

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Route  
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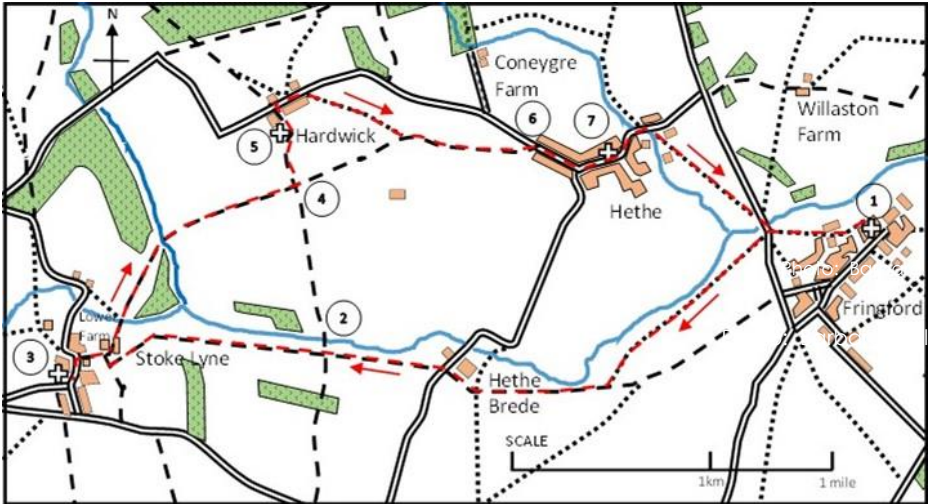
# Pilgrim Paths

## Fringford, Stoke Lyne, Hardwick and Hethe Circular Walk

Distance: 6.4 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*



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

ADDITIONAL WALKS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE

**Bicester and Islip Deanery website**

These can be accessed by scanning  
the QR code below



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**Bicester and Islip Deanery Pilgrim Paths**

## START

**LOCATION:** The Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Fringford



Photo: Barbara Walton

*Fringford is an ancient site and the name is thought to mean 'ford of the people of Fera', a Saxon tribe or family group, who were here before the Norman Conquest. There may well have been a church on the site since Saxon times. However, the current church dates to the 12th century and only a much restored south door and the two northern arches of the nave remain. The south aisle may have been rebuilt in the 14th century. At the north-west end of the nave is a blocked-up arch. In the 16th century there were altars to St. Catherine and St. Thomas. The roughly carved medieval screen has been preserved.*



Photo: Barbara Walton

## 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

From the church door turn right and walk around the right hand side of the church to the back left hand corner of the churchyard, where you will see a metal gate. Go through the gate and continue down the path ahead. Follow this path to a tarmac lane, forking left and right. Follow the lane to the left. After the lane bends to the left you will see a footpath leading off to the right. Follow this path until it comes out by the Old Rectory.

Immediately opposite you is a kissing gate – go through the gate and follow the path through a second kissing gate and into a field. Continue diagonally across the field, going slightly downhill, to a stile. Go over the stile, cross the road and then cross the stile on the opposite side into a field. Follow the edge of the field, with a stream on your right, continuing into the next field.

When you come to a metal gate go through the gate and continue along the path, going slightly uphill, away from the stream, to a foot bridge. Continue over the bridge and follow the path across the field to another footbridge. Follow the path on the other side of this bridge, bearing slightly left.

When the path joins another path (see photo), turn right, following the path towards a small metal gate at the left hand end of a small wood.

Go through the gate and continue along the path towards some farm buildings (Hethe Brede) directly ahead of you.



Photo: Barbara Walton

Continue straight through the farm to a road. Cross the road and go down the track opposite and around the side of the field. At the corner of the field you come to a small copse. The path turns left, through a gap in the hedge and around the copse to a footbridge (2) over the stream. Do not cross the stream but continue along the path, past a footbridge, with the stream on your right.



