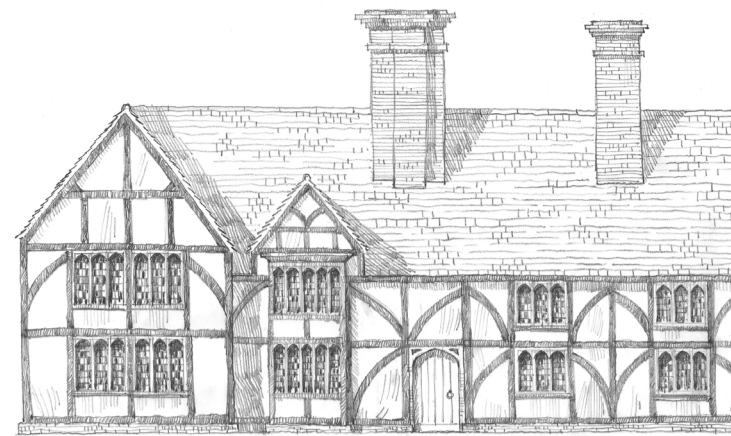


A walk around the Inns, Breweries & Maltings of Old Amersham



The King's Arms

A one mile walk around Old Amersham, exploring the history of its Inns, Breweries and Maltings

An optional extension of ¼ of a mile can be downloaded from our website



Amersham Museum

Amersham Museum is an award-winning accredited museum, sharing the stories of local people and places. The museum is housed in part of a Grade II listed medieval hall house in the heart of Amersham, an historic market town. The museum has a beautiful physic garden, next to the River Misbourne.

The Museum runs a wide range of activities for people of all ages, including reminiscence groups, singing, art and literature workshops and an accredited art club for children. It is brilliantly supported by a team of 125 volunteers and a Friends group.

Amersham Museum Walks

This is one of several self-led walks created by the Amersham Museum. Go to <https://amershammuseum.org> to find more.

The Museum also offers a programme of themed guided walks, including Tudor Amersham, the movers and shakers of Amersham Old Town, Arts & Crafts architecture, Modernism and drivers' routes. Go to <https://amershammuseum.org/events/guided-walks> for details of dates and how to book.

This circular walk starts at the Amersham Museum (49 High St, Old Amersham, HP7 0DP). It is about 1 mile (1.6 km), and will take about ¼ hour, although if you stop to sample what is on offer in the remaining inns, the walk may take much longer! There is an optional extension walk to the hamlet of Bury End which would add about 0.8 miles (1.3 km). You can download this with much more information, from our website amershammuseum.org.

Car parking & toilets: Cars can be parked in most of the Old Town but if busy use the paying car park off The Broadway, where toilets can also be found.

Buses: There are buses stopping in Old Amersham from Chesham, High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Slough & Watford. See <https://bustimes.org/localities/old-amersham>.

Trains: Amersham station is served by the Metropolitan Line from Aldgate and Baker Street and the Chiltern line from Marylebone and Aylesbury. There are buses or taxis from the station to the Old Town.

A walk around the Inns, Breweries & Maltings of Old Amersham

Start

The walk starts from the Amersham Museum 1 (49 High Street). In 1613 the building was leased to Thomas Hunt, a maltster. Then the Bateman family, also maltsters, lived there until 1851.

