

Chichester Heritage Trails

Trail 1: North-West Quadrant

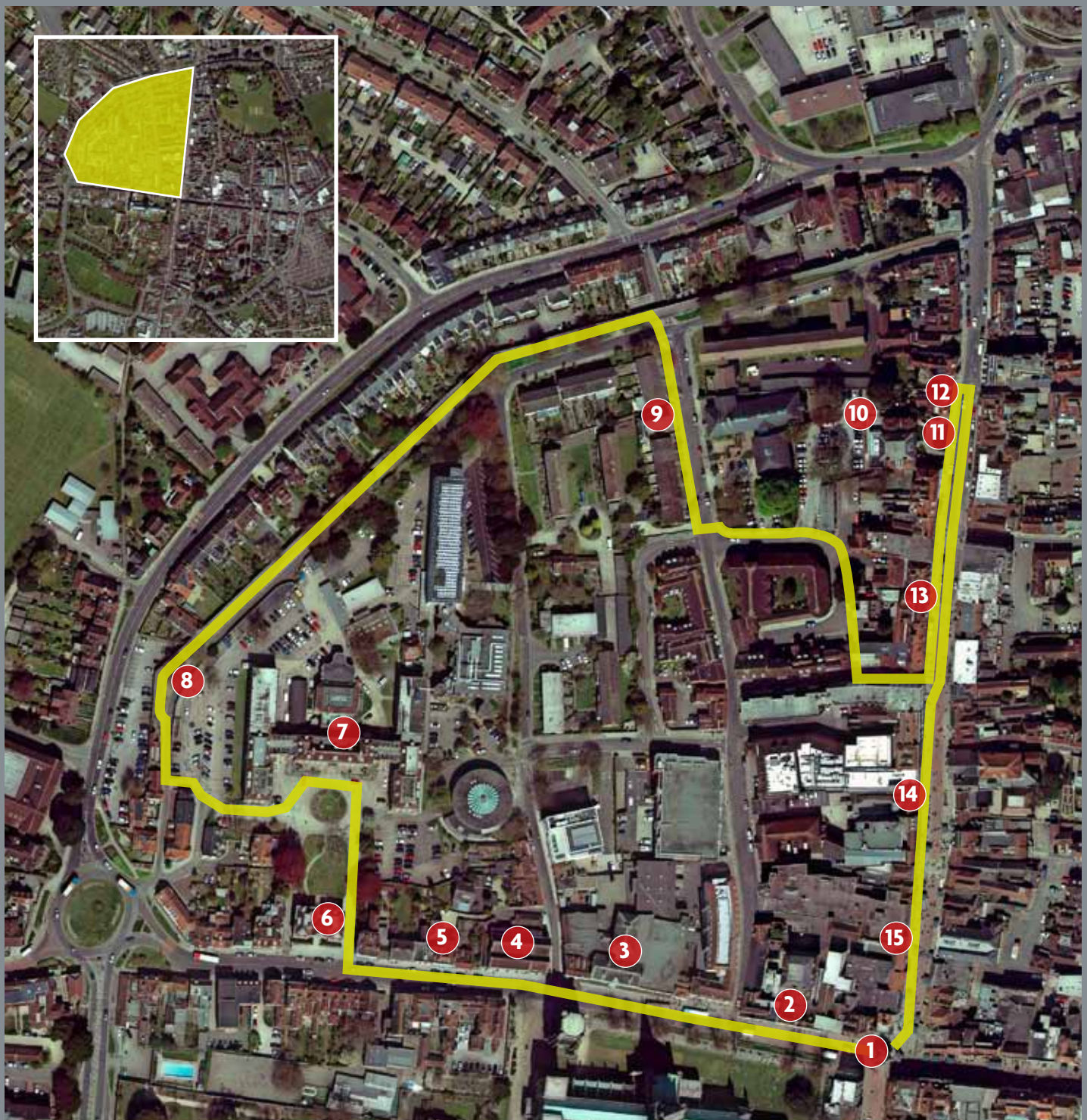
General Introduction

Chichester's four principal streets still mainly follow the pattern of the Roman settlement, founded nearly two thousand years ago. The city walls – remarkably intact for an English town – also follow the Roman plan and contain masonry from the original construction. These four city centre walks explore each of Chichester's historic quadrants that are divided by the four principal thoroughfares of North, South, East and West streets. Each quadrant has its own special atmosphere and distinctive history. A great rebuilding from the late seventeenth century replaced or re-fronted timber-framed thatched houses with the characteristic Georgian street scene of brick and stucco buildings that exists today.

