

Bicester and Islip Deanery

Route  
2

# Pilgrim Paths











Lower Heyford to Upper Heyford  
Circular Walk

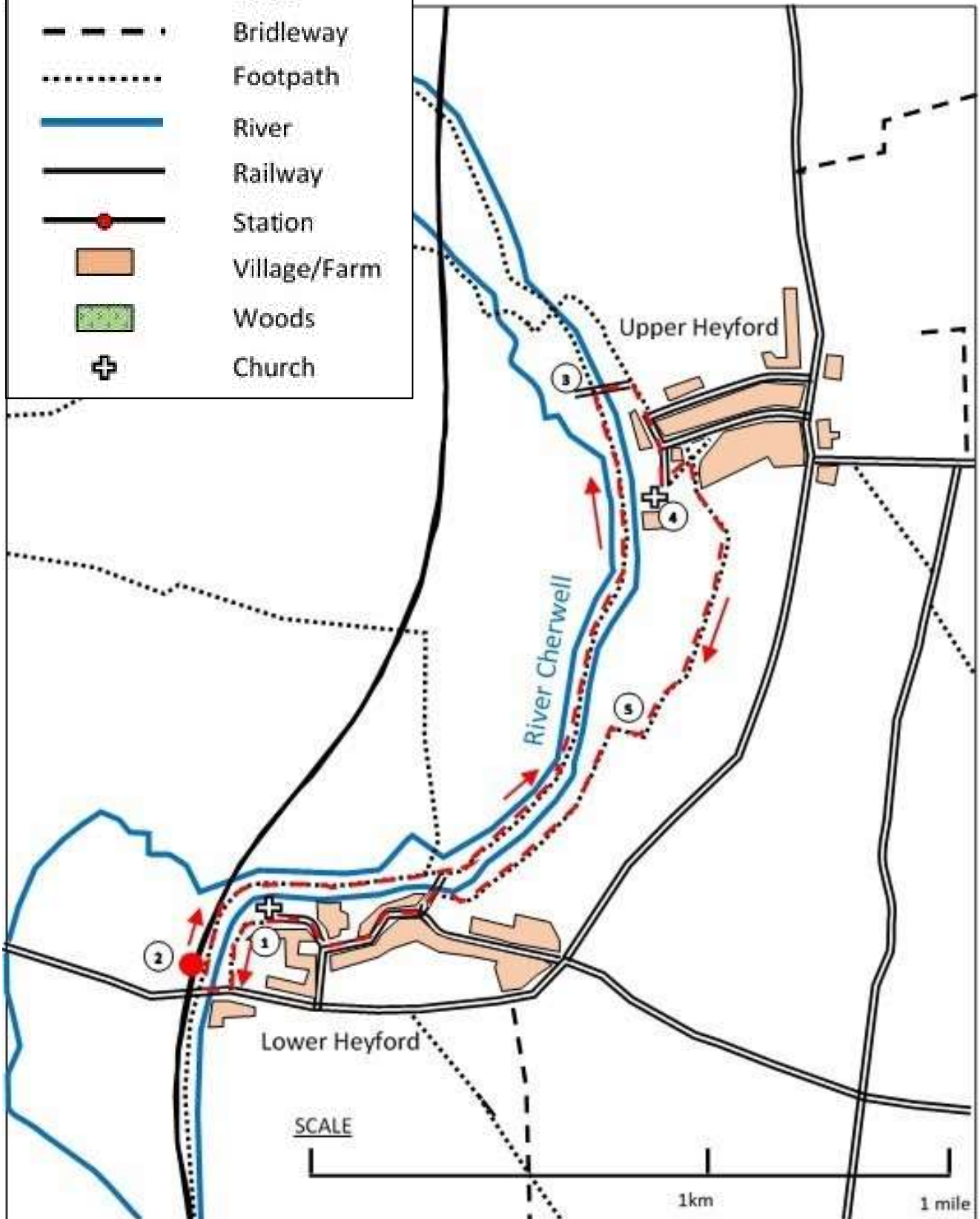
Distance: 2 miles

*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



# START

Park in the lane leading to the church (1). Please note that this route is flat and provides an easy walk. It is signposted as Heyfords Circular Walk all the way.

