

### Short Description:

This is a simple walk around the village of Binfield, with the emphasis on the historic places passed on the way.

### Long Description:

This is a walk researched by the Wokingham U3A "Walks into History" group. The group is for all who enjoy researching the history of local areas, sharing others' research, and/or walking the routes discovered, to see the features for themselves. This walk starts at a pub to the north of the village and progresses in a clockwise direction round the outskirts.

### Access info:

We start at The Jack O' Newbury pub, to the north of Binfield, on Terrace Rd - RG42 5HX. There's no reason not to start anywhere else on the route, if you prefer.

### Additional Information:

There is a second pub, the Stag & Hounds, a quarter of the way round, and a brasserie, the Darunchini, half way round. You also pass close to a Co-op store near the end of the walk.

1)



Leave the pub, cross the road and turn right, towards the village centre, along Terrace Road North. You soon come to the North Lodge and the western entrance to Binfield Park. This was built in 1775 for a private owner, but like many similar properties has had many uses – a hospital during the war and now luxury homes. Continue to Tilehurst Lane, and there turn left.

2)



On the left is a children's day nursery, called Park Lodge. This is a converted Edwardian mansion house, again part of Binfield Park. Now look out on the right for an unusual pale grey timber house, just after Pound Place. This is the only remaining original building of the Swedish Houses – a gift of post-war flat-pack semis donated by the Swedish government. You then pass the South Lodge of Binfield Park on the left. The pavement peters out after a bit but the road is straight and traffic usually light. After the last house on the right you arrive at the Stag & Hounds. Keep ahead as Church Lane joins from the left until you reach the junction with Forest Road. Immediately after you bear left you will see a footpath across the road. Cross very carefully – there are traffic lights along to the left, which will help.

3)



Enter the footpath and immediately turn right, along a path that's parallel to Forest Road. This protects you from the traffic for half of this part of the walk. Walk in towards the centre of Binfield and just before the roundabout, take a left turn down Emmets Nest (emnets is the old English word for ants). When the tarmac road bears right, keep ahead. Eventually this rough road also gives up – take the footpath straight ahead. After a dip and a rise the path bears sharp right and continues between fences and hedges, until you reach Terrace Road South. Here turn left.

4)



After a few houses, the obvious building on the left is Newbold College, run by the Seventh-day Adventists. The large, older building near the road is the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Moor Close. The college bought this from a bankrupt millionaire in 1945, moved out from London and then expanded the campus to the size it is today. When you reach a fork in the road, bear right and continue down the right-hand side pavement, down St Mark's Road. Just after you reach the end of the churchyard on the left, you will see a sign to the right for Pope's Meadow.

5)



Cross the carpark and walk down the grassy park, keeping to the right. The path ends up at a quiet lane, Murrell Hill Lane.

Here turn left. Just before the road starts to rise, the impressive house and grounds on the right, Murrell Hill Grange can be seen. This is owned by the family of John Nike OBE, a Bracknell-based leisure and hotel entrepreneur. He was best known for a set of dry ski slope complexes. One of these is nearby, close to the Coppid Beech Hotel, which also belongs to his organization.

Round the corner to the left is Pope's Manor. Originally Whitehill House and since much extended and altered, this was bought in 1698 by Alexander Pope. The family needed to escape the exclusion zone when Catholics were expelled from central London.

Now retrace your steps and continue all the way north up Murrell Hill Road. At the end on the left is the picturesque Whitehouse Farm Cottage, dating from 1687 – one of the oldest properties in the village. Cross the road ahead, turn left and look for a footpath on your right (where the footpath ends).

6)



Make your way along this suburban road, which winds its way until you pass Binfield C of E Primary School and come out to a roundabout. The large house on the left hand corner opposite is Binfield Place, a mostly Jacobean manor, and one of the oldest buildings in Binfield. Now take the narrow lane ahead – Wicks Green.

7)



A little way along on the left is a road called Monks Alley. The name is associated with the monks of Reading Abbey, who had a retreat here. Next, on the right is Binfield House, built in 1776. In the mid-19th century the house was used for at least 35 years as a small school and now belongs to the council and forms retirement housing.

Look out for a small 17<sup>th</sup> Century house on the left, called the Kicking Donkey. A store of broken wine bottles found in the grounds leads us to think this was once a public house. After the road bends to the right you will see the Muir Almshouses on the left, donated by a local beneficiary. We then reach Terrace Road North again, and turn left to return to the pub.