

**WORDS  
ON  
THE  
WAY**

Stotfold to Radwell  
Circular Pilgrimage



## Preamble

Pilgrimage has often involved long journeys to far off places, with a vague hope of enlightenment or redemption. But travelling – usually by foot – with spiritual intent requires neither months off work nor a firm Christian faith, and can involve any journey if taken mindfully.

Stotfold and Radwell are neighbours but each place can feel worlds apart in character and landscape. This walk binds together these places in a circular journey that will hopefully deepen the reader's relationship with the landscape and provide space to hear the story that it is telling through its houses, trees, watercourses and places of worship. Whether you believe that story starts and ends with God is up to you.

It is likely that you are reading this either as a download on your phone, tablet or computer, or as a hardcopy that was first picked up in St Mary's church. The journey should take an able-bodied person just over an hour-and-a-half to complete, depending on whether they read this guide word-for-word at each stopping point, in which case it might take considerably longer, or just snippets.

The walk starts and finishes at St Mary the Virgin church in Stotfold (61 Church Rd, SG5 4NE), where ample parking can be found in the carpark, or next door at the Roecroft Centre, and there are toilet facilities.

The detailed route is described through the course of this booklet and the accompanying map provides an overview. For those less able bodied and those with young children, or if it has rained heavily, it should be noted now that the crossing over the A507 should be avoided, and an alternative route taken using the underpass and heading towards Radwell on the same path on which is the return journey.

There is perhaps more to be had from this changing landscape than meets the eye. You are setting off from the same place as New World settlers and high-flying mountain adventurers. The route will take you through townland, riverland, woodland and farmland, over roads and under them, and across a county border - twice. Not bad for a round trip that's only a couple of miles in length.

The stopping points have been selected with no great science, but because they represent a threshold or an environment different to the last. Each place has a theme connected to the spirit of the location, with an accompanying short line of scripture, a prayer, a poem, and a commentary.

There are hopefully some words at each halt that will appeal to the spiritual and the secular. If you find reading the prayer, poem and commentary becomes a chore, maybe just read one, or just enjoy the silence.

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

*- Jenny Child*

"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of  
all our exploring will be to arrive where  
we began and to know the place for the first time."

- *from Little Gidding, T. S. Eliot*

# The Route—Approximately Two Miles





## St Mary the Virgin Church

### *Journey's Start*

'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path'  
Psalm 119

These stones have seen and heard a lot. There has probably been a church on this site for a thousand years, with the nave, the oldest parts of the present building, dating to about 1150. Bits have been added over the centuries, and other parts taken away, to give us the church we see today. To label it formally, it is a medieval church in the early perpendicular style, built from flint and a local soft, chalky stone called clunch. More importantly, this place is sanctified by the prayers of countless generations that have been baptised, married and buried in this space. This journey is begun in their company, and with all who continue to worship here every week.

Others have set off on more perilous journeys. Between 1629 and 1631, four brothers, William, Thomas, Michael and Gerard, and their sister Elizabeth, the children of Gerard Spencer and Alice Whitbred, left Stotfold and settled in America.



These founding fathers, who are thought to be distant relatives of the aristocratic Spencer family to which Winston Churchill and Diana, Princess of Wales, belong, are now the ancestors of thousands of Spencers across the United States. The New World Spencers regularly return to Stotfold and St Mary's church to explore the origin of their pioneering forefathers. The return journey in this guide should take at most a couple of hours, rather than several centuries, but every journey, long or short, begins with its first step.

*When ready, leave the church via the south door and turn left, then follow the alleyway to Rook Tree Lane. Cross the road and take the footpath through some trees and into a grassy meadow. Bear to the right and head through the gate and onto Bury Farm and Mill Lane. Turn left and head to the second stopping point at the mill.*

Help me to journey beyond the familiar  
and into the unknown.  
Give me the faith to leave old ways  
and break fresh ground with You.  
Christ of the mysteries, I trust You  
to be stronger than each storm within me.  
I will trust in the darkness and know  
that my times, even now, are in Your hand.  
Tune my spirit to the music of heaven,  
and somehow, make my obedience count for You.  
Amen.

