

St Mary, Fawley – Rainbow Inn, Middle Assendon



St Mary, Fawley



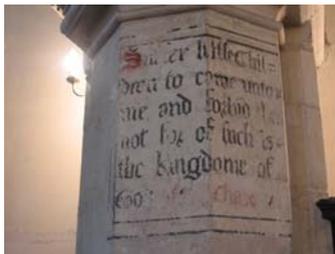
Fawley is a church mouse of a Chiltern village. The quietness would make a pin dropping sound like a peel of bells. It is incongruous therefore that what strikes you first about St Mary's is the huge, rather loud, Freeman mausoleum in the churchyard.

The location's unassuming nature makes the mausoleum, and another dedicated to the McKenzie family, seem somewhat out of place.



William Freeman was a London merchant with West Indian interests who purchased the Fawley estate in 1679. His nephew, an amateur architect, succeeded him and was responsible for designing and implementing changes to the church. He was for example responsible for the wood panelling that gives the church much of its 'elegant simple' character.

The pulpit was brought from a chapel near Stanmore and is ascribed to Grinling Gibbons. Two years after the reconstruction of the church in 1748 he designed the family mausoleum, built with Portland stone brought by river and hauled up the hill. William MacKenzie bought the estate in 1853 and his mausoleum was built in 1862.



The walk starts from the lane to the side of the church (1) signposted Fawley Bottom. The lane goes downhill, passing 'Church Field Cottage' and reaches a T junction where you turn right towards Jackson's Farm.

After 150 yards / 135 metres the road splits adjacent to a cottage. Keep straight on (marked cul de sac) and you start a long incline up a quiet lane. After just under a mile / 1250 metres you reach Bosmore Farm.

Continue past the farm and go through three wooden 5bar gates, turning left onto a footpath shortly after the third one. This wide track leads through a plantation (Annabelle's Wood).



Go through a gate and onward in the direction of a large white building. Cross over stiles and ½ right over a field to further stile.



Turn left into a lane and after a short distance, at a sign for 'Farm House Only', turn right. Walk past some barns and follow a track to the left of the farmhouse. You now follow this track for just under a mile / 1.6 kilometres enjoying the fine views.

Take note of the field boundaries on your left.

When you get to the third one, with an old 5bar next to a trough, the track ends and you must follow the hedge around to the right and down hill to a stile in the trees. Go over the stile and take the winding path downhill through Paradise Wood.

You eventually reach a larger track on which you continue to the road, turning left to Middle Assendon. Carry on until you reach the Rainbow Inn (2) where there is a good choice of unpretentious food accompanied by the local Brakspear's. On sunny days you can sit outside in the garden.

Leaving the Rainbow Inn, cross over the road and turn left along the lane signposted 'Fawley 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' opposite a row of rather unattractive bungalows.



You then quickly turn right behind a row of houses onto a footpath marked Oxfordshire Way. Go steeply uphill and the clearly marked path goes straight across a field to a hidden stile in the opposite hedge.

Now, going between two wooden fences, you get to another stile and return to the Turville Court Estate. Follow path F13 $\frac{1}{2}$ right across the next field to a stile next to a large wooden shed.

Continue to a lane, cross over and follow the Oxfordshire Way past a pond. After 250 yds / 225 mtrs turn left on path F4 over a stile and go to the right of a hedge and wire fence.

Continue over two stiles, then cross a field heading just to the right of large house and conservatory to another stile.

From that stile go $\frac{3}{4}$ right diagonally to the far corner of field and you will reach a stile. Cross the lane and continue on F4 with a gated gravel drive on your right. When you reach a large red gate on your right, turn left onto a footpath and follow this rough track to the lane where you turn right back to Fawley.

Location:

*SU 753867 Explorer Map 171
Chiltern Hills West*

Length:

5¼ miles / 8.5 kilometres

Terrain:

Initially downhill and then a long moderate climb on a very quiet lane, followed by open farmland and a steep incline from Middle Assendon

