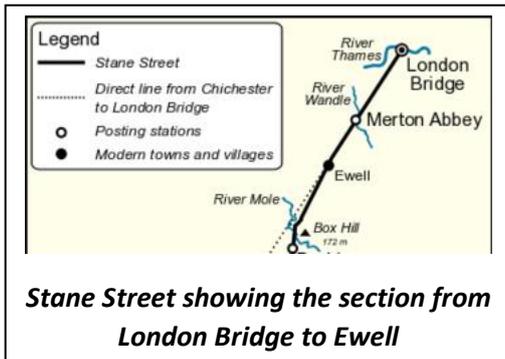


## Pilgrim's Progress: Morning of Day One :

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL TO EPSOM. 15 MILES.



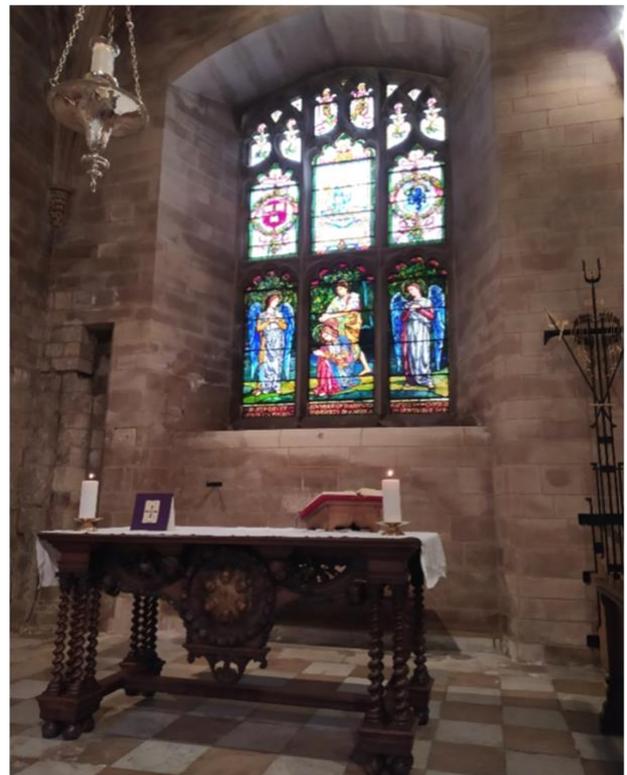
**Psalm 32 v 8** *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."*

As stated in the introduction, there is no official Pilgrims' Way from Southwark Cathedral to Epsom, which is where I hoped to finish at the end of Day one. However, a Roman road known as Stane Street ran from London Bridge to Chichester, was still in use in the Middle Ages, and one section covered as far as Ewell, which no doubt any pilgrim from London to Winchester would have used.

We have no idea what the Roman name for the road was. The word "Stane" comes from a Nordic word for stone - "steinn". The word was used to describe the paved Roman roads as opposed to the usual trackways in Britain, which would have resembled more closely the somewhat prone to mud paths across Wimbledon Common. The first written reference we have to it being called this is in mediaeval documents from the 1270's, where it is referred to as "Stanstret" (meaning stone street) . Anyway, history aside, the first phase of it, from London Bridge to Ewell still exists under the modern roads, except where it wiggles off the main road at Colliers wood onto footpaths behind Sainsbury's to the old Merton priory site and then across Morden hall Park to the Morden roundabout. This meant I could follow the line of the old Roman road as far as Ewell and then walk on from there to Epsom, fairly confident that I would have been more or less following the route any mediaeval pilgrim would have sensibly taken in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century when heading for Winchester. Route



planned, I set off for my starting point at Southwark, courtesy of the Northern line underground to London Bridge. I arrived at the Cathedral at 8.15 well in time for the first Eucharist of the day, to find the Cathedral tower clock was showing 12.00, so I guess it has been stuck for some time!



The Cathedral's first weekday Eucharist service is at 8.30am. There were only four of us. The celebrant, the vergers and two in the congregation. It seemed a good way to begin by bringing before God the pilgrimage I was about to undertake and ask for his blessing. I knew the Dean, Andrew Nunn, from his time as Warden of Readers , but as he was out of the country returning from an ecumenical journey in the Holy land, I was sure that the sacrament would stand instead of the usual clerical blessing one seeks at the start of a pilgrimage.

*The Harvard chapel that morning - gloriously peaceful.*

The journey began not at the Harvard chapel, however, but at the splendid tomb of Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) who is buried in Southwark Cathedral, on the south side of the high altar.



