



Pilgrim Paths

Chipping Norton Deanery

Finstock-Wilcote-Ramsden

4.2 Miles

A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a sacred place

This leaflet offers Bible passages and reflections to accompany your journey, with suggestions of places to pause. Please allow much more time than you would usually spend on a walk to be able to contemplate the journey.

The circular walk includes some road walking through villages, footpaths through woods and fields and negotiating some stiles. You may also, at any time, encounter sheep, cattle or horses grazing in the fields.

Holy Trinity Church, Finstock

Preparing : Inside the Church

Holy Trinity is a Gothic Revival building of 1841. Its ornate chancel was added in 1905 and its elaborate south window, by the architect, P. Morley Horder, in 1929.

The novelist Barbara Pym, who lived at Finstock after her retirement, is buried in the churchyard and has a commemorative plaque in the church.



Sir Arthur du Cros

Sir A du Cros

The church also contains a stained glass window and mural tablet in memory of Sir

Arthur du Cros, inventor of the pneumatic tyre - at one time Dunlop even produced a Finstock tyre - whose family lived in Finstock Manor and whose family mausoleum is in the churchyard.

T.S.Eliot

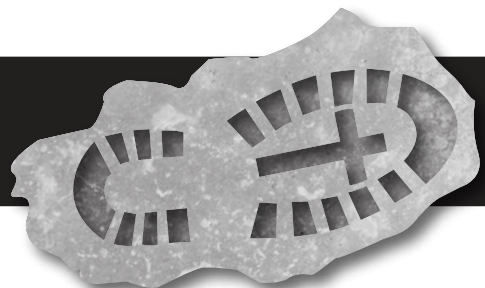
T. S. Eliot, the American-born British essayist, publisher, playwright, literary and social

critic and "one of the twentieth century's major poets", was baptised here in 1927, a few weeks before publication of his poem Journey of the Magi.

Eliot's poem reflects, through the voice of one of the three wise men, on the outcome of the journey to seek out the Christ-child. Many have followed since, each on our own journey of quest and discovery.

These words from the poem may resonate with you.

**"With voices singing in our ears,
saying that this was all folly."**



As you begin this pilgrimage,
you will not know what to expect,
as that is the nature of pilgrimage.



Leaving: At The Church Door

Prayer

Lord God, be with us as we set out on our journey.
Help us to hear your voice singing in our ears,
Bless us in all that we experience. Amen



Turn Left

Turn left outside the West door and follow the path around the South side of the church building to the iron gate. **Turn right** and follow the track to the field.

Psalm 42

*1 You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole
being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.*



Pause as you come out into the field.

You may wish to take a moment as you come out from the darkness of the lane to consider any way that lack of 'light' resonates for you.

Here, the psalmist uses thirst to illustrate his sense of lack.

What do water and light mean for you?

What do you long for?

Continue

Now continue with the hedge on your **left**.

Turn left past the children's' playground and the school to the metalled road. Turn left along School Road and then turn **right** along Wards Lane.

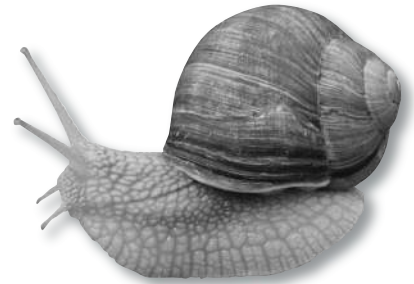
At the bottom of the lane **turn right**. Follow the path on the edge of the field between two hedges, then keep to the right down a short slope to the bottom of this small valley.

Journeying - Back in time to the present

Turn Left

Turn left onto a track. Follow the path. **Bear right** at a junction of paths. **Turn right** to reach the edge of Topples Wood. Keep an eye out for Roman snails.

Yes, they may well be the progeny of those imported by the Romans.



There is a site of a substantial Roman villa situated on a gentle slope just above the valley floor to the north west of the River Evenlode, by the railway embankment below the hamlet of Fawler. The name Fawler is believed to originate from a Saxon name 'faga flora' meaning coloured or spotted floor. This suggests that the villa survived in part above ground or was encountered during digging in the early medieval period.

Pause Here

here to look at the view over to Fawler..



*'Praise be to the name of God for
ever and ever;*

wisdom and power are his.

