



# CHURCHYARD TRAIL

1: From the Porch walk to the gate (originally needed to keep out drovers' animals! ). Turn round. Gently pinch the leaf of a plant on either side and smell your fingers. Can you name this plant? - - -

2: To your right on the church wall above the seat is a memorial to Capt Ian Strang, a soldier and artist. Some of his work is in the Tate and National Portrait Galleries. There are three of his etchings in the church. How old was he when he died? - - - -

3. Not everyone who dies is placed in a grave. Tablets on the ground just beyond the flagpole cover the ashes of some whose bodies have been cremated. How many tablets can you see here? - - - -

4: On your right is the War Memorial. Poppies are laid here on 11<sup>th</sup> November each year to remember those who lost their lives in the two world wars. When did the 'Great War' begin and end? - - - -



5: Walk round the east end of the church to the north side. About half way along a slab covers the entrance to a Hoare family vault. This has had to be filled in to support the church floor above. Do you know where the family seat of the Hoare family is in Wiltshire? - - - - -

6 It is believed that George Brown was an atheist buried in unconsecrated ground outside the original churchyard. However, it now lies in the extended churchyard on your right. His grave is about 20 paces diagonally from the entry at the corner ahead. In what year did he die? - - - - -

7: Continue round to the church tower which houses six bells. Sit on the seat near here and look at the tower. If each section of the rainwater pipe is 2 metres long. Approximately how high is it? - - - - -

8 The oldest headstones in the churchyard were made of soft local stone and names and dates have crumbled away. Later, harder stone was brought in by easier transport. On the stonework are tiny plants called lichens.



In this area is a special gravestone like this. What is the name on this stone? - - - - -

9: Next to the road are large native yew trees. These are slow growing, long-lived and often found where there are no farm animals to eat the narrow poisonous leaves. At one time Christians carried yew branches in procession at major festivals especially Palm Sunday., 'Deciduous' broad-leaved trees lose their leaves in winter: What are conifers like yew called because they keep their leaves in winter? - - - - -

10. The stone column next to the tower is probably the remains of an old Churchyard Cross. Used in the past to mark holy ground, some even predate the construction of a church building. They also served to mark areas having simple or unmarked graves. Large congregations gathered around such crosses on special occasions if the church was too small. How many sides has its 'Calvary' base? - - - - -

11: Next to the church path is a tree planted in 1977 to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Look at its leaves. What sort of tree is it? - - - - -



12: Return to the porch. The tiled pattern on the floor shows two overlapping rectangles. These represent earth and heaven, or the human and divine. Where they overlap is a cross. This is a symbol for Jesus, who is present in both areas. How many black tiles make up the two rectangles? - - - - -

## ANSWERS & COMMENTS

1: Lavender. Commonly grown in gardens, it is also grown commercially for the extraction of essential oil. The ancient Greeks called it *nard* after the Syrian city of Naarda, It was one of the holy herbs used in the Jerusalem Temple to prepare the holy essence

2 65 – just short of his 66 birthday

3: About 40

4: It began in 1914 and ended in 1918, but some memorials give 1919 if any of those named died later of their wounds.

5: Stourhead

6: 1918

7: 22m. The height can also be estimated by holding a pencil at arm's length with the point at the top of the tower and a thumb marking the bottom; then turning the pencil sideways (keeping the thumb in the same place) and measuring from the tower to the spot on the ground indicated by the point

8: E S Collins. This is a standard design, used for people killed in war. Similar gravestones can be found in churchyards all over the country and in War Department cemeteries in France and Belgium.

[Of over 1700 British species of lichen, 300 have been found growing on churchyard stone in lowland England. They are made up of a small plant (an alga) and a fungus growing together. They often form mosaics of colour and vary in form from simple powdery scatterings and crusts to more elaborate leafy or even bushy structures.]

9: Evergreen. The wood of a yew tree is very hard and was used extensively in medieval times for making long-bows and other tools and weapons.

10: Eight. Recent building work revealed there were unmarked graves of young people in the area on which the church tower was later built.

12: Oak. This tree is said to be a cultivar from Windsor Great Park

12. Thirty-eight. (Eight sides of 5, less 2 duplicate intersections). The pattern is similar to a Venn diagram formed by two overlapping circles that create an almond (Mandela) shape traditionally used to frame holy figures in windows.



# St.Mary's Wavendon

## THE CHURCHYARD

The primary purpose of a churchyard is as a burial place. This special use means that it is likely to be preserved even if other parts of the local area undergo redevelopment. The churchyard can therefore remain as a haven and safe habitat for wildlife – an aspect quite in keeping with its primary purpose as a place of rest.

The churchyard should therefore be:-

- A pleasant , reflective place for congregation and visitors;
- An environment in keeping with the function of burial and interment of cremated remains;
- A fit setting for the church;
- A haven for grasses, wild flowers, birds and other wildlife.

The trail inside this leaflet takes you round St.Mary's churchyard and explains some of the more interesting items to be seen. Please feel free to explore other areas, but be sensitive to those who have relations buried here. Take care and think about any likely hazards you may encounter: in places the ground is uneven, there are old roots and other debris, and some of the plants, particularly yew, are toxic.

Youngsters (of any age!) may like to answer the questions.