



# Town Heritage Trails

## Short Walk 1.2 miles



DISCOVER  
THE HISTORY of  
WELLINGBOROUGH

All Hallows Church

Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
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Borough Council of  
**Wellingborough**  
Making Wellingborough a place to be proud of

# Short Walk (1.2 miles/2km)



The River Nene and once fenland terrain of Wellingborough provided an attractive landscape for early settlers. In 43 AD, the Romans invaded Britain and built a small town on the bank of the river near Irchester (Chester Farm). Later the town became a walled 'Castrum' and an influential Roman outpost.

During the 6th century an Anglo Saxon warlord named Chief Waendel came to settle on the opposite side of the river bank, leaving the Roman town on the other. Waendel's people flourished here and the Roman settlement disbanded. It is at this time that the town we know as Wellingborough came into being.

**Waendel's burh or Wendlingburgh is a Saxon term meaning 'stronghold of Waendel's folk'.**

The town went on to be shaped by the cultural and economic lead of the 9th century monks of Crowland Abbey, noted in the 1086 Domesday Book as 'Wendleburie'.

In 1201 King John granted a market charter and the town and its name evolved into a thriving market town. After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1541, the land passed into the hands of the crown.

By the early 1600s, influenced by a royal visit from King Charles I, the town became well known for its many wells.

As the centuries moved on, Wellingborough grew, supported by a healthy boot and shoe industry, several breweries and iron works.

Your walk will reveal some of the influences from these past eras and the architecture they left behind.

**Ing - derived from the Anglo Saxon for Inga or Ingas meaning 'belongs to or people'.**

**Borough - derives from Anglo Saxon for Burh meaning 'fortified place'.**

**\*\* Blue boxes within this booklet indicate places of interest beyond the boundaries of this walk.**





## Useful Websites:

[www.wellingborough.gov.uk/THI](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/THI)

[www.wellingboroughmuseum.co.uk](http://www.wellingboroughmuseum.co.uk)

[www.wellingboroughcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.wellingboroughcivicsociety.org.uk)

[www.northamptonshireheritageforum.co.uk](http://www.northamptonshireheritageforum.co.uk)

Full details of the Library Service can be found on the 'Libraries' page of the Northamptonshire County Council website at [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk)

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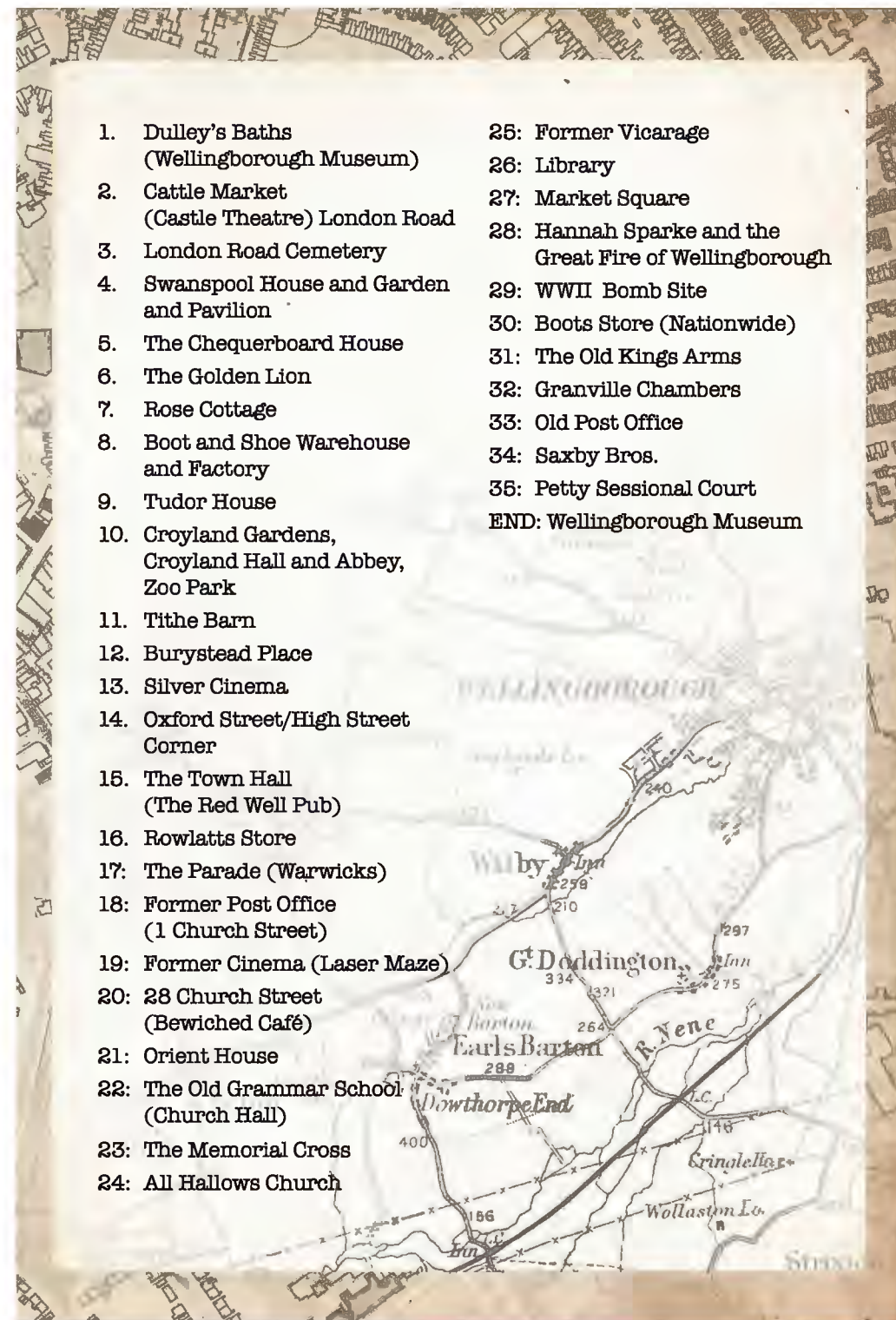




