with each other, each attempting to out-do the other by providing lavish entertainments for the Queen. The first of these Elizabethan mansions was Longleat, it was built by Sir John Thynne.



Sir John had been a favourite of the Duke of Somerset, and was Knighted by him on the field of battle. Somerset later fell from power, causing Sir John to be imprisoned in the Tower of London. Fortunately he obtained his release on payment of a large fine, and it is then that he began work on the Augustinian Priory purchased by him in 1540. The building was close to the Wiltshire-Somerset border, on the banks of a stream known as the Long Leat.

It took many years for the house to reach completion, sadly once it was finished it was ravaged by fire. Sir John was devastated, but quickly sought the aid of Robert Smythson and began to build again. Between them they built what remains the first important Renaissance building in the land, fitting for Sir John to entertain Queen Elizabeth I on a grand scale which he did in the summer of 1575.

Throughout centuries Longleat has been embellished by various successors, some of whom have a colourful history. In 1682 one successor was murdered in Pall Mall, leaving the house to pass to his cousin Sir Thomas Thynne who was created Viscount Weymouth in that same year. He was a cultured man and was responsible for Bishop Ken's library. Bishop Ken was one of the Seven Bishops in the famous trial of 1688. Following his acquittal he was given asylum by the 1st Viscount and he died at Longleat in 1711.

The 3rd Viscount became Marquis of Bath in 1789, he employed Capability Brown to re-arrange the landscape, set out the formal gardens, form lakes from the Long Leat, and plant woods. **Lancelot Brown (1716 – 6 February 1783)**, more commonly known as **Capability Brown**, was an [English landscape gardener](#). He is remembered as "the last of the great English [eighteenth-century](#) artists to be accorded his due", and "England's greatest gardener". He designed over 170 parks, many of which still endure.



This then was the beginning of Longleat Park, which today is a thriving animal Kingdom that was Britain's first "safari park" it opened in 1966 and soon became known for its magnificent Lions. Other animals have since joined, a baby white Rhino was born here in 1984, giving Longleat a growing worldwide reputation for the care of endangered species. It has maintained this position ever since.

Within the house visitors can see a range of beautifully furnished and lavishly appointed magnificent rooms.

Here are just a few of the romantic rooms on show to the public:

- The Saloon, formerly the long gallery, it has walls hung with priceless tapestries, magnificent French furniture, a stunning fireplace, and a beautiful gilded ceiling.
- In the Red Library there are bookcases lined with thousands of books collected from many centuries, comfortable English furniture, magnificent portraits and other works of art, all beneath

- a richly decorated ceiling.
- The Great Hall retains the charm of the Elizabethan period. It is notable for its wonderful wood carving, imperious fireplace, paintings, coats of arms, and again this room has unique ceiling decoration incorporating heraldic shields amongst much intricate carving.
- Interestingly, in the Conference rooms there is a display of paintings by the present Marquess, who himself is a talented painter.

In the grounds visitors can see some of Capability Brown's work, this includes the Orangery, effective garden statuary, and lakes.

The house is in the care of the 7th Marquess of Bath who has worked tirelessly to make it one of the country's foremost tourist attractions. To the delight of many visitors this pleasant bohemian English aristocratic gentleman has been known to pop out for a chat, or to point out something new and relevant. His contribution to the house and all we see today cannot be under-estimated.



The East African Reserve is a place where you can roam freely amongst giraffe, zebra and camels. All animals here are seen in circumstances as close as possible to their natural habitat; these include the famous Lions of Longleat, rhino's, monkeys, gorillas and tigers.

Apart from the pure pleasure and enjoyment of this noble house, visitors can part-take of a wealth of experiences, there are attractions as diverse as the "world's longest maze" to a balloon ride; other attractions feature a children's adventure castle, Victorian kitchens, a tropical butterfly garden, needlework centre,

train and boat rides. There is a secret garden and a gardeners pleasure walk. Other mazes to have fun in are the sun maze, love labyrinth, and the lunar labyrinth. The pets corner is beloved by all little ones, so too is Postman Pat's village.

**Warminster** -- This is a former wool and corn town with a fascinating history stretching back to Saxon times. It sits comfortably beneath the chalk downland of the Salisbury Plain at the head of the beautiful Wyle Valley. The centre of the town is noted for its many historic 17th and 18th century houses, in its shopping streets you only have to gaze above glaringly modern shop fronts to see attractive mullioned windows from another age. Warminster was once a popular stopping place for coaches as can be seen by the beautiful buildings of the Bath Arms, dating back to the 1600's, the Anchor and the Old Bell Inn dating from 1483. All have well preserved period features belonging to a by-gone age, whilst offering today's traveller every comfort in tastefully decorated accommodation.

**Crop Circles** -- GATEWAY TO WESSEX -- Ever since the late eighties the small village of Avebury, and its surrounding area, covering a 5 mile radius, has been what we can only describe as the "Homeland" for Crop Circles.

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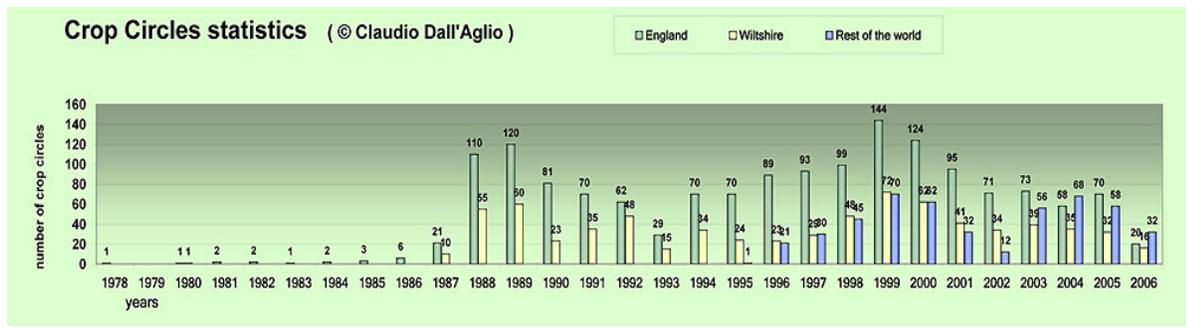
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The [River Wylve](#) (pronounced 'Why-lee') is a tributary of the [River Avon](#) in [Wiltshire](#). It rises south-west of [Warminster](#), and passes through that town. It heads generally east, forming the [Wylve Valley](#), which the [A36 road](#) and the [Wessex Main Line](#) both use. It then meets the [River Nadder](#) at [Wilton](#), and eventually drains to the sea by at [Christchurch](#) as a [tributary](#) of the [River Avon](#). Both Wilton and, indirectly, Wiltshire, are named after the river. There is also a village of [Wylve](#).

