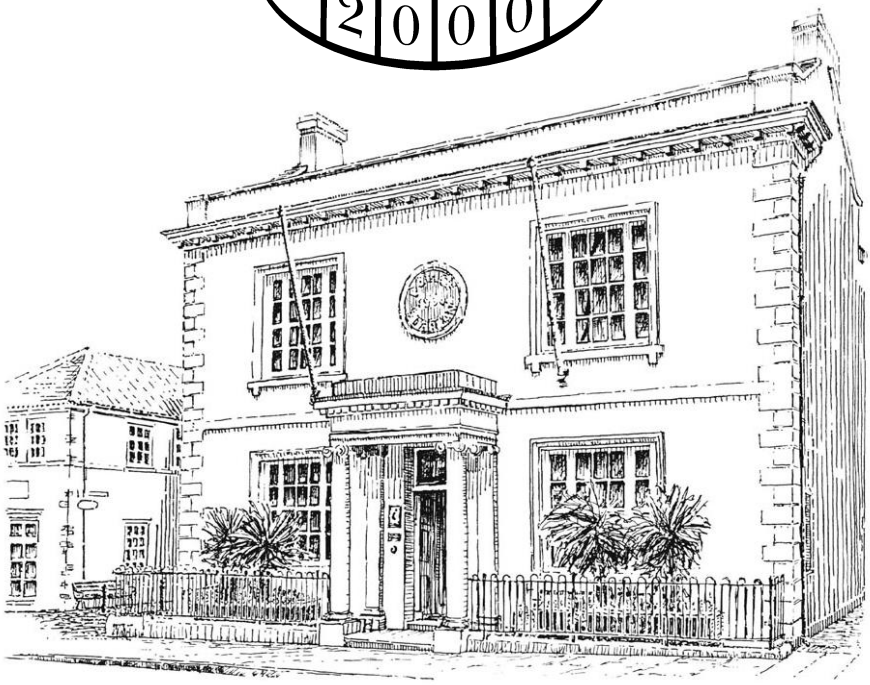
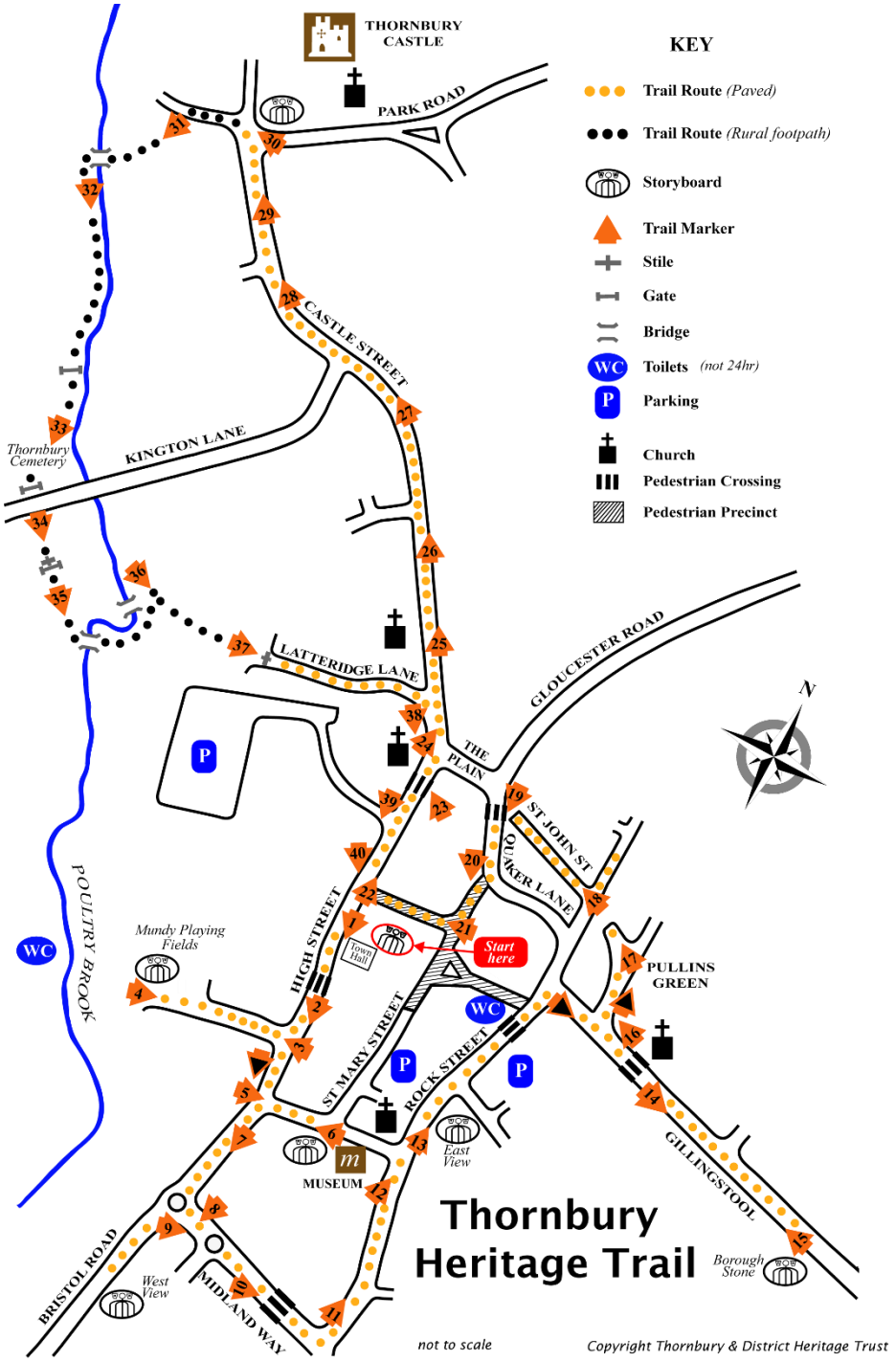
THORNBURY HERITAGE TRAIL



