

Guide to the Winchester Pilgrimage

**"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of Salvation,
My gown of glory (hope's true gage),
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage." (Sir Walter Raleigh)**

This guide is intended to provide some basic information about people and places important to English medieval pilgrims. Such information may also prove to be useful on your Winchester Pilgrimage.

Why go on Pilgrimage?

Indeed, for many people in medieval England, a pilgrimage was all about religion.

Some religious reasons for going on pilgrimage include the following:

- Secure a place in heaven
- Seek a cure for illness
- Obtain personal peace or solace
- Perform an act of atonement
- Make a special request from a saint associated with a site
- As a forced act of penance ordered by a member of the clergy

Of course, not everyone was so devout. As is evidenced in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, many folks went on pilgrimage for far more secular reasons, ranging from business to the delight of travelling to even seeking a husband.

Both types of travellers often enjoyed acquiring souvenirs of their trips. As is shown by the Pardoner in the *Canterbury Tales*, many religious souvenirs were sold to pilgrims, including some items whose sellers claimed to be holy relics. Often, however, their authenticity could be doubted. Such mementoes included holy statues/figures, drawings or even badges, the latter of which were collected by avid pilgrims. Sometimes relics, including bones of saints and other holy figures, pieces of wood from the true cross and fragments of Mary's veil, could be purchased.

Commonly known saints:

Matthew the Evangelist Matthew the Evangelist is the author of the Gospel of Matthew. On one occasion, Jesus said to him, "Follow me". Matthew arose and followed him, and became his disciple. Matthew is the patron saint of Bookkeepers and his feast day is September 21. We know St Matthew by the sign of the angel, who dictated to him as he wrote.

Mark the Evangelist Mark the Evangelist is the author of the Gospel of Mark. Mark later went to Cyprus and to Alexandria to preach the gospel. The Alexandrians resented Mark's efforts to convert them. They killed him and tried to burn his body. Afterwards, Christians removed his unburned body from the ashes, wrapped it and then buried it in the church they had built. In 828, Mark's relics were taken from Alexandria by Italian sailors to Venice. A basilica was built there to house Mark's relics. His symbol of the lion. His feast day is April 25. He is the patron saint of notaries.

Luke the Evangelist Luke the Evangelist is the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke was a physician by profession. He became a disciple and followed Paul until Paul's martyrdom. He painted the first icon. We see him painting pictures of the Virgin Mary with his evangelistic symbol, the bull, nearby. He is patron saint of painters, physicians and healers, and his feast day is October 18.

John the Evangelist John the Evangelist has given us the Gospel of John, the three epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation. He was the only one of Christ's disciples to live into old age and not be martyred for his faith. John was buried in Ephesus, where he lived with and cared for Mary, the mother of Jesus. His sign is the eagle, and his feast day is December 27.

Saint Peter Peter was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. A fisherman of Galilee, he and his brother Andrew were called by Jesus to be apostles. Jesus called Peter "the Rock of the Church". He was sentenced to death by crucifixion by the Roman authorities. Peter was crucified upside down by his request, as he did not want to set himself as equal to Jesus. He is buried in the grottoes underneath the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome. St Peter holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Peter was the first Pope. He is the patron saint of Popes, fishermen, and the city of Rome. His feast day is June 26.

Saint Catherine of Alexandria Catherine was born in Alexandria. Converted to Christianity through a vision, she denounced Emperor Maxentius for persecuting Christians. Maxentius offered Catherine a royal marriage if she would deny the faith. When she refused she was imprisoned. While in prison, and while Maxentius was away, Catherine converted Maxentius' wife and 200 of his soldiers. On his return, Maxentius had them all put to death, and likewise condemned Catherine. She was put on a spiked wheel but when the wheel broke, she was beheaded. Her symbol is the spiked wheel, which we know as the Catherine wheel, and her feast day is celebrated November 25. She is the patron saint of philosophers, preachers, wheelwrights and mechanics.

