



LUTTERWORTH HISTORIC TOWN TRAIL

TOWN TRAIL

The trail starts in the Market Place.

1 The Market Place

The buildings that surround the Market Place have a variety of styles and are evidence of the evolutionary development of the town centre. In 1414, King Henry V granted the Lord of the Manor a charter to hold a weekly market – which is still held every Thursday.



2 The Shambles



The timber framed thatched building known as The Shambles dates from the 16th century. Its name refers to the fact that the Shambles, the market building for butchers, once stood in this part of town.

3 Town Hall

The architect for the distinctive Town Hall of 1836 was Joseph Hansom, who also designed Birmingham Town Hall, and took out the first patent for the horse drawn Hansom Cab. The ground floor of the Town Hall originally had open sides for use as a covered market and when first built was known as the Butter Market. A photograph from about 1900 (in the Town Museum) shows workmen filling in the sides to give the appearance much as it is now.



4 The Greyhound Coaching Inn

This hotel is one of the three original coaching inns that used to line the main street. It retains an early 19th century façade. The courtyard and stables have been extensively renovated to form an attractive enclosure with brickwork from different periods.

5 Town Estates Office

This building has an Edwardian appearance, but behind the frontage is a 16th century timber framed building.



6 The Manor House

The Manor House (to the side of the Town Estates Office) is a late Regency building in a classical style.

7 The Cavalier

The Cavalier, although significantly altered by successive renovations, is reputedly a building with 17th century origins. Its name reflects a local belief that wounded Royalists took refuge here after the Battle of Naseby in 1645.



8 The Police Station

At the junction of Leicester Road and Gilmorton Road is the Police Station. Opened in 1843, it is one of the oldest working police stations in the

country. Its triangle of land also contains the Edwardian police house and the old Courthouse, distinguished by its lead-sheathed cupolas and prominent ventilation hood.

9 Wycliffe Rooms

This art deco red brick building was originally built as a Ritz Cinema in 1938. It is now an important exhibition and performance venue, as well as being the Masonic Hall.

10 United Reformed Church

First records of the Congregational Chapel, now the United Reformed Church, date back to 1689, but the present building bears the date 1777.



At the southernmost tip of Leicestershire, Lutterworth is an attractive market town of approximately 10,000 inhabitants. The town centre is a designated conservation area and there is much to discover in the architecture of the town. The settlement was most likely established in Anglo-Saxon times and had prospered sufficiently to be included in the Domesday Book of 1086. In 1214 King John granted an annual charter to Nicholas de Verdun to hold a market in Lutterworth for the sale of livestock and dairy produce. This was extended in 1414 when a weekly market charter was granted by King Henry V. Although the livestock has now gone, the Thursday market continues as well as a monthly farmers' market.

The street pattern is of medieval origin and suggests that it was then laid out formally on either side of the High Street with a large market place. The timber framed Shambles public house is one of the few remaining buildings representative of a time when timber and mud were the predominant building materials. The imposing buildings in the town centre date mainly from the coaching heyday between 1750 and 1850. As long distance communications became more practical, the town became an important posting station for stage coaches on the London to Chester turnpike and the High Street is still dominated by the Greyhound hotel and other former coaching inns, the Denbigh and the Hind. After a flurry of building in the early 19th century, including the highly distinctive Town Hall, there was comparatively little built during the Victorian period, perhaps because Lutterworth had to wait until 1899 to be connected to the railway network.

LUTTERWORTH

11 Western House

Gideon Bibles are found in hotel bedrooms throughout the world. Western House, 24 George Street, is a Regency villa which now serves as the national headquarters of Gideons International.

12 Wycliffe Memorial

A small but attractive terrace of late Georgian houses leads the eye to the Wycliffe Memorial, erected to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Beyond it is the Methodist Church of 1905.

John Wycliffe

In 1374 this early church reformer was made Rector of Lutterworth as a royal reward for his diplomatic services. He appointed a curate to carry out his parochial duties while he preached sermons and wrote tracts, in Oxford and London, that threatened the doctrines of the Roman Church. The first translation of the Bible into English was produced under his guidance. He spent the last three years of his life in exile at Lutterworth. He suffered a stroke when listening to a communion service on 27th December 1384 and was carried through what is now called Wycliffe's Door. He died on New Years Eve 1384. Following his death, Wycliffe was denounced as a heretic by the Council of Constance. In 1428, his bones were exhumed by order of the Pope and burned, a fate his living body escaped only through the influence of his patron, John of Gaunt. Wycliffe's work later influenced Martin Luther.

Retrace your steps to Chapel Street.

13 Christian Fellowship Church

This plain building of 1839 in Chapel Street was formerly the Baptist Chapel, becoming the Rugby Club for some years, before reverting to religious use.

14 Candlemas Cottage

Candlemas Cottage (opposite the Pentecostal Church) is a late 16th century house with two exposed timber framed walls.

Proceed through the yard of the Greyhound Coaching Inn and turn right down Market Street.



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PUTTING THE BOOST BACK INTO LUTTERWORTH



GUIDE PRODUCED BY

Lutterworth continues to serve as the market town for the area, with a good range of independent shops and places to eat and drink. There is a variety of interesting places to visit in the locality. Another link to aviation can be discovered at nearby Stamford Hall, a grand 17th century house beside the River Avon. Here you can see a full sized replica of 'The Hawk' - an early flying machine that was designed and flown by Percy Pilcher, the first man to fly in England. There is also Bruntingthorpe Air Museum which houses numerous examples of aircraft developed during the Cold War. If you would like to explore the local countryside, the Grand Union Canal presents the ideal opportunity. Foxton Locks is famous for its staircase of ten canal locks and an inclined plane. Learn more at the Foxton Canal Museum. If you would like to take to the water, boat hire is available at both North Kilworth Wharf and Foxton.

