

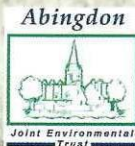
# ART ABOUT ABINGDON

Over the past eight years the Vale of White Horse District Council has encouraged the commissioning of public art as part of new buildings and developments, often referred to as 'Percent for Art'. Most of these commissions celebrate Abingdon's identity and heritage through contemporary works of art that are on display in public places.

This leaflet was commissioned by the Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust (a partnership between the Vale of White Horse District Council and Abingdon Town Council) to celebrate the wealth of contemporary artworks throughout Abingdon.

Public Art has been commissioned to enhance and beautify towns and cities for centuries and is often the mark of distinction that creates a unique sense of place and civic identity. Artworks range from iconic and traditional sculptures to integrated features such as paving, fences, street furniture, windows and lighting.

This leaflet celebrates some of the most recent art commissions and community art projects.



Published November 2009.

# COMMUNITY ARTWORKS



The process of commissioning each artwork aims to work with the local community as much as possible, both to be inspired by local people and to encourage the artists to share skills with local groups.

Some communities are inspired to commission their own works directly such as the Gainsborough Green Mosaic, the Stratton Way Mural (pictured right), the textile wall hanging in Abingdon Library and the Millennium Tapestry hanging in the Guildhall.

Oxfordshire County Council initiated a rejuvenation of the Saxton Road area of Abingdon, by re-paving and surfacing the road to create the area into a 'Home Zone' (a scheme that is designed to calm traffic in residential areas). Bhajan Hunjan was commissioned to work with community groups to create designs that were produced in two tone concrete for the paving.



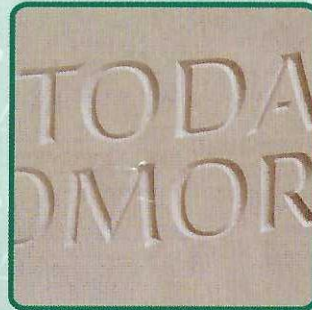
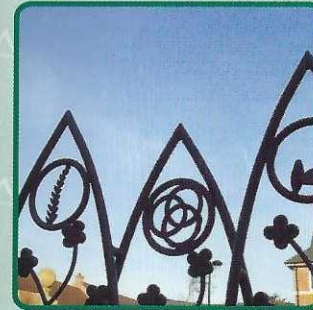
Sustrans, the national cycle route network, have also commissioned artworks as part of their 'Art through the Travelling Landscape' project. The artworks provide stopping and resting places along the three Sustrans routes in the Vale. Such as Didcot and Upton Ridgeway Route

(route 44) and Hanson Way through Kennington to Abingdon (route 5 and 51).

The inspirational collection of artwork ranges from waymarkers, cycle racks, drinking fountains, benches, large scale sculptures, viewing points, bridges, fences and stiles.



# ART ABOUT ABINGDON



Discover contemporary public art in and around Abingdon



## TOWN CENTRE TRAIL



**The Abingdon Needle (Abbey Close, 2007)**  
This stone spire topped with stainless steel is situated near the entrance to Abbey Grounds. The spire represents the turned spire of the Anglo Saxon church that stood on the site centuries before the Abbey was built. The steel cap acknowledges Abingdon's close link with modern technologies. Artist, Michael Fairfax, designed the feature to celebrate the 450th anniversary of Abingdon's town charter.

### Abingdon A (Neave Mews, 2005)

This sculpture, by Philip Bews and Diane Gorvin, was commissioned by Lovell's and the Vale of White Horse District Council. It is 3.7m high, made of Portland stone and topped with glass shell finials lit by a blue light at night. The integral oak seating follows the curved edge of several circular reliefs based on themes relevant to the site, such as a cinema reel, a Celtic brooch found on the site and an ammonite fossil. The other side features two bronze faces of brother and sister, Hean and Cilla, who founded Abingdon's Abbey and Nunnery.