*- Prayer attributed to St Brendan the Navigator*

On this road  
the cripple runs  
and neither age nor pain  
stumble on the way.  
Here mourned and mourning  
meet,  
the beggar's wish is realised,  
the poor are equal in its toll's  
cost  
and prisoners free,  
the lonely and the lost are  
found.

On this road  
who look beneath the outward  
sign  
will find  
the leper become a lover,  
the blind see  
with vision new as rain-washed  
light,  
the voice which speaks within  
to the deepest spirit and no  
other  
— creation's sound —  
ring clear:  
and the long-closed ear  
be open,  
and fellow travellers touch  
like rainbow's colour  
where none is lost  
yet each makes beauty with the  
other.

Food for the road is given  
and those whose thirst is strong  
enough  
discover living water.  
Some say the longest journey  
is this road  
and desire is the only goad;  
others journeying on to seek its  
end  
find instead it come to them  
and walk beside,  
a friend.

- *'The Way', Sister Audrey OSB*

*Thanksgiving*

‘Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.’

Psalm 107

It’s clear from the Domesday Book record, which is on the following page in place of a straightforward poem, that Stotfold has always been a place rich in agricultural potential. But, from the disposed lord Eskil to the six slaves for whom the change of lordship probably meant very little, access to the land’s bounty was strictly hierarchical. While issues of equality still remain, we can give thanks for the continued beauty of this bit of country and that in some measure we are all able to enjoy its riches.

The current mill stands on the site of one of the four mentioned in 1086 and was largely redeveloped to its present form by Thomas Randall in the late nineteenth century. The mill had ceased working by 1966 and suffered a severe fire in 1992, however, the Stotfold Mill Preservation Trust was subsequently founded and the building was restored. Since 2006 it has once again ground grain into flour that can be bought in many local shops, including from the mill itself.

*Once ready to leave, double back up Mill Lane and take the footpath on the left, just after the mill. Follow this along the length of the river, keeping the nature reserve to the left and housing to the right. After some time come up onto Baldock Lane and turn left, past the gate, and then turn right onto the footpath in the trees that will lead to the third stopping point at the steps up to the A507. It is not recommended to cross the road with young children or anyone with limited mobility. This section can also become flooded during heavy rain. As an alternative, follow Norton Road to the underpass and journey to Radwell via the return route.*

Lord of the harvest,  
with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your  
love in creation  
and have shared in the bread and the wine of the  
kingdom:  
by your grace plant within us a reverence for all  
that you give us  
and make us generous and wise stewards  
of the good things we enjoy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

*- Harvest Thanksgiving (post-communion prayer),  
Common Worship*

Twenty-one villagers. Fourteen smallholders. Six slaves.  
Fifteen ploughlands. Three lord's plough teams. Twelve  
men's plough teams.

Five lord's lands. Meadow., Seven ploughs. Four mills,  
value four pounds.

Annual value to lord of twenty-five pounds in 1086;  
twelve pounds when acquired by the 1086 owner;  
twenty pounds in 1066.

Tenant-in-chief in 1086, Hugh of Beauchamp.

Lord in 1086, Hugh of Beauchamp.

Overlord in 1066, King Edward.

Lords in 1066, Eskil of Ware; Freemen, seven.

- *Stotfold (Stotfalt), Domesday Book*

*A Dangerous Crossing*

‘And you shall make response before the LORD your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father”’  
Deuteronomy 26: 5

Stotfold is a town in the middle. Sitting next to two major roads, and on the border of two counties, it has always witnessed people on the move and travellers in danger. As you step across the road and into the bounds of Radwell, you pass from Bedfordshire to Hertfordshire. If you look carefully this can be seen in the earth itself, as the clay gives way to chalk. In the Dark Ages, the people of the Ivel valley were known as the Gifle, named after the river, which meant forked. The lands to the south were inhabited by the Hicce, from which we get the name Hitchin and the River Hiz. The two different environments would have needed different forms of farming and ways of organising communities, and after both people were subsumed into the warring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and then into England, the division between the two lands remains in the line of our county border.

Whether as Germanic settlers after the Roman legions departed, or descended from earlier arrivals to these islands, these ancient peoples came from across the sea. As you do now, they set off in the hope of finding sanctuary in a new place.



