

# Pilgrim Paths

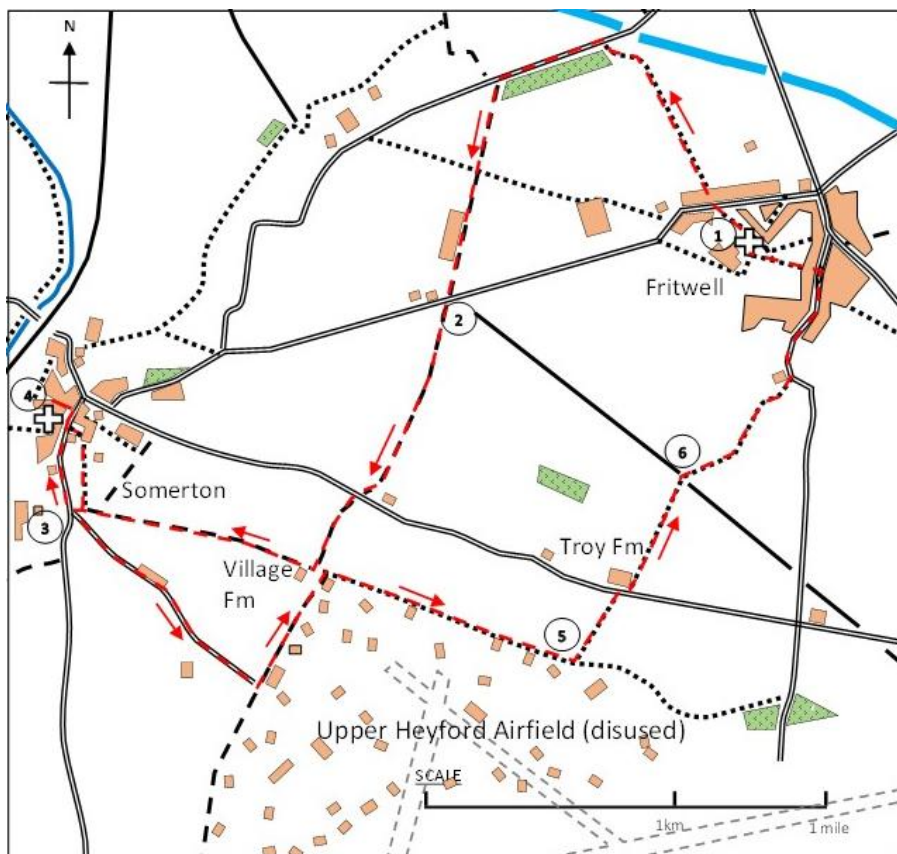
## Fritwell – Somerton Circular Walk

Distance: 6.7 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 using the QR  
code below. Also follow us on **FACEBOOK**  
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# START

**LOCATION:** The Church of St. Olave, Fritwell



## 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.



*St. Olave's dates from 1103. The building was originally Norman, and the north and south doorways survive from this time. Before 1865, the nave had a clerestory, the tower had no steeple but was crenelated, and the chancel had a square-headed east window. In 1865 the church was restored and the bell tower was rebuilt. This bell-tower has a ring of four bells. Before 1645 St. Olave's had a turret clock, parts of which still survive.*



## Pause, Reflect & Pray

Fritwell is a larger village in this area, with a school and a shop. Consider all the people who contribute to making villages like this thriving communities – and give thanks for their work.

*We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift ... is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously;... if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.* NIV Rom 12 v 6-8

Leave St. Olave's (1) by the north door. Go through the lychgate and continue down the track towards North Street, keeping the Green on your right. Cross North Street; turn left and almost immediately right, following the footpath sign between houses. After you pass the house on your right you will find the entrance to the footpath on the right. The way-marker is low down and the entrance may be partly obscured by foliage. Follow this path through a series of gates and stiles until it emerges into a field. Continue straight ahead, keeping the field boundary on your left. At the next corner of the field, take the kissing gate and follow the path as it turns left through to a field alongside the M40. Take the stile on the right and climb over the crash barrier onto the road. Turn left along the road for about 500m and then take the footpath on the left, marked 'Restricted Byway'. This path eventually passes a chicken farm down a long concrete track. When you reach the Fritwell – Somerton Road (2), cross straight over and continue along a path through the trees until it emerges onto a field margin. Follow the footpath until you reach the Somerton – Ardley Road. Cross straight over and take the path through the gap in the hedge towards Village Farm (signposted 'Bridleway Upper Heyford'.) Immediately before the gates to the farm, turn right (see photo.) This path may be overgrown.



