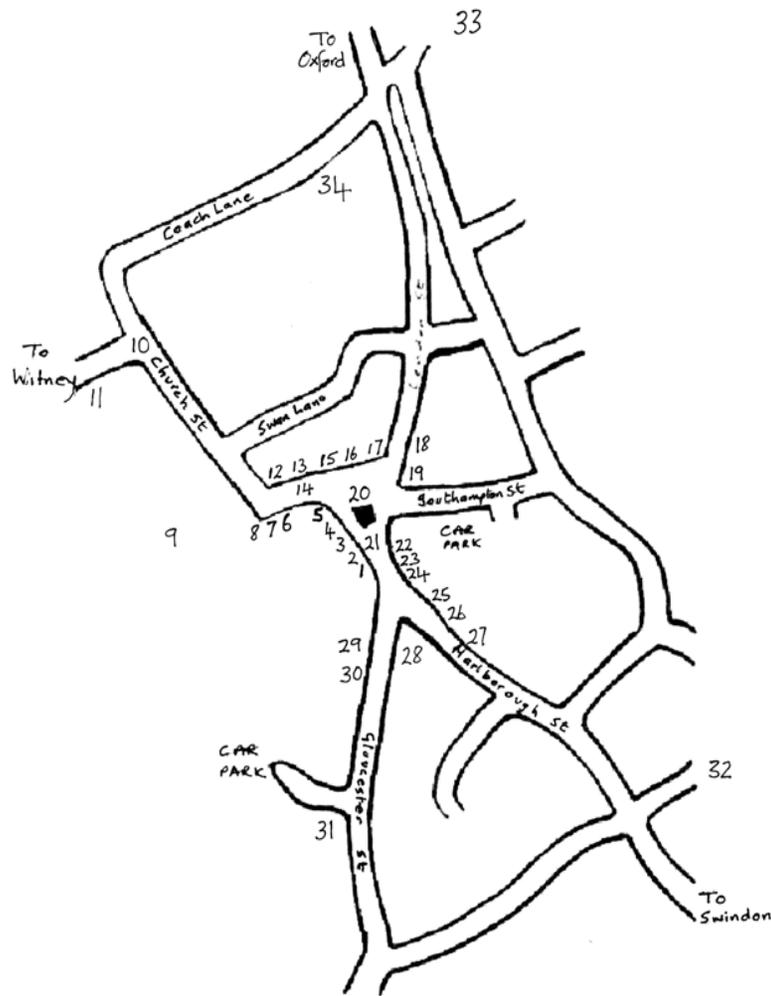


- 1 Martin's newsagent
- 2 Herbs restaurant
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- 4 Crown Hotel
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History of Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Faringdon has a long and varied history with evidence of habitation by Prehistoric man, Romans and Saxons, Normans and Vikings.

It ranked the 3rd town of importance in the Saxon Kingdom of Wessex.

Faringdon is derived from Ferendune- the fern covered hill- and recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086

In 1218 King Henry III gave the town a Royal Charter to hold a weekly market. Faringdon became the main market centre for the area with 2 annual horse fairs, a servants hiring and regular cattle, sheep, corn and dairy markets

The town became important because of its position on the London to Cirencester Road and on the old wool merchants route from the Cotswolds to the South East.

This position resulted in there being many inns and public houses in the town. Even in the 1960s there were about 21 public houses for a population of around 3500

In the 1780s stage coaches were used for delivery of the post and by 1840 came through Faringdon twice daily. Gummed envelopes were invented in Faringdon in the mid 19th century

Faringdon was prominent in the Civil War, with Charles I staying in Oxford. Faringdon was one of the last places in England to hold out for the King. Oliver Cromwell briefly occupied the town in 1645, attacking unsuccessfully the Royalist garrison defending the church and Faringdon House.

The seige of Faringdon House started in April 1645. By the end of the Civil War Faringdon was ruined (Parliament judged that Faringdon and Torrington in Devon were the two worst war-damaged towns in England) and did not recover until the coaching age.

Until boundary changes in the 1970s Faringdon was in Berkshire.

Historic Buildings, Faringdon, Oxon

1. **Martin's Newsagents**

Erected in 1911 for Mr Tinker Anns as Faringdon's first purpose built motor car showroom. There were two petrol pumps in the doorway with booms to reach across the pavement. The garage replaced a 17C house and blacksmith's shop with a forge at the rear.

2. **Herbs Restaurant**

Dated 1645, it has been a dwelling house, dairy shop, greengrocer & fruiterer, café, greengrocer with fruit and flowers and now a restaurant.

3. **Sadler's delicatessen**

A 17C property. It was Coopers the Saddlers until 2003 and was thought to be the oldest shop window in the town.

