

A TRANQUILITY WALK

IN HOLY TRINITY BERWICK'S CHURCHYARD - A RE-WILDING REFLECTIVE SPACE

Enter through the gate in the corner of Berwick-upon-Tweed's Parade car park, with its historic ramparts and sea views beyond. This graveyard surrounds the most northerly church in England.

Follow the main path. On your left is a sycamore, a thorn, a birch and a cherry tree which blossoms in May. The thorn is a gift from Glastonbury whose famous thorn tree is reputed to have been planted by Joseph of Arimathea. 'Did those feet in ancient times walk upon Britain's ancient greens'?

This ancient churchyard is being re-wilded. There is now a recycled owl box in the northwest corner of the churchyard, a bat box in the southeast corner, and the hedgehog and other wildlife homes and bug hostels made by school pupils around the churchyard. Look for them. These and water trays attract new birds - even a parakeet! How many can you identify? Jesus suggests we learn not to worry by reflecting on the birds (Matthew 6:24,26). Note the herb garden opposite the church door. Look out for wild flowers: e.g. snowdrops in later winter, daffodils in early spring, bluebells in early summer, orange fox and cubs in later summer, fox gloves in autumn. What other wild flowers can you spot? Jesus calls us to learn from the wild flowers that God will look after us (Matthew 6:28-33).

Now go up the path on your left to the parish centre. Look out for insect hostels, feeders and boxes. The area in front of the wall to the right as you face the centre is deliberately left wild. It attracts insects and hedgehogs. Can you see any? The trees on the left as you exit the centre include a holly and a Russian olive. Think how Jesus often went to the Mount of Olives for inspiration. What other flowers do you notice? Can you spot the yew tree? Yew trees flourished in ancient Britain: what do their shelter and longevity say to you? Go to the area in front of the north wall. This, too is meant to be semi-wild. We hope to have public seats where you can relax.

Some may wish to inspect tomb stones. To find about some distant relative you think may have been buried here click <https://berwickparishchurch.co.uk/familyhistory/> on the parish web site. Copies of the monumental inscriptions can be obtained directly from HTB; on a CD for £10.00 or for £7.00 by file transfer. Email HTB (see button on the web page) to obtain one. The tombstone of the famous Berwick naturalist George Johnston (d. 1855) is on the left of the path by the south side of the church.

Outside the east (sea) end of the church is an area where cremated remains may still be buried. Beyond this is a greenery garden created by those who arrange the magnificent church flowers.

Storm damaged sycamore trees are being replaced with smaller, indigenous trees whose fruits provide food for birds and bees, e.g. rowan ash and cherry. There is one old and one new oak tree. See if you can spot these. An oak takes years to grow deep roots before it grows up and out. What may you learn from this about growing in wisdom?

Famous early bishops taught that Jesus was baptized in the river to announce that he came to restore fellowship between the Creator and humans (Adam) and between creation (Eden). The tree on which Jesus was crucified announces in the famous 8th c Northumbrian poem The Dream of the Rood that when its Creator died 'all creation wept'. Think about how you can help restore communion between God, us and creation. You may wish to return and spend time inside the church, or linger again outside. You are always welcome to the ever-open, re-wilding churchyard.