

Chichester Heritage Trails

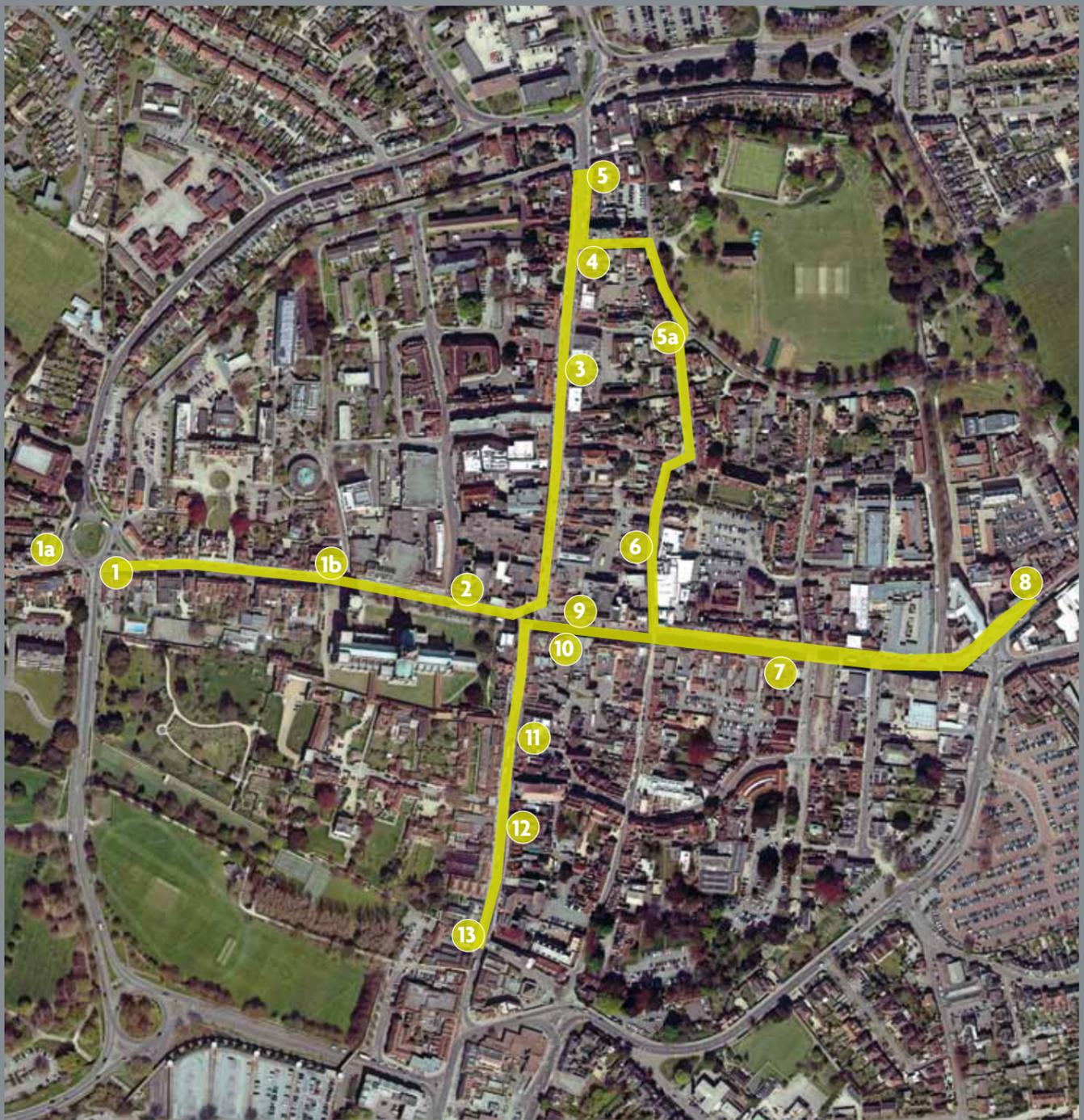
Trail 5: Inns, pubs and hotels

Introduction

Chichester's earliest inns can be traced back to mediaeval times when they catered for pilgrims visiting the shrine of St Richard in the cathedral. Over time they came to serve all types of travellers, who needed rest and food after travelling along the notoriously bad Sussex roads. By the middle of the seventeenth century there were seven inns in Chichester, as well as 50 alehouses, taverns, and other premises that sold drink. Given the population was only 2,000 people at the time, of whom over half were women and children, it can be seen that Chichester was a boozy city and remained so until the beginning of the twentieth century. Today there are only a dozen public houses in the city centre and no inns. Many of the city's old inns have been converted into restaurants or private accommodation. This trail includes both former as well as current pubs and inns. We begin at the western end of West Street.