# Notes



1. Dulley's Baths  
(Wellingborough Museum)
2. Cattle Market  
(Castle Theatre) London Road
3. London Road Cemetery
4. Swanspool House and Garden  
and Pavilion
5. The Chequerboard House
6. The Golden Lion
7. Rose Cottage
8. Boot and Shoe Warehouse  
and Factory
9. Tudor House
10. Croyland Gardens,  
Croyland Hall and Abbey,  
Zoo Park
11. Tithe Barn
12. Burystead Place
13. Silver Cinema
14. Oxford Street/High Street  
Corner
15. The Town Hall  
(The Red Well Pub)
16. Rowlatts Store
17. The Parade (Warwicks)
18. Former Post Office  
(1 Church Street)
19. Former Cinema (Laser Maze)
20. 28 Church Street  
(Bewicked Café)
21. Orient House
22. The Old Grammar School  
(Church Hall)
23. The Memorial Cross
24. All Hallows Church
25. Former Vicarage
26. Library
27. Market Square
28. Hannah Sparke and the  
Great Fire of Wellingborough
29. WWII Bomb Site
30. Boots Store (Nationwide)
31. The Old Kings Arms
32. Granville Chambers
33. Old Post Office
34. Saxby Bros.
35. Petty Sessional Court
- END: Wellingborough Museum







#### (Start) Castle Way/Castle Street

From the 1600s Wellingborough became known for its spring waters. Several of the town's breweries used these waters in the brewing process during the 1800s and 1900s.

In 1892, one brewery, William Dulley & Sons, used the surplus warm water from the brewing process to supply the town's first covered public swimming pool.

The pool manager gave swimming lessons by means of a long pole with a leather loop at one end, which went under the bather's arms to keep their heads above water. As the week progressed the price of the admission became cheaper as the water became dirtier. At the end of the week, the water was drained into the Swanspool Brook and the pool was refilled.

The pool closed during the First World War and in 1918 the building was purchased by George Cox & Co, who operated a successful boot and shoe factory from the premises until 1994.

Since 2007 it has housed the **Wellingborough Museum** where sections of the old pool are displayed inside.



**Leaving the museum, turn immediately right towards the Castle Theatre and out on to Castle Road.**

#### (End) Castle Way

### Wellingborough Museum

**Ever since it opened in 2007 the museum has been a welcoming place for all ages. Unique local history and heritage activities take place throughout the year, finding new and exciting ways to bring history to life.**

**The museum is free to visit and offers a wide choice of refreshments and a gift shop.**

**Visit [www.wellingboroughmuseum.co.uk](http://www.wellingboroughmuseum.co.uk) for more details.**





## 34. Saxby Bros.



The pies were made to a secret recipe and over the coming years, the brothers were awarded more than 100 national prizes. Their pies were not only available in supermarkets but also sold in Harrods, Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason in London.

Herbert and Ted Saxby were local butchers. They bought their first shop in Midland Road in 1904, which offered fresh and cooked meats, along with popular home-made pies. They soon expanded the shop to include a bakery and the beginning of a long career in pie making. The brothers became synonymous for their pies, in particular their pork pies.

At its peak, Saxby's employed 325 people in the factory in Brook Street East and 14 shops across the Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire region. However, competition from expanding supermarkets led to the closure of all the outlets, and in 2005, after just over 100 years in business, Saxby's was sold on and the factory closed.

*Cross the road to join Castle Road and head back towards the Museum.*

## 35. Petty Sessional Court

**The court house is built from Victorian red brick with stone mullion and transoms on the windows, stone cornice under the eaves and stone inscription above the entrance which add to its judicial appearance.**

**In the late 1800s the town was the county court district and head of the petty sessional division. The town had police stations in Sheep Street and Midland Road. Before the Petty Sessional Court was built in 1916, the town hall provided the meeting place for magistrates and small court hearings.**



## 2. Cattle Market (Castle Theatre)



By the end of the 1800s the popular cattle market had outgrown its location on the Market Square and was relocated to this new site and purpose built accommodation in 1905.

