



ON YOUR BIKE: OXFORDSHIRE PRICE: £8.99 ISBN: 978 1 84674 229 3
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Abingdon and the distant dreaming spires

This figure-of-eight circuit starts and finishes in Abingdon's Market Square and winds its way around Albert Park before heading north to the village of Sunningwell. For the more energetic, a short but sharp climb up to Boars Hill awaits. The rewards are splendid views over the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford and the chance to explore Jarn Mound, with its garden and viewpoint designed by the well-known archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans and its literary connections to Matthew Arnold. The route continues downhill to Wootton and Dry Sandford. Why not take some time to explore the nature reserve of Dry Sandford Pit which has much to offer of geological and wildlife interest? This part of Oxfordshire is well known for its calcareous fens which are home to much rare wildlife. We then skirt the edge of Abingdon airfield before joining up with the 10-mile route back in Sunningwell and Abingdon.

MAP OS Landranger 164 Oxford, Chipping Norton and Bicester (GR SU498971).

STARTING POINT The Market Square in the centre of Abingdon. There are two car parks (pay and display) immediately south of the river bridge on the A415 at Abingdon, 8 miles south of Oxford. The town cannot be reached by train. The nearest railway station is Radley, 3 miles away, on the line between Oxford and Didcot. If you travel by train, you may pick up the route outside Radley station with a simple turn L out of the station.

REFRESHMENTS There are several cafés and pubs en-route. In summer, drinks and ice creams are also usually available from a kiosk in the Abbey Meadows.

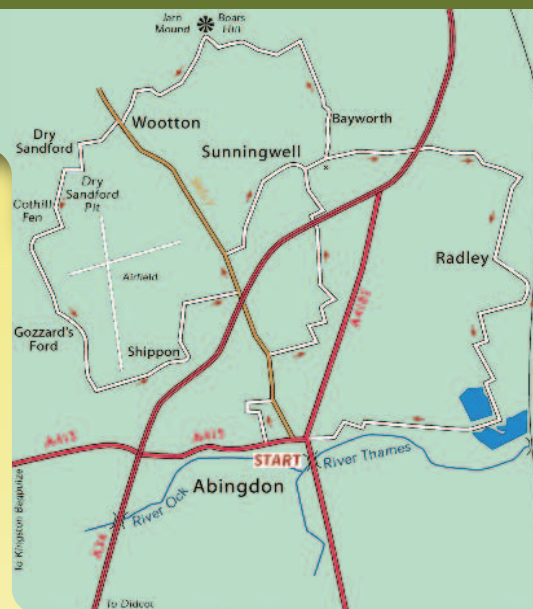
THE ROUTE 10-miles of mostly flat, gentle riding including sections on tracks and bridleways.

From Abingdon Market Square, head west along High Street. Keep straight ahead past the war memorial. Go straight ahead at the traffic lights (signed A34, All Other Routes). Soon turn R onto Conduit Road (signed Carswell School). Go straight ahead at the crossroads (Park Crescent) and ride with Albert Park on your left. Turn R opposite the statue of Prince Albert and ride between bollards. Turn R onto Faringdon Road (not signed). Turn L at the mini-roundabout (signed Wootton/Cumnor). Go straight on at the next mini-roundabout and very soon turn R at traffic lights onto Northcourt Road.



Turn L onto Sellwood Road. Soon turn R at the T-junction (still Sellwood Road). Turn L onto Holland Road and turn R at the T-junction onto South Avenue. Turn L at the next T-junction (still South Avenue) and where the road ends, join the cycle track by riding through the barriers. Continue and go straight ahead, crossing Boulter Drive. Exit through the gate and carefully cross the road. Go through the gate and continue on the stony track which crosses the A34 on a bridge. When you emerge near some buildings, keep straight on and turn R back onto the road (not signed).

Go straight on at the staggered crossroads onto Sugworth



Lane. Enjoy a gentle descent for a mile or so. After a while you will have Bagley Wood on your left. Here there are plenty of footpaths to explore and in late April and May this is one of the best places to come and see bluebells. Turn R at the T-junction and on to the pavement cycle track (signed Radley). Join the road after ½ mile. Pass the entrance to Radley College and Turn L onto Church Road (signed Station). Continue through the village. Pass the railway station and on leaving the village, turn L (Thrupp Lane, NCN Route 5). Bear R by the aggregate quarry and soon turn L (signed Abingdon NCN Route 5). Continue on a track with lakes on both sides. Bear R through some barriers and keep following NCN Route 5. After about 1 mile, cross the Abbey Stream on a wooden bridge and turn R along the stream. Re-cross on the second (wooden) bridge and turn L (signed Sustrans Cycle Route) through a car park and onto Abbey Close. You will see some of the few remains of Abingdon Abbey in the meadow to your right. Bear left under the Abbey Gateway and the market Square is ahead and to your right.

JARN MOUND

Jarn Mound, and much of the surrounding area, is now looked after by the Oxford Preservation Trust. The Mound itself is artificial and was built between 1929 and 1931. It was the brainchild of Sir Arthur Evans, the well-known archaeologist, who lived locally and wanted to ensure that the view of the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford was preserved, at a time when other views of it were threatened with development. He also oversaw the preservation of Matthew Arnold's Field so that the landscape which inspired the poet and appeared in *Thyrsis* and in *The Scholar Gypsy* would not be lost. Today, the area is criss-crossed with numerous paths and is a very pleasant place to wander around, or to rest after climbing the hill.