Thornbury Town Hall – the starting point of the trail

Explore Historic Thornbury
with Thornbury & District Museum


THORNBURY CASTLE
PARK ROAD
CASTLE STREET
KINGTON LANE
Thornbury Cemetery
LATTERIDGE LANE
GLOUCESTER ROAD
THE PLAIN
ST JOHN ST
QUAKER LANE
HIGH STREET
Mundy Playing Fields
Town Hall
Start here
ST MARY STREET
ROCK STREET
PULLINS GREEN
GILLINGSTOOL
MUSEUM
East View
West View
BRISTOL ROAD
MIDLAND WAY
POULTRY BROOK
Borough Stone
N
KEY
Trail Route (Paved)
Trail Route (Rural footpath)
Storyboard
Trail Marker
Stile
Gate
Bridge
Toilets (not 24hr)
Parking
Church
Pedestrian Crossing
Pedestrian Precinct
Thornbury Heritage Trail
not to scale
Copyright Thornbury & District Heritage Trust

The Route

The Trail covers a total distance of 3.7 km (2¼ miles). It begins and ends at Silver Street next to the Town Hall. The whole trail takes about two hours, allowing for stops and small diversions, but with so much to see you may wish to allow more time. Alternatively, you could follow the two loops of the trail on separate occasions.

The trail around the town centre is mostly on paved paths and is easy walking with good wheelchair access. The part of the trail between way markers 31 and 38 follows established rural footpaths with some gates and styles and it may be muddy and overgrown at times. It is not suitable for wheelchairs.

Please take care, particularly in the town where roads can be busy. Use the pedestrian crossings where you can, even if it means deviating slightly from the marked route.

In addition to toilets shown on the map, there is a community toilet scheme in the town. To find premises that participate, visit: https://www.thornburytowncouncil.gov.uk/community-toilet-scheme/

The trail is marked by numbered bronze plaques set in the pavement in the street sections and by numbered posts in the rural areas. There are also intermediate un-numbered markers to help show the way.

This symbol on the map marks the seven sites along the trail with storyboards giving additional information.

Some locations have wall plaques that indicate why they are important to the town.

The QR codes on the back page and those on the storyboards will take you to the home page of the Thornbury & District Museum website.
Use this QR code to download a larger, printable version, of the trail map.

THE THORNBURY HERITAGE TRAIL

Introduction

Thornbury & District Heritage Trust created the Trail to celebrate the Millennium. It was supported by The Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional donations from sponsoring organisations and many local contributors.

Artist Stephen Daniels designed extra features to enhance important sites on the Trail, including “The Spirit of Thornbury”, a bronze relief sculpture of the town, at the start of the trail.

The information in this guide was researched and compiled by volunteers at Thornbury & District Museum and was correct at the time of printing.

HISTORIC THORNBURY

“Thornbury” probably means a fortified place amongst thorns. The earliest known reference is in a Saxon charter of 896 AD. After the Norman Conquest, the Domesday Book of 1086 recorded that a Saxon thane, Brictric son of Algar, was the last Saxon overlord and that the Manor of Thornbury was then owned by Queen Matilda of Flanders, wife of William the Conqueror.

The town and its market developed as the focal point of the manor with its feudal economy based on agriculture. When it was granted borough status by Richard de Clare, then lord of the manor, in about 1252, a measure of independence was given to the burgesses, who could make byelaws and hold their own court under an appointed Mayor and Corporation. More importantly, although the burgesses had to make payments of borough rent and tolls to their lord, they were freed from their customary service obligations to the manor. This allowed them to devote their time and energies to the development of crafts, trade and professional activities, so that Thornbury could develop as a prosperous commercial centre.

Thornbury had many important, but mostly absentee, lords of the manor, including Robert Fitzhamon, first feudal baron of Gloucester, in the 11th century, and a succession of Earls of Gloucester and Dukes of Buckingham. Perhaps the most notorious was Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, whose grand plans to complete his magnificent new castle here were extinguished following his execution for treason in 1521, when his property became forfeit to the Crown.

The manor was restored to the Staffords by Mary I and their heraldic badge, the Stafford Knot, can still be seen on buildings around the town.

Changes in local government during the late 19th century brought about the Parish Councils that form the basis of the present system of civic administration. A Town Council was established with the first Town Mayor taking office in 1974.