Lutterworth is famous for having twice made its mark on world history. In the 14th century John Wycliffe inspired the translation of the Bible into English whilst serving as Rector of Lutterworth. More than five hundred years later, Sir Frank Whittle revolutionised aviation with his development of the jet engine. Today, visitors can find out more about these pioneering figures by visiting St Mary's Church and Lutterworth Museum.

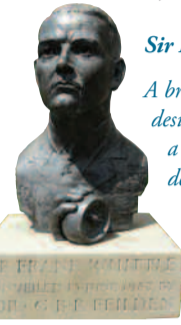


15 Church Street

Church Street is the retailing centre of the town. Its intimate scale is due to the fact that the buildings conform to their medieval cottage plots with narrow frontages. A variety of architectural styles representing every century from the 17th to the 20th can be seen, especially if one looks above the level of the shop windows.

16 Memorial Gardens

The Memorial Gardens commemorate the town's dead of two world wars. Facing Church Street is a bust of Sir Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine.



Sir Frank Whittle

A brilliant innovator, Frank Whittle pioneered the design of the gas turbine for jet propulsion. In 1936 a new company, Power Jets Ltd, was formed to develop this engine. Development and testing work commenced in Lutterworth on the 16th April 1938 at a foundry just off Leicester Road.

The first 'flight engine' powered the specially designed Gloster E28/39 aeroplane, which made its successful maiden flight on the 14th May 1941. A full size replica of this aircraft can be seen on the roundabout at the southern entrance to Lutterworth.

17 Bank Street

Bank Street contains a varied selection of houses. No 14, constructed c.1835 in Greek Revival Style, is now a solicitor's office. It is reputed to have been originally designed as a bank by Joseph Hansom, architect of the Town Hall, although there is no direct evidence of this.



Return to Church Street and turn left towards the church.

26 The Terrace

The Terrace is an unusual feature for a small market town. It was built to a classical design in the 1830's. This major feature of the lower High Street reflects the quality of the architecture of the town in this period.



27 The Denbigh Arms and Hind Hotel



The Denbigh Arms and the Hind Hotel are former coaching inns now converted for residential and commercial use. Before the railway age these were the main

stopping places for travellers and were also meeting places for business and pleasure. The Hind has a 19th century façade which does not hide the fact that its main structure is late 17th century. The Denbigh also has an early 19th century façade. It takes its name from the Earls of Denbigh. Their family, the Feildings, owned property in the town from the 14th century onwards, and became the main landowners in the area. They acquired the lordship of the manor of Lutterworth and their earldom in the 1620's. The Denbigh occupies the site of one of their former manor houses.



You can return to the starting point of the trail by continuing up the High Street to the Market Place.

18 Western end of Church Street

The western end of Church Street is an unspoiled old residential street. The last of the timber houses on the south side was once the Coach and Horses Inn – the plaque on the building giving full details.



19 Old Sherrier School

This gabled building was originally built as a school in 1875 and is one of the town's few substantial Victorian buildings. It was paid for largely through a bequest from Rev. Edward Sherrier who was Rector of Shawell (a nearby village).

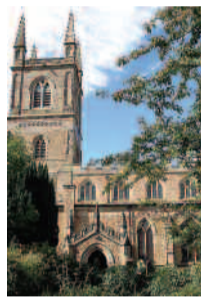
20 Churchgate

The Churchgate Centre is located within an attractive Victorian building that was originally built in 1876 as the Reading Room for the Mechanics' Institute.



21 Parish Church of St. Mary

The Parish Church of St. Mary is a large church, essentially of 13th and 14th century construction, but much restored by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1868.



The spire collapsed during the Great Storm of November 1703 and was replaced some sixty years later by four weighty pinnacles. The churchyard is extensive and secluded, with a fine array of slate headstones. Within the Church there are some exceptional wall paintings, and the more recent Millennium tapestry which hangs at the west end of the Church.

22 Baker Street

Baker Street is now entirely residential. The buildings are mainly of 19th century origin, but the street, with its narrow frontages, has been built up continuously since the early 17th century. No 43 is the Old Bakehouse.

23 Woodmarket

For such a quiet residential street Woodmarket is surprisingly wide. This is probably because it was formerly the main road out of town to the west and was also one of the town's market streets. Hythe House (Queen Anne, on north side), the White House (Georgian, no 31 opposite) and Hill House (Regency, at the top of Stoney Hollow) are large houses indicating the town's subsequent development and prosperity.



24 The Springs

At the corner of Stoney Hollow, the Springs, an 18th century house with additions and some earlier features, takes its name from the springs in the garden, which are said to never freeze or dry up. There is a legend that when Wycliffe's bones were taken to the River Swift one was dropped, and miraculously a spring of water rose up. The water was thought to have curative qualities and local residents used the water as a cure for eye problems. Three unusual features are the cast milestone, the insurance plaque and the porch lamp which incorporates a glass from the Ebenezer Chapel, Leicester. John Parsons Cook lived at The Springs until Dr William Palmer poisoned him in Rugeley, Staffordshire in 1855. This was one of the most notorious crimes in Victorian Britain.

25 River Swift Bridge



Just outside the old part of the town the main road south crosses the River Swift. There has been a bridge here since the Middle Ages. It was

rebuilt in brick in 1778 by public subscription, and widened in 1910. It is into this river that John Wycliffe's ashes are said to have been thrown and thus distributed by water over the whole world.

*'The Avon to the Severn runs
The Severn to the sea,
And Wycliffe's dust shall spread abroad
Wide the waters be!' (Anon)*

