

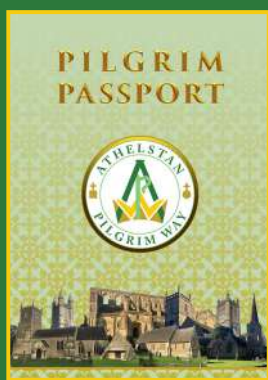


Malmesbury & Upper Avon

WALKING GUIDE 1 ATHELSTAN PILGRIM WAY



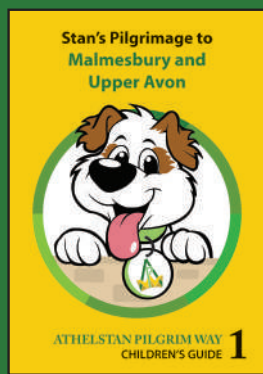
The Athelstan Pilgrim Way is a pilgrimage route linking all 36 Anglican churches in the North Wiltshire Deanery. It comprises 6 individual circular routes, with linking sections between them, and with the historic medieval Malmesbury Abbey at its centre.



HAVE YOU GOT YOUR PILGRIM PASSPORT?

There are 36 stamps to collect in each church.

PLUS: Pick up a children's guide and find out more about the furry friends guarding each building.



AVAILABLE FROM MALMESBURY ABBEY BOOKSHOP

GUIDES COMPILED, WALKED, AND WRITTEN BY DAVID & ANNE POPE
AND TASH WILKINSON
DESIGN BY SHEONA BEAUMONT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID & ANNE POPE AND CAROLE BRITTON
MAPS © OPENSTREETMAP

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WWW.BRISTOL.ANGLICAN.ORG

REGISTERED ADDRESS:

Malmesbury Abbey Office
The Old Squash Court, Holloway
Malmesbury
Wiltshire SN16 9BA



WELCOME

King Athelstan had a palace near Malmesbury and was buried there, by the altar of the 7th-century abbey, next to St Aldhelm. The current Malmesbury Abbey is a successor to that original building, itself a shadow of its pre-Reformation heyday. The Abbey once rivalled Salisbury Cathedral in size, and has a 15th-century tomb commemorating Athelstan, the first King to unite England as a cohesive entity.

Our historic churches are living places of Christian worship and active community. They are havens of peace and contemplation. Our churches bear the marks of centuries of history, national politics and the changing preferences for how worship was conducted over time.

I invite you to make your pilgrimage around these remarkable churches of North Wiltshire, to marvel at the history and beauty and perhaps take a moment for contemplation or prayer. Whether your pilgrimage is long or short, on foot or otherwise, dare to imagine that you tread where King Athelstan trod before.

+ Neil Swindon



North Wiltshire Mission Area
Diocese of Bristol

www.athelstanpilgrimway.org.uk

FOR WHEN YOU ARE NOT THERE

For when you are not there -

What *is* this sacred ground?

A separation here, lulled from where you current stand:
You are not there yet, yet when you're found
in the broken barrow, ancient land
remember them, the nonsuch ones
who've guiled and drawn you by what means?
The bones are theirs that rise these tuns
their wizened souls, and on, their sons.

Encounters once, encounters past
Uncounted, untimed silence
of meekened communicants in mass
Strength union compliance;
Buskinned Benedictines
attend in willing thrall
to Benedict's Rules, when hearts shall
pierce in question and call
to a Compunction Of Tears;
Total oblation, a life e'er arrears.

This abbey's precious, worn-pocked door
prefaced with apostles here, as Pentecost
a thousand years before
when they, as you, this portal crossed
to Malmesbury's utter diadem.
A conduit profound of 'so be it' we say - Amen
Our seeking ever crowned.

In Brokenborough, where tombs were rent
A foolish act, or grave intent?!
But here is home to Athelstan
A king, the first, but first, a man.

by Carole Britton

Also by the author: *Past, Present, Presence*,
a companion book about the churches available from
Malmesbury Abbey Bookshop



Detail of stained glass window, All Saints Corston

THE HOLY SPIRIT

WALKING ROUTES: Malmesbury & Upper Avon

BOOK
1

This section of the Athelstan Pilgrimage Way is a circular route around the 4 churches in the Malmesbury & Upper Avon Benefice. The total distance is 13 miles, which should take around 5.5 hours. However, the section is made up of 4 shorter stages, each being between two of the churches, which can be tackled separately or in combination, provided that transport is available at the end of the walk.