The town went through periods of growth and prosperity in the late 18th and mid-19th centuries, but dramatic expansion came in the second half of the 20th century with the building of motorways, the first Severn Bridge and nearby nuclear power stations.

THE TRAIL

The trail starts in the High Street at the Millennium Sculpture and storyboard in the open area in Silver Street, next to the Town Hall.

Spirit of Thornbury. The “Spirit of Thornbury” is a bronze relief sculpture, commissioned to commemorate the Millennium.

The sculpture is a tactile representation of the town centre and the layout of streets and buildings can be both viewed and traced by hand. Inside the plinth, there are time capsules prepared by schoolchildren and local residents to mark the Millennium. The plinth is made from Forest of Dean sandstone with setts around the base recording sponsors’ initials.

Town Hall. The present Town Hall was remodelled internally in 1994 after a fire. The façade, with its neo-classical stone portico and roundel above the door, dates from 1860 when an impressive Georgian house was converted into the town's Police Station and Magistrates' Court.
Features inside include the Council Chamber, which was once the Petty Sessions Courtroom, and a restored police cell. These can be viewed on special open days. *In normal working hours, you can see a magnificent grandfather or long case clock at the top of the central staircase. It was made by Thornbury clockmaker Samuel Collings and is part of Thornbury & District Museum's collection.*

High Street (Once known as Fore or Front Street). The High Street was the heart of the historic market town. Markets and trade fairs were held here from medieval times until 1911. The thriving market brought both business and prosperity to the town and was an important factor in its development. The market, held in the wide High Street, the market hall, the shops and the many inns, all added to the town's character. *There are tales of townspeople being chased by frisky cattle on market day!*

From here, the following buildings can be viewed across the street

24 High Street (Opposite the Town Hall). Note the 18th century Venetian style windows and the cast iron gutter decorated with repoussé lion heads. Inside there is an original 16th century stairwell that now has a modern spiral stair. *Another interesting feature, hidden behind the street door to the right, is the little alley that runs through the building to the rear. In the1850s, a saddler and harness maker called Daniel Pitcher used this passage as a ropewalk, where long strands of material were laid out before twisting them into rope and twine.*

26 High Street. Look for the fine Victorian cast iron canopy with pillar supports. This was once an inn known as the Widow's Mantle and later, The George. In its time, the building has also housed a Quaker boarding school and was for many years a butcher's shop. An alleyway behind the door in the centre was the only access to the slaughterhouse and garden at the back of the premises. *The Widow's Mantle is thought to refer to the Mantle (Parliament robe) of Brecknock, one of the heraldic badges of the Dukes of Buckingham.*

28 and 30 High Street. Within living memory, this area was known as Pye Corner. In his will of 1777, John Lippiatt, a tailor and inn holder, mentioned, “My Tenement called Pye Corner with the Backside, Buildings, Garden and Orchard”. *This may have been the name of his inn, where perhaps “pie poudre” courts of instant justice were held on market and fair days. The town stocks (on display in the museum) may also have been near here.*

2

From the Town Hall, walk along the High Street in the direction of the way marker

30 High Street (Across the street). This 16th century timber framed building, with a jettied upper storey, is a good example of its type. The gable end bargeboards are Victorian alterations, as are some of the windows facing down the street. *From about 1824 until the 1960s, this was the premises of successive saddle and harness makers - Embley, Burchell and finally Pavey.*

38 High Street (Across the street). Look high up on the wall for a Victorian commemorative plaque, placed to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897, also the year when the house was rebuilt.

3

57 High Street. A commemorative plaque marks the site of Thornbury’s small cinema known as The Picture House, built by Edmund Cullimore in 1919 at the suggestion of his daughter Helen and her husband Francis Grace. The family ran it until its closure in 1959. *Previously the Beaufort Arms, the inn was superseded in about 1887 by The Castle Coffee House and Temperance Hotel, run under the auspices of Mr Stafford Howard of Thornbury Castle.*

Cross the High Street into The Close

42 High Street. Behind its high gates, Close House is a 17th century hall house with a two-storey porch and 19th century extensions. At the rear it looks out over its Victorian red brick walled garden to land that used to belong to the house, now the Mundy Playing Fields.

Follow the walled lane to the Mundy Playing Fields

COMMUNITY LIFE AND LEISURE

In the distance, there are views of the former agricultural and wooded land of the manor. You can also see a number of closes, town gardens and walled burgage plots. Some boundaries date back to the 13th century when the narrow plots were owned by the burgesses as freemen of the town. Medieval byelaws required the “metes and bounds” to be maintained and many of the charges recorded fines for failing to keep these boundaries in good repair.

Mundy Playing Fields. *In 1937, the Hon. Mrs Violet Mundy donated this land for “the provision of a recreational park or pleasure ground for the town”. Mrs Mundy was one of the hardest women riders to hounds. She trained racehorses, especially steeplechasers, and was one of the first female judges of horses. Her only child, Lt. Freddie Mundy M.C., R.N.V.R., died of wounds in 1917 in the Great War.*

Return to the High Street

59 High Street (Across the street). Made up of three buildings, these have over the centuries, separately or together housed a malthouse, grocers, wine and spirit shop, and off licence. Former names include The Knot of Rope, The Exchange, The Royal Exchange and Michaels. In the late 1600’s the gabled part is thought to have been an inn *“known by the sign of the Mermaid”. The large number of establishments in Thornbury which have been used as inns or public houses is typical of a once thriving market town.*

5

Turn right to continue along the High Street
Cross the High Street into Chapel Street
towards the Cossham Hall and the Museum

Chapel Street. This was once known as Le Raten Row or Rotten Row, a description sometimes given to a row of tumbledown cottages infested with rats. *Possibly derived from ratton, an old word for a rat.*

Look up to see the date and information plaques on the front façade of the Cossham Hall.