The buildings included a corn exchange, auctioneer's offices and a refreshment room.

During the 1960s, use of the cattle market declined and the site was closed.

A new supermarket building was erected in front of the buildings, which survived until the 1980s when Tesco, the last operator, relocated and the building was demolished.



In the early 1990s, the Wellingborough Arts Association became the force behind establishing a theatre on the site. By this time, the cattle market buildings had gained historic importance and so were incorporated into the theatre design.

**The Castle Theatre was officially opened on 30 March 1995 by its then patron, actor Jeremy Irons.**

*Turn left and walk for a few yards before crossing to the opposite side of the road, to enter the small gate leading into the Cemetery. Follow the path through the cemetery, around to the front of the twin chapels.*



### 3. London Road Cemetery

**When visiting this historic graveyard, you are immediately struck by the twin gothic style chapels.**

**The two chapels were built in the 1850s to accommodate divided practices, Church of England on the right and Non-Conformists on the left. They were designed by Northampton architect Edmund Francis Law.**

The twin chapels and the gate lodge are Grade II listed. Consecrated in 1856 by the Bishop of Peterborough, the cemetery's original area was three acres. Another three were added in 1874.

Among the notable Wellingburians buried beneath this soil is John Askham who died in 1894 aged 69. He was a local shoemaker and self-educated poet. He continued to work long hours throughout his life, despite his literary notoriety, always believing in the value of hard toil.

*"Literature, with me, must, under the present circumstances, come second; and I can truly say that I have never let it interfere with the labour which wins the bread, although the temptation is often great."*

John Askham



#### **\*\*Doddington Road Cemetery**

**A 25 acre cemetery was opened in Doddington Road on 31 May 1906. This cemetery has been extended over the years and continues to be the place of rest for town residents.**

**Leave the cemetery past the Gatehouse and onto London Road. Using the traffic crossing (to your left) cross the road and walk back down London Road.**

### 32. Granville Chambers

Now a large prominent corner store, it was originally opened by the Wellingborough Public Coffee House Co. in 1883 as a Temperance Hotel, named the Granville Hotel Ltd. The copper dome (now painted black) at the top of the building was considered as a 'lavish' and 'ostentatious' expense at the time, but a feature that is still enjoyed today.



### 33. Old Post Office

The construction of Midland Road with the coming of the railway line provided a prime location for a new post office. The red brick building was built in 1908, with stone dressings and mahogany fittings inside.

Telephone booths were installed in the foyer for public use. It was still being used by the postal service in the 1970s but no longer open to the public. The building is now in private ownership and a small post office counter operates next door.







### 30. Boots Store (Nationwide)

The Tudor style building on the right, which is currently home to Nationwide Building Society, was actually built in 1907 for Boots the Chemist with a lending library on the first floor.



The rest of Market Street is home to many banks which were built during the late 19th century.

### 31. The Old Kings Arms

Now a bakery, this building was a public house until the 1960s. In 1887 a temporary decorative arch was erected in front of the King Arms, across Midland Road, for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee Show and another in 1897 for the Northamptonshire Agricultural Show.



The Old Kings Arms motif can still be seen above the bakery shop sign.

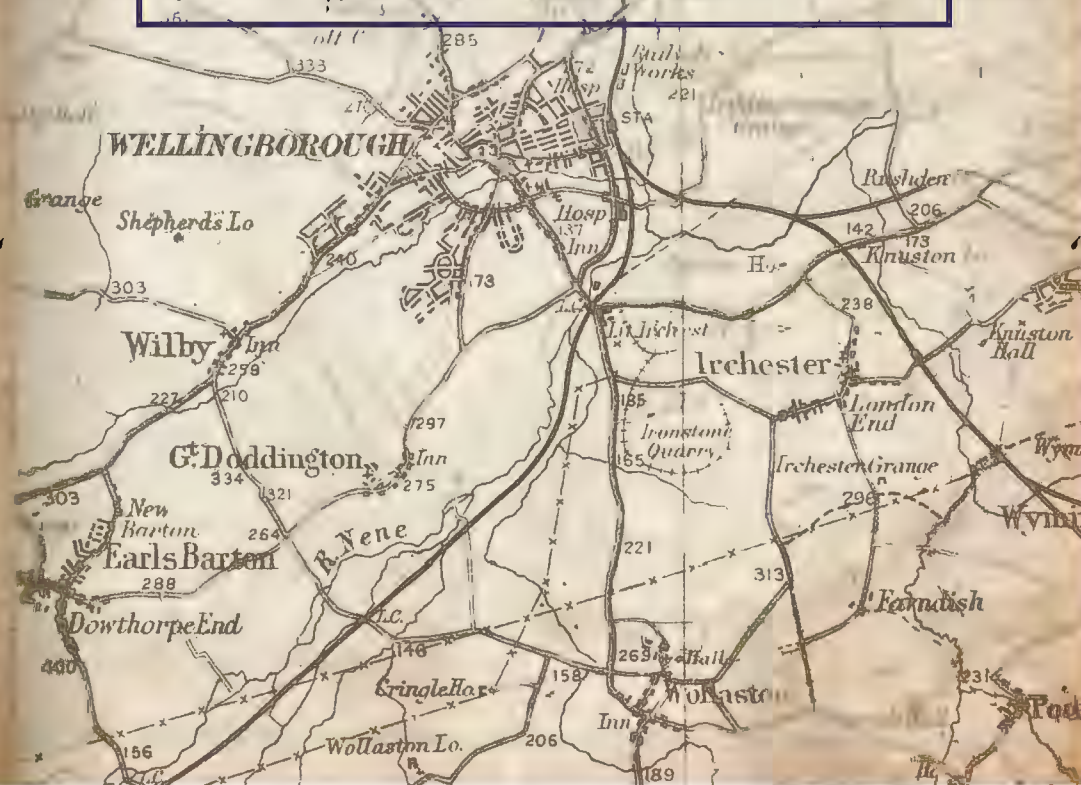
**Turn right into Midland Road, and continue down. The road leading down the hill opposite the Old Kings Arms is Midland Road. In 1857 Midland Road was constructed to link the town to the new railway station. As a result houses were built along the road with larger Victorian housing estates further down. The first two buildings are worth noting (1-5 Midland Road).**