The route described in this booklet starts and ends at Malmesbury Abbey, where Athelstan was buried, but the walk can be started at any point along the route, and can be walked in either direction.

The starting point is given for each stage of the walk, with the Ordnance Survey Grid Reference, the Post Code and the what3words app location reference.

All of the route is along public rights of way, or minor roads where necessary, and passes through fields where livestock may be grazing. Dogs should be kept on a lead and care taken where cattle are present, particularly during the calving season. Practical advice on staying safe when walking dogs can be found online.

Links to other sections of the Athelstan Pilgrim Way:

This section of the Athelstan Pilgrim Way links to the Gauzebrook section via footpaths from Brokenborough Church to Foxley Church (see Stage 2 of this section) or by walking along Foxley Road from Malmesbury Abbey to Bremilham Church at Cowage Farm and Foxley Church.

NEED TO KNOW:

Total distance: 13 miles

Duration: 5.5 hours

Level of difficulty: Easy, but some difficult stiles and locked gates

Car parking: see each stage for details

Public transport: see <https://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/>

Refreshments: see each stage for details

Toilets: Malmesbury Abbey and Malmesbury Town Hall

Please note that we cannot take responsibility for your safety when you walk or cycle the Athelstan Pilgrim Way, or for the accuracy of information provided regarding the routes. Information in this booklet is accurate at the date of publication, but may be subject to change.

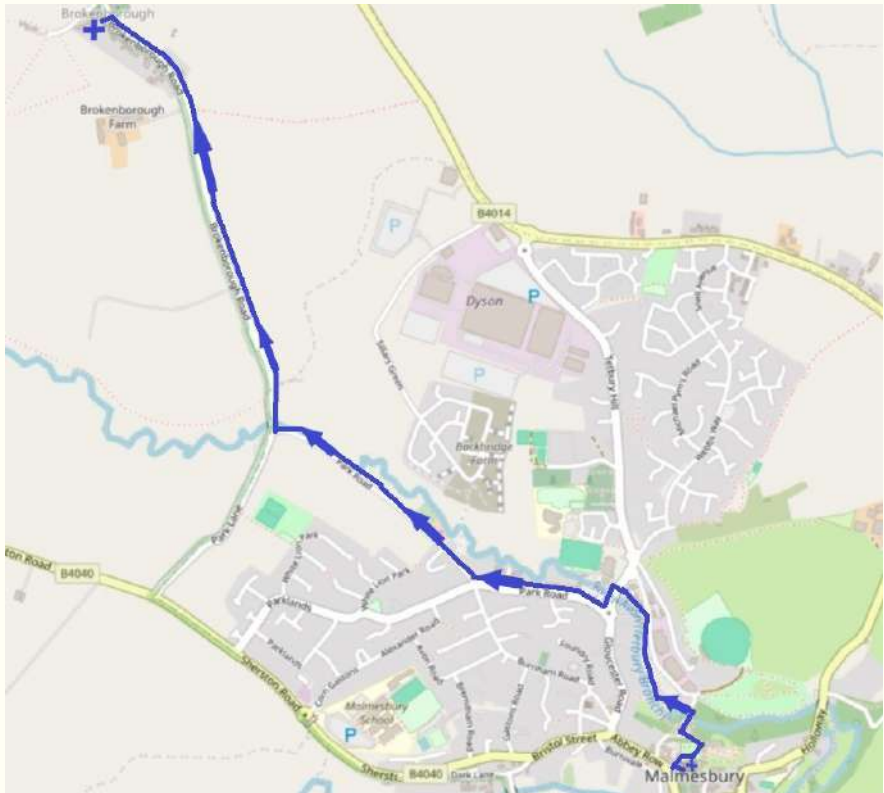
STAGE 1: MALMESBURY ABBEY TO BROKENBOROUGH

Length: 2 miles **Duration:** 1 hour **Level of difficulty:** Easy
Starting Point Grid Reference: ST933873 **Post Code:** SN16 0AA
what3words: tubes.swinging.rehearsed

Car parking: Malmesbury public car parks & parking on road in Brokenborough

Refreshments: Café in Malmesbury Abbey and cafés and pubs in the town

Toilets: Malmesbury Abbey and Malmesbury Town Hall



Directions:

1. With your back to the Abbey, turn right and walk through the churchyard towards the Old Bell Hotel, the oldest in England. Leaving the churchyard, turn right along the path to the right of the Old Bell. Walk through the Abbey Cloister Garden to the opposite corner, then down the steps towards the River Avon.
2. At the bottom of the steps, turn right and walk across the bridge over the river.
3. Take the path along the river to the left of the Old Station car park, walking past benches and a lifebuoy.