In 2022, the hotel at the Baldock Services, only a mile away from this spot, housed refugees who had fled war and political upheaval; a story not overly different from that of the Spencer's flight from Bedfordshire during the religious sectarianism and looming civil war of the seventeenth century.

We each have migrants in our history. Our fathers were all wanderers.

*Cross the busy road - carefully - and descend the steps into the trees beside the river. Follow this footpath along the length of the river, at the Mill House cross Baldock Road and continue along the footpath past the lake and through a kissing gate into pasture where horses are often kept and the footpath runs along its edge to Radwell Lane. Turn left to find All Saints church, and the fourth stop.*

Merciful God, we pray to you for all the men, women and children who have died after leaving their homelands in search of a better life. Though many of their graves bear no name, to you each one is known, loved and cherished.

May we never forget them, but honour their sacrifice with deeds more than words. We entrust to you all those who have made this journey, enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation, in order to reach a place of safety and hope.

Just as you never abandoned your Son as he was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph, so now be close to these, your sons and daughters, through our tenderness and protection.

In caring for them may we seek a world where none are forced to leave their home and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

Merciful God and Father of all, wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering, and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centredness.

Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters.

Amen

- *Pope Francis*

swa ic modsefan  
minne sceolde,  
oft earmcearig,  
eðle bidæled,  
freomægum feor  
feterum sælan,  
siþþan geara iu  
goldwine minne  
hrusan heolstre biwrah,  
ond ic hean þonan  
wod wintercearig  
ofer wapema gebind,  
sohte seledreorig  
sinces bryttan,  
hwær ic feor opþe neah  
findan meahte  
þone þe in meoduhealle  
mine wisse,  
opþe mec freondleasne  
refran wolde,  
wenian mid wynnnum.

So I,  
often wretched and sorrowful,  
bereft of my homeland,  
far from noble kinsmen,  
have had to bind in fetters  
my inmost thoughts,  
Since long years ago  
I hid my lord  
in the darkness of the earth,  
and I, wretched, from there  
travelled most sorrowfully  
over the frozen waves,  
sought, sad at the lack of a hall,  
a giver of treasure,  
where I, far or near,  
might find  
one in the meadhall who  
knew my people,  
or wished to console  
the friendless one, me,  
entertain with delights.

*- 'The Wanderer' (10th c. Old English and modern translation),  
Unknown*

## All Saints, Radwell

### *Rest and Restoration*

‘Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth’  
Psalm 46

Radwell, with its tiny medieval All Saints church and mill pond, feels like a place set apart. A hidden sanctuary tucked away beside ancient roadways and modern motorways. Somehow, despite being surrounded by intense activity, it remains a place of quiet and reflection.

Go inside the 14th century church, which is always open, and sit for a while: if your boots are very muddy why not take them off in the porch before you go into this small, holy place.

The church is a member of the Small Pilgrim Places Network (SPPN), which includes more than 70 locations, including churches, chapels and gardens which offer peace and sanctuary. Take time to look around both inside and out. Don't rush to get to the next destination.

*When ready, return to Radwell Lane, turning right back towards the river. Continue to the next stopping point overlooking the mill lake.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,  
have mercy on me, a sinner.

*- The Jesus Prayer*

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.  
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping  
slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;

There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.  
I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

- *'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', William Butler Yeats*

*Life-Giving Waters*

‘There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God ‘

Psalm 46

On 11 September 2021, a crowd of people processed from the source of the River Ivel, a mile to the south, to All Saints church, Radwell, led by the Right Reverend Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford and Reverend Bill Britt, Vicar of Radwell, Stotfold and Fairfield, and in partnership with the Revival Association. Their purpose was to draw attention to unsustainable levels of abstraction by the water companies, which had placed this rare chalk stream at risk of drying up.

This pilgrimage brought together those of deep Christian faith and those with no faith at all, in a shared desire to undo the damage we have caused through carelessness and ignorance. The river and pond you see might not be here forever unless there are people willing to fight for it. The Ivel flows through Stotfold, Arlesey, Henlow, Langford, Biggleswade, Sandy, Blunham and Tempsford, before joining the River Great Ouse at Roxton, after which it passes through the fens of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, where it joins the sea in the Wash.