6

4 Chapel Street, Thornbury & District Museum. Records from the 1700s onwards show that it has been a home for a variety of families and tradesmen over the years, including a basket maker and a shoemaker. *At one time it even served as a malt house!*

FAITH AND WITNESS

This storyboard commemorates people from the local area who have played a significant part in the religious life of their community and in the wider world. The storyboard gives details about some of them.

The Cossham Hall. John Wesley preached at the opening of this Wesleyan Chapel in 1789 and returned to mark the first anniversary.

After the opening of a new, bigger, chapel in the High Street (23), this hall was leased to the Salvation Army in 1881. In 1883 its members were driven out of town after several “disgraceful riots” by people who disliked the Army marching through the streets with noisy drums and cornets. In 1888 Handel Cossham purchased and entrusted the building as a public meeting space "for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Town of Thornbury and neighbourhood". At the time, his only restriction was that "intoxicating liquors and tobacco shall not be sold or supplied" on the premises.

Handel Cossham (1824-1890). Handel was the son of local carpenter, Jesse Cossham. As an active member of the Congregational Church, he preached his first sermon at the age of 20 and continued as a lay preacher throughout his life. He was a keen supporter of the Temperance Movement.

Cossham was a successful colliery-owning industrialist. He founded a number of British Schools in South Gloucestershire, including one in Thornbury in 1862 (the old building formerly part of Gillingstool School). He was a councillor in both Bristol and Bath, served as Mayor of Bath from 1882 to1885 and was elected as a Member of Parliament for Bristol East in 1885.

He applied his Christian principles to social reform, often quoting as his motto “To do all the good I can, to all the people I can, throughout life”. In 1890, whilst in the library of the House of Commons, Cossham was taken ill and died the following day. It is thought that more than 30,000 people lined the streets of Bristol on the day of his funeral.

7 ***Return to the High Street then turn left***

67 High Street. In the 18th century this was a public house, known as The Cock. Around 1811, it was renamed the New Inn, following alterations that included a large club room. Later it became a bakery.

Miss Saise's Cottage. This tiny building was the birthplace of Handel Cossham. “Miss Saise” was Esther, Jesse Cossham’s niece and housekeeper, who lived in the house until her death in 1914.

On the opposite side of the road, alterations to the houses over hundreds of years have resulted in a wide variety of windows, roof levels and chimneys, whilst some interior features date from before the 17th century.

*Note particularly **60 High Street** with its two-phase façade.*

66 High Street. Behind stone walls, Rosemount House is an early 19th century Italianate style building with decorative ironwork and veranda. It is next to the medieval walled Polterbrook or Poultrybrook Lane that used to lead to a small farm.

Continue to the junction with Midland Way

Midland Way. The road follows the line of the former Midland Railway track. The railway opened in 1872, linking Thornbury and Yate, via Tytherington and Iron Acton. It closed to passengers in 1944 and to freight in 1966.

Cross to the opposite corner

WEST VIEWPOINT

Look out across Daggs Allotments towards the medieval Marlwood Deer Park, the Severn Vale and the Severn Estuary. Daggs field was given to the borough in about 1580 by blacksmith Thomas Slimbridge, with the condition that the income from the rent was used to help the poor in the town. On the bank behind this point is a “Ring of Thorns” planted in 2015 to represent the likely origin of the town’s name. The wall behind these trees was the southern boundary of the railway station land.

Continue along Midland Way

Midland Way. The Midland Railway twin-pavilion station building with elaborately fretted bargeboards and tiled roof was near here. Its exact location can be seen on the map on the storyboard when you reach the Borough Stone at way marker 15.

Cross Midland Way again, then turn left into Rock Street

Rock Street (Once known as Nelmes Street). Look for the wall on the left that was the northern boundary of the railway station land. A little further along, on the opposite side, you can see sections of the old, high, town wall. Also on the right, you will see new housing built on the site of the former cattle market. *The original gates from 1911, when the market moved here from the High Street, have been retained at the front of the building.*

Cross Chapel Street

United Reformed Church. This church was built in 1826 to replace an older chapel, erected in 1718 by a group of Protestant Dissenters, usually known as Presbyterians. Earlier, meetings had been held in a private house in Thornbury from 1672. The chapel was located 50 metres along the road but was demolished in the 1960's to make way for a car park. *See the URC's information panel on the site of the 1718 chapel for a fuller account.*

Cross Rock Street to Rock Street Green

EAST VIEWPOINT

The East Viewpoint looks out towards the Cotswolds with its upland farms, the Tyndale Monument and the former Kingswood Forest. The storyboard gives details of the view in 2000, before subsequent developments took place.

