



# Pilgrim Paths

Chipping Norton Deanery

**Ascott-under-Wychwood to Shorthampton 5 Miles**

**A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a sacred place.**

In addition to route directions, this leaflet offers reflections on Psalm 34 to accompany your journey, with suggestions of places to pause. Although the trail could take around two hours, you should allow much more time if you wish to participate fully in the spiritual element of this pilgrimage.

The circular route includes road walking through and beyond the villages, on public footpaths and bridle roads, through woods and fields (some of which may contain cattle or horses). There are no stiles.

Park in Church View on the west side of the church (tower end). Enter the churchyard through the gate in the north-west corner.

# Church of the Holy Trinity, Ascott-under-Wychwood

## Preparing: inside the church

The twelfth-century origins of this charming church are very evident from the round-arched north arcade, but there is much to enjoy from later centuries including the fine brass chandelier crowned by a dove.



Enjoy taking some moments to look around and then find a place to sit. Before you leave, take a moment to recollect those people for whom you have concern and, using the opening verses of the Psalm to bring them to God.

### ***Reading from Psalm 34***

*I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.*

*<sup>2</sup> I will glory in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.*

*<sup>3</sup> Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.*

### **A PRAYER of PREPARATION:**

Bless to us, O God, the earth beneath our feet  
Bless to us, O God the path where-on we walk  
Bless to us, O God, each thing our eyes will see.



On leaving the church, return to Church View and turn right, noting on your right the stone-walled village pound, which now contains, rather than stray animals, some interesting re-set stones from a nearby long barrow.



Turn right again on Shipton Road and continue past the Swan Inn to the road junction and level crossing. Cross the railway and look for the drive to Manor Farm on your right, just past the Windrush Valley School Conservation Project.



Walking up the drive you are within the scheduled monument of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Ascott d'Oyley castle and deserted medieval village.

On reaching the lovely stone buildings of the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century manor house, turn left on the track.

**Pause here**

Look back where the track bends to the right. The small motte is in trees to the left of the large stone barn, and the prominent earthworks in front were once the main bailey.



Just imagine this site long ago – A site of refuge and security.

## Reflect

You may like to use the psalm to reflect on how God can be the ultimate place of safety for you.

### ***Reading from Psalm 34***

*<sup>4</sup> I sought the LORD, and he answered me;  
he delivered me from all my fears.*

*<sup>5</sup> Those who look to him are radiant;  
their faces are never covered with shame.*

*<sup>6</sup> This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;  
he saved him out of all his troubles.*

*<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,  
and he delivers them.*

Continue towards a wooden vehicular bridge over the River Evenlode. Turn right on the far side and follow the track (now part of the Oxfordshire Way) as it bends back to the left. Proceed through two fields, keeping close to the hedge on your right except where the track leads through the gap between them.

At the end of the second field turn right through a field gate into a much smaller field. While the gate to exit this field is ahead of you on high ground, near the far end of the hedge on your left, the right-of-way actually turns right and follows the meandering lower hedge around the field (and through often boggy ground) to get there. If you choose this route, make sure you don't go through a field gate set lower down on the far side of the field. The correct gate has an Oxfordshire Way map on its post. Cross the next field, heading towards a gate just to the right of a concrete-block cattle shelter. After this you simply follow the track keeping the hedge on your left.



There is a lovely view towards Pudlicote House at the next field boundary, beyond which you will have metal park fencing on your left.



The clearly marked and almost straight bridleway continues for a mile on the far side of the lane from Chilson to Pudlicote House, at several points in close proximity to the River Evenlode and with wide views across the delightful valley.



Pause here

As we walk in the beauty of our surroundings, you may wish to use the psalm and prayer to reflect on our dependence and responsibilities.

*<sup>8</sup> Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.*

*<sup>9</sup> Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.*

*<sup>10</sup> The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

## **A PRAYER:**

In dependence on the God of life,  
may we cherish the precious earth;  
the earth of the God of life,  
the earth of the Christ of love,  
the earth of the Spirit Holy.



On reaching Catsham Lane – running southwards from Chadlington to Leafield – turn right and follow the road over the river and up to the railway bridge.

Just after the bridge, a footpath to the right leads diagonally across a ridge-and-furrow field to a metal gate from where you will see Shorthampton church ahead.



Go through a final field, keeping the wall to your left, and turn left up the lane to reach the tiny church of All Saints.

## All Saints, Shorthampton



This little gem of a church was even smaller in the twelfth century. One of its tiny windows with original 'masonry' painting on the splay can still be seen.

The lower wall paintings seem to focus on the simple goodness of the saints. They are ordinary folk – a servant, a smith (shoeing a horse), a scholar, all who became people of prayer and kindness.

Jesus is depicted as a child with his mother and a brother making clay pigeons. Even this apocryphal story of Jesus giving the clay pigeons life was to illustrate his reliance on God, not some bizarre show!









The psalm continues, reminding us of our status as children of God and our need to be good listeners.