Rest in its fragile beauty.

*The route continues on the path to the left of the trees, over the infant Ivel's side streams and past the campsite. Continue along the path towards the woodland. At this point the path splits into three. Left towards Radwell Meadow, straight on through the woods to Norton Road, and right, hugging the edge of the woods and heading back towards Stotfold. Take this righthand path.*

*Walk through the wood until reaching the bridge over the stream and the sixth stopping point.*

Deep peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.  
Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.

- *Gaelic Blessing*

Peace flows into me  
As the tide to the pool by the shore;  
It is mine forevermore,  
It ebbs not back like the sea.

I am the pool of blue  
That worships the vivid sky;  
My hopes were heaven-high,  
They are all fulfilled in you.

I am the pool of gold  
When sunset burns and dies, —  
You are my deepening skies,  
Give me your stars to hold.

- *'Peace', Sara Teasdale*

*Ad Astra*

‘If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.’

Psalm 139

It isn't easy to find wilderness amid so many large towns, villages, and roads. This small wood, its tiny stream, and these fields, are as close as we can get to the wild. Rabbits, foxes and deer are not an uncommon site, nor are buzzards and kites. But even this place has not been wild for very long. The wood is less than a hundred years old, while the field ahead is marked on Ordnance Survey maps as an old airstrip. The landscape and its inhabitants have never stood still. Just as the river rises here and ends in the North Sea, so too its people have left this place of calm to take on the wider world.

It is from this overgrown airstrip that Richard Meredith-Hardy, a British extreme microlight pilot who lives in Radwell, has been flying microlights since 1984. Richard was twice World Microlight Champion and has held a variety of speed records.

*When ready, continue across the old airstrip field, which can be very muddy, and head along the bridleway, keeping the hedge to the left and an open field to the right. On reaching the gate onto the concrete road keep heading forward, with the allotments to the right. Head into the path in the trees and come to the cycle track at the Norton Road and A507 roundabout. Turn right into the underpass - the seventh stopping point.*

Praise God, all you people of the earth.  
Blessed be God forever  
From the rising of the sun to its setting  
Blessed be God forever.  
As high as the tree soaring above the forest  
As beautiful as the river flowing through many lands  
As rich as the eco-systems of an abundant earth  
As close as the smallest creature on the ground  
So good is the God of all creation  
Blessed be God forever.

- *Christian Aid*

They shut the road through the woods  
Seventy years ago.  
Weather and rain have undone it again,  
And now you would never know  
There was once a road through the woods  
Before they planted the trees.  
It is underneath the coppice and heath,  
And the thin anemones.  
Only the keeper sees  
That, where the ring-dove broods,  
And the badgers roll at ease,  
There was once a road through the woods.  
Yet, if you enter the woods  
Of a summer evening late,  
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools  
Where the otter whistles his mate,  
(They fear not men in the woods,  
Because they see so few.)  
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,  
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,  
Steadily cantering through  
The misty solitudes,  
As though they perfectly knew  
The old lost road through the woods.  
But there is no road through the woods.

- *'The Way Through the Wood', Rudyard Kipling*

## Underpass

### *The Dark Road*

‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’

John 1:5

This is another boundary between one landscape and another, as we once again cross the A507. It can be nerve-wracking walking through an underpass. During the day it is dark and secluded, and at night its bright light feels harsh and exposing. The weight of the world passing above can be overwhelming.

Thousands of people will travel overhead in the course of a day, whether going to work, to visit family or friends, or on other errands and duties, and few-to-none will realise that there is a person a few feet below trying to stand still and make sense of all this activity. The sound of the cars and lorries is muffled as is heard from inside the womb, or deep under the earth. Find some comfort in the darkness and remember there is always light at the end of the tunnel.



*Continue through the underpass and come back up onto Norton Road, where there is a place to cross over to the other side. Head back towards the roundabout and turn right onto Tansy Avenue and then keep going as it leads into the Greenacres housing development. Keep going until you reach the eighth waypoint at the Greenacre Centre.*

Through the dark hours of this night  
protect and surround us,  
Father, Son and Spirit, Three.  
Forgive the ill that we have done.  
Forgive the pride that we have shown.  
Forgive the words that have caused harm  
that we might sleep peaceably,  
and rise refreshed to do your will.  
Through the dark hours of this night  
protect and surround us,  
Father, Son and Spirit, Three.