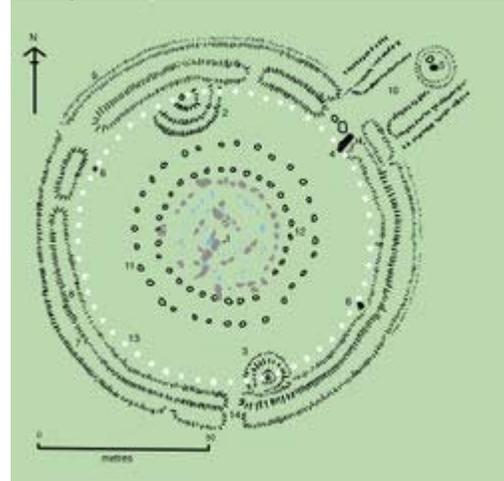
**Stonehenge** is a [neolithic](#) and [bronze age megalithic monument](#) composed of [earthworks](#) surrounding a circular setting of large [standing stones](#) and is one of the most famous [prehistoric](#) sites in the world. [Archaeologists](#) think that the standing stones were erected between 2500 BC and [2000 BC](#) although the surrounding circular earth bank and ditch, which constitute the earliest phase of the monument, have been dated to about 3100 BC.



The Stonehenge complex was built in several construction phases spanning 3,000 years, although there is evidence for activity both before and afterwards on the site.

### **Stonehenge 1 (ca. 3100 BC)**

The first monument consisted of a circular bank and ditch enclosure (*7 and 8*) measuring around 110 m (360 feet) in diameter with a large entrance to the north east and a smaller one to the south (*14*). This first stage is dated to around [3100 BC](#) after which the ditch began to silt up naturally and was not cleared out by the builders. Within the outer edge of the enclosed area was dug a circle of 56 pits, each around 1 m in diameter (*13*), known as the [Aubrey holes](#) after [John Aubrey](#), the seventeenth century [antiquarian](#) who was thought to have first identified them. The pits may have contained standing timbers, creating a [timber circle](#) although there is no excavated evidence of them. A small outer bank beyond the ditch could also date to this period (*9*).



### **Stonehenge 2 (ca. 3000 BC)**

Evidence of the second phase is no longer visible. It appears from the number of postholes dating to this period that some form of timber structure was built within the enclosure during the early [3rd millennium BC](#).

### **Stonehenge 3 I (ca. 2600 BC)**

Archaeological excavation has indicated that around [2600 BC](#), timber was abandoned in favour of stone and two concentric crescents of holes (called the Q and R Holes) were dug in the centre of the site. The holes held up to 80 standing stones (shown blue on the plan)

The north eastern entrance was also widened at this time with the result that it precisely matched the direction of the [midsummer sunrise](#) and [midwinter sunset](#) of the period. This phase of the monument was abandoned unfinished however, the small standing stones were apparently removed and the Q and R holes purposefully backfilled. Even so, the monument appears to have eclipsed the site at [Avebury](#) in importance towards the end of this phase. The [Heelstone](#) (5) may also have been erected outside the north eastern entrance during this period although it cannot be securely dated and may have been installed at any time in phase 3.

### **Stonehenge 3 II (2450 BC to 2100 BC)**

The next major phase of activity at the tail end of the [3rd millennium BC](#) saw 30 enormous [sarsen](#) stones (*shown grey on the plan*) brought from a quarry around 24 miles (40 km) north to the site on the [Marlborough Downs](#). The stones were dressed and fashioned with [mortise and tenon](#) joints before 30 were erected as a 33 m (108 ft) diameter circle of standing stones with a 'lintel' of 30 stones resting on top. The lintels were joined to one another using another woodworking method, the [tongue in groove joint](#). Each standing stone was around 4.1 m (13.5 feet) high, 2.1 m (7.5 feet) wide and weighed around 25 tons. Each had clearly been worked with the final effect in mind; the [orthostats](#) widen slightly towards the top in order that their perspective remains constant as they rise up from the ground while the lintel stones curve slightly to continue the circular appearance of the earlier monument. The sides of the stones that face inwards are smoother and more finely worked than the sides that face outwards. The average thickness of these stones is 1.1 m (3.75 feet) and the average distance between them is 1 m (3.5 feet). A total of 74 stones would have been needed to complete the circle and unless some of the sarsens were removed from the site, it would seem that the ring was left incomplete. Of the lintel stones, they are each around 3.2 m long (10.5 feet), 1 m (3.5 feet) wide and 0.8 m (2.75 feet) thick. The tops of the lintels are 4.9 m (16 feet) above the ground.

Within this circle stood five [trilithons](#) of dressed [sarsen](#) stone arranged in a horseshoe shape 13.7 m (45 feet) across with its open end facing north east. These huge stones, ten uprights and five lintels, weigh up to 50 tons each and were again linked using complex jointings. They are arranged symmetrically; the smallest pair of trilithons were around 6 m (20 feet) tall, the next pair a little higher and the largest, single trilithon in the south west corner would have been 7.3 m (24 feet) tall. Only one upright from the Great Trilithon still stands; 6.7 m (22 ft) is visible and a further 2.4 m (8 feet) is below ground.

The images of a 'dagger' and 14 'axe-heads' have been recorded carved on one of the sarsens, known as stone 53. Further axe-head carvings have been seen on the outer faces of stones known as numbers 3, 4, and 5. They are difficult to date but are morphologically similar to later Bronze Age weapons; [recent laser scanning work on the carvings](#) supports this interpretation. The pair of trilithons in north east are smallest, measuring around 6 m (20 feet) in height and the largest is the trilithon in the south west of the horseshoe is almost 7.5 m (24 feet) tall.

This ambitious phase is [radiocarbon dated](#) to between [2440](#) and [2100 BC](#).

### **Stonehenge 3 III**

Later in the Bronze Age, the bluestones appear to have been re-erected for the first time, although the precise details of this period are still unclear. They were placed within the outer sarsen circle and at this time may have been trimmed in some way. A few have timber working-style cuts in them like the sarsens themselves, suggesting they may have been linked with lintels and part of a larger structure during this phase.

### **Stonehenge 3 IV (2280 BC TO 1930 BC)**

This phase saw further rearrangement of the bluestones as they were placed in a circle between the two settings of sarsens and in an oval in the very centre. Some archaeologists argue that some of the bluestones in this period were part of a second group brought from Wales. All the stones were well-spaced uprights without any of the linking lintels inferred in Stonehenge 3 III. The Altar Stone may have been moved within the oval and stood vertically. Although this would seem the most impressive phase of work, Stonehenge 3 IV was rather shabbily built compared to its immediate predecessors, the newly re-installed

bluestones were not at all well founded and began to fall over. However, only minor changes were made after this phase. Stonehenge 3 IV dates from [2280](#) to [1930 BC](#).

### **Stonehenge 3 V (2280 BC to 1930 BC)**

Soon afterwards, the north eastern section of the Phase 3 IV Bluestone circle was removed, creating a horseshoe-shaped setting termed the Bluestone Horseshoe. This mirrored the shape of the central sarsen Trilithons and dates from [2270](#) to [1930 BC](#). This phase is contemporary with the famous [Seahenge](#) site in [Norfolk](#).

### **After the Monument (1600 BC on)**

Even though the last known construction of Stonehenge was about [1600 BC](#), and the last known usage of Stonehenge was during the [Iron Age](#) (if not as late as the [7th century](#)), where Roman coins, prehistoric pottery, an unusual bone point and a skeleton of a young male (780-410 cal BC) were found, we have no idea if Stonehenge was in continuous use or exactly how it was used.

