

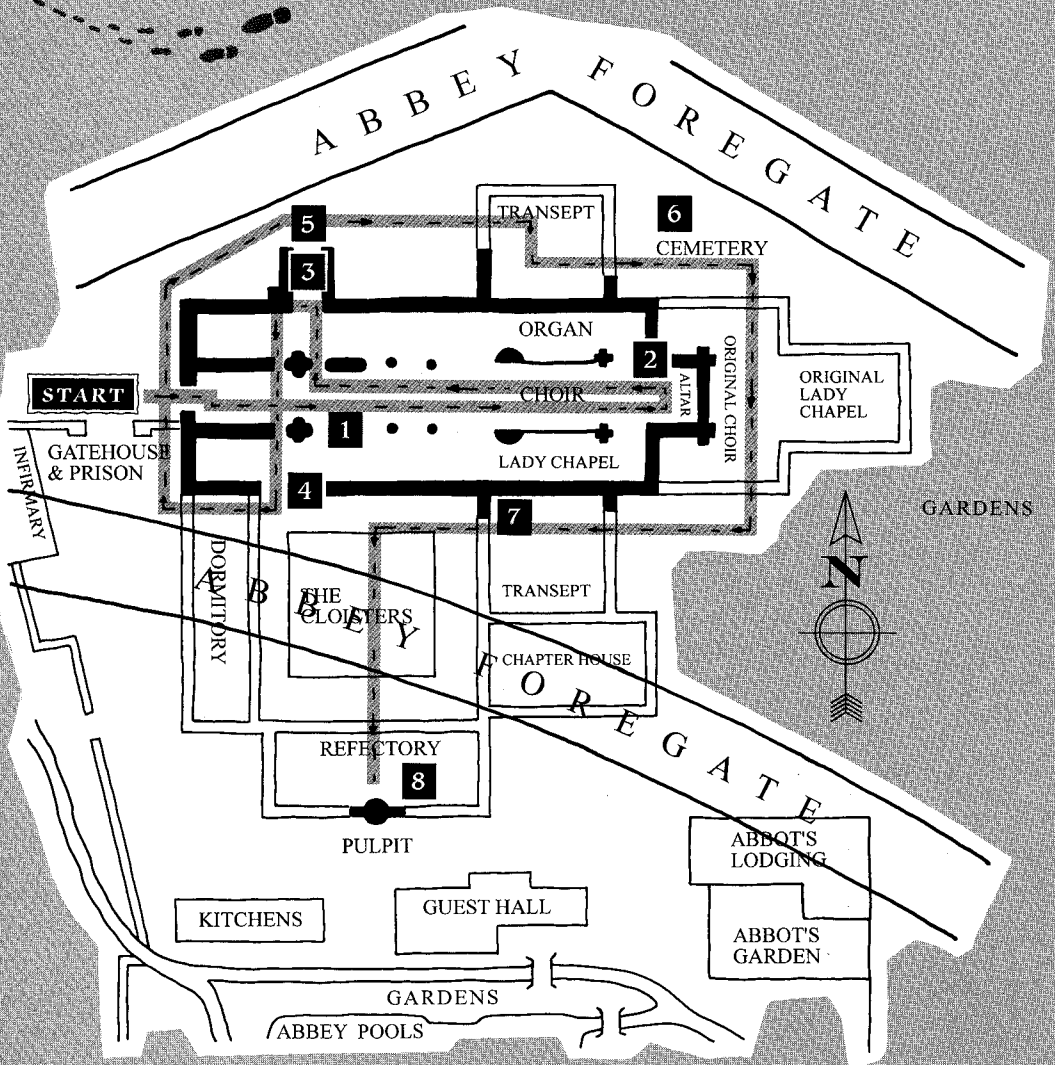
1 WALK

THE ABBEY ENCLAVE

DISTANCE ¼ mile

Brother Cadfael lived in the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter and St Paul. Within the abbey enclave, he worked peacefully in his garden and workshop; laboured in the infirmary amongst the sick and old; traversed the busy outer courtyard where daily business was conducted, and moved silently amongst the other monks in the cloisters, refectory and dormitory. Eight times a day, however, Brother Cadfael would make his way with the other monks to the abbey church for the services – Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. The church was the centre of life within the abbey.

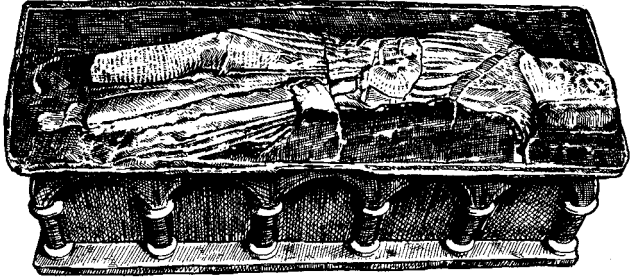
ABB EY F O R E G A T E



START

You are standing before the west door of the abbey church of St Peter and St Paul. The abbey enclave with its many buildings spread out to the south - to your right.

The abbey was founded in 1083 by Roger de Montgomery, kinsman of William the Conqueror. Roger was cared for by the monks during his last illness and was buried here in the church in 1094. In the south aisle you can see a carved tomb slab reputed to be a likeness of Roger de Montgomery, dating from the 13th century. By Brother Cadfael's time, the abbey was wealthy and had become an important place of pilgrimage. The abbey church was much larger than the church you see today. It had a north and south transept, forming the shape of a cross, and it was about a third again as long, with cloisters and other monastery buildings attached to its south side.



The west door still has its original Norman stonework. The door was never closed except in times of danger. The herb garden has been planted here in honour of Ellis Peters, creator of Brother Cadfael. To your right was the abbey gatehouse leading to the vast complex of abbey buildings.