North-West Quadrant

The North-West Quadrant was, prior to the eighteenth century, dominated by market gardens and livestock farming, including slaughterhouses. Today, among the older buildings, are the modern administrative centres of a county town, including County Hall, Chichester Library and the Novium Museum. The south side of West Street (including the cathedral) is included in Trail 4, and the east side of North Street is included in Trail 2.

The walk begins at the Market Cross.



Hilaire Belloc

Sussex writer, Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953), was born in France, but was brought back to England as a young child by his widowed English mother. Belloc, as well as being a prolific writer, was also a constant traveller, sometimes spending no more than a few months of the year at home. For Belloc 'home' was firstly, Slindon, eight miles east of Chichester; and latterly, Shipley, near Horsham. For all his love of travel, Belloc had an abiding sense of 'home,' and found joy and repose in the traditions and customs of rural Sussex. As an old man he became despondent about the survival of 'Old England' and everywhere saw signs of cultural and moral decline. Perhaps this explains his overly pessimistic view of Chichester as no longer being a walled town. The city gates had been demolished but that had taken place in the century before his birth. In truth, the old walls of Chichester had become a metaphor in Belloc's mind for the decay of a way of life that he held dear.

"When I hear the word 'Chichester,' a town which I should know best in Europe, for it was the market town and local capital of youth, I forget that it ever had a circuit of walls and that their remains can still be traced among the houses; yet anyone thinking of Sussex up to quite modern times remembered Chichester as a walled town. People coming in by the sea plain from the west, or from the east, or across the downs from the north, were aware of the walls long before they noted anything else, except, beyond, the spire of the cathedral. The people of Chichester rebuilt their spire, much as it had been, for Sussex is the most conservative of the English counties. But, for all its attachment to ancient things, Sussex did not keep Chichester as a walled town: a pity, I think. It is when we have lost things that we know their meaning – and then it is too late."

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.

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.

Special thanks go to Richard Childs and Sue Parslow for proof reading and to Alan Green and Andrew Berriman for bringing their knowledge of local history to bear on the proofing stage and correcting all inaccuracies and anomalies. Thanks also to the project volunteers and supporters who helped variously with the research and proof reading. In no special order they are: Paula Chatfield, Geoff King, Madeleine Keene, Paula Nicholson, Sue Parslow, Mary Hand, Mab Evans, Ellen Cheshire, Pat Saunders, Ross Wilson, Richard Beeny, Geoffrey Redman, Wendy Walker, and Sue Millard.

For further information contact historian Chris Hare, Project Manager. chris@chichesterheritagetrails.org.uk or 07794 600639 www.chichesterheritagetrails.org.uk

