



# Trails

Heritage walks in and around Milton Keynes



## Stony Stratford

### 1. The Market Square

Stony Stratford was first granted a market by Richard I in 1194. Charles II also granted four annual fairs in 1662. Hiring Fairs, corn and cattle markets were frequently held here. In 1986 scenes from the film 'Withnail and I' were filmed here.

**Preachers and Prisoners:** A magnificent Elm Tree once stood in this square. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, preached beneath it in the 1770s.

**The Old Court House:** The large brick building in the square was once the Victorian police station – possibly erected on the site of an early lock-up. The Court with the Judge's chambers and even the original cells have now been converted into offices.

### 2. Church Street

This attractive row of houses formed the north side of the medieval market place. No 40 (The Sundial House) is a former bakery. The Latin inscription on the sundial (dated 1739) translates as 'Time and Fire Destroy All Things'. No 36 was, until the 1980's, part of the former leather works of Sharp & Woollard, established in 1815 by Samuel Sharpe.

### 3. The Church of St Mary and St Giles

From the 15th century, Stony had two churches, in the east St Mary Magdalen, and the medieval church of St Giles in the west, originally in the Parish of Calverton.

The tower which dates from 1487 is the only part of the medieval church to have survived the rebuilding of the church by Francis Hoirne of Warwick in 1776. Unusually the nave has wooden pillars supporting a gallery, designed in the Strawberry Hill Gothic style.

### 4. The High Street

This is part of the Roman Watling Street, which ran from London to Chester. During the coaching era (mid 17th to early 19th century) up to 30 horse-drawn carriages a day carrying passengers and mail would stop at one of the many Inns in the town. An ideal 'service station' for both passengers and horses.

**48 High Street, The Shell House:** This striking house, with its iron railings and imposing shell canopy, dates from the 17th century. It was built by the Wilkinson family as the dower house for Old Wolverton.

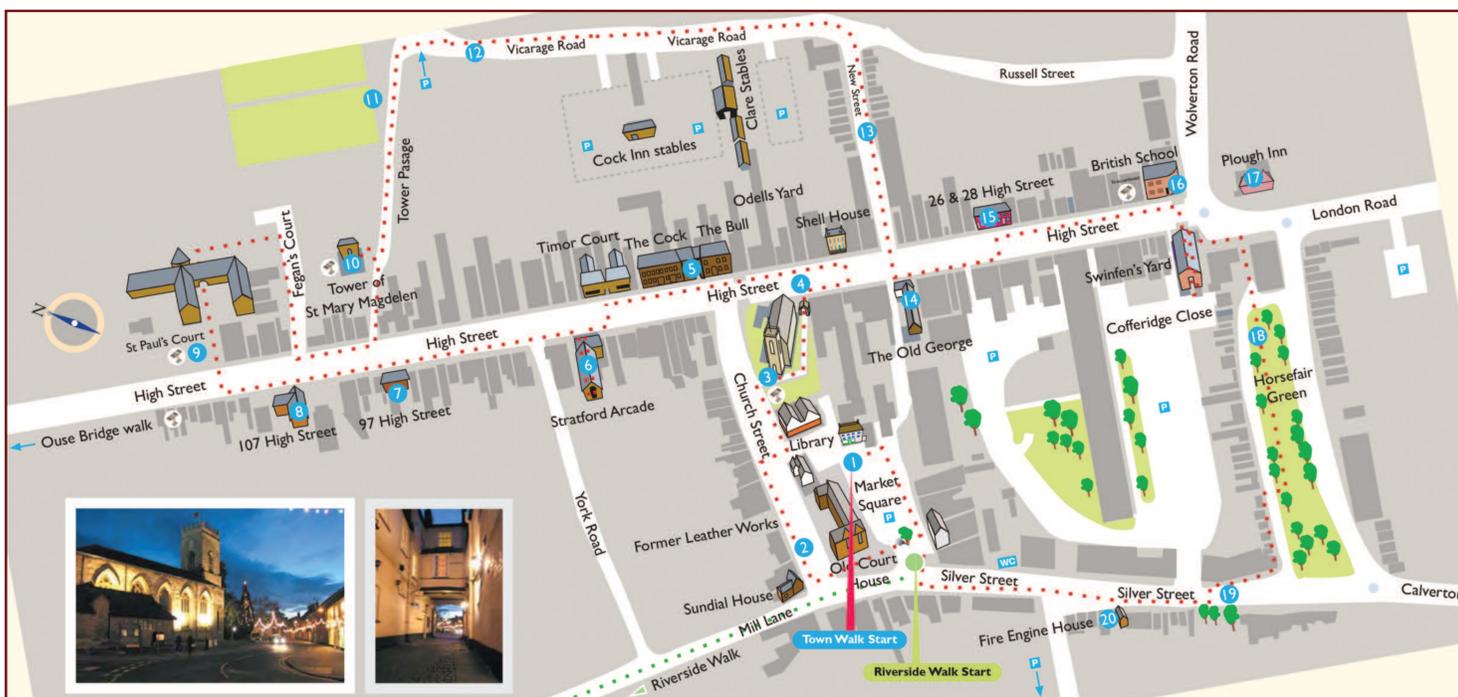
### 5. The Cock and Bull Inns

In 1520 the Cock Inn was bequeathed by Thomas Piggott of Beachampton to set up a 'Charitable Trust' in the town. Profits were to maintain the bridge and the causeway over the River Great Ouse. The Great Fire started at the Bull in 1742.

