

The trail starts from the carpark located in the Town Centre. Parking is free.

1) The buildings surrounding the Market Place have a variety of styles and are evidence of the evolutionary development of the town centre. In 1214 King John granted the Lord of the Manor a charter to hold a weekly market - still held every Thursday.

2) An area of crowded housing at the centre of the town was demolished in the 1960s to leave an open space, the present market place. A row of shops was then built behind Bell Street.

3) The timber-framed, thatched building now known as The Shambles dates from the 16th century. Its new name refers to the fact that the Shambles, the market building for butchers, once stood in this part of the town, near the Beast Market.



The Shambles

4) The architect for the distinctive Town Hall of 1836 was Joseph Hansom, who also designed Birmingham Town Hall (which bankrupted him) and took out the first patent for the Hansom Safety Cab (which brought him only £300). The ground floor of the Town Hall originally had open sides for use as a covered market. A photograph from about 1900 in the Town Museum shows workmen filling in the sides to give the appearance much as it is now.

5) On the southern corner of Church Street is Dalbys Buildings built in 1900. Note the terracotta dog which sits over the ornate doorway which once led to a decorated balcony. A succession of heavy lorries trying to negotiate the corner has meant that the doorway now leads nowhere.

6) The Greyhound is one of the three coaching inns that still line the main street. It retains an early 19th century facade. The courtyard and stables have been extensively renovated to form an attractive enclosure with brickwork from different periods.

7) The Manor House opposite is a late Regency building in a classical style. It later became a cafe but was restored in 1980-82 and now houses offices.

8) The Cavalier, although significantly altered by successive renovations, is reputedly a building with 17th century origins. Its name reflects a local belief that wounded Royalists took refuge here after the Battle of Naseby in 1645. It was until recently known as The Ram.

9) At the junction of Leicester Road and Gilmorton Road is the Police Station. Opened in 1843, it was the first purpose-built police station in Leicestershire and is the oldest working police station in the county, if not the country. Its triangle of land also contains the Edwardian police house and Courthouse, distinguished by its lead-sheathed cupolas and prominent ventilation hood.

10) This functional redbrick building, now the Masonic Hall, was built as the Ritz Cinema, which opened in 1938. The foyer is virtually intact whilst the main auditorium is used for functions. The town originally had three cinemas, all now gone.



United Reformed Church

11) First records of the Congregational Chapel, now United Reformed, date back to 1689 but the present building bears the date 1777. Together with the Italianate Manse next door it is shown in an engraving of 1795 in Nichols' Leicestershire but without the narrow school room that later joined the two buildings. Look for the join in the brickwork.

12) Gideon Bibles are found in hotel bedrooms throughout the world. Western House, 24 George Street, is a Regency villa which now serves as the national headquarters of Gideons International.

13) A small but attractive terrace of late Georgian houses leads the eye to the Wycliffe Memorial, erected to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. Beyond it is the Methodist Church of 1905.



The Methodist Church & Wycliffe Memorial

John Wycliffe

In 1374 this early church reformer was made Rector of Lutterworth as a royal reward for his diplomatic services. He appointed a curate to carry out his parochial duties while he, in Oxford and London, preached sermons and wrote tracts that threatened the doctrines of the Roman Church. The first translation of the Bible into English was produced under his guidance. He spent the last three years of his life in exile at Lutterworth, dying of a stroke on New Year's Eve 1384. His bones were dug up in 1428 and burned, a fate his living body escaped only through the influence of his patron, John of Gaunt. Wycliffe's work later influenced Martin Luther.

Retrace your steps to Chapel Street

14) The Pentecostal Church in Chapel Street, a plain building of 1839, was formerly the Baptist Chapel, becoming the Rugby Club for some years before reverting to religious use. Opposite is Candlemas Cottage, a late 16th century house with two exposed timber-framed walls.

Proceed through the yard of the Greyhound Hotel and turn right down Market Street

Church Street is the retailing centre of the town. Its intimate scale is due to the fact that the buildings conform to their medieval cottage plots with narrow frontages. A variety of architectural styles representing every century from the 17th to the 20th can be seen, especially if one looks above the level of the shop windows. Of note is the watch overhanging sign - a new feature, but built in a traditional style.

15) The Memorial Gardens commemorate the town's dead of two World Wars. Facing Church Street is a bust of Sir Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine.

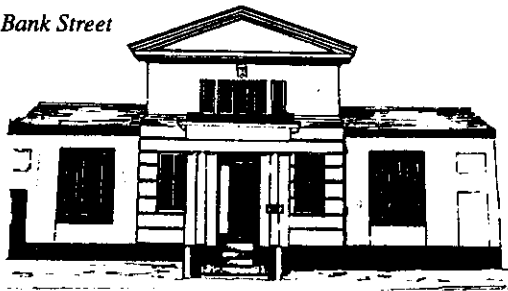
Sir Frank Whittle

A brilliant innovator, Frank Whittle pioneered the design of the gas turbine for jet propulsion and in 1936 a new company, Power Jets Ltd, was formed to develop this engine. In April 1937 Whittle commenced testing his first experimental engine at a works in Rugby.

