

Thame Historic Town Trail 3

Start and finish at the Memorial Gardens

1 The **Memorial Gardens** with its fountains and fish ponds is on the site of White Hound Pound where animals used to be held prior to the market. There was also a large pond where animals could drink. The white Portland stone War Memorial was unveiled by Prime Minister David Lloyd George in 1921.

2 Across the road was once an early land enclosure of Thame, **White Hound Close**, stretching all the way to Wellington Street and across East Street. It was a popular recreation

area for the town and one where the Queen's Men (a travelling Elizabethan troupe) would have played. In 1587 one of the players, William Knell, was killed here in a fight with John Towne and it is reputed that his place in the troupe was taken by a young William Shakespeare.

3 Proceed past "The Poplars", an attractive house in the Dutch style, into Park Street. A little way along is the **Baptist Chapel** (now a private house) built in 1865 at a cost of £500 to replace an earlier one at the end of Rooks Lane. Cross over, return to the roundabout and turn right into East Street.

8 Post First World War Housing Acts required councils to build new houses and, in 1919, 14 houses were erected in **Wykeham Park**, where the rents were 10 shillings a week. In order to earn the large subsidy on offer from the Government a further 30 houses were built in East Street between 1924 and 1927.

9 The **Victoria Nursing Home** was built by Mr Samuel Lacey at his own expense: costing, with equipment, about £700. It was opened by the Countess of Macclesfield in 1897 and presented to the Nursing Association in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. An operating room was added in 1909 and a new wing in 1922. Soon afterwards its name was changed to the more suitable one of "Cottage Hospital". In 1926 two maternity wards, nurses' bedrooms and another bathroom were added. It is still in use as a Community Hospital.

10 Continue to the next junction. Here the construction of East Street across the earlier street line of Wellington Street and Kings Road is noticeable. The row of cottages on the left including the **Star and Garter** was built as Tythrop Terrace in the early 1860s; the pub's name reflects allegiance to the crown and Queen Victoria.

11 Turn right into **King's Road** with its lovely terrace of Victorian houses. A very early "VR" post box is located in one of the gate posts.



15 The white house at **No. 111** provides a break in the terraces. This prestigious house was designed by I K Brunel as the Station Master's residence. The terraces following with their small front gardens reflect the increased wealth of the later Victorians, although the Turret house is a little over-elaborate.

16 Pass in front of the new Phoenix Court, follow the road up the railway bridge and take the path to the left, down steps, to join the **Phoenix Trail**. Turn right under the bridge. The Trail follows the old railway line between Thame and Princes Risborough. In 1997 Sustrans secured it as part of Route 57 of the National Cycle Network. It is well used by walkers, joggers and horse riders as well as cyclists. The many artistic and imaginative structures along the Trail were designed and constructed by local Rycotewood College students.

17 Continue along the old railway line. This was originally one of Brunel's broad gauge railways, but in common with the

rest of the GWR it became standard gauge in 1871. Passenger services ceased between Princes Risborough, Thame and Oxford in 1963, although freight services continued to Thame until 1991. Sadly the roofed structure of



The station in 1962

Thame Station and the rest of the buildings have now gone, with just the platforms remaining.

18 After the next bridge turn right, off the Phoenix Trail, through Chowns Close (named after a former chair of the Council) and at the end, turn left onto Thame Park Road. Across the road, to the right of an alleyway, once stood All Saints' Mission Church. This "tin tabernacle" provided for the traditional religious needs of this part of the town until it was taken down in the 1980s.



19 The name of **The Falcon** derives from the crest of the Dormer family, landowners when the pub was first opened in 1861. When the railway came to Thame it was often referred to as the Falcon Railway Hotel. The original structure was replaced after a disastrous fire in 1900. The Falcon is now the last of the many pubs and beer houses that were once prominent in this area.

20 The house opposite the Falcon was until the 1990s **Thame Police Station** which was built at the road junction facing Park Street in 1854. With its proximity to the railway station the adjoining area became a small industrial

complex of garages and workshops in the early 20th C. There was also a cinema and ironworks a little way back along Chinnor Road.

21 The gap in the houses on the left leads to the secluded Park Terrace; the house at the entrance was until 1957 the Wenman Arms, a popular pub in its day.

22 The house next to the garage is the former **Four Horse Shoes** pub. This was originally a farm house which, as its name implies, became a staging post between the town and Thame Abbey. Despite its appearance it is the oldest building in the area. The predominant building material of this part of town is clearly brick and in early 19th C much of it came from the brickworks that stood in the area around the garage. Park Street was known at the time as Brick Kiln Lane.



4 The **Cross Keys** has imposed itself on this junction since 1841 when Thomas Burnard was the first licensee. Its architecture typifies the new beer houses that sprang up in the country around that time. The name stems from Christian heraldry and would have suited the religious bigots of the time.



5 An unusual feature of this area of the town is the use of stone as a building material, probably from the demolition of a larger building. An example of this is The White House opposite built in 1900. The straight wide aspect of **East Street** shows its origins as the 19th C Thame to Princes Risborough turnpike road. It cut the old White Hound Close in two and provided new development opportunities along its wide margins. The cottages on both sides show early domestic and industrial growth but soon peter out.

6 Continue along East Street where the path of **Gas Alley** on the left dates back before White Hound Close. The name is derived from the town's gas works (opened in 1851) which were located towards the Wellington Street end.

7 The **Chapel** on the right was erected by the Primitive Methodists in 1864 (as shown on the foundation stone) but due to amalgamations of religious factions had ceased being used as a chapel by about 1900. It was used as a Church Hall for many years before becoming a private house.

12 Turn right into **Croft Road** where many Edwardian houses stand out on the right hand side of the road with their decorative ridge tiles and balconies. This is a residential development of the early 20th C with grand houses and large gardens on the sunny side and smaller less imposing ones opposite.

13 Halfway along Croft Road, by a new development, take the footpath to the left leading through to **Queen's Road** and turn right. Queen's Road was once the main route out of town to the east, to Towersey, Kingsey and Princes Risborough. The development here is a mixture of Victorian and more recent housing.

14 Turn left on meeting Chinnor Road. Here, sitting on a curve in the road, the attractive **terraces of cottages** are typical of the Victorian period. The use of contrasting yellow brick around doors and windows adds to their architectural appeal and the decorated key-stones make interesting features. Although built for the railway workers and the new working class they still represent desirable accommodation today.



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Introduction

Thame (or Tame) originated as a Saxon settlement at a crossing of the River Thame and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. After the Norman Conquest it came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lincoln and in the 12th C he founded the “new” market town of Thame away from the river and the church and in the area we now recognise as the town centre.

In Victorian times the town expanded towards the east, encompassing some of the agricultural land amalgamated under the Enclosure Award of 1826. Although now mainly residential, these areas included many of the industrial and religious ventures of the time. The architecture varies from small Victorian cottages to grand Edwardian town houses.

This Historic Town Trail Route 3 explores the areas where the town developed during the Victorian and Edwardian times. It can be used as a stand alone walk or included in parts to extend the circular walk of Historic Town Trail Route 1.



A 2 mile walk of approximately 1½ hours exploring the Victorian and Edwardian area, east of the Town Centre. Start and finish at the Memorial Gardens.

Limited ability access

The walk is entirely on footpaths and pavements with good access for prams and wheelchairs. There are steps at Point 16 where the route joins the Phoenix Trail. To avoid this, return along Chinnor Road to rejoin at Point 19 / 20



Historic Town Trail 3

23 Opposite the garage and housed in a former fire station is **Seymour's Motorcycle Shop** where examples of TT racing can often still be seen in the shop window. On the other side of the road are many attractive houses from Victorian and Edwardian times.



24 Continue along Park Street to **The Royal British School**. When built in 1836 the ground cost £400 and the building around £1,500, the money

being raised mainly by donations. The “Royal” attachment to this “British School” was on the basis of a donation of £5 from the Duchess of Kent (Queen Victoria’s mother). It is now the John Hampden Primary School, named after a local hero of the Civil War.