The question that dominates the debate as to what Stonehenge was used for can be easily divided into whether it was a religious or a scientific observatory. Few theories have given much emphasis to the possible practical application of astronomical observation, on the grounds that such a mammoth undertaking must have had an ideological rather than practical basis. There is, in other words, a gap between religious explanations and those based on a more modern idea of scientific astronomy. At the time there was no other way of establishing precise calendar dates, whether these were needed for agricultural, social or seasonal-religious reasons. The double-level circle of the monument defined the observational vantage-point from which the movement of constellations could be accurately established. A less massively-founded edifice than Stonehenge, such as one of wood, would not retain accuracy over any long period, and without at least one authoritative comparison, events and seasons had no chronological index since the length of the year in days was not known. Whatever its goals, the cooperative effort necessary for such a large constructive undertaking can be appreciated in relation to the unique value of accurate dating for the whole region of southern Britain, but our ignorance of the social context of the time has meant that this area has been little addressed.

Many archaeologists believe Stonehenge was an attempt to render in permanent stone the more common timber structures that dotted Salisbury Plain at the time, such as those that stood at [Durrington Walls](#). Modern [anthropological](#) evidence has been used by [Mike Parker Pearson](#) and the [Malagasy](#) archaeologist [Ramilisonina](#) to suggest that timber was associated with the living and stone with the ancestral dead amongst prehistoric peoples. They have argued that Stonehenge was the terminus of a long, ritualised funerary procession for treating the dead, which began in the east, during sunrise at [Woodhenge](#) and [Durrington Walls](#), moved down the Avon and then along the Avenue reaching Stonehenge in the west at sunset. The journey from wood to stone via water was, they consider, a symbolic journey from life to death. There is no satisfactory evidence to suggest that Stonehenge's astronomical alignments were anything more than symbolic and current interpretations favour a ritual role for the monument that takes into account its numerous burials and its presence within a wider landscape of [sacred](#) sites.

In a [2001](#) exercise in [experimental archaeology](#), an attempt was made to transport a large stone along a land and sea route from Wales to Stonehenge. Volunteers pulled it for some miles (with great difficulty) on a wooden sledge over land, using modern roads and low-friction netting to assist sliding, but once transferred to a replica prehistoric boat, the stone sank in [Milford Haven](#), before it even reached the rough seas of the [Bristol Channel](#).

As far as the stones, it has been suggested that timber [A-frames](#) were erected to raise the stones, and that teams of people then hauled them upright using ropes. The topmost stones may have been raised up incrementally on timber platforms and slid into place or pushed up ramps. The carpentry-type joints used on the stones imply a people well skilled in woodworking and they could easily have had the knowledge to erect the monument using such methods. In [2003](#) retired construction worker [Wally Wallington](#) demonstrated ingenious techniques based on fundamental principles of levers, fulcrums and counterweights to show that a single man can rotate, walk, lift and tip a ten-ton cast-concrete monolith into

an upright position. He is progressing with his plan to construct a simulated Stonehenge comprising of eight uprights and two lintels.

Estimates of the manpower needed to build Stonehenge put the total effort involved at millions of hours of work. Stonehenge 1 probably needed around 11,000 [man-hours](#) (or 460 [man-days](#)) of work, Stonehenge 2 around 360,000 (15,000 man-days or 41 years) and the various parts of Stonehenge 3 may have involved up to 1.75 million hours (73 000 days or 200 years) of work. The working of the stones is estimated to have required around 20 million hours (830 000 days or 2300 years) of work using the primitive tools available at the time. Certainly, the will to produce such a site must have been strong, and it is considered that advanced social organization would have been necessary to build and maintain it. However, Wally Wallington's work suggests that Stonehenge's construction may have required fewer man-hours than previously estimated.

**Salisbury Plain** is a 300 sq mi (780 km<sup>2</sup>) chalk plateau in central southern England, part of the Southern England Chalk Formation. Most of the plain lies within Wiltshire, with some in Berkshire. The plain is famous for its rich archaeology, including Stonehenge, one of England's best known landmarks. The plain is sparsely populated and is the largest remaining area of calcareous grassland in northwest Europe.

The plain, and some of the surrounding area, is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Durrington and Amesbury are the only towns on the plain. It is one of the Ministry of Defence and NATO's principal training grounds because of the sparse population. The plain is also home to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down, much of whose work is secret.

In the mid-19th century the wool and cloth industry began to decline, leading to a decline in the population and change in land use from sheep farming to agriculture and military use. Wiltshire became one of the poorest counties in England during this period of decline.

The scarp of the downs is to the north overlooking the Vale of Pewsey. Its highest point is Walbury Hill in Berkshire, at 297 m (974ft) above sea level. The Wylde, Avon and Bourne valleys cut through the plain. There are a number of chalk carvings on the plain, of which the most famous is the Westbury White Horse. The Kennet and Avon Canal runs to the north of the plain, through the Vale of Pewsey.



**[Vale of Pewsey](#)**. The Vale of Pewsey runs East from Devizes, with the Marlborough Downs to the North and Salisbury Plain to the South. Through it run the Kennet & Avon Canal and the railway line from Paddington to Exeter.

**[Devizes](#)** -- Devizes is a small market town situate on the edge of the great expanse of Salisbury Plain. Originally bounded by three manors, hence its name - a version of 'ad divisas' meaning, at the boundary. The town shows elegant houses of the 18th-century and Tudor houses can be seen in St. John's Alley. Devizes Castle, constructed in the 19th-century, contains fragments of the earlier castle, demolished

following the Civil War. The church of St. John was built in the 12th-century, for the castle. St. Mary's church was built in the town at the same time. Both churches feature fine Norman work and St. John's has a magnificent tower.



Historically, the town dates back to the Bronze Age, a fact borne out by the many findings of interesting relics from this period. These, together with relics from the Neolithic and Iron Age, are housed in the local museum.

There are many other interesting features in this lovely old town and these include an ancient market cross and the Bear Inn which dates 16th-century. The inn was visited by Fanny Burney in 1730 and the landlord was the father of the painter Thomas Lawrence.

More latterly, the town is known for the Kennet and Avon Canal. The canal passes close to the town, and rises with the aid of 29 locks built by Rennie, to a height of 237 feet in two and a half miles. It is one of the longest flight of locks in the country.

**Marlborough** -- This little town, standing on the River Kennet, is best known for its partially arcaded High Street, and for the famous public school. It developed along the old stagecoach route from London to Bath. It is an ancient town with a long history and many relics from the Stone Age and the Romans have been found here.



Marlborough College, was founded in the year 1843. Today, it is one of the finest educational establishments in England and occupies some beautiful old buildings.

The town is fortunate in its attractive and very broad High Street. Many of the handsome buildings in the street are from the Georgian period, few earlier buildings survive, and this was due to Civil War damage and a series of fires. Each end of the High Street has a Perpendicular church. The church of St. Mary is at one end and from here a curfew bell is rung each evening. Interestingly, this church was severely damaged by fire in 1653, most of the church, save for the Norman west doorway, had to be rebuilt. At the other end is St. Peter's church, this too, has a Norman doorway. Both churches have a cool serenity and house many treasures. A delightful feature of Marlborough is its many ancient little alleys that hide a wealth of black and white half timbered cottages. A wander around the High Street, the alleyways and a visit to the churches will provide a pleasant trip into Marlborough's historic past. While in the outskirts of the town at nearby Manton, you can see the famous White Horse, said to have been cut in 1804. In the regions surrounding Marlborough there are many pre-historic remains and of these perhaps the best noted is the hill-fort of Barbury Castle.

