

## Other things to see in and around Buckingham

### Buckingham Town Trail

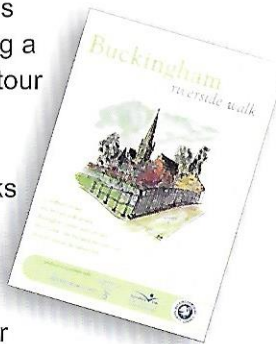
A leaflet available at the Old Gaol Museum describes a walk through this ancient and historic town.



*The Old Gaol Museum, Shop and Tourist Information Centre*

### Buckingham Riverside Walk

A separate leaflet is available describing a combined circular tour and riverside walk through Buckingham's parks and along the Great River Ouse.



Leaflets and further information from the Old Gaol Museum/Tourist Information Centre, telephone 01280 823020.

### Stowe Landscape Gardens

Three miles north of Buckingham the National Trust owns 320 acres of magnificent landscape gardens, and a further 1000 acres of parkland. The grounds are designed with lakes, pasture and wooded valleys and are adorned with over thirty temples and monuments. Call 01280 822850 for details of opening times and for tours around the 18th century House which is occupied by Stowe School.



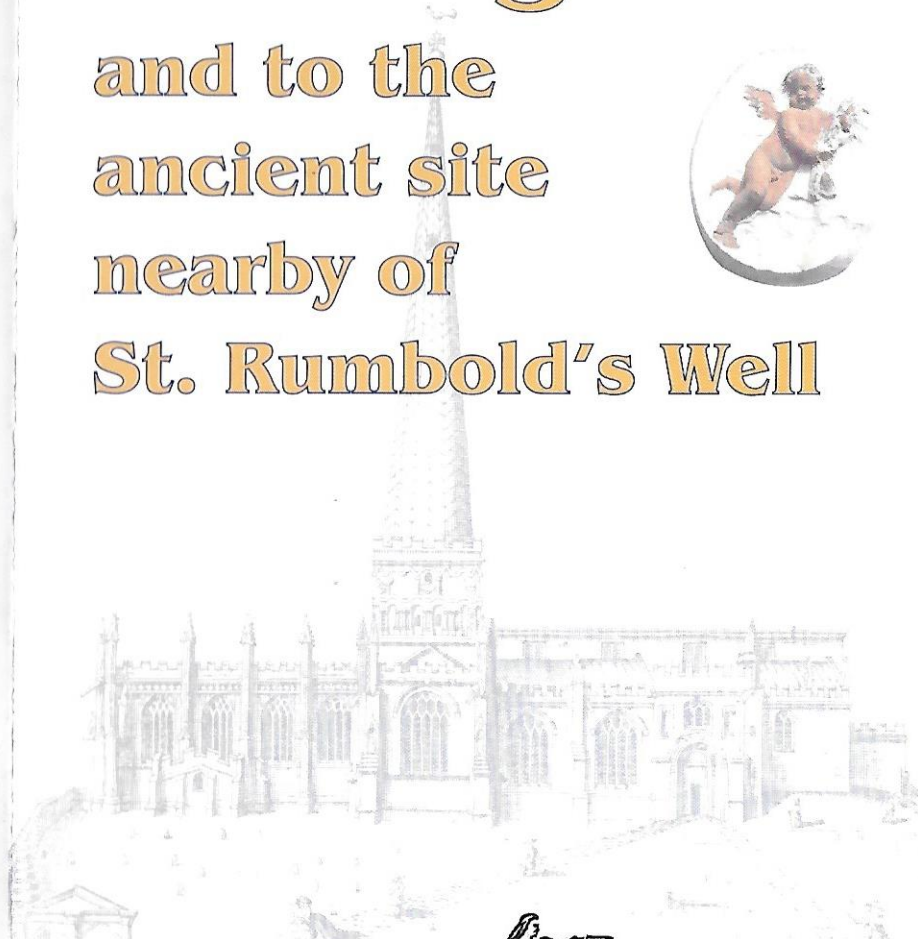
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Limited parking for the start of St. Rumbold's Ramble may be available around the Church. Stout footwear is recommended, especially if there has been wet weather.