Continue along Rock Street, cross Bath Road, passing the car park

Turn right into Gillingstool and continue to the school buildings

Gillingstool (Once known as Burgage Hill). Gillingstool School was opened in 1862 as a British School, thanks to the generosity of Handel Cossham. *Note the separate entrances for Boys and Girls.*

Continue past the school to the bottom of the hill

THE BOROUGH STONE

This boulder of local stone is a modern interpretation of the ancient stone that would have defined the eastern entry to the town. The borough boundary, indicated by a marker placed across the pavement, crosses the road here. It follows the line of a stream that now runs underground.

Return up Gillingstool and cross to the Thornbury Baptist Church

Thornbury Baptist Church. The Baptists can trace their origins in the town to 1747. The first purpose-built Baptist Meeting House opened in 1789. The new church centre was inaugurated in May 1989.

Turn right into Pullins Green

Pullins Green (Formerly part of St John Street). A document relating to this area dated 1683 reads, “neare unto a place where St Johns Crosse heretofore stood”, suggesting the earlier removal of a standing cross, where ministers preached in the open air. Changes in religious practices during the 16th century Reformation resulted in the destruction of many of these crosses.
Most of the cottages here appear on the 1840 tithe map but the character of the green has changed with modern landscaping and paving. *Numbers 15 to 23, erected by local builder George Hodges in the late 1800s, were once known as Victoria Terrace.*

17

Continue around Pullins Green to Crispin Lane

Crispin Lane (Once known as Mutton Lane). On Crispin Lane (at the rear of Number 13 Pullins Green) there was a blacksmith's forge, associated for many years with the Higgins family. In Victorian times, the house directly across the lane was a public house called The Jolly Crispin. *Beer housekeeper James Cullimore may have chosen the name as he was also a shoemaker, the patron saint of shoemakers being Saint Crispin.*

18

Cross Pullins Green to Sawmill Lane

Sawmill Lane. As the name suggests, this once led to the site of a sawmill operated by Edmund Cullimore from about 1886. It is a medieval walled lane between burgage plots. The plaque is located high up on the furthest section of wall.

Continue along St John Street to the junction with Gloucester Road, The Plain and Quaker Lane

St John Street (Briefly known as Trumplington Street). On the left is Quaker Court, built in the1980's on the site of the demolished Quaker Meeting House (dated 1794) and its burial ground. On the right are 18th and 19th century cottages. Some still have their original timber doors, windows and pantile roofs.

19

7 The Plain. This public house was formerly known as the Boar's Head and later became the Royal George, named after a ship rather than a king. The building is mid-19th century with a pantile roof and a flat Doric style portico main entrance.

Cross Quaker Lane at the pedestrian crossing and turn left to continue towards St Mary Street

Swan Stables. On the right are the rear entrance and former stables of The Swan, historically the most important inn in the town (More details when you reach way marker 22).

Carry on into the pedestrian precinct

St Mary Street (Once called Backstreet). Although much restored and rebuilt, some important buildings are still here. Others were demolished to make way for the St Mary Centre in 1970's.

11 St Mary Street, Attwells Free School. "Victualler and innkeeper" Brice Mansell built this four-gabled property and the carved oak portico bears his initials with the date 1679. The present porch is a modern replica. Attwells School operated here from the mid-18th century until 1879. John Attwells bequeathed the large sum of £500 in trust to provide a free school where children of the inhabitants of the town were to be instructed in "reading, writing, arithmatick, knitting and sewing and all other things fitt and necessary for such boys and girls to be taught". *After the school closed the building was briefly used as a Temperance Coffee Tavern and then housed the Church Institute.*

15 and 17 St Mary Street. This property was given to the borough in about 1580 by blacksmith Thomas Slimbridge, with the instruction that the rental income should help needy townspeople. It was rebuilt in 1724 and about ten years later was divided into four tiny alms-houses that the Mayor and Corporation leased out at a low rent, often to elderly widows. In the mid-19th century, each pair of houses was converted into a larger single house. *The building features front chimneys and unusual arch-linked doors and windows.*

***21 and 23 St Mary Street** were also saved from demolition.*

25 St Mary Street, The Horseshoes. The shops beyond Horseshoe Lane occupy the site of a 19th century inn called The Horseshoes. *Perhaps the name came from the nearby blacksmith's shop and forge that was at the rear of Numbers 21 and 23.*

22

Turn right and walk through the covered St Mary's Way to the High Street and then turn right

High Street. On the opposite side of the High Street is the Old Market Hall (More details when you reach way marker 40).

17 High Street, The Swan. Erected about 1633, probably replacing an earlier tavern, the building once had a central, open courtyard adjacent to the street. You can still see part of that courtyard and other old features of interest inside the building. In the 1790s, the elegant Georgian façade was added and it soon became Thornbury's only coaching inn and post house. It was owned by the lord of the manor until 1834.