**Avebury Stone Circles** -- This is one of the most spectacular stone circles in Britain, it certainly eclipses Stonehenge, for not only is it older, but you are able to wander around the stones unhindered by protective ropes as is the case at Stonehenge. Thus the visitor can delight in giving themselves up to the mystery and atmosphere of the site, enjoying to the full unhewn stones in attractive natural shapes, hauled thousands of years ago from the Marlborough Downs.

For years the history of the stones has remained a mystery, Archaeologists have pondered at the purpose of



the stones, and perhaps all of this is part of their appeal. However, it can now be said with some certainty that the stones came from the Marlborough Downs, but their purpose continues to perplex - maybe they were something to do with pagan rituals or sun worship - whatever, a visit here is truly uplifting, spiritual and rewarding.

The circle, standing inside a great bank of earth stretches to almost 1500 feet in diameter, it is an awesome sight especially when seen against a background of autumnal mist rising across the meadows. Dappled sunlight casts a kind of magic over the site, but whatever the weather this is a site where you can give full reign to your imaginings, your mind wandering back to the mysterious times when this once barren landscape was populated by Bronze and Iron-Age settlers.

**Lacock Abbey** -- Lacock is one of the most beautiful villages in England, with houses dating from the 15th-century to the 18th-century. At the heart of the village lies the magnificent abbey founded by Ella, Countess of Salisbury in the year 1232. The abbey building is a confection of many styles and features a stunning octagonal tower, tall chimney pots and decorative mullioned windows. It remained an abbey until the reign of Henry VIII when the Dissolution of the Monasteries was caused by the Henry's wish to divorce Queen Catherine.



At the time of the Dissolution, the abbey was sold to William Sharington who made it his home. He had travelled widely on the continent and had a particular love for Italy, thus he introduced the Italian style of architecture to the alterations to be made to Lacock Abbey. When he died in 1553 having no issue, the house passed to his niece Mrs John Talbot. Between the 18th and 19th-centuries the Abbey underwent a series of alterations and the stunning Gothic revival style is a legacy from the 18th-century when alterations were made by the architect Sanderson Miller.

The Abbey remained in the ownership of the Talbot's for over 400 years. During this time the family's most famous member was William Henry Fox Talbot, who in 1835 pioneered the development of the world's first photographic negative. His subject was the oriel window in the south gallery, and today a print of the negative hangs close to the window making the house a Mecca for photographic enthusiasts. The Fox Talbot Museum of photographic memorabilia is located in a converted barn outside the abbey gates.

Lacock Abbey offers many experiences and is well worth a visit. The cloister and the chapter house are strongly atmospheric of the austere lives of the nuns who surrounded Ella when she was Abbess. Nun's followed the religious way of life at Lacock Abbey for over three centuries and this part of the abbey is in stark contrast to the luxurious Tudor accommodation introduced by William Sharington and his heirs.

The village of Lacock perfectly epitomises, and indeed exceeds ones expectations of the idyllic English village. It was given to the National Trust together with Lacock Abbey in 1944, when remaining members of the Fox-Talbot family became tenants of the National Trust.

**Tetbury** is a [town](#) and [civil parish](#) located in [Cotswold \(district\)](#), [Gloucestershire](#), [England](#). It lies on the site of an ancient [hill fort](#), on which an [Anglo-Saxon monastery](#) was founded, probably by [Ine of Wessex](#), in [681](#). In the [Middle Ages](#), Tetbury became the most important market for [Cotswold wool](#) and [yarn](#). At this time, the [Tetbury Woolsack Races](#), in which competitors must carry a 60 pound sack of wool up a steep hill, were founded and are still contested annually.

Notable buildings in the town include the [market house](#), built in [1655](#) and the late-[eighteenth century Gothic revival parish church](#) of [St Mary the Virgin](#) and much of the rest of the town centre, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Market House is a fine example of a Cotswold pillared market house and is in regular use as a meeting place and market to this day. Other attractions include the [Police Bygones Museum](#). Nearby, [Chavenage House](#), [Highgrove House](#) and [Westonbirt Arboretum](#) lie just outside the town.

**Tetbury parish church**—with view of Highgrove House, home of the Prince of Wales.

**Highgrove House** -- The country home of [HRH The Prince of Wales](#), in [Gloucestershire](#), [England](#). Situated near [Tetbury](#), Highgrove House was purchased in [1980](#) by the [Duchy of Cornwall](#). The Duchy also manages the estate surrounding the house.

Built in [1796](#) to [1798](#) by John Paul Paul (a [Huguenot](#)), it belonged to his descendants until [1860](#). It was restored in [1894](#) after a fire. The house has four reception rooms, nine main bedrooms, a nursery wing and staff quarters. The Duchy of Cornwall acquired Highgrove House from the MP [Maurice Macmillan](#), son of former Tory Prime Minister [Harold Macmillan](#) in [1980](#). The purchase added to the nation's speculation that the Prince was considering marriage. In [1988](#) the plain exterior of the house was embellished with new [balustrade](#), [pediment](#), and column of classical [pilasters](#) to the Prince of Wales's own design. A new single-storey staff annexe was also added.



A keen gardener, the Prince of Wales has devoted much time to planning and designing the gardens. He has created a wild garden, a formal garden and a walled kitchen garden. He has also planted a large number of trees in the grounds. He placed a bust of Dr [Alan McGlashan](#), MC in the garden.

The Highgrove Estate consists of parkland fringed by woods surrounding Highgrove House, a number of farm buildings and around 900 acres (364ha) of land farmed by the Duchy of Cornwall- the Home Farm. The beef herd based at Highgrove includes pedigree [Aberdeen-Angus](#) females and yearlings, [Angus](#) bulls and Angus cross [Friesian](#) cows. Sharing the permanent pasture with the beef herd is the flock of Masham and Mule sheep.



[Bourton-on-the-Water](#) – “The Venice of the Cotswolds” on the River Windrush. There is a 1:10 scale [model of the entire village](#), complete with another tiny model of the village, in the Garden of the New Old Inn. It has been on display since 1937.

Just South of Stow-on-the-Wold is one of the prettiest most tranquil places in England - Bourton on the Water, often referred to as 'The Venice of the Cotswolds'. Bourton is a favourite amongst tourists and is a beautiful place to visit all year round, especially in the summer and spring when the sunlight glistens off the shallow river that runs hypnotically through the village.

There is lots to see and do in Bourton in the way of museums, a tropical bird house, and a rather special model village, but even if there were nothing to do at all you would still be content to spend your time strolling around it's pretty streets that are lined with gorgeous old cotswold stone buildings, and enjoying the pretty lawns and public gardens where you can sit out and relax, soaking up the peaceful atmosphere.

The towns other main feature apart from it's lovely Cotswold style buildings is the river Windrush which flows through the center of the village, it's shallow water being crystal clear and seeming to add a certain freshness to the Cotswold air. Every so often along the river there are small stone foot bridges for people to cross to the other side where you will find cafe's, shops, and places of interest. There are some lovely cafe's serving exceptionally tasty traditional foods of the highest quality. All in all Bourton on the Water is a must place to visit, and it is such a pretty and relaxing place that you will find it hard to leave.



**[Stow-on-the-Wold](#)** – This town was the center of the wool trade. The town square includes the stocks and a cross at opposite ends. Welcome to "Stow on the Wold, where the wind blows cold" - an old saying because of Stow being situated at the high point of the Cotswolds, 800 feet above sea level.

