

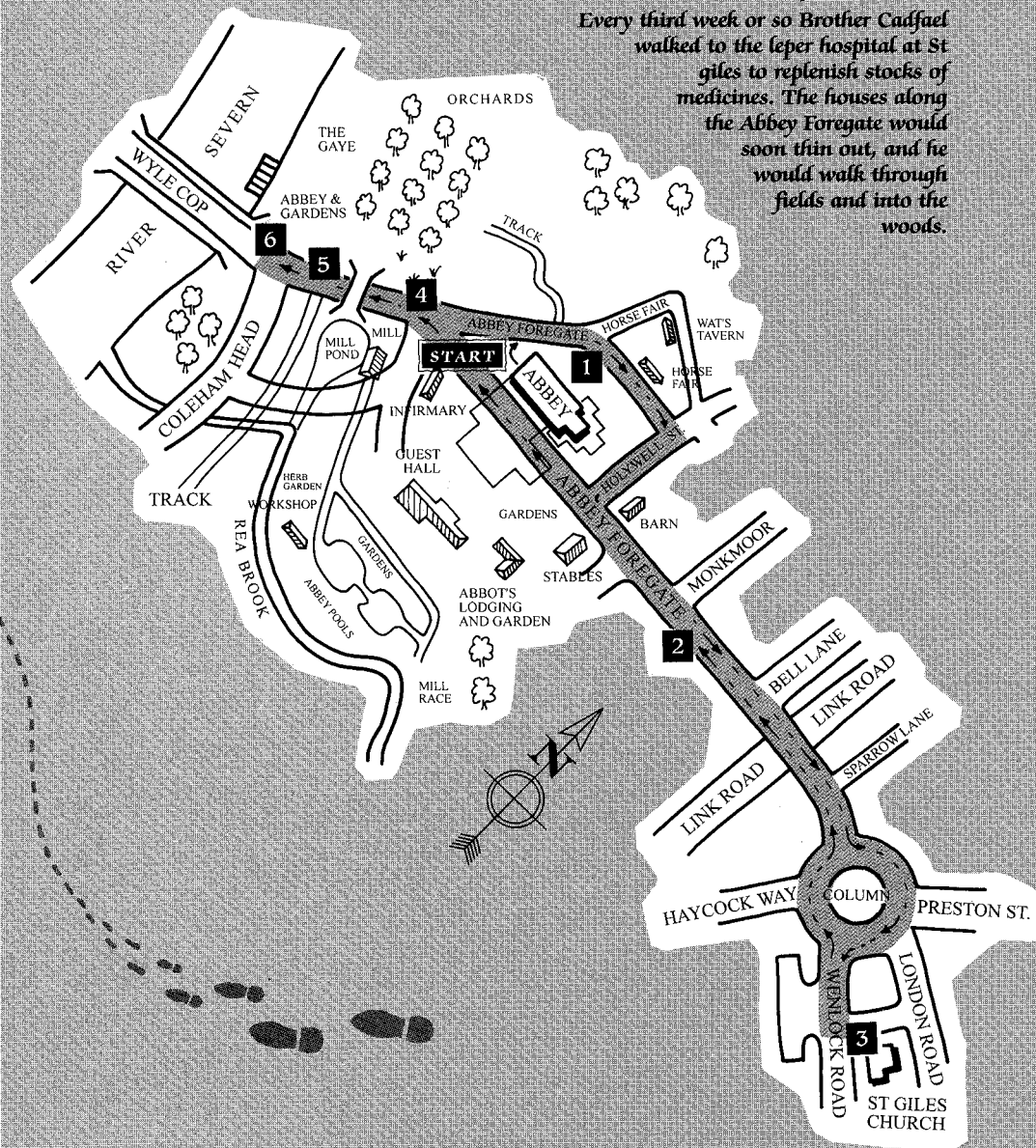
2 WALK

DISTANCE 1½ miles

ABBEY FOREGATE, ST GILES and THE GAYE

Most monks stayed within the abbey enclave. Brother Cadfael, however, was allowed to leave the enclave to minister to the sick in the town and to make journeys even further abroad.

Every third week or so Brother Cadfael walked to the leper hospital at St Giles to replenish stocks of medicines. The houses along the Abbey Foregate would soon thin out, and he would walk through fields and into the woods.



Based on the maps in the chronicles of Brother Cadfael.