Saint James the Great James the Great, the apostle, is the brother of John. James went to Hispania and preached Christianity there, establishing an Apostolic see. James was one of the first martyrs of the Church. King Herod Agrippa I killed him with a sword. The man who arrested James became a convert after hearing James speak at his trial and was executed with him. James miraculously appeared to fight for the Christian army during the battle of Clavijo during the Reconquista, and was henceforth called Matamoros (Moor-slayer). "Santiago y cierra España" ("St James and strike for Spain") is the battle cry of the Spanish. St James' relics were discovered at Compostela in the time of King Alfonso II (791-842). Accordingly, in the 9th century, a shrine was dedicated to James at Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia, Spain, which is the most famous Christian pilgrimage. James is the patron saint of Spain. The military Order of Santiago was founded to fight the Moors and later membership became a precious honour. Royal favour allows the order to put the red cross of St James on their clothes (a cross fleury fitchy, with lower part fashioned as the blade of a sword blade). James is the patron saint of hat-makers, rheumatoid sufferers, labourers, veterinarians, equestrians, furriers, tanners, pharmacists and Spain. His feast day is July 25 and his symbol is the scallop shell.

Saint Sebastian Sebastian was a High Captain in the praetorian guards of the Roman Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Neither knew that Sebastian was a Christian. When it was discovered during Maximian's persecution of the faithful that Sebastian was indeed a Christian, he was ordered executed. He was shot with arrows (his symbol) and left for dead, but when Irene, the widow of St. Castulus, went to recover his body, she found he was still alive and nursed him back to health. Soon after, Sebastian intercepted the Emperor, denounced him for his cruelty to Christians, and, on January 20, 287, was beaten to death on the Emperor's orders. He is patron of archers, athletes, and soldiers, and we appeal to him for protection against plagues. His feast day is January 20.

Saint Lawrence Lawrence was one of seven deacons who were in charge of giving help to the poor. However, the Prefect of Rome thought the Church had a great fortune hidden away, so he ordered Lawrence to bring the Church's treasure to him. Lawrence went through the city and gathered together the poor and sick people supported by the Church. He showed them to the Prefect and said: "This is the Church's treasure!" In great anger, the Prefect condemned Lawrence to a slow, cruel death. On August 10, 258, Lawrence was tied on top of an iron grill over a slow fire that roasted his flesh little by little, but Lawrence almost did not feel the flames. In fact, he even joked. "Turn me over," he said to the judge. "I'm done on this side!" Just before he died, he said, "It's cooked enough now." Lawrence is honoured in Rome, where he is a city patron, and he is patron saint of librarians, cooks and tanners. The Feast of St Lawrence is celebrated on August 10; his symbol is the gridiron.

British Saints:

Saint Dunstan Dunstan was abbot at Glastonbury, and bishop of Worcester and London and Archbishop of Canterbury, under King Edgar of England (10th century). He also showed cunning in dealing with the Devil. His symbol is a pair of tongs for good reason: *St Dunstan, as the story goes, / Once pull'd the devil by the nose / With red-hot tongs, / Which made him roar, / That he was heard three miles or more.* Dunstan nailed a horseshoe to the Devil's hoof when he was asked to re-shoe the Devil's horse. This caused the Devil great pain, and Dunstan only agreed to remove the shoe and release the Devil after he promised never to enter a place where a horseshoe is over the door. Dunstan is the patron saint of armourers, goldsmiths, locksmiths and jewellers, and his feast day is May 19.

Saint Swithun Swithun, also spelled Swithin, was born in Wessex, England, and was educated at the old monastery, Winchester, where he was ordained. He became chaplain to King Egbert of the West Saxons, who appointed him tutor of his son, Ethelwulf, and was one of the King's counselors. Swithun was named bishop of Winchester in 852 when Ethelwulf succeeded his father as king. Swithun built several churches and was known for his humility and his aid to the poor and needy, but is now best known for the popular British weather lore proverb that if it rains on St. Swithun's day, 15 July, it will rain for 40 days and 40 nights: *St Swithun's day if thou dost rain / For forty days it will remain / St Swithun's day if thou be fair / For forty days 'twill rain na mair.*

Swithun's best-known miracle was his restoration on a bridge of a basket of eggs that workmen had maliciously broken. Swithun made his journeys on foot; when he gave a banquet he invited the poor and not the rich. He died on 2 July 862, and was buried out of doors, rather than in the cathedral, apparently at his own request, so that the "sweet rain of heaven" could fall on his grave. In 971 it was decided to move his body to a new indoor shrine, and it is said that the ceremony was delayed by 40 days of torrential rain, a sign of Swithun's displeasure at the move.

Saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne Cuthbert was an Anglo-Saxon monk and bishop who was one of the most important English medieval saints. Over his lifetime, he was prior of Melrose Abbey, prior of Lindisfarne, and, after a time as a hermit on the Farne Islands, became bishop of Lindisfarne. While on the Farne Islands, he instituted laws to protect the island's eider ducks and other. Consequently, eider ducks are called cuddly ducks. He died in 687 and was buried at Lindisfarne. When Cuthbert's burial casket was opened some years after his death, his body was found to have been perfectly preserved. This miracle led to the steady growth of Cuthbert's posthumous fame, and Lindisfarne still is a pilgrimage destination. In 875 raiding Danes forced the monks to flee, carrying Cuthbert's body with them. Cuthbert's remains spent over 100 years in Chester-le-Street and another century in Ripon, until being moved to its resting place in Durham Cathedral. Cuthbert is the patron saint of Northumbria. His feast day is March 20.

Saint Thomas Becket Thomas was born December 21, 1118, and raised in both England and France. He studied civil and canon law at Merton Priory in England, and then at the Universities of Paris, Bologna, and Auxerre. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, entrusted Becket with several important missions to Rome and made him Archdeacon of Canterbury. Becket served so faithfully that Theobald commended him to King Henry II for the office of Lord Chancellor. As Lord Chancellor, Becket became a favourite courtier and companion to the King. Thomas was so devoted to the king's interests that none doubted his allegiance to the King. After Theobald's death, King Henry ensured that Thomas became Archbishop of Canterbury, thinking the head of the church in England would be his man. But Thomas, having previously been a merry, pleasure-loving courtier, became an ascetic prelate in simple monastic garb, fully devoted to God's holy church and prepared to do his utmost to defend it and its authority.

Becket and Henry quarrelled over clerks' exemptions in Canon Law from civil jurisdiction. For eight years it continued, with Thomas spending years in exile in France. Becket returned to England in December 1170. According to legend, the King cried, "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" Four knights murdered Thomas on Tuesday, December 29, 1170, at the entry of the Quire in Canterbury Cathedral during Vespers. When the Henry II heard the news, he shut himself up and fasted for forty days.

On Becket's body was found a penitent's hairshirt under his archbishop's garments. Soon after, the faithful throughout Europe viewed Becket as a martyr, and in 1173, barely three years after his death, he was canonized by Pope Alexander. The hairshirt and other evidences of austerity, and the many miracles that occurred at his tomb, including cures for blindness, madness and leprosy, which are shown in stained glass panels created in the thirteenth century at Canterbury Cathedral, show his holiness. On July 12, 1174, Henry humbled himself with public penance at Becket's tomb, setting the path to pilgrimage there. The shrine of the "holy blessed martyr," as Chaucer calls him, is famous, and the road running from London to Canterbury is known as "Pilgrim's Way." The feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury is celebrated on December 29.

There were many miracles attributed to St Thomas Becket in his lifetime. Becket's Well, in Otford, Kent, was created after he became displeased with the taste of the local water. Two springs of clear water bubbled up after he struck the ground with his crozier. The absence of nightingales in Otford is also ascribed to Becket, who was so disturbed in his devotions by the song of a nightingale that he commanded that none should sing in the town ever again.

Saint Edmund the Martyr Edmund the Martyr was a boy King of East Anglia in the time of the Danes. Abbo of Fleury tells us that when the Danes were ravaging the land, Edmund refused to meet them in battle himself, preferring to die a martyr's death being whipped, beaten, shot with javelins and finally beheaded, all the while calling upon Jesus. His martyrdom took place at Hoxne, some 20 miles southeast of Thetford, and his body was ultimately interred at Beadriceworth. The shrine of Edmund is one of the most famous in England. He is depicted as crowned and robed as a monarch, holding a sceptre, orb, arrows, or a quiver, and his feast day is November 20.

