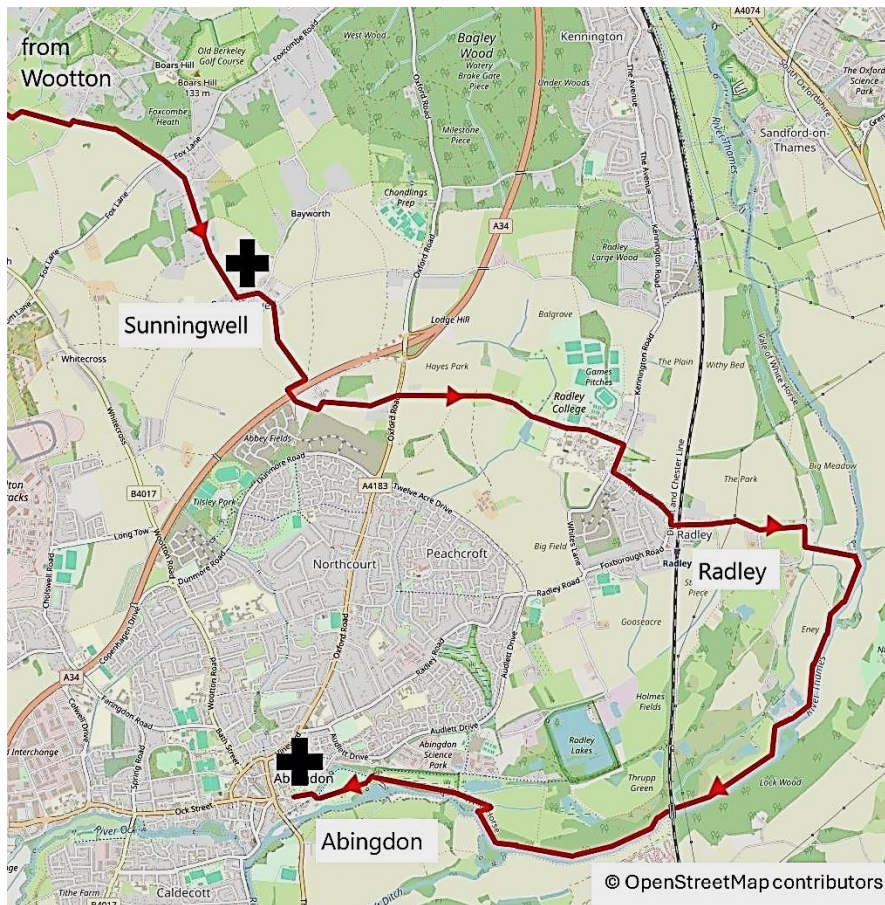
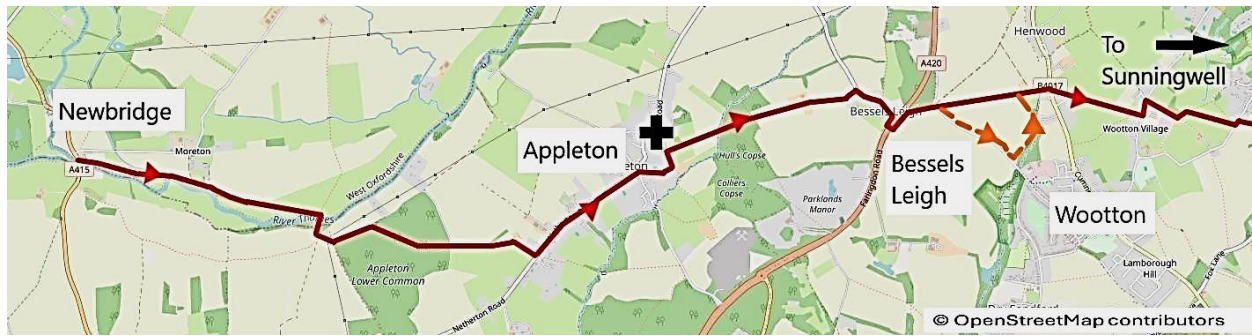