He became Dean of Westminster in 1601, was consecrated a Bishop in 1605 to the see of Chichester, then was translated to Ely, finally being made Bishop of Winchester in 1617. The palace of the bishops of Winchester was near to Southwark Cathedral (at that time St. Saviour's church) and a ruined part of it can still be seen around the corner. Andrewes was also on the committee to translate the King James Bible and a major contributor to that work – in that context our family has a personal connection with him, because a clerical ancestor of my husband worked with Lancelot Andrewes on the translation of Genesis and

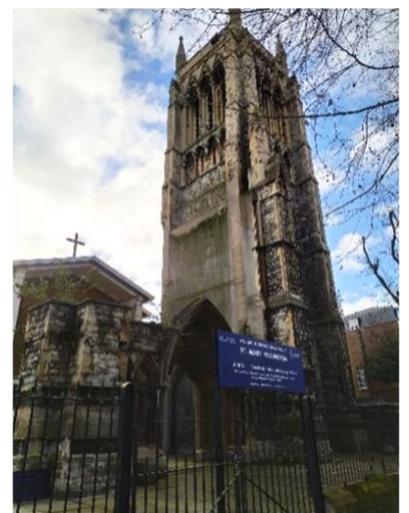
Exodus. I lit a candle there, since as Bishop Andrewes was connected to both Southwark and Winchester his tomb seemed a very appropriate place to begin a Pilgrimage from one to the other.



I began walking at 9.06am, accosting a passer-by with a request to provide photographic evidence of my start from the cathedral. The weather was fine, and I made good progress through the Market and on down Borough High Street passing St George the Martyr Church at 9.15am (right) and walking on towards Kennington. The trickiest bit, oddly enough, was traversing the intricacies of the Elephant and Castle intersections, which are not really designed for pedestrians; it is necessary to negotiate a veritable myriad of traffic lights, while keeping your eyes fixed on the road you are eventually heading for!



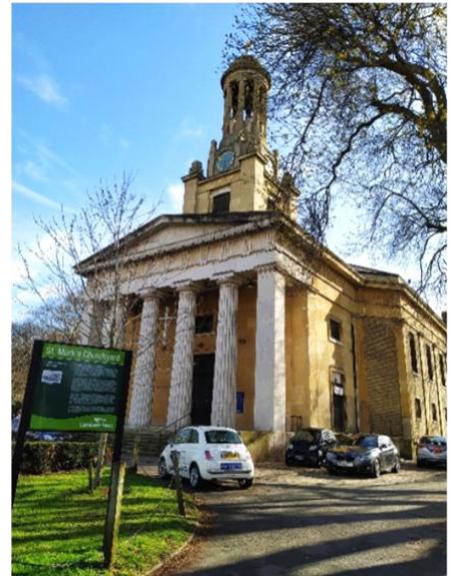
Finally, I made it to Newington Butts, passing the old tower and new church of St Mary Newington, just before Kennington Station, (and a favourite restaurant of my husband's - the Toulouse Lautrec, on the right). St Mary's, Newington, was under the diocese of Winchester until 1877, but has a much earlier foundation than that. There is a list of rectors going back to 1212, the first recorded being a "Roger de Sussex". The original early mediaeval church may not have stood exactly where this one does, but in fact the church has been subject to several rebuilds over the centuries and its site shifted slightly each time. The burial ground remains but the current church with the cross on its roof is in fact modern. This is because most of the church built in 1876 was destroyed in an air raid in 1941 - all except for an archway and the old Victorian tower (see right). Newington is not in the Domesday book, but the manor of Kennington is (*Chenintun*) which was held in 1086 directly from King Williams by Theodric the Goldsmith, and who had held from King Edward the Confessor as well.



Pilgrims in the past often travelled between churches, so I decided to take note of the ones I passed – even though nearly all of them certainly would not have been there when early pilgrims went to Winchester. There were a number, of varying styles, on this first day.

Walking on, I stopped at St Mark's church opposite Oval tube station. It is one of the four South London "Waterloo" churches, built after Napoleon's defeat and each named for one of the four gospel writers. St Mark's is built on a site with a rather degenerate and dreadful reputation in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century where it had been a place of gambling, riotous public fairs and a gallows for public executions. Some of the Jacobites from the 1745 rebellion were hanged there. Perhaps because the area had had a reputation for vice and was frequented by large crowds, it also attracted public speakers – including notable preachers (anxious no doubt to appeal to people's souls), the Methodist Wesley brothers among them.

St Mark's was erected on the old gallows corner and consecrated by the archbishop of Canterbury on 30 June 1824. One of its vicars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the father of Field Marshal Montgomery of WWII. Sadly, only the Grecian façade in the photo survived the war damage and threatened with demolition. Fortunately, it was eventually rebuilt and finally opened again in 1960. When I was there, it seemed there was a lot going on, even early on a Monday morning.