*- John Birch*

Come, my friends,  
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

*- from 'Ulysses', Alfred Lord Tennyson*

*Living Community*

'I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.'  
*John 10:10*

Some in Stotfold like to refer to it as a village in memory of a more rural past. It is, however, a town, and a growing one at that. The Greenacres housing estate was completed in the late 2000s, and other newer developments have since sprung up on any patch of habitable ground that can be found. That said, it's the same earth beneath the houses. An allotment used to be where some of the houses are now, and occasionally a herb or flower may spring up in a garden where it was never planted. Many of the new residents will work in other large towns, or commute to London, and only see Stotfold for a few small hours each day and at the weekend. But community is to be found here. The sense of it being a village isn't simply nostalgia, but comes from an attitude of togetherness that can still be seen in its festivals, fêtes and celebrations.

During the coronavirus pandemic many newer residents of the town found themselves spending more and more time in Stotfold, searching out its pathways and history.

Community is born in shared experience, and we're proud to live in a place with diverse peoples and cultures. It is important to protect that which is good in this place, but let's not be threatened by the future.

*Head across the road, along Grange Road, past the small supermarket and cross the zebra crossing to the parade of small businesses on the High Street. This is the ninth, penultimate, stopping point.*

O Jesus, come back into our society, our family life,  
our souls and reign there as our peaceful sovereign.

Enlighten with the splendour of faith and the charity  
of your tender heart the souls of those who work for  
the good of the people, for your poor.

Impart in them your own spirit, a spirit of discipline,  
order and gentleness, preserving the flame of  
enthusiasm ever alight in their hearts.

May that day come very soon, when we shall see  
you restored to the centre of civic life, borne on the  
shoulders of your joyful people.

*- Pope John XXIII*

It seems sometimes we live our lives  
Within our walls and fences  
So nothing of the world outside  
Can breach our strong defences;  
So fully do we concentrate  
On stresses and expenses  
We fail to quite appreciate  
Our five God-given senses.

Just touch and stroke a cat's soft coat  
And smell a fragrant flower,  
The taste of honey in your throat  
A song's inspiring power!  
The sight of rolling countryside  
Of nature, gently thrilling  
Just let your senses be your guide  
To daily joys fulfilling.

For sometimes, through our ailing health  
Our senses are denied us  
No doctor's skill or plenteous wealth  
Can put them back inside us;  
So if you have your senses, five  
Thank God – and daily use them  
Part of the joy to be alive –  
And one day we may lose them.

- *'Five Senses', Nigel Beaton*

*Hustle and Bustle*

‘And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’

Revelations 21:3

Stotfold as a town, rather than village, has one missing feature - a discernible centre. In this place is its largest shop and several smaller businesses, so it is probably the closest thing there is to a ‘market square’. The number of businesses in Stotfold has shrunk over the decades, but even in its heyday in the early twentieth century these premises were spread throughout the then village. It was in chapel, church, in the fields, playing football, or in the pub, that most people met and exchanged the news. In 1830, one of the most famous gathering of locals occurred when farm labourers came together to demand higher wages and living conditions. Known as the Stotfold Riot, the episode did not end well for its participants, five of whom were sentenced to hang but fortunately had their sentences commuted to prison or transportation to Australia.



It's in this area that you're most likely to bump into people you know or to engage in unexpected conversation with a stranger. Be open to the exchange. It might mean more to the other person than you can know. It doesn't necessarily need to end in insurrection.

*Turn left at the western end of the businesses and come to an alleyway. Turn right and keep going around a couple of bends to reach The Crofts. Turn left down this road and continue to the end. Veer right onto Church Road and head down the driveway back to the final stop back at St Mary's.*

Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right,  
Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the  
Trinity,

Through belief in the Threeness,  
Through confession of the Oneness  
of the Creator of creation.