4. Do not take the footbridge on the left-hand side, but instead continue on the path behind the Fire Station, reaching Gloucester Road near the Co-op.

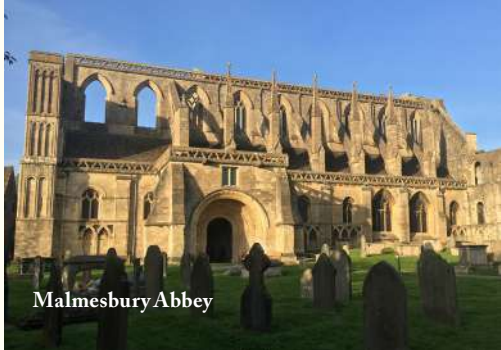
5. Cross Gloucester Road and turn left, walking along the pavement.

6. At the road junction, turn right into Park Road, and follow this road for around a quarter of a mile.

7. At the junction with St Aldhelm Road and Old Alexander Road, turn right (still Park Road).

8. Follow Park Road past Buildbase on the right. After this, the road becomes rural with no pavement, so take care with traffic.

9. At the next road junction, turn right, signposted Brokenborough. Walk over the river bridge and follow the road to Brokenborough village. Pass the Horse Guards pub on the left-hand side (currently closed in March 2024) and walk up the hill to reach the church of St John the Baptist on the left.



STAGE 2: BROKENBOROUGH TO CORSTON

Length: 6.5 miles **Duration:** 2.5 hours **Level of difficulty:** Easy

Starting Point Grid Reference: ST917892 **Post Code:** SN16 0HY

what3words: scrapped.defrost.procured

Car parking: parking on road in Brokenborough and Corston, pub car park in Corston for patrons of The Radnor Arms