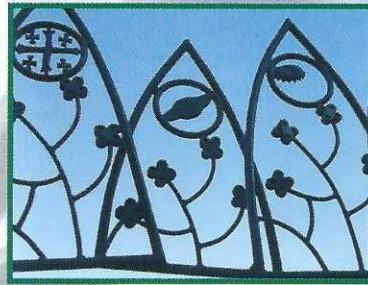
### The Barrel (Brewhouse, 2001)

This work was commissioned by the Council in partnership with Berkeley Homes through the Percent for Art Policy. Walter Jack created the seven identical cast iron planks which weigh nearly 1½ tons and stand 4m high. Its curved form reflects the traditional shape of beer barrels used at the old Brewhouse and Malthouse, the two buildings which occupied the site.



### The Lesson (Abingdon Library, 1989)

This life-sized bronze sculpture of a mother teaching her child to walk stands outside Abingdon Library. Czech-born artist, Franta Belsky, who lived locally, donated the work to the Vale of White Horse District Council in 1989. The small inscription on the brick base "In Memory of Margaret Belsky" is a dedication to his wife who had died in Abingdon Hospital just three months before its installation.



### Railings (Maltings Vineyard, 2007)

Artist blacksmith, Jon Mills, was commissioned to design and create bespoke railings at the Maltings Vineyard development. The railings reflect the character and history of Abingdon. Nine different motifs are represented in the arches

including the Ock Street Bull, Abingdon's Charter crest, the griffin from one of the floor tiles in the Abbey and symbols of local industries such as barley, hops, a beer bottle top and the MG car badge.

### Sculptures (Merchants Place, 2006)

Local sculptor, Diana Bell, was commissioned to create a series of sculptures designed to reflect the many industries indigenous in the town. The art works include a stone bench with a bronze apron, a large barley-filled sack and a pair of boots. The larger bronze relief set into the pavement represents the many different historical trades that played a significant role in Abingdon's industrial heritage, including a stable, tannery and the manufacturing of Penlon's medical instruments.



### Thamesview Bridge, 2008)

Artist, Richard Farrington, was commissioned to design and create this unique and interesting feature integrated within the new bridge across the Mill Stream at Thamesview. Richard took inspiration for the



beautiful bronze cast inserts from the motifs carved into the handle of an ancient (8th/9th century) silver sword that was found in the river in the mid 19th century and is now housed in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

## WIDER ABINGDON TRAIL

**Glasswork and Mosaic (White Horse Tennis and Leisure Centre, 2002)** 'Glasswork' by Jane MacDonald and Julia Newbold comprises three main works based on the theme of the River Thames.

The reception desk reveals a copper burnished map of the Thames; etched glass panels in the café represent insects and fish found on the river and there are smaller glass inserts near the swimming pool. Next to swimming pool is the 'Quiet Sun', a mosaic by Michael Gamble and Susan Wenyon based on a digital image of the ultraviolet light patterns from the sun. It reaches over 20m in length and is created with over 50,000 Italian glass tiles stretching the entire width of the pool.



**Crossing the Line (Tilsley Park, 1997)** Artist, Robert Kilvington, designed and created this sculpture for the entrance to Tilsley Park which was opened as a District Council Athletics and Football facility in 1997. The gateway is made from 50mm 316 grade stainless steel tube and is 7.5m high with a centre circle of 2.5m in diameter. The artist worked with local school children to look more closely at the links between sport, maths and art.



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### Translucent (Police Station, 2000)

Lighting and glass artist, Martin Richman, was commissioned by Balfor Beatty to create an enhancing feature for the new Police Station. 'Translucent' is a glass and fluorescent light installation that casts light patterns by the sun during the day and projects a traditional police blue light in the contemporary design at night.





