

ABINGDON'S



Art WALK



Town centre trail

The Vale of White Horse has encouraged the commissioning of public art as part of new buildings and developments. Most of these commissions celebrate Abingdon's identity and heritage through contemporary works of art that are on display in public places.

1: The Abingdon Needle (Michael Fairfax, 2007)

This stone spire topped with stainless steel is situated near the entrance to the 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.



2: Octagon Old Gaol, Cranbourne Homes (Tim Ward, 2015)

Tim Ward created this sculpture along with bespoke signs for the development of the Old Gaol in Abingdon. The octagonal shapes reference the Old County gaol in a contemporary and inviting way in this public area on the bank of the Thames.



3: Abingdon A

(Bews & Gorvin, 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.

4: The Barrel

(Walter Jack, 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 1.5 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.





5: The Lesson

(Franta Belsky, 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.



6: Railings

(Jon Mills, 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.

7: Sculptures

(Diane Bell, 2006)

Local sculptor Diane Bell was commissioned to create a series of sculptures designed to reflect the many industries indigenous to 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, a tannery and the manufacture of Penlon's medical instruments.

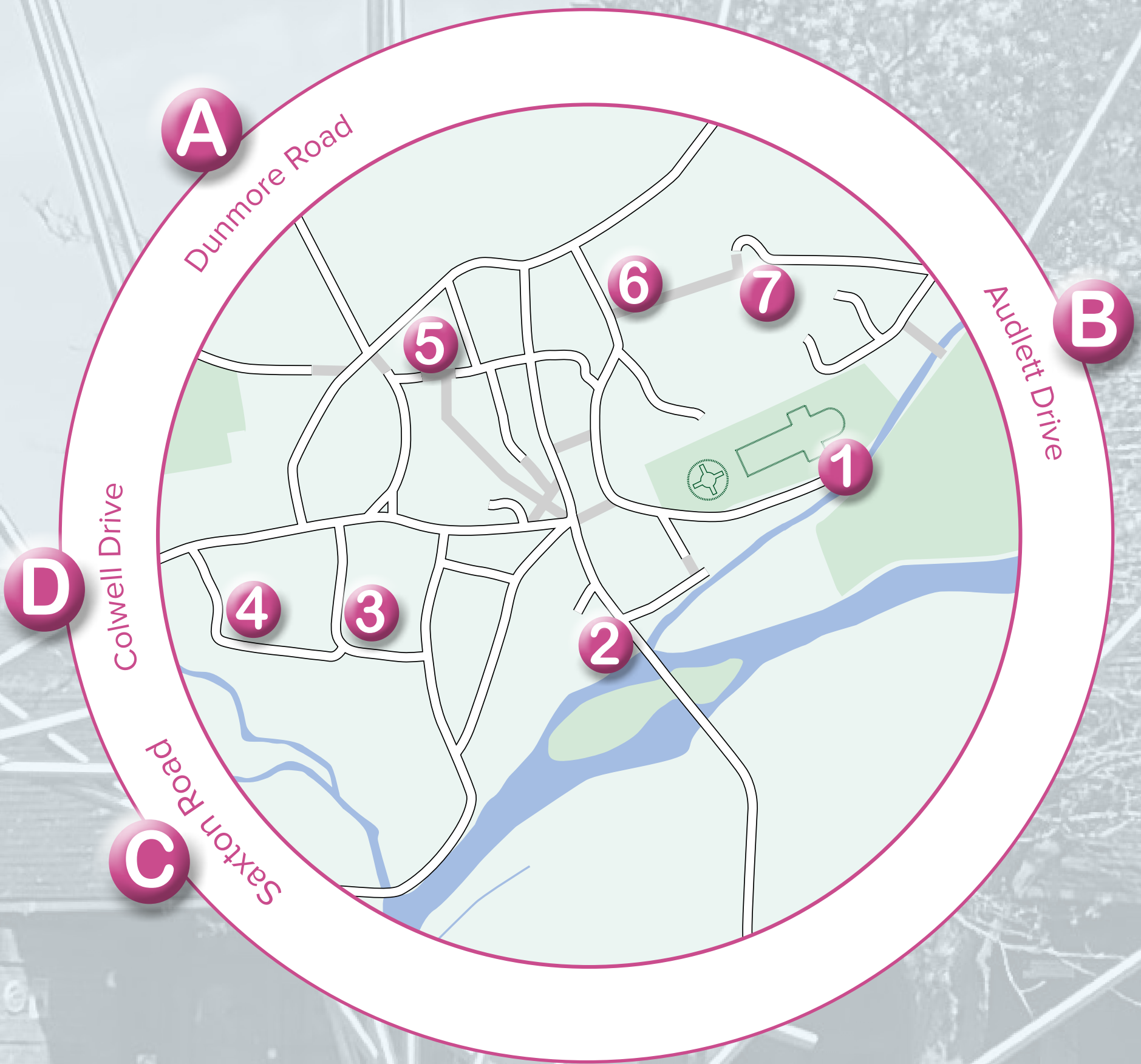


8: Thames View Bridge

(Richard Farrington, 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 Thames View. Richard took inspiration for the beautiful bronze case 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 Avingdon trail



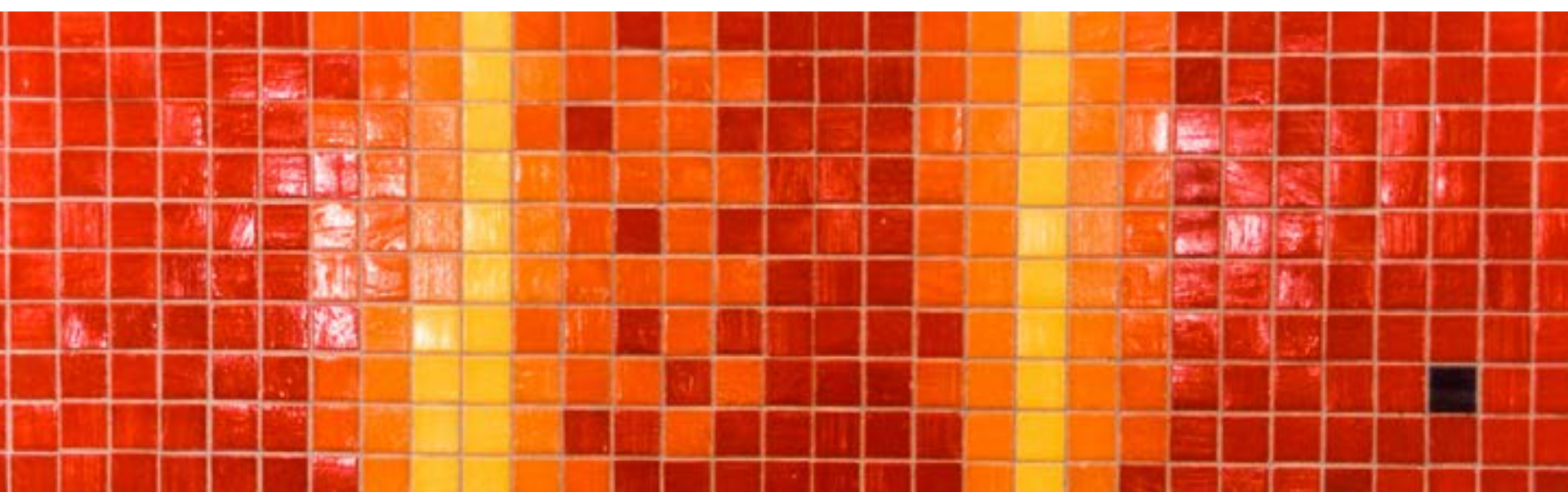
Wider Avingdon trail



A: Crossing the Line

(Robert Kilvington, 1997)

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





B: Glasswork and Mosaic

(Jane MacDonald & Julia Newbold, 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 cafe represent insects and fish found on the river and there are smaller glass inserts near the swimming pool. Next to the 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.