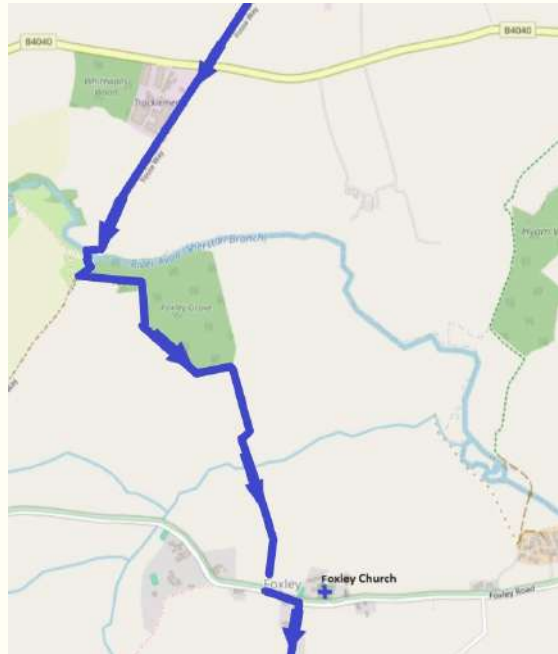
Refreshments: The Radnor Arms, Corston



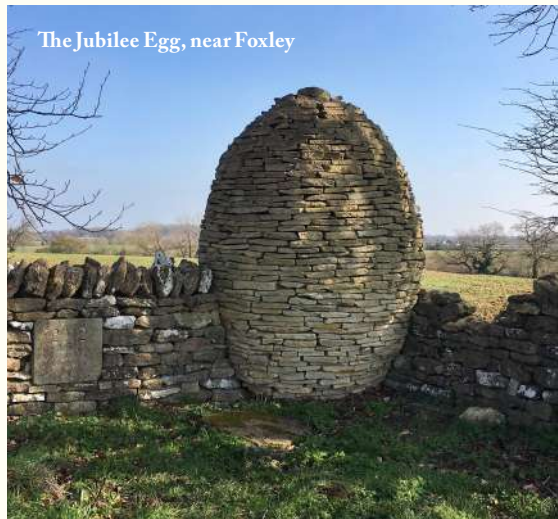


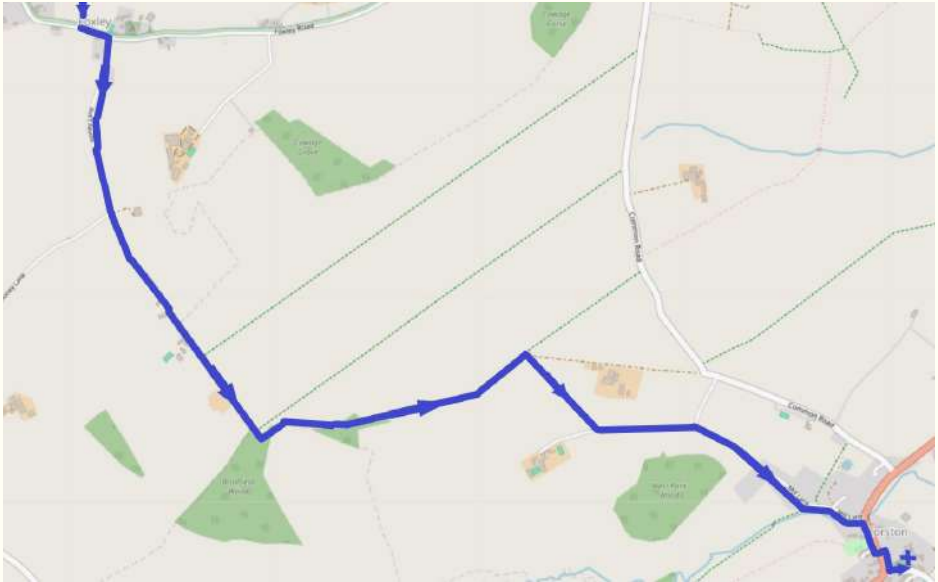
Directions:

1. Turning left out of the churchyard, walk down the hill and take the second turning left, past a derelict old chapel. Continue down the hill and walk along the road past Brook Farm, ignoring the bridleway on the left-hand side.
2. After about a mile, at the T-junction, turn left along the Fosse Way, an old Roman road.
3. Continue along the Fosse Way to the next road junction at Fosse Cottages. Cross the minor road with care and continue along the Fosse Way, passing the very ornate Shipton Moyne Treatment Works on the right-hand side.
4. At the junction with the B4040 Malmesbury to Sherston road, cross this busy road with great care and continue along the Fosse Way.
5. After a short distance, the track is closed to cars (but not motorbikes). Continue along the track until it crosses over the River Avon at the old Roman settlement of Easton Grey. (There is an interesting information board by the river bridge).
6. Continue along the track up the hill from the river and at the top of the hill, by a metal gate across the track, take the bridleway to the left into a field.
7. Follow the path across the field and around the edge of the next field, with the woodland on the left-hand side.
8. When the woodland ends, take the farm track to the right, which leads to Foxley.
9. After a short distance, there is a bench and a dry stone wall sculpture of an egg or beehive, with a stone inscription '2012 – The greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. R Dahl'.
10. Continue along the track, crossing the bridge over a stream, through a



The Jubilee Egg, near Foxley





metal gate and straight on up the hill. At the road, turn left, and then after around 50 yards, at Foxley Green, take the road to the right, signposted The Vine Tree inn. *(At this point, instead of turning right, you could take a diversion and continue for a short distance to visit Foxley Church on the left, before returning to this point. Foxley Church is actually on the Gauzebrook section of the Pilgrim Way, but it is well worth visiting and there is a welcoming bench in front of the church for taking a break).*

11. At the next road junction, do not turn right (signposted Gorsley Leaze and The Vine Tree), but instead continue straight on (marked No Through Road).

12. After around half of a mile, the road becomes a track. Continue along this, ignoring any tracks on the left-hand side. You will pass a bench on the left-hand side, with the carved inscription 'SIT YER – YONDER BE KINGS HEATH'.