Saint Etheldreda (Audrey) Etheldreda, known as Audrey, was a 7th-century English princess. She married, but was widowed after three years, and it was said that the marriage was never consummated. She had taken a vow of virginity, but married again for the kingdom's sake. Her young husband tired of a sexless marriage and eventually attempted to bribe the local bishop to release Audrey from her vows. He refused. Eventually, Audrey's husband married someone more willing, while Audrey became a nun and founded the abbey of Ely, where she lived an austere life. She eventually died of an enormous tumour on her neck, which she gratefully accepted as divine retribution for all the necklaces she had worn in her early years. (It really had been caused by plague.) St. Audrey's Fair was held at Ely on her feast day of June 23, though so many false merchants peddled such shoddy goods there especially the necklaces, that they are called "tawdry", after "Saint Audrey". 17 years after her death, her body had not decomposed and the tumour had healed.

Saint Bede Bede, commonly known as the Venerable Bede, was born near St. Peter and St. Paul monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow. He was placed in the monastery at Wearmouth at age seven, where he became deacon at age nineteen, and priest at age thirty, and except for a few brief visits elsewhere, spent all of his life in the monastery,

devoting himself to the study of Scripture and to teaching and writing. He was the most learned man of his time. His writings are a summary of all learning with very many theological and scientific treatises, historical works, and biographies. His is the great HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA, and by these works he is called "the Venerable". He died in Wearmouth-Jarrow, but his bones lie in Durham Cathedral. His feast day is May 25th.

Saint Alban Alban was the first Christian martyr in Britain. In 304 AD, Alban sheltered a Christian priest in his home, and was converted and baptised by him. When the Roman governor sent soldiers to Alban's house to look for the priest, Alban exchanged cloaks with the priest and was arrested in his stead. The judge was furious when he found out that the priest had escaped, but Alban refused to denounce his new religion and was beheaded. On his way to the execution, Alban had to cross a river, and finding the bridge full of people, he made the waters part and crossed over on dry land. The executioner was so impressed with Alban's faith that he converted to Christianity on the spot and refused to kill him. Another executioner was quickly found (whose eyes dropped out of his head when he did the deed), and the first was killed after Alban, becoming the second British Christian martyr. The execution took place on the spot where St Albans Cathedral (a pilgrimage destination) now stands. His feast day is June 22, and Alban is shown as carrying his head between his hands.

Saint Werburgh Werburgh (also known as Werburga) is an English saint and the patron saint of Chester; she was a Benedictine nun and patroness of Chester, England. Born in Staffordshire, Werburga resolutely refused to marry, insisting instead that she become a nun at Ely. She eventually became the fourth Abbess of Ely. St Werburgh had a favourite goose of the flock of geese that visited the convent meadow. She named the goose Grayking, and he had a black ring around his neck and was the fattest and happiest looking of the flock. Grayking was eaten by the convent steward, Hugh, because he looked very tempting and fat, but also because the flock of geese, which St Werburgh liked so much, had ruined his field of corn and he felt that they had not been punished enough by St Werburgh. When St Werburgh found out this she was furious with the steward. She found the bones of the goose Grayking and ordered him to arise. The bones reformed and Grayking the goose stood before her. She banished the geese and since then none of these birds has been seen in those parts. She was also endowed with gifts of prophecy and of reading the secrets of hearts.

When her body was moved, it was found to be miraculously intact. Her tomb, therefore, became a centre for pilgrimage. The shrine of St Werburgh remained at Hanbury for the next 160 years, but due to the threat from Viking raiders in the 9th century, the shrine was relocated in 875 to the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which lay within the protection of the city walls of Chester. The church was re-dedicated in 975 to St Werburgh (eventually becoming the Chester Cathedral), and within 50 years, St. Werburgh was regarded as the protector and patron saint of the city, after the miraculous withdrawal of the Welsh king Gruffudd ap Llywelyn from a siege of the city. Her feast day is February 3.

Additional British Pilgrimage Destinations

Although there are numerous period pilgrimage destinations, and some are described above, the following also were very popular.

