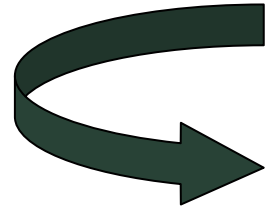


Oxfordshire Way



Points of interest from Islip to Beckley

To be used in cross-reference with the letters marked on the map

Points of interest

A **Islip** has many attractive buildings including the **Old Rectory**, built in 1690 by the Rector Dr South who also founded and endowed the village school in 1710. Other buildings include **Manor Farm** in Upper Street (sixteenth century) and a **house in High Street** (seventeenth century), formerly the King's Head Inn. Islip lay on the coach route from London to Worcester and had at one time twenty-one inns. Now there are only two, the **Red Lion and the Swan Inn**. In the last field you crossed before entering the village once stood a palace of Ethelred the Unready, where in AD 1004 King Edward the Confessor was born. When King Edward built Westminster Abbey he gave it to the manor of Islip. Simon of Islip became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1348, and John of Islip became Prior of Westminster in 1500 and presided over the building of the Henry VII chapel. As befitting for a village with such history, **Islip church** dominates the village. In the Civil War, Islip was an important outpost in the Royalist defence of their headquarters at Oxford, and in 1645, Cromwell defeated the Royalist forces at Islip Bridge, the **bridge over the River Ray** at the southern end of the village. The old stone bridge was rebuilt in 1878. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when drainage and new cuttings partially tamed the River Ray, Islip was a prime source for fish supplies.

B The name '**Noke**' is derived from 'the oak tree', recalling the origin of the village as a clearway in the forest. There are still a few of the ancient oak trees surviving. The **church** dates

from the thirteenth century and was restored in 1883. When Edward the Confessor granted the fees of Islip to the Abbey of Westminster, part of the parish of Noke was included in the grant. Those who paid their tithes to Islip buried their dead in Islip churchyard and to this day the path from Islip to Noke is therefore known as the '**Wake**' or '**Coffin**' path. **Manor Farm** dates from the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and the **Old Rectory** has a central block dating from the seventeenth century with later extensions. **The Plough Inn** was originally a cottage and probably dates from the seventeenth century.

C **Beckley** stands on a ridge of the Oxford Heights, 350 feet above the plain of Otmoor. **Otmoor** contains a layer of Oxford clay and for centuries was a swamp, used for wildfowl and fish and ringed by rough pasture. This way of life persisted for centuries, until the moor was forcibly enclosed in 1830 and the Otmoor Riots that followed are famous. 'Progress' won in the end and the River Ray was rechannelled, although these measures were never wholly successful and the moor remains a haven for birds and plants. The **church of St Mary** was originally Norman, rebuilt in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. **Beckley Park**, now a listed building, was built around 1540, possibly as a hunting lodge, though the history of the site and three moats goes back many centuries before.



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