13. After around a further half-mile, take the bridleway on the right-hand side, leading uphill through a field. (The bridleway is opposite a telegraph pole with the numbering '14B').

14. Follow the bridleway up the hill, passing between West Park Farm and Lower West Park Farm.

15. At the metal gate, turn left along a metalled farm drive. This drive becomes a road, which leads through housing to the main A429 road at Corston.

16. At the main road, turn right and walk along the pavement to the light-controlled crossing.

17. Cross the road and walk along the pavement to the right. After the bus shelter, turn left at the next junction, before the war memorial and opposite The Radnor Arms. (There is a bench just in front of the war memorial).

18. All Saints Church is on the left-hand side just after the junction.

STAGE 3: CORSTON TO RODBOURNE

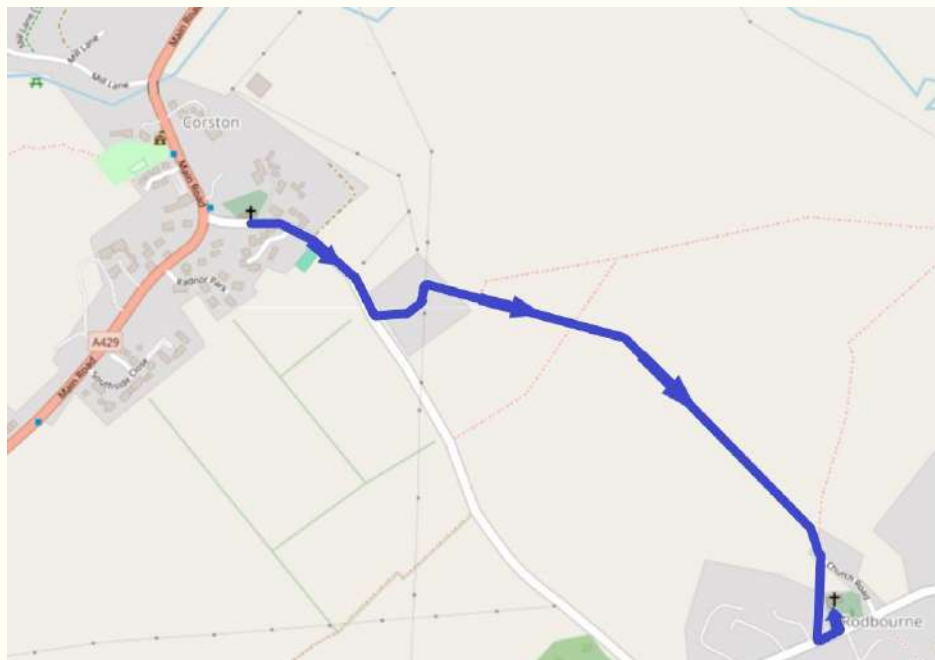
Length: 1 mile **Duration:** 30 minutes **Level of difficulty:** some difficult stiles and bridge over stream with no handrails

Starting Point Grid Reference: ST925839 **Post Code:** SN16 0HP

what3words: divider.twin.vibrating

Car parking: parking on road in Corston and Rodbourne, pub car park in Corston for patrons of The Radnor Arms

Refreshments: The Radnor Arms, Corston



Directions:

1. From the churchyard, turn left along Rodbourne Road.
2. After around 200 yards, turn left into a cul-de-sac and, at the far end, take the footpath in the right-hand corner, past Rodbourne Road Playing Field and Play Area.
3. Go through the metal gate and turn right, following the footpath and heading towards the left of the water tower in the distance. (The path across the field is not well marked, so when you reach the hedge at the far end of the field, look for a stile, which will probably be to your left.)
4. At the far end of the field, cross over a stile, then walk over a footbridge across the stream (no handrails) and a second stile with no step, which is not easy.
5. Walk uphill through the next field and through the gate into the field beyond.



All Saints, Corston



Holy Rood, Rodbourne

6. Follow the track through this field, which leads out into the green area behind Rodbourne Church.
7. Leave this green area via a gate in the corner next to a house, and turn left on the road to reach Holy Rood Church, Rodbourne on the left. Enter the churchyard via the lych-gate.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can follow Stan on a pilgrimage around all the churches on the Athelstan Pilgrim Way. (There are guard dogs at each church). Pick up a Children's Guide in Malmesbury Abbey bookshop.

