

## AN ARC OF CHURCHES AROUND EVESHAM

This route avoids Evesham itself, rather starting southeast of Evesham at Sedgeberrow and then swinging east, north and west of the town. It is all on O.S. Map 150. You can stop at any point or miss a church . At Sedgeberrow you are close to Ashton under Hill on the Bredon Hill circuit so could link with that route if you wished.

As most people now have either a sat nav or google maps on their phone, I have added the post code of each church and omitted instructions for moving between them.

### SEDGEBERROW, ST MARY. WR11 7UE

Easy to park outside the church. A largely 14<sup>th</sup> century building with some earlier work and extensively restored and furnished by William Butterfield in Victorian times. Well kept church yard. Church not always open.

### CHILDSWICKHAM, St MARY. WR12 7HH

An attractive and confusing village! Keep your eyes open for the signs to the church in its southeast corner ( farthest from main road) . There is a small car park by the church. The prominent tower (14-15<sup>th</sup> century) has battlements and a spire that can lead you to the church. There are Norman remain inside notably the original west doorway – now into the tower, with an extensive church yard alongside fields.

### BROADWAY, St MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS WR12 7AE

This church is on the road just off the west end of the main street of this attractive but heavily touristy village. Parking for cars has to be in the nearby paid car parking. Much choice of refreshments available. St Michael's was built in 1839-40 in good imitation of the Early English style and is clearly heavily used by the local community . it is on the site of an 1608 chapel, whose magnificent carved wooden pulpit is now back in the church. A light and airy church.

### BROADWAY ST EDBURGA WR12 7JS

On the road to the National Trust site of Snowshill. Parking just past the church on the verge of the road. This church belonged to Pershore abbey in the middle ages hence the rare dedication to St Edburga, a Saxon princess and granddaughter of King Alfred ( of cakes fame) some of whose relics were at Pershore abbey. The interior mostly dates from around 1200, but with the tower crossing inserted into the nave slightly later. A rare circular 16<sup>th</sup> alms box by the pulpit and the Victorian coffin carrier inside the church too. The unusual stone roof tiles are a Victorian replacement for lead .An attractive church in a pretty and quiet valley.

## BRETFORTON, ST LEONARDS WR11 7JH

The village has the National Trust's medieval Fleece Inn across the small square from the church for refreshments if required. Parking in square or nearby streets. Another church that belonged to Evesham abbey from before the Conquest. The nave arcades and the font are late Norman ( c 1200) with much 13<sup>th</sup> century work in the church and tower. There is no chancel arch with the high altar only 3 steps up above the rest of the church. Look for the capital with the carving of the dragon swallowing St Margaret- with just her feet sticking out of its mouth!



## HONEYBOURNE, ST ECGWIN WR11 7PP

Easiest to park on main road and walk the 50 yards up the lane to the church. The chancel probably dedicated in 1295 with nave a little later. The tower is topped by an octagonal spire with lucarnes ( window openings) and attractive pinnacles, mostly 14<sup>th</sup> century. The south porch entrance has unusual massive stone slabs for its roof borne on 4 transverse stone arches. The most immaculate church yard in a day of high standard ones.

## MIDDLE LITTLETON, ST NICHOLAS WR11 8LJ

Easy to park in layby opposite the church. Most of the church was originally late 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century but was heavily restored by Preedy between 1871-5 ( his original plan hangs on the wall inside the south door). It retains its Norman font and a few medieval tiles. A typical 14<sup>th</sup> century tower with battlements and pinnacles and the 15<sup>th</sup> century church yard cross steps have a newer cross also by Preedy. ( The magnificent mid-13<sup>th</sup> century stone tithe barn, belonging originally to Evesham Abbey and now National Trust, lies just behind the church and is well worth a visit for a quick break from churches!).

### OFFENHAM, ST MARY AND ST MILBURGH WR11 8SF

Park on the main street by the church and note the enormous yew at the east end of the church yard. Another church heavily rebuilt by Preedy in 1860-61 except for the 15<sup>th</sup> century battlemented west tower. The polished blue Lias pillars in the nave arcade are startling plus some red marble pillars also. A very attractive village street with old houses of various periods and a large maypole at the end.

### NORTON, ST ECGWIN WR11 4TL

There is a small car park off the busy main road just in front of the church. It belonged to Evesham Abbey (hence the dedication) from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. While the nave is largely a Victorian rebuild from 1843-44, the chancel is 14<sup>th</sup> century and the tower 15<sup>th</sup> century with typical battlements and pinnacles. Note the unusual splays at the east corners of the tower to allow light to two small west windows of the nave.

### FLADBURY, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST WR10 2QB

You can park opposite the church and refresh yourself at the noted pie shop at the same time! The lower stage of the west tower is Norman but it was heightened in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in imitation of the Perpendicular style of battlements and pinnacles you will have seen earlier in the day. The bulk of the church was rebuilt in about 1340 with Preedy rebuilding the chancel in 1864-5. Most of the furnishings are by Preedy but there is a splendid tomb chest with brasses of John Throckmorton and his wife from 1445. Other notable 15<sup>th</sup> century brasses also. There is an unusual sundial on the south porch roof with a fine hanging lantern also



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### CROPTHORNE, ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS WR10 3LU

You can park in the main street by this most interesting church which goes back to Saxon times as parts of the nave suggest. It also houses a fine 9<sup>th</sup> century decorated Anglo Saxon cross head (inside opposite the south door). The west tower is Norman with a 14<sup>th</sup> century top stage, a Norman chancel arch, 14<sup>th</sup> century windows and a Victorian rebuilt chancel. A few remains of medieval wall paintings are visible in the nave. Several fine monuments to different generations of the local Dingley family, including Francis Dingley (died 1624) and his wife who survived 19 children (of whom only 3 died) and were married for 50 years and his son Edward (died 1646) with his wife and seven children. A fitting finale to a day of church crawling.

E.M.D