

# Badger-Watch Brochure



Photograph by Darin Smith  
A defensive badger at College Barn Farm

Enjoy a peaceful, relaxing holiday in a secluded, mobile home situated in the heart of the countryside on the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire border, with wonderful views over the Cotswolds and floodlit badger-watching facilities nearby.

**College Barn Farm,  
Sibford Gower, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 5RY**  
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**Badger-Watch Website**

For up-to-date information and further photographs, please visit our web-site:  
<http://www.badger-watch.com>



Badgers playing at College Barn Farm  
Photograph by Darin Smith

**Location**

Situated in a secluded, rural spot on the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire border, College Barn Farm offers nature-lovers the opportunity to enjoy a peaceful self-catering holiday in the heart of the countryside combined with excellent badger-watching facilities.

College Barn Farm is situated one mile south of the nearest village, Sibford Gower, which is just off the B4035 Banbury to Shipston-on-Stour road - approx. nine miles from Banbury (M40, junction 11) and six miles from Shipston. The farm covers 45 acres and comprises 28 acres of arable, about seven acres of trees and the remainder is set-a-side for the benefit of the badgers who reside there.

The views all around are truly exceptional, especially towards the south and the west where, on a clear day, Broadway Tower can be seen on the horizon (about 20 miles away).



Ponds at College Barn Farm Photograph by Richard Butt

### **Local Environment and Wildlife**

Our objective at College Barn Farm is to protect and preserve the local wildlife and countryside, and to provide genuine lovers of such with the opportunity to share in our enjoyment of it. Over the last few years, the funds from letting the mobile home have been invested in a number of improvements, including the formation of three ponds, the construction of three hides and an artificial sett (where some of the badgers moved in as soon as it was finished!). In December 2001, over three thousand trees were planted on the farm.

There are some lovely walks in the area, particularly along the county border of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, which is only a field away (a local O.S. map is available for visitors to borrow). There is a stream and ford surrounded by coppices nearby, with a wide variety of bird-life in the area, including greater-spotted and green woodpeckers, kingfishers, gold-crests, goldfinches, reed-buntings/warblers, linnets, chaffinches, yellow-hammers, jays, harrier/hobby-hawks, buzzards, kestrels, herons, mallard, barn/little/tawny-owls and many more. One visitor spotted a total of 47 different kinds of birds during her stay.



Elephant Hawk Moth  
Photography by John Need

As well as badgers, other wildlife observed at College Barn Farm from time to time include foxes, bats, muntjack/roe/fallow deer, stoats, weasels, rabbits, dragonflies and, in 2002, nine species of butterfly and thirty-eight species of moth were recorded.

### Tourist Attractions

College Barn Farm is located within easy reach of many tourist attractions, including Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick Castle, Blenheim Palace, Oxford, Cotswold Wildlife Park, Birdland at Bourton-on-the-Water, Batsford Arboretum, Hidcote Gardens and several farm-animal parks, to name but a few.

### Local Amenities

There is a small shop and post office in Sibford Ferris. Only two miles away in the village of Hook Norton (famous for its brewery and 'Hooky' beer) there is a larger store which *'sells almost everything'*. For those who prefer superstores, *Tesco*, *Morrisons* and *Sainsburys* are located in Banbury. Badger peanuts are available from Michael and Henry Butt at £2.50p per bag.

There are several village pubs in the vicinity where good food is served and some excellent restaurants can be found in Stratford and Oxford. We suggest you ask Sandra and Richard Butt to make recommendations according to your requirements.

## Description of Mobile Home

The mobile home is located a few hundred yards beyond the farmhouse with access via a concrete drive. It is surrounded by a lawned area with fruit trees and two swings. The wonderful view to the west, about 19 miles across to Broadway Tower can be enjoyed through the living-room window.



The modern '*ABI Havana*' mobile-home measures 28' x 12' and has two bedrooms (one double and one twin with 2'-wide beds); a shower room with half-size bath, WC and basin; a kitchen - with units on two sides - containing a sink, a gas oven/hob, refrigerator, microwave and radio-cassette player. The living room (with seating which can be adapted to form a 4'-wide bed) has a gas fire, colour TV and video player.

China, cutlery, kitchenware, cleaning materials, blankets, one double duvet, two single duvets and pillows are supplied. Please note, however, that linen is NOT supplied, so please bring with you your own sheets, duvet-covers, pillow-cases and towels/tea-towels. We recommend you also come equipped with a torch and binoculars, if you have them, and waterproof footwear in case of wet weather.