STAGE 4: RODBOURNE TO MALMESBURY ABBEY

Length: 3.5 miles **Duration:** 1 hour 30 minutes **Level of difficulty:** Easy walking, but with a locked gate which needs to be climbed over and a difficult stile approaching Malmesbury

Starting Point Grid Reference: ST933833 **Post Code:** SN16 0FJ

what3words: lyrics.clutter.axed

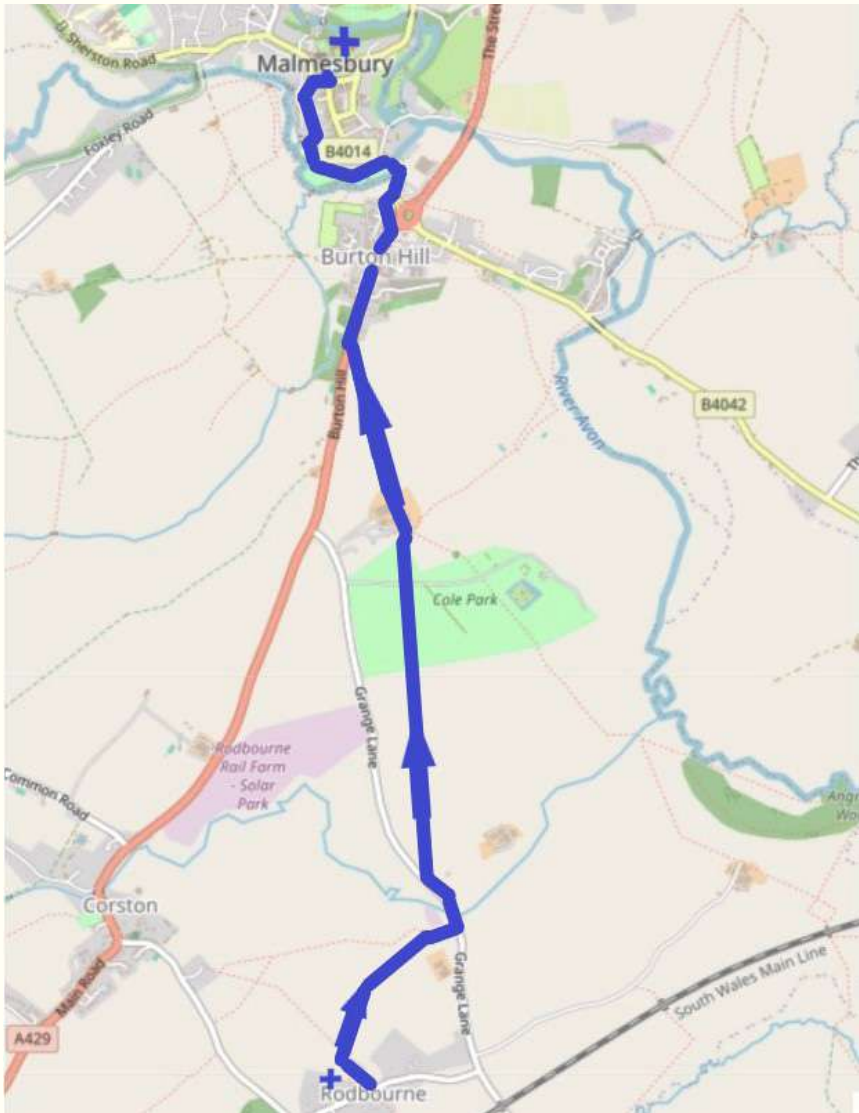
Car parking: parking on road at Rodbourne & public car parks in Malmesbury

Refreshments: Café in Malmesbury Abbey and cafés and pubs in the town

Toilets: Malmesbury Abbey and Malmesbury Town Hall

Directions:

1. Leaving Holy Rood Church via the lychgate, turn left and then take the first left into Church Lane. The road becomes a footpath and then leads into a field.
2. Follow the footpath through the field, keeping the hedge on the left.
3. Go through a gate on the left, then turn right, following the path with the hedge on the right towards the pumping station.
4. Keep to the right of the pumping station and leave the field via a metal gate. (If this is locked, it will need to be climbed over).
5. Turn left along the road and, just after the drive on the right leading to Rodbourne Rail Farm, take the marked footpath on the right through a hedge.



