



Hampshire and the Islands
Historic Churches Trust
DAYS OUT:
around Romsey

East Wellow, St Margaret of Antioch

SO51 6DR

Everyone visits here because it is the final resting place of Florence Nightingale, who lived at nearby Embley Park. Her simple monument can be found to the south of the 13th century church.



The porch timbers have little holes in them; these are the nail holes where rat-catchers pinned up their prey until the churchwardens had paid them!

Inside the church are extensive 13th century wall paintings, including a picture of St Christopher carrying Jesus, but supporting himself not with the traditional staff, but with an eel stick such as would have been used in the nearby River Test.

St Ethelflaeda, Romsey Abbey

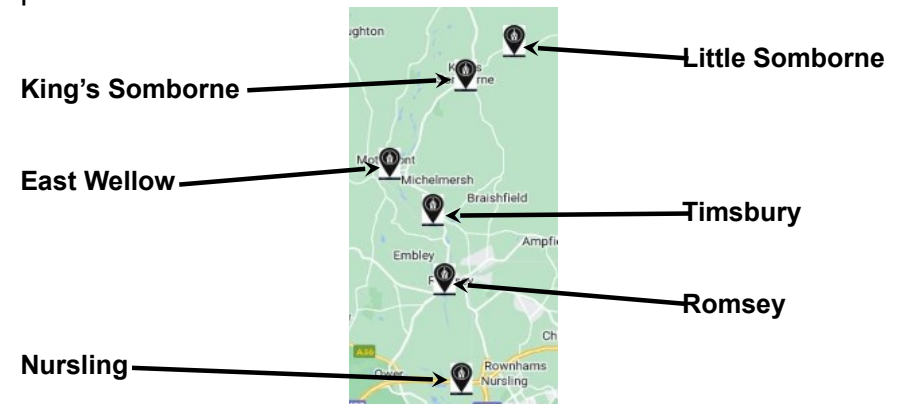
SO51 8EP

This lovely old building presides over the town and frequently features in the TV Inspector Wexford stories. St Ethelflaeda was abbess in 1003 and was famous for taking night time dips in the River Test. There is so much history here – the “Romsey Rose” that turned out to be an onion, the vicar Edward Berthon who founded Berthon’s Boatyard, a Titanic memorial – but the most recent is the grave of Lord Louis Mountbatten in the south transept, who was assassinated in 1979.



Romsey and the Test Valley

Many of these churches are within easy walking distance of one another and if you happen to come across another church on the way it’s almost certain to be worth a visit. The River Test is a magnet for visitors today and was obviously a much sought after place to live in from Saxon times onwards.



Copy link to get map: <https://tinyurl.com/mryrtazf>

King's Somborne, St Peter and St Paul

SO20 6PW

A 12th century village church with a lovely worshipping community. John of Gaunt's palace was nearby and a mound in the churchyard was possibly used as a butt for 13th century archery practice.

But at the base of a pillar in the south aisle some really unusual history: some graffiti or carvings just a metre above the floor. It is assumed these were devotional works of art by pilgrims moving towards the altar on their knees.



All Saints, Little Somborne

SO20 6QT

Now in the care of the Council for the Care of Churches, this lovely Anglo Saxon church was "modernised" by the Normans. At one time there was a small hermit's cell attached to the NE corner of the nave; this was occupied by Peter de Rivallis, who was later buried within the walls of Mottisfont Abbey, being known as "The Holy Man in the Wall".

Much more recently to the east of the church can be found the grave of Sir Tommy Sopwith who designed the Sopwith Pup and the Sopwith Camel biplanes; he died at the age of 101 in 1989.



Timsbury, St Andrew

SO51 0NE

The oft repeated myth that, in previous generations "all churches were full" is neatly disproved by this lovely 11th century building. Its pews give plenty of room for at least 50 worshippers but, in the 1861 census, as well as having a full time rector of its own, there were only 32 residents living in the parish.

A more recent rector decided to exercise his right to "perchery" on the nearby (very expensive) River Test. "Perchery" gives the priest the right to fish without hindrance. Except that he discovered the right had been extinguished along with tithes!

In 2014 a fire destroyed the tower and west end. Two years later, it had been restored and is now a lovely peaceful haven in which to and pray. A monument fell off the wall above the south door in the 1990s revealing a painting of Tudor Romsey. Much more has now been revealed along the whole south wall.



sit

St. Boniface, Nursling SO16 0YB

The present 14th Century church may be on the site of an earlier Benedictine monastery from 686 AD, famous for educating Winfrith (renamed by the Pope "Boniface") who became the German equivalent of St George.