

<b>DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>HISTORY NOTES</b>
The wooden gate at the bottom is open to the public: go through it, passing King's Mill lodge, and you will find yourself in <b>MESOPOTAMIA</b> .	<i>There is an Oxford boundary stone dating from the mayoralty of James Wyatt (1842/3) outside King's Mill House)</i>
Follow the concrete path (which crosses a bridge with wooden diamond-patterned sides after about 300m). <b>There should be water on each side of you all the time.</b> (Do <i>not</i> be tempted to turn on to any of the diversions on the right: these will only take you back to the Marston Road)	<i>This walk is called "Mesopotamia" (from the Greek meaning "between the rivers") because the Cherwell has two branches here, one each side of the path.</i> <i>Near the end of Mesopotamia you will see cyclists to your right using the cycle track (marked by a series of lamp-posts) which runs through the Parks from Ferry Road in Marston to South Parks Road. This track, was opened in the early 1990s.</i>
After about half a mile, the path crosses a humped-back bridge. About 150m after crossing this bridge, you will come to a junction where ahead of you is a locked wooden gate with spikes on top. At this point you should <b>turn left</b> (opposite another sign for the University Parks) and cross the bridge and then turn right.	<i>The University acquired 91 acres of the University Parks between 1853 and 1864. The Parks then included the present Science Area.</i> <i>In 1886 it acquired additional land on the east side of the Cherwell, and in 1934 the meadow to the north-east of Rainbow Bridge.</i>
Continue straight on and go through the metal gate <b>Take great care here, as you are emerging on to a fast cycle track: cross it, and turn left on the footpath.</b> As well as being safer, this will enable you to get a better view of the punt rollers and <b>PARSON'S PLEASURE.</b>	<i>Parson's Pleasure, the large pool behind the rollers, only acquired its name in the twentieth century. It was known as Patten's Pleasure in the seventeenth century and Loggerhead in the nineteenth century.</i> <i>Until the 1990s it was a nude bathing and sunbathing place for men.</i>
This short footpath brings you out on to the cycle track again, which you should follow until you reach <b>SOUTH PARKS ROAD.</b> This leads to Parks Road and central Oxford.	<i>Linacre College, which is on the left as you enter South Parks Road, moved into Cherwell Edge (built as a private house in 1887, but latterly a convent) in the late 1970s.</i>

## Walk from Headington to South Parks Road, Oxford via Cuckoo Lane and Mesopotamia

**The walk starts in Cuckoo Lane, which can be picked up at any point between Old High Street and Pullens Lane**

Until the London Road was cut through the fields at the end of the eighteenth century, Cuckoo Lane was the main route from Oxford to Old Headington village. The stretch from Marston Road to Headley Way marked the boundary between Oxford and Headington from 1835 to 1929



There is a bridge at one end of Cuckoo Lane (*above*) and a boundary stone at the other end (*right*) that reads "*Here endes Hedington way*"

- Not suitable for cyclists (narrow footpaths are for pedestrians only, and barriers prevent cycles entering the Mesopotamia)
- Not possible after dark (no lighting), and Parks are locked at night: see <http://www.parks.ox.ac.uk/closing/> for times gates are closed
- Negotiable by pushchairs that fold (a bit bumpy), but not wheelchairs
- Slightly muddy in places after rain. Mesopotamia is closed when the Cherwell floods (usually around February)
- Mesopotamia is usually closed on the Monday of St Giles' Fair, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