The extensive redesign and development work was then transferred to a disused foundry just off the Leicester Road in Lutterworth and testing recommenced here on the 16th April 1938.

The first 'flight engine' powered the specially designed Gloster E28/39 aeroplane, which made its successful maiden flight on the 14th May 1941. Sir Frank Whittle now lives in the USA.

14 Bank Street



16) Bank Street contains a varied selection of houses. It was originally a back lane behind the premises facing the High Street. No 14, constructed c 1835 in Greek Revival style, is now a solicitor's office. It is reputed originally to have been designed as a bank by Joseph Hansom, architect of the Town Hall, although there is no direct evidence for this.

23) Just outside the old part of the town the main road south crosses the River Swift. There has been a bridge here since the Middle Ages. It was rebuilt in brick in 1778 by public subscription and widened in 1910. It is into this river that John Wycliffe's ashes are said to have been thrown and thus distributed by water over the whole world.

*"The Avon to the Severn runs
The Severn to the sea,
And Wyclif's dust shall spread abroad,
Wide the waters be!"*

There is a legend that when Wycliffe's bones were taken to the River Swift one was dropped and, miraculously, a spring of water rose up (see also 22). It was claimed that the water had medicinal properties, particularly for treatment of the eyes.

24) Unusual for a small market town is The Terrace, a grouping of six private apartments built to a classical design in the 1830s. This major feature of the lower High Street again reflects the quality of the architecture in the town at this period.



The Denbigh Arms

25) The Denbigh Arms and the Hind Hotel are former coaching inns. Before the Railway Age these were the main stopping-places for traffic and meeting-places for business and pleasure. The Hind retains its heavy gates leading into the yard and has a 19th century facade which does not hide the fact that its main structure is late 17th century. The Denbigh also has an early 19th century facade and takes its name from the Earls of Denbigh. Their family, the Feildings, owned properties in the town from the fourteenth century onwards and became the main landowners in the area. They acquired the lordship of the manor of Lutterworth and their earldom in the 1620s. The hotel occupies the site of one of their former manor houses.

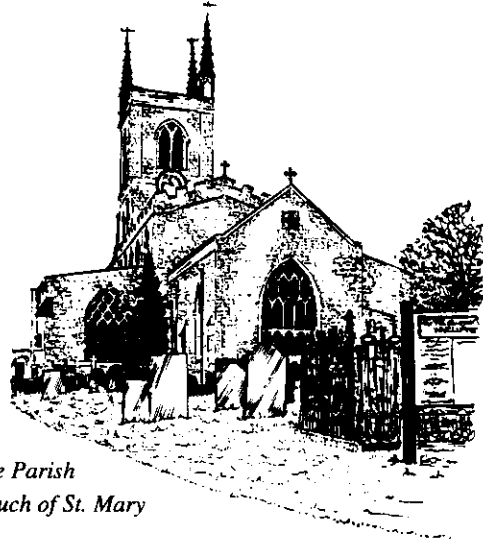
The starting point of the trail can be reached by continuing up the High Street to the Market Place.

Return to Church Street and turn left towards the church

17) The western end of Church Street is an unspoiled old residential street. The timbered houses on the south side have been thoroughly restored. The last house was once The Coach and Horses Inn - the plaque on the building giving full details. Beyond the row of cottage - scale houses on the north side is the Sherrier School of 1875, one of the town's few substantial Victorian buildings.

18) At Churchgate is the Lutterworth Town Museum, housed in what was built in 1876 as the Reading Room for the Mechanics' Institute. Supported entirely by volunteers, it contains displays of artefacts from the town's past and much written and pictorial material of local interest.

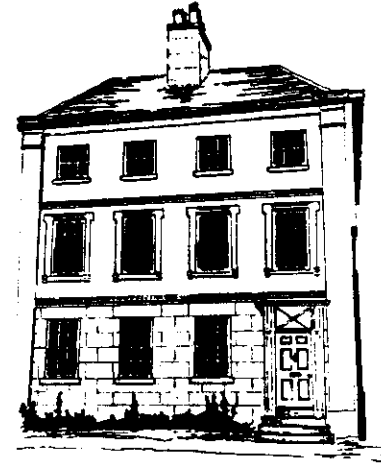
19) The Parish Church of St Mary is a large church, essentially of 13th and 14th century construction but much restored by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1868. The spire collapsed during the Great Storm of November 1703 and was replaced some sixty years later by four weighty pinnacles. The churchyard is extensive and secluded, with a fine array of slate headstones.



