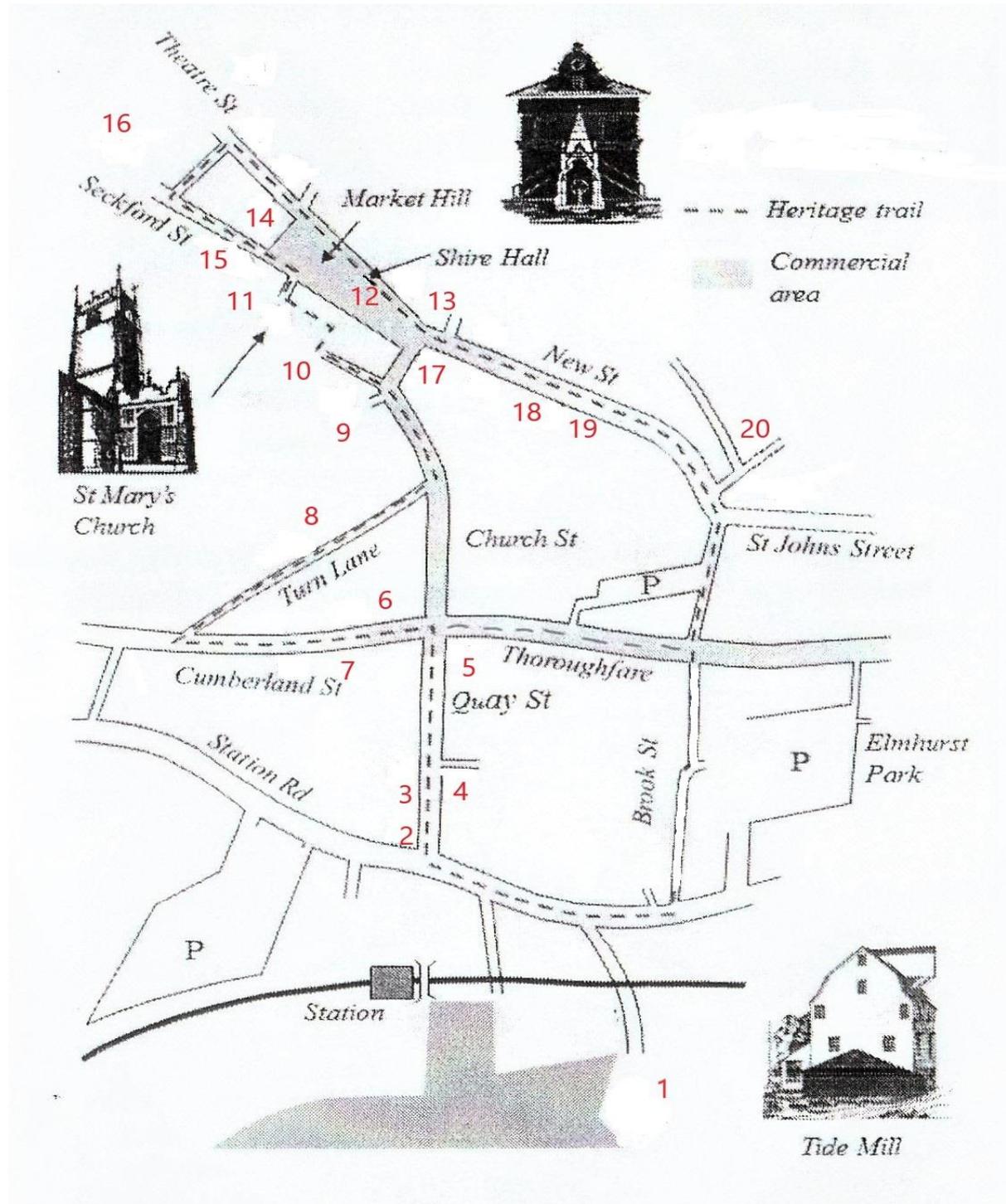


Woodbridge. People and Places.

Easy/Moderate. Allow 1-1½ hours. Parking available by Woodbridge Station (East Suffolk Line). Many opportunities for refreshments along the walk.

Discover places and people from Woodbridge's past. The names of the roads walked along will provide further insight into the fascinating history of Woodbridge.



The walk begins at Woodbridge Tide Mill (1). To reach the Tide Mill from Woodbridge Station or Station Car Park there are two possible routes: either turn right along Quayside walk past the cinema and turn right over the crossing or go over the bridge above the railway line and then left along the waterfront. A working Tide Mill has been on this same site for over 800 years. Open now on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for pre-booked small groups.

From the Tide Mill turn left and look at the historic waterfront, where are situated the Long Shed, the venue of a project to reconstruct the Sutton Hoo ship, and Woodbridge Museum (both closed at present).

