

**HIDDEN HERITAGE: WALK 3 - IFFLEY**

**2 miles / 1.5 - 2 hours**

*Iffley is mentioned in the **Domesday Book** as 'Givetelei', thought to mean 'plover meadow' in Old English, but how early in the Anglo-Saxon period the village came into existence is not known. Roman and Bronze Age remains have also been found here. Iffley was officially absorbed into the City of Oxford in 1928.*

**1**

- Walk starts at the junction of **Iffley Turn** and Henley Avenue (adjacent to where the bus from the City Centre stops at the bottom of Rosehill)
- Ignore the main approach to the village via Iffley Turn (to your right)
- Instead, continue walking and take the ancient high-walled footpath up the hill next to **86 Henley Avenue** (signposted 'Bridleway')
- Before the corner, note the old stone at the bottom of the wall on which is inscribed 'here Iffley Hyway 1635'

*This footpath with stone walls on one side, and wooden fencing and breeze blocks on the other, divides old Iffley from more modern Rosehill.*

**2**

- The path emerges at the top of **Tree Lane**
- Turn right and pause to catch sight of **Hill Top House** on the right (an 18th-century brick and stone building with a large cottage garden)
- Continue down Tree Lane
- Note a terrace of mid-19th century farm labourers' cottages to your left and **Azors Court** sheltered housing on your right

*Azor is noted in the Domesday Book as being the Lord of Iffley in the time of Edward the Confessor. **Stone Quarry Lane** on your left is named after the stone pit from where stone was quarried in medieval times for Iffley Church and Merton College chapel.*

**3**

- Cross over **Woodhouse Way**, through the bollards and down the steep hill, passing three cottages on your right that back onto **Hawkwell Hotel**

**4**

- Across Church Way to your right you can see the gable end of **Tudor Cottage** (a 16th or 17th-century timber-framed building)

**5**

- Turn left along **Church Way** (passing the Prince of Wales public house on your left)
- Opposite just along is **Rivermead** (a late Elizabethan stone house with an interesting door knocker)
- Next to this is **Malthouse Cottages** and a 16th to 17th-century long barn (with pieces of medieval carving from other buildings set into its walls)
- On your left is the Iffley Community Shop

**6**

- Continue along Church Way past the junction with **Abberbury Road**
- Note the 17th-century **Thatched Cottage** opposite
- Ignore the turn to Mill Lane (on the right by the Cottage) and carry on to the thatched **Church Hall**

*This was a 15th-century tithe barn, later used a school from the mid-19th century until 1961.*

**7**

- As you approach Iffley Church you pass the **Glebe Field** on the left (with local allotments, originally part of the Glebe, stretching up the hill behind)

*The Glebe was rescued from development in 1996 by a local benefactor and is managed as wild meadow and pasture by **Oxford Preservation Trust**. Learn more at this web address: [www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk/content/iffley-glebe](http://www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk/content/iffley-glebe).*

**8**

- Enter the churchyard under the massive horse chestnut at the gate (planted in 1838)
- **St Mary the Virgin** (built around 1170) is famous for the Norman carvings at the west and south doorways and elsewhere
- On leaving the churchyard, turn left down **Mill Lane** (passing The Rectory)
- When you reach **The Manor House** (on your right) the steps and footpath to your left lead down to the site of Iffley Mill

*The mill operated from the 12th century until burnt down in 1908.*

**9**

- Cross the lock and then the **Mathematical Bridge** (a replica of that over the River Cam at Queens' College, Cambridge) to the towpath
- Walk downstream to your left for a few metres, along the path and through the fencing either side, and then to your right to visit the famous **fritillary field**

**10**

- Retrace your steps upstream past **Iffley Lock** (now on your right)
- Note the **Desborough Bridge** with its life-size replica of a bull's head (accessible by crossing the bridge and carefully descending the steps by the water)
- Shortly you will come to **The Isis Farmhouse** (only accessible by boat or foot)

**11**

- Continue upstream along the Thames towpath, with views across the water to the fields and gardens that separate the village from the river
- After a quarter of a mile, you reach **Donnington Bridge** (built in 1962)

*On the side of the bridge, rowing eights have painted their colours to celebrate triumphs in the annual college boat races.*

**12**

- If you carry on along the towpath upstream for another 30 minutes you meet the **Abingdon Road** at **Folly Bridge** just south of Christ Church
- To continue the Iffley walk, climb the path (to the left by the bridge) up onto Donnington Bridge Road
- Cross over on the south side