Photo: Barbara Walton



When you reach the next field, keep the hedge on your right and continue towards Somerton. After about half a mile the field boundary bends to the right. Follow the field boundary, pass through a gap in the hedge, turn left and walk down the path to the bottle banks (3). Turn right and head downhill, through Somerton, taking due care on the road. Turn left towards St. James's (4) in Church Street.

## Pause, Reflect & Pray

Farmers are pivotal in creating and maintaining the countryside as we know it, often working with difficulties due to climate change and political instability, at home and across the globe.

Jesus told many stories based on the farming practices of his day. May 'The Good Shepherd' inspire us to care for His creation and to make choices which will ensure that generations to come may enjoy this environment as we do.

Amen

**LOCATION:** The Church of St. James, Somerton





*There has been a church at Somerton since the 11th century. Note the Reredos Panel, dating from about 1400, depicting The Last Supper.*



*The Fermor Chapel: The Fermor family purchased Somerton Manor in 1512 and stayed until 1642, before moving to Tusmore Park. Even then, family members continued to be buried at Somerton. The wonderfully restored effigies, brasses and inscriptions give details of their lives and times.*

## Pause, Reflect & Pray

God of our pilgrimage, you have given us a desire to take the questing way and set out on our journey. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus that, whatever we encounter as we travel, we may seek to glorify you by the way we live. Amen.

Leave the church via the north door and turn right out of the churchyard. Head up Church Street to the road junction and turn right along Heyford Road. After a few yards, cross over the road and take the second turn to the left, signed 'The Paddock'. Follow the track as it turns right in front of some cottages and continue to cross a private drive by means of two stiles. Continue on the path straight ahead across a small field to a further stile on the far side.

After crossing the stile, turn left up Aston View on a narrow road that passes several cottages. After about half a mile, you will reach the fence which surrounds the Upper Heyford Airbase. Turn left, keeping the fence immediately on your right.



Upper Heyford Airfield was built at the end of the First World War, its first operational squadron arriving a few days before the armistice. The airfield closed for a few years after the war, but later reopened as a bomber station. Three RAF bombers squadrons (18, 34 and 57 Squadrons),

equipped with Hampden bombers, were at the airfield at the outbreak of WW2 and deployed to France in 1939. At this time Upper Heyford became a training airfield, training bomber crews. The airfield was bombed twice in 1941, although without any casualties being sustained. Crews from training units, including Upper Heyford, took part in some of the 'Thousand Bomber Raids' on Germany. In 1951 control of the airfield was passed over to the American air force and it remained in use by the Americans until the end of the Cold War, when the airfield closed.

## Pause, Reflect & Pray

Think on those have served their country, risking their lives in defence of this country. Thank God for the peace we enjoy today and pray for an end to war throughout the world.

Follow the path until you reach Village Farm on your left. This stretch can be a bit muddy in wet weather. Continue around the perimeter of the farm buildings, until you see the path that leaves Village Farm on the right, keeping the hedge to your immediate right. Walk along the edge of a large field, following the fence which forms the northern boundary of the airbase.

Follow the fence line for about half a mile, passing through a small copse, and continuing along the edge of the next field until you find a path to the left, lying between two hedges (5).

Follow this path until it meets the road between Somerton and Ardley. Cross this road and go through the double gates onto the Permissive Path through Troy Farm. Go through the gate on the far side of the farmyard and walk across a paddock, keeping the hedge on your right. When the hedge comes to an end, you will see a gate ahead, leading to a grassy path which crosses the railway over a bridge (6). Take this path, crossing the railway line followed by a stile. Go straight ahead, across a small field to a further stile immediately in front of a tree, and a small footbridge over a stream. Follow the footpath across the next field, pass some allotments and a pumping station, and turn left when you reach the road into Fritwell. Walk along East Street, passing Wrigton's Shop on your right and then cross the road. Immediately after passing two Edwardian Villas (Lorna and Lamorna Villas), a footpath to the Church is signposted. Take this path until you reach a small gate into the churchyard of St. Olave's Church.

## 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.