### Acknowledgements

The text for this leaflet was written by Rodney Shirley with pictures by Dennis G Osborne, John Credland and Barbara Shirley  
Published by The Buckingham Society © 2004

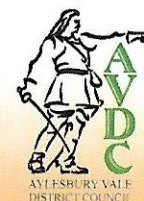
# A short walk through Buckingham and to the ancient site nearby of St. Rumbold's Well



Produced in association with



The Buckingham Society



AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Buckingham's old church*

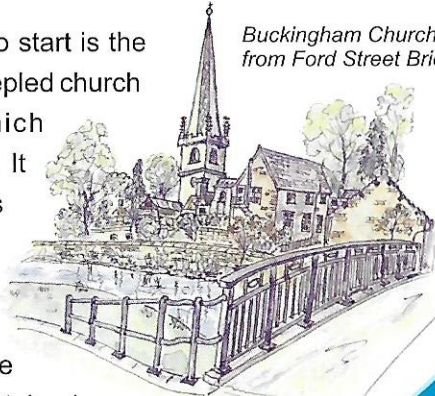


St. Rumbold's Ramble

# St. Rumbold's Ramble

**1** A good place to start is the entrance to the fine steeped church of Buckingham which stands on Castle Hill. It was built in the 1770s and re-modelled by George Gilbert Scott in 1860. Have a look inside and admire the high quality Victorian stained-glass windows. Possibly in Anglo-Saxon times there was a much smaller church here, an adjunct to the long-vanished Castle, and where St. Rumbold would have been remembered.

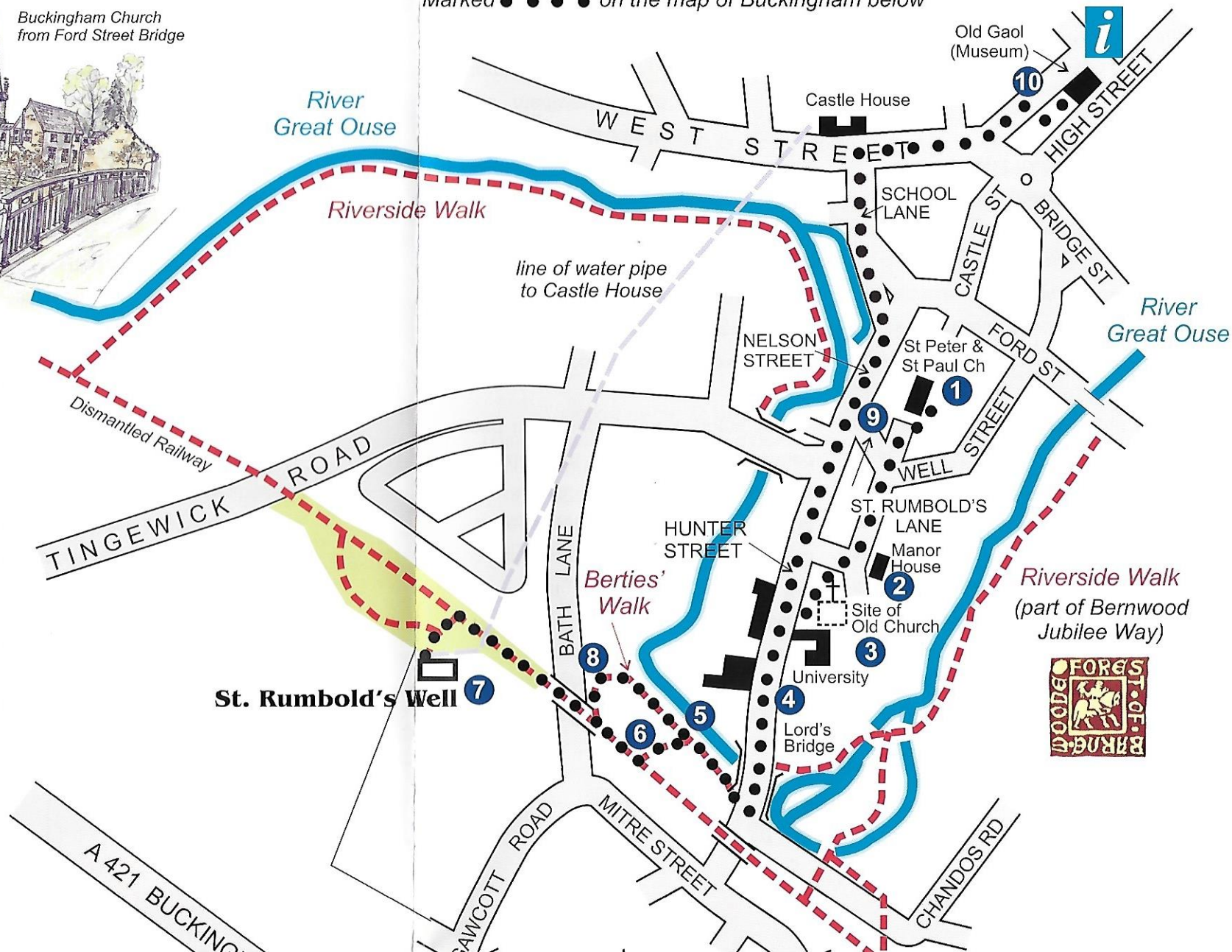
*Buckingham Church from Ford Street Bridge*