Stow is a beautiful town, and probably the busiest of all the Cotswold towns. In fact if you judge it by the size of its market square, this shows that it has always been a busy part of the Cotswolds.

Many years ago when the Cotswold wool industry was at its height, Stow was famous for its huge annual fairs where as many as 20,000 sheep were sold at a time at the busy market square. The square is now mainly used for parking, as Stow is a favourite destination for many a visitor to the Cotswolds.

With its beautiful streets and buildings, and interesting shops, Stow is a great place to base yourself if you plan on visiting the area and exploring the Cotswolds further, as it has eight roads intersecting and is often referred to as the very heart of the Cotswolds. With its wonderful church, rich history and beautiful town, Stow on the Wold is one of the perfect English towns that remains a must visit in most tourist guides of England.



**[Parish Church of St Edwards](#)** (in Stow-on-the-Wold) -- This beautiful church was built somewhere between the 11th and 15th century. The tower is 88ft high and was completed in 1447. It houses the heaviest peal of eight bells in Gloucestershire. The painting of the crucifixion in the south aisle was painted by Gasper de Craeyer (1582- 1669), a contemporary of Rubens and Van Dyck. Many features of this outstanding Cotswold church may be attributed to Stow on the Wolds prosperity as a wool trading town.

**[Rollright Stones](#)** -- These Bronze-Age monolithic circles are third in importance only to Stonehenge and Avebury. They are one of the most historic archaeological finds in the Cotswolds, they are said to pre-date 2000BC, and the site is considered sacred.

Most people connect these stones to the Druids, but a more likely fact is that they were used in the Bronze-Age for funerary purposes. These magnificent stones range in size, some reaching a height of over 7 feet. The main circle is quite vast, measuring around 100 feet across.

There is a circle popularly called "The King's Men" another group is known as "The Whispering Knights" and then there is the King's Stone. These monuments are all within a few hundred yards of each other and are constructed of local Cotswold limestone.

The site is somewhat eerie, and yet at the same time it is uplifting, perhaps this is largely due to the historic nature of the place, coupled with the fact that Bronze-Age people had strong beliefs about the after-life.



The Rollright Stones can be found on the Oxfordshire-Warwickshire borders, near to the village of Great Rollright, with grey stone cottages set at undulating windswept heights, and the unspoilt hamlet of Little Rollright, at the edge of the Cotswolds.

**[Moreton-in-the-Marsh](#)** is a lovely old market town in the north Cotswolds. It grew up around the Fosse Way, the old Roman road which runs through the wide main street. Moreton-in-Marsh is on the route of the old [London](#) to [Worcester](#) coaching road, and was a popular stopping place for stagecoaches. Several inns and hotels originating from the coaching heydays still exist in the High Street.

Prior to the Norman Conquest, Moreton-in-Marsh was the property of the Earls of Mercia. It is shown in the Domesday Book to be the property of Westminster Abbey. The name 'Moreton' means Moorland settlement, the 'in Marsh' was thought to be originally 'Henmarsh', marshy land where wild birds were found. However another explanation of the word Marsh is a corruption of the word march, meaning boundary. Until changes in county boundaries last century, Moreton was the meeting place of four county boundaries: Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. A short distance from the town, stands the 'Four shires Stone', marking the crossroads of the four counties.

Moreton-in-Marsh was first granted a market charter in 1227. In 1638 King Charles I granted a new charter and in 1267, a charter for a fair to be held. Moreton is famous for its large street market, held weekly on Tuesdays.

The buildings along the high street are mainly of the local golden limestone, some date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. The White Hart Royal a 17th century coaching inn, is an interesting building where King Charles I stayed in 1644. Today there are claims that it is haunted by a ghostly male figure. At the end of the High Street is the lovely 16th century Manor House, now an Hotel.

The Curfew tower on the corner of High Street and Oxford Street, dates from the 17th century and retains the original bell dated 1633. This bell was in use daily until 1860, and used in later years in times of emergency for the fire brigade.

Centrally situated in the High Street is the Market Hall, which dates from the mid 19th century and is known as the Redesdale Hall, named after the Redesdale family of Batsford House who were benefactors to the town. The Church dedicated to St. David, was re-built in 1859 and replaces a smaller church from the 13th century.

Moreton-in-Marsh has one of the earliest railway stations in the country. The Moreton to Stratford tramway opened in 1826, and the London-Oxford-Worcester main line followed in 1853.

[Broadway Tower](#) is one of England's outstanding viewpoints and, at 1024 feet (312m) above sea level, it is the second highest point on the Cotswold Ridge. Built in 1799, it is a perfect example of an eighteenth century Gothic folly from which it is possible to survey an area which includes as many as thirteen counties.

The views encompass the Vales of Evesham and Gloucester and on a clear day you may also see across the Severn Valley and as far as the Welsh Mountains. Today, the Tower houses fascinating exhibitions connected with its past and the surrounding area. Notable occupants include Sir Thomas Phillips, renowned printer of his time and Pre-Raphaelite artists including designer, writer and craftsman William Morris, who used the Tower as a country retreat. The Morris Room is furnished with some of his more famous designs



[Cotswolds Farm Park](#) -- Established in 1971, the Farm Park can be aptly described as a pageant of history on four legs. Alongside our serious aims of conservation and education, visitors of all ages will find themselves easily entertained. On display is an unrivalled collection of rare breeds of British farm animals including sheep, cattle, pigs, goats, horses, poultry and waterfowl.

**Cirencester** – Originally occupied by the Dobunni tribe of Celts prior to Roman times, Cirencester became the second largest Roman town in Britain, after London. The town was surrounded by a wall in the 2<sup>nd</sup> C. The common ending to many English place names, -cester or -chester, is derived from the Latin castra, meaning military camp. Cirencester, along with Bath and Stow-on-the-Wold, is on a Roman road, the Fosse Way, that was built in 43 AD. Fosse is derived from the Latin fossa, meaning ditch, and the speculation is that it was named because there had been a defensive trench along part of the route it follows. Fosse Way is the only Roman road in Britain that retains its Roman name. It is 182 miles long,

stretching from Exeter in the southwest to the East Midlands. Along its entire length, despite wide variations in terrain, it never deviates more than 6 miles from a straight line.

#### Things to See and Do in and Near Cirencester

- 1<sup>st</sup> C. Roman Amphitheater (still buried) about 2 miles outside of town. Also referred to as the Bull Ring, from the 18<sup>th</sup> C. The Amphitheater is in the area called the Querns, which refers to a quarry that has not been active in more than 1500 years.
- Corinium Museum (£3.90. M-S 10 AM-5 PM, Sun 2-5 PM) houses displays of Cotswolds history, including Roman and Medieval wool trade exhibits, and the Anglo-Saxon gallery with forensic reconstructions.
- Cotswold Water Park, a series of 130 lakes that were formed where there had been gravel extraction.
- Cotswolds Wildlife Park is a 160-acre zoo with a Manor House and gardens.
- The Cathedral of the Cotswolds—a Wool Church—the Church of St John the Baptist was built 1515-1530 by local merchants whose tombs are still standing, along with their stone houses on Coxwell and Dollin streets.
- Norman Arch (from the Abbey Church) and Prehistoric Walls remain in the public park in the center of town. After the Norman Conquest in 1075, the Abbey Church was built in Cirencester and dedicated in 1176. However, it was destroyed in 1539, as a result of the Dissolution (or Suppression) of the Monasteries in 1559, when Henry VIII took over as the head of the Church of England.