6. Cross over the stile, turn left and over a second stile into a field.

7. The footpath crosses the field diagonally to roughly the centre of the hedge line at the far end. (It might be easier, and better for the farmer, to walk around the left-hand edge of the field instead.)

8. Cross into the next field through a gap in the hedge and a footbridge over the ditch.

9. The path crosses the field diagonally to the right-hand corner, but again it might be preferable to walk around the edge of the field.

- 10.** Cross over the stile and follow the path through the next field, with the hedge on the left and a wire fence on the right.
- 11.** Cross over the next stile and walk across the next large field, keeping to the right of a large clump of trees in the centre of the field. (You will see a large country house, Cole Park, on the right).
- 12.** Cross over the metalled drive to Cole Park and head towards the right-hand corner of the field, where there are tall trees and the buildings of Lawn Farm behind them.
- 13.** In the corner, there is a farm gate and a stile with a footpath waymarker. Cross over the stile and follow the path straight on and around to the left to pass through the farmyard and to the left of a large steel barn, arriving at a stile.
- 14.** Cross over the stile and head for a gate in the far left-hand corner of the field. (Again, it might be easier to walk around the field edge).
- 15.** In the corner of the field, go through the gate ahead (not the gate to the left).
- 16.** In the next field, aim for the houses in the far left-hand corner. Again, it might be easier to walk around the left-hand edge of this field. The A429 Malmesbury to Corston road passes on the left-hand side.
- 17.** In the far left-hand corner, a stile leads to the road verge at Burton Hill. (As at March 2024, this stile is very difficult to use, as the step and lower bar are missing).
- 18.** Walk right along the verge, crossing a minor road, to reach the pavement. Follow the pavement past Malmesbury Primary Care Centre to the pedestrian crossing.
- 19.** Cross over and follow the road (Parliament Row) to reach the main road into Malmesbury. Cross the River Avon via the footbridge and follow the tarmac path to the left alongside the river, passing the exercise equipment and the play areas.
- 20.** At the end of the riverside walk, follow the path uphill to King's Wall.
- 21.** Turn left and walk along King's Wall, which narrows and becomes a footpath.
- 22.** As the path starts to go downhill, take the path on the right instead, leading uphill. This joins Gloucester Street on a bend.
- 23.** Turn right along the pavement, cross the road using the pedestrian crossing and walk through the arched gateway into the Abbey churchyard.

