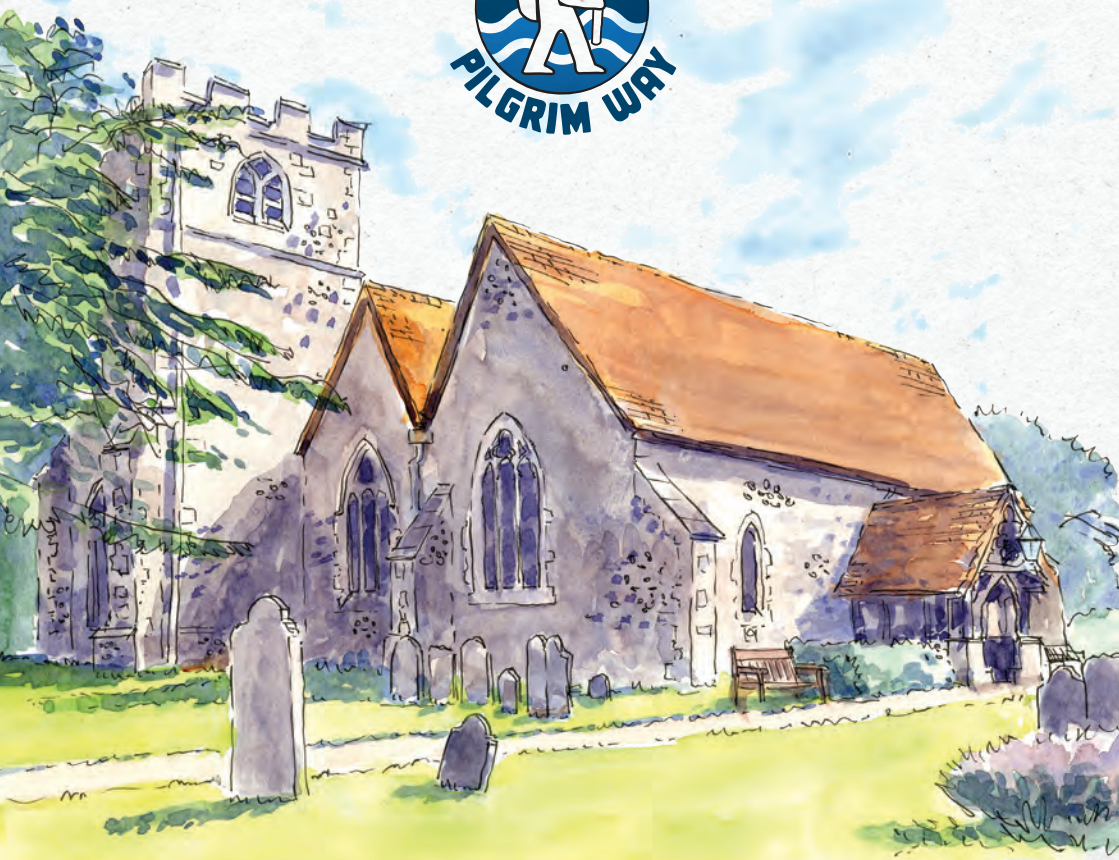


The Thames Pilgrim Way

A pilgrimage with the Bishop of Oxford
18th – 28th September 2014





For centuries, people have gone on journeys to enrich their spiritual lives. The desire seems deeply ingrained in human nature. Pilgrimages nurture and sustain our inner life, our 'sacred centre'.

Personally, pilgrimage has long been one of my passions. Over the years I've made pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Rome, Holy Island, Iona, Mount Sinai, Turkey and Greece. I also really enjoyed travelling around the diocese in August 2011, meeting people and praying with the local communities surrounding the 15 wonderful churches featured on our Pilgrimage Map.

Three years on, I'm delighted to be launching a brand new Pilgrimage route. At 104 miles, the Thames Pilgrim Way follows a well-established national trail, and winds majestically through the very heart of our great diocese and each of our four archdeaconries.

By following the Thames Path, the journey is already laid out for us, so in some ways we are simply reclaiming an iconic route for God. More than 70 of our churches lie within half a mile of the river, all treasures. We won't be stopping at all of them (this time, at least), but my hope is that by blessing the route, praying along the way, and providing resources for prayer and reflection, we'll be able to offer something unique and long-lasting for pilgrims of the future.

To launch the Thames Pilgrim Way I plan to lead the first pilgrimage along the route in September 2014. On the third day, we will pause for the Grand Day Out in Oxford City Centre, when I am inviting the whole church family to join me for a day of celebration as part of our 2014 'Imagining Faith' series, before resuming our journey on the Sunday.

Past experience tells me that exciting things happen when Christians journey together. It is in the action of travelling, of encountering the new and the unfamiliar, of sharing conversations and allowing ourselves time and space away from our everyday routines that we find refreshment and spiritual growth.

Do join me, for an hour, a day or the whole 104 miles. And as we travel, let's remember the pilgrim who comes towards us from the opposite direction. In Jesus Christ, God comes in search of us.

+ John

+John Pritchard

Bishop of Oxford



The Itinerary

Thursday 18 September

Friday 19 September

Saturday 20 September

Sunday 21 September

Monday 22 September

Tuesday 23 September

Wednesday 24 September

Thursday 25 September

Friday 26 September

Saturday 27 September

Sunday 28 September

Radcot to Newbridge

10 miles

Newbridge to Wolvercote

13 miles

Grand Day Out*

Wolvercote to Radley

8 miles

Radley to Little Wittenham

12 miles

Little Wittenham to Mouldsford

11 miles

Mouldsford to Tilehurst

11 miles

Tilehurst to Shiplake

11 miles

Shiplake to Marlow

10 miles

Marlow to Maidenhead

8 miles

Maidenhead to Runnymede

10 miles

The daily pattern

0945

Gathering

1000

Morning reflection

1300

Lunchtime reflection

1600

Tea

1700

Evening reflection



Refreshments

Please bring your own lunch and sufficient water for the day. At the end of each day the local parish is kindly providing tea. To help us plan, if you would like tea please book with graham.sykes@oxford.anglican.org / 01865 208221 by 1 September.

*Grand Day Out pilgrimage (3 miles) from St Margaret's Binsey to Oxford's Cathedral at Christ Church, beginning with Morning Prayer at 0700, leaving Binsey at 0730.

Practicalities

The start and stop points have been chosen to allow for travel by train where possible, but this is not always the case, especially on the first two days.

Please try to co-ordinate lifts with others so that you can leave a car at the beginning and end of the day's walk.

Note that public loos are very limited.

You will need waterproofs and stout walking boots. Do go on a practice walk if you are not a regular walker before committing yourself to a long day's walking. You may find walking poles helpful.

Resources

Web resources will be available online at

www.oxford.anglican.org/pilgrimage

There will be a special Handbook to the Thames Pilgrim Way on sale for £5 at the beginning of each day.

Pocket Prayers for Pilgrims edited by John Pritchard (CHP, 2011)

Making a Pilgrimage by Sally Welch (Lion, 2009)

Every Place is Holy Ground by Sally Welch (Canterbury Press, 2011)



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