**2** Turn right out of the entrance down the hill into Church Street. Originally it was part of St. Rumbold's Lane and named as such. Walk towards the Old Churchyard and after 100 yards note on the left the Elizabethan half-timbered Manor House. There is an image of a baby cherub on the wall facing you which is fancifully said to be of St. Rumbold himself.



Marked ● ● ● ● on the map of Buckingham below



The Manor House

To the left of the Manor House is Twisted Chimney House, also Elizabethan, which boasts a rare twisted brick chimney.

**3** The site of the previous church of Buckingham was in the Old Churchyard until 1776 when the spire collapsed and a new church was built on Castle Hill.

Medieval records show that the old church contained the tomb and shrine of the infant Saint Rumbold. Note the recently-erected memorial to him which says

NEAR THIS SPOT WITHIN THE OLD CHURCH OF BUCKINGHAM WAS THE TOMB AND SHRINE OF THE INFANT SAINT RUMBOLD WHO LIVED AND DIED c.650 AD

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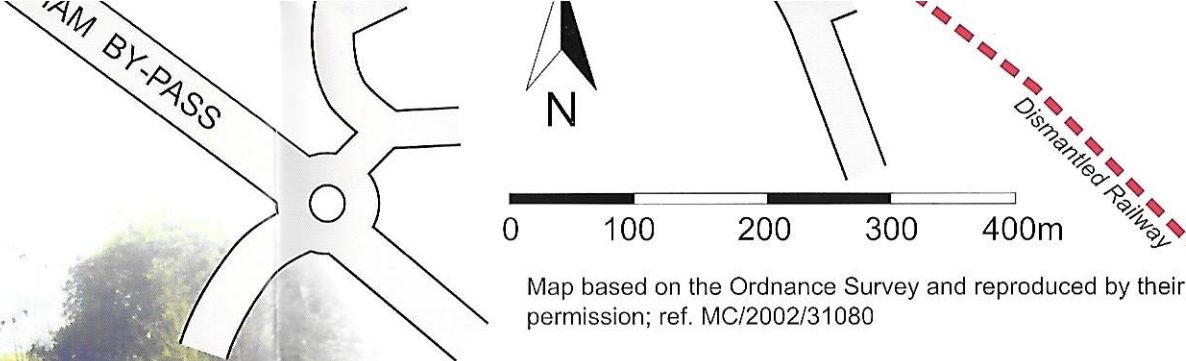
**4** The ramble takes you diagonally across the Old Churchyard to the area of the town known as Prebend End. It is now the precinct of the independent University of Buckingham.



Lord's Bridge

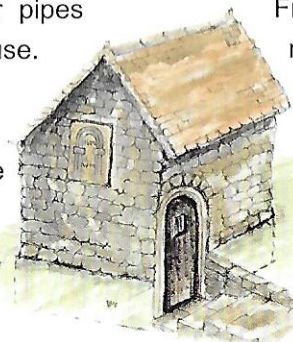
**5** Immediately after crossing Lord's Bridge (pleasant views from either parapet) turn right into Berties' Walk, named after two residents of a previous generation who gardened here. The Walk is initially along the bank of the River Great Ouse, then up to the left until you meet the line of the disused railway which ran from Buckingham to Banbury.