- <sup>11</sup> Come, my children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*
- <sup>12</sup> Whoever of you loves life  
and desires to see many good days,*
- <sup>13</sup> keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from telling lies.*
- <sup>14</sup> Turn from evil and do good;  
seek peace and pursue it.*

### **A PRAYER:**

Lead us from death to life,  
from falsehood to truth,  
From despair to hope, from fear to trust;  
Lead us from hatred to love,  
from war to peace.  
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe.  
*The Universal Peace Prayer*

Return to the lane and turn right to continue up the hill to the signpost. Go right at this point and, where the lane turns sharp right again, go straight ahead on a farm track that runs parallel with the valley. The hedge is on your right through the first field but, halfway through the second, the track crosses to the other side of the hedge. This offers even better views across the lovely valley to your right. However, the track soon becomes a delightful green lane that leads to the idyllic stone hamlet of Chilson.

Though you need to turn left up the lane at this point to continue the walk, you might want to stroll a few metres to the right to enjoy the beautiful stone buildings of Chilson Farm.



However, 80m up the lane from the point you joined it is a bridleway on your right signed School Lane.



At the far end of School Lane, go through the gate on the left, but continue in the same direction towards the next gate. Keeping the hedge on your right in the next field, head for a corner where the path goes through a gap. It then bears half-left towards the hedge and continues up the left-hand side of that field.



At the end bear slightly right to keep the hedge on your left in the next field. Staying close to the hedge, walk round two sides of this large field that slopes down into the valley.



On reaching the diagonally-opposite corner, turn right again along the third side but, after 20m, turn very sharp left through the first hedge gap and continue diagonally across this final field toward the outlying buildings of Ascott-under-Wychwood.



The path joins the end of Mill Lane which becomes High Street. Along it you will find, on your left, as splendid children's playground and, on your right, Ascott Village Stores which serves coffee. Depending on the composition of your party you may wish to utilise either or both!

You might also spot along this charming street three of the handsome stone door canopies that are such a feature of the village. At the end of High Street, turn right on the main street (London Lane) and then left around Windrush Valley School to cross the triangular village green where you will see a memorial bench around a chestnut tree.

Pause here



This commemorates the sixteen women – known as the Ascott Martyrs – who in 1873 were sentenced to prison and hard labour for their part in supporting a farmworkers' strike in Ascott-under-Wychwood, only a year after the foundation of the National Union of Agricultural Workers. The sentencing quickly led to local riots, questions in Parliament and a pardon from Queen Victoria.

You may like to call to mind an issue of injustice that is in the news at the moment, or closer to home for you.



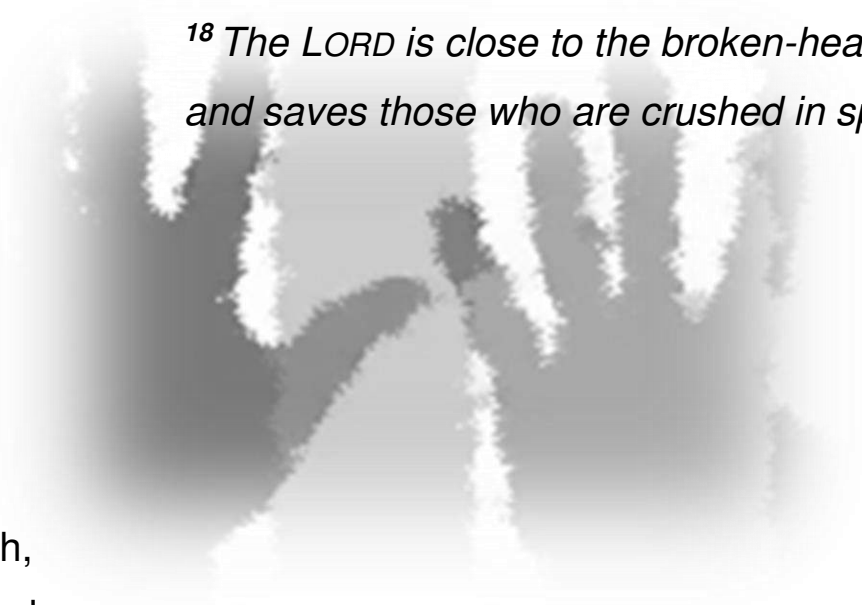


The psalm continues :

*<sup>15</sup> The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,  
and his ears are attentive to their cry;  
<sup>16</sup> but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,  
to blot out their name from the earth.  
<sup>17</sup> The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.  
<sup>18</sup> The LORD is close to the broken-hearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

**A PRAYER:**

Father, take our hands.  
May your compassion  
flow through them.  
May they offer tender touch,  
human warmth and practical care.



## Returning

Take the lane to the right of the Forge Garage to return to the churchyard, and either linger in the impressive lime avenue (carpeted with crocuses in February) or re-enter the church.

# PAUSE



.... at the end of this pilgrim path to consider something that has given you a sense of renewal today.

The psalm ends remembering God's promises to us in the midst of trouble.

*<sup>19</sup> The righteous person may have many troubles,  
but the LORD delivers him from them all;*

*<sup>20</sup> he protects all his bones,  
not one of them will be broken.*

*<sup>21</sup> Evil will slay the wicked;  
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.*

*<sup>22</sup> The LORD will rescue his servants;  
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.*

## A PRAYER:

God of renewal, lead us  
From complaining to appreciation  
From stagnation to creativity  
From coldness to love  
From ourselves to you.