The Parish Church of St. Mary

20) Baker Street is now entirely residential. The buildings are mainly of 19th century fabric but the street with its narrow frontages has been built up continuously since the early 17th century. Number 43 was the Old Bakehouse and the ovens still survive.

21) For such a quiet residential street Woodmarket is surprisingly wide. This is probably because it was formerly the main road out of town to the west and was also one of the town's market streets. Hythe House (Queen Anne, on North side) the White House (Georgian, No 31 opposite) and Hill House (Regency, at the top of Stoney Hollow) are large houses indicating its subsequent development.

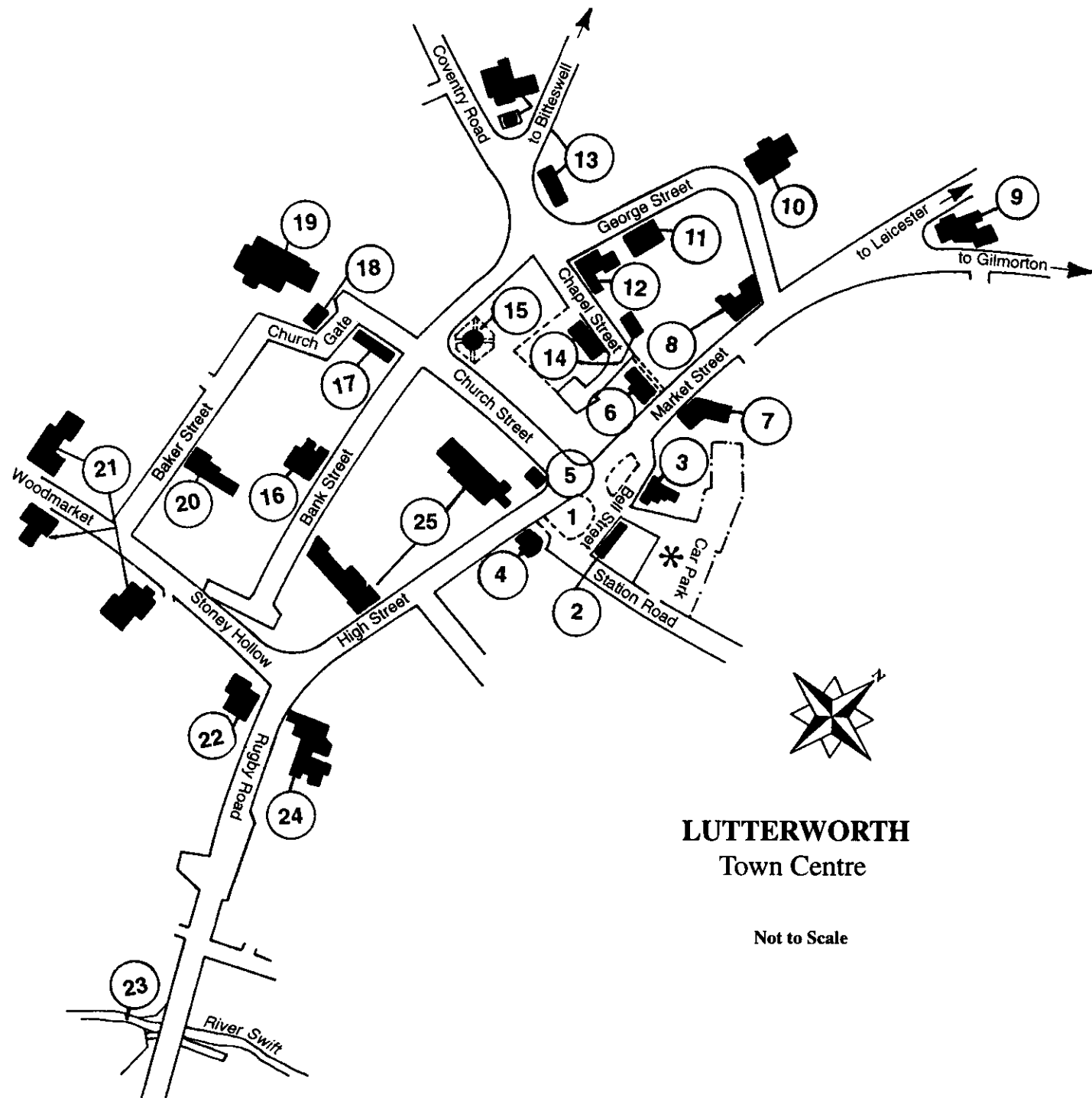


Hythe House

22) At the corner of Stoney Hollow, The Springs, an 18th century house with additions and some earlier features, takes its name from the springs in the garden, which never dry up or freeze. The water was thought to have curative qualities and local residents used the water as a cure for eye trouble. Three unusual features are the cast milestone, the insurance plaque and the porch lamp which incorporates a glass from the Ebenezer Chapel, Leicester.

