



Bradford on Avon
Preservation Trust

TOWN TRAIL

Bradford on Avon's rich history dates back to the iron age. Many of its historic buildings reflect the changing fortunes of the town. From the Middle Ages until the late 19th century, Bradford's prosperity depended on wool and cloth weaving. By the end of the 19th century rubber manufacture was the main industry of the town.

This Town Trail will take you along routes that will show you many interesting buildings – some saved by The Trust. You'll also see green plaques on some buildings that were placed there by The Trust.

Turn back around and go back down Silver Street to view the site of **Market Leet** and the original **Town Hall** ⑨. In 1552, it was here that Thomas Tropicell was burnt at the stake for his religious beliefs.

The old Town Hall, where the Court Leet was held, adjoined this site. At ground level there were open colonnades for the market and also, stocks, pillory and whipping posts. The building sadly

DETOUR 1 - Turn right up Coppice Hill to see attractive cottages and at the top, the preserved frontage of the **Wesleyan Chapel** ⑨ opened in 1818.



15th century doorway

collapsed in 1826.

Walk through **The Shambles** ⑩. The site of a medieval market; at the eastern end, a late medieval building with a 15th century doorway was formerly the house where tolls were collected, known as the tolsey. Other sights include the rare monogram of Edward VIII 1936 and a 'ghost' advertising sign.



The Shambles (10)



The Town Trail starts at the Information Centre in Westbury Garden. While in the Garden, have a look at the **Town Bridge**. The side you are viewing was the site of the original ford: hence the name, Bradford or 'Broad Ford'. The bridge was widened in 1769, creating the arches you can see here.



Cross at the pedestrian crossing to see the **Statue of Millie** ①. Erected for the Millennium in 2000, it symbolises Bradford's history – the stone industry and the woollen cloth trade.



Turn left towards the river.

The Museum ② is in the library. It includes the contents of one of the town's oldest chemist shops.

The Lockup ③. The 18th Century lockup on the bridge was built on the foundations of a medieval

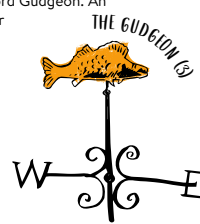
chapel. Look at the top to see the Bradford Gudgeon. An occupant of the cell was said to be 'under the fish and over the water.'

Walk over the bridge. Continue into Silver Street, turn right by the Green Wall.

Unveiled in 2022, it has over 3,500 plants and features an in-built watering system.

New Mill and Lamb Yard ④ were originally built for the woollen cloth production, then used as part of the rubber company founded by Stephen Moulton at Kingston Mill in 1848. The square building next to the bridge was added in 1917. Rubber production continued under the Avon Rubber Company until 1994.

Go into Lamb's Yard, on the far left you will see a passageway which houses Made in Bradford, a collective of local artists. Carry on to Kingston Road and take a right.



At the corner of Market Street you will see a gold post box. This is to celebrate GB gold medalist Ed McKeever. The then 28-year-old from Bradford-on-Avon, won Britain's 26th gold medal in the men's 200m kayak sprint on 11 Aug 2012. Later on the trail, you will see a bridge named after him. Turn right onto Market Street

Be sure to have a look at another 'ghost' advertising sign on the side of the old Swan. Continue up Market Street. Look across the street and you will see the **Pippet Buildings** ⑪ which were derelict before the Trust purchased the property in 1980. The restored building was opened in 1982 and won a Civic Trust Award in 1984. It now houses several independent shops.



Pippet Buildings before restoration by the Trust

A little further up the street (on the right-hand side) are **Nos. 9 – 11** ⑫. These were mid-18th century tenements. They were restored by the Trust in 1990-91.

Turn around and cross over at the pedestrian crossing onto Church Street ⑬-⑭. There's much to see here so please refer to the map overleaf for details.

Continued overleaf...

The imposing buildings were formerly the headquarters of the Avon Rubber Company.



The Iron Duke (5)

Continue along until you come to **The Iron Duke** ⑤. The Trust and Museum Society jointly reconstructed this 19th century calendaring (rubber rolling) machine. It was made for the Kingston Mills rubber factory and preserved in bits since the factory closed.



Silver Street House (7)

Cross the street and turn left up Mill Lane to Silver Street. Cross Carefully! If you continue up Silver Street, it becomes Woolley Street and, on the left, you will see **Lynchetts** ⑥. This large, late Georgian house was given to the Trust in 1970 at which time it was divided into flats. Following re-conversion, it was sold as a house and the proceeds used to purchase and restore Silver Street House.

Silver Street House ⑦. The Trust bought 13 Silver Street in 1974. Originally an early 18th century house it was at one time a hotel but had become derelict. The Trust converted it into flats which were sold on long leases.

ABOUT THE PRESERVATION TRUST

In the post-war period, working class housing in Bradford on Avon was in a terrible state: one government enquiry considered it equal to the worst inner-city slum in the North of England.

St Margarets, Tory, Middle Rank and Wine Street were scheduled to be cleared. In 1959, a Preservation Society was formed to campaign nationally and locally to save these architecturally rich streets. Much of Tory and Middle Rank was restored to the condition you see today.

In time the Society advocated two different approaches. One group prioritised informing and lobbying the authorities, which had proved very successful. The other group were more 'hands on' and actively set out to buy and rescue buildings on the brink of destruction.

Elisabeth Stephenson and Katherine MacKean were key figures in the group. They were known as the 'Hens' after the name of their antique shop on Silver Street, the China Hen.

For a few hundred pounds Elisabeth acquired the Priory Barn in Newtown, then in ruins. Together the Hens raised funds for the restoration and the Trust was formed to manage the project.

The trail includes several buildings which have been restored by the Trust.

Both the Priory Barn and West Barn are available for hire; Ideal for weddings, exhibitions & meetings. Scan the code to find out more.



Photo Andrew Eberlin

BRADFORD ON AVON PRESERVATION TRUST TOWN TRAIL

CHURCH STREET

The Old Town Hall 13. Originally the site of the Market Tavern in c.1635, the Old Town Hall was erected in 1855 and was used as a public hall and an early police station. It is now the Catholic Church of St Thomas More and is open to the public.

On the opposite side is **The Old Bank House 14** which dates back to the 15th century; by the 18th century it had become the Red Lion Inn with the adjoining Bullpit.

Continue along Church Street until you reach on the right Church House 15 which was restored c.1730 for the Attorney at Law, Christopher Brewer on land leased from the Methuen Family. It was later occupied by another lawyer, Daniel Clutterbuck, and a number of financial institutions. Today, a playful addition is the green bear on the wall of the neighbouring building.

Two buildings of note are:

Abbey Mill 16. The present building was originally a cloth mill but ceased business in 1898. Until 1995, it had an important role in the rubber industry of Spencer Moulton and Avon Rubber. The building has since been converted into retirement apartments.

And opposite Abbey Mill entrance

The Masonic Hall 17 was built by the clothier, Thomas Horton in the early 1500s and was used for church activities. The Hall has had many functions including at different times, schools for girls and boys.

Walk up the slope to

Dutch Barton 18. Flemish weavers of fine cloth from Spanish wool were brought to the area by the clothier Paul Methuen in 1659, and to this site by William Brewer in 1674. The skills they brought helped re-establish the wool trade.

Return to the road and continue to

Holy Trinity Church 19 which is of Roman origin and altered over time.

Follow the road to the right of the Church to

Saxon Church of St. Laurence 20 dating from the early 11th century. It was a school and a house until 'rediscovered' in 1856. Remains of a Saxon cross can be seen above the altar, and angel carvings above the chancel arch. One of these is now the Trust's logo.

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Continue up the road, past the cottages, to the detached house on the right.

Orpin's House 21. This 17th century building was formerly a glebe cottage and home of Edward Orpin, Parish Clerk. His portrait by Thomas Gainsborough is hung in the Tate Gallery; his grave can be found directly opposite in Holy Trinity Church graveyard.

For accessible town trail retrace your steps back to Church Street and cross the river using McKeever bridge. For Detour 2 see below.

Walk around St Margarets Hall. Once a late 18th century dye house, it is now a venue for public events and activities.

Take the river path to Barton Grange Farm.

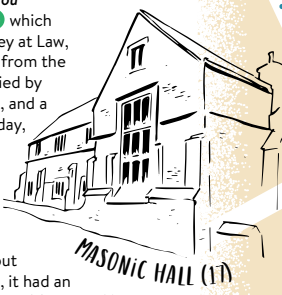
DETOUR 2 has steep hills but also fascinating features and stunning views.

Continue along Church Street and up a path (Church Lane) to reach The Chantry 22. Chantry priests from Holy Trinity may have been housed here to say prayers for their benefactor. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was a clothier's house where cloth was made or sold.

From here **continue up the stairs and turn left to Newtown Spout 23.** In 1999-2000, the Trust restored the spout, and historic stone trough to working order and resolved a problem with water leaking out through holes in wall.

Continue past the Spout and at the fork, go right onto Wine Street passing the former Seven Stars Brewery 24 built in 1841 and extended east as a maltings in 1856.

Continue up Wine Street and take the signposted path on the right at 76 Wine Street to the Chapel of St Mary Tory 25. Located on a pilgrim route it was founded as a hermitage. It was later used as a cloth factory but fell into disrepair. It was rebuilt in 1871.



KEY

- 3 The Trust Plaques
- Pedestrian Route
- ⋯ Town Trail - accessible
- ⋯ Detour - some steep sections & steps



The Hens Orchard (31)

BARTON GRANGE FARM

Barton Grange (meaning outlying farm) was established by the nuns of Shaftesbury Abbey on land given to them in 1001 by King Ethelred; they managed it until the 1530s when it passed into private ownership. It functioned as a working farm until 1971. In 2000 the Trust bought and restored the yard and four smaller buildings.

The **West Barn 29** was a substantial restoration project for the Trust. In the late 90s a tree ring analysis discovered the Barn dated from the late 13th century.

This is some 70 years earlier than the **Tithe Barn 30** which dates from c.1340. One of the largest medieval barns in the country, it is in the care of English Heritage: it is a Grade 1 listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Walk straight on from the Tithe Barn and through the opening in the stone wall to the Hens Orchard 31. Planted in 2014 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Preservation Trust, the orchard is named in honour of the 'hens,' Elisabeth Stephenson and Katherine MacKean (mentioned overleaf in 'About the Preservation Trust'). The trees were donated by local people, organisations and nurseries. It is a community orchard and the fruit is freely available to the people of Bradford.



The Tithe Barn (30) and the West Barn (29)

Retrace your steps where you can now browse the shops and enjoy a drink. You may also pass Barton Grange Farmhouse 32 now a private dwelling. **Return to the river path and take a right heading north. Follow the river past the swimming pool until you see St. Margarets Hall 33 again. Walk around St. Margarets Hall towards the river. You will see McKeever Bridge 34. Continue through the arch back into Westbury Garden.** On your left you will see a **plaque 35** showing the 1882 flood level.

Continue along Tory where the Trust has had a major impact, rescuing buildings that were down for demolition.

At the end of Tory take a right, walk past Middle Rank and at the bottom of the hill, turn left into Newtown to The Priory Barn 26 which was built at the end of the 15th century as an outbuilding of Rogers Manor. Over time it became inhabitable; it was the Trust's first restoration project.

Turn round and return along Newtown. Turn left onto a series of



Priory Barn before restoration by the Trust (26)



Priory Barn today

steps, signposted at the bottom to Barton Farm. Turn right to Barton Orchard 27. This is an ancient packhorse way from Barton Grange Farm to Winsley and Bath. A communal washhouse fed by Ladywell Spring stood between Nos 7 and 9. No 3 is an 18th century clothier's house.

Follow the walled path down to the railway level crossing into Barton Farm Country Park. Follow the path to the medieval Barton Bridge (also known as the Packhorse Bridge) which gave animals and carts access to the farm.

Cross the bridge. On the right, there is a **WWII pillbox 28** with an information board provided by the Trust.

Walk toward the buildings ahead and go through the archway to enter Barton Grange Farm