

# Northleach



The delightful Cotswold town of Northleach is tucked away from the busy A40, between gently rolling hills, at a crossroads

on the Roman Fosse Way. The streets in and around the ancient Market Place are rich in architectural interest ranging from half-timbered buildings and merchants' houses dating from the 15th and 16th centuries, to the great House of Correction built at the crossroads in the 18th Century. Since the opening of the by-pass in 1984 Northleach has come to life, successfully balancing its traditional commerce with the demands of Tourism.

When you walk through the town, you can see reminders of the great days of the wool trade. Funded by these merchants, the impressive church of St Peter and St Paul is a fine example of the Cotswold perpendicular style. Although wool is no longer a contributor to the towns commerce, the town centre is busy with a variety of shops, and the local hostelrys provide a lively service to both visitors and locals. For the visitor, Northleach is an ideal stop on the road from Oxford to Cheltenham, or between Stow and Cirencester.

The town centre is compact and completely unspoiled, having changed little since 1500, except for the more 'recent' additions of late 16th and 17th century buildings, which



split apart to form The Green. Here you walk through the small alleys leading off the Market Place and discover houses whose upper levels of timber framing overhang great stone built walls and wide oak doors. It is said that beneath the houses and streets of Northleach runs a maze of stone vaulted tunnels. Whether this was the result of mining or escape routes from a nearby monastery during religious persecution, few residents of Northleach could tell you.



While many rush along the A40, travellers who stop to discover Northleach will leave the town knowing that they have just shared one of the most delightful secrets of the Cotswolds.

# The Town Sign



Commissioned by Northleach with Eastington Town Council in 1996, the Town Sign stands proudly in the Market Place, sitting within the old 'Union Hotel' wrought iron signpost, celebrating the history of Northleach.

The old mill and the river in the central picture signify the original settlement, north of 'Lecce'. The sheep, a 'Cotswold Lion' on a woolpack represents the wool trade, which brought prosperity to the town. The church of St.Peter and St.Paul is represented by the cross-keys and sword to the left of the design. The mace depicted opposite, is the insignia of the Court Leet, which still meets annually to appoint the law enforcement officers of the town (now honorary positions). The earliest form of democracy in local government, the Court Leet is as old as the town. On the otherwise identical reverse of the sign, there is a sheep and woolpack from the brass of John Tayler, a 15th century woolmerchant, buried in the church.

## Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music



The museum occupies The Oak House, once home to one of the wealthy wool merchants, used as Westwoods Grammar School from 1589 to 1902. The Museum houses a fascinating collection of self-playing instruments in the old school room, plus a selection of musical automata. Regular guided tours include demonstrations of Barrel Pianos, Musical boxes and Polyphons and reproducing pianos to name a few.

The Museum also offers a restoration service in its world famous workshops, and visitors can browse in the well stocked gift shop.

**Open every day except Christmas Day, 10am - 6pm.**

# Shopping



Northleach offers a mix of independent retailers for shoppers including: a specialist wine merchant, a fine quality butcher, a picture framer and gallery, dolls house shop, mechanical music museum, post office, pharmacy, three public houses offering food and accommodation, a Chinese takeaway, two tea shops, 'Just eggs and Veg' seasonal produce brought to your door, plus a taxi hire service and funeral director.

**A lively Charter Market is held every Wednesday from 8.30am – 2.30pm.** Market stalls include: Fresh fruit and Vegetables; Pet products and supplies; Fresh fish; Plants; Breads; Home made speciality foods.

## Northleach Church

The brass memorials in the magnificent church are testimony to the wealth of the wool merchants, who generously gave money in the early 1400s to rebuild the parish church of St. Peter and St Paul, often referred to as the 'Cathedral of the Cotswolds'.

The church clock not only plays a quarter chime, but also a Carillon (O Worship the King) every three hours. Regular classical concerts are held at the church. Details can be obtained from Rev Dick Woodger Telephone: 01451 860293.

**The church is generally open from 8.30am - 6.00pm each day.**



## Leisure Facilities

The community spirit is alive and well in Northleach, supporting many organisations and clubs. There is something for everyone here, from young to old, energetic to more leisurely pursuits. Many of the organisations use the new Westwoods Centre at the Eastern end of the town, whilst the Cotswold Hall and Church rooms offer central accommodation for meetings and events.

For those wishing to enjoy a quiet afternoon, there is a picnic area and children's playground by the river. The adjoining King George V playing field is used at weekends, for football and cricket matches. Once a year the field is alive with funfair stalls, games and exhibits celebrating the annual Charter Fair held on the last Saturday in June.