

PUCKLECHURCH is a village with an incredibly rich past, from the Bronze Age with its tumulus on Shortwood Hill, up to the siting of a barrage balloon depot in World War II. This walk aims to guide people both local and visitor, around some of the fascinating historic sites in the village centre.

Not many Parishes in England can point to the former existence of a Royal building within their boundaries - Pucklechurch is an exception. Not only that, as the Anglo Saxon Chronicle tells us, King Edmund was in fact murdered here, at his hunting lodge, in 946:

"A.D. 946 . This year King Edmund died, on St. Augustine's mass day. That was widely known, how he ended his days: — that Leof stabbed him at Pucklechurch."

Leof was supposedly an outlaw, someone that had been exiled by the King. Edmund died whilst trying to protect one of his servants from an attack by Leof. History doesn't relate the fate that then befell the regicide.....

Pucklechurch was of national importance in the Anglo-Saxon world, as a 'burh' (a Royal administrative Centre) with a minster church and then under the auspices of Glastonbury Abbey. This importance is reflected by several of the stops of this walk.

The Saxon past notwithstanding, many fine buildings do survive and are visible throughout the village.

Medieval and Post-Medieval structures can be seen all along the route of this walk, one of the reasons for Pucklechurch being a most important Parish within South Gloucestershire.



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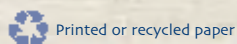


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Tel 01454 863762
www.southglos.gov.uk



TAKE A WALK AROUND
THE CENTRE OF
PUCKLECHURCH,
A VILLAGE STEEPED IN
HISTORY AND HERITAGE
AND SITE OF A SAXON
ROYAL PALACE.



PUCKLECHURCH VILLAGE TRAIL



PUCKLECHURCH VILLAGE TRAIL



1 COMMUNITY HALL AND PARKING

Village activities take place in the Community Hall, from displays to meetings. You are in the Conservation Area which was designated in 1975 and as you walk towards the centre of Pucklechurch you will see on your left houses of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries providing a fine entrance to the village.

2 This is the bustling centre of the village with fine houses and has long been on important coaching routes. The old Fleur de Llys Inn formerly catered for travellers. The large stone house in the centre (No. 1) used to be the White Hart Inn, where, if a visitor wanted a bed for the night, tradition said that they had to be accommodated no matter how full the hostelry was at the time.



3 PARISH CHURCH

of St. Thomas a Becket. This beautiful church with its fine tower has a blocked Norman doorway but generally dates from the thirteenth century. There are two stone effigies in the North Aisle, probably of man and wife, dated around the mid-fourteenth century. Today the church is the centre of a very busy parish.

4 HOMEFIELD ROAD

There has been much new development in the village over the years, either as estates bordering the Conservation Area, as here at Homefield Road, or as in-filling within the village core itself. Today Pucklechurch has a dynamic community, but care will have to be taken not to spoil its historic heritage.



5 KINGS LANE

You are now in Kings Lane and in one of the most historic parts of the village. Nearby is Grey House, one of the many great houses of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries of which the village is so proud. Along this lane it is reputed that the slain King Edmund was carried to his final resting-place at Glastonbury.



6 MOAT HOUSE

Moat House, formerly called the 'Great House', was the great manor-house of Pucklechurch and excavations on the site have unearthed evidence of Saxon and Roman activity. It is thought that it formerly had a moat on three sides and seven gables to its frontage. It might even have had royal connections.



7 VILLAGE GREEN

It is thought that there were three village greens in Pucklechurch in medieval times at the top of three roads (Westerleigh, Parkfield and Shortwood Roads) which stopped at the great 'Burrell' enclosure (see Stop 11). This suggests that the medieval village plan was of three small street hamlets. Where you are standing is the vestige of one of these greens.





This is another of Pucklechurch's greens and is surrounded by historic properties. Castle Road was formerly called 'Pound Lane' and nearby was the Village Pound. This was an essential part of rural life from early times, being an enclosure to pen cattle or other animals found straying or seized in payment of debt. Overlooking the green was the former 'National School' rebuilt in 1886. Then the pupils paid a weekly fee of 2d or 3d.



KING EDMUND'S PALACE

Somewhere in this area it is thought that the Palace or Hunting Lodge of King Edmund 'the Magnificent' was situated. The grandson of Alfred the Great, Edmund was a fine ruler who held together a kingdom that extended to a large part of England. In 946 he was murdered in Pucklechurch whilst defending his steward by a man called 'Leof' whom he had earlier banished.



THE COTSWOLD SCARP

The view outside of the village here is towards the Cotswold Hills and Dyrham.

There is an Iron Age hillfort on Hinton Hill, opposite to where you are standing, which commanded the landscape, access and trade. One of the great battles of Anglo-Saxon times took place at Dyrham in 577, when the lower Severn valley finally fell into English hands as a result of Ceawlin's victory.



***AD. 577**

THIS YEAR CUTHWIN AND CEAWLIN FOUGHT WITH THE BRITONS, AND THEY SLEW THREE KINGS, COMMAL, AND CONDIDAN, AND FARINMAIL, IN THE PLACE THAT IS CALLED DEORHAM, AND TOOK THREE CITIES, GLOUCESTER, CIRENCESTER, AND BATH.



EDMUND REX



RECREATION GROUND

Now the centre for open-air recreation for the village. The Recreation Ground was formerly the great central enclosure for the village, called 'The Burrell' on the tithe map of 1843, which may mean 'a defended site set on a hill'. Evidence suggests that Pucklechurch was a place of great importance, even before the tenth century. This was a royal centre, a 'burh', with a minster church closely associated with it and eventually came into the hands of Glastonbury Abbey. The Burrell must have retained its royal functions as a meeting place for the hundred (*the administrative unit*) in early times and has been an open area for over 1,000 years.



***AD. 946**

THIS YEAR KING EDMUND DIED, ON ST. AUGUSTINE'S MASS DAY. THAT WAS WIDELY KNOWN, HOW HE ENDED HIS DAYS: — THAT LEOF STABBED HIM AT PUCKLECHURCH.

**Anglo Saxon Chronicle*

