

the biblical story of the Israelites circling the walls of Jericho. Nigel Pennick²² mentions a ninth-century manuscript which shows Jericho located within a labyrinth, and an eleventh-century Syrian manuscript depicting the seven walls of Jericho as a labyrinth.

Space does not permit a detailed discussion of this question, but the temptation to assume a now-lost labyrinth in the north Oxford suburb of Jericho is irresistible. The usual explanation for the name is that it signifies remoteness, but the neighbourhood is not particularly remote – less than one mile – from the city wall in the old Northgate Hundred. According to Hibbert,²³ the name was actually taken

from Jericho Gardens, which lay to the west of the Radcliffe Infirmary when the hospital opened in 1770. These were mentioned as early as 1688 by [the diarist] Anthony Wood. At that time an inn named Jericho stood near the site of the present public house, Jericho House.

It must be admitted that the name ‘Jericho Gardens’ could have signified the existence of market gardens (in an area just south of ‘Cabbage Hill’, now Kingston Road) – but why ‘Jericho’? It seems at least possible that the name referred to a pleasure ground that had developed on the site of an ancient turf labyrinth. This theory, however, must be the subject of further research. Meanwhile, I would be interested to receive information about any turf labyrinths, lost or extant, in Oxfordshire.²⁴

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** against footnote, consulted at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Westgate Library, Oxford*

Websites:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy_Town

www.crystalinks.co.80/labyrinths2.html

www.beakman.com:80/contour/edkins_maze

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labyrinth>

www.indigogroup.co.uk:80/edge/Mazes

www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/julian.html

²² As footnote 8, page 74.

²³ Hibbert, C. and E. Hibbert, *The Encyclopedia of Oxford*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

²⁴ 12 Hayfield Road, Oxford OX2 6TT.