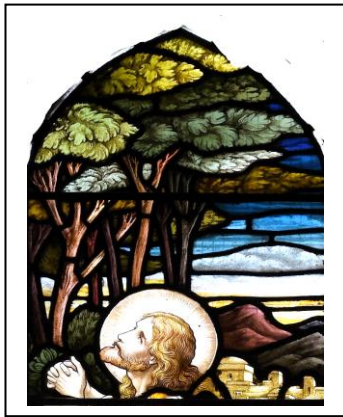


## A CREATION TRAIL

### to the Churches East of Leominster

The trail can be followed by roads or, except for the last two stages, by footpaths and quiet lanes. Approximate distances are given in km in a clockwise direction from the Priory, the first for road and the second for path. The churches are normally open, except where stated, and many of them will have special displays during the **Threads Through Creation** festival in June and July 2024.



All the churches hold craftsmanship in wood, glass, stone and other media, but it is only possible to highlight a few works here. The churchyards are full of sculpture and calligraphy, and the green handiwork of the Creator God.

#### **KIMBOLTON, St James the Great:**

HR6 0HG, SO52596161 (5km, 4.3km)

The church with its broach-spire stands isolated on a hill with views to the Black Mountains. The rough local stone gives the impression of a shrine springing from the rock of Creation.

The stained glass is all by Heaton, Butler and Bayne (above) and shows their style developing over forty years from the vibrant colours and medieval feel of the Ascension in the east window (1875) to the richly dressed figures, naturalistic background lilies and sombre colours of the south aisle Annunciation (1909). Their windows often include at least one figure with Bayne's long beard and spare features.

There is important woodwork in the chancel with linenfold panelling of the early sixteenth century and a splendidly primitive monument of 1766 to George Wanklen surmounted by a crowned angel.

#### **MIDDLETON ON THE HILL, St Mary:**

SY8 4BE, SO54056460 (4.8km, 3.9km)

The squared blocks of masonry, shallow pilasters, small windows and round arched doorways betray the Norman foundations of this church. Inside, the font is Norman, with zig-zag decoration. The furnishings are undistinguished except for the eagle lectern by Robert (Mouseman) Thompson (1876 – 1955) who signed his work with a mouse.



#### **LEYSTERS, St Andrew:**

HR6 0HR, SO56846325 (4.5km, 3.5km)

The setting here is majestic with great trees set high up in rolling country. On entering the church, it is the carpenter's art that impresses in the fourteenth century roof with its tiers of diamond-forming braces. The big-bowled Norman font was once at Puddleston, and the modest interior is graced by fine stained glass. In the chancel, the Risen Christ with angels and soldiers of 1890 by Ward & Hughes and in the nave, a beautiful Pre-Raphaelite couple – Saints Cecelia and George – by Morris & Co.

#### **BOCKLETON, St Michael:**

WR15 8PP, SO59316143 (6km, 4km)

The mason's art strikes first as the main door is surrounded by a portico below an intricate colonnade. Inside the chancel, the sandstone the Barneby tomb (1594) with its ranks of sons and daughters impresses, and nearby the sleeping figure of William Prescott (1867). On the plinth he is shown in relief as he tends his dying gamekeeper; an act of charity that led to his own death from a fever (below). Nearby, is the splendid east window by Kempe (1906) with St Michael at the centre dispatching a fiery red beast.



#### **HATFIELD, St Leonard:**

HR6 0SF, SO58585938 (4km, 3km)

A small church with Saxon herringbone tufa masonry and a timber west porch. In the turret, unseen, two bells nearly eight hundred years old, still calling the parish to prayer. The interior is charming and intimate with eighteenth century pulpit and stalls in the chancel and fine wall monuments. The Triumphant Christ looks down from the east window of 1878 by Mayer & Co on a chancel which retains its brass oil lamps.

#### **PUDLESTON, St Peter:**

HR6 0RA, SO35652598 (4km, 3km)



The epitome of a small country church at the edge of the park of Puddleston Hall. It was almost completely rebuilt between 1850 and 1857 and furnished at great expense with a fine screen and covered font. It is the glass here that shines. A creative partnership between Pugin and Hardman deeply rooted in medieval gothic has left a magnificent series of saints and apostles. More modern glass in the tower screen

depicts the earliest time of Creation with Adam, Eve and the Serpent.

**DOCKLOW, St Bartholomew:**

HR6 0RX, SO56415752 (3.5km, 3.5km)

A thirteenth century tower, but the body of the church rebuilt in 1880. The floor displays the ceramic tiles of the Hereford makers, Godwin. The only artistry is in the east window with a glass of 1880 by the Shrewsbury studio of Done & Davies.

**HAMNISH CLIFFORD, St Dubricius:**

HR6 0QW, SO53195924 (5.5km, 4.5km)

The exterior of the church, built in 1910, is simple, but the interior is a jewel box of brilliant stained glass, in the fashion of the time, with figures set in backgrounds of white glass. The apse windows are by C. C. Powell, the north nave by Kempe & Co with their typical elaborate clothing and detailed settings (below). The rest are by the Whitefriars Studio with richly coloured figures and foliage. The reredos is equally ornate and there are ceramic wall panels in the Florentine style.



**HUMBER, St Mary the Virgin:**

HR6 0NE, SO53575634 (4.5km, 4km)(Closed)

Humber is tucked into a narrow valley, but its spire is a landmark in this part of the upland. Much was rebuilt but the carpenters' work of the fourteenth century can still be seen in the porch and chancel roof. There are windows by Heaton, Butler & Bayne (see Kimbolton and Stoke Prior) showing their work through the first half of the twentieth century. The

change in style seen clearly in the two images of the Madonna and Child (below).



**STOKE PRIOR, St Luke:**

HR6 0LG, SO51982565 (2km, 2km)

The church was all but rebuilt in 1863 and, as elsewhere. It is the glass of Heaton, Butler and Bayne that speaks loudest of the creative spirit. The east window of 1864 with its distinctive colouring had eight scenes from the Annunciation to the Resurrection. There are some fine wall tablets in the base of the tower.

**FORD, St Saint John of Jerusalem.**

HR6 0LE, SO51162553 (1.5km, 1.5km)

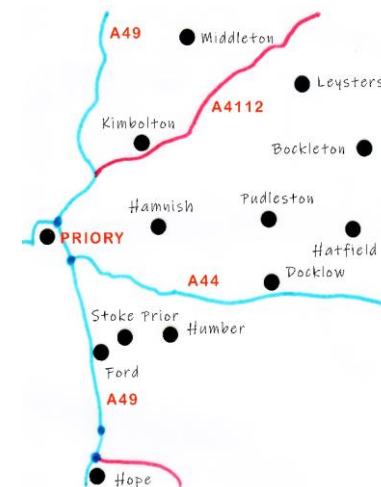
A tiny chapel on the bank of the River Lugg, simply furnished. There is a rare example of painting on leather in the apse roof over the altar, showing the four Evangelists.

**HOPE UNDER DINMORE, St Mary:**

HR6 0PJ, SO51055283 (Closed)

The substantial rebuilding of the church is associated with the Arkwright family of nearby Hampton Court, but earlier residents there, the Coningsbys have left two magnificent creations. The first is an incised slab to Humphrey and Anne which shows the dress

of 1558 in great detail. The second is a grand Classical monument to Thomas and Frances of c.1729 which includes their infant son who choked on a cherry stone in 1708.



This Trail has been produced by Priory Arts for the Threads Through Creation festival in 2024  
Text and illustrations by Rob Walker