The Duke and Rye, a relatively new pub, situated within the former church of St Peter the Great. (See stop 1)



Two highly respected writers of their day, W.H. Hudson and E.V. Lucas, visited Chichester within a few years of each other and they have left two very different impressions of the city, which only goes to show that beauty, both of man and building, rests in the eye of the beholder!

“Chichester is a perfect example of an English rural capital, thronged on market days with tilt carts bringing a farmer or farmer's wife, and rich in those well-thronged ironmongers' shops that one never sees elsewhere. But it is more than this: it is also a cathedral town, with the ever present sense of dominion by the cloth even when the cloth [the clergy] is not visible. ...Whatever noise may be in the air you know in your heart that quietude is its true characteristic. One might say that above the loudest street cries you are continually conscious of the silence of the [Cathedral] close.”

E.V. Lucas, *Highways and Byways of Sussex*, 1903

“There are 12,000 souls in the town; that is to say, an adult population of 3000. This number includes a rather large body of clergymen and ministers, and perhaps a couple of hundred highly respectable persons who do not go to bars. To provide this village population with drink there are seventy public-houses, besides several wine and spirit merchants, and grocers with licences. To keep all these houses open, all these taps perpetually running, there must be an immense quantity of liquor consumed. At eight o'clock in the morning you will find men at all the bars, often in groups of three or four or half a dozen, standing, pipe in mouth and tankard in hand; and at eleven at night, when closing-time comes, out of every door a goodly crowd of citizens are seen stumbling forth, surprised and sorry, no doubt, that the day has ended so soon. In the streets, near the railway station, at the Market Cross, and at various corners, you will see groups of the most utterly drink-degraded wretches it is possible to find anywhere in the kingdom....”

W.H. Hudson, *Nature in Downland*, 1900

Did you know?

Chichester has 518 listed buildings, 18 of which are Grade 1. Find out more about them on the heritage trails and discover a lot of hidden architectural gems and stories about Chichester's amazing history that will surprise you.

Do you have memories of old Chichester? If so, we would like to hear from you. We are recording memories of the city for future generations. A memory recorded, is history saved.

Please let us know what you think about this trail. We would really like to know which aspects of Chichester's history you would like future trails to cover. Local volunteers, including Chichester University students and pupils at Bishop Luffa School, are currently creating these walks leaflets through the Chichester Heritage Trails project, which is run by the Chichester Society and managed by History People UK.



Chichester City Council

The project has received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £53,000. As part of the project, volunteers are doing archival research and carrying out oral history interviews with residents to recall their memories of Chichester in the past. They have received training in these heritage skills through the project.

Project partners: Bishop Luffa School, Chichester BID, Chichester City Council, Chichester Local History Society, Chichester Society, Chichester Walls Trust, University of Chichester, West Sussex Library Service, West Sussex Record Office.

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You will find a lot more about the Chichester Heritage Trails project and local history on our website and social media sites.

Chichester Heritage Trails

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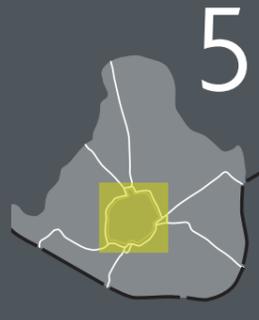
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Chichester Heritage Trails



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Inns, pubs and hotels



1 The Chichester Inn (formerly the *Castle*). The *Chichester Inn* is built on the site of a medieval house belonging to the Dean of Chichester Cathedral. The house was left in a ruined condition following the siege of the city during the civil war. The house had been rebuilt by 1692 and by 1754 it had become an inn known as the *Three Kings*. By 1792 it was called the *Duke of Richmond Arms*, becoming the *Castle* during the Victorian era. The Chichester Hand Bell Club met here from 1844. Hand-bell ringing was very popular at Christmas and a much loved festive entertainment. In 1992 the pub was renamed again, becoming the *The Chichester Inn*. According to legend, the ghost of a Roman soldier haunts the premises. The *Crate and Apple* (1a) restaurant in Westgate was formerly *The Swan*.