START

The great west door of the abbey church still has Norman stonework. The ordinary people of the town used this door to enter the church. Moving round the church you reach the north porch, with its doorway dating from Norman times.

I *Opposite the north porch of the abbey church a narrow twisting lane led off the Foregate opening out into a small grassy space where local children played. Father Adam and later Father Ailnoth lived here in a small house (Raven in the Foregate).*

I You can now see the spot where the north transept used to stand, before it was pulled down when the Benedictine abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1540. The church was originally 120 ft (44 metres) longer; however, only the part of the church used by the ordinary people was allowed to remain after the dissolution.

One of the streets to the left of the Abbey Foregate is called Horse Fair; in Brother Cadfael's day there was a grassy triangle called The Horse Fair opposite the north transept of the abbey church. Every August the abbey held St Peter's Fair here. Merchants travelled from all over the country to the Fair - which was not entirely popular amongst the townspeople, as the town had its own rival fair.

I *At the far corner of The Horse Fair, on a quiet road leading north, Walter Renold kept his tavern. Turstan Fowler, having spent the evening at the inn, was found supposedly dead drunk among the Fair's stacked trestles and canvas awnings (St Peter's Fair).*


One of the back lanes off The Horse Fair led to the little wooden hovel of the Widow Nest, widow of a forester at Eyton. Here she looked after the baby girl left by her own daughter Eluned (Raven in the Foregate).

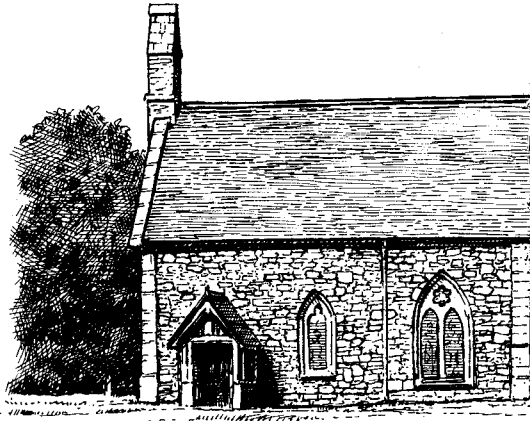
Opposite the abbey church stood the abbey forge, and the house, land and outbuildings of Thomas the farrier. Between the forge and Thomas' property was the house of Judith Perle. Her shop and workshop lay on the Foregate, with the house, garden and field behind. The body of Brother Eluric was discovered under a tall white rosebush in this garden. Judith Perle gave the property to the abbey to furnish goods for St Mary's altar. In return, she asked only a single rose each year from the bush - a request she was to bitterly regret... The abbey's tenant in the property was Niall Bronzesmith who made buttons, brooches and dishes in the workshop (Rose Rent).




The monks were buried at the east end of the church.

2 In Brother Cadfael's time the Abbey - or Monks - Foregate was the name given to an area of Shrewsbury belonging to the abbey itself. Rents, tolls and fines were paid directly to the abbey.

 *The house of Bishop Roger de Clinton of Coventry stood here. When Brother Cadfael passed by on a Monday afternoon in October 1139, people were gathering around the house (Leper of St Giles). Bishop Roger judged the case of Elave's heresy, and loaned his house to his friend Huon de Domville during the preparations for his marriage (Leper of St Giles).*



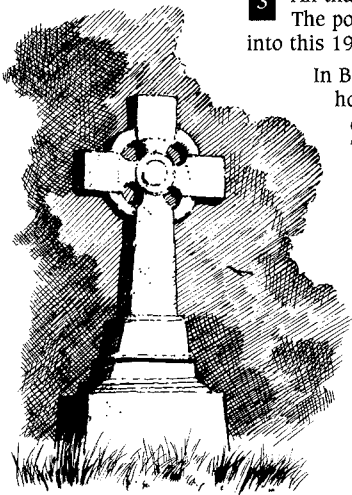
The road now called Wenlock Road was within the fringes of Long Forest in Brother Cadfael's day.

 *"Beyond the bishop's house the road opened between trees, leaving the town well behind; and at the fork, a bow-shot ahead, the long low roof of the hospice appeared, the wattled fence of its enclosure, and beyond again, the somewhat higher roof of the church, with a small, squat turret above... The buildings were set discreetly back from both roads... Lepers, as they may not go among the populous streets of the towns, must also keep their distance even to do their begging in the countryside" (Leper of St Giles).*

3 All that remains of the hospital of St Giles is the church. The porch and walls of the old leper hospital are incorporated into this 19th century building.


