Ss Mary & John Churchyard
SPACE FOR REMEMBERING AND REFLECTION
PART OF LOCAL HISTORY

1. **SSJE memorial.** The Society of St. John the Evangelist (the Cowley Fathers) was founded by Fr Benson, the first Religious Order for men in the Church of England since the Reformation. Imagine this area with simple wooden crosses that originally marked the individual graves of the Fathers.

2. **Benson memorial.** In 1868, Father Richard Meux Benson (1824-1915), Vicar of St. James, Cowley, moved into East Oxford to serve the spiritual, educational and social needs of a growing working class population. Try reading the inscription on the memorial. This landscaped cemetery is one half of a site he bought with Meux family money in 1870.

3. **Trinity Labyrinth.** This mosaic is a ‘ret-space’ by artists Emily Fuller and Helen MacKeith, arranged by Fusion, Oxford’s community art agency. They worked with people from mental health support groups and Church members to create the design and the individual tiles. The sitting walls were inspired the design of the green vestments used in the church. Weather (and fire) have taken their toll. Several cast-iron crosses dating from 1894 onwards.

4. **A broken fossiliferous limestone memorial.** Look at the revealed fossils. The geology of the churchyard itself is West Walton Mudstone to the east overlying Upper Oxford Clay to the west. ‘Devil’s Toe-nails’ – bivalves of species *Gryphaea* from the Jurassic period – are quite often found.

5. **Commonwealth War Graves.** There are 13 graves maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. 9 have headstones erected by the Commission.

6. **Grimsley headstones.** There are 3 terracotta ceramic grave markers, two dated 1879 and 1886, the third with no remaining inscription, stamped ‘Grimsleys Patent’. These headstones were modeled and cast in clay and fired at the Grimsley family workshop in St. Giles Parish, Oxford. There is one example of a stone memorial in the same style.

7. **Sisters of the Holy Childhood memorial.** These Sisters taught in the St John Senior Girls School (1871-1963) in Marston St. Some are commemorated on this stone sculpted in the style of Eric Gill or Joseph Cribb.

8. **Cowley Hall (now listed) was built in 1893 by Bucknall and Co.** Look behind it at the south facing side of the former Vicarage (1902), a rare example of domestic architecture by Sir Ninian Comper.

9. **Ss Mary & John Church.** The Foundation stone was laid in 1875. Designed by A. Mardon Mowbray in Early Decorated Style, it was built in instalments as the money trickled in. The proposed spire was never built. Don’t miss the carving on the east end gable depicting Christ the King, a recurring theme of Fr Benson.

10. **Trinity Labyrinth.** This mosaic is a ‘ret-space’ by artists Emily Fuller and Helen MacKeith, arranged by Fusion, Oxford’s community art agency. They worked with people from mental health support groups and Church members to create the design and the individual tiles. The sitting walls were designed a year later by the same artists.

11. **A display board in the porch records.** Thanks to our principal churchyard funders.

12. **Photographs of people more widely known:**
- **George Wilton Pieritz.** Read about a surprising career!
- **HHW Woodward.** Have you visited the tailor’s shop on the High where he started trading in 1923?
- **Emily Constance Barber (grave pictured here)** committed suicide after murdering her family - they are together commemorated in a memorial erected by her husband’s parents.

**Key**
- Can you find?
  - seat
  - heritage information
  - wildlife information

**Drawings by Margaret Cullen. A transcription of the monument inscriptions is available on CHROM from the Oxfordshire Family History Society: www.ofhs.org.uk**