

# Stage 2

## Bridford to Christow

**Start:** St Thomas Becket, Bridford (EX6 7HT)  
Parking in the Village Hall car park behind the church, accessed via Oxenpark Gate road above the church

**End:** St James', Christow (EX6 7LZ)

**Distance:** 2.8 miles (4.5 km)

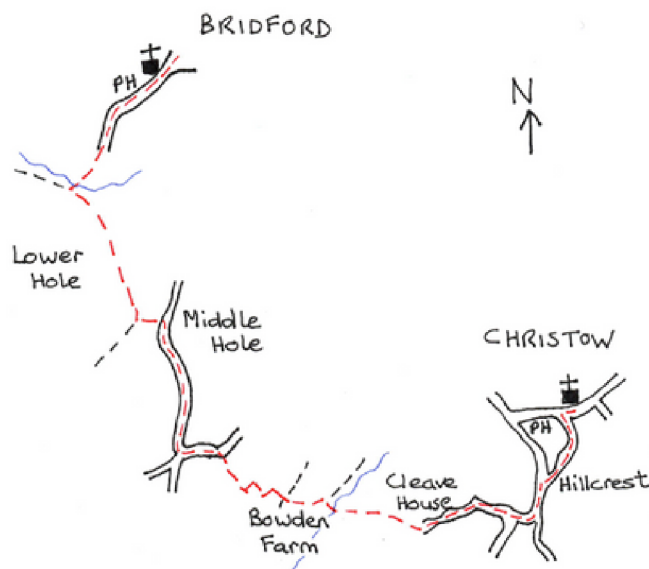
**Time:** Approximately 1½ hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate



### Overview

This is a lovely walk along wooded footpaths and beside tumbling brooks. It passes through working farmyards and across crop-filled fields. It is a gentle walk with no steep inclines or descents, giving the pilgrim plenty of time to admire the views and explore the flower strewn hedgerows and listen to the prolific bird song.



## St Thomas Becket, Bridford

Open 8am - 5pm



### Reading Genesis 1:6-8

'And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.'

### Meditation

Order out of chaos; form from inchoate mass. Who has the power to conceive creation, and formulate the blueprint of life? Who discerns the potential of being alive and being human? Who assembles the building blocks of life in the proper sequence for flourishing?

God separates water from water; God calls it by name and gives it identity. 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you' (*Isaiah 43:1-2*). God calls each of us out from the chaos and gives us a name; God sees the potential within us and invites us to come and see.

God creates space; space that gives room for choice. For Adam and Eve the choice was one of obedience; for Mary and for us the choice is of accepting God's invitation. Thomas Becket had to choose between serving church or state; who do we serve?

When we say 'Yes' we open ourselves to the power of the God who turns the waters of chaos into sea and sky; who turns water into wine; who turns wine into his own blood. How does God transform us?

### Prayer

Spirit of the living God,  
fall afresh on me.  
Melt me, mould me,  
fill me, use me.  
Spirit of the living God,  
fall afresh on me.  
Amen.

## Directions

Leave **St Thomas Becket Church** by the south entrance and descend the stone steps. Turn right, left and right again.

Pass the Bridford Inn on your right, stopping for light refreshments if you wish, and head along the road and track in a westerly direction.

Bear right at The Old Rectory and follow the bridleway for ¼ mile. Shortly after entering the woodland, you will see a gate ahead of you, but instead bear left along the bridleway signposted for Middle Hole. Continue uphill for just over ¼ mile and continue along the bridleway through Lower Hole Farm.

Continue uphill for 150yds and ignore a narrow gate on the left. Shortly after turn left through a wooden gate signposted 'Bridleway to Middle Hole' and descend quietly through the farm.

When you reach the road turn right. Follow the quiet road for ⅓ mile to the T-junction with Commons Hill and turn left.

After 100yds look for a metal field gate on your right and note the finger post indicating this is a Bridleway.

### Main route

Ignore the stile on your right and instead pass through the metal gate and continue across the field in a south-easterly direction to a metal gate in the far-left hand corner. Pass through the metal gate and turn right.

### Detour

If there is stock in the field continue along the road and take Bowden Farm track to the right.

Continue along this track and pick up the main route as follows.

Follow the farm access road which bends to the left then right, and pass through two sets of normally open metal gates. Pass through Bowden farmyard, with the house on your right.

Look for a wooden gate (with a green oil tank alongside it) leading on to an extension of the bridleway and continue in an easterly direction. In about ½ mile note the rarely seen all red brick house on your left with an even rarer mulberry tree growing in the front lawn.



### Hi-vis

Keep following this road down for ⅓ mile. At the next T-junction turn left down Butts Lane. At the next junction, you will see a white detached house in the fork of the road.

### Main route

For directions to the church, bear right at this fork onto Church Lane, then turn right at the bottom of the hill where you will see the church ahead of you.

### Detour

If you wish to visit the Artichoke Inn for some refreshment, take the left fork here and follow the road around for 400yds where you will find the pub on your right.

Exit the pub and turn right onto Village Road towards the church.

Arrive at **St James' Church, Christow**, with its stained-glass portrait of St James clutching a scallop shell (the international symbol for a pilgrim). Rest and relax as you meditate for a while.