**Bibury** is a charming, typically Cotswold, village just a short drive from "The Capital of the Cotswolds", [Cirencester](#). Bibury was once described by William Morris (1834-96) as "the most beautiful village in England". The area is actually made up of two villages, Arlington on one side of the River Coln and Bibury on the other. It is one of the "must see" destinations in the Cotswolds, and has a place on the itinerary of most tourists.



Attractions in Bibury include [Arlington Row](#), a row of weavers cottages built of local stone next to the [River Coln](#), [Arlington Mill](#), the [Bibury Trout Farm](#) and the Saxon Church, the [Church of St Mary](#). The north Chancel wall of the Church is home to a stained glass window which was designed in 1927 by Karl Parsons and was featured in the 1992 Christmas stamp set issued by the Royal Mail. The River Coln flows through Bibury sandwiched between the main village street and an expanse of boggy watermeadow known as Rack Isle.

With [Arlington Row](#) as a backdrop, it makes one of the most picturesque scenes you will find in the Cotswolds.

[Chedworth Roman Villa](#) refers to the remains of one of the largest Romano-British villas in the country featuring several fine mosaics, two bathhouses, hypocausts, a water-shrine and latrine. The site museum houses objects from the villa. Chedworth is the best site in the country for exploring and understanding the remains of a large country house of the Roman period.

Chedworth Roman Villa is very much an interactive attraction, with many events being staged so that your experience of the site is enhanced and your understanding of the Roman way of life improved.



The villa was discovered by accident in 1864, when a gamekeeper found fragments of paving and pottery on the bank of soil which covered what is now referred to as room 32.

The importance of these finds were recognized by James Farrer who uncovered most of the buildings now visible over a period of two years at the expense of the then owner, the Earl of Eldon, who also provided the Museum and roofing for some of the structures.

In 1924 the site was bought for The National Trust by means of subscriptions raised largely by the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

Since that time, further discoveries have been made such as a child's coffin in 1935, the excavation of Room 4 in 1954 and a series of excavations by Sir John Richmond from 1958 until his death in 1965.

The site today looks different from how it would have looked in the Roman period. The vegetation of the area now largely comprises of modern plantations and at the time when the villa was built the trees were probably less dense than they are today.

The contours of the site would have been much sharper than they are now. When maintenance and repair of the building stopped, when the buildings were eventually abandoned, the roofs and walls would have collapsed. Soil eroded from the slopes by the weather would have collected behind the walls and eventually would have covered them thereby preserving some walls to a considerable height.

A large amount of this debris was moved in the excavations of the 19th century and now forms the platform on which the custodian's house, originally a shooting lodge, was built before 1870. The edge of this modern terrace runs along the lawn east of the modern house, thus softening the outlines of the modern landscape.

[Cotswold Wildlife Park](#) is a zoo, set in 160 acres of parkland and gardens around a listed Victorian Manor House. It has been open to the public since 1970.

[Castle Combe](#) – Once called the prettiest village in England, which along with a starring role in the 1966 film Dr Doolittle where the town was dressed up as a seaport, Castle Combe is still one of the prettiest villages to visit in England. As recently as 2001 it was awarded the title of 'Most Picturesque Village' by British Heritage Magazine's 2001 Traveller's Choice Awards. Situated on the southern edge of the Cotswolds in a valley, Castle Combe found its wealth in the wool trade with the villages picturesque river 'Bybrook' powering the mills. Visitors to the village park at the top of the hill and wonder down into the village where they can enjoy walking round this lovely setting. Most buildings are made of the typical Cotswold limestone with its manor being built of the stone from the Norman castle that sat above the village.

In its center is the 14th century Market Cross with old water pump beside it. The best view is said to be from by the old weavers cottage across the bridge.

The village has its own museum, a small museum containing local artifacts, old photos and maps and a look at the history of the village and surrounding area, well worth a visit.

## **London Sightseeing Ideas**

### **TOWER BRIDGE EXPERIENCE**

Tower Bridge, London SE1 tel 0171 403 3761

#### **Description**

*Walk along the top of Tower Bridge and get a spectacular view, see a video and watch the mechanisms of this bridge*

#### **Location**

*Central London, city end. Underground; Tower Hill. River launch to Tower Pier.*

#### **Opening Times**

Apr-Oct 10am-6.30pm Nov-Mar 9.30am-6.00pm

**Admission Prices**  
*Adults £5.50*

### **TOWER OF LONDON**

London EC3 tel 0171 709 0765

#### **Description**

*For many centuries this large and spectacular fortress was a focal point of power and consequently it has a long, fascinating and often grisly history. On display are the priceless crown jewels and the yeoman wardens in their ceremonial dress.*

#### **Location**

*On the River Thames, City of London. Nearest underground Tower Hill. Parking across the river in Tooley Street, fee.*

#### **Opening Times**

Mon-Sat 9am-5pm Sun 10am-5pm

**Admission Prices**  
*Adults £8.50*

### **BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

Recorded information 0171 799 2331; Group bookings and enquiries 0171 839 1377; Advance credit card bookings (on the day) 0171 321 2333

#### **Description**

Official residence of HM Queen. Since the fire at Windsor Castle some rooms in the palace have been opened to the public. The original intention was to fund the restoration of Windsor Castle, but this is now complete and the tour is so popular that the arrangement now seems permanent. It is a magnificent palace with important works of art. The tour is of numerous state rooms and the grand staircase.

There is also a separate and cheaper tour of the Royal Mews which includes a look at the Gold State Coach. This is 100 yards to the Victoria side of the palace.

Changing of the guards is a free spectacle. This takes place approx at 10 am and 4 pm. Several marches of guards take place at once all over St. James Park, but probably the best vantage point is outside the front gates of Buckingham Palace.

#### **Location**

In the middle of Green Park, central London. No parking. Nearest underground stations: St. Jame's Park, Green Park & Victoria

### **OLD ROYAL OBSERVATORY**

Greenwich, London SE10 tel 0181 312 6565

#### **Description**

*Greenwich Mean Time starts here, the 0 meridian line runs through the court yard; to name two features of this historic building.*

#### **Location**

*Inside Greenwich Park (up a steep hill if coming via the town entrance) Greenwich off A2, parking in upper part of park. By rail to Greenwich from Charing Cross, Waterloo & London Bridge. By bus 177 180 188 199. By river from Westminster, Charing Cross and Tower Piers*

### **Opening Times**

10am-5pm closed 24 25 26 Dec **Admission Prices**

*Adults £5.50 Children £3.00 (includes admission into National Maritime Museum & Queens House)*

### **Palace of Westminster ("Houses of Parliament"): Big Ben**

Charles Barry, born in London in 1795 and deceased in 1860, had a training as architect in Italy from 1817 till 1820. Because of this foreign influence, much of his early work was in the Italian Palazzo style. The story goes that on the night on the 16th of October in 1834, the old Palace of Westminster was destroyed by fire. Following on this devastating event, competition was launched in 1836 to create a new design. Charles Barry's proposed one won. His design incorporated a clock tower. The dials were 30 feet in diameter; the struck on eight bells announced each quarter hour, the hours were struck on a 14-ton Bell. At the time the clock was designed it was the largest clock in the world. Benjamin Lewis Vulliamy, a clockmaker with great reputation was contacted but under pressure of open competition, Sir George Airy got appointed to be referee and to make up the specifications of the clock to be. Three candidates occurred: Vulliamy, Dent and Whitehurst. Dent was awarded the contract in 1852. Was it favoritism of Airy? Who can tell. Edward John Dent died in 1853 and his stepson Frederick Rippon completed the clock mechanism. When it needed to be installed the tower was not finished yet due to miscommunications and problems between Edward Dent and the architect Barry. But the lost time was spent well as the mechanism got enhanced and enabled to run even more accurate. But ... still the tower was not finished yet. The hour bell, finished in 1856 was too heavy so the ball hammer was made heavier with the result that the bell got damaged behind repair when they hung it for the time being in the New Palace Yard. At last it was in 1858 that George Mears of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry that provided the bell that still is in use today. Warners provided the four quarter bells.