*From here, there is a good view of the many boating activities down below, including the starting point of the Oxford college races.*

**13**

- Take the first turn on your right at the bottom of the bridge into **Meadow Lane** (an ancient route from the villages east of Oxford into the City Centre), which brings you back into Iffley village
- After crossing **Boundary Brook** and walking along the footpath flanked by green spaces on either side, there is a string of modern houses on your left (mostly built in the 1960s)
- Then after a right-angled bend, there is a gentle climb past several older houses (including the last working farm in Iffley, which was active until the 1950s)

**14**

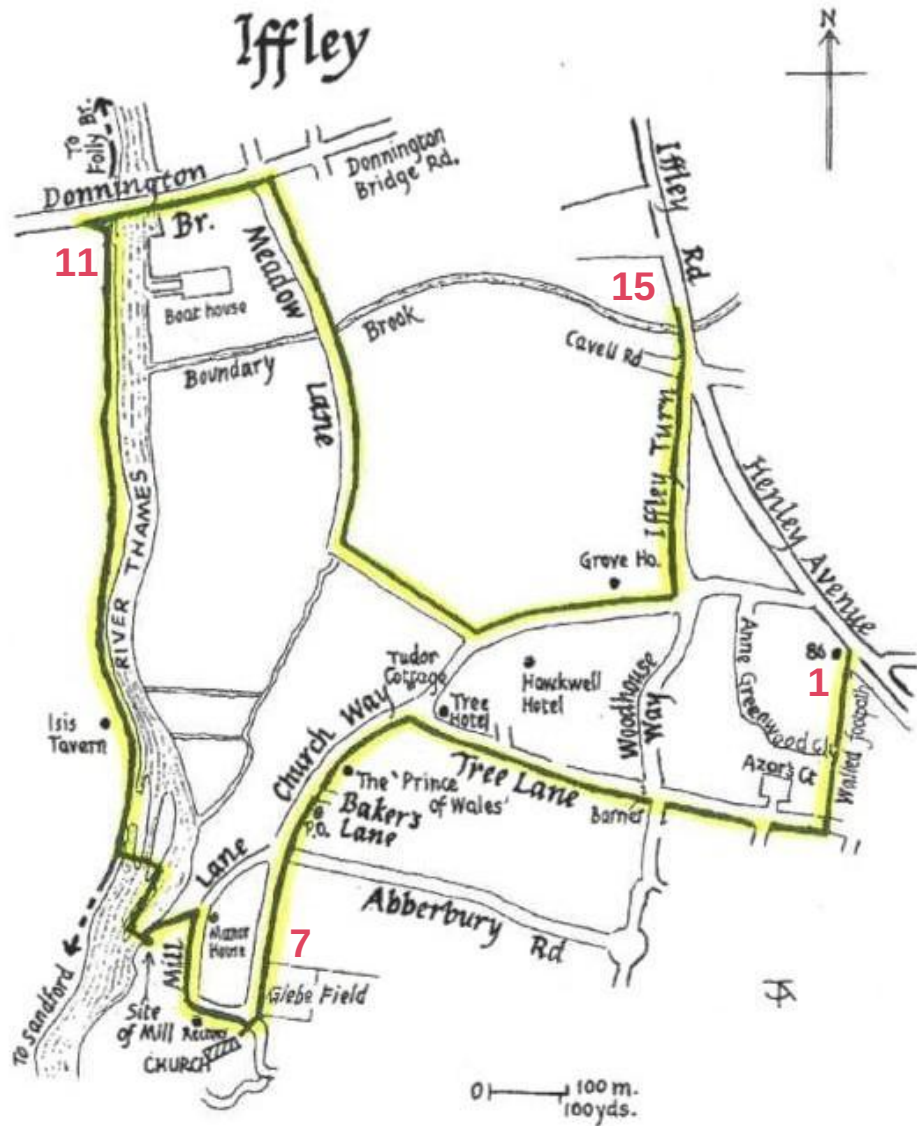
- Turn left along Church Way
- Pass The Priory (number 35) and Hawkwell House (Hotel), two large 19th-century houses on your right (behind the high wall), and a terrace of cottages on your left

**15**

- Branch left down the slope into Iffley Turn at the roundabout
- A fair few metres further on, Iffley Turn rejoins the **Iffley Road** (where there is a regular bus route into Oxford)

**END OF SELF-GUIDED WALK**

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If you enjoyed this Hidden Heritage Walk, why not try the **Iffley to Kennington Green Spaces Walk (Walk 4)** on our website.

## HIGHLIGHTS