21 *He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up
others.*

*He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.*

Daniel 2;21

Note the passing of time.

Be aware of your feelings about this.

**Value the moments that you spend
here.**



Journeying - Imagining and Re-Imagining

Fork right through the wood.

Continue to follow the track to the Finstock / Wilcot Road, past the stonemasons' yard.

There is often an interesting piece of stone that has been left ready for use or carved and waiting for collection.

If you had the skill and the opportunity, what would you carve in stone?

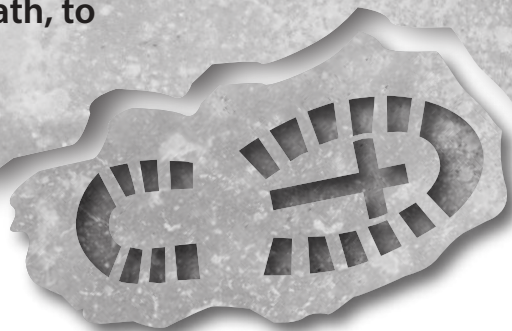
**You might consider how you could turn that idea into reality, if not in stone,
how else could you record it?**



Turn Left

Turn left along the road. At the bottom of a small dip, pass through a kissing gate on the right-hand side of the road. **Bear right** through some trees to follow the edge of Sumteth's Copse.

As you walk, pay attention to the different surfaces your feet tread on. Jesus told a parable about different types of soil representing various attitudes of heart; from the hardness of a path, to the ploughed soil.



Prayer

St. Richard of Chichester's prayer

Day by day, day by day,
O dear Lord, three things I pray;
To see Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly
Follow Thee more nearly,
Day by day.

Amen



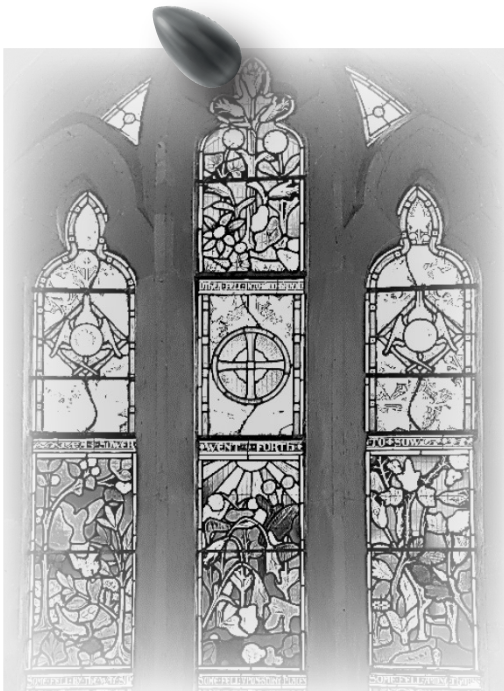
Bear Right

Bear right and go through a kissing gate and over a low fence in front of Wilcote Manor.

Turn right onto a metalled lane. St. Peter's Church is on the left.

St. Peter's Church, Wilcote

The East window tells the story of the parable of the sower and the seed.
Look for the four different types of soil



Psalm 63

- 1 *I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.*
- 3 *Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.*
- 4 *I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.*
- 5 *I will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*

As we set out, we prayed to hear the voice of God "singing in our ears". Consider how you have been listening and what you have been hearing.

Might you echo the words of the psalmist, or how else might you wish to respond?



Please draw your map here . .



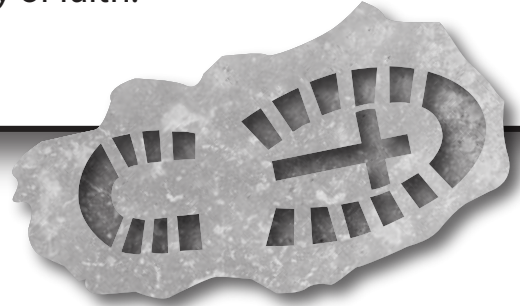
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Prayer

Open our ears to hear your voice,
Inspire our minds with your wisdom,
sustain us in our journey of faith.

Amen



As you leave the church, walk around to the north side to view this lovely Norman door arch.



Journeying-Sheltering

On leaving the church, continue down the lane for 60 metres and **turn right** opposite Wilcote Grange Farm.

