

OXFORD INSCRIPTIONS 2

An all-age worksheet © Zenas Heritage Tours

- These inscriptions are in stone, metal and glass.
- The languages are Latin, English, Hebrew and in one case, Elvish!
- One is outside the ring road and one is in a college, but you should be able to find all the others if you look carefully.

2. ROBERT BOYLE and ROBERT HOOKE

In a house on this site between 1655 and 1668 lived ROBERT BOYLE Here he discovered BOYLE'S LAW and made experiments with an AIR PUMP designed by his assistant ROBERT HOOKE Inventor Scientist and Architect who made a MICROSCOPE and thereby first identified the LIVING CELL

During the English Civil War, was Oxford more on the side of King Charles I or of Parliament?

This plaque on the High Street commemorates two famous scientists. They lived here during the period England had no King or Queen from 1650 to 1660. During this period, Puritan views predominated. Puritans encouraged all forms of learning, but they did not like the gowns and Latin used by universities, which did not help learning and seemed too much like the Catholic Church.

Do you agree with the Puritans about Latin and dress code?

4. FORTIS EST VERITAS

‘Truth is Strong’

Although this inscription is quite common in Oxford, it is not the motto of the University. It is the motto of the City. It is inscribed on this famous tower at the very centre of Oxford.

What is the name of this central crossroads?

Can you find it?



The rivalry between the University and the City is sometimes referred to as ‘Town v Gown.’

Are you more ‘Town’ or more ‘Gown’?

1. BEAUMONT PALACE



This plaque helps locate a palace on Beaumont Street where two famous English kings were born.

Beaumont is French for ‘beautiful mountain’. Richard, who fought in the Crusades, had a famous French nickname.

What was his nickname and why was anyone in Oxford using French?

Besides being the year John was born, 1167 was also the year Henry II banned English students from studying in Paris. Students instead came to Oxford, and so the famous University began.

3. PEACE was proclaimed in the City of OXFORD JUNE 27 1814



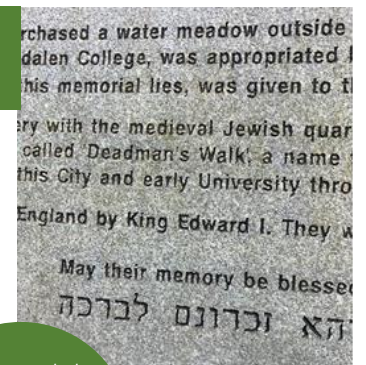
This plaque is in a dangerous place, on a roundabout known as the Plain. It commemorates the temporary defeat of the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and his exile to the island of Elba in June 1814.

But Napoleon escaped! The inscription was not removed, but peace did come a year later in 1815, thanks to a battle won by the Duke of Wellington.

What was the name of that famous battle?

5. HEBREW INSCRIPTION

This was the site of a Jewish Cemetery. Dead Man’s Walk was the path between here and St Aldates where the medieval Jews lived and had their synagogue.



What did King Edward I do in 1290?

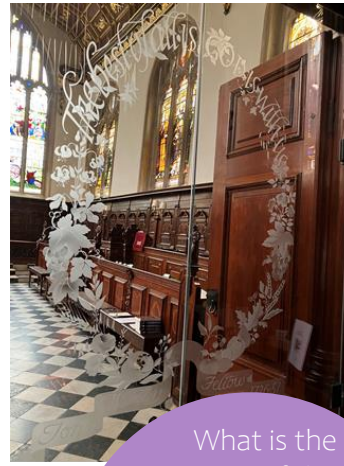
6. ST PETER - ST MARTIN - ST ALDATE

This line marks the boundary between three parishes. St Peter is now part of St Peter's College. St Martin is now just a tower at the crossroads with no church. St Michael at the North Gate is the parish church for what was St Martin's. St Aldate's is a busy church opposite Christ Church.

FUN FACT: Every year there is a procession on Ascension Day when people beat the boundary line with sticks!

This inscription is in M&S! Can you find it?

Tip - it's on the ground floor between the lift and Jaeger clothes.



7. "The best of all is GOD is with us." John Wesley Fellow 1726-1751

Most inscriptions are in wood or stone, but this one is in glass. These are the doors to Lincoln College chapel.

These are reputed to be John Wesley's last words. Do you know any other famous last words?

What is the name of the Christian denomination founded by John Wesley which had its beginnings in Oxford?

8. JRR TOLKIEN... LUTHIEN ... BEREN



Professor Tolkien was born in South Africa. He was an important member with CS Lewis of the group known as the Inklings.

The first inscription is on a bench in University Parks overlooking the River Cherwell. The second inscription is in Wolvercote Cemetery. 'Luthien and Beren' were the Romeo and Juliet of Middle Earth, the world created by Tolkien. Beren was a mortal man, Luthien an Elf maiden.

Who are your favourite characters from Tolkien's fantasy world?

9. ALEXANDER BUTULARUS ... ANNIS XXX ANIMA BONA OMNIORUM AMICUS

Alexander was a sausage-seller. He died aged 30 "a good soul and a friend to all." Some people think this plaque was round and pink to look like a slice of salami sausage - a final joke by his friends.

Can you find this plaque in the Ashmolean, Room 30 (Mediterranean world)?



This plaque was found in the catacombs of Rome alongside many Christian graves.

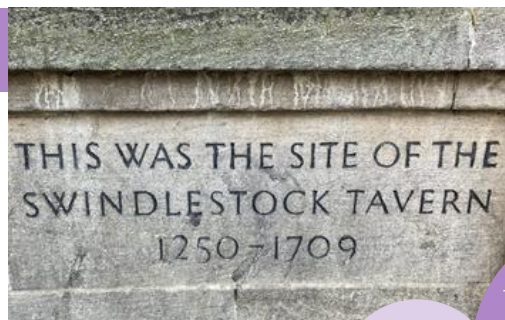
What symbols did Christians use?

What religion was Alexander?

10. SWINDLESTOCK TAVERN

How much is a student worth?

A lot more now than in 1355, when a four day battle between students and the towns people began in Swindlestock Tavern. 63 students were killed. The townspeople were order to pay a penny for each student killed to the university each year as a punishment.



Violence against students the previous century had already led to the founding of Cambridge. John Wycliffe lived in Oxford during the 1355 riot but fortunately was unharmed.

Which bank is it on?

This plaque is on the southwest corner of Carfax crossroads.