

BUCKINGHAM (OLD GAOL) TO THORNTON (COLLEGE)

Heading away from the Old Gaol, follow Buckingham High Street which becomes the Stratford Road (A422), walking past The Grand Junction Pub (across the road on your right) and heading out of the town.

As you're leaving the town, look for a new development of flats on your left, just past Page Hill Road. **Do not** take the path across the road, sign-posted as "The Riverside Walk". Instead, continue along the road a short distance, go past the Air Training Corps building, cross the road and turn right down Lower Wharf. The footpath passes along the grass verge with a conifer hedge to your left, passing houses. Follow this path down to the river, turning left at the cycleway junction towards Bourton.

Where the path forks, walk straight on and away from the river. When you come to the end of the path and out into a cul-de-sac, turn left and continue walking towards the A413 ring road, passing the entrance to Bourton Meadow County Combined School on your right.

Cross the A413 and continue straight ahead on the path which takes you round to the left with a field on your right. Look out for a kissing gate on your right, go through it and then continue along the path on the other side of the hedge towards The disused Old Stratford and Buckingham Arms of the Grand Union Canal.

Follow the path with the course of the old Canal to your right towards the Lock Keeper's Cottage, bear left around the side of the cottage, keeping the fence on your right and continue along a partly hard-surfaced track which crosses another track, go over a stile and then continue straight across a field.

Go over the stile, cross diagonally down the field towards the fence at the bottom, then follow the fence along the bottom edge of the field, with Lock Meadow Farm to your left towards the next stile. Walk across the next field (keeping the fence and the next field in between you and the river) down towards a bend in the river on your right where you will come to a kissing gate.

Go through the gate and walk along a very peaceful stretch of the river, past a small weir, towards the Old Mill House. As you get towards the house, bear right towards a wooden kissing gate which leads to a field to the right of the house. Go through the gate and, keeping to the edge of the field, continue towards the next gate.

Go through the gate, cross the road and go through another kissing gate. Walk under the power lines and through two more kissing gates until you come to the red-brick pumping station.

Pass the pumping station and continue walking – you will soon see a large reservoir over to your left. Go through a kissing gate and into Buckingham Canal Nature Reserve which takes you, again, alongside the now disused canal (on your left) and through a wooded area. Further along the path, there are a group of seats for those who fancy a coffee break!

Continue past a wooden bridge on your left and then continue along the path, crossing over two more wooden footbridges. Cross a stile, then go over a track to cross another stile to walk along a short stretch of embankment with the old canal still on your left, towards the road.

Go over another stile and continue towards Leckhampstead Wharf House. Cross another stile and go across the road to pick up the path on the other side. Go through the kissing gate and then walk behind the house towards the next gate. Continue past the barns through a series of kissing gates and, when you come to an hard-surfaced horse exercising area straight ahead of you, bear left to pick up the path which skirts around the edge of this area, between the exercise yard on your right and the farm road on your left. (Please keep to the path through the stable area).

Cross a little wooden footbridge and walk straight across the field ahead of you towards the lone tree. At the far side there's another stile. Continue across to the next stile and walk towards the road, cutting diagonally across the field to the corner where it meets the (A422) road and you'll see a stile which leads on to the A422.

Turn right and walk along the roadside verge. Take care, as this can be a very busy road with fast traffic. Immediately you've walked across the road bridge, look for a signpost which points to the right, directing you down some steps and along a path which runs through some trees adjacent to the road.

Cross the stile and continue along the course of the old canal for just under 0.5 mile/0.8 km walking past the arched canal bridge and up some wooden steps to the road. You will see Thornton College across the river over to your right.

Turn right along the road towards Thornton and the entrance to the college.