Bear left past a pond on your right and over a stile.

Turn left and follow the path to the lower end of the field. **Bear left** into the next field. Follow the path over a track and bear right to follow the edge of the wood which is on your **left**.



- 6 *On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.*
- 7 *Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.*
- 8 *I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.*

As you walk you could take the opportunity to recollect some difficulty you are facing at this time in your life. Is there something that can disturb your sleep? The psalmist here uses these times to turn to God in prayer. He doesn't use words, but instead finds peace in being held and sheltered by God's presence. Why not try this now ?

Bear Left

Bear left through hidden gate posts and continue through the wood until you reach another post with the Wychwood Way sign. Just past this **bear left** across a small field, past a metal gate onto a metalled lane.



Turn right and follow the lane to Ramsden High Street.

Journeying-Resting

Turn right into the High Street and cross over the road to go up the slope to St. James' Church.

In the light of the last meditation about being sheltered under God's wings, you may like to search out the guardian angel window in the North wall and take a few moments to rest here.



The building owes its erection very largely to the untiring efforts of the Reverend Robert Lowbridge Baker and his generosity. He ministered in Ramsden for forty- four years.



The porch, tower and spire, were the gift of the Reverend Baker, in memory of his wife Mary (Noel) who died just before the church was opened.

The alabaster reredos behind the altar, with symbols of the four evangelists and the Resurrection window above it, both memorials of Mary Baker, given by her friends.

You will find a series of information boards around the church

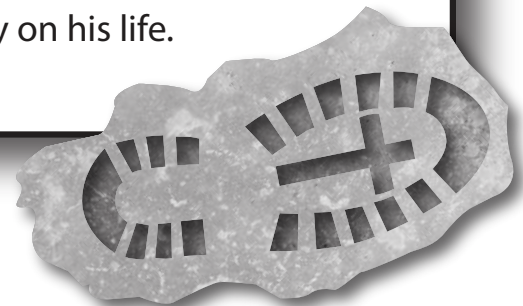
You will also observe the oak chancel screen, erected in memory of Henrietta Hicks-Beach, the Rev. Baker's second wife and their daughter Marjorie, who died within two days of each other in February 1932.



Faith

What a remarkable story of personal faith lies behind these memorials.

The 'Faith and Hope' window by the pulpit, commemorating the life and work of this priest-builder of the church, is a fitting commentary on his life.



Return

Return down the hill and cross the road to the Royal Oak. **Turn left** along the High Street and continue for about 500 metres. Just after Garden Cottage, beside Walnut Tree Cottage, **turn right** onto a marked footpath which leads uphill.