*- from St Patrick's Breastplate*

No man is an island,  
Entire of itself.  
Each is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.  
If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less.  
As well as if a promontory were.  
As well as if a manor of thine own  
Or of thine friend's were.  
Each man's death diminishes me,  
For I am involved in mankind.  
Therefore, send not to know  
For whom the bell tolls,  
It tolls for thee.

*- from Meditation XVII, John Donne*

*Journey's End*

'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.'

Numbers 6:22

This journey ends at its beginning, as do many. Hopefully, in some very small way, you are not the same person who set out. Maybe you feel less worried about that problem at work, or that member of the family who is unwell, perhaps you've seen something or spoken to someone that has given you a fresh perspective. Although you have travelled from the familiar to the familiar, sometimes we need to slow down and reappraise what we think we know about a place to come to a new respect for its people and landscapes. We tend to just throw money at our problems and book expensive holidays in the hope that in some other place we'll find answers, but maybe we need to carve out time, and place, closer to home to find some real peace.

The Christian faith is itself a journey seeking union with the whole of humanity and the natural world, by turning to the source of its goodness and purpose, which became flesh and blood as Jesus Christ.

It might be you've enjoyed the route and the snippets of history, but not so much all gobbledygook bits of Bible, prayer and poem. That's fine, but I hope not. If this has been no more than a pleasant walk, thank you for joining us in this small pilgrimage.

O Father, give the Spirit power to climb to the  
fountain of all light, and be purified.  
Break through the mist of earth, the weight of the  
clod.  
Thou art calm weather and a quiet resting place for  
faithful souls.  
To see thee is the end and the beginning.  
Thou carriest us, and thou dost go before.  
Thou art the journey, and the journey's end.  
Amen

- *Boethius*

It's good to get away from noise  
From chaos and from din,  
To seek in solitude and peace  
The beauty that's within

To go into a quiet place  
Where all is fresh and green,  
And contemplate in silent calm  
Great truths and things unseen.

The mysteries of the universe  
The wisdom of the sage,  
Or take some old and lovely thought  
From a bygone age,

And meditate upon the good  
The honest and the true,  
This calms the mind and you will find  
A blessing comes to you.

- *'A Blessing Comes', Kathleen Gillum*

May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

*- Irish Blessing*

God to enfold me, God to surround me,  
God in my speaking, God in my thinking.

God in my sleeping, God in my waking,  
God in my watching, God in my hoping.

God in my life, God in my lips,  
God in my soul, God in my heart.

God in my sufficing, God in my slumber,  
God in mine ever-living soul, God in mine eternity.

*- Carmina Gadelica*



Prayer is like watching for  
The kingfisher. All you can do is  
Be there where he is like to appear, and  
Wait.

Often nothing much happens;  
There is space, silence and  
Expectancy.

No visible signs, only the  
Knowledge that he's been there  
And may come again.

Seeing or not seeing cease to matter,  
You have been prepared.

But when you've almost stopped  
Expecting it, a flash of brightness  
Gives encouragement.

- *Ann Lewin*

## Thanks and Further Resources

Thank you to those who have allowed us to use their work in this not-for-profit guide. We have sought to gain permission where we understood it necessary, but if we have unknowingly made use of any copyrighted content please do let us know and it shall be rectified immediately.

Below is a short list of books and websites that we found helpful in compiling this booklet.

- ◇ <https://www.smallpilgrimplaces.org/>
- ◇ Smith, C. (2004) *Stotfold Reflections*. Baldock.
- ◇ Community of the Sister of the Church, *Voices on the Way*. Solomon Islands
- ◇ <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~fesschequy/genealogy/Spencer.html>
- ◇ <http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/>
- ◇ <https://www.pilgrimswaycanterbury.org/>
- ◇ Mayhew-Smith, N. (2021) *Landscape Liturgies*. London

"He often used to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep and every path was its tributary. 'It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door,' he used to say. 'You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no telling where you might be swept off to.'"

- *Frodo Baggins, The Fellowship of the Ring, J.R.R. Tolkien*

In my beginning is my end. In succession  
Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,  
Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place  
Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.

*- from 'Four Quartets', T. S. Eliot*

Compiled by Paddy Harris

**St Mary the Virgin**

Stotfold & Fairfield Parish Church

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