Cross the railway line and turn left and then right up Quay Street, noting on the corner the 18th century Anchor Inn (2). This is the last remaining of three public houses where merchants could quench their thirst when loading and unloading their wares. No 5 Quay Street (3) was Woodbridge's Custom House until 1882 when the town was no longer classified as a port. Opposite is Woodbridge Quay Church (4), dating from 1805 but on the site of an earlier chapel erected by dissenters in 1689.



No 5 Quay St. Former Custom's House

At the junction of Quay Street and The Thoroughfare stands the Crown (5) which used to be a coaching inn. Turn left into Cumberland Street. During the Napoleonic Wars officers and their families, including the Duke of Cumberland, lived in this street and No 6 is a fine Georgian building (6). Note the blue plaque acknowledging that 'Thomas Churchyard Landscape Artist and Advocate lived here 1843-1853'. In contrast is tiny Barton's Cottage, once the home of Quaker poet Bernard Barton, another of the so-called 'Wits of Woodbridge' who called it 'my little nutshell of a house' (7).



Barton's Cottage

From Cumberland Street turn right up Turn Lane. The Old Meeting House was used by Quakers until 1935 and is now a private residence. The adjacent burial ground is leased to the Town Council as a place of quiet contemplation (8).



Quaker Burial Ground

At the end of Turn Lane turn left up Church Street and on the left is Abbey School. This was built as a town house by Thomas Seckford on the site of an Augustinian Priory dissolved by Henry VIII in 1537. It is now the prep school to Woodbridge School (9).



Abbey School

Thomas Seckford was Master of the Court of Requests during the reign of Elizabeth I. As such he became a very rich figure and his legacy lives on in Woodbridge through the Seckford foundation.



St Mary's Church

Walk through the grave yard of St Mary's Church and note the tomb of John Clarkson (10), a friend of William Wilberforce and prominent in the anti-slavery movement. The Parish Church of St Mary's (11) was constructed in the early 15th century, financed by many contributions from local people and adjacent to a Saxon Church. Inside the porch is a bread cupboard from which bread was distributed to the poor for some 300 years, a practice recently revived. The tomb of Thomas Seckford is to the left of the altar in the church.



Tomb of John Clarkson

Ascend the steps opposite the church and you arrive at the heart of historic Woodbridge. Shire Hall (12) was built in 1575 at the behest of Thomas Seckford: the upper floor was used for the Quarter and Petty Sessions, the lower part as a covered market. Shire Hall is now used by Woodbridge Town Council. The pump in Market Square was financed by the Seckford Foundation in 1876. Cross Market Square and look up at No 8-10 Market Hill noting the initials EFG. Edward Fitzgerald, the translator of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, lodged here from 1860 to 1871/4. (13)



Water Pump



The King's Head



Shire Hall

Go back to the top of Market Square and take the left fork to Seckford Street, known in earlier days as Well Street, passing The King's Head (14) where some 15th century half timbering is still visible and includes five carved heads.

No 1 Seckford Street was the initial site of The Free School which later became Woodbridge School. No 5 was the Seckford Dispensary, now private apartments but the site of the Seckford Dispensary from 1886 until the establishment of the NHS in 1948 (15). Continue up Seckford Street with Fen Meadow on your left and on the right are the Seckford Almshouses (16) built between 1838 and 1869 and constructed on the site of Thomas Seckford's original structure.



Seckford Almshouses

Retrace your steps down Seckford Street and turn left up Queens Head Lane to arrive at the junction of Burkitt Road and Theatre Street. If you walk a short distance up Burkitt Road you will see Buttrum's Mill which operated until 1928. The mill is now privately owned but maintained by the local authority and open to the public on occasion.



The Bull Inn

However the route continues right at the junction down Theatre Street with Woodbridge School on your left. Nos 16-24 Theatre Street housed a converted House of Correction built in 1804 and closed in 1842. Theatre Street is so named because a Georgian Theatre stood behind the car park between nos 4 and 2 Theatre Street from 1814 to 1862. Return to Market Square and walk towards The Bull Hotel (17). This was once a coaching inn and John Grout, the landlord, was a horse dealer of international renown.



The Bell and Steelyard

Now take the left hand fork down New Street, which is in fact over 450 years old, and was built to relieve Church Street. The Bell and Steelyard (18) has a strange contraption hanging over the road. The steelyard was used to weigh loaded waggons on their way from the market to the quays.

Further down New Street no 93 (19) is a private residence but in the past was used as the Parish Workhouse and apartments for the frail poor.

As you advance down New Street look left up St John's Hill to note St John's church consecrated in 1846 (20). It was built to encompass overflow from the increasingly large congregation at St Mary's.



St John's Church

Arrive back at the Thoroughfare and turn right and then left at the Crown junction back towards the station, the car park and the Riverside Cinema.

(If you want a slightly longer walk turn left at The Thoroughfare and then veer right through Elmhurst Park back to Quayside).