Both Inns feature impressive facades (the Cock is 18th century and the Bull 19th) and ornate brackets which carry their decorative signs. The saying 'A Cock and Bull story' originates here.

### 6. Burgage Strips

The buildings fronting the High Street date from the medieval layout of the town. Each property (Burgage) had a frontage on the main street and a long narrow plot extending to a 'back access lane'.



### 7. Signs of the Times

Many of the former Inns now have new uses, but retain marks of their original purpose, such as the large archways leading to stables at the rear.

On the left, 97 High Street, 'The Cross Keys' is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the town. It still bears its old sign, and medieval timber roof structure, circa 1480; retaining its original moulded archway. Once the town's 'Guild Hall', it later became the first Court Room. In 1697 the murderers of Grace Bennet, Lady of the Manor of Calverton, were tried here.

### 8. 107 High Street

Designed and built in 1892 in his highly individual style by local architect Edward Swinfen Harris for his own use. The inscription over the door NISI DOMINUS is from the first words of Psalm 127 – 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that buildeth it....'

### 9. St Paul's Court

This Victorian building was lavishly constructed, by the Rev W. T. Sankey in 1863 between 'The Mallets' and 'Pudding Bag Lane'. It was a private school and chapel then for a short time the building was a cigar factory after closing in 1895. It was then purchased by Mr Fegan from London to be used as a boy's orphanage. For over 60 years Fegan's 'Boys' went to school there until it closed in 1962. One of these 'Boys' was Tom McClean. His record-breaking feats appear on the Heritage Board. The school chapel is now a restaurant.

### 10. Tower of St Mary Magdalene

This church, built in 1450, was largely destroyed by the Great Fire in 1742. However the tower was saved and restored by Browne Willis, a local historian.

### 11. 'Ancell Trust' Sports Ground

On your left is the town's own Sports Ground, the land was purchased with funds left by Frederick Ancell in 1919.



### 12. Vicarage Road

This was the 'back lane' on the eastern edge of the medieval town. Opposite No 16, look to the right to see the old bus garage and Clare stables at the rear of The Bull Inn. The Victorian vicarage, built in 1861, used to stand opposite the junction with New Street.

### 13. New Street

In 1862-3 the Rev W.T. Sankey re-developed this road to create "Ram Alley", Stony's equivalent to the Shambles in York, to connect his new Vicarage with the High Street and St Giles Church. The date can be seen on the rainwater heads, and in the brickwork of No 2.

### 14. The Old George

This is one of the oldest surviving inns in the town. A former Posting House, it dates back to 1609, and has 18th century two storey bay windows. Note the floor level showing how the road has been built up over time.

### 15. 26 & 28 High Street. A Royal Kidnap in 1483

Formally the Rose and Crown Inn, it was here the 'Boy King', Edward V, was kidnapped by Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later King Richard III). He was taken to the Tower of London, where it is believed he and his 10 year old brother Richard were murdered. In 1674 the remains of two children were found when the White Tower was being renovated. Charles II decreed their remains should be buried in Westminster Abbey.

### 16. British School and famous Stream Tram

In 1844 the British School opened here for both girls and boys who were not permitted to enter the Church of England schools! It closed in 1907, was the Public Hall of the town for a number of years, and is now a Dance Studio.

In this building was the ticket office for the famous steam tram. It operated from 1887 until the General Strike in 1926 brought its closure. They were the largest tramcars in the world, each carried 100 passengers to the railway Works at Wolverton. One has now been restored to its former glory and can be seen at The Milton Keynes Museum.

### 17. Plough Inn

In 1867 the Radcliffe Trust donated this land, 36 perches (size), to build Wolverton End School and School House. This church school for the poor was financed by Mrs Russell of Beachampton and designed by local architect E Swinfen Harris. Over 280 pupils attended in the early 1890s. It became The Plough Inn in 1937.

### 18. Horsefair Green

This pleasant green space edged with lime trees, was originally used from 1480s for weekly horse fairs, hence its name. The Baptist Chapel, now the 'Community Church', was built in 1657. The older houses (late 17th century) are those on the north side, formerly the edge of the town. The white building No 35 & Dene Cottage were once a 'Cottage Hospital'. No's 8 & 9 were former Maltings. The 'Green' is still used for events, notably 'Folk on the Green' in June, and the 'Town Fayre' in August.

### 19. Silver Street

Formerly 'Cow Lane', it was re-named in 1887 in honour of Queen Victoria's Silver Jubilee. This was the medieval 'back lane' along the western edge of the old town. Here, until WWI, you could see women and children making lace, an important cottage industry in the town. Stony even had its own pattern, named 'Butterfly Lace'.

### 20. Fire Engine House

This intriguing little building, (14 Silver Street) was built in 1864 to house Stony Stratford's fire engine. The horses to pull it were kept in a paddock in Horn Lane. It was staffed by volunteer firemen from the town until 1958. Walk along to the Market Square to complete the walk.