25 A little further on, turn left into **Elms Park** which was given to the town in 1951 by Mr and Mrs Leonard Purser who then lived at The Elms, to be maintained as a park and recreation ground for the town.

26 Pass through Elms Park, turn right along a path with housing to the left, a line of old trees and a fence on the right. The path leads to **Elms Road** where over the wall are the extensive grounds of The Elms. The house was built as a private residence for Thomas Stone, a prominent draper, in the 1830s and then known as May’s Elms. There are interesting brick decorative features in the wall pillars.



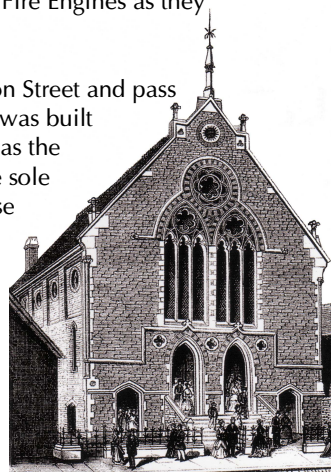
27 Turn right into **Nelson Street** which was broken through to the Upper High Street soon after 1900 to give better access to the south of the town and thus provided an opportunity for the building of the many Edwardian houses that line the street.

28 The **Players Theatre** is located in the former St Mary’s Church Hall which was founded in 1913, although not completed until 1928. The building was purchased by the Thame Players in 1997 and re-opened after a complete refurbishment in 2002. It now provides a fine venue for resident and touring players as well as regular film shows.



29 Although built in 1937 the **Fire Station** still houses the two appliances of the local brigade and has a tall training tower to the rear. Take care crossing the forecourt and watch out for the Fire Engines as they emerge.

30 Turn right at the end of Nelson Street and pass **Christchurch** on your right. This was built of brick fronted with stone in 1871 as the Congregationalist Chapel and is the sole 19th C chapel in the town still in use for its intended purpose.



The Chapel in 1871

31 The timber framed building at **No 34** is where a magnificent set of Elizabethan wall paintings were discovered in the room above the porch in 1968. These are now on display at Thame Museum. The building was also the cycle shop and garage from where James G West sold the first

Renault cars imported into this country in about 1905.



32 Before returning to the Memorial Garden pass the entrance to the substantial private house of **The Elms**, the extensive grounds of which were previously mentioned at Point 26.

Local Information



This historic market town of Thame is a great place to shop and a delightful area where you can enjoy good food and drink in one of the many pubs, cafes and restaurants.

i For information about events, places to eat, accommodation and attractions visit Thame Information Centre (Mon - Fri) in the Town Hall. Tel: 01844 212833 or go to www.visitsouthoxfordshire.co.uk www.thame.net www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk

Markets

Weekly Market - every Tuesday
Farmers' Market - second Tuesday of each month
Cattle Market - every Wednesday and Friday



P Long stay car parks are shown on the map - please look at the parking signs for restrictions

Bicycles - several places to park and secure your bike

WC Public Conveniences in the Town centre

Thame Museum in the High Street is certainly worth a visit and it also provides a lot of local information. Open Tues, Wed and Sat (10 - 4), Sun (12 - 4)

Commemorative Plaques

This is the first of a series of walks around historic Thame. **Enjoy the experience.**

How to get here



By bus

Thame is on the 280 service between Oxford and Aylesbury. It passes by Haddenham and Thame Parkway station. The 280 runs frequently during Mon - Sat daytimes, less so at other times. The Arriva Line 40 is a Mon - Sat daytime service from High Wycombe via Stokenchurch and Chinnor.

Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visit www.traveline.org.uk

By train

Thame is a short bus (280) or taxi ride away from Haddenham and Thame Parkway which is on the Chiltern Line between Marylebone and Birmingham Snow Hill. Train information: call 0845 7484950 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk

By car

From the north leave M40 at junction 8a, or from the south at junction 6. Follow signs to Thame. There is ample parking available in the town.

By bicycle

The Phoenix Trail between Princes Risborough and Thame is part of National Cycle Network Route 57 which continues to Oxford.

This leaflet has been produced by 21st Century Thame with support of South Oxfordshire District Council and Thame Town Council