*The stream on your right eventually flows into the River Great Ouse and these waters will ultimately enter the North Sea at King's Lynn. The high ground to your left is a watershed and rain falling on this side of the high ground will go into the River Great Ouse. Rain falling on the far side of the high ground will form into streams that eventually feed the River Thames.*

## **Pause, Reflect & Pray**

*As you look at the landscape ponder the greatness of our God.  
The rain which falls here flowing to different parts of the country  
and eventually to different parts of Europe.*

*Thank you Father for the bountiful blessings that you give us.  
Rain for water to drink.*

*Rain to water our crops for food and nourishment,  
rain to water the flowers to bring us joy and  
rain to provide for all your living creatures large and small.*

*Amen.*

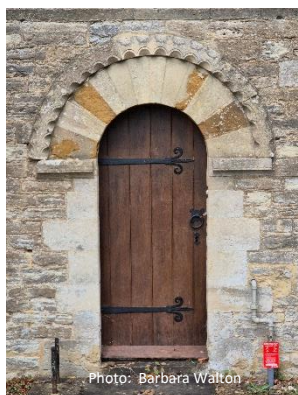
Continue along the path for approximately 650m until you come to a gap in the hedge on your right. Go through gap, as indicated by the way-marker and through a gate. Continue along the path, with the hedge on your left. After 250m you will see the first buildings of Stoke Lyne. The path turns right, away from the field boundary, towards a small gate to the left of the nearest cottages. Go through the gate, follow the path, keeping right, to a gate in the right hand corner of the small field. Go through this gate to a tarmac track. Turn left along the tarmac track and continue to the road, with Lower Farm and its tennis courts on your right. At the road turn left and continue until you come to St. Peter's Church (3).



## LOCATION: The Church of St. Peter, Stoke Lyne.



*St. Peter's Church at Stoke Lyne comprises a chancel, nave, and north and south transepts, with a tower over the south transept. The nave and chancel were built in the 12th century, and both the chancel arch and the fine south doorway are Romanesque work of this period. Over the doorway there is a niche containing a*



*contemporary statue of a seated figure, probably St.*

*Peter. The porch is 19th-century. The south transept was added early in the 14th century and forms the lower stage of the tower. This is lighted by a three-light window with reticulated tracery, and has an embattled parapet and a pyramidal roof. Its repair or alteration in 1658 is recorded by an inscription on the exterior.*





Photo: Barbara Walton

*In the chancel you will see the original grave markers for two members of the Peyton family, who lost their lives in the First and Second World War respectively. The Peytons were the Lords of the Manor of Stoke Lyne.*



Photo: Barbara Walton

## Pause, Reflect & Pray

As you gaze at the beauty and solidity of the 3 arches that connect the different parts of the church, reflect on our triune God:

Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Thank you that you minister to all parts of us through all parts of you:

our need for a parent to teach us and discipline us,  
our need of a friend and brother to stand at our side,  
and our need for a helper and guide to help us through the  
difficulties that we have day to day.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are all to us.

Thank you. Amen.

After visiting the church retrace your steps along the road to Lower Farm. Turn right along the tarmac track with Lower Farm now on your left. Continue along the track as it turns to the left between two rows of farm workers' cottages until you come to a gate. Go through the gate and bear slightly right along the path signposted 'Hethe 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ '. Continue along the path across a field and into the next field, towards a wood that lies straight ahead of you. Continue along the path into the wood. After 100m the path comes to a dirt track. Turn left and follow the track around a field. When the track comes to a T-junction continue straight along the edge of the field. At the corner of the field you come to a gate. Go through the gate and continue into a wood, following the way-markers. After walking 20m along the path into the wood do not continue down the path but turn left (4).

Go through a gate and follow the path along the side of a field until you come to a concrete track among some farm building. You have reached Hardwick and you will see St. Mary's Church (5) on your left.