The name "Big Ben" does not refer to the entire tower - just the huge bell. It is commonly believed that the bell is named after Sir Benjamin Hall - a politician of the time and who was also the Parliamentary Commissioner of Works. Big Ben is 9'-0" diameter, 7'-6" high, and weighs 13 tons (13,760 Kg) It was cast on Saturday 10th April 1858 at Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London by George Mears the master bellfounder and owner of the foundry. The first chime was rung on 31st May 1859 in situ. More info can be found at <http://Londonnet.co.uk>

**Directions:** Underground: Westminster station **Website:** <http://www.parliament.uk>

### **South Bank and London Eye Millennium Wheel**

This is probably the best way to see London's layout. Run by British Airways London, it towers 135 metres above the ground, the tallest observation wheel in the world! When you buy your ticket, they call it a 'flight', not a ride. A flight lasts about 45 minutes. There are generally long queues outside, but they do tend to go quite quickly, so don't let this put you off. It is very well organised and ordered. 3.5 million people took this 'flight' in the first twelve months of its birth, and millions have since. It is the most frequented landmark/site in the United Kingdom. Marks Barfield Architects developed the design and created a masterpiece in 2000, an engineering feat (to put it mildly). The lines and curves are splendid, a photographers dream to capture up close. It's only when you get to the top of the London Eye that you fully appreciate how everything lies and how close everything actually is in relation to each other! The view over the Thames and London's North and South banks is spectacular. I have been in the middle of the day, and am told that the dusk view is simply stunning too. If there is any fog or cloud, do not bother going up, as this will be a waste of money for you. The Eye is on the 2for1 scheme in London, so if you are carrying a tube ticket, you can take a guest for free. £12.50

**Directions:** Waterloo tube **Website:** <http://www.southbanklondon.com/>

### **British Museum**

A spectacular glass roof designed by star architect Sir Norman Foster spans over the neo-classical buildings. Alone this structure is worth the visit. The British Museum lays claim to being the Worlds Oldest Public Museum. It has an outstanding collection of items inside from all over the world (some of these are now claimed by the countries they originally came from - The Elgin Marbles from Athens in Greece being a notable example). The museum was established in 1753 so is well over 250 years old. The main building you see is newer being built between 1823-1850. For the millennium celebrations, a Great Court was added by Norman Foster, and this is worth seeing in its own right. Notable exhibits amongst many are Egyptian Mummies, Greek Marbles, a Peat Bog Man, and a stone head from Easter Island. The

famous Rosetta stone, which made possible the decipher the hieroglyphs. When facing the library, go to the left hand side wing. The Rosetta Stone data from the Fort St Julien, el-Rashid (Rosetta), Egypt Ptolemaic Period, 196 BC. The inscription on the Rosetta Stone is a decree passed by a council of priests, one of a series that affirm the royal cult of the 13-year-old Ptolemy V on the first anniversary of his coronation. The decree is inscribed on the stone three times, in hieroglyphic (suitable for a priestly decree), demotic (the native script used for daily purposes), and Greek (the language of the administration). Soon after the end of the fourth century AD the knowledge of how to read and write hieroglyphs disappeared. In the early years of the nineteenth century, some 1400 years later, scholars were able to use the Greek inscription on this stone as the key to decipher them. Thomas Young, an English physicist, was the first to show that some of the hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone wrote the sounds of a royal name, that of Ptolemy. The French scholar Jean-François Champollion then realized that hieroglyphs recorded the sound of the Egyptian language and laid the foundations of our knowledge of ancient Egyptian language and culture.

**Phone:** 0 20 7323 8299 **Address:** Great Russell Street, WC1 **Directions:** Holborn tube

**Website:** <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk> **Admission:** Free

### **Westminster Abbey**

This architecturally magnificent masterpiece of the 13th-16th Centuries has been the site of the coronations of all of Britain's monarchs apart from two, since the crowning of William the Conqueror in 1066. It is choc-a-bloc with statues, effigies, and monuments to countless Medieval kings and queens who are entombed or have memorials here. It is also where many visitors pay pilgrimage to The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Westminster Abbey

**Phone:** 0 20 7654 4900 **Directions:** Westminster Tube (Exit 4) **Website:** <http://www.westminster-abbey.org>

### **St Paul's Cathedral**

St. Paul's Cathedral is a Renaissance Church and Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece, which took 35 years to build. It dominates the North bank of the River Thames. Even though St. Paul's was bombed several times during WWII, it survived because of the determination of the fire brigade. After the war, the church was renovated and brought back to its former splendor. (Note: The wedding of Lady Diana Spencer and Prince Charles took place here in 1981.) Visible from all over London, the church's dome is patterned after St. Peter's in Rome...this dome is St. Paul's most distinctive feature. It's really a "dome within a dome, supported by a hidden superstructure and crowned with a stone lantern." When I was inside and looked up, I actually had vertigo! Fortunately, it's possible to climb up for a fantastic view of London. There are three galleries around the dome to experience these views. St. Paul's also has the largest crypt in all of Europe. Appropriately, Sir Christopher Wren is buried here.

**Phone:** 0 20 7236 4128 **Directions:** St Pauls tube **Website:** <http://www.stpauls.co.uk>

### **Trafalgar Square**

Trafalgar Square is the main hub of Central London. It was built in honour of Admiral Nelson. This followed his victory in 1805 at the Battle of Trafalgar, off the coast of Spain. "England expects that every man will do his duty" Commemorating Nelson's great naval victory in 1805 over the combined Napoleonic fleets of France and Spain off the Spanish coast near Tarifa, close to Gibraltar. The outcome of this battle was supremacy of the British navy on the high seas for the next hundred years and the end of the threat of invasion from Napoleon, leading him to change his strategies and ultimately leading to his downfall... The battle also cost Britain her great hero of her time as Nelson was struck down by a musket ball, so a grateful nation named this London square after the battle and erected Nelson's Column in his honour... You can find two symetric fountains at the Trafalgar Square and wonderful sculptures in them. Trafalgar Square is always full of pigeons, people and tourists taking photographs of sculptures-lions and the square itself. The Square is always full of people and events, even in the late evening.