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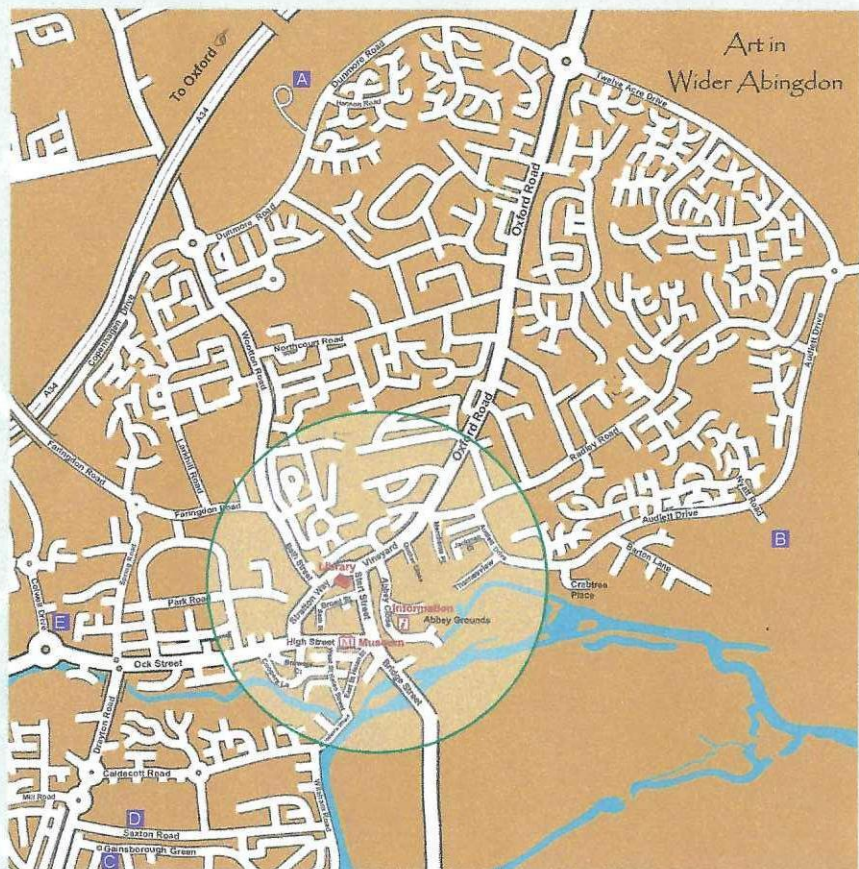
A Crossing the Line - Tilsey Park



E Quiet Sun mosaic - White Horse Tennis & Leisure Centre



E Glass Reception Desk - White Horse Tennis & Leisure Centre



1 The Abingdon Needle - Abbey Close



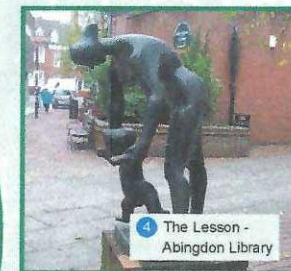
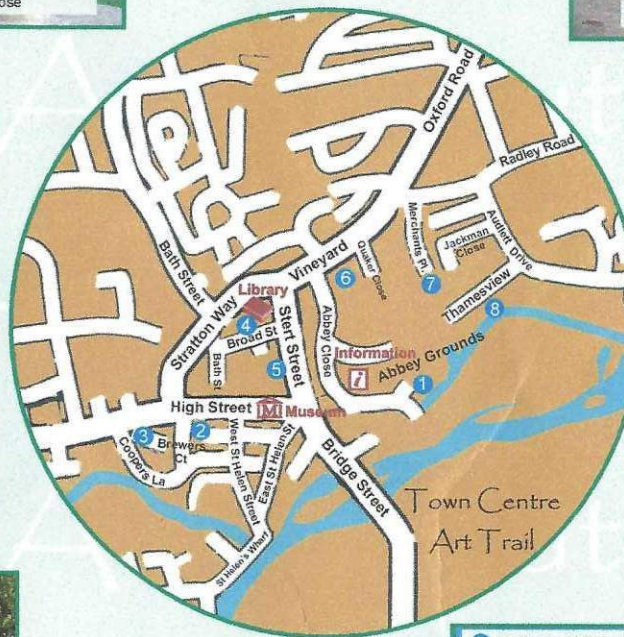
2 Abingdon A - Neave Mews



3 Barrel - Brewery, Brewers Court



6 Sword Bridge - Thamesview



4 The Lesson - Abingdon Library



C Gainsborough Green Community Mural



D Saxton Road Paving



E Translucent - Police Station



7b Boots - Merchants Place



7a Apron - Merchants Place



6 Rallings - Maltings Vineyard



5 Mural - Market Place