## Day 4: Newbridge to Abingdon



*Today's walk starts and ends along the Thames, but takes a short cut to Abingdon through some beautiful countryside in order to avoid the longer route through Oxford.*

*The walk passes historic churches at Appleton and Sunningwell, and rejoins the Thames at Radley, before finishing at the ruins of the Abbey at Abingdon, founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by the Saxon kingdom of Wessex.*

**Distance:** 15 miles

**Duration:** 6½ hours, not including breaks

**Level of difficulty:** Easy but long

**Maps:** Ordnance Survey Explorer 170, 180

**Car parking:** the Maybush and Rose Revived pubs at Newbridge have car parks, but request permission from the landlords; Abbey Close car park in Abingdon and other council car parks.

**Public transport:** see bustimes.org, No. 33 bus between Abingdon and Wallingford

**Refreshments:** the Maybush and Rose Revived pubs at Newbridge; several pubs along the route; village shop in Radley; pubs and cafes in Abingdon

**Toilets:** the Maybush and Rose Revived pubs at Newbridge; Appleton Church; pubs along the route.

## Day 4: Newbridge to Abingdon

### Short Walk Option:

1. Newbridge to Appleton Church. 3.5 miles. Directions 1 to 6.

#### Newbridge

The bridge is a contender for the oldest of all the bridges crossing the Thames, dating back to c1250 and built by the monks of Deerhurst Priory on the orders of King John.

### Directions:

1. Start at the Rose Revived pub and follow the Thames Path, which runs through the pub garden and alongside the river. After just over a mile, cross the river by the footbridge towards Appleton.
2. After a short distance, take the public bridleway, just to the right of an electricity pylon, leading through the woods of Appleton Lower Common.
3. When the bridleway splits left and right, take the right-hand fork and continue straight ahead at a crossing of paths.
4. At the end of the woods, follow the track to the right. After passing houses on the left-hand side, continue to the road at Appleton. Cross carefully to the pavement on the opposite side of the road and turn left.
5. Walk through the village to the road junction, cross the road and continue straight ahead along Park Lane.
6. At the end of the tarmac road, before the barn, turn left at the public footpath sign. Continue straight ahead along the left-hand edge of the field to the gate leading into the churchyard of **St Laurence, Appleton**. The church is well worth visiting and a good place to stop for a break.

#### Appleton

The Manor of Appleton ('Æppeltune') was held by Abingdon Abbey during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It was sacked by the Danes in the reign of king Alfred, and was subsequently sequestered by him. The Domesday Book states that Appleton was the most valuable fishery in Berkshire. (The village was transferred to Oxfordshire in 1974). The oldest parts of St Laurence Church are 12<sup>th</sup> century.

7. After visiting the church, return to the churchyard gate and continue straight ahead across the field to the gate at the other side.
8. Follow the path for around a mile, ignoring turnings to the left and right, to reach the minor road at Bessels Leigh.
9. Turn right along the road to reach the Greyhound Inn after a few hundred yards, at the junction with the busy A420 road. Turn right along the pavement and cross the road with care via the traffic island.
10. Follow the pavement on the opposite side of the road back in the direction of the Greyhound Inn and then take the first road turning on the right, signed Wootton Business Park and Abingdon.