**Directions:** Charing Cross or Leicester Square tubes

### **Waterloo Bridge**

Waterloo Bridge connects the Strand/Aldwych area north of the river with the wider Waterloo Station area on the south bank of the Thames. It offers probably the nicest view towards the skyline of the City of London, i.e. St. Paul's, the highrise buildings of the financial district with the skyscrapers of the Docklands

area looming in the background.

### **KENSINGTON PALACE**

Kensington W8 tel 0171 937 7079

#### **Description**

*Home to several members of the Royal Family and also the last home of Princess Diana. The palace has a long and also living history. The state apartments are open to the public by guided tour only (tours leave every fifteen minutes and last one hour)*

#### **Location**

*On western edge of Kensington Gardens, mid way between the Bayswater and Kensington entrances. No vehicles inside park, limited meter parking outside. Nearest underground; High Street Kensington, Gloucester Road (then bus) or Queensway.*

#### **Opening Times**

May- Sep 10am- 5pm (last tour 4.15pm)

**Admission Prices**  
Adults £6.00

### **NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM**

Greenwich, London SE10 tel 0181 312 6565

#### **Description**

*Premier maritime museum.*

#### **Location**

*Entrance inside Greenwich Park, town level. Greenwich off A2, parking in upper part of park. By rail to Greenwich from Charing Cross, Waterloo & London Bridge. By bus 177 180 188 199. By river from Westminster, Charing Cross and Tower Piers*

#### **Opening Times**

10am-5pm closed 24 25 26 Dec

**Admission Prices**  
Adults £5.50 Children £3.00 (includes admission into Old Royal Observatory & Queens House)

### **QUEENS HOUSE**

Greenwich, London SE10 tel 0181 312 6565

#### **Description**

*Superb Palladian villa designed by Inigo Jones. Period furniture, fine paintings and special exhibitions.*

#### **Location**

*Inside Greenwich Park, town level just past National Maritime Museum. Greenwich off A2, parking in upper part of park. By rail to Greenwich from Charing Cross, Waterloo & London Bridge. By bus 177 180 188 199. By river from Westminster, Charing Cross and Tower Piers*

#### **Opening Times**

10am-5pm closed 24 25 26 Dec

**Admission Prices**  
Adults £5.50 Children £3.00 (includes admission into National Maritime Museum & Queens House)

### **CUTTY SARK**

King William Walk, Greenwich, London SE10 tel 0181 858 3445

#### **Description**

*The last of the big clippers, spectacular and graceful. Tour the decks of this magnificently preserved ship*

#### **Location**

*On a dry dock at the Greenwich waterfront. Greenwich off A2, limited parking. By rail to Greenwich from Charing Cross, Waterloo & London Bridge. By bus 177 180 188 199. By river from Westminster, Charing Cross and Tower Piers*

#### **Opening Times**

Apr-Sept 10am-6pm Oct-Mar 10am-6pm **Admission Price:** Adults £3.50

### **MONUMENT**

Monument Street, London EC3 tel 0171

#### **Description**

*A tall tower which commemorates the Great Fire of London that started nearby in 1666. The tower has*

*steps (no lift) and the climber is rewarded by a fantastic view on reaching the top.*

**Location**

*In the City of London near to London Bridge, north side. Zero parking during the week. Nearest underground; Bank*

**Opening Times**

Summer - Mon-Fri 9am-5.40pm Sat & Sun 2pm-5.40pm; Winter - Mon-Sat 9am-3.40pm **Admission Prices**  
*Adults £1.00 Children 50p*

Globe Theater (Shakespeare's, restored)

*On the River Thames (south side) a few yards west of Southwark Bridge. Nearest underground stations: London Bridge or Mansion House (across the river)*

**SHERLOCK HOLMES MUSEUM**

221b Baker Street, London NW1

**Description** *Although Sherlock Holmes was fiction 221b actually exists and now portrays the life of the super sleuth detective.*

**Location** *Slightly north of centre. NCP car park and Regents Park pay & display within walking distance. Underground; Baker Street.*

**Opening Times** 9.30am-6pm (last admission 5.30pm) **Admission Price** *Adults £5*

**NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY**

St. Martin's Place. London WC2 tel 0171 306 0055

**Description** *Magnificent collection of portraits, which illustrate British history from medieval times to the present day*

**Location** *Just off Trafalgar Square, behind the National Gallery. Nearest underground: Charing Cross & Leicester Square. Parking extremely limited.*

**Opening Times** 8th August- 5th October, 9.30am-4.30pm daily **Admission Price:** Free

**FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MUSEUM**

Car Park, St. Thomas' Hospital, Waterloo tel 0171 620 0374

**Description** *Dedicated to the famous nurse with the lamp.*

**Location** *In the car park of the hospital, situated on the river south side, opposite Houses of Parliament. Nearest underground; Waterloo & Westminster*

**Opening Times** Tues-Sun 10.00am-4.00pm **Admission Price:** *Adults £2.50*

**GUILDHALL**

Gresham Street EC tel 0171 606 3030

The City of London has been governed from this site for over 800 years. The present Guildhall was built in the early 1400s, and it is the headquarters of the Corporation of London, the governing authority for the City of London. The Great Hall is open to the public (10am to 5pm) and is the setting for magnificent state occasions, ceremonies, banquets, and important statements on the economy. In the West wing is the Guildhall Library, a fine resource for books (some very rare) on ancient London

**Description** *Dating from 1411, this elegant hall is occasionally used for government and other functions. Access available into the library.*

**Location** *City of London. Nearest underground station: Bank*

**Opening Times** 9am-5pm **Admission Price:** Free

**HAMPTON COURT PALACE**

Hampton Court, Surrey. tel 0181 781 9500

**Description:** *Magnificent Tudor palace, closely associated with King Henry VIII*

**Location:** *Outer London, west. Frequent trains from Waterloo to Hampton Court (30 mins). Also river launch from Westminster, Richmond & Kingston.*

**Opening Times:** Mid Mar- Mid Oct 9.30am - 6.00pm (Mon - open at 10.15am) Mid Oct-Mid Mar 9.30am- 4.00pm (Mon - open at 10.15am) Last admission 45 before closing. Closed 24 25 26 Dec

**Admission Price:** *Adults £8.50*

**KEW GARDENS**

tel 0181 332 5000

**Description:** *World famous botanic gardens*

**Location:** *The gardens are in west London. They stretch from Kew Bidge to the Old dear park and have several gates. The most popular entrance is a short walk from the underground station, Kew Gardens (district line). By car the gardens are where the North circular road (A406) joins the South circular road. Parking: a bit tight.*

**Opening Times:** Apr-Oct 10am-6pm Nov-Mar 10am-4pm **Admission Prices**  
Adults £4.50

### **WINDSOR CASTLE**

Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1NJ tel

**Description** *Entry into castle, state apartments (closed until 27 Dec 1997) St Georges Chapel - resting place of many sovereigns (closed Sundays for worship) Albert Memorial Chapel, a masterpiece of gold mosaic and inlaid marble etc.*

**Location** *Windsor is 20 miles west of central London. Take exit 6 on M4 motorway. Numerous car parks in town (up hill walk to castle!) Train from Waterloo to Windsor.*

**Opening Times** Mar-Oct 10.00am-5.30pm (last entry 4.00pm) Nov-Feb 10.00am- 4.00pm (last entry 3.00pm)

**Admission Prices** Mon-Sat £5.60 (£9.80 when State Apartments re-open) Sun £3.60