

Swainswick pilgrimages



THE LAM VALLEY:

Ancient churches, quiet gardens & a Holy Well

5 miles/ 3 - 4 hours

Start and Finish at Swainswick Church

Parking on lane near the church

Tea, coffee & toilet available at Swainswick Church

Terrain: lanes and footpaths, some steep & muddy

*“Stand at the crossroads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.”*

~ Jeremiah

*Life is very different when you walked through it...How was it he
never noticed all this before?”*

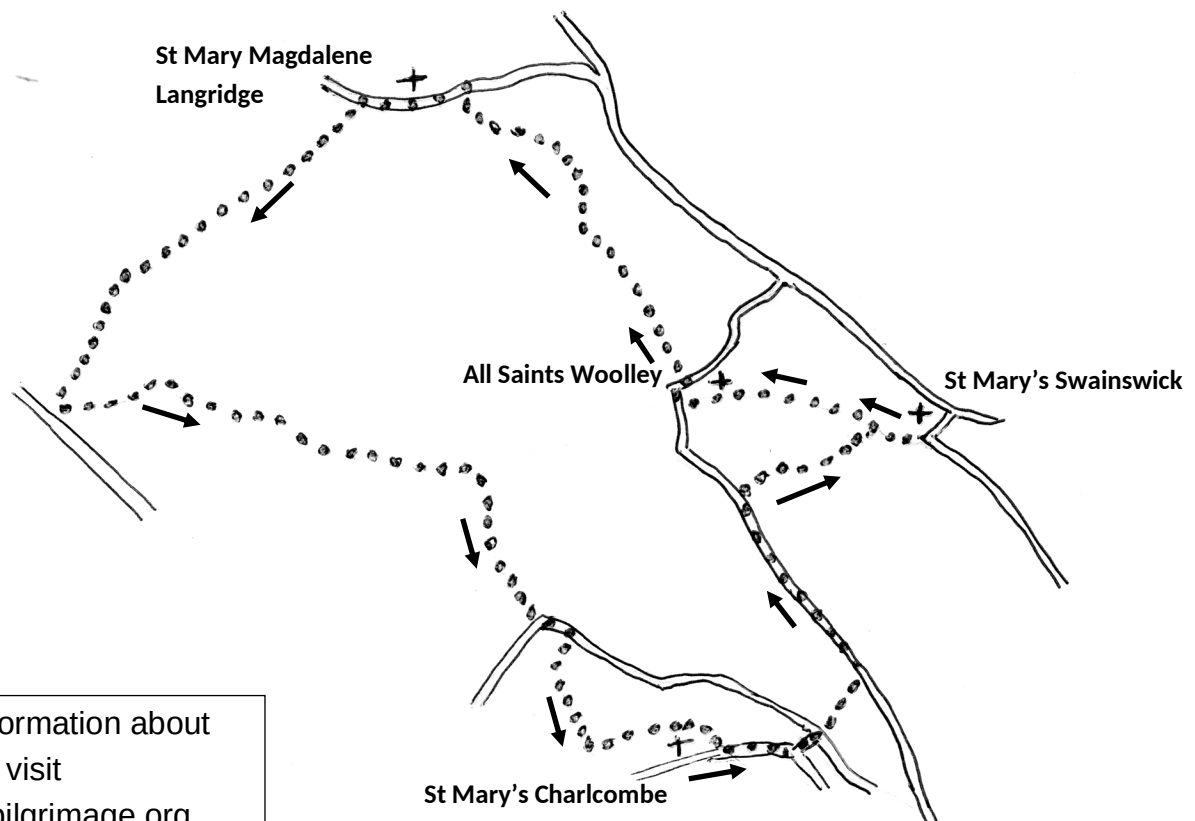
~ Rachel Joyce, The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

This circular pilgrimage route takes you round four tiny churches in the beautiful Lam Valley on the edge of the Cotswolds. Starting at St Mary the Virgin in Swainswick, the route crosses the valley to All Saints in Woolley and St Mary Magdalene in Langridge. From there it heads up and over Lansdown to St Mary the Virgin Charlcombe, with its peaceful garden and holy well, and back across to Swainswick.