## Day 4: Newbridge to Abingdon

11. At the right-hand bend in the road, the public footpath runs straight ahead diagonally across the field to a stile on the opposite side, to the right of the farmhouse ahead. However, if this field is planted or ploughed, walk around the right-hand edge of the field instead to reach the stile.
12. Cross the stile, walk across the field and go through a gate in the opposite corner. Follow the field around to a stile and footbridge, then continue between fences to a wooden gate which leads on to a minor road with housing. Turn left to reach a busier road, the B4017.
13. Cross the road with care and continue straight ahead, following the public footpath signposted towards Old Boars Hill.
14. After passing the office furniture showroom on the left, continue through a series of gates to reach the road at Wootton.
15. Turn left along the road for around 100 yards and then turn right at the public footpath sign.
16. After a few hundred yards, at the end of the woodland on the left, there is a crossing of paths. Take the left-hand path and then the first path on the right. This leads through fields via a number of stiles to reach a road.
17. Turn left along the road for around 50 yards and then turn right at the public footpath sign. Follow the footpath for around half a mile to reach the road (Fox Lane). Turn left and the Fox Inn is on the left.
18. Take the signed public footpath opposite the Fox Inn and, at a junction of paths, take the right-hand fork.
19. On reaching a road, continue straight ahead and then through a gate, along a footpath and then through more gates to reach Sunningwell, with **St Leonard Church** across the road. There are several benches in the churchyard, so this is a good place to stop for (a probably late) lunch.
20. After visiting the church, turn right out of the churchyard and follow the road to the next junction after around 100 yards.
21. Follow the road around to the right and, when the road bends to the left, continue on the track straight ahead. The track leads across a bridge over the A34 dual carriageway.
22. After the bridge, take the path on the left down a flight of steps. Continue straight ahead to the main road (A4183), where you will see a full-size World War 2 Spitfire plane mounted above the car saleroom on the corner.
23. Cross the road with care, turn left and then take the footpath on the right through Radley Park. Follow the path through Radley College to the next road.
24. Turn right along the road and then take the first left, Church Road, signposted towards the railway station. (Radley Village Shop is on the right along this road.)
25. Turn left along Lower Radley over the railway bridge. When the road bends right, continue straight ahead, signposted to Radley College Boathouse.
26. At the river, turn right to follow the Thames Path towards Abingdon.
27. At Abingdon Weir (closed for repair until late 2025, at the earliest), continue along the Thames Path diversion through Abbey Meadows. Walk to the right of the playground and over the footbridge to arrive at the ruins of Abingdon Abbey and the finish point at Abbey Close car park.

## Day 4: Newbridge to Abingdon

### Abingdon

An ancient site of human settlement, occupied since the early Iron Age. The Council website claims the town to be the oldest in England. The remains of an Iron Age 'oppidum' (a defensive enclosure) are located below the town centre. A Roman villa and a Saxon farmstead were excavated at the nearby Barton Court Farm. The name 'Abingdon' is believed to mean 'Hill of a man named Aebba' (or alternatively, a woman named Aebbe), although this view is contested. The Benedictine Abingdon Abbey (St Mary's) was founded in Saxon times, possibly as early as 676, by Cissa (or possibly by Hean, his nephew), viceroy of Centwine, king of the West Saxons. The Saxon abbey was destroyed by the Danes in the 950s, and rescued from decay by Aethelwold, appointed Abbot by King Eadred in 954. He was subsequently Bishop of Winchester. The Abbey became an internationally renowned centre of learning and culture. The importance of the Abbey is demonstrated by the fact that William the Conqueror celebrated Christmas there in 1084. The Abbey was dissolved in 1538, resulting in the town falling into decay. It was revived in 1556 by the grant of a charter by Queen Mary I, incorporating the town as a borough. The site of the Abbey is marked out in Abbey Gardens.

### Timings for Thursday 21 August (approximate):

09:45 - 10:00	Registration and briefing, Rose Revived Pub, Newbridge.
10:00	Set off from Newbridge
11:15 - 11:30	St Laurence Church, Appleton (3 miles)
14:00 - 14:30	St Leonard Church, Sunningwell (8 miles)
16:00 - 16:15	The Thames at Radley Boathouse (11½ miles)
17:45	Arrive at Abbey Close car park in Abingdon (15 miles)
	Contact: David Pope, 07413 713 515

With thanks to John Dewhurst, Churchwarden of All Saints, Kingston, for the information in the panels