

BADSEY SOCIETY WHIT WALK  
FRIDAY 1st JUNE 2012



Walk around Bretforton and it's not long before you realise that the village was originally owned as outlying farmland of Evesham Abbey. At the dissolution of the monasteries, the Manor was sold to the tenants and a new class of land-owning yeomen was set up. Some of the stone, or timber framed houses that were subsequently built, still stand today.

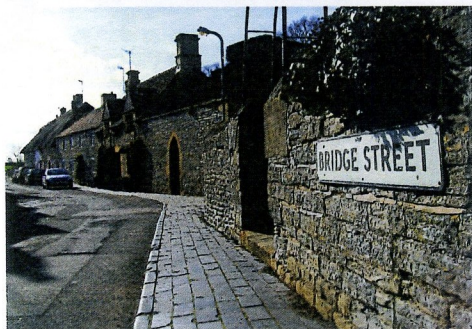
St. Leonards church was built on high ground in the 12th Century. It stands very attractive in the centre of the village and inside there are many antiquities, such as an Elizabethan altar. At one time, before Edward VI, there were five altars.

Buried in the churchyard are many descendants of the well known Ashwin families who once lived in the Manor House. Also, buried somewhere in the churchyard in the 1700s, lies a murder victim, who went to her grave with a hole in her skull, and a highway robber who went to his grave with one hand burnt by a branding iron, a common court punishment for theft in 18th Century England. In the 1860s, PC James Surrell, the village policeman, attended the divine service on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. Today, there is a band of bell ringers, a flower guild and a rota of people who ensure the church stays clean.





St Leonards, built on high ground and a very visible building in the village.



Bridge Street leading to the back end of the village., the start of our walk



This orchard is very old, and would have been very productive at the time the first Ordnance Survey was conducted. Notice how the surviving trees stand on the top of the grass ridges.



The remnants of what was an old building, lost through time. The building that stood many years ago, can be identified on the old Ordnance Survey Map.



An open view from Stoneford Lane, over to the Cotswold Hills. Seemingly unspoilt for centuries, this particular spot allows you to experience a wonderful open space in the English countryside.



Back Lane, on our return to Bretforton village. Years ago, the lane would have been just an old farm track for the horse and cart, later a lane for the tractor, and now a highway for many types of vehicles.



Market Gardening is never far away from view. This ground runs alongside the Brook, so typical of many parcels of Market Gardening land in the area.



A neat little public footpath over a stream, leads us along the way back to the centre of the village, past some really old houses.



When Evesham Abbey was ruined, Bretforton's Yeomen began building grand houses:



**The Manor House** was originally built in the 14th century, and then rebuilt around 1600, with local Cotswold stone. There is a priest hole in the library and lots of oak panelling adorning the rooms. The grounds contain the old village stocks, and a thatched barn. A half timbered dovecote still stands in the grounds, dating back to the 15th Century.



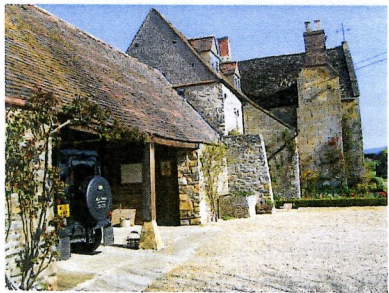
**The Fleece Inn** was originally built as a long house by a farmer named Byrd and remained in the ownership of the descending families for virtually the whole of its time. Initially, one end housed the animals, the other end the family. It has remained largely undisturbed in its architecture since the mid 17th century. Miss Lola Taplin, a direct descendant of the man who built the house, bequeathed it to The National Trust, making it the first pub in the country to be owned by the Charity



**Bretforton House Farm** was built from Cotswold stone in the 15th century. It was refurbished with a red brick frontage, giving it an appearance of the Georgian period. Interestingly, the barns adjoining the house, were built using the cheaper, lower lias stone, found around South Littleton.



**Bretforton Hall** is a Grade II British Listed Building, built in the late 18th century. A listed building means it has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of special architectural or historic interest.



**Top Farm House.** The main part of this Farmhouse was built from Cotswold stone, in the late 16th century.

We hope you have enjoyed yourselves this evening and thank you for accompanying us around Bretforton village and the surrounding footpaths.

If you have any ideas of where we should go on our next Whit Walk, we are always open to suggestions. Just get in touch with any one of our Committee Members, or email Valerie Magan, our Secretary, at [valeriemagan@googlemail.com](mailto:valeriemagan@googlemail.com).

We wish you a safe journey home.

Badsey Society