When is a walk a pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage traditionally takes you to a sacred or holy place. But you could say that any walk can be a pilgrimage if you decide to make it one. A pilgrimage on foot is simply a walk with an intention – a walk to which you have given a purpose or meaning. Pilgrimages connect us to landscapes and places and to our internal depth and spirituality. You don't have to be religious to go on pilgrimage, but pilgrimages have been part of Christianity and other religious traditions for centuries.

You might decide to go on a pilgrimage in memory of someone or on an anniversary. You might go because you are at a crossroads in your life. You might go in gratitude or to lay down a regret. You might go in search of meaning or to deepen your relationship with God. Or you might go simply to meet whoever and whatever comes your way.



For more information about pilgrimages, visit www.britishpilgrimage.org

Directions

Walk out of **Swainswick churchyard** and follow the footpath sign diagonally to your left. Go through the garden of Woodbine Cottage and follow the path to bottom right hand corner of the field below.

Cross a small brook and continue along the bottom of the field with the Lam Brook on your left. Over a footbridge, the path heads uphill curving round to the right. At a finger post, walk uphill along the right hand field boundary to a kissing gate. An enclosed path leads into the 'Doubly Thankful' village of Woolley. **All Saints Church** is on your right.



Walk up Church Street with a memorial garden on your right. At the top turn right along the lane. As the lane turns sharply right downhill, continue straight ahead along a footpath, through a kissing gate and into a field.

Walk along the top of two fields, keeping the hedge on your left. Then through a further three fields to a kissing gate. Follow the waymarked path down the hill to cross a brook. Follow the path to the right to reach the lane. Turn left uphill to visit **St Mary Magdalene Langridge**.



Turn right out of the church gate and walk about 200m up the lane. Opposite a bungalow take a footpath on the left, through a kissing gate into a field.

Walk across the top of field with the fence boundary on your right, then through the next field, crossing small plank bridge. Head down the hill to cross another footbridge and then follow the path to the right, over second small stream.

Head straight up the steep field towards a fence. Continue with the fence on your right until you reach a gate into another field. Follow the path on uphill. Ignore a track curving round to the right towards farm buildings and head straight up to a gate in the wall. After a few yards the path meets a driveway.

Turn right along the driveway. Just before a cattle grid and the main road, turn sharp left on a path across the field, passing to the right of a telegraph pole. Cross a stone stile in the wall and turn left to follow the path along the wall, which then curves round to the right at a finger post.

Cross a stone stile and head towards a working yard and house. Go through a gate and follow the path round to the right.

Cross the drive and continue on the enclosed path opposite into a field. Follow the path across 3 fields eventually crossing a stone stile with far reaching views ahead over Solsbury Hill and into Wiltshire. Continue on the path across the next field to a gate.

Go through the gate and follow the path straight ahead keeping the gravel driveway on your left. Ignore the footpath signs pointing right and walk through some metal gates on to a tarmac driveway. Go past Rockfield House and walk towards new houses built on an old MOD site. At the end of the driveway, turn left on the road and, after about 100 yards, take a footpath on the right.

Cross a stone stile on the left and follow the footpath downhill keeping the hedge on your left. Go through a kissing gate ahead of you and almost immediately over a stile to your left. *[This is a permissive path and is closed for lambing 15th April – 15th June. If it is closed continue downhill, eventually emerging on Charlcombe lane. Turn left and in about 350m, take drive fork left to Charlcombe church.]*

Follow the path along field boundary to reach gate in far corner. Turn right and down some steep steps. At the bottom, turn right to visit **St Mary the Virgin Charlcombe**. At the bottom of the garden opposite the church is St Mary's holy well.



Coming out of the garden, go to the right and through the gate. Ignore the steps to the left and continue along the path between wall and fence to reach Charlcombe Lane. After about 200 yards, take the fork left marked unsuitable for large vehicles. At a T-junction, cross straight over through a gate in the hedge opposite. Take the left hand path down the field to reach steps going down to the lane.

Turn left and walk along the lane for about ¼ mile. From here, you can see the cupola on top of Woolley church ahead of you and look across to Swainswick on the other side of the valley. At Crosslease farm, turn right at a footpath sign. Walk down the drive and then follow grassy path over a stile. The path heads slightly right downhill under telegraph wires to a stile and footbridge.

Cross the Lam Brook and head straight uphill to a gate. Go back through Woodbine Cottage garden to Swainswick Church.