4. **Crown Hotel, 16th Century coaching inn**

Refronted in Georgian times.

Cobbled courtyard, from which there is a fine example of an Elizabethan external stairway, called the Judges staircase, which was access to the Manorial courts which sat in the courtroom on the first floor.

A tunnel leads off towards the church from the cellars.

Note the stained glass window in the downstairs bar which features a Lancastrian red rose. After King Stephen's reign royal roses combined white with red. This rose is probably 14th Century glass.

The garages and storerooms at the rear were all once stables

5. **Portwell House Hotel**

Once part of the Crown Hotel. Until 1920s the northern end was the Angel pub and used by coachmen and stable lads whilst their masters lodged at the Crown.

In 19C it was the town's first Post Office and telegraph office.

6. **Camden House**

A late 19C town house built for Mr Ann's family. In the 1950s it became the home of Faringdon Rural and District Council. More recently it was a private Old People's Residential Home and now it is again a private house.

7. **Astley House**

Late 17th century/early 18th century. Once the Dower House to Faringdon House and then the vicarage until late 1980s. This is a private house

8. Entrance to **Faringdon House** (not open to the public)

The house was built in 1780 by Sir Henry James Pye when the old Manor House was burned down. Sir Henry Pye was poet laureate to George III and once described as 'respectable in all except his poetry'.

George Stevens, a literary critic punned on Pye's name satirising his poetry in the nursery rhyme 'sing a song of sixpence'

Historic Buildings, Faringdon, Oxon

9. **All Saints Church**, dating mainly from 12th and 13th century
The ironwork on the Church door is 13th century. There is a fine Norman Doorway on the North side
The Church contains tombs and monuments to 3 notable families. – the Untons, Pyes and Bennets
On the east side there is damage resulting from the Civil War bombardments by cannon fire in 1645/6 when the spire was shot off.
There is a cannon ball embedded in the east wall
The Church Bells play a hymn tune each day at 3 hour intervals from 6am to 9pm daily
10. **Church Street**
At the end of the churchyard there are the old gatehouses belonging to the original Faringdon House, and parts of these are timber framed with brick infill. In the 19C a large stone barn stood in the top corner of the churchyard.
The large stone house facing the church was the original vicarage, now converted to flats. There is a large old sundial at the rear.
11. About 100 metres down the Radcot road, in the grounds of Faringdon House, is a statue reputed to be of **Cleopatra**. This is one of several in Faringdon House grounds. They came from the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851. Underneath the statue is a WW2 pillbox.
12. **Salutation Mansions**
This building is thought to be on the site of a hunting lodge used by King Alfred the Great and his son Edward the Elder who succeeded him in 901. Edward later became the first Saxon King of England and died in Faringdon in 924
The site also was a monk's lodging house which dated from when the Cistercian order was given the Manor of Faringdon by King John in 1203.
The current frontage was built in 1890
More recently this was the Salutation Hotel, later renamed the Faringdon Hotel, now private apartments.
13. **The Pump House**
Originally called the Pump House from the spring which rises in the cellar and supplied the Portwell
It was Faringdon's first Bank.
You can see 4 paler squares from where the letters BANK were erased in the 19th century
The building is owned by Lord Faringdon of Buscot Park and leased to the town.
It has recently been refurbished to become the Faringdon Tourist Information office and to provide meeting rooms for the community. In the past it has been a Community Centre and before that the Institute and Services Club.
14. **The Portwell**
Given to the Town by Sir Henry Unton, Lord of the Manor in the 16th Century it was the towns only piped water supply and fed an animal trough. A heavy lead cup securely chained, was for the use of passers by.
15. **7a Market Place**
Parts of this property are very old. Inside is a large beam with Tudor style carvings.
There is a well, carved out of solid rock, under the front of the shop. It has been a grocer's shop and was the Tourist Information office until 2005
16. **Lloyds Bank**
Originally 2 town houses, it became a County of Gloucester Bank when it moved from the Pump House. It became Lloyds bank in 1897

Historic Buildings, Faringdon, Oxon

17. 10 Market Place

Another re-fronted building which hides an older interior. In the early 19C it housed an open-fronted butcher's shop and in the late 19C there was a *chymist* on the ground floor.

In the rooms above there was a solicitor who ran a postal lending library as a sideline. His son, Bernard Haines, also a solicitor, worked full-time until he died at the age of 92. He was, at one time, Britain's oldest practicing solicitor. Until 2005 it was the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society

18. County Cleaners

A late 17C building, drastically altered in the 19C & early 20C.

