Charlbury is situated 15 miles north west of Oxford in the beautiful Evenlode Valley, surrounded by glorious Cotswold countryside and the historic towns of Woodstock, Burford and Chipping Norton. Charlbury is a small market town, typical of the Cotswolds, with its colourful cottage gardens and houses built of local materials.

To the south west of Charlbury lies the remainder of the ancient Wychwood Forest, part of which now makes up the estate of Combe Park. Monarchs once exercised their exclusive hunting rights in the forest. Today, deer and other wildlife can still be spotted from public footpaths that border the Park.

The coming of the railway in 1853 put new life into the market town. Charlbury still has its picturesque station, the design of which is linked to Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Regular trains link the town to London, Reading, Oxford, and west to Hereford and Worcester.

Today, Charlbury lends itself to gentle strolls past buildings and features of historic interest. Footpaths in the surrounding area offer walks through stunning scenery, all within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The quiet country lanes and roads in the Wychwood area are also popular with cyclists and horse riders.

Award-winning pubs and inns at the heart of the town encourage visitors to stay and sample local hospitality. Local books and information can be found at the nearby bookshop, library, post office and other shops, while Charlbury Museum brings to life the story of its people and their town over the centuries. Today, the community organise many events open to all. These include a two-day music festival by the Evenlode River, a popular Beer Festival and an Annual Street Fair.

To find out more please visit www.charlbury.info
Some of Charlbury's Historic Buildings and Monuments

1. Grantchester House
   Thames Street
   The first authenticated owner was the Rev. John Arrowsmith, who was a Curate of St. Mary the Virgin Church, Master of Charlbury Grammar School and Vicar of Wilcote until his death in 1761. In the 1880s and 1890s it was a boarding school for young ladies, known as Merton House, and it was probably then that the top storey was converted from attics with dormers to dormitories, and the round windows inserted. Bought in the 1930s by the Bursar of New College, Oxford, its name was changed to Grantchester House.

2. The Old Talbot Inn and Armada Cottage
   Thames Street
   A virtually unaltered Elizabethan building, saved from the philistine hands of a brewery by the outbreak of the Great War, its licence was given up in 1927. Both cottages are now privately owned.

3. The Museum
   Market Street
   Opened in 1952, it contains many relics of Charlbury’s past including a fine collection of farm implements and old photographs. The garden in front is the site of The Star, a former pub, demolished in 1912.

4. Drinking Fountain
   The Playing Close
   The winning design of a national competition, it was opened in 1900 to commemorate Queen Victoria’s visit to Cornbury in 1886, her Golden Jubilee in 1887, her Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and Arthur Albright’s gift to the town of a pure water supply in 1896.

5. Corner House
   Market Street
   Given to the town in 1946 by Mr. and Mrs. C H Morris of Lee Place, it is the civic hub of Charlbury. The street front was added in 1723 by William Spendlove, a Quaker baker. He built a gable-like structure on the roof (now removed), and the townpeople christened the building Observatory House. It remained in Quaker hands for the rest of the 18th and most of the 19th centuries. The Annual Street Fair is held to raise funds for the maintenance of the Corner House and the War Memorial Hall, built in its garden in 1956. The building also houses the public library.

6. Albright House
   Church Street
   Another Quaker property, it was bought by Edward Spendlove in 1710 because he was a maltster and it had a malthouse. The Albrights bought it in 1813, and it is still owned by their descendants. The wisteria along the frontage is much appreciated by passers-by.

7. Friends’ Meeting House
   Market Street
   First built in 1681, rebuilt in 1779 and enlarged in 1987, it is an unassuming building which continues to be the focus of worship for Quaker families in the Charlbury area.

8. The Bell Hotel
   Church Street
   An ancient hostelry, whose foundations probably go back to the town’s first market in 1256. The date 1700 over the entrance tells us when it was altered and repaired. First penned in the street, the livestock were later moved to the yard behind, but in 1955 by agreement with the Tayler & Fletcher Brewery, the auctioneers moved the market to Kingham.

9. Gothic House
   Church Street
   This was the home of Edward Lyster, apothecary, who came to Charlbury to help to conquer smallpox in 1766. He was most successful, and died in 1804. Dr George Horniblow took over his house and practice until he retired in 1849. That year Dr William Pollard married Mary Albright and it became another Quaker property. A tenement on the east side was demolished to make way for an extension in the 1880s, and the locals called it Gothic House. Bessie Marchant, a prolific writer of girls’ school stories, bought it in 1910.

10. St. Mary the Virgin Church
    The pillars and arches on the north side of the nave are Norman. The rest is later and is well described in the leaflet available in the church. During the 1990s the interior of the church was modernised and now provides a much used space for worship.

11. Lee Place
    Bought as a dower house for Ditchley Park in 1716 for the widowed Countess of Lichfield, King Charles II’s favourite daughter. The south-west front was added circa 1722, when the new Ditchley Park was being built. The road from Park Street to Fiveways was re-routed about this time to keep traffic away from the windows. The last male Lee died in 1776.

12. Charlbury Station
    The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway opened the line through Charlbury in 1853. The company employed Isambard Kingdom Brunel as its Engineer and one of his standard ‘chalet-type’ stations was used at Charlbury. The station, now a Grade II Listed Building, retains much of its original general appearance.

Note: Please respect the privacy of the occupants of the private buildings featured.