Adjacent to the mobile-home is a timber annexe which houses a bathroom (with full-size bath, wash basin and WC) and a utility room – each measuring 9' x 9' - which contains an automatic washing machine, a tumble dryer and some garden chairs. There is a concrete parking area next to the mobile-home.

## **Badger-Watching**

There have been badgers at College Barn Farm for at least forty years. We believe our setts are safe from interference since, not only are they observed regularly, but their location is relatively inaccessible. In the field where the hides are located, there are two natural setts with around 14 entrances in active use and one artificial sett which became occupied only a few weeks after its completion.

Over the past eighteen years, visitors have consistently seen several badgers using the floodlit pathway leading up to the main elevated hide. The most ever seen in a group numbered twenty one, although it is rare to see so many out together at the same time. It is more usual to see them come and go in ones, twos and threes, so you can never be absolutely sure how many different badgers you've seen during an evening.



**The elevated hide (pictured on extreme right),** which is heated and seats four persons, is on ground level at the entrance, but 10 feet above ground on the viewing side where the field containing the setts slopes away. Watchers usually leave a trail of food - e.g. peanuts - from the setts up to the hides and, very soon after dark, the badgers come up for supper. They can be clearly seen as there are two floodlights mounted on the front of the hide, which do not seem to bother the badgers in any way. Although their hearing and sense of smell are very acute, their sight is poor.

**A ground-level hide (on the left of the previous photo) was constructed in 2001. It too is heated and can seat four people. It is located near the artificial sett within the floodlit area and enables visitors to watch the badgers at eye level within only four feet of where the badgers feed on one side. On the other side of the hide, there is a good view of the two large ponds during daylight hours.**

Our third hide (constructed in 2007)



A year on and the hide has proved to be a complete success, particularly in the early evening. Note the badger sett entrance that has been constructed by the bottom left of the hide.

The hide seats four in individual seats and looks out over the barn-owl box and two badger setts. After dark, illumination comes from the existing floodlight and, although the hide is on the extremity of the light, badgers and other wildlife can be clearly seen from the hide.



The owl box as seen from our third hide

It is recommended that visitors keep as quiet as possible when viewing the badgers. Any noise or unfamiliar sounds can cause them to run back down their setts until all is quiet again. They are very wary of unfamiliar scents too, so it's advisable not to wear perfume or after-shave!



A caved in tunnel which now acts as a fresh air hole to a living compartment

## Comments from Visitors

Many visitors come back year after year. Some know a lot about badgers and some have never even seen a badger before. Here are some extracts taken from the **BADGER-WATCH** file in which visitors make notes about their observations:-

“What well-kept accommodation in perfect isolation with breathtaking views across the countryside.” The Presswells - Taunton.

“Very impressed by the mobile home and by the luxurious accommodation in the hides.” The Waddinghams - Kent.

“As Arthur was laying a food trail, he was joined by the cubs circling around the gate area and playing ‘chase-me’ in the long grass, yacking, growling and chirruping as they went, totally unfazed by meeting Arthur!” Rosy Jones – Warrington.

“It has been a privilege to observe badgers in a safe, comfortable environment and we are coming back next year for more!!” Janice & Frank – Scarborough.

“First badger emerged at 9 pm followed quickly by others, one after another, totalling at least nine. Wall-to-wall badgers! All over logs and surrounding area. Ate most of nuts then seemed to spread out and started scraping at grass. Realised they were collecting bedding! Saw one bring bedding out – others taking it down into sett. Then saw two mating close to middle entrance!” Pat, Viv, Jackie and Pat 2 – Teesdale.

“Badgers, young and old, were coming from different setts and directions until the grand total was eight altogether at one time. One was collecting straw for its bedding which was good to watch.” Mr. & Mrs. Peach - Isle of Wight.

“Two youngsters and four adult badgers grunted, munched and slurped in the rain. Eventually all left, having hoovered up Sugar Puffs, bread and apple. Then the two youngsters returned for a game of tag on and around the big log, jumping, chasing and grunting. A lovely bonus!” Denise & Paul Buick – Surrey.

“On our last night saw 12 badgers all out together; 8 coming up the path from the middle of the fields and 4 behind them feeding around the sett entrances. Wonderful viewing and magical moments, as always! Richard & Lesley Marriott – Sheffield.