Carry on eastwards, note the *Duke and Rye* (1b), on your left. This is a relatively new pub, situated within the former church of St Peter the Great (See Chichester Heritage Trail no. 1).

2 The Dolphin and Anchor. The present pub of this name dates back to 1997, and is situated in the western part of what were once the principal coaching inns of Chichester – one called the *Anchor*, the other the *Dolphin*. Both inns date back to the seventeenth century but it is possible that an older inn – *The George* – stood on this site by 1519 and possibly earlier. The city was bitterly divided during the civil war of the 1640s and this factionalism continued into the eighteenth century, with the *Anchor* becoming the headquarters of the Tory party and the *Dolphin* becoming the base for the Whigs. Elections in those days were very rowdy, with considerable drunkenness and riotous behaviour. The two inns were amalgamated into the *Dolphin and Anchor Hotel* in 1910. The hotel's 'Whig and Tory' has been converted into the present-day *Dolphin and Anchor* bar, and was opened following the closure of the hotel in 1997. Several large retail outlets now operate from the former hotel buildings.



Continue until you come to the Cross (see Chichester Heritage Trail no. 1), turn left into North Street and proceed until you come to the *Old Cross* public house.

3 The Old Cross. Formerly the *Green Dragon*, the pub was rebuilt in 1928 and given its current name in commemoration of the city's outstanding Tudor market cross. The date of the rebuild is shown on dice embedded in the front wall. In medieval times the land here was owned by the Bishop of Chichester. Following the Reformation, two tenements were built on this site and by 1688 they had been converted into an ale-house. Ale-houses (later beer-houses) were licensed only to sell ale or beer and could not sell more intoxicating liquors or offer accommodation.

Continue up North Street until, on your right, you reach –

4 The Chichester Harbour Hotel, formerly *The Ship Hotel*. Although the building is Georgian, it was only converted into a hotel in 1939. It was built in 1804–6 as the home of Admiral Sir George Murray, who distinguished himself at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801. Murray was held in high regard by Nelson but missed being present at the Battle of Trafalgar. Murray became Mayor of Chichester in 1815, the year he was knighted. Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery met here in 1944 prior to D-Day.



Continue northwards until you reach –

5 The George and Dragon. It is believed that the first stagecoach from Chichester to London ran from the spacious yard of the *George and Dragon* and was operated by Robert Quennel, who lived in the neighbouring property. In the days when the city had a bad reputation for drunken brawling, the *George and Dragon* must have had its fair share of altercations as it was known locally as the 'Bucket of Blood.' We are pleased to say that no such reputation is attributed to the current premises!



Retrace your steps and turn left into Guildhall Street and then right into Priory Road and on your right you will see the *Park Tavern* (5a), formerly known as the *Ritz*. Continue southwards along St Martin's Square until you come to St Martin's Street, continue until you come on your right to –



6 The Hole-in-the-wall. There is much speculation surrounding the origin of this pub's name. Immediately adjacent was one of the city's Poor Houses (workhouses) and it is said that the inmates were passed food through a hole in the wall to the neighbouring property. Another theory is that workers at the St Martin's Brewery that also abutted the property would

pass barrels back and forth between the inn and the brewery through a hole in the cellar wall. Another theory, which is more likely a folk tale, is that there was a debtor's prison on this site, and family and friends would pass food and drink through this hole to their loved ones. The brewery dated back at least until 1684 and probably earlier. St Martin of Tours was the patron saint of the Worshipful Company of Vintners.

Continue southwards down St Martin's Street until you come to East Street, turn left. On your right you will come to 58 East Street, formerly –



7 The Fleece. The *Fleece*, formerly the *Golden Fleece*, was one of Chichester's oldest inns. An ale house stood on this site in 1641 and may have existed at a much earlier date. It had become an inn – offering food and accommodation by 1710. From 1812–1823, the city's Member of Parliament was William Huskisson whose nomination as a candidate took place at the *Fleece*. In 1827, Huskisson joined the Duke of Wellington's government, serving in various roles, including President of the Board of Trade. He had the dubious distinction of becoming the world's first railway fatality when he was killed by George Stephenson's 'Rocket' at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1830. It is also said that an earlier Member of Parliament, William Cawley, was born here. Cawley was one of the regicides, who signed the Death Warrant of King Charles I, following his trial for treason in January 1649. *The Fleece* closed in 1987 and is now a shop.

