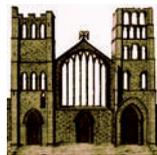




The **Abbey Chapter House** is the next place to identify. Look south-east towards the far wall where you can see a sundial. **Plaque 5** is on the wall behind it. To get there walk towards St Leonard's Church, turn right and follow the path. This is a special place as it is also the site of the **High Altar** of the **older Abbey** founded by Aethelmaer in **1005**. He was one of the nobles of King Aethelred (the Unready) and it was he who appointed his good friend **Aelfric** as the **First Abbot of Eynsham**. Aelfric's grave could be set near or even under the High Altar of this first Abbey.



The rest of the site can be viewed by retracing your steps and going back through the gate into the grounds of St Peter's. Then go through another gate into the Tolkien Meadow, named after Father John Tolkien (son of the famous author), who was the priest at the time of the dig which he supported enthusiastically. Look across to the hedge running down the left hand side and walk across to **Plaque 6**. This marks the line of the south wall of the **Refectory** (Dining Hall) of the Abbey.



Now walk down the hedge to the **limestone boulder**. This was found under the foundations of the south wall of the Refectory where you were standing. It was in a deep ditch called an enclosure where pieces of pottery were found, showing that this ditch was dug over 3000 years ago. This, and the stone, show how long Eynsham has been in existence in some form or another. The archaeologists think that the builders of the Abbey decided to incorporate the stone into the wall foundations rather than move it.

The **Abbey Guest House** lay just south of where this Boulder now is. **Plaque 7** is just on the other side of the boulder and indicates the line of the north wall of this guest house. The area between the refectory and this house was an open space or **Garth**, probably a kind of garden. Now walk diagonally across this Garth making for the east end of the modern Catholic Church.



The **Kitchen** and the **Refectory** met here as indicated by **Plaque 8**. This is the site of the south west corner of the refectory and the north west corner of the kitchen which stretched south from here. Look south towards a dip in the ground and find **Plaque 9**.



The **Kitchen Cellar** or **Pantry** was a big underground store room where food could be kept relatively cool. The archaeologists excavated the whole of this cellar but when they filled it in afterwards they found they had left a dip which now conveniently marks the area of this building.



This Pilgrim badge was found during the archaeological excavations of the Abbey. These were common in abbey towns such as Eynsham during the medieval period.

The cover illustration has been adapted from a reconstruction painting by Peter Lorimer on display in the Abbey fishponds. © Eynsham Parish Council.

Written and produced by Father Martin Flatman, designed by Paul Hughes, Northmoor Productions and printed by Information Press.

EYNESHAM ABBEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE TRAIL



An exploration of the actual site based on the Dig by Oxford Archaeology between 1989–1992





If you follow the trail using this leaflet you need to start in the car park of St Peter's Catholic Church. You will see a picture of the Abbey on the north wall. Walk east towards the main doors of the Church and then follow the path along the left hand side of the buildings until you come to the far corner where you will find **Plaque 1** on the wall. The **south-west corner** of the **Cloister** was at this point.



Look northwards towards the north wall and you will see **Plaque 2** indicating the line of the **west wall** of the **Cloister**. Look east towards the hedge and you will see **Plaque 3** indicating the line of the **south wall** of the **Cloister**. Inside this south-west corner of the Cloister - so under the grass in front of you - was the **circular fountain (lavatorium)** which was the main water supply for the Abbey.



The **Great Abbey Church** was north of the Cloister. Walk between the modern graves up to the north wall and then turn right and go through the gate and then left up a step into the old graveyard. A little way along the path that lies straight ahead of you is **Plaque 4**. This is the position of the centre of the Church. As you read it you are facing west towards the main door and the **Abbey Gateway** beyond - more or less between the modern houses that you can see. Turn round to the east and imagine the Church with its **Choir** and **High Altar** extending beyond the modern boundary wall. To the north you can still see St Leonard's Church which was built by the Abbey for the village.