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
 @ChiHeritage

History People UK
developing and delivering community heritage projects

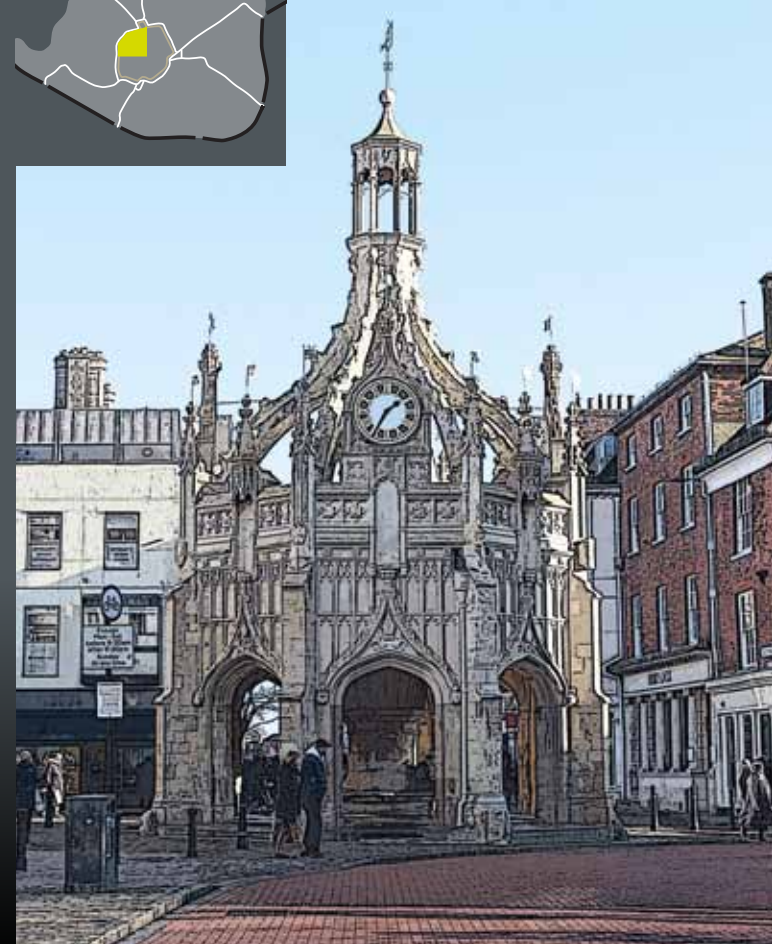
LOTTERY FUNDED

Design: Blacker Design (6805-02-17). Aerial images: Getmapping. Website and social media: Nigel Bird. Photographs: Nigel Bird, Mike Blacker, John Wichers, David Wilson. Printed by Oxted Colour

Chichester Heritage Trails



North-West Quadrant





1 The **Market Cross** was built in 1501 and was a gift to the city from Bishop Storey. The aged prelate wished to provide shelter from sun or rain to the tradesmen on market days. The clock, cupola and bust of King Charles I are seventeenth century additions, but otherwise the cross – arguably the best preserved in England – is much as Bishop Storey would have known it over 500 years ago. The old medieval market took up a large area here where the four city streets meet. Over time, new buildings encroached onto the market area reducing the space available for stall-holders.



2 The row of shops on the north side of West Street, with Waterstones at their centre, were once all part of the **Dolphin and Anchor Hotel**, which closed in 1997. You will see that a bar at the west end has been named after the old coaching inn. Actually,

until 1918, there were two inns – The Dolphin and The Anchor. If you cross West Street towards the cathedral and turn around, you will observe on the parapet, a golden dolphin on the left and a golden anchor on the right, marking the position of the two inns. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were great political and religious rivalries in the city, with the Dolphin taking on the Whig cause, while The Anchor adhered to the Tories.

3 This building, now the House of Fraser department store, was built in 1906 as the **Oliver Whitby School**, and replaced an earlier building. The new building was designed by the distinguished architect Reginald Blomfield in the so-called “Wrenaissance style”. The school was founded in 1702 to give a good education to poor children of Chichester and the parishes of Wittering and Harting. It was also known as the ‘bluecoat school,’ after the distinctive long blue coats worn by the scholars. When it closed in 1949 it merged with the far larger ‘bluecoat school’ of Christ’s Hospital at Horsham. It is believed that the oval windows on the second floor lit five bedrooms where the school staff stayed. The boys’ dormitories were at the rear.



4 Although it appears to be old, even medieval, the former church of **St Peter the Great** was only completed in 1852. Previously the congregation of this parish worshipped in the north transept of the cathedral, but by the 1840s, with the

population and religious devotion on the increase, it was felt appropriate that the parish should have its own church. It was not practical to have two sets of services taking place in the cathedral and furthermore there was an ongoing hostility between the cathedral authorities and the parishioners of St Peter the Great. By the 1970s, conversely, church attendances were falling, and St Peter’s was no longer viable. It has been through several commercial uses since it closed in 1979. The memorial garden to the left marks the spot where the church tower would have been built, but this plan never came to fruition.

5 Numbers **22 and 23 West Street** are fine examples of Georgian town houses. The former housed Chichester Library from 1947 to 1967, while number 23 is of note for its beautiful decorative rainwater head found just below the eaves, surmounting the downward drainpipe, currently painted white.