Walsingham: A statue of the Virgin and Child, known as 'Our Lady of Walsingham', marked the place where the Virgin was believed to have appeared before the lady of the manor of Walsingham in 1061; the shrine was later incorporated into an Augustinian monastery. A sealed glass jar that was said to contain the milk of the Virgin Mary. Erasmus visited Walsingham and described the shrine as being surrounded "on all sides with gems, gold and silver". He also added that the water from the Walsingham spring was "efficacious in curing pains of the head and stomach".

Glastonbury: A monastery was built at Glastonbury in the seventh century. In 1125 William of Malmesbury visited the area while researching a book on the history of England. He afterwards argued that as well as Edgar Atheling and Edmund Ironside, several other important people were buried at Glastonbury including King Arthur, St. Patrick and St. David. He also claimed that the relics of Benedict Biscop, St. Aiden, St. Dunston and St. Paulinus were also at the monastery. This claim was rejected by the monks of Canterbury who claimed they had most of these remains at their shrine. On 25th May, 1184, everything at Glastonbury, except for the Bell Tower, was destroyed by fire. Henry II immediately arranged for rebuilding the abbey and the old church at Glastonbury. Soon afterwards the monks at Glastonbury claimed they found King Arthur's tomb. This was reported by Gerald of Wales and Glastonbury soon became an important place for pilgrims to visit. By the end of the 13th century the religious shrine brought in about £120 a year.

Deadly Sins, Corporal Works of Mercy, and Heavenly Virtues

The deadly sins, also known as cardinal sins, are a classification of vices used in early Christian teachings to educate and protect followers from basic human instincts. The practices of charity are known as the Corporal Works of Mercy.

The Seven Deadly Sins

The church made a division between sins that were venial and could be forgiven without the need for the sacrament of Confession and those which were capital and merited damnation. Capital or Deadly Sins were so called because they could have a fatal effect on an individual's spiritual health. Medieval British wall paintings stressed the connection between committing the Deadly Sins and ending up in Hell. In the latter part of the 6th-century A.D., St. Gregory the Great (d. 604) introduced the seven deadly sins. The goal of the seven deadly sins was to illustrate for laypersons of the church the need to be mindful of capital sin, or sin which requires penance in Hell. Pope Gregory's list was different from the one used today and the ranking of the sins' seriousness was based on the degree to which they offended against love. From most serious to least serious, they were pride, envy, anger, avarice, sadness, gluttony, and lust. Sadness was later replaced by accidia (sloth), putting off or failing to do what God asks of you.

1 Superbia	Pride	4 Avaritia	Avarice	7 Luxuria	Lust
2 Invidia	Envy	5 Accidia	Sloth		
3 Ira	Anger	6 Gula	Gluttony		

After three, seven is the number of greatest significance in ancient Judaism. God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The number seven, consequently, had connotations of completeness or perfection. The Seven Deadly Sins became one of a number of important groups of seven in the medieval church, for example, the Seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows of the Virgin and, of course, the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy.

The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy

The seven practices of charity, taken from Christ's prophecy of the Last Judgment, are known as the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy:

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked
4. Visit the sick
5. Shelter the homeless
6. Visit those in prison
6. Bury the dead

As early as the third century the additional deed, Burying the Dead, was added to bring the number up to seven. The need to supply a seventh deed relates to the perceived mystical significance of the number seven.

The Seven Heavenly Virtues

The Seven Virtues were derived from the Psychomachia ('Contest of the Soul'), an epic poem written by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (c. 410) entailing the battle of good virtues and evil vices. Practising these virtues is alleged to protect one against temptation from the Seven Deadly Sins, with each one having its counterpart.

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. Charity
4. Prudence
5. Justice
6. Fortitude
7. Temperance

*"A bolle and a bagge
He bar by his syde
And hundred ampulles
On his bat seten
Signes of Synay,
And Shelles of Galice,
And many a conche
On his cloke,
And keys of Rome,
And the Vernycle bi-fore
For men sholde knowe
And se bi hise signes
Whom he sought hadde."*

(from *Piers Plowman* by William Langland)