**[www.headington.org.uk](http://www.headington.org.uk)**

**We hope you have enjoyed taking this ancient route from Headington**

<b>DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>HISTORY NOTES</b>
<p>Cuckoo Lane starts in <b>OLD HIGH STREET</b>. You may prefer to start in <b>OSLER ROAD</b>, however, as the first section of the lane is more like a dark tunnel, with two very low bridges overhead.</p> <p>If you do decide to try it, you will find the entrance between the bungalow at 40 Old High Street and Headington House. Continue until you emerge into the daylight again at Osler Road.</p>	<p><i>William Wootten-Wootten, who bought Headington House in 1848, also owned the land on the other side of Cuckoo Lane that is now occupied by Stephen Road. He probably resented the fact that an ancient public right of way split his estate, and thus reduced it to the minimum size imaginable and built the two foot bridges for himself.</i></p> <p><i>The lane marks the southern extent of the original village of Headington. When you emerge into Osler Road, the building on your right is the former lodge of the large 1830s house now divided into Sandy and White Lodges; the row of houses on your left is clearly dated 1928.</i></p>
<p>Cuckoo Lane continues on the west side of <b>OSLER ROAD</b>: the narrow, slightly concealed entrance has a wall letterbox to its left.</p> <p>Soon you will have Manor Court flats (on the site of the old football ground) on your left, and fine views of Headington Manor House on your right. You will emerge into <b>SANDFIELD ROAD</b>.</p>	<p><i>The Manor Ground was the home of Headington and later Oxford United from 1926 to 2002. The Manor House was built in 1770 by Sir Banks Jenkinson and was only bought by Henry Mayne Whorwood, the Lord of the Manor, in 1801. The former name of Osler Road was Manor Road.</i></p> <p><i>The John Radcliffe Hospital site was bought from the executors of the last Lord of the Manor in 1919, and the hospital buildings date from the late 1960s to the present day.</i></p>
<p>Take care crossing Sandfield Road: it can be busy. Continue on the footpath that runs alongside the south side of Woodlands Road until you reach <b>HEADLEY WAY</b>. (It is best to make a slight sideways detour in order to cross this very busy road via the new pedestrian crossing.) Continue walking westwards along <b>WOODLANDS ROAD</b>, which at this point has swallowed Cuckoo Lane</p>	<p><i>You are now crossing the Boundary Brook, which used to run across the London Road at the White Horse but was sent underground in the 1930s.</i></p> <p><i>Notice the boundary stone on the line of the brook, marking the parliamentary division between Oxford and Headington established in 1889. The stone is inscribed "1892", and "F.W. Ansell, Mayor".</i></p>

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<p>At the end of Woodlands Road, do <i>not</i> swing right into Franklin Road, but continue on to the footpath, which is marked with a signpost memorial stone put up in 2003.</p> <p>The grounds of Headington School are on your left, and Rye St Antony School on your right. Continue along this path until it reaches <b>PULLEN'S LANE</b>. (At the end, take the left-hand fork in order to see the plaque that marks the site of Josiah Pullen's tree.)</p>	<p><i>As you reach Pullen's Lane, a plaque on the wall of Davenport House on the left reads: "Near this spot stood the famous elm planted by the Rev. Josiah Pullen about 1680 and known as Joe Pullen's tree, destroyed by fire on 13 October 1909".</i></p> <p><i>Opposite is another plaque: "The Lime and Plane trees nearby were planted by his wife and family in memory of Dr H. M. Harris of Wembley, Middlesex, and The Barn, Pullen's Lane. Beloved Physician 1894 to 1976". Dr Harris was the author of Between the White Gates: A History of the Barn, the Tree, and Some Notable Inhabitants of Pullen's Lane, Headington (Oxford Polytechnic Press, 1975).</i></p>
<p>Cross Pullen's Lane, and take Cuckoo Lane right down the hill (with the wall of Headington Hill House and then the railings of Headington Hill Park on your left) until you reach <b>MARSTON ROAD</b>.</p>	<p><i>A stone at the top of this footpath dated 1901 was probably set up when the biologist George Claridge Druce beat the bounds at the end of his mayoral year</i></p> <p><i>Headington Hill Hall was built by James Morrell in 1858, and the park below was part of its grounds. Only a remnant of the old lane was left in the process.</i></p>
<p>Straight ahead of you is the new £75m Centre for Islamic Studies.</p> <p>Just to the right of it, you will see a footpath (with a "No parking" sign" on the left and an old stone gate-pier to the right). Its name is <b>KING'S MILL LANE</b>, but it has no sign.</p>	<p><i>About 120 paces after passing a footpath to John Garne Way is a stone marked C.J.S. that was probably set up when Charles James Sadler beat the bounds at the end of his mayoral year in 1837. It marks the new 1835 eastern boundary of Oxford.</i></p> <p><i>When you reach the Marston Road, there is a very fine (listed) boundary stone dating from the seventeenth century. It marks the boundary of Headington and Marston, and reads: "[Here end-]es Heding-ton way".</i></p>
<p>Take King's Mill Lane down to the River Cherwell. The gardens of Magdalen College lie behind the wall on your left, and Merton College sports ground is on the right.</p>	<p><i>The King's Mill stood here by the Cherwell until 1832. It belonged to the Manor of Headington. Anthony Wood wrote in the seventeenth century, "Kings Mill, soe called perhaps from King Ethelred that lived sometimes at Hedindon".</i></p>