6 **Edes House** (a Grade I listed building) is named after John Edes, a wealthy city maltster, who died before it was completed in 1696. It was the first ‘modern’ house built in the city; a brick and stone construction with a tiled roof. Previously all buildings in the city were timber framed with thatched roofs at the time Edes House was built. The city council had banned all thatched roofs and existing householders were given six months to update their properties or face a fine. Having been in the doldrums for half a century, the Chichester authorities were determined to boost the local economy by modernising the city.

7 Walk down the right hand side of Edes House and you will see **County Hall**, headquarters of West Sussex County Council, built in the grounds of Edes House in 1936. To your right you will see the back of **Chichester Library** (Grade II listed). You may wish to make a slight detour to view this



County Hall



Chichester Library



The Novium

building from the front as it is regarded as a fine example of mid-twentieth century architecture. It was opened in January 1967 by Professor Asa Briggs and was described by one contemporary as having “an unmistakable air of the canopied tent of a Shakespearian king”. It was the first library in the country to install a computer system. Opposite the library is **The Novium**, Chichester’s 21st century museum, built on the site of a Roman bath house, and opened in 2012.



views at this point – north across the city towards the South Downs, giving a sense of the city’s ancient connection with its landscape. As you look down into the gardens of Orchard Street, to your left, note the large remnant of a detached bastion of the Roman wall, located at the rear of some flats.

9 Descend down the steps at North Walls and head south down Chapel Street. Soon on your right you will see **Providence Chapel**, built in 1809 out of Mixon stone (Bognor rocks) from the famous reef off Bognor.



There is a memorial plaque to two Protestant martyrs burnt at the stake in Chichester in 1555, during Queen Mary Tudor’s reign. They were not Chichester men, but



were executed here as a warning to their like-minded co-religionists. The memorial says they were ‘Faithfull unto Death’. However, at the time, Bishop Day of Chichester described one of the martyrs, Richard Hooke of Alfriston, as being, “a child and nursling of Devilish iniquity”, and “an obstinate and confirmed heretic”.

10 As you continue south along Chapel Street, you will observe a car park on your left called **St Cyriac’s**. In medieval times there was a chapel here dedicated to this fourth century saint. It is said that King Henry III particularly revered St Cyriac and gave money for the upkeep of the chapel. The building



was later converted to secular uses and then demolished. Today only a car park recalls the name, although there is an English yew growing close by – a tree historically associated with ancient religious sites and churchyards.

11 Bearing to your right (with the car park on your left), make your way into Crane Street, turn left here and into North Street. Turn left again and soon you will come to an imposing house built of flint on your left.



Fernleigh was built in the early 19th century by Chichester coal merchant, Charles Cooper. In 1807 he sold it to Richard Murray, who was twice elected mayor of the city. On close inspection it will be seen that flakes of flint have been placed in the mortar between the flint nodules. This practice was known as ‘galleting’ and was done to strengthen the mortar, a necessary precaution when so many flints were being deployed in the construction. Flint became a popular building material at this time as a consequence of a tax imposed on bricks, as well as the local abundance of flint, which occurs naturally in chalk of the South Downs. Galleting also helped to deflect rainwater from the mortar and was regarded as an attractive feature in its own right.



12 To the immediate right of Fernleigh are numbers **41 and 42 North Street**. Although they appear to be typical buildings of the late Georgian period, the later brickwork disguises timber-framed buildings from the Tudor era.



13 Now retrace your steps down North Street and head back towards the Market Cross. On your way you will pass **31 North Street**, a beautiful example of a bow-fronted eighteenth century town house (now a shop) with oriel windows and a neo-classical entrance.

14 Today **16 North Street** is WH Smith’s and by strange coincidence, in the eighteenth century the building on this site was the studio of the renowned Smith Brothers of Chichester. George and John painted landscapes, while their younger brother, William, painted still life. George, who was also known for his pastoral poetry, was the only one of the three to live past middle age.



15 **Sussex Stationers – 9 North Street** – was, from 1786 to 1985, a chemist shop; indeed it was the first recorded chemist shop in the city. From 1903 it traded as Bastow’s – a name still familiar to the memory of many local residents. ‘Bastow’s Classics’, located at 50A North Street, closed in 2013.

Return now to the Market Cross and the end of this trail.