



A Pilgrimage Walk

from Tewkesbury Abbey

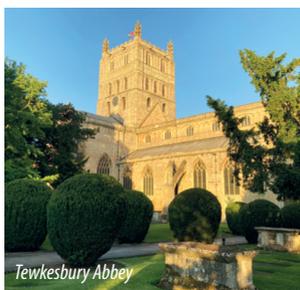
An interesting walk through quiet countryside, enhanced by much ancient history

This, almost triangular walk, splits into three definite sections which can be walked individually or together. For the availability of public transport, Tewkesbury is an obvious starting place, with the great Abbey a true focal point. There is a local bus service back from Stoke Orchard to Tewkesbury for those, that only wish, or have the time, to walk the first section.

This section **(A-B)** is the longest at just over 8km (5 miles) with the route out of Tewkesbury needing close attention. There is quite a bit of lane walking around Walton Cardiff and Fiddington as the motorway is crossed.

The last few miles are straightforward as the path drops down into Stoke Orchard where there is the Orchard Stores/Amy's Café at the Community Centre. The sight of the unique Norman wall paintings within St James Church will undoubtedly lift the spirits.

The second section **(B-C)** is slightly shorter at 7.2 km (4.5 miles). The initial few miles alongside the River Swilgate are rather uneven, as the



village of Tredington is passed over to your right. The busy A38 is then crossed and the route is more straightforward as one progresses to Deerhurst with its amazing Saxon Church. Just around the corner is the simple Odda's Chapel which was built slightly later than the church.

The third section **(C-A)** is the shortest, 4.0 km (2.5 miles) and most straightforward, which is good for tired limbs. The Severn Way is followed back towards Tewkesbury for nearly three km, as the large and interesting Cheltenham College boathouse is reached. Just the other side of this is Lower Lode Lane which soon leads up to the main road with pavement walking and where the abbey is soon visible ahead. Walkers may have already visited the abbey, but should also

notice the rather obscure (votive) pilgrim's inscription on the left hand side of the porch entrance. This is similar to those on the porch at Stoke Orchard church, which have been enhanced.

Walkers arriving in Tewkesbury by car should note that there is a long term car park on the road soon after leaving Lower Lode Lane and it may also be possible to park without charge in Lower Lode Lane although spaces are limited.

This leaflet is produced for T&SO PCC and in particular as a celebration of the 2020 Acclaimed Renovation of the Wall Paintings in St James Church, Stoke Orchard

NOTE- section letters are marked on the map on the back page. For more details refer to OS LANDRANGER MAP No 150

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Stage 1- Tewkesbury Abbey to Stoke Orchard

Section A-B (see map on reverse). Circa 8km (5 miles)

Turn right from the main entrance and follow flag stoned path up and over steps, past a giant Copper Beech tree to minor road. Cross over and follow stream on right (Swilgate river). Continue for 400m, past Rails Meadow CP on right.

Cross over road and proceed up bank to railings with footpath sign ahead (Gloucestershire Way - next mile) into meadow.

Carry on ahead across meadow to reach tarmac track where turn right and then immediately left. Proceed ahead to pass under A38 road (**1km**) and turn right after to walk on old road up towards new houses. Skirt to the left around houses on narrow path to arrive in large field. Bear right across field towards black silo in distance.

Arrive at hedgerow and walk left for 100m to find stile in hedge which cross. Turn left and follow path to metal gate. Continue through and follow left hand boundary to reach minor road. (**2km**).

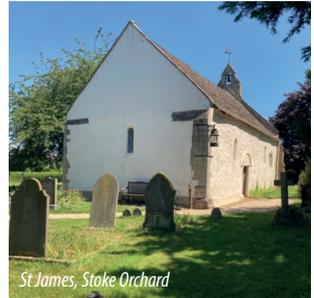
Leave GW, and turn right on minor road. After 100m turn left onto unmade road and continue ahead for 400m to arrive at minor road and turn right.

