

A NEWBURY CHURCH WALK

Start at **ST MARY'S CHURCH, SHAW CUM DONNINGTON (RG14 2DR)**

An unusual church, designed by Reading architect Richard Billing in the Norman style and built between 1841 and 1842. The chancel, designed by William Butterfield, was added in 1875-1878.

Things to look for:

The hammerbeam roof (very unusual in a 'Norman' church).

Wall paintings in the chancel, in memory of members of the Eyre family of nearby Shaw House).

Monuments.

Stained glass (by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake).



On leaving the church, turn right. At the junction with Love Lane, turn left. Cross the bridge over the A34 and continue to the junction with the old Newbury to Oxford Road (B4494) which you will reach after about half a mile. Turn left and walk down hill, passing the historic Donnington Hospital (on your right), actually an almshouse, founded in 1393. The present buildings, restored in the early nineteenth century, originally date from 1602. Continue over the River Lambourn and turn right into Grove Road. After approximately half a mile turn left into Station Road (you can cut off the corner at the end by crossing the playing field: turn left when you reach the road). At the end of Station Road (the station, on the former Lambourn Valley Railway, has long gone) you will reach the A4. Turn left and walk towards Newbury, crossing carefully as soon as you can. After 200 yards or so turn right into Pound Lane. At Speen Lane cross straight over into Church Lane and walk to the end, where you will find

ST MARY'S CHURCH, SPEEN



A slightly strange history. In the 19th century the original nave was replaced by a new nave built to the south (replacing a much smaller south aisle). The old nave became a north aisle. In the 20th century the old nave was restored to use, and the new nave partitioned off to become a separate room (the Majendie Room, named after the nineteenth-century vicar who funded the restoration).

Things to look for:

Monuments, especially the splendid monuments to Sir John Baptist Castillion and Lady Elizabeth Castillion in the Benedict Chapel beyond the Majendie Room.

Retrace your steps to Speen Lane and turn right. Follow this road for about a mile. (After half a mile or so it becomes the Old Bath Road, and later on Oxford Street, but continue on regardless). When you reach the clocktower, turn right into Northbrook Street. A little way down on your right is

NEWBURY METHODIST CHURCH

An early example of a Methodist Church built in the gothic style - to look rather like an Anglican Church.

Things to look for:

A largely unaltered early Victorian interior, complete with galleries on cast-iron columns.



Carry on down Northbrook Street, cross the high bridge over the Kennet into Bartholomew Street, and almost immediately afterwards, on your right, you will come to

ST NICOLAS' CHURCH

A very large and splendid building, rather like the great wool churches of the Cotswolds. It was built between 1509 and 1532, funded from the profits of the wool trade (very important in the area in the late middle ages)

Things to look for:

Stained-glass windows - a remarkable sequence designed by Hardman in 1867, and installed between 1867 and 1910. There are four themes: parables in the south aisle, miracles in the north aisle, apostles in the south clerestory (high level) and saints in the north. Monuments, including John Smallwood, who paid for the rebuilding (under the tower).



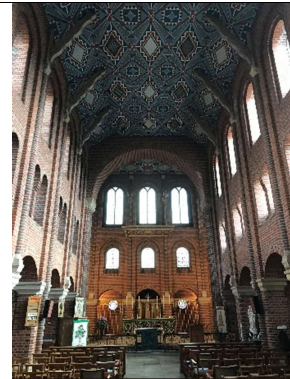
Carry on down Bartholomew Street, over the railway, until you reach the roundabout. Turn left into St John's Road. On your left is

ST JOHN'S CHURCH

A modern church, designed by Stephen Dykes-Bower (the architect of Bury St Edmunds Cathedral) and built between 1955 and 1957 to replace one that was bombed in the war. Unlike any other that you will see today. Two million bricks were used in the building.

Things to look for:

The fine brickwork, both interior and exterior. Note the careful attention to detail. The tall, narrow interior - more like an Italian than an English church.



Continue along St John's Road until you reach the next roundabout. Here turn left. Cross the railway, and shortly afterwards turn left into Cheap Street. Here on your left (but slightly tucked away, so don't miss it) is

NEWBURY BAPTIST CHURCH

Built just before the second world war to a design by local architects in a 'neo-Elizabethan' style. (The entrance is a later addition).

Things to look for:

The shaped gables and mullion-and-transom windows.



Continue along Cheap Street.

(At Market Street, a little further along, you may make a short detour to visit the Newbury Quaker Meeting House. Turn left into Market Street, and after a short distance, left again into Mayors Lane. The meeting house is on the corner of Highfield Avenue, next to Thomas Merriman Court. It is a plain building, converted from a private house, but there is a pleasant garden to the rear.

Afterwards, return to Cheap Street and turn left).

Carry on along Cheap Street until you reach the Market Place. (Note the fine Town Hall, built between 1876 and 1881 to designs by local architect James H Money). At the north end, turn right into Wharf Street. Here on your right is the excellent Newbury District Museum, well worth a visit if you have time. At the end of Wharf Street, turn left into Park Way. Cross the Kennet and make your way diagonally across Victoria Park. Pass the statue of Queen Victoria and continue into the narrow road ahead (Charlton Place) which leads into Park Lane. At the end on your left, you will find

ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Built in 1927-28 in a Byzantine style, with a separate campanile (bell tower). Another brick church, but very different from St John's. (The earlier, plainer, nineteenth-century church still stands next door).

Things to look for:

The splendid bell tower.

The large statue of Christ over the crossing, and the arched baldacchino (canopy) over the altar.



Turning right out the church grounds you will find the Robin Hood roundabout ahead of you (note the interesting sculpture by Johannes von Stumm). Cross the road using the underpass. At the other end, take the steps to your left. Here you have a choice. For route (a) go straight ahead past the elegant terrace called Smith's Crescent (built in 1823, as the stone above the central archway declares), cross the River Lambourn, and immediately afterwards turn left into Church Road, and in approximately 300 yards (passing the splendid Elizabethan mansion of Shaw House) you will arrive back where you started. For route (b), cross the road by the traffic lights, turn left, and follow the footpath round by the main road. After a little distance the path leaves the road and crosses a meadow. Follow this straight ahead, over the River Lambourn, and you will come out to see Shaw House ahead of you. Turn left towards Shaw church.

Several of the churches you will see on this walk have been supported by a grant from the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust.

To find out more about the Trust, please see our website, www.berkschurchestrust.org.uk, or contact our secretary at secretary@berkschurchestrust.org.uk

Prepared by the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust, 2021.

Please take care on the walk. Although we have taken every effort to recommend a safe route, the Trust can take no responsibility for your personal safety.