

ATRIUM TOUR

FOLLY BRIDGE

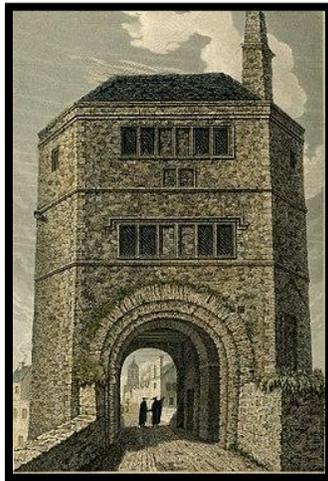
Folly Bridge is a stone bridge over the River Thames carrying the Abingdon Road south from the center of Oxford, England. Erected in 1825–27, the bridge is in two parts separated by an island. The origin of the name is uncertain although it has been suggested that it originated about 1650 after a tenant of Bacon's study.

The bridge apparently stands at the site of the ford over which oxen could be driven across the Isis, the ancient name of the Thames in the Oxford area. The first known stone bridge on the site was built by Robert d'Oilli in around 1085, but there was believed to be a wooden bridge in the time of Ethelred of Wessex.

Until the late 17th century the bridge was known as South Bridge, and formed part of a long causeway known as Grandpont, which stretched along most of the line of Abingdon Road. In the 13th century, Friar Roger Bacon lived and worked at "Friar Bacon's Study" which stood across the north end of the bridge until 1779, when it was removed to widen the road. In Oxford lore, Roger Bacon is credited as the namesake of Folly Bridge for having been placed under house arrest nearby.

Samuel Pepys visited Bacon's study in 1669, noting: *"So to Friar Bacon's study: I up and saw it, and gave the man 1 shilling."*

A toll-booth gateway tower used to straddle the approach to the bridge, which was on the Abingdon to Banbury turnpike. The former bridge and "Bacon's Tower" were drawn by many artists.



The old "Friar Bacon's Study"