Oxford Walk & Talk

"River & Stream"

Duration: 60-75 mins

Updated by Ros Weatherall & Liz Storrar, February 2013

Oxford was defined by its water courses long before the arrival of its University. This leisurely walk will take you along the Mill Stream Walk, following the stream which powered the city's mill, returning alongside the modern navigable River Thames.

The walk

1. From Bonn Square walk to your right, 50 metres towards New Road. Cross the road at the zebra crossing and walk downhill along Castle Street, with County Hall to your right.

2. Turn right at the Castle Tavern into Paradise Street, and follow it past Paradise Square to your left. Cross the bridge over the stream (the **Castle Mill Stream**) – see the Norman tower of the Castle to your right - turn immediately left (marked Woodin's Way) and double back on yourself to walk along the Millstream Path with the stream on your left (passing the Europe Business Assembly building to your right).

3. Walk beside the stream and after crossing it turn right to continue on the path – the stream is now to your right, and housing to your left. Where the housing ends turn left and immediately right to pass through a passage beside the housing signed as 1-14 Abbey Place. This leads you to a car park adjoining what is now a building site, where construction of the extended Westgate Centre will begin at some point in the future.

4. Walk ahead across the car park (with a hoarding to your right) to the main road (Thames Street/Oxpens Road). Turn right along the pavement and walk along Oxpens Road for a few metres (crossing the stream in so doing). Cross Oxpens Road via the light controlled crossing. Double back to re-cross the stream, then turn right down the pedestrian path and walk south along the path, with the stream to your right and housing to your left. Continue for several hundred metres.

5. When you reach the green painted pedestrian bridge across the stream, do not turn right onto it – instead, turn left (signposted 'Folly Bridge') and follow the curving, rising path round until it brings you onto the ornate iron bridge that crosses the Thames. This bridge gave railway access to parts of the city's one-time gas works.

6. Cross the bridge and immediately turn sharp left and follow the path down to **the Thames path**. Turn left and pass under the iron bridge.

7. Continue upstream along the Thames path, with the river to your right. On the far side you will see the large shed that is the ice rink. Continue, and you will pass under the bridge carrying the railway. Look out for the modest obelisk commemorating the bravery of Edgar Wilson.

8. Continue, passing the boatyard on the far side, and pass over the bridge that takes you to **Osney Lock**. You can linger here to watch cruising craft pass through the lock, which is managed by a lock keeper.

9. Continue northwards until the riverside path joins East Street. Walk along East Street, beside the river. On the opposite bank is the building that once housed the municipal 'electricity works'. Continue to the end of East Street, where turn left and immediately right to climb nine steps and cross a stream to join Botley Road.

The walk ends here. Turn right and walk along Botley Road, passing under the railway to Frideswide Square. Park End Street will lead you back towards the city centre and Bonn Square. Alternatively you can catch a bus into the centre from the far side of Botley Road.

Help make our streets friendlier, more pleasant and safer!

View Google map