

# Eynsham

## A Walk Round Eynsham

1. Start at the Car Park in Back Lane and walk west, along Clover Place
2. Turn left, down the alley called Wastie Lane
3. Turn left again along Acre End
4. Turn right down Lombard Street - note the Baptist church set back to your right - and go straight on into Abbey Street
5. At the bottom of Abbey Street, go into the Catholic church car park to see the site of the Abbey. Turn round and retrace your steps
6. Turn right into Church Street and up to the Square
7. Go east along High Street and then turn left up Queen Street
8. At the top of Queen Street turn left into Newland Street
9. At the end of Newland Street turn left into Mill Street
10. Just opposite Thames Street, turn right, up Conduit Lane, which will bring you back to the Car Park.

## Back in time

Here are some sights you might have seen had you done this walk 100 years ago, or so. Stop at the green dots, look in the direction of the arrows and compare the view with today.



## Hidden Treasures

See if you can find these items at the places marked with stars on the map.



Cover image: a medieval key found in Abbey Street, close to the site of the abbey's main gate. Was this the abbey's front door key?

## Catholic Apostolic Church

The Catholic Apostolic church was a 19th century movement which had 12 founding 'Apostles' and a number of 'Angels' - the equivalent of Bishops. Unfortunately, since the original Apostles could not be replaced, and since only they could ordain Angels, when the last Apostle died the movement was doomed. The Eynsham church building was closed in the early 1980s and is now a private home.



## White Hart

The White Hart Inn is Eynsham's oldest domestic dwelling. In 1750 it became an inn and was licensed as The Haunch of Venison in 1785. By 1828 it was a coaching inn with stabling for 36 horses. The manorial courts met here in the 19th century. Tenants of the New Lands elected their own court officers - some to collect the rents for the abbey, others to collect fines and money owed to the court and there was also an official beer-taster. The court could fix its own penalties up to a maximum fine of 10 shillings.



## Street Wise: Newland Street

This was originally the main street of the New Lands built in the 13th century. It was designed to be wide enough to hold a street market intended to replace the original market close to the abbey. (The abbot found the stallholders too rowdy!) The northern boundary of New Lands ran along the bridleway at the top of what is now Hawthorn Road. Originally this was Eynsham's first by-pass: an ancient 'salt road' which ran east to the wharf on the Thames.

## The Old Malthouse



Now a restaurant, workshop and offices, the Old Malthouse was built about 1820 for James Swann, the owner of Eynsham Mill at this time. The mill supplied the paper for the rare tar and paper roof which covers the Old Malthouse. Swann lived next door to the Gables where a 200 year old Acacia tree marks his association with William Cobbett. Cobbett, the English radical author, made a lot of money promoting Acacia trees for ship building. However, by the time the trees matured, ships were being made from iron and steel.

## Cobden

Cobden is one of the few houses in Eynsham to retain its thatched roof. In 1854 a disastrous fire threatened the entire village but was stopped just short of the north end of Queen Street. Although there was no loss of life, many people lost all their possessions.



## Street Wise: Queen Street

As late as 1650 this was still Pucke or Pugg Lane. The new name may have been adopted in honour of Queen Anne. Halfway up is Queen's Lane, which marks the northern boundary of medieval Eynsham and the start of the borough of New Lands. The old name has been transferred to the alley between Queen's Lane and High Street.

## The Elms

The Elms is an early 16th century rectangular house which still has several original windows with arched lights under square hoods. Sadly, the trees which gave the house its name were victims of Dutch Elm disease.



## Lord's Farm

Lord's Farm, named after the family that owned it in the 18th and 19th centuries, dates from the late 17th/early 18th century. The farm and its adjoining barn, stable and Lord's Row cottages were bequeathed to the Oxford Preservation Trust in 1983.



## Red Lion



Called the Angel until 1750, this is the oldest known pub in Eynsham. In the 18th century it was known for its cockfights and auctions. Eynsham has always had many inns and taverns, due mainly to the village's position as a staging post on the route west from London to Gloucester, Wales and even on to Ireland. The earliest recorded inn is a different Red Lion, in 1587. Other ancient taverns which have disappeared include The Black Boy, The Eagle and Child and The Green Dragon, which was probably where the Co-op now is.

## Street Wise: Mill Street

Mill Street is so called because it extended north to Eynsham Mill, site of the original abbey mill, on the river Evenode, for which the rent was paid partially in eels. Paper making started in 1682 for book production, supplying the fine paper for bible printing in Oxford.

## Street Wise: Conduit Lane

This unassuming alley once had a channel - or conduit - running along it which carried water to the abbey from a spring. Conduit Lane is now the official address of Eynsham Medical Centre.

## Street Wise: Acre End

Acre End Street - or Acre End as it is in the earliest maps - originally led to a track which crossed the Chiltern and went on to South Leigh. Up until the building of the A40 by-pass, this narrow road was a main route for traffic from London to South Wales via Oxford.

## Street Wise: Abbey Street

This was once the main road south past the abbey gate to Stanton Harcourt. South and east lies the Catholic church (built 1940-68), on the site of the abbey which is the first stop on the Heritage Trail. The main road was diverted west in 1217 to expand the abbey precinct and construct fishponds. North and west of Abbey Street lies the Baptist church (1817-8), sole survivor of our nonconformist history.

## Bartholomew Room

Meeting place of Eynsham Parish Council. On his death in 1700, John Bartholomew of Eynsham left £350 for the education of boys in the village. Other benefactors, listed on boards in the upper room, raised a further £87-12s - probably to pay for the building. Originally the ground floor had open arches (which are still visible) and served as a market hall. Since the arches were filled in, the lower floor has served as a jail, fire station, library and, for a short time, as a Catholic church. It is now used for meetings and exhibitions.



## St Leonard's Church

The church dates from the 13th century and was probably the original chapel mentioned in the abbey records. This was a separate chapel for the people of the town, allowing the monks solitude to pursue their own devotions. Daily mass was expected of everyone in the town and the church served not only as a place of worship, but also as a kind of community centre.



## Street Wise: The Square

The heart of medieval Eynsham, the Market Square has been the centre of the village ever since. The original, medieval square was much bigger - and included the entire area between Church Street, Lombard Street and Thames Street. In the middle street a Market Cross intended to remind all those trading to deal fairly before God. The one now in the Square is a replica - the original is stored by the Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre.