

**9 Orpin's House.** This charming house is late 17th / early 18th century. It is named after Edward Orpin who lived here. He was town clerk, and also organist at Trinity Church until 1781. It is believed that Orpin is the subject of Gainsborough's painting *The Parish Clerk*. Orpin's grave lies just over the wall in the church yard, opposite his front door.

**10 Holy Trinity Church** is Norman, dating from around 1150, when it took over from the nearby Saxon church (11). It is possibly on the site of the monastery destroyed by the Danes in 1015. It has been further developed over the centuries; the present tower was built in the 15th century and the chancel was extended in the 16th century. *Note the 12th century windows in the chancel (near the altar) and in the nave over the south door; remains of pre-reformation rood screen at west end of nave; plaque in the chancel, commemorating the burial place of General Henry Shrapnel (inventor of the exploding shell); the squint, or viewing tunnel, between the north aisle and the high altar, one of the longest in the country.*

**11 The Saxon Church** (dedicated to St Laurence). This may be the most complete Saxon church in the country. It dates certainly from the late 10th century and the core building has remained essentially unaltered since then. The very first church here is believed to have been built by Bishop Aldhelm in the late 7th century, along with a monastery where Holy Trinity church now stands. It was rebuilt in the 10th century during the reign of King Ethelred, and this is the church we see today. It was superseded by Holy Trinity in the 12th century. After this it was used as a charnel house for storing human remains, then a school (from 1712), then a private house. A house and outbuilding were added to the front of the original structure; the roof lines can still be seen, and the present buttresses are where the house walls stood. The windows at the west end were added in the 1880s. *Note the arcading that*

*runs around the outside; tapered arches and doorways (a Saxon motif); the two carved Saxon angels on the interior east wall.*

**12 St Margaret's Hall.** This is now the town's main hall for events and exhibitions. It also houses the Town Council offices. It was built in the late 18th century as a dye house for the cloth trade, and continued as such until 1903.

**13 The Packhorse Bridge** was built in the 14th century to link the Barton Farm complex with the lands north of the river. It has been repaired and restored but the structure you see is essentially the original bridge.

**14 The Tithe Barn** was built in the early 14th century as part of the medieval farmstead belonging to Shaftesbury Abbey. Its function was to store the produce of the farm, and of the farms of the manor. Tenant farms contributed a tithe, meaning a tenth of their produce. King Ethelred gave the Manor of Bradford, including the monastery founded by St Aldhelm, to the Abbess of Shaftesbury in 1001. The barn is now owned and maintained by English Heritage. *Note: the remarkable timber trusses of the tithe barn roof, and its original threshing floor.*

**West Barn** is the restored building at the river end of the tithe barn. This is a re-creation on the remains of the 14th century original that pre-dated the tithe barn and which was destroyed by fire in 1982.

\*\*\*

For further information: The Information Centre stocks a selection of local interest leaflets and a colour history guide.

Published by: Bradford on Avon Tourist Information Centre,  
50 St Margaret's Street, Bradford on Avon. BA15 1DE. 01225 865797  
[www.bradfordonavon.co.uk](http://www.bradfordonavon.co.uk)

Despite every care being taken to ensure accuracy, the publisher cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

Text and photographs copyright © Raincourt Consultants Ltd 2005



Tithe Barn

## LET'S EXPLORE BRADFORD ON AVON

Bradford on Avon's origins can be traced back to Iron Age settlers. Later there were Roman and Saxon communities here, established around the ford across the river. Yet the majority of the stone buildings, lanes and paths that characterise the town today owe their existence to the prosperity brought over several centuries by the wool trade.

This leaflet will help you explore the highlights of this charismatic riverside town.

Please be aware that some parts of the town are accessed by steep and sometimes uneven paths.



The Saxon Church

Lock up on the town bridge

Refer to the map for the locations of each numbered entry. The map is intended to allow you to construct your own route around the town.

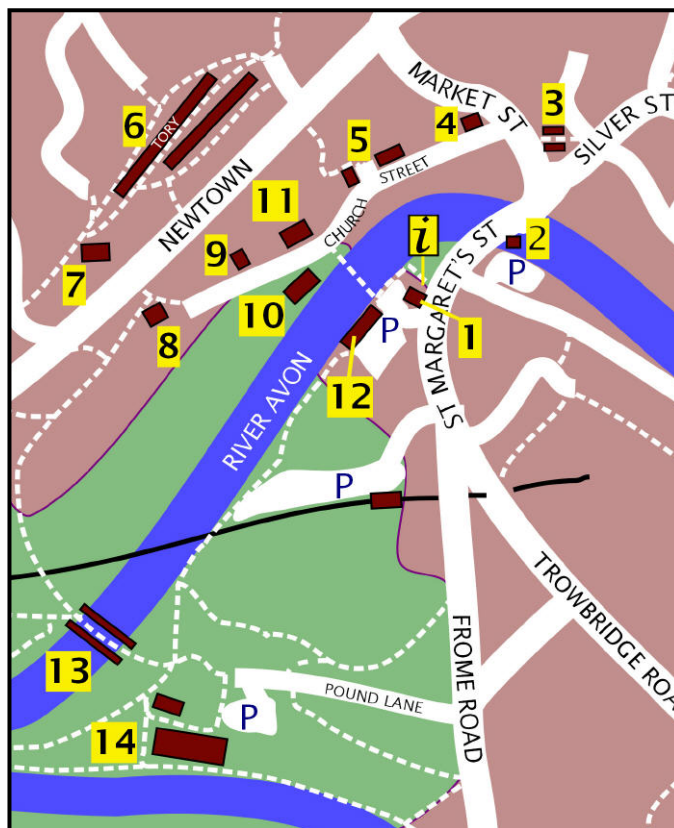
**1 Westbury House** is an early 18th century clothier's house that originally had a factory attached (on the site of the car park, behind). The name comes from Richard Bethel who owned the house in the 19th century and became Baron Westbury. In 1791 there was a small riot of aggrieved weavers protesting about Joseph Phelps introducing machinery at his factory here. Phelps shot and killed three of the crowd. It was ruled that the deaths were justified, and Phelps was awarded £250 compensation! However, the protestors did manage to destroy a scribbling horse machine (used in combing and separating wool in readiness for spinning).

**2 The Lock Up** on the town bridge was built when the bridge was widened in the mid 17th century. It was probably first used as a toll house, then later converted to be the lock up - an overnight cell for drunks or troublemakers. The fish on top is a gudgeon.

**The Town Bridge's** origins are Norman, from the 13th century; the two pointed arches between the Lock Up and the river bank are from this time. It was widened by building a new bridge alongside, on the downstream side by the ancient ford. (Broad ford = Bradenforda in Anglo Saxon, = Bradford.) The ford was in use, or at least usable, until the start of the 20th century when the embankments were constructed.

**3 The Shambles.** Many of the buildings in this narrow street date from the 14th century, with 17th century facades. It is probably the earliest site of trading in the town, having been a market since Saxon times. 'Shambles' is derived from the Anglo Saxon word 'scamel', which is taken to mean a meat market place.

**4 Catholic Church of St Thomas More.** Constructed in 1855, it was the town hall until 1910, when the council moved to Westbury House. It became Bradford's first cinema and in its time it has also been home to the police and fire brigade, as witnessed by inscriptions over doorways.



**5 Trinity Church hall**, beside Druce's Hill in Church Street, is Tudor. It was built by Thomas Horton in the early 1500s. What you see today is essentially what you would have seen had you chanced down this street in the 16th century. It now houses both the church hall and the **Masonic Hall**, which has the large 20th century window facing onto Church Street. *Note: the V-shaped gutters bearing Thomas Horton's heraldic symbol; the old dole window in the west wall*

*(facing Druce's Hill) - used for handing out charitable monies in past centuries.*

Across Druce's Hill is the **Dutch Barton**, which in the 1670s, was home to a small number of Dutch weavers. They were brought over to teach Bradford weavers the techniques for processing higher quality Spanish wool, and were instrumental in regenerating the cloth trade in the town.

**6 Tory** is the highest of four rows of weavers' cottages on the hill overlooking the town. 'Tory' comes from the Anglo Saxon word 'Tor', meaning a high place. Tory, along with Middle Rank, Newtown and Barton Orchard below it, dates back to the expansion of the cloth trade in the 17th century. The houses are thought of as charming now, but were once regarded as poor dwellings with little more than the view to recommend them, and would have been demolished had it not been for the efforts of the preservation trust.

**7 St Mary Tory Chapel** is known to have existed in 1540 as an isolated building at what was then the highest part of the town. It was used as a chapel, or hermitage, until the early 18th century, when it became a cloth factory. By the late 19th century it was a ruin, with really just the east end remaining. After restoration by Thomas Bush Saunders it resumed life as a place of worship in 1871. *Note the modern stained glass window and medieval detail in the east wall, overlooking the town.*

**8 The Chantry** was established as a priest's chantry by Thomas Horton in 1524, six years before his death. In 1548 the crown, under Edward VI, sold it to Horton's nephew, also called Thomas. The Chantry has a large stone tank where fish were kept for food. This tank is fed by the spring stream that originates by St Mary Tory and can be heard running beneath Barton Orchard.