

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Route
1

Pilgrim Paths

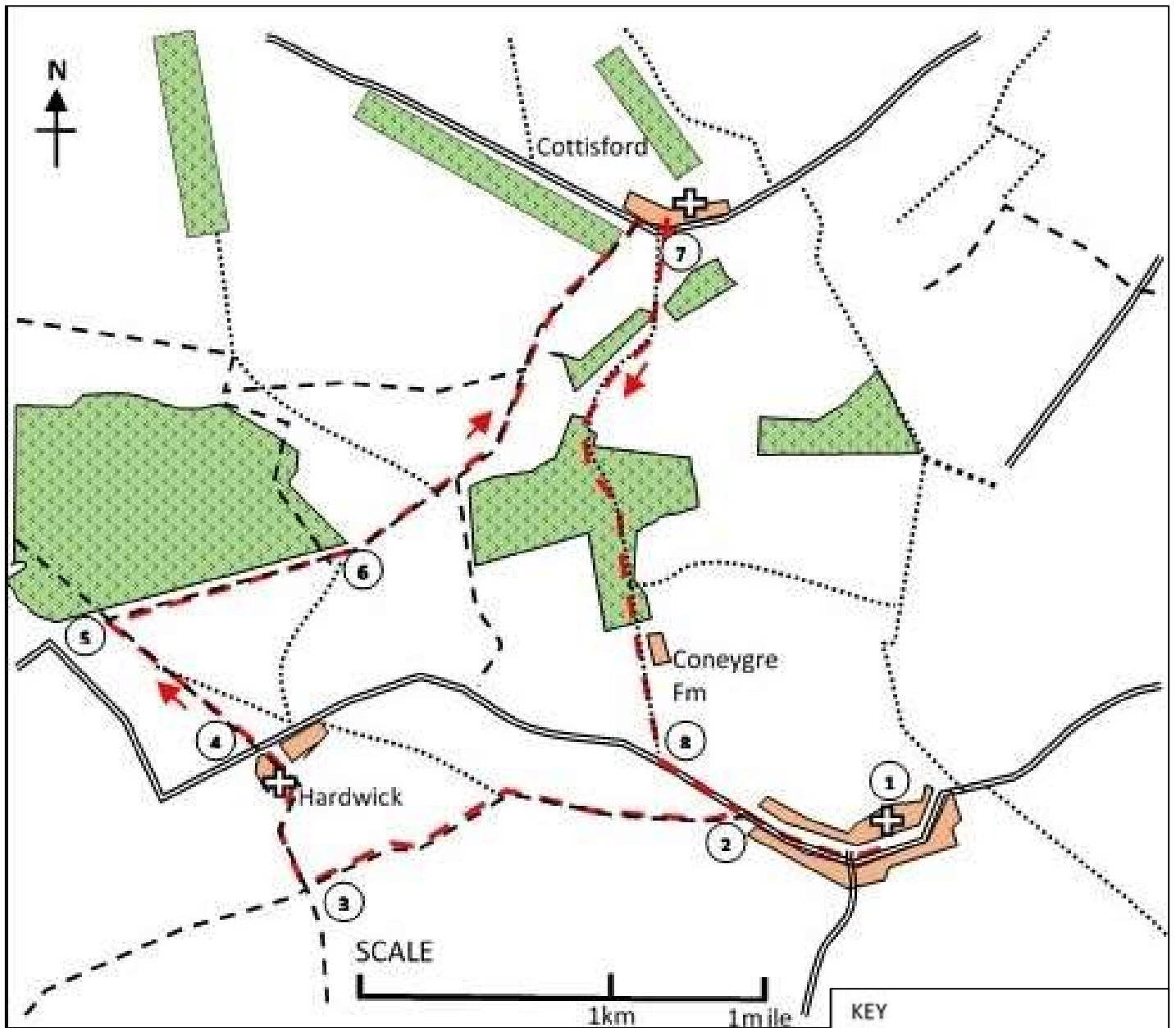
Hethe to Hardwick to Cottisford
Circular Walk

Distance: 4 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 may include road walking through villages, footpaths through woods and fields and negotiating some stiles. You may also encounter sheep, cattle or horses grazing in the fields.

Photo: Barbara Walton



KEY	
	Pilgrim Path
	Road
	Bridleway
	Footpath
	River
	Railway
	Station
	Village/Farm
	Woods
	Church

START

LOCATION: Church of St Edmund and St George, Hethe



The church is Grade 2 listed and sited within the Hethe Conservation Area. The first church on this site was dedicated to St Edmund and was built in the early 12th century by Lord Norman de Verden, whose father served with William the Conqueror. Hethe outgrew its small Norman church and 150 years later it was rebuilt. On St George's Day around the turn of the 14th century it was rededicated to become the Church of St Edmund and St George. In 1859 the



Gothic Revival architect GE Street restored the building, widened the chancel arch, and added the bell-turret and the north aisle. Street moved the east window from the chancel to the north aisle and inserted a new east window in its place. A Grade 2 listed headstone dated 1682, pictured here is found about 10m south of the porch.

Pause, Reflect & Pray

Be with us, Lord God, as we set out today. Open our eyes to see the beauty of your creation and open our hearts to receive your love. Amen.