The route was reasonably level, so I made good time past Stockwell down to Clapham, passing the tremendous spire of St Mary's RC church near the Common. The weather, however, was beginning to look decidedly grey... thus I thought it wise not to divert to Holy Trinity, which was right on the other side of the common, but instead to press on through Clapham, Balham High Street and Tooting.



Walking down through such busy areas, the streets with their shops and traffic, it was difficult to imagine how it must have seemed to mediaeval people. The long urban sprawl would have been merely a scattering of villages large and small amid open fields and woodland. Today the natural spaces around this part of London have mostly is gone and only the open space at Clapham, with far fewer trees, reminds me that it must once have looked far more like the wooded parts of Wimbledon Common. Many of the settlements have remnants of older Saxon origins though. According to the College of Heralds who hold the history of various ancient families, in 965 King Edgar gave the land at Clapham to a chap called 'Jonas' (John) who came originally from Lorraine on the continent – Unfortunately, Jonas' descendant, Thorbern, sided with the Saxons in 1066, so when William the Conqueror became king, the land was forfeit and the family fled north where there are still apparently some descendants of the "Clapham" family to this day. The place is called "*Clopeham*" in the Domesday survey of 1086, and was held then by Geoffrey (*Goisfrid*) de Mandeville, one of William I's most trusted tenants-in-chief. (Curiously, as I walked, my mind dredged up a strange memory. - my father once telling me that Clapham Rovers won the FA cup in the 1880's - though I guess most people might not know that as one of Clapham's claims to fame!)

Many place names along this route - Clapham, Balham, Tooting and Merton are certainly Saxon in origin. The “ham” at the end of both Clapham and Balham, is one of those that describes a settlement or village by its landscape, and means a village which is enclosed, sometimes spelt “hamm” which denoted nearby water meadows, so perhaps partly enclosed by stream. The word “clopp” in Anglo-Saxon means specifically a short/small hill, so Clapham (or ‘*Clopeham*’ as in Domesday), means ‘the enclosed settlement on the small hill.’ Balham, where I passed the church of St Mary & John the Divine, was called *Belgeham* in Domesday, meaning a smooth rounded enclosure/settlement. The Domesday survey states Geoffrey Orlateile held it in 1086, without any warrant from the king! It was 5 hides in size, enough land for 5 families, but only had 1 villager and 1 smallholder. Worth £6 in 1066, it was only 40 shillings in 1086. (I suspect Geoffrey was in trouble!)

Other place names come from Saxon words. ‘Hurst’ means a wooded hill. “Don”, as in Wimbledon, is the word for a much larger/longer hill, (as those who walk up it regularly to the village can testify!)



“Tun/ton” means a farmed landholding or manor, as in Merton. The word “ing” refers not to landscape but to a person - the leader or chieftain to whom they owed allegiance when the place was first founded. eg Reading was the settlement of Redde’s people. Thus Tooting (or “*Totinges*” in Domesday) means ‘the settlement of Toot or Tot’s people.’ The bit of it called Tooting Bec now, merely denotes the part of the land that was given to the Abbey of Bec near Évreux in France, after the conquest.

St Anselm’s Roman Catholic church in Tooting Bec provided a welcome space from the bustle of the pavements. You have to go up a reasonable flight of steps, as the church door is on the first floor, but the church is lovely and peaceful inside and had two terrific Lent banners in purple with the crown of thorns upon them hanging done either side of the altar pillars. Like St Johns, they are now finding new ways for the congregation to join in worship and are streaming the celebration of mass live on Sundays.

The RC church first took over a building here in 1905. Although the current church was built in the early 1930’s, its architecture is fairly unique in combining Early Christian/Byzantine/ Romanesque and Mudejar tradition. The current church is dedicated to St Anselm because he was the Abbot of Bec, who came to England and was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. Historically, a small priory or grange was established here by monks from the Benedictine Abbey of Bec in Normandy, after the Abbey was given the land by another of Williams I’s leading noblemen, Richard de Tonebridge, a few years after the Conquest. As I sat in the nave of St Anselm’s church for a while, I thought about those early Benedictine monks praying in their new small priory somewhere nearby presumably, having travelled across the channel from the mother house, and also the fact that most pilgrimages past were undertaken *before* the Reformation, when every Christian in this part of Europe would have been Roman Catholic – both being reminders that perhaps we and the Roman Catholic Church have important experiences in common within our shared past. I left refreshed after some moment of quiet, heading past Tooting Broadway and on to where the old Stane Street turns away from the current road at Colliers Wood.

Incidentally, during the whole of this morning’s journey, and indeed the rest of the day, I saw only one policeman, standing near a bus stop in Clapham. How different from 40 or 50 years ago when the local ‘bobby’ on his bicycle was a common sight ... I reached Christchurch, (*right*) in Colliers Wood at around quarter past midday. (*to be continued...*)