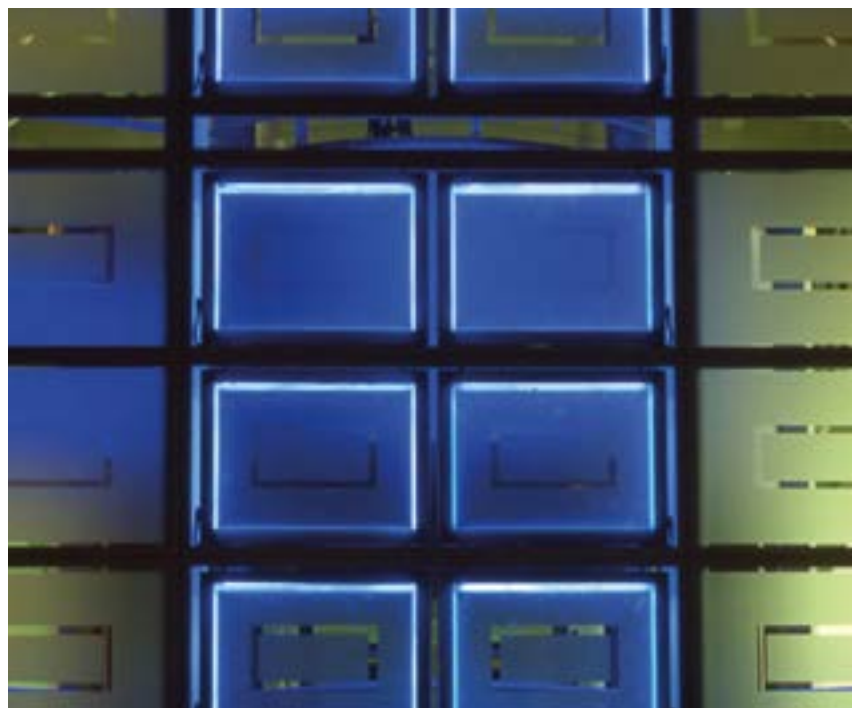


C: Saxton Road Paving

(Bhajan Hunjan, 2004)



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.



Martin Richman

D: Translucent

(Martin Richman, 2000)

Lighting and glass artist Martin Richman was commissioned by Balfour 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.



Community artworks

Stratton Way Mural

Two local artists, Margaret and Gwyn Jones, painted the murals in 1984 and updated them again in 2007. The murals represent the history of Abingdon and they also include some of the famous people of Abingdon. The research conducted by the artists as part of the design was careful and meticulous and a walk along its 120 metres transports you through time. Personal touches known only to the artists and the Town Council are included in the murals!

Abingdon's Royal Charter Wall Hanging

1556 – 2006



This project was launched in 2005 during the Abingdon Arts Festival. Abingdon Library decided to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Abingdon's Royal Charter. The imaginative textile panels were created by members of the public and inspired by life in Abingdon. The wall hanging can be seen in Abingdon Library.



Sustrans

Sustrans, the national cycle route network has also commissioned artworks as part of its 'Art through the Travelling Landscape' project. The artworks provide stopping and resting places along the three Sustrans routes in the Vale: Didcot and Upton Ridgeway Route (route 44) and Hanson Way through Kennington to Abingdon (routes 5 and 51).

The inspirational collection of artwork includes way-markers, cycle racks, drinking fountains, benches, large scale sculptures, viewing points, bridges, fences and stiles.

Community artworks

Artwork has been commissioned by working with the community in order 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 Stratton Way Mural and the textile wall hanging in Abingdon Library.



We hope you have enjoyed this walk. Return to the Market Square for some well-earned refreshment