On leaving the church turn right and walk past The Muddy Duck pub. Take the right fork signposted Hardwick and continue past the village hall on your right, at the edge of the village. Take the bridleway to the left just before the allotments, signposted to Stoke Lyne (2). Continue past the stables and paddocks on your right until you come to a gap in the hedge. Go through the gap and cross the field diagonally left to a break in the hedge in the far corner. Stay on the footpath with the high hedge on your right. Go through the gate in the corner of the field into a wood (3), taking the right fork (more or less straight on) for a short distance before turning right before the ponds to a gate into a field. Follow the field edge, with the hedge and fish ponds on your left, and past a farmyard to the Church of St Mary, Hardwick. Continue around the outside wall of the churchyard to the entrance gate.

LOCATION: Church of St Mary, Hardwick with Tusmore



The chancel and its arch are 13th century. The rest of the church was almost entirely rebuilt in 1878 to designs by George Gilbert Scott Junior. The south aisle and south porch were added at this time. The 13th century north and south doorways and the large Perpendicular west window were reused in the redesign.

Pause, Reflect & Pray

Every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle
on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air,
and all that moves in the field is mine.

Psalm 50: 10-11

The millennium window in the church portrays some of the wildlife in the area: a pheasant, a hare and a fish. Be still and give thanks for God's creatures. Each one is an expression of God's love.

On leaving the churchyard turn left and walk up the lane to the road. Cross the road and go through the gap in the stone wall (4). Follow the bridleway to Tusmore Park, to cross a small paddock going through a gap in the fence into the next field.

Cross this field diagonally left to the end of the hedge line, passing to the left of a big tree to follow the grass track between the open fields. Go through the gap in the hedge (5) to enter the wood and turn immediately right onto the track known as Buckingham Lane.

You are now on the Tusmore Estate and should take particular care not to stray from the designated footpaths and keep dogs on leads.

At the end of the wood continue on a broad track with the open field on your left and the hedge on your right (6). Continue on the track, ignoring footpaths to the right and left until you pass some restored farm buildings and come out on the road in Cottisford. Turn right and after a short walk you will see the Church of St Mary on your left.

LOCATION: Church of St Mary, Cottisford

Pause, Reflect & Pray

Flora Thompson, the novelist and poet, worshipped at
the Church of St Mary, Cottisford, as a child.

Spend a few moments reflecting in the churchyard.
What cares and concerns do you have at the moment?

Offer them to God.

Be open to receive God's peace.



The Church of St Mary Cottisford



The present stone church was built in the 13th century on the site of a Saxon church by the Abbot of Bec and, apart from the removal of a tower, it remains largely unchanged to the present day. In 2015 a major repair project was completed comprising: repointing of its exterior walls; repairs to its roof; repairs to rainwater goods, stonework and perimeter channel; repairs to its leaded lights; window protection.



Flora Thompson based her trilogy “Lark Rise to Candleford” on the area north-east of Bicester, including the villages of Juniper Hill, Cottisford, Fringford and Hethe. A memorial tablet to her is found in the church.

Pause, Reflect & Pray

A wave of pure happiness pervaded her being, and,
although it soon receded, it carried away
with it her burden of care.

Flora Thompson, “Over to Candleford”

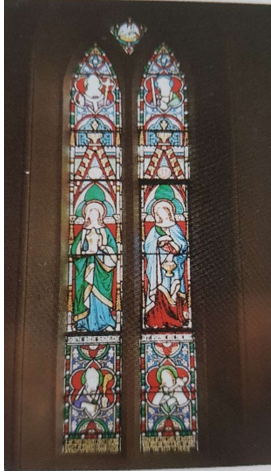
Leaving the church cross the road diagonally right and take the footpath signposted Hethe (7), crossing the field diagonally left to the far corner and through the gap in the trees.

Turn left on to a track and cross a small bridge over the stream. Turn immediately right after the wood and continue along the grass track alongside the wood. The path continues into a pleasant broad valley planted with trees. Follow the stream on your right initially before bearing left to follow the path through the saplings planted in 2020.

Continue until you come to a gravel track where you turn right over a small bridge and follow the track past Coneygre Farm on your left. When the track reaches the main road, you will be at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Hethe. Take a moment to go inside.

LOCATION: Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Hethe





In Holy Trinity Church, the five windows nearest the altar filled with patron saints are designed by Francis Barnett, a stained-glass artist from Leith, Scotland. The pair at the rear of the church depicting the Baptism of Christ and St Margaret Mary Alocoque's vision of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are probably the work of his son William Collingridge Barnett. Francis was part of a family of stained-glass artists who designed many windows for Catholic churches in England, Scotland and Ireland. In 1838 Francis married Anne, the daughter of Farmer Thomas Collingridge of Hethe which is why this unassuming church is blessed with these beautiful windows.¹

When you come out of the church turn left on the main road and follow it back into Hethe where you will once again be at St Mary's.

Pause, Reflect & Pray

We have come to the end of our walk, taking the experience with us ...

May the raindrops fall lightly on your brow.

May the soft winds freshen your spirit.

May the sunshine brighten your heart.

May the burdens of the day rest lightly upon you
And may God enfold you in the mantle of his love.

Old Gaelic Blessing

END

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE.

LEAVE GATES AND PROPERTY AS YOU FIND THEM AND WALK ONLY ON
DESIGNATED PATHS.

¹ Source: *Hethe-with-Adderbury: The Story of a Catholic Parish in Oxfordshire* by Joy Grant