It was once the home of Faringdon's printing works. They published 'The White Horse Gazette' until 1930s. It was once a newsagent, first owned by W H Smith and then privately

19. Bell Hotel

A Coaching Inn where Cistercian monks ran a hospice in the 12th/13th century

It was refronted in the late 17th century, when it was a famous coaching inn

There are traces of a tunnel from The Bell leading towards the Church.

A stone mullioned window looking onto Barclays Bank, is thought to be Tudor.

When the Faringdon Railway branch line was opened in the 1860s, the Bell advertised 'every train arriving at Faringdon Station will be met, and any person desiring to stay at the Bell Hotel will be conveyed with their luggage to the Hotel'

20. Old Town Hall

Built after the Civil war in 1645, of stone tiled roof supported on stone pillars above an open piazza.

The upper room was used as a meeting room and Magistrates Court. There was once a jail next to the stairs, and for a time it housed the fire appliance.

On Market days butter, eggs and other farm produce were sold on the steps.

At the beginning of the 20th century it was a fire station and later the Faringdon Branch Library.

It is now a meeting room available for hire.

21. CornMarket

A stream which divided Faringdon into the Tithings of Port to the east, hence Portwell and Westbrook to the west used to be forded at this point but is now concealed in a culvert passing under the roadway and directly below the Taylor's Bargain store.

22. Mustard Seed, Rob the Cheese

Very early 18C. In the mid 1800s, an egg collector and dealer lived there. Later it was part of the Eagle brewery, which was situated where Southampton St car park is now.

23. Terma Kitchens

Taylor's fishmonger was here from late 19th century until 1999

It was purpose built as a fishmonger, but now the marble frontage has been painted.

24. The Nut Tree

Possibly mid 18C. The street clock was made by a Mr Counsell in the mid 1800s, a watch and clockmaker

25. Red Lion

Probably the oldest pub in Faringdon. It started trading in the 14th Century, and became a famous coaching inn with extensive stabling. It is featured in Tom Brown's Schooldays by Thomas Hughes of Uffington

Historic Buildings, Faringdon, Oxon

26. **Post Office, 1880**

Built as a post office, on the site of the fishmonger's before it moved to the Cornmarket. Following the move of the Post Office business to Martins, the newsagent, the building is destined to become commercial and residential premises.

27. **Roman Catholic Church** from 1974

Originally the Congregational Church built in 1840

28. **Corn Exchange**

Victorian stone fronted building now a community hall, with District and Town Council offices at the rear. Dated 1853. In the 1920s it was used as a cinema

It is built on the site of the Green Dragon Coaching Inn

29. Regent Mews town cottages are where the **Faringdon Cinema** used to be

The cinema was demolished in the 1970s/80s

30. **Gloucester House**

This is largely a private house, with PG Walker the dentist at the rear of the property

This house is linked with Cistercian monks who had a Priory on this site. In 1202 King John bestowed the Royal Manor of Faringdon on the Cistercian Order with permission to build an Abbey. A year later he re-granted Faringdon manor to the new Abbey at Beaulieu in the New Forest to where most of the monks transferred. Some remained to build the Tithe Barn at Great Coxwell c1250

There is a below ground blocked up passage, one of many in the town associated with the monks and others that were religiously persecuted, and a tunnel called Monk's Walk leads from under the Gloucester Street car park directly towards the church's west door.

31. **The Elms flats and Faringdon Library**

Until the comprehensive education system was introduced this was part of Faringdon Grammar School for Girls, and later Faringdon School

Before this it was the home of Mr Dundas who gave the Cottage Hospital in Coxwell Road to Faringdon

32. **Old Station Nursery**, Station Road

The station opened in 1864, terminus of the Faringdon Railway Company's broad gauge branch line to Uffington junction on the main London/Bristol track. It was converted to standard gauge in 1878 and bought by GWR in 1886. The Beeching plan closed the service to passengers in 1951 and finally to goods in 1963

33. **Folly Hill and Tower**

Once a Celtic camp and for a short time a castle during the reign of King Stephen 1135-54AD.

During the Civil War in 1645 Cromwell stationed a troop of cavalry on the Hill.

In 1936 Lord Berners, Lord of the Manor, built the tower, the last Folly in Britain, to the design of Gerald Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington. It seems that Lord Berners wanted a gothic tower and Lord Wellesley a classical one – perhaps an explanation for the mix of styles.

It is over 30m high and from the top on a clear down 5 counties can be seen

The original Scots Pine were planted by Henry James Pye in about 1780

Until 1999 there was no electricity in the tower. A local businessman with initiative and energy raised money to install this and a beacon to mark the 21st millennium. The rotating light could be seen many miles away.

The tower is open on the first Sunday of the month, April to October

34. **The Old Police Station**

Dating from 19th Century the police station used to have a courtroom, 2 cells and was in use until 1976.

It is now private accommodation.