In Brother Cadfael's time St Giles was one of three hospitals in Shrewsbury. It was set back from the road on a grassy rise with a small church and a graveyard. There is still a medieval cross in the graveyard (medieval crosses are not necessarily cross-shaped; they have a carving of the crucifixion). This cross was restored and re-erected in the last century.

A 15th century socket in which a cross had stood was used as a pest basin in times of plague. Much trading went on in the churchyard, and coins from the towns people would be placed in the basin, filled with vinegar. Traders would then




pick up their “clean” money.

The hospital would also have had a barn, and the whole area would have been surrounded by a wall or fence.

 *Brother Mark came to serve here (Leper of St Giles) followed by Brother Oswin (Excellent Mystery). Brother Cadfael also worked here. Joscelin Lucy hid here, and those searching for him shunned the place because of fear of leprosy (Leper of St Giles). Brother Cadfael also saw Iveta de Massard here - the unwilling bride of Huon de Domville. She threw alms to Bran and Domville himself, who attacked an elderly leper (Leper of St Giles).*


The coffin of St Winifred lay on the altar of the church at St Giles on its way from Wales to the Abbey Church (Morbid Taste for Bones).

Now return along the Abbey Foregate.

 *Brother Cadfael walked this way with the procession bringing the coffin of St Winifred from Wales to the abbey church (Morbid Taste for Bones). Four years later the procession was repeated, and Brother Cadfael realised that the coffin was lighter... (Pilgrim of Hate).*

Just outside the south-eastern corner of the abbey enclave was the barn in which Brother Cadfael hid Edwin Gurney (Monk's Hood).

4 A track led down to the abbey's mill, on Mill Pond. The abbey had been granted the milling rights in Shrewsbury at its foundation in 1083. This led to centuries of ill-feeling between the abbey and the town as everybody had to pay the abbey for milling their corn.

 *Near the mill a wicket led through the wall into the abbey enclave, through which Brother Humilis was brought on his last journey (Excellent Mystery).*

Eluned and father Ailnoth drowned in the Mill Pond (Raven in the Foregate). Near the far shore, caught in the ice, Brother Mark found the vial of poison used to murder Gervase Bonel (Monk's Hood).

The miller's house and two other cottages stood on the track.


Aline Siward stayed in the miller's house, and Godith Adeney brought FitzAlan's treasure here (One Corpse Too Many). The Widow Warren, who was profoundly deaf, occupied the next cottage. Jordan Achard, the Foregate baker, paid an illicit visit to Widow Warren's maidservant on the night of Father Ailnoth's death (Raven in the Foregate). The cottage nearest the road had an elderly occupant,



who, like the Widow Warren, had purchased bed and board for life from the abbey by granting his own property to it.


On the far side of Mill Pond stood three more houses. The most northerly was occupied by Gervase Bonel and his family. Their plan was to grant the manor of Mallitū with its tenants to the abbey. In exchange, the abbey would give the house by Mill Pond, food, clothing and a fixed sum of money for necessities to Gervase Bonel and his wife for the rest of their lives. (*Monk's Hood*).

5 In Brother Cadfael's day this fertile area was known as the Gaye. Orchards set back from the river provided plums, apples, cherries and pears for the abbey, together with soft fruits such as strawberries and gooseberries. Vegetables were also grown here.

 At the far end of the Gaye, opposite the castle, stood the second abbey mill. The mill was in disrepair, having been abandoned during the siege of Shrewsbury. Brother Cadfael and Godith Adeney hid Torold Blund in this mill (*One Corpse Too Many*).

Further still downriver Brother Cadfael found the corpse of Baldwin Peche (Sanctuary Sparrow) and Aldwin's body (Heretic's Apprentice).

6 You have now descended into the Abbey Gardens.

 The trees and bushes fringing the river proved a useful hiding place for Elave (Heretic's Apprentice) and Philip Corviser hid here to recover from his revelry (*St Peter's Fair*).

A temporary jetty stood at the river bank where merchants' barges tied up during St Peter's Fair. The young bloods of the town started a riot here when trying to enlist the merchants' help in their struggle with the abbey over the income from the Fair (*St Peter's Fair*).

The Abbey Gardens are a pleasant place to rest at the end of this walk.

