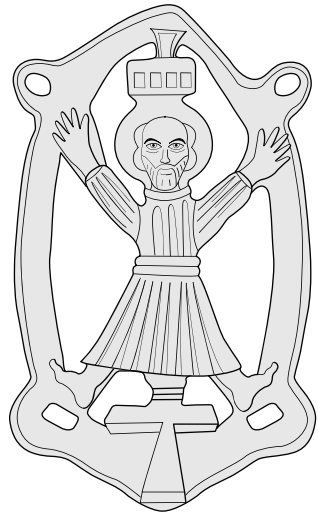


# MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE IN SCOTLAND

Use this worksheet to put together your own pilgrim badge!



0 5 cm

This image (above left) is based on an incomplete lead alloy badge found near St Andrews castle (above right\*). We know it represents St Andrew as he is reputed to have been crucified on an 'X' shaped cross, which became known as the St Andrew's cross or Saltire.

St Andrew was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ and therefore a visit to his shrine where his relics were kept was considered particularly special. The only other shrine of a disciple of Jesus in western Christendom was that of St James at Compostela in Spain.

St Andrew is, of course, the patron Saint of Scotland and it is his 'X' shaped cross that we can see on the flag of Scotland today. St Andrew's feast day is 30th November, and this is also the National day of Scotland, often marked by a celebration of Scottish culture.



Pilgrimage made to the burial place of a saint, known as a shrine, became very popular in medieval times - not only in Scotland but throughout Europe and the Middle East as people from all walks of life journeyed to the shrines of saints. The English author Henry Chaucer wrote a famous story about a group of pilgrims called 'The Canterbury Tales' that included people from a variety of different professions.

They would have done this for a variety of reasons - some would have carried out a pilgrimage in order to ask for forgiveness for something they had done wrong. Others might have been hoping to be cured of an illness or disability - something that they believed was possible because of the saint's closeness to God: This was often encouraged by the priests who would publicise miracles where it appeared that somebody had been cured. Others made the pilgrimage as an act of faith to ensure that God would know them to be a practising Christian.

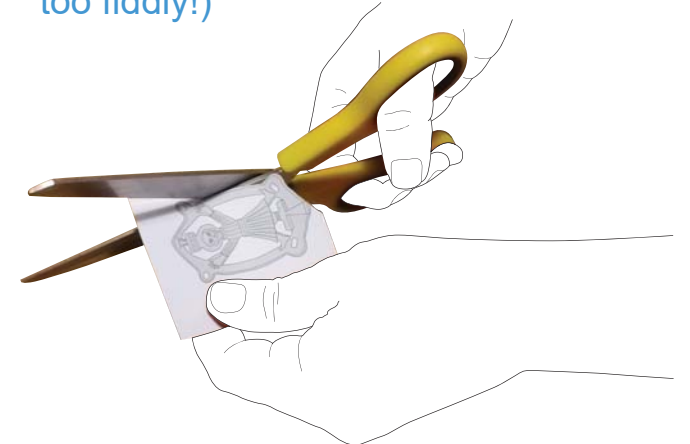
The church was able to profit from pilgrims who needed to be sheltered and fed, and who would also buy such things as pilgrim badges and gourds, (small bottles that held holy water from the shrines).

Badges were worn prominently by pilgrims to show others that they were making a pilgrimage. They would also have functioned as a kind of souvenir in that they would have reminded the pilgrim of their journey.

However, pilgrim badges were not simply souvenirs as we would understand them today. It is likely that the owner, having presented them at the shrine and relics\*\* of the saint in question, believed that something of the saint's holiness rubbed off onto the badge, so that the badge itself was then believed to be 'holy' and have healing powers.

1

Mount and glue the image upon some card and carefully cut around the shape. (Don't worry about cutting out the internal shape if you find it too fiddly!)



2

Use a badge pin and carefully glue it onto the back of your pilgrim badge and leave to dry.



Originally, the pilgrim badge would have been sewn onto the fabric of a garment or hat using the four holes shown on the badge. This would have allowed the wearer to show others they were a pilgrim.

You now have your very own medieval pilgrim badge. Perhaps you could persuade someone in your family to take you to St Andrews as part of your very own pilgrimage!

\*The drawing that my own illustration is based on was made by Marion O'Neil of the National Museum of Scotland and taken from the book *Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland*, 1999, by Peter Yeoman.

Also of interest is the book *The Hidden Ways*, 2017, by Alistair Moffat which features a chapter on the medieval pilgrimage route, 'The Road to Heaven: Earlsferry to St Andrews' pp.109-145.

\*\*The word relics refers to the physical remains of a saint which could be anything from a finger-tip, to a tooth, to a whole arm, but rarely the whole body.