## **LOCATION:** The Church of St. Mary, Hardwick



Photo: Brbara Walton



*The earliest parts of St. Mary's Church date back to the late 12th or early 13th centuries, although Christian worship may have taken place on this site since Saxon times. The 14th century chancel still has its three original windows and a priest's door. The south doorway is the only surviving*



Photo: Barbara Walton

*portion of the original Norman church. The church's first patrons are thought to have been the Knights Hospitaller and the church's exterior is decorated with Maltese crosses in recognition of this.*



Photo: Barbara Walton



## Pause, Reflect & Pray

Spend some time looking at and meditating on the baptismal font at the rear of the church. Delicate flowers, leaves, angels and crosses.



Photo: Barbara Walton

Thank you for new birth and new life; for the start of our journey of coming to know you.

As we continue along the road in our faith,  
may we always remember the beginning,  
coming to you vulnerable and naïve,  
but being accepted fully for who we are  
and where we are at. Thank you for knowing us.

Amen.

After visiting the church continue down the concrete track to the road. Turn right and follow the road through Hardwick. After 160m, just after you have passed the last house of the village, you will see a stile on your right, signposted 'Hethe 1m'. Cross the stile into a paddock and walk diagonally across to the far left hand corner where there is another stile. Cross the stile and follow the path along the right hand edge of the field, with trees on your right. Continue along the field edge, which bends right and then left, to the far right hand corner of the field and go through the gap in the hedge. Turn left and go through another gap in the hedge ahead of you. Cross a dirt track



Photo: Barbara Walton

and continue straight ahead across a field, heading just to the left of a large tree. Follow the path, with a wooden fence on your left and a hedge on your right. The path continues through some allotments to a road. As you walk through the allotments you will see the Catholic church (6) on your left.

Turn right along the road and continue through the village of Hethe. After 450m you will come to the church of St. Edmund and St. George (7) on your left.



**LOCATION:** The Church of St. Edmund and St. George, Hethe



The name 'Hethe' is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'hæð', meaning a piece of uncultivated ground and which is the origin of the modern word 'heath'. The church of St. Edmund and St. George is known to have existed by 1154 when it was given to the Augustinian Priory at Kenilworth. Both the west wall of the nave and the south wall of the chancel survive from this time, each retaining a Norman lancet window and the latter a priest's doorway from this period.

The east end of the chancel was rebuilt early in the 13th century when a Decorated Gothic east window was inserted. In the 15th century a Perpendicular Gothic clerestory was added to the nave. At the time of the 'Dissolution of the Monasteries' under Henry VIII the advowson of Hethe passed to the Crown, which has retained it ever since.

Part of the south aisle forms the hagioscope, popularly believed to be the place where lepers and others with an infectious disease were allowed to assemble to view and join in the service. It might also have been used by an assistant priest giving the Holy Sacrament to a part of the congregation who used the 'squint' to watch the Celebration of Communion at the main altar.

## Pause, Reflect & Pray

As you look at the unusual bell turret built in 1859 when the church was reroofed, meditate on how bells are used:

to call people to worship,  
to call them to mourning,  
to call them to celebration.

In all seasons and for all reasons the bells toll.

Thank you Lord that you are also with us in all the seasons of our life,  
whether joyous or sad, or just every day.

Amen

After visiting the church continue down the road through the village, passing the former Wesleyan Chapel on the left (now converted to a home, as in the photo), until you come to a bridge.

Immediately after the bridge turn right along a track signposted 'Fringford 1½'. After

20m go through the kissing gate on the left and follow the path slightly right and uphill.

At the top of the slope continue straight along the path, with some sewage works on your right. Continue to the end of the field and go through the gate on your right, then turn left and walk downhill until you come to kissing gate that leads onto a road. At the road turn right and cross bridge. Just after the bridge take the footpath on the left, signposted 'Fringford ⅓', and into a field. Follow the footpath diagonally across the field, going slightly uphill.

In the far corner of the field go through a kissing gate and follow the path. At the next kissing gate keep left and continue down the footpath. When you come to a tarmac road bear slightly left and continue to the end of the road, where you join a footpath that brings you back to the churchyard.



## 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.