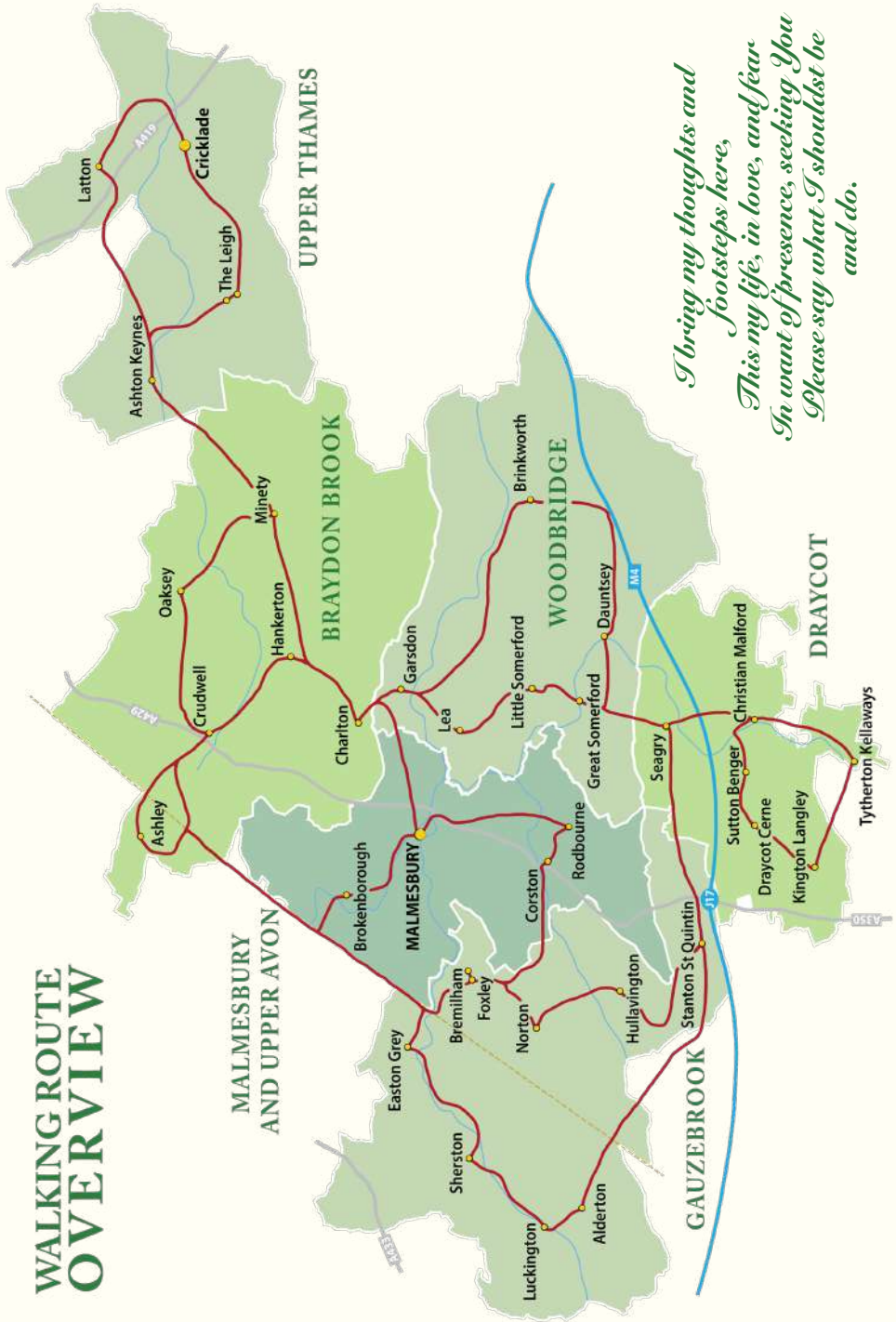
TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Have you enjoyed your pilgrim walk? Did you meet unexpected obstacles or discover something new?

Find us on Facebook: <http://facebook.com/athelstanpilgrimway/>



WALKING ROUTE OVERVIEW



*Bring my thoughts and
 footsteps here,
 This my life, in love, and fear
 In want of presence, seeking You
 Please say what I shouldst be
 and do.*

PLANNING YOUR WALK:

MAPS: Whilst the maps shown in this booklet should be sufficient, we recommend the use of the Ordnance Survey Explorer map 168, which contains full details of footpaths and bridleways.

SAFETY: Walking is a low impact activity that offers many health benefits and is generally a safe way to exercise. However, there are safety and environmental issues to consider. The National Trust website and the Ramblers website offer useful safety tips for exploring the outdoors.

HOSPITALITY, REFRESHMENTS & TOILETS: Relevant information is included on the detailed description of each stage of the walk.

TRANSPORT: Although the route described in this booklet is circular, the individual stages are not. For up-to-date information about local bus services, please visit:

www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk

ACCOMMODATION

www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/accommodation

CHURCH INFORMATION: If a church is not open, details of how to obtain access should be available in the porch. Further details of the churches, together with their usual opening arrangements, can be found on the Athelstan Pilgrim Way website:

www.athelstanpilgrimway.org

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PILGRIMAGE?

Pilgrimage has historically been a way to enact one's dedication to God by undertaking a walk to a site of special religious significance. Liturgy, prayers, and material tokens of devotion (such as pilgrim badges) were particular features of medieval Christian pilgrimage. Today such enactments may take less devotional forms, but are increasingly found to be restorative and reorientating in surprising ways, both physically and spiritually.

Find out more about the Christian understanding of pilgrimage by using **The Pilgrim Way** resources from the Church of England:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/pilgrim-way>



WALKING GUIDE 1

Athelstan Pilgrim Way



Churches of the Malmesbury & Upper Avon Benefice:

Malmesbury Abbey
St John the Baptist, Brokenborough
All Saints, Corston
Holy Rood, Rodbourne



North Wiltshire Mission Area
Administered by Malmesbury Abbey
Diocese of Bristol

www.athelstanpilgrimway.org.uk

