



Oxford Walk & Talk

"Morris and Motors"

Updated, November 2012, by Ros Weatherall

Duration:
approx
45 mins

Oxford has associations with two William Morris's – the artist and founder of the Arts & Crafts movement (1834-1896) (WM1) and the car maker and philanthropist (1877-1963) (WM2). This walk takes you past places associated with each.

22 September is European Car Free Day. The 'second' Morris gave the world affordable mobility – something that we have not yet learned to manage well. As you undertake this walk, contemplate how we might better manage the car in towns, to enable its benefits to be more widely distributed while limiting its least welcome by-products.

The walk

1. From Bonn Square walk to the right (westwards) with the Oxford Central Library to your left, and walk down New Road until opposite the entrance to the Malmaison Hotel. Ahead to your right are the distinctive tower and spire of **Nuffield College**, endowed by WM2. Here was the terminus of the Oxford Canal, in the former basin now occupied by the college. Look upwards through the gateway of the St Peter's College Fellows car park and you will see the fine portico on Canal House – the one time headquarters of the Oxford Canal Company.
2. Retrace your steps to Bonn Square then turn left (so that Bonn Square remains to your left and Beaverbrooks jewellers is to your right) to enter New Inn Hall Street via the pedestrian route. About 100 metres along on your left you will find **St Peter's College**, which WM2 supported with substantial gifts in the mid 1930's. Observe the college arms on the gates and above the main entrance.
3. Continue along New Inn Hall Street and turn right into St Michael's Street. Half way along on your right is the **Oxford Union**, within which are murals by WM1 and friends. It was while painting these murals that WM1 met **Jane Burden**, who was to become his wife (as well as a leading model for the pre-Raphaelite painters).
4. Continue to Cornmarket Street and cross it, walking ahead into Ship Street. On your left is **St Michael's Church** where WM1 married Jane



Burden in 1859. At the far end of the street can be seen the tower and spire of **Exeter College**, where WM1 studied. When you reach the end of Ship Street turn left into Turl Street, then right into Broad Street. A large tapestry in Exeter College chapel, Adoration of the Magi, was made in 1890 by the company founded by WM1.

5. Walk to the junction (the **King's Arms** is on the corner) and walk straight ahead into Holywell Street.
6. Divert briefly into Bath Place – a passageway to your right, where a blue plaque commemorates the childhood home of Jane Burden, who became wife of WM1.
7. Continue along Holywell Street to Mansfield Road. On your left immediately along Mansfield Road, is the entrance to **Harris Manchester College**. Its chapel has fine windows by WM1 and Edward Burne-Jones. Ask at the lodge for permission to see them.
8. Continue to the end of Holywell Street and turn right into Longwall Street. Here the red brick building with the red mail box in the wall is the frontage of the **Morris Garage**, where WM2 built his first cars, and whose initials became the famous car marque **MG**.
9. Walk along Longwall Street past the Morris Garage, to High Street. In 1913 you would have seen horse trams in High Street providing the services that today are provided by buses. In that year WM2 and his colleague William Gray effectively brought to an end the monopoly of the Oxford Tramway Company by illegally operating two motor buses. The outcome was conversion of the city's transport to buses by 1914.
10. Turn right from Longwall Street into High Street, and walk past the shops. **Number 48** (now 'Fitrite') is the shop where WM2 began repairing and selling bicycles.
11. Continue to Queen's Lane, on your right. Behind the façade is the college, **St Edmund Hall**. Walk along Queen's Lane to the college entrance if you wish, and ask permission to see the stained glass in the chapel, created by WM1 and Edward Burne Jones.

The walk ends here. You can return to Bonn Square if you wish by continuing along High Street to the Carfax Tower, then along Queen Street. If you find any anomalies on this route, please email info@oxstreets.org.uk

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