### •• London Road

**At the corner of London Road and Irthlingborough Road is a fine avenue of lime trees called 'The Walks', which were planted in the 1840s. The Walks lead to The Embankment and the River Nene.**



**Take the set of steps leading to Swanspool Gardens. Alternatively, continue down London Road (marked on the map with dots), following the path round to the left, in front of Swanspool House, where you will find a sloped access into the gardens and the pavilion. You should return to the front of Swanspool House to continue the trail.**





## 4. Swanspool Pavilion, House and Gardens

### The Pavilion

The pavilion was built in 1929 as a sports facility, but during the war it was used as 'The British' restaurant for service personnel and townspeople.



*Cross the Market Square as shown on the map, and walk through Orient Plaza and join Market Street next to the newsagent kiosk (known locally as 'The Pagoda', which was built as a bus shelter in 1915).*

## 29. WWII Bomb Site

**Here you will see a plaque from the Civic Society commemorating the lives lost at this bomb site. During the Second World War, on Bank Holiday Monday, 3 August 1942 at 6.10pm, the air raid sirens blasted out and the town was hit, by four 500 kilo bombs. Buildings to your right were completely destroyed along with other devastation in Midland Road.**

**Below the memorial plaque is another brass plaque acknowledging a major disaster suffered by the town 200 years earlier; Hannah Sparke and The Great Fire of Wellingborough. The plaque forms part of children's heritage trail.**

*Turn left and walk up Market Street until you reach a pedestrian crossing, where the street meets Midland Road.*







## 28. Hannah Sparke and the Great Fire of Wellingborough

**On Friday, 28 July 1738, behind an old dyers shop in Silver Street, a boy sat drying oats in the midday sun.**

**A small cinder from his open fire drifted next to the wall of a nearby barn, which instantly caught fire, along with the neighbouring 'Peacock Inn' and was burnt to the ground. Soon, the dry thatches on every house and stacked fire logs in each courtyard were engulfed by the flames.**

Equipped with only buckets, the blazing heat overpowered the fire-fighters and townspeople took shelter in the parish church on Market Street. The heat was so intense it melted lead from the church roof creating panic from within. The fire seared through Market Square, consuming Market Street and into Cambridge Street.

Word was sent to Kettering and nearby by parishes for help.

**A small row of houses in Butchers Row laid a pathway for the fire towards the Church.**

**60-year-old Hannah Sparke, owner of the ale house in Butchers Row, quickly ordered all the liquors and ales from her cellar to be thrown on to blankets. These beer soaked blankets successfully quenched the flames, stopping the fire reaching the church and saving the lives of everyone inside.**

**The aptly named heroine was recognised as the town's major celebrity for her actions and hailed a hero until she died in 1785, aged 107! She is buried in All Hallows Churchyard.**

By the time the fire had been extinguished, the people of Wellingborough had escaped with their lives, though not much else. Over 200 homes and 800 shops, along with outbuildings and barns, had been totally destroyed and all worldly possessions, food, stock and money lost to the embers. This small town with a then population of 2,600 was left in ruins. Neighbouring townsfolk of Northampton, Kettering, Oundle and others sent contributions of 560 guineas to help re-build the town.

## The House

**Swanspool House dates from 1779. The limestone façade and large central doorway provides the building with an air of grandeur within the ornate gardens.**

Owned by four generations of the Sharman family, it was sold following the death of Nathaniel Pearce Sharman in 1918. The council purchased the property including the house and 49 acres of land, at auction, for £8,300 in February 1919, proposing to use the land for housing.

The sale of the house sparked a local outcry. The local newspaper, Wellingborough News, put out an appeal to wealthy residents to buy the property and gift it back to the town. Local boot and shoe manufacturer Mr Frederick C Chamberlain stepped forward and submitted an offer for £2,500, with the condition that the house and gardens be retained for the benefit of the town.

The offer was accepted and all other tenders were returned unopened with a thank you letter from Mr Chamberlain. The letter began:

**"For some years I have cherished the hope that someday I might be given the opportunity to do something for my native town that would give pleasure to my fellow townspeople....."**

The house and grounds were officially opened to the public on 10 June 1919 by Mr Chamberlain.



Swanspool House is currently home to the registry office and council chamber. The grounds remain a public formal garden including tennis courts, bowling green and a children's nature walk.

### Jotto's Fountain

Situated in front of Swanspool House and brook is a drinking fountain known as 'Jotto's Fountain'. It was given to the town by James 'Jotto' Page, Chairman of the Urban District Council, in 1902 to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII.

The brook running in front of the house has been known as the 'Swan's pool' for hundreds of years. John Cole in his History of Wellingborough (1837) notes that in this location swans and their eggs were protected by several statutes, during the reign of King Edward IV (1461-1470) "a person may not own a swan if they did not own free-hold land".

Jotto's fountain in its original place on the Market Street. The Corn Exchange is in the background.



**Use the path in front of Swanspool House, to join Doddington Road. Cross the road here. To your right and follow the path around to join Sheep Street. On the opposite side of the street you will see a tall building with a chequerboard brick effect, Ye Golden Lion pub and Rose Cottage.**



This chequerboard house with its white and red brick façade and slate roof is a fine example of early 19th century architecture and was once a stylish three-storey home to the Dulley family. Mr William Dulley established one of the town's breweries in 1840, which was located to the rear of this house.

## 5. The Chequerboard House



The Dulley family owned many properties in the town, and benefited local residents with employment, business and community facilities such as the public swimming baths (*Dulley's Baths - now the Wellingborough Museum*).

The town's breweries benefited from the waters of the Red Well which was pumped from the spring itself into a reservoir on the northern side of the town and from there it flowed to Sheep Street and the breweries.

The motif of the Dulley Brewery was a swan which was carved in stone and could be seen on the old clock tower of the brewery offices. The rendering was saved when the former brewery was demolished in the early 1970s and is now on display in the Swansgate Shopping Centre.

Although the swan was the brewery's motif, it was a raven that became the brewery's mascot. In the early 1900s a bird called Jack, belonging to the brewery manager, had the freedom of the brewery yard but often flew into the town centre. It is said that Jack's owner, a staunch supporter of the Liberal Party, taught his bird the words "*No Tariff Reform, No Tariff Reform*" which Jack would squawk whilst perched on the steps of the Conservative Club in Silver Street.

In 1920 Dulley's brewery was sold to Campbell, Praed and Co (a family of London bankers) who owned the adjoining brewery which itself closed in 1954. The Swansgate Centre (formerly called 'The Amdale Centre') was built on the site.

**Cattle Market outside All Hallows**



**Corn Exchange Market Square**

**Pagoda on Market Street - non market day**





## 27. Market Square

In 1201 a Market Charter was awarded to the town by King John. It is thought that the area for the market was laid out at this time, making use of existing Roman roads.

The road linking High Street, Silver Street and Sheep Street was the important north-south route to London.

Similarly, the roads running west to east mark the Oxford to Cambridge route.

*The Medieval Wellingborough Market was held on the steps of the 'Market Cross', a monument located on a triangular piece of land in front of the Hind Inn. At this time the market was hemmed in by buildings and extremely busy as traders from out-of-town came to buy and sell goods.*

*By 1719, the cross had fallen into decay and a new one was built by George Shepherd, then Lord of the Manor of Hatton. It is said to have been quite ornate, having had a 'stepped base with a beehive shaped rotunda; and an octagonal, fluted shaft with a vane.'*

*In 1798, the cross was dismantled. It seems it became a hazard to coaches swinging round into the entrance of the Hind.*

*The Corn Exchange (a large stone building with hall) was built in 1861 relieving the Hind Inn of its custom as people left it behind to trade in the new building. It later became The Electric*

*Theatre and then The Regal Cinema. It was demolished in 1959 by the owners and replaced with a Fine Fare supermarket which was also demolished in 1995.*

*In 1874 a row of houses on the northern side of Market Street, called Butchers Row, were demolished to accommodate the growing market. In 1905 the main market moved to its current location outside All Hallows Church, when the cattle market relocated to Castle Road. Iron rings can still be found along the church wall, where the animals were tied.*

**Markets are still held here every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.**  
[www.wellingborough.gov.uk/market](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/market)

## 6. Ye Golden Lion

**Ye Golden Lion is a house of ancient origin and great charm. It stands at the point where three ways once joined, known as 'Ham Joint Close'. Thought to date back to 1540, the building has been constructed with enormous timber, mostly stout English oak, incorporated into the exterior. The house was owned and lived in by farmer Thomas Roane who died in 1676. The Roane family are buried in All Hallows Church yard.**

It is said that the house was the first place in Wellingborough that served tea, known as 'Chinese Soup' at the time.

In the early 1800s the house was the residence of Mr A Wilkin, printer and artist. The house became an inn during the mid-1800s.



## 7. Rose Cottage

**This attractive house consisting of squared course and regular course ironstone and slate roof is a Grade II listed building, reputedly built around 1603. It was remodelled in the mid-1700s with further brick extension in the 1800s and a few adjustments in the 1900s. Also worth noting is the attached cottage at 18 Sheep Street which is an equally attractive 17th century Grade II listed building.**



**Walk up Sheep Street, past an old boot and shoe factory and stop when you reach a thatched Tudor house.**





Trafalgar House and Works of Sharman & Skins, Sheep Street.



## 8. Boot and Shoe Warehouse and Factory

**It is thought that the shoe industry started in Wellingborough before 1760 and in the following years spread to the surrounding areas of Earls Barton, Wollaston, Irthlingborough, Higham Ferrers, Raunds and Rushden in the following years.**

The shoe industry grew slowly but steadily in the town until the principal manufacturer, Samuel Sharman, was described in the Baileys British Directory (1784) as a 'contractor for the Army and Wholesale Manufacturer of Shoes'. This statement was not noted by any other supplier and is an indicator of the businesses success.

At this time, the shoe industry for Northamptonshire was not run in factories like it is today. Shoemakers collected their work from the employer's premises and completed it at home, then returning to the warehouse to collect more work and their wages. Until machinery was introduced in the 1850s, all processes were done by hand.

One of the earliest warehouses was built in Sheep Street in 1850 and was owned by the Sharman family (of *Swanspool House*) who had established their boot and shoe business in 1749.

With the coming of mechanisation, the warehouse was turned into a factory and named 'Trafalgar Works'. The ironstone building (at the bottom of the left hand side

of *Sheep Street*) is now divided into shops and flats, but the original upper façade of the warehouse and factory can still be seen.

Between 1851 and 1861, the introduction of machinery likely contributed to the decline in the number of male shoemakers whilst machine closing increased opportunities for young women, not only as machinists, but also as fitters.

Wellingborough's development as a shoe manufacturing centre is described in extracts from the 1889 Kelly's Directory of Northamptonshire which states:

**"The town has long been celebrated for the manufacture of boots and shoes, the females being employed in the manufacture of thread lace, the latter trade, however, seems gradually dying out, having given place to machine upper closing for the London boot manufacturers, now very extensively carried on."**

## 25. Former Vicarage

**The Vicarage is a town house built in the 1800s, set back from the road and adjacent to All Hallows Church. It is now private apartments.**



## 26. Library

The Wellingborough Library building was constructed in 1973 in a style typical of the time.

In the early 1800s Literacy and Mechanic Institutes were established in the town and

would loan their members books. The current library houses a wide range of resources including local and family history material.

**Full details of the Library Service can be found on the 'Libraries' page of the Northamptonshire County Council website at:**

**[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk)**



## 24. All Hallows Church

All Hallows is an old dedication which means the same as All Saints. In the mid-1800s the church became widely known as St Luke's, although there seems to be no evidence that it was officially dedicated as this. Around the time of the First World War it reverted to the name All Hallows.

The parish church is the oldest building in the town (the door at the south end dates from 1170) and includes a wide variety of ecclesiastical detail. The most striking feature is the three stage tower with a banded limestone and ironstone spire.

The 13th century spire rises to a height of 165 feet which dominates the surrounding area. Like so many of Northamptonshire churches, All Hallows was originally Saxon but probably suffered damage after the Danish invasion in 1069.

There is a large ironstone porch over the entrance leading to Market Square. This south doorway is Norman with almost all the rest of the church being built during the 1200s and 1300s. Small additions were then made in the following centuries.



One of the many stained glass windows tells a sad tale of Thomas Jones, a rector of the church. He was a staunch royalist, who was twice thrown in prison for his beliefs during the Civil War. On one occasion he was apparently arrested and dragged by soldiers to Northampton, harnessed on the back of a bear! He eventually died in prison.



## 9. Tudor House

The foundations of the Tudor House are believed to have been laid prior to 1000 AD. The lower ground-floor walls are from the 1200s and the upper floor would appear to be late 1500s or early 1600s. This building was originally part of the Manor of Croyland (Croyland).



Pre 1910 - with 4 gables

In 1920 the houses were bought by Herbert Dulley (*a member of the brewing family*) when they were in danger of collapsing. He extensively renovated the houses, using as much of the original material as possible.

**There were originally four gables in the thatch, but during restoration the roof was altered reducing the gables to three. It is the last remaining thatched house in Wellingborough.**

The buildings are reputedly haunted, with one eye-witness claiming to have seen a hooded monk walk through the wall of the upper floor room from the direction of the Abbey. The figure is said to be dressed in a grey habit with a hood. He walks the length of the room to sit in the same corner every time.



**Take the walk way on the left of the Tudor building and into Tithe Barn road. Cross the car park and use the path between the Tithe Barn Road office building and the Croyland Abbey, to join Croyland Gardens.**





## 10. Croyland Gardens

### Croyland Hall and Abbey

**In 948 AD, King Aedred bestowed 6 ½ hides of land (around 700 acres) to the Abbey of Crowland (or Croyland) in Lincolnshire. The Abbot later planted a mission here. The abbey or farmhouse was built circa 1280 for the Abbot Richard de Crowland.**

A fragment of the original doorway remains along with the floor of a chapel which adjoined the hall to the west.

The abbey was remodelled in the 1860s by architect Edward Sharman who lived in the house. The adjoining Croyland Hall also became a farmhouse.

As the building is not technically an abbey, there is divided opinion on whether any monks actually resided here, but they certainly managed the land.

The monks of Croyland brought with them a tradition of beer brewing, utilising the town's flurry of natural springs and the rich barley crops.

In the grounds of Croyland Gardens is a Roman stone coffin which came from Chester House, Irchester (*the site of a Roman Town*). The coffin was placed in the gardens during the 1920s and used as a garden ornament.



## 23. The Memorial Cross



**Located in the grounds of the parish church is the Cavalry Cross, which was dedicated in 1918 and gifted to the town by Mrs Sotheby of Ecton Hall.**

**The sculpture stands at 23ft tall. The western face represents the crucifixion with attending Virgin Mary and St John, and the eastern face is the image of Our Lady and her Divine Child.**



The memorial is sculpted from stone, designed by Wellingborough architects Messrs Talbot Brown & Fisher and the carving was carried out by Messrs Reynolds & Son of Northampton. This gift was to commemorate the 500 servicemen and women of the town who had given their lives during the First World War. Upon the rise of one of the steps is an inscription:

***"Pray for the gallant men who from this town gave their lives for truth and freedom in the Great War 1914."***



## 22. The Old Grammar School (Church Hall)



This is a 400 year old school house in an ecclesiastical setting, sitting in contrast to its modern cousin, Tresham College on the opposite side of the street.

It was founded in 1595, and rebuilt in 1620. An early account of its conception reads:

**“In the 16th year of King Richard II, it was suggested by a survey that as Wellingborough was the King’s town and had a good market it might please his Majesty to erect a free school...”**

The school was the Grammar and Lower Free School, supported by an individual benefactor and fee paying pupils. In 1880 it became just the Lower School, after a new school was built in London Road. It then became the church hall in 1903 and is now a Grade II\* listed property.

The building adjoining the hall is thought to have provided accommodation for some of the boys attending the school and is known as Priory Cottage. It was later divided into two properties and is one of the oldest houses in the town.

It has a date stone of 1608. The Heritage Lottery Fund recently supported some ironstone restoration work to these buildings.



## Zoo Park



**On 12 June 1943, Mr H J Stevens, a local pet shop owner, opened his private collection of exotic animals to the public. Using the ‘holidays at home’ fund (a government scheme aimed at boosting morale during WWII), he turned the house and grounds of Croyland Abbey into the Wellingborough Zoo Park.**

**The zoo exhibited monkeys, lions, panthers, a baby elephant, a giant tortoise and many more. At the centre was a penguin pool, which was surrounded by an eclectic menagerie of large cats, sea lions, birds of prey and a bear. The original entry price was seven pence.**

Mr Stevens and his family lived in the abbey and the zoo’s lion, Simba, was treated like the family pet. Simba was taken to the cinema, the local park and occasionally the pub!

The zoo expanded during the 1950s, before being sold to animal lovers Miss Smith and Miss Such. In 1968 the zoo was sold again to Mr Robert Royston Clarke for £7,000. Unfortunately, poor investment led to the zoo’s closure in October 1970.

An animal auction was conducted by Martin Pendered at the end of the year and new homes were found for many of the zoo’s residents.

Edinburgh Zoo’s oldest resident is a chimpanzee named Cindy, who is recorded as moving to there from Wellingborough Zoo in 1971.

After the zoo’s closure the buildings became council offices and the grounds became public formal gardens.

In 2011 a small play area was created to the rear of Croyland Hall, which includes wooden sculptures of Simba and his companions. A series of animal carvings also decorate the stepping stones and boulders in the play area, designed by local primary school artists, to commemorate the zoo.

[www.wellingborough.gov.uk/zoopark](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/zoopark)

**Follow the path to the right passing Croyland Hall and towards the Tithe Barn.**







## 11. Tithe Barn

**The barn was built shortly after the abbey (circa 1280) at the request of Richard de Crowland to collect the tithe from the lands. It was constructed using mainly local ironstone and thin courses of limestone.**

A major fire in the 1970s left the barn in desperate need of repair and it was scheduled for demolition. Thankfully, campaigns by a local community group managed to raise the necessary funds to restore it and the building was saved for future generations.

Today, the barn is owned by the council and can be hired for public and private functions.

## 12. Burystead Place

Burystead House and buildings, which were located here, were thought to be part of the Manor of Wellingborough Hatton. A small, former farm building still remains at the end of Burystead Place. It bears a plaque in the form of a partially unrolled scroll which reads:

**"These Premises were rebuilt by C.G Thornton Esq. of Marden Hill, Herts, to replace those destroyed in an accidental fire, 21st August 1847".**



Above the plaque is a clock which originally came from the offices of Campbell Praed & Co brewers (now demolished), which once adjoined the Tudor House in Sheep Street.



**Walk through Burystead Place and past Cromwell's Bar. Turn left and continue up Silver Street.**



## 20. 28 Church Street (Bewicked Café)

In the 1920s the fire station house was on the Tresham site, next to the old Institute building. It is thought that 28 Church Street was used as the station's storage. It was later used as storage for the Market and then in 2009 it was converted into stylish new premises for a café.

## 21. Orient House



**This Grade II listed building was built as a house in 1889.**

**It has squared coursed ironstone with ashlar dressings and a slate roof. It is currently used as offices and has been extended at the rear.**



## 18. Former Post Office (1 Church Street)



If you look closely above one of the archways you will see a small carved crown. This denotes the fact that it was built as a post office in 1880. It closed in 1908.

The building was sold in November 1919, and re-opened as the Wellingborough ex-service men's club. Run by members of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers (NFDDSS), the building was extensively renovated and offered members snug pleasant rooms. It was used as an ex-service men's club until early 2000s.

## 19. Former Cinema (Laser Maze)

On the corner of Church Street and Orient Way is an ironstone building that was originally built as a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in 1791. It was used for this purpose until the 1870s when it became a Drill Hall for the local Volunteer Force (a forerunner of the TA). Around 1904 it became the 'King's Palace Theatre' and in 1910 it became the first cinema in the town.



Follow the path around into Orient way and take the path behind the café leading to the church yard. Walk through the church yard towards All Hallows Church and exit onto the Market Square.

## Silver Street

### 13. Silver Cinema

One façade in Silver Street stands out from the rest of the shop fronts, due to its large brick fronted, arched first-floor window. This is the remains of the former Silver Cinema which was open from 1920 until 1957. It was for a time one of four cinemas in the town.



Cross the road here and continue up to the high street.

### 14. Oxford Street/High Street Corner

On the corner of Oxford Street and High Street stands a large, three storey ironstone house, which became the Liberal Club in 1900. The club originally included a large hall suitable for meetings and concerts and both the Wellingborough Liberal Association and the Women's Liberal Association used to meet here.

In the 1960s Mobile Radio, an innovative store of its time supplying home electrical and media equipment, took over the building and operated here until their closure in 2014.

Army personnel were accommodated here during the First World War and dance bands would provide entertainment for the guests and townsfolk.

In November 1920, Princess Helena Victoria (Queen Victoria's granddaughter) opened the club as a new YMCA. A huge crowd awaited the royal visitor with streamers hung across the roads whilst electrical lights from the building helped to brighten the proceedings. The Marquis of Northampton, also in attendance, clearly concerned for the values of the youth, impressed on the crowd "besides dancing and billiards, they should see that there are also educational activities...it should be the object of everyone to educate himself, both mentally and morally".







## 15. The Town Hall (The Red Well pub)

The 'Red Well' is actually one of many wells situated on the edge of town, but the pub is the old town hall, built in 1821. It was also the police station and Court. Wrongdoers would be held there in one of the two 'lock ups' behind the town hall.

A police station and superintendent's house were built on the adjoining right side of the town hall, (which later became part of the neighbouring, former Angel Hotel) and were used until the 1860s. The former town hall building was then converted into shops. The Red Well pub was opened in 1996.

## 16. Rowlatts Store

Rowlatts is the oldest shop in the town. The family business established in 1751 sold kitchen hardware and ironmongery. It meets today's demands, maintaining traditional values and services. The store is still run by a member of the Rowlatt family.

The ironstone part of the building in Church Lane, to the rear of the store was originally the parish workhouse, until the new workhouse was built in Irthingborough Road in the 1830s. It was then used as a girls and infants school during the mid-1800s, before becoming part of the store.

### High Street

As you move into High Street, to your left you will notice a fine row of buildings from the 1800s. The first two buildings are both three-storey red brick of very different character. The first has a formal style with five sash windows along two levels and was built as solicitors' offices in 1800s. The second was built in 1882 as the Conservative Club and is more elaborate with arched entrance, balcony above and gables. It later became the British Legion Club and has now been converted into apartments. Next to these is Leighton House.



## 17. The Parade (Warwicks)



High Street, Wellingborough, 1900.

This long shop front offers a nice example of Victorian arched windows, although the lower section has been modernised. Built in 1888 and originally known as 'The Parade', the building provided a full line of retail outlets from Warwicks tailors (est. 1868) at the front and corner plot, continuing up the High Street with an array of other general stores.

In 1900 Warwicks store sold hats, suits and men's underwear. As the business expanded the owners took over the rest of the building to create the large clothing store that remains today, still run by the Warwick family.

Looking over to the opposite side of the street you will see an ironstone building on the corner of Church Street, slightly tucked behind Warwicks shop. This was once the old post office. Cross here and continue a short way up Church Street.