Follow this road for about a km, over the M5 motorway, past Tyrefield Cottage (**3km**) to arrive at the edge of Fiddington village. At the junction continue ahead SP Tredington, and after 300m, and

just past Fiddington Manor, turn off left onto an initially surfaced trackway. This soon becomes a muddy bridleway and leads up to another surfaced trackway where turn right. Bozzard Lane (**4km**) - follow this to a junction where turn right and then soon after turn off left into open fields. Follow right hand boundary through enclosed path (**5km**) to reach minor road.

Turn right on road and walk for 200m to reach FP sign on left. (**6km**) Follow footpath through a succession of fields, past fields of solar panels, to reach outskirts of Stoke Orchard. (**7km**) The obvious path turns right and then left to soon reach the main road.

Turn right and reach the Orchard Stores/Amy's Café at the Community Centre on the right, with welcome refreshments. Continue on the pavement to soon reach the small but enchanting church dedicated to St James. (**8km**)



St James, Stoke Orchard

The church is nearly always open for visitors to admire the interior and the most amazing medieval wall paintings commemorating the life of St James.



Medieval wall paintings inside St James, Stoke Orchard

Stage 2- Stoke Orchard to Deerhurst

Section B-C (see map on reverse). Circa 7.2km (4.5 miles)

Leave the church and turn left alongside the main road. Arrive at a main junction where turn left, and soon cross over the motorway. On far side of the bridge take FP on right. Drop down to large field and fork left. Field can often be 'in crop' so although actual line is ahead past a telegraph pole, it may be necessary to walk around right hand boundary.

Whichever, arrive on the opposite side with the River Swilgate on right. **(1km)** Follow the tortuous path, with the river continuously on right, **(2km)** through several copses and past several field boundaries, to eventually reach a bridle way. Turn right and walk past commercial buildings to reach a minor road **(3km)**.

Just before road, take footpath to left. Walk up field, following hedge on left for approx. 250m then bear

right towards prominent Poplar trees in distance. Pass through gate in hedge and make your way up to buildings - Salters Hill House. Pass through two metal gates and proceed up to A38 road. Turn right for 50m and cross dual carriage carefully to gate opposite. Make your way straight across the very large field to a gate in new post and rail fencing, pass through and turn left, following fencing, up to metal pedestrian gate at corner of field. Turn sharp right in next field and follow track up to stile which cross onto driveway to Redhouse Farm. Turn left and walk up to road junction, and continue ahead to reach entrance to The Folly (cottages) Continue past the Folly, to an enclosed footpath through wood which after 400m reaches an open field.

Turn right and follow the hedgerow through two fields as the path

initially rises **(6km)** but then drops to reveal Deerhurst and its venerable church ahead. Pass through a gateway and follow surfaced track all around field to arrive at metal gate out onto road. Turn right on the lane to reach another junction with a sign for the church and Odda's Chapel **(7km)** Soon arrive at the gate for this amazing church with its many antiquities. **(7.2km)**.

There are no benches outside Odda's Chapel so any picnic stop is best taken within the environs of the church.



St Mary's Priory Church, Deerhurst

Stage 3- Deerhurst Church to Tewkesbury Abbey

Section C-A (see map on reverse). Circa 4.0km (2.5 miles)



Odda's Chapel and adjoining farm

Turn right outside the church gate and follow the lane (100m) as it bends around to reach Odda's Chapel. After a look inside this unique ancient building, continue

walking opposite through a gateway, and up a slight incline with the River Severn beyond. Turn right and follow the path, which is actually The Severn Way, for about **(2.5km)** until a large building is reached.

This is the boathouse for Cheltenham College, and if the doors are open, it is interesting to see the large array of different skiffs available for the most competitive

rowing. Just on the other side of the river is The Lower Lode Inn and until recently there was a ferry service across the river here.

Walkers now arrive on tarmac, which is Lower Lode Lane and this leads after about a km up to the main road. **(3.5km)**

Turn left and walk towards the town, with the Abbey soon in sight on the right hand side. **(4.0km)**

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Route Map - Sections A, B and C