Murder Most Foul

The Springs was the home of John Parsons Cook, well known as a sportsman, cricketer and racehorse owner. Born at Catthorpe, he lodged with a Dr Jones at the Springs. A betting success at Shrewsbury Races in 1855 led to his murder by Dr William Palmer of Rugely. Successive doses of strychnine brought about Cook's death in Rugely and Palmer acquired his winnings by misrepresentation. He was found guilty at the Old Bailey of Cook's murder and hanged in front of Stafford Gaol in June 1856. He was also found to have killed his wife and his brother.



Lutterworth

Lutterworth, a market town with 7,500 inhabitants, is situated in south Leicestershire. Located 13 miles south of Leicester, it is 8 miles from Rugby, 13 miles from Market Harborough and 11 miles from Hinckley.

Its settlement dates from Saxon times but as a town its origins date from a Royal Market Charter in 1214. The street pattern is of medieval origin and suggests it was then laid out formally as a borough town on either side of the High Street with a large market place.

The buildings reflect the town's modest prosperity and there are examples of good houses from the 17th century onwards. Before the 18th century they were of timber and mud and only the better houses were of brick. After a flurry of building in the early 19th century there is comparatively little from the Victorian period, perhaps because Lutterworth had to wait until 1899 to be connected to the railway network.

The town flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries both as the centre of local agriculture and as a staging point on long-range trade routes. Its coaching inns became an important feature, with their busy yards entered through archways. On market days the town would be full of people on business of all kinds.

Today Lutterworth is still located near the cross-roads of middle England - the junction of the M1, M6 and A14 is only four miles away. It has flourishing industrial estates, extensive warehousing and office accommodation. It remains the market town for the area with its lively shopping streets and Thursday market. The town centre is a Conservation Area.

Famous individuals associated with the town are John Wycliffe in the 14th century and Frank Whittle in the 20th century. This town has much to be discovered as many of the buildings have been disguised by later rebuilding. We hope you enjoy your visit.

This leaflet has been prepared jointly by Lutterworth Town Council and Harborough District Council. Support has been obtained from Lutterworth Town Council, F.A. Simms & Partners, the Lutterworth Museum and the Countryside Commission.

Refreshments

A wide range of meals and snacks is available at a selection of pubs, cafes and hotels in the town.

Accommodation

The following accommodation can be obtained locally :-

The Greyhound Coaching Inn

9 Market Street

Lutterworth

Tel: (01455) 553307

*

Mrs Dewes (B&B)

Crichaven

17 Lower Leicester Road

Lutterworth

Tel: (01455) 556416

Further information

Library (Coventry Rd)

Tel: (01455) 552868

Open :

Monday, Friday 10am - 12.30pm, 1.30pm - 5.30pm.

Tuesday, Thursday 10am - 12.30pm, 1.30 - 7pm.

Saturday 9.30am - 12.30pm

Closed Wednesday.

Museum (Churchgate) Tel: (01455) 557635 / 554484

Open Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10am - 4pm

Denbigh Arms Hotel

High Street

Lutterworth

Tel: (01455) 553537

*

Mrs Hopkins (B&B)

Northfield House

Cotesbach

Nr Lutterworth

Tel: (01455) 554507

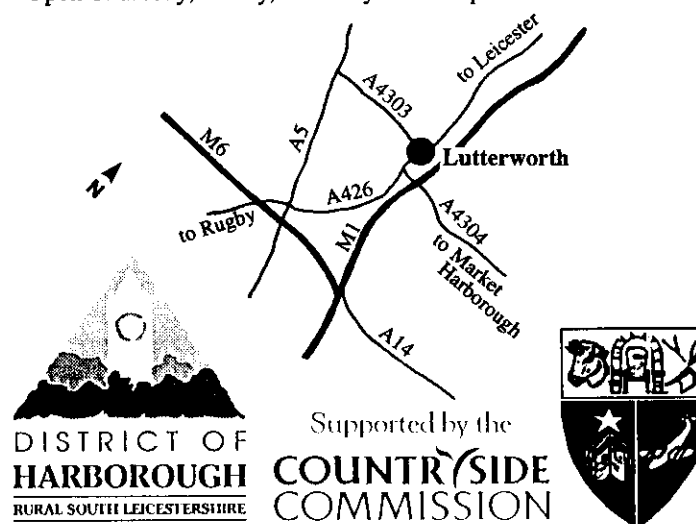
LUTTERWORTH

South Leicestershire

Historic Town Trail



The Town Hall



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