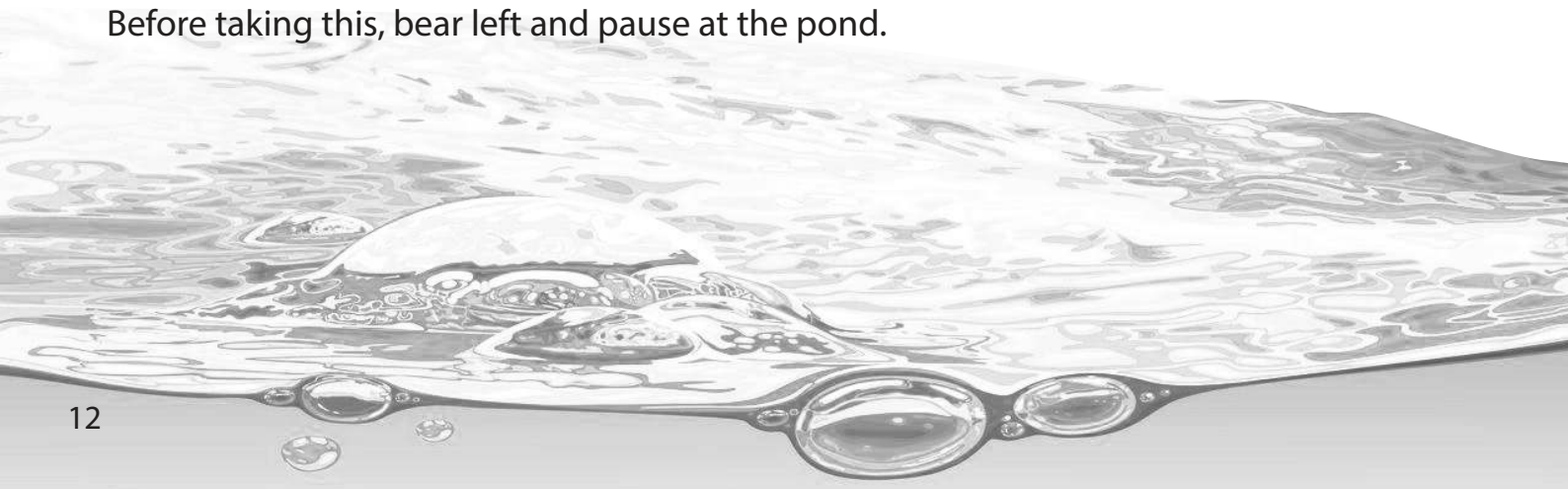
Journeying-Reflecting



After 400 metres **turn left** at a crossroad of paths.

The path bears right where it meets a laurel hedge and wire fence.

Before taking this, bear left and pause at the pond.



Can you see a reflection in the water?

Still water reflects more accurately than running water.

How can you use the stillness now to speak to your heart?

*As water reflects the face,
so one's life reflects the heart.*

Proverbs 27:19



Turn Back

Turn back and keeping the laurel hedge on your **left**, continue down the wooded path to emerge into Finstock High Street.

Turn right and walk down the High Street for approximately 400 metres.

About 100 metres past the entrance to Strange's farm, **turn left** onto a marked footpath up a slope and follow the hedge on your **left**. Continue for about 200 metres. Don't go on up to the top of the field but **turn right** across the field on an unsigned but clear and consolidated grass footpath.



Continue across the field and go through the small wooden gate leading to the cemetery extension.

Before the second gate, **turn left** through the cemetery and return to the church.



The Finish



Pause in the churchyard or the porch
to reflect on your thoughts throughout this pilgrimage.

PRAYER

Lord God, you have brought us back to this place
where we began.

Time has passed and our hearts and minds are
changed by what we have experienced.

Seal in our hearts those words that you have spoken.

Our feet are weary and we are ready to rest.

As we go from here, may we continue to hear your
voice singing new songs of mercy, peace and joy.

Amen.



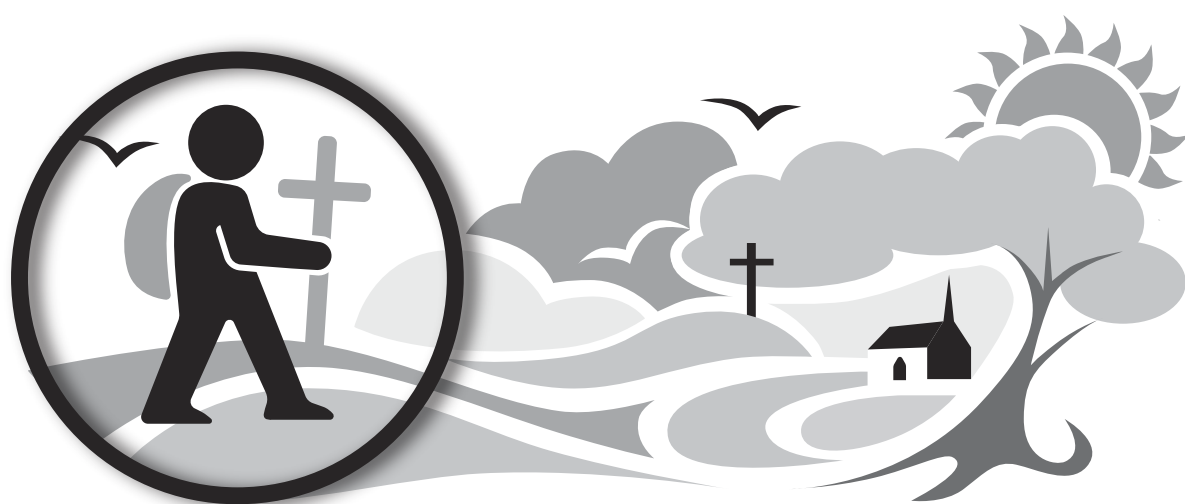
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