T *Liliwin was pursued through the west door of the church (Sanctuary Sparrow). The small prison in the gatehouse held Meriet Aspley after his attack on Brother Jerome (Devil's Novice).*

I The western half of the nave was used by the ordinary people who lived in the Abbey Foregate area of Shrewsbury. The parish altar stood here, upon which was the reliquary of St Elerius, friend and benefactor of St Winifred. There was an alms box beside the altar. Because this part of the nave was used as a parish church, it was not destroyed when the abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1540.

T *Liliwin claimed sanctuary at this altar, and later married Rannilt here, with Father Adam officiating (Sanctuary Sparrow).*

A rood screen - a crucifix set into a carved wooden or stone partition - divided off the eastern half of the church which was used by the monks, who entered from the monastery buildings to the south. The north and south transepts - which formed the arms of the cross-shaped church - were to your left and right. They contained a number of chapels. This entire half of the church was demolished when the abbey was dissolved in 1540, and was partly restored in Victorian times. The transepts, however, have not been rebuilt. St Winifred's altar was also demolished, but a small section of stone carving,



reputedly from the shrine, is on display in the north aisle under the new St Winifred's window.

❖ *The south transept held St Winifred's altar, with her sacred bones kept in an oak coffin ornamented with silver and lined with lead. Brother Cadfael prepared perfumed oil for the lamp on St Winifred's altar using rose, lily, sage and rue. Scented candles were made by Brother Rhun in gratitude for his cure on the steps of her altar (Pilgrim of Hate). The mortuary chapel held the bodies of Thomas of Bristol (St Peter's Fair) and Drogo Bosiet (Hermit of Eyton Forest) before burial. Both Nicholas Faintree (One Corpse Too Many) and Gilbert Prestcote (Dead Man's Ransom) were buried in the transepts, an exceptional privilege. Liliwin and Rannilt hid behind a chapel altar to escape Brother Jerome (Sanctuary Sparrow).*



2 In Brother Cadfael's day the church extended another 120 ft (44 metres); the high altar was 80 ft (29.5 metres) further on and behind it lay the Lady Chapel. The monks' first two services of the day, Matins and Lauds, were held before dawn; the choir would have been lit by candles, with a lamp glimmering on the high altar. The monks were not allowed to talk in the church.

❖ *Matthew married Melangell at St Mary's altar in the Lady Chapel, with Brother Paul officiating (Pilgrim of Hate).*

3 The barrel-vaulted ceiling in the north porch dates from Brother Cadfael's time.

❖ *Cynric, the verger of the Holy Cross lived in the small room above the porch, where Father Adam robed and kept the church furnishings.*

4 Leave the abbey church by the south door. This doorway was used by the monks, entering from the cloister square, which was surrounded by two-storey buildings. The upper floor of the building which stood on this side of the cloister square was used as the monks' dormitory. Low panelled partitions divided the long room into cells.

❖ *Brother Cadfael's cell was next to the night-stair at this end. Prior Robert's cell was at the far end by the day-stair, along with Brother Paul's cell and the small room for the novices.*

If you would like to know more about the history of the abbey church, visit the Vestry here at the south door before continuing the walk.

5 The doorway of the north porch is Norman.

❖ *Cynric sat here in summer chatting to local children and befriending local dogs.*

6 You have just passed the spot where the north transept stood. The brothers of the abbey were buried at this east end of the church -

which extended another 120ft (44 metres). The vicars of the local parish were also buried here, somewhat removed from the monks.

6 *Father Adam and Father Ailnoth were laid to rest here, Father Ailnoth lying close under the wall (Raven in the Foregate). Away from the church were buried patrons, stewards and servants of the abbey. The unknown corpse from the Potter's Field was buried here (Potter's Field).*

7 You have just passed the spot where the south transept stood. You can see two alcoves into which cupboards were built.

7 *Brother Anselm kept his music manuscripts, portable organ and chests of books in cupboards built into alcoves.*

The cloister here against the wall of the church was used by the monks for reading, writing and meditation. Stone partitions formed separate bays - called carrels - for each monk. Each carrel would contain a bench and a sloping table for writing.

7 *Brother Humilis worked midway along the wall where the light lasted longest (Excellent Mystery). Other carrels were occupied by Brother Aelfric and Brother Haluin, the abbey's best illuminator.*

The cloisters, forming a square, had a turfed area in the centre, called a garth. The monks were allowed to talk within the cloisters at certain times of the day.

7 *Brother Cadfael washed the mud from Baldwin Peche's corpse in the stone basin in the centre of the cloister garth (Sanctuary Sparrow).*

Opposite the monks' dormitory was the chapter house. The monks assembled here each day to hear a chapter of the Rule of St Benedict read out, to conduct business, arrange special duties, confess faults and receive punishments.

7 *Brother Cadfael was wont to snooze behind one of the columns supporting the chapter house roof.*

8 You have crossed the main road built by Thomas Telford in 1836. Most of the abbey buildings had disappeared long before this date, and were pulled down to make way for the new road. However, the 14th century stone pulpit miraculously survived. This pulpit was built into the wall of the refectory, where the monks took their meals. In Brother Cadfael's day there would have been a pulpit - similar to this one, or perhaps less ornate - from which one brother would read aloud while his fellow monks ate in silence.

To continue your explorations of Brother Cadfael's abbey, visit "The Shrewsbury Quest", just a few steps along on the same side of the road. Incorporating original walls from the abbey buildings, parts of a medieval monastery have been reconstructed. You will discover Brother Cadfael's workshop as described in the Chronicles. His herb garden forms part of the recreated medieval monastic gardens, unique in England. And there is a mystery to solve if you can... You can also relax and sample the fine fare available throughout the day.