**LOCATION:** Church of St Mary, Lower Heyford



## 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.



*The attractive little Church of St Mary is at the bottom of the village, past several thatched cottages and a pub of golden-coloured stone. It's an idyllic village setting, and the church does not disappoint. The oldest part of the church is the chancel, built some time before 1220. The chancel was rebuilt in the 14th century when the timber roof was crafted, and a large east window in Decorated Gothic style was inserted. Look up at the roof and you will see several rather amusing bosses in the shape of peculiar faces.*



The font pictured here is from 1662 and on a medieval base.

After viewing the interior, turn right at the church gate and look for a footpath sign to the left of a gate at the end of the lane.

Take the narrow path between the stone wall and the fence which brings you to the canal. Turn left and continue along the grassy stretch, ignoring the left turn beyond the cottages and continuing straight on towards the corner of a stone wall. Follow this wall to a gate which leads onto the road and head right, towards the station (2). Pass the boatyard and Canal Cottage, crossing the canal bridge to the station.

Do not take the footbridge over the railway line but head along the towpath, with the station on your left.



Please be aware, the towpath can be muddy and slippery in wet weather.



Look across the river as you bid adieu to the Church of St Mary, Lower Heyford until the end of the walk.



## Pause, Reflect & Pray

He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside the still waters.

*Psalm 23 v2*

Be still and look around: the birds and the boats,  
the wildlife and the wetlands.  
Give thanks to God for water  
providing recreation and refreshment.

Proceed along the towpath for almost one mile, until you reach bridge 204 at Allen's Lock (3). Cross the bridge and proceed up the track until you reach Allen's Lane. Head straight along Allen's Lane and into Church Walk, passing the cemetery on your left, to find St Mary's, Upper Heyford, on your right (4)



**LOCATION:** Church of St Mary, Upper Heyford





The village had a church by AD 1074. Inside the current church is a 14<sup>th</sup> century recumbent effigy of a priest in a 14<sup>th</sup> century arched recess in the chancel. The church may have been rebuilt in the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but only the Perpendicular Gothic west tower survives from that time.

## Pause, Reflect & Pray

This area has seen immense change over many years: the coming of the canal, the railway, the airbase, the M40, and latterly Heyford Park. St. Mary's Church continues to be a beacon of stability.

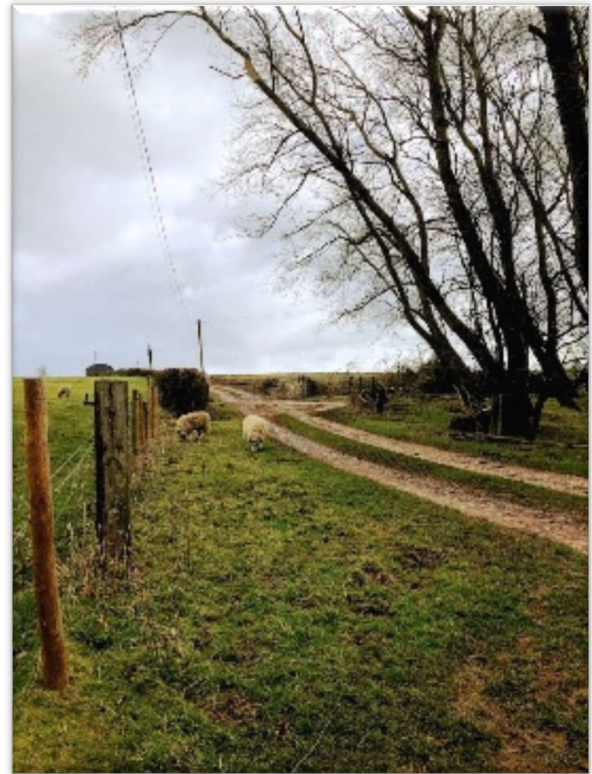
Ask God to guide you through the changing world today.

'Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;  
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.'



Opposite the church, take the footpath across the green area to a metal gate in the corner.

Continue diagonally across this field to another gate on the next field boundary, near a large tree. Turn left and immediately right onto a concrete track as shown here. Continue along this track, through a gate and onwards towards Upper Heyford Water Treatment Works (5). Bear left just before the gates and continue along the edge of the field, keeping the boundary on your right. Follow the field edge, which runs close to the canal, back to Lower Heyford. Walk along the edge of the Playing Field. Join another concrete track and walk down the road adjacent to the Mill Lift Bridge. Do not cross the canal. Turn left onto Mill Lane. Turn right into Freehold Street and then right into Market Square seen here. Bear left into Church Lane and return to your vehicle.



## 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.

Photo: Barbara Walton