



Robert Frost (another American poet) wrote the poem 'The Road Not Taken', the first two verses of which go as follows:

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,*

It's a poem about choices. Sometimes we agonise about choices we need to make, or regret ones we have made. The worry is about the future and the regret is about the past. This walk is trying to help us live in the present.

When you are ready, take one of the paths. It doesn't matter which – they come together again after a while! After the two paths rejoin, continue along the path until

you come to the path down the side of the field you walked along earlier.



Turn to the left and walk past the big fallen tree (now on your left) until you come to the fallen tree you sat down on at the beginning of the walk. Sit again for a moment and in your mind retrace the walk, down over the stream, up to and along the line of oaks, past the house and the old oak, into the wood, over the bridge and up to the spot where the paths diverged then rejoined. What thoughts and feelings has this walk has brought up for you?

When you are ready continue along the path, retracing your steps from earlier: turning right and then passing the barrier, walking along to the crossroads and turning left, walking back up to the church to where you began.

**St John the Baptist, Outwood is part of  
the Windmill United Benefice**  
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The production of this leaflet has been made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## St John the Baptist, Outwood A reflective walk

*This walk is about a mile long, from and back to the church. The ground is undulating and parts of it can get very muddy when wet. You could walk it in half of an hour but the idea is to walk more slowly, taking in the sights and sounds and considering the thoughts that arise from them.*

From the church porch walk through the churchyard with the church on your left. At the wall and the tap, walk down the path with the wall on your left, go through the gate in the hedge, turn right and then left onto the track. Walk down the track for about 100 yards to the crossroads and take the right-hand track. As the track bends to the left going to Slate Cottage, take the earth path that leads off to the right. About 50 yards past the wooden barrier take the first path on the left (if wet, take the second left-hand path, 15 yards further on). Walk down either path until you come to a felled tree on the path.





Sit here and pause for a moment. Be aware of the sounds around you, the birds, the traffic in the distance, maybe the planes and any other sounds. Be aware of the trees all around you. In both children's and adult literature (from Snow White to Shakespeare), a journey into a wood often symbolises a process of personal discovery and growth. As you sit on the trunk make a conscious decision to continue the walk mindfully, to walk *in* the wood not *through* the wood.

When you are ready continue down the path. Soon you will come to another felled tree on your right. Pause to look at the rings (faint, but visible), each ring a year of the tree's life. Reflect for a moment on the years of your own life.

When you are ready walk on down the path. Follow the path round to the left and as the path slopes down into the dip, look back at the trees in the field beside the path.



The American poet Joyce Kilmer wrote a poem about trees, it begins: *I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree*. Pause and reflect on those words.

When you are ready follow the path down over the little stream and walk up between the fields to the line of oaks. Take the right hand path and follow the line of three oaks, being aware of each tree as you pass it.



Go through the metal gate, up the track and onto the road, walking past the house and the National Trust estate office. On the left, just past the fence of the estate office, stands and old oak.



In Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* the Ents are a tree-like race. Treebeard, one of the Ents, tells the hobbits about the Entish language:

*It's a lovely language, but it takes a very long time to say anything in it, because we do not say anything in it unless it is worth taking a long time to say and to listen to.*

Stand for a moment looking at the old oak. What might it be saying to you?

When you are ready follow the path into the wood opposite the old oak, down the side of the estate office fence then turning to your right so you are walking behind the estate office grounds. The path drops down towards the stream and to a wooden bridge.



Cross the bridge and walk up the bank to a felled tree and a path running to your left and right. Turn to right and follow the path round to the left. After a while there is another felled tree and a fork in the paths. The path to the right, which follows more closely the path of the stream below is narrower and a bit more uneven than the left hand one.