



## Huntingdon Local Information

### **History**

With its choice of boutique and national shops, historic heritage, riverside walks and fun activities, Huntingdon is the perfect place to visit whatever the season.

The town was chartered by King John in 1205 and is the county town of Huntingdonshire. Having prospered successfully as a bridging point of the River Great Ouse, Huntingdon grew into a market town and, in the 18th and 19th centuries, as a coaching town. The well-preserved medieval bridge was once the main route of Ermine Street over the river and is still in use today.

This quaint market town with its charming churches, the Cromwell Museum - the only Cromwell-dedicated museum in the UK - and bustling markets, both traditional and farmers, offers you a warm welcome in an assortment of cafes, bars and restaurants.

Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon in 1599 and the Cromwell Museum tells of his life and legacy through portraits and artefacts associated with this enigmatic figure. The Museum opened in 1962 in the old grammar school where Cromwell was once a pupil, as was Samuel Pepys the well-known diarist. Events, such as The Sealed Knot, are organised by the Museum to bring to life the fascinating history of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Other famous residents, past and present, include John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich (and the inventor of that staple foodstuff) and John Major who became the youngest Prime Minister of the 20th Century.

Stay and enjoy the sights in a choice of places to stay including The Old Bridge Hotel and The George Hotel, where each year the historic courtyard plays host to 'Shakespearian theatre' and plays by the Bard are enacted. Stroll at leisure the pedestrianised shopping centres and enjoy mix of independent and national brands amongst the shops, cafes and restaurants.

Highly recommended is the Historic Town Trail, which takes you on a self-guided circular walk from the Town Hall, past the 'Thinking Soldier' war memorial and the 16<sup>th</sup> century Falcon Inn, reputedly a headquarters for Cromwell during the Civil War and All Saints' Church. As one of only two surviving medieval churches, All Saints has Norman stonework and the font is reputed to have been used for the baptism of Cromwell. The route leads you past old gaols, the quaint Market Inn and on to the picturesque riverside park with its 19<sup>th</sup> century mill, now smart apartments, and back through the town with so much more history to soak up.

Huntingdon's riverside park is a great place to relax, take a boat trip or simply enjoy a picnic whilst watching the fourth longest river in England, The River Great Ouse, go peacefully on its way.

Huntingdon is just one hour by train from London and sits directly off the A14 with links to Cambridge (20 minutes in the car). So easy to reach, so wonderful to arrive.

Discover more about Huntingdon at [www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk](http://www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk)

### **Shopping in Huntingdon**

With its pedestrianised shopping centre, Huntingdon offers visitors a choice of national, independent and boutique shops. The town is undergoing a major facelift with the ongoing redevelopment in several areas. The historic High Street, St Benedicts Court and Chequers Court now offer a good mix of shops for all tastes. Gift shops, craft shops, bookshops, antique shops, clothes and home-style shops all allow a happy time to be whiled away. Visit Huntingdon First's website for a full list of shops, where to find them and for any special offers. [www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk](http://www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk)

Traditional markets are held every Saturday and Wednesday in the Market Square, with the popular Farmers' Markets every other Friday and on the last Saturday of a five-week month. There is also a popular Crafts & Collectables Market every Friday in the town's Commemoration Hall.

Visiting markets include French and Italian Markets and exquisite craft markets. All year round there are periods of entertainment to keep the young at heart happy with the popular Christmas Lights event lighting up the town each November for the festive period.

There are plenty of places to enjoy a drink, a bite to eat or a more formal dining experience as well as pavement cafes for those hazy summer days. Visit Huntingdon First's website for a full list. [www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk](http://www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk)

And do keep an eye open for our BID Huntingdon Town Rangers; dressed in red, they are ready to help with answers to questions, directions or in any way they can!

### **The Surrounding Area**

Huntingdon Racecourse is just a stone's throw from the town, directly off the A14 and holds regular race meetings including family fun days. Portholme, between Godmanchester and Huntingdon, is the largest lowland meadow in England. Perfect for peaceful walks and escaping the rat-race.

Houghton Mill, a National Trust property, is a water mill located on the Great Ouse. Flour is still milled here and the building is a tourist centre, with a camping site nearby. Grafham Water Centre, near Perry, offers land and water based activities as well as walks and bike hire around the reservoir. Cambridge is twenty minutes away and offers all the delights of city life.