**6** Turn right, and after about ¼ mile take the path on the left up the stepped railway bank to a stile which leads to the site of St. Rumbold's Well. In wet weather water from the well may flow onto the railway path – known locally as 'St. Rumbold's revenge'.



**7** The site is marked as a circular well on Speed's map of Buckingham (1610). In 1623 a conduit house was built over the Well and lead water pipes were laid to Castle House.

The present ruins are of the conduit house and for most of the year no water is visible because the general water level has fallen. There is a good information board at the site, and medieval 'ridge and furrow' evidence can be seen in the adjacent field.



How the Conduit House might have looked

**8** Retracing your steps to the railway line walk, just after crossing the first bridge turn down the stepped path on the left. This leads into Bath Lane perhaps where pilgrims who had visited the Well to take the curative waters took the opportunity to wash. Return by Berties' Walk to Prebend End and into Hunter Street which leads into Nelson Street.

**9** Off Nelson Street on the right is St. Rumbold's Lane, with a piece of black carved woodwork, reputedly from the old church, built into the corner of house no.7. From St. Rumbold's Lane either return to the present-day church, or continue along Nelson Street, then turn into School Lane to the left which leads directly to the 17<sup>th</sup> century front of Castle House.

**10** From either the church or from Castle House is only a short walk to the centre of Buckingham and to the Old Gaol Museum which also houses an Information Centre.



Castle House

# The strange tale of St. Rumbold of Buckingham

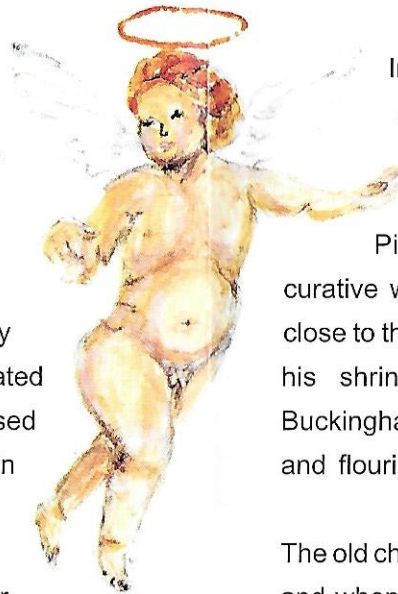
**A**ccording to legendary history, St. Rumbold (or St. Rumwold or St. Rumwald) was born in about 650 AD in a field near Astrop, King's Sutton – 12 miles west of Buckingham. His parents were royal members of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia. At that time relatively few inhabitants of England were Christian.

Rumbold was precocious from the start, declaring in a loud voice three times "I am a Christian" and seeking Christian baptism.



There were immediate problems in finding a baptismal font. A suitable bowl-shaped stone in a hut nearby was found miraculously easily, and Rumbold was baptised. Very soon afterwards he celebrated his first mass. The supposed original font can still be seen in King's Sutton church.

Next day Rumbold further astounded everyone by preaching a sermon on Christian virtues and the Trinity. On the third day Rumbold foretold his death, saying that he wanted to be buried where he was born for one year, then at Brackley for two years and then for all time at a place which would later be known as Buckingham. All this came about according to an early manuscript of 1086, probably compiled by Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, one of the few Anglo-Saxon bishops in a Church packed by Norman appointees.



In the Middle Ages there was an important St. Rumbold's shrine and tomb in the old church of Buckingham. Pilgrims came to take the curative waters of St. Rumbold's Well close to the town and then to worship at his shrine. The earliest inns of Buckingham were reputedly founded and flourished on the pilgrims' trade.

The old church steeple fell down in 1776 and when the present-day church was built on Castle Hill nothing, regrettably, of the infant saint's resting place seems to have been transferred. In the old churchyard there is a recent memorial to St. Rumbold marking the probable site of his medieval shrine and tomb.

The ancient site of St. Rumbold's Well, about 1/4 of a mile to the south-west of the town, has

recently been protected and partly restored. The interior appears dry because the water level has fallen. There is now easier access by means of steps from the walk along the disused railway, and an information board has been put up nearby.

The infant St. Rumbold is a curious survival from the long-distant past – over 1350 years ago. But at one time he was a significant cult figure in the history of the town and the Church. It seems appropriate to remember him today through his memorial in the old churchyard, and the restored well site, as a continuing part of Buckingham's historical and tourist scene.