The portico supports a glass-fibre swan, which replaced an earlier wooden version, put in place in 1844. The original bird wore a collar and chain, imitating one of the heraldic badges of the Dukes of Buckingham. *The parapet above is adorned with two large pineapples, which in the 18th century expressed hospitality, wealth and social status. In Victorian times, across the road, a rival white lion appeared upon the porch of another 17th century building.*

23

Continue to the pedestrian crossing and cross to the west side of the High Street, bearing right

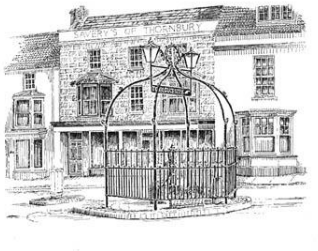
4 High Street, Old Fire Station. Bearing a decorative date stone, this 1930 building housed the engines of Thornbury's Volunteer Fire Brigade for fifty years.

Thornbury Methodist Church. The foundation stone for this Victorian Gothic style building, once known as the Wesley Chapel, was laid in 1877. *During WW2 the schoolroom at the rear was used as a hobbies workshop by troops, with a sign over the door "Abandon rank all who enter here".*

24

The Plain (Once known as Bells Cross or Colwell Street). **The Old Bank** is a fine looking building in Italianate style**,** erected in about 1858 on the site of the White Hart Inn. Until its closure in 2022 it still housed a bank. It has a neo-classical pilaster portico, fine ashlar (finely cut masonry) walls and a decorative frieze. Part of the earlier building, bearing the date 1706 and the Stafford Knot emblem, remains as the north wing. *As with many other properties in Thornbury, the building used to have ornate metal railings but these were requisitioned as scrap metal to help the war effort in the 1940s.*

The Pump. At the centre of The Plain, this is a modern replica of the 1860s town pump. The original was removed in 1924, despite many objections from local residents, partly because it was considered an obstruction to traffic. *Ironically, this replica was introduced in a slightly different position in 1984, in part as a traffic calming measure.*



There are many other interesting and varied buildings around The Plain. Note particularly **Number 2** with its two gables, mullion windows and its diagonal chimney dating from the 17th century.

25

Cross the road below the Pump to continue down Castle Street

Castle Street (Once part of High Street). The view from The Plain northwards towards the church has changed little in character over the past three hundred years. On the east side of Castle Street, the shops and premises at the top lead on to the impressive frontages of Oriel

House, Wigmore House and Epworth House (said to be named after John Wesley's birthplace). Then there are smaller cottages, some of which appear to be subdivisions of larger buildings. Burgage plots at the rear are a surviving feature of the 13th century town layout.

On the west side of the street, a few smaller cottages near the top also retain their burgage plot gardens.

9 Castle Street, Lion House. This was rebuilt in the late19th century. and was formerly the Black Lion public house, you can still see the figure of a lion on top of the building.

11 Castle Street, Porch House. This is a significant example of a large medieval hall house with a later two-storey porch. In 2016, tree ring dating of structural timbers suggested it was built in 1401.

In the early 1900s, tailor Thomas Cox Smith had a type of pommel or vaulting horse in his workshop here. When he made riding habits, he would get his customers to sit on it so he could check the fit and drape of the outfits when "seated" on a horse!

Christ the King RC Church. The adjoining Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, built in 1964, is a modern addition, which blends in well with the older buildings.

26

15 and 17 Castle Street, Clematis Cottage and The Priory. These important buildings are probably parts of a single 15th century hall style property. It was known as The Greene House.

27

Cross the road to continue down Castle Street towards the church

52 Castle Street, The Chantry. This was originally two chantry houses, endowed to pay for priests to sing masses in the Parish Church for the founders' souls. "Our Lady Chauntrie" was founded in the mid-14th century and Dr Slimbridge's Chantry in 1497. The existing building is late 16th century, with many alterations and extensions. Tudor features can still be seen inside. *The ornate stone gateway on the north end probably dates back to the early 1500s, from the time of the building of Thornbury Castle, and may have come from there.*

28

23 Castle Street, The Hatch (Across the street). 1606 is the date usually given for the founding of Thornbury's Free Grammar School for boys but recent research suggests that it may have been established in the 1570s. The school building, with stone mullion windows and its back to the road, was erected in 1648. Adjoining on the left was the schoolmaster's dwelling house, rebuilt in 1797. *The school's motto "Disce aut discede" meant learn or leave. Some say it continued "Manet sors tertia, caedi" - there is a third choice: to be flogged!*

29

North Borough Boundary Stone and Medieval Boundary Wall. You can see the stone in the wall opposite this marker. This important historical feature is associated with the medieval town. It defined the extent of the borough as it met the tithing of Kington. *Burgesses' animals straying beyond this point were seized and taken to the Manorial Pound, which still exists just beyond the church. The owner of the animals had to pay a fine to the manor court to release them.*

30

Continue towards the church and cross to the sundial and storyboard close to the entrance to Thornbury Castle

CHURCH AND CASTLE

The Millennium Sundial. “Time - Hours for man - Eternity with God”. The analemmatic sundial designed by Stephen Daniels reflects the spiritual and secular aspects of the church and manor over the centuries. The sundial is set out using locally produced clay tiles for the hour markers and central date line.
It indicates “Thornbury Summer Time” when you stand with one foot each side of the current date point and count the hours from the central one o’clock tile, using your shadow as the pointer. *Thornbury time is approximately 10 minutes behind Greenwich Mean Time, so add this to the indicated time to get British Summer Time.*

The storyboard includes a pictorial plan showing the main features to be seen around this site.