“Thank you for allowing us to share this truly wonderful place. Heaven on Earth!” Ann & Karen, Wakefield.

“Lovely relaxing week-end. Very good facilities. Abundant wildlife in a beautiful setting.” Lucy & Michael – Aylesbury.

“To sum up – excellent weather, superb scenery, brilliant badger-watching – it’s been a privilege. We can’t thank Richard and Sandra enough for making it all possible. Hope whoever reads this has as much fun as we did!” Kate & Phil Roberts – Bury.

## Conditions of Booking

### Rent includes:

- Electricity and gas
- Pillows, blankets, one double duvet and two single duvets
- On request, cot & mattress (although cot linen **not** supplied)

### Rent excludes:

- Sheets, duvet covers, pillow-slips, towels and tea-towels - guests should bring their own.

### Pets:

- No pets allowed.

### Arrivals/Departures:

Weeks commence and terminate on Saturdays only (unless special arrangements are made) and in order to provide sufficient time to prepare for incoming guests, arrivals are **from 2.00 p.m.** onwards.

Departures are **by 10.00 a.m.** on the day of departure.

### Breakages:

Although no charge is usually made for **reasonable** breakages, it would be appreciated if guests would notify Sandra Butt of any breakages, so that replacements can be provided as soon as possible.

### Liabilities:

The proprietors will not accept liability to any person or member of a holiday booking for any personal injury, loss or damage to property, however sustained or caused, nor for the loss or theft of property and/or money. (Personal insurance is strongly recommended.)

### Payment:

50% deposit at time of booking and the balance paid on holiday commencement date.

### Cancellation:

If you have to cancel your holiday for any reason, this cancellation must be made immediately by telephone to Sandra Butt. Such cancellation will become effective from that date and will be subject to a charge payable by you to compensate Sandra Butt for estimated losses which are calculated in accordance with the following scale:

|                     | Amount to be charged |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Over 7 days notice: | Deposit              |
| Under 7 days:       | Full Rental          |

### Descriptions:

All descriptions, dimensions and other details are given without responsibility for any changes, although every effort will be made by Sandra Butt to adhere to such.

### Booking Liability:

The person signing the Booking Form is and will remain responsible for the members of his/her party and should ensure that they are aware of the Conditions of Booking and that they meet the obligations arising therefrom in every way. If the Conditions of Booking are in any way contravened, The proprietors may refuse the right of entry to the property at any time, and no money will be refunded. In particular the following points must be strictly adhered to:

- (a) The number in the party must never exceed four (unless prior approval is given by Sandra Butt).
- (b) Any Conditions mentioned above.

# Booking Form

Please telephone Sandra Butt to make your reservation **BEFORE** completing and returning this form to:

Mrs. Sandra Butt, College Barn Farm, Sibford Gower, Banbury, Oxon. OX15 5RY  
**Telephone: (01295) 780352; Facsimile: (01295) 780147.**

Date of arrival: ..... Date of departure: .....  
(after 2.00 pm) (by 10.00 am)

| Names of party | Age if under 18 | Male or female |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| .....          | .....           | .....          |
| .....          | .....           | .....          |
| .....          | .....           | .....          |
| .....          | .....           | .....          |
| .....          | .....           | .....          |
| .....          | .....           | .....          |

**N.B.** Payment required at time of booking is 50% of hire.

I confirm that the Booking Conditions are accepted by me and by the members of my party. Enclosed is a cheque made payable to 'Mrs. S.M. Butt' amounting to £ ..... which represents **50% deposit** and I confirm that the balance of any money owing will be paid to Sandra Butt on my arrival at College Barn Farm (holiday *commencement* date).

Signature: ..... Name in Print: .....

Address: .....  
.....  
..... Post Code .....

Date: ..... Telephone: .....

Where did you hear about us? ..... Email address: .....

Expected time of arrival at College Barn Farm? .....

**SHORT-BREAK** prices (i.e. less than a week, minimum stay 2 nights) include badger-watching facilities and mobile home accommodation for **2 persons only**. A supplement of £25 per person per night will be charged for any extra persons over the age of 16. Children aged 16 years or under are free of charge.

\* A 'Short-Breaks discount of £5 per night is applicable to senior citizens on Sun., Mon., Tues., Weds. and Thursday night on a minimum of a two night booking.