Continue eastwards until you come to Eastgate Square then bear left into St Pancras and on your left you will come to –

8 The Nag's Head is a twentieth century mock Tudor building that incorporates an archway that once led to a blacksmith's shop at the rear. After being rebuilt in the 1930s it traded as the *Family and Commercial Hotel*, before reverting to its previous name.

Retrace your steps back into East Street and make for the Cross. Just before reaching the Cross you will find two important former inns of Chichester –



9 The Swan. The mock gothic building of the National Westminster Bank marks the site of the *Swan Inn* that dated back at least until 1620. *The Swan*, also known as the *Royal Swan*, was the hub of life in eighteenth and nineteenth century Chichester. Dr Samuel Johnson stayed here and the fiery Radical, William Cobbett gave lectures here. It was rebuilt in 1819 after a disastrous fire. In 1832, the inn boasted hot and cold baths, good stabling, lock-up coach houses, post horses, chaises and every convenience for the traveller. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert stayed here overnight when journeying to Portsmouth for the crossing to their house at Osborne on the Isle of Wight. The royal couple came out onto the balcony to acknowledge the cheers of the crowds. *The Swan* was also used for meetings of the Mayor and Corporation when it was too cold to meet in the Guildhall (see Chichester Heritage Trail no. 2).



Opposite the bank is –

10 The Royal Arms. *The Royal Arms*, also known as the *Punch House* was the great rival to the *Swan* opposite. Its 'royal' title was derived from the claim that Victoria and Albert also visited this inn and, furthermore, sampled their famous 'milk punch'. The ingredients for this beverage, which was brewed for two years, included milk, lemon juice, sugar, and rum. The building was originally a spacious town house, built in the late sixteenth century. It is said that Queen Elizabeth I stayed here on her visit to Sussex in 1591. The pub closed in 2006 following a serious fire. Fortunately the exquisite Tudor moulded ceilings survived the blaze, although they are now hidden underneath a suspended ceiling in the current shop.

Reach the Cross, turn left into South Street, on your left you will find *Prezzo's*, formerly –



11 The White Horse. This former inn dates back to at least 1533. The building was re-fronted in the eighteenth century, although the original Tudor timber-framed jetty can still be seen at the back of the building when viewed from West Pallant. A sign hangs from the original ornate eighteenth century wrought-iron bracket and you can still see the White Horse stained glass window. The Royal Sussex Coach used to depart from the *King's Head* every day at 9.15 am, calling at Bognor, Littlehampton and Worthing. Various masonic lodges and tradesmen's societies met here and held their annual dinners, often with the Duke of Richmond in attendance.



Continue down South Street until you come to *Trent's* restaurant, formerly –

12 The King's Head. An ale house was on this site from about 1599. It was in about 1740 that the Tudor façade was added to the Tudor building. Legend claims that a tunnel once ran from the *King's Head* to the Cathedral, so that choristers could enjoy a covert pint of ale. The clock-maker, Henry Fogden, was landlord from 1804 until after 1840. The ancient name was changed in 1994 to the *Hog's Head*. It has since become *Trent's* bar-restaurant, providing accommodation, so, in a sense, it has become an inn!



Our final stop is –

13 The Fountain. *The Fountain* is probably Chichester's oldest surviving pub, dating back to the late eighteenth century. It abutted the south gate of the city as shown by a missing length of cornice. Apart from a brief interruption in the 1980s, when it was renamed, the *Cathedral Tavern*, it has always been known as the *Fountain*. What was described as a 'gargantuan meal' was eaten here in 1807 by a soldier looking to win a bet. George Neal was the landlord here in the 1830s. His daughter, Sarah, married Joseph Wells, the Kent county cricketer. Their son found fame as the novelist, H.G.Wells. The old game of Single-sticks or Back-sword, was played here. One worthy winner was known as the 'Muff of Lavant.'

If you wish to return to the start of the trail, retrace your steps back to the Cross and then turn left into West Street and you will return to our starting point at *The Chichester Inn*.