The Glebe Field and Old Rectory.

The house is late 16th century with many alterations and extensions. On its foundation in 1546, King Henry VIII granted the Rectory of Thornbury (amongst other properties) to Christ Church College, Oxford. The College leased out the buildings, land and the tithes associated with it.
The tenants were not necessarily clergymen.

The Old Vicarage. The Abbey of Tewksbury controlled the parish of Thornbury until the transfer of the benefice to Christ Church in 1546. A list of the vicars’ names inside the church shows that most of them were graduates of that college. About 1550, the Vicarage was a “fair house” with a garden and orchard; the living was worth £30. In 1894, a new Vicarage replaced the “insanitary and unsuitable” ancient building. *Thornbury & District Museum has an unusual quilt that was made by local people in 1900. Some squares feature local tradesmen. The quilt was sold or raffled at a Sale of Work held to help raise the money needed to pay off the debt arising from construction costs of the new vicarage.*

The New Vicarage. This was built in 1997 in the orchard of the former Vicarage.

Thornbury Castle. This was intended to be no ordinary castle, but rather a palace within secure walls.

Built by Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, between 1508 and 1521, it was the last castle in England to be granted a licence to crenellate. It was to be his base for courtly living and entertainment, demonstrating his power and wealth. The estate included three deer parks nearby enclosing over 2,500 acres.

The massive but well-proportioned façade with impressive gateways to the outer and inner courts, magnificent oriel windows, decorated Tudor brick chimneys and beautiful private gardens were features designed to emulate royal palaces like Richmond.

Accommodation for a garrison of at least 200 men was planned. Such ostentatious grandeur gave rise to suspicions that Buckingham was developing a power base to threaten the throne and he was summoned to London by King Henry VIII. He was tried for treason, convicted and executed at the Tower of London on 17th May 1521. This brought the building work to an end and the castle, together with the many Stafford estates around the country, became the property of the monarch.

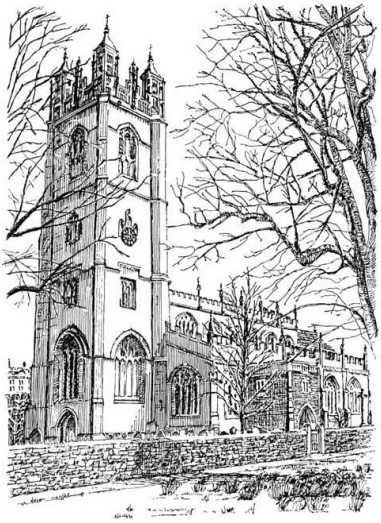
In August 1535, King Henry visited the castle on royal progress, accompanied by his wife Queen Ann Boleyn. Much of the unfinished castle gradually fell into disrepair, although a steward was usually in residence. It was partially restored in the late 1700s and more completely by the Howard family in the mid-19th century.

Today Thornbury Castle is a luxury hotel. Please respect the privacy of hotel guests.

Thornbury Parish Church of Saint Mary the Virgin. In Tudor times, John Leland, Henry VIII's chaplain and historian, recorded that a covered timber gallery led from the adjacent castle to the church, giving the lord of the manor direct entry to private pews on the upper level of the chancel. The church is of 12th century origin. The earliest surviving features are a Norman south doorway and font. Early 14th century Decorated Gothic

work survives in the chancel. In 1848, a major restoration included raising the roof of the nave with the addition of a clerestory or a series of high windows to let in light, enlarging the chancel windows and removing the ancient high box pews and some internal tombs.

The magnificent tower, with its decorative stone tracery pinnacles and open parapet, dates to the mid-16th century. The stonework was extensively restored in 1889.



Inside there are many fascinating memorials. Of particular interest are those in the chancel to John Stafford of Marlwood and to Thomas Tyndall (sic) of Eastwood, the nephew of the martyr William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English in the early 1500s. On the south aisle wall is a memorial to John Attwells, Gent, who was the founder of Attwells Free School (21).

One of the many colourful stained glass windows is a memorial to Lt. Hector Maclaine. This links to the drinking fountain seen later on the trail (38). There are also fitting tributes to those who gave their lives in two World Wars.

Ornate table tombs in the churchyard indicate the relative prosperity of some of the leading families, while headstones record many of the tradesmen of the town. One stone tells us that 28 year old Augustus Chambers was slain at “Isandula” (Battle of Isandlwana, Anglo-Zulu War) in 1879. The inscription for John Allen, who died in1816, reads, “Lord in the cutting off of my days I shall go to the gates of my grave I am deprived of the residue of my years”. These words are all the more poignant when you learn that John was hanged at Gloucester Gaol for his part in the Great Berkeley Poaching Affray.

Another stone simply reads “Lucy Derrick 2nd April 1879”. Poor Lucy was murdered just outside the town, when travelling on foot to Gloucester. She was buried at the expense of the parish.

A guide booklet containing more information is available from the church.

To start the rural part of the trail, follow the track between the Castle Lodge and the Old Vicarage to way marker 31.

Alternatively, retrace the route back along Castle Street to re-join the trail at the Maclaine Fountain, way marker 38.

