

# Pitham Brook, Fairford Park, Gloucestershire

## A permissive footpath *(closed on Tuesdays)*

Four footbridges, two rivers: one tranquil English landscape

[www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk](http://www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk)

This delightful walk takes you through the heart of the 4,200 acre Fairford Park Estate, owned and cared for by one of the UK's leading educational charities, the Ernest Cook Trust.

The 3.6 Km (2.25 mile) mostly level footpath takes you from the bustling centre of the picturesque Cotswold market town of Fairford with its welcoming shops, 15th Century church and places to eat, to the historic site of the Ox Pens, along the quiet banks of Pitham Brook to where it joins the River Coln, and on towards the pretty villages of Quenington and Coln St Aldwyns.

**Family-friendly**  
but be aware of rivers and streams

**Parking**  
Fairford

**Public conveniences**  
Fairford

**Places to eat**  
Fairford, Quenington and Coln St Aldwyns

**Shopping**  
Fairford

**Historic church**  
Fairford



**Otter**  
An early morning or later evening walk might reward you with a glimpse of the elusive otter.



Pitham Brook along with the River Coln and the surrounding countryside is a haven for wildlife and animals such as the much-loved but elusive water vole (of Wind in the Willows fame), now one of the UK's rarest mammals.



**Water Vole**  
A very distinct 'plop' sound as a water vole enters the water may alert you to their presence. They are becoming easier to see as numbers increase along our waterways.



**Kingfisher**  
Waters rich with small fish attract the Kingfisher. Pause a while on any of the bridges and you might be lucky enough to see one.

The **River Coln** is the reason for Fairford's existence and the dominant feature of this landscape. At Fairford, the main long-distance route from East to West crossed this, the most dramatic of the Thames headwaters. Here too crossed the ancient droving route known as the Welsh Way along which, for centuries, livestock was driven to London.



**Water Crowfoot**  
A favourite resting place for banded demoiselles. The plant stems form a tangled mass above and below the water surface. The small flowers stand on short upright stems.



**Banded demoiselle**  
Never still, the banded demoiselle dances and flits among the vegetation that lines the river and streams in this area.

To Fairford town centre and car park

## The route



While walking from the car park to the **Ox Pens (A)**, an ancient agricultural building with wooden stalls

which accommodated pairs of oxen which used to pull ploughs, take time to stand and stare on the bridge over the River Coln next to the quintessentially English Fairford Mill (an ideal weekend hideaway!)

The Ernest Cook Trust has restored the Ox Pens and created the garden and picnic area for all to enjoy.



Follow the path for about three-quarters of a mile to **(B)**. **Turn right** over a series of four footbridges across the various courses of the River Coln.

Cross a stile **(C)** and follow the track through the field to the cattle grid (D). Continue to the gate where you will see a plaque to mark the site of the Fairford Polish Hostel (E), which was 'home' for 1,200 Polish families displaced by World War II, between 1947 and 1959.

Either return via the road to Fairford or retrace your steps to **(B)**, turn right and continue along the Pitham Brook Path.

This permissive path ends at **(F)** as it joins the Public Footpath which can take you on to the delightful village of Quenington and the Keepers Arms pub, or further on to Coln St Aldwyns, its pub and village shop, before your return to Fairford and perhaps afternoon tea?



The Ernest Cook Trust is rooted in the conservation and management of the countryside and has created this permissive footpath because it is happy to encourage people to enjoy this route through some very beautiful countryside.

## Fact file

This permissive path is closed on Tuesdays  
OS reference: OSGB36: 150 013

Google maps: Search for The Mill, Fairford

The Explorer map no: OL45

Post code: GL7 4JG

Public transport: [www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.traveline.org.uk/index.htm)

## More information

Visit the Ernest Cook Trust website

[www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk](http://www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk) to find out more about this fascinating educational Trust and its work, as well as information about renting the Mill House or Mill Stream Cottage, Fairford.

### Fairford Town Council

[www.fairfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.fairfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)

### St Mary's Church Fairford

[www.stmaryschurchfairford.org.uk](http://www.stmaryschurchfairford.org.uk)

### Fairford History Society

[www.fairfordhistory.org.uk](http://www.fairfordhistory.org.uk)

### Fairford and Lechlade Business Club

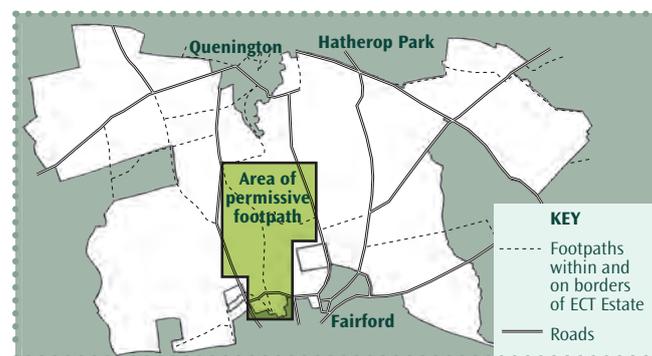
[www.flbc.org.uk](http://www.flbc.org.uk)

### Keepers Arms, Quenington

01285 750 349

## The Ernest Cook Trust's Fairford Park Estate

showing the area of the Pitham Brook walk map



The Trust also welcomes children and young people onto its estates to learn from the land through hands-on educational opportunities organised for schools and also by offering grants. To find out more about the Trust, please visit [www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk](http://www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk).