

OXFORD ORBITAL

A tour of Oxford's satellite villages and pubs • Length: 18 miles (alternative route 24 miles)

Wolvercote

Known by this name since 1185, derived from Ulfga a Saxon who lived here. All residents of the parish are Wolvercote Commoners. A mill here was used by Charles I's men to grind sword-blades. In 1662 the villagers battled scholars over a goose theft. The paper mill here operated here for three centuries. The mill area is now under discussion for housing development for OUP staff.

Cuttleslowe

Cuttleslowe was built in the 1930s but given a name from 1004. The park dates from the 1950s. The Cuttleslowe Wall was built to separate middle class housing from the council estate – Communist Abe Lazarus led a protest in 1935. The wall was partly demolished in 1938, and completely only in 1959.

Marston

The village was held by the Parliamentarians in the Civil War siege of Oxford. In 1819 The Rev Jack Russell acquired his dog Trump here, forefather of the Russell breed. A ferry has crossed the Cherwell here since at least 1279. The new road and bridge were opened in 1971.

Headington

A place of pottery manufacture in Roman times, there was also a Saxon palace here, where St Frideswide grew up. Philosopher Isaiah Berlin lived in the 18th century Headington House. In 1669 a 'flying-coach' first got to London in a day from here. Tolkien and C S Lewis both lived in Headington.

Shotover Country Park

Formerly Shotover Royal Forest. Ochre was quarried here until the 1930s. A giant is said to have 'shot over' the hill, hence the name

Horspath

Here the Grey Lady ghost is reputed to haunt the manor house: killed by her husband, her body was found in a priest's hole.

Godstow

The abbey here was founded here in 1133. Henry II's mistress, Rosamund Clifford, was a nun here. In the 16th century, Henry VIII's physician lived here.

Wytham

Formerly in Berkshire, the whole village is now owned by the University of Oxford. Wytham Hill is 500ft above sea level.

Botley

Another refugee from Berkshire. Botley was an ancient village, probably named after 'Botta'.

North Hinksey

Here a young Oscar Wilde helped John Ruskin with his road-mending scheme to improve undergraduates through 'the pleasures of useful muscular work'. Some historians think the original 'ox ford' was here. St Lawrence's church is believed to have started as a monk's cell

South Hinksey

'In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same; The village street its haunted mansion lacks, And from the sign is gone Sybilla's name, And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks.' – Matthew Arnold, *Thyrsis*
(Sybela Curr ran the Cross Keys Inn in the mid-19th century. The church here is confusingly named St Laurence (sic). The name Hinksey derives from the Saxon founder of Kent, Hengist.

Kennington

Though appearing to be a modern suburb, Kennington was first mentioned in a charter of 821. Bagley Wood to the west belongs to St John's college. A 1629 manor house remains. A mediaeval chapel was lost and the Norman-style church of today dates only to 1828. It was deconsecrated in the 1950s and replaced by a more modern one. The modern settlement grew from 1913, with the help of local landowner Norton Disney

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Hinksey Park

Was created in 1934

Iffley

Bronze Age, Roman and found here. Its name evolved considerably: in the Domesday Book it is named Givetelei. A yew tree near the church is believed to be 1000 years old. Iffley Lock was the site of a series of watermills from the 12th century to 1908.

Littlemore

Only 7/8 nuns were based at Littlemore Priory but they became famed for their dishonesty, violence and sexual incontinence. They were suppressed by Cardinal Wolsey. The later Cardinal Newman was once priest in the village.

Sandford-on-Thames

'a faint shout/Comes from some Oxford boat at Sandford lock, And starts the moor-hen from the sedgy rill...'

– Oscar Wilde, *The Burden of Itys*

Sandford had a ferry across the Thames from the 13th century. A paper mill has been here since Domesday times, but has now been converted into flats. An 1843 riverine obelisk marks the site of drownings (one in 1921 was of Michael Llewellyn Davies, who may have inspired *Peter Pan*) and is mentioned in Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*.