At the way marker post, follow the narrow footpath to the left

The Pithay. This low-lying pasture beside the stream is overlooked by the massive defensive walls of Thornbury Castle.

Carry on along the footpath towards a small bridge
Then follow the footpath to the left

(Before crossing the bridge, look back for a view of the castle walls).

New Park. In 1510 the 3rd Duke of Buckingham enclosed much of the land here and around the castle as part of his new deer park. The low wall just over the stream is the remnant of a “ha-ha”, a ditch which separated the grounds of the now demolished early 19th century Thornbury House from grazing land. The stream can be heard running close to the path, even if it cannot be seen.

Continue along the footpath and through the gateway into the Cemetery

The Cemetery. This well maintained cemetery was opened in 1892 on land provided by E. Stafford Howard of Thornbury Castle.

Cross the cemetery grounds to the far corner of the small car park

Follow the path to cross Kington Lane

The west entry to the borough was near this point but the boundary stone has long since disappeared.

Wellfield. Continue along the footpath beside the current field boundary, over the stone stile followed by a modern kissing gate. At one time, the fields to the right were known as Little Wellfield and Great Wellfield and extended down to the stream.

Follow the path past the next way marker post. Carry straight on to a bridge over the stream. Bear left to cross the bridge and enter the open space of Latteridge Close

To reach Coppins Well it is necessary to keep left and follow the boundary until you come to the way marker post marked “Coppins Well”, near a gated bridge over the stream. Cross the bridge to view the spring.

(Depending on the time of year, this area might be overgrown).

Coppins Well. This is a fresh water spring that feeds into the stream and was once an important source of drinking water for the town. Although piped mains water was supplied to water taps in the street in the late 19th century, oral history relates that this source was still in use in the 1930s.

Return to the path and continue uphill across field called Latteridge Close towards the stone Town Walls

Latteridge Lane. This lane leads back to the High Street between walled burgage plots. The wall plaque can be seen at the top of the field.

38

The Maclaine Memorial Fountain. This drinking fountain is an appropriate memorial to Lt. Hector Maclaine, Royal Horse Artillery, who was captured in late July 1880 while trying to find water for his wounded men after the Battle of Maiwand (Second Anglo-Afghan War). Shockingly about a month afterwards, his captors killed him, just as rescue was near at hand. *The event was reported in the national newspapers, with one commenting that "The subsequent news of his cold-blooded murder was received with great sadness in Thornbury".*

39

Pass the Old Bank again and continue up the High Street

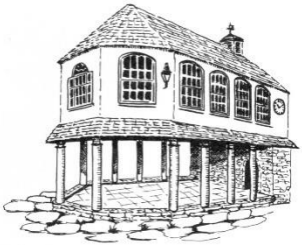
6 High Street, The Old Register Office. Opened in 1839, this is a Neo-Grecian ashlar faced building designed by the Gloucester architect Samuel Whitfield Daukes. It was made both fire and burglar proof, with the intention of storing the town's birth, marriage and death registers for 500 years. The office was also a venue for "contracting marriages". *It was suggested that the register office be built as part of the new Union Workhouse, but this raised a storm of protest. Who would like to be seen going to the workhouse to register a birth or death? While getting married there would be unthinkable!*

Cross Castle Court

8 High Street, Tudor House. This is a late 16th century cross-passage style house. Known in most old documents as the Vine House, it is thought also to have been the "The Antilope House" mentioned in a 1696 tithe terrier. The house had a thatched roof, known locally as helm. It retains many of its early features, including timber mullion windows.

The building gives an impression of Thornbury as a commercially prosperous market town in the Tudor period.
For over 250 years to the mid-20th century, the property was a butcher's shop, with a slaughterhouse at the back and with a number of adjoining fields, where livestock was kept.

40



The Old Market Hall. An 18th century remodelling of a 17th century building once known as the Booth Hall, it had an open colonnaded area on the ground floor with a Town Hall above. Owned by the lord of the manor, it was for centuries the focal point for the street market. The date on the weathervane refers to the installation of a "new, good and sufficient clock well going", paid for by some townspeople in 1634. Thornbury Town Council still maintain the current Victorian Town Clock.
Inside you can see an old, studded plank door with strap hinges. This is the outer door of an early single-cell town gaol, known as the Blind House, as it had no windows.

The Toll House. This one storey rendered building attached to the right of the Market Hall is early 17th century and has a pantile roof with an attic in the steep gable. The lord of the manor charged traders a fixed toll for animals or produce sold at the market.

Cross the High Street to return to the start point and complete the Heritage Trail.

We hope that you have enjoyed following the trail and that you will return to learn more of our historic town. This short guide can only give a flavour of the rich history of Thornbury.

If you want to know more, please visit Thornbury & District Museum in Chapel Street or visit our websites for information and details of exhibitions and events.

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ACCREDITED MUSEUM

Thornbury & District Museum
4 Chapel St Thornbury

Opening times: Please check the museum web site for details

Admission Free

01454 857774 *(Answer machine when closed)*

Email: enquiries@thornburymuseum.org.uk

For more information about the museum and to find out about the exhibitions and events, visit: https://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/

To find out more about Thornbury people and its buildings, visit "Thornbury Roots": http://www.thornburyroots.co.uk