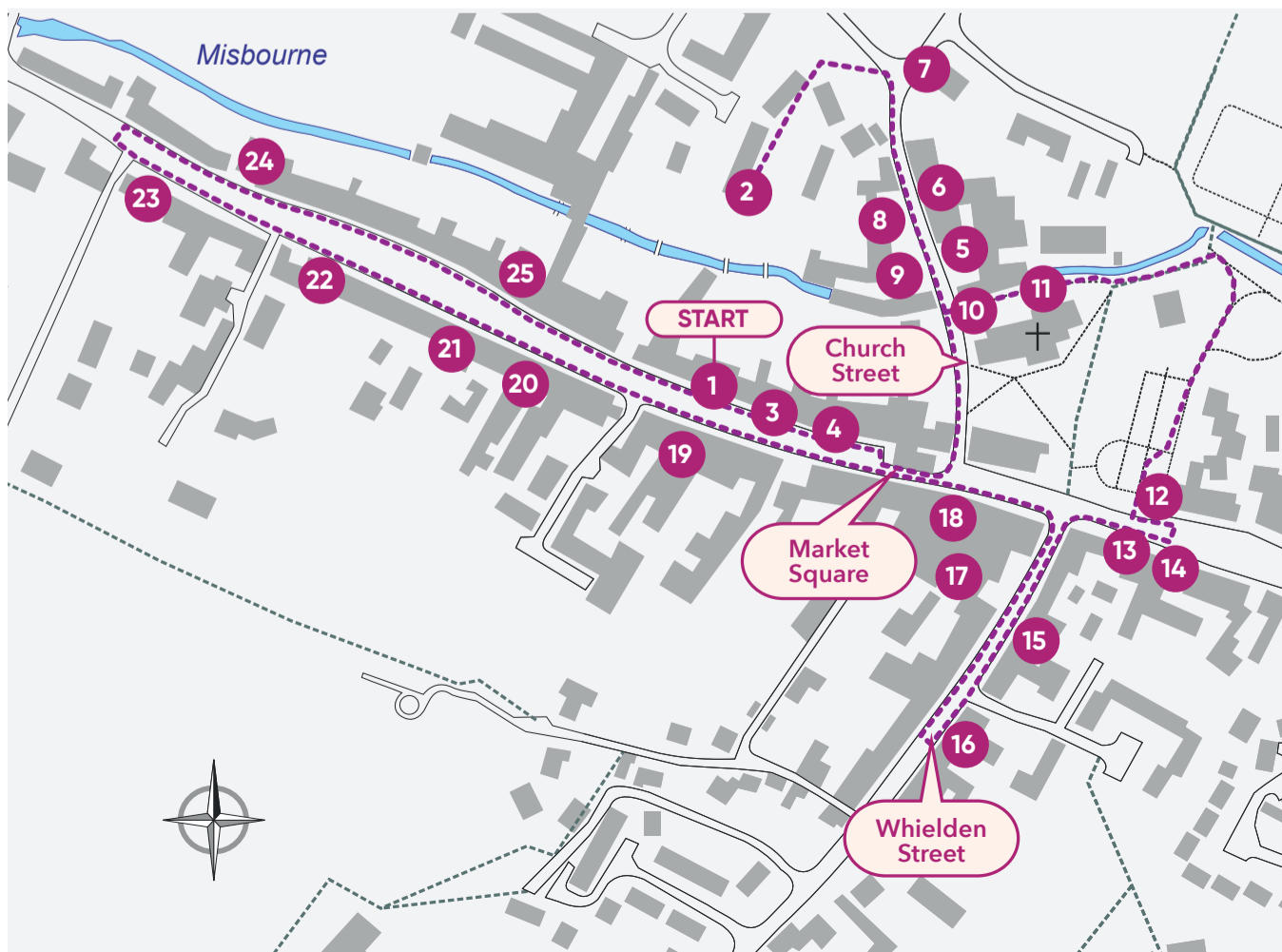
If you have access to the Museum, go to the bottom of the garden and look through the gate at Pondwicks Meadow. The buildings you can see on the left are the Maltings 2 built by John and William Weller in 1829 and largely rebuilt after a fire in 1837.

Turn left (east) out of the Museum and walk along the High Street. Stop at no. 41 High Street and note the red lion above the door of the shop and just beyond it the archway leading to a courtyard. This was once The Red Lion 3, an inn bought by the Weller brewing family in 1837. It catered for touring cyclists.

Continue to 31-33 High Street. This building was once the George Inn 4. The timber framed building was given a Georgian façade in the 18th century. In 1722 Montague Garrard Drake of Shardeloes owned the inn

and outhouses, insuring them for £300. Although by then no longer an inn, the brick rear wing on the left has a stone inscribed to a later owner from the family, TDTD 1807 (Thomas Drake Tyrwhitt Drake).

Continue in the same direction past the Market Hall to Church Street. Cross the road and turn left towards the church. Just past the church arrive at Badminton Court on the right and Flint Barn Court opposite. This is the centre of what was the Weller brewery business 5.



The Weller Brewery

The brewery itself was in Badminton Court. The yard opposite housed the drays and various offices. Beyond what is now the Amersham Town Council building was the Maltings **2** for the brewery, on Barn Meadow.

A grandson of William Weller, also William, married the daughter of a wealthy brewer from Hemel Hempstead, Lydia Holloway, who expanded the Weller business by bringing in part of her father's brewery. They lived in the house to the north of the brewery **6**. Continue to the Three Gables **7**, bought by William Weller in 1775 as a store house for barrels. In earlier times it was probably the tithe barn.



Three Gables

(If you did not see the Maltings from the museum garden, you could cross the road onto School Lane, then follow the footpath half left in front of houses and then left again between houses until you reach Pondwick's Meadow, now a community orchard. You can see the buildings of the Maltings **2** on the right-hand side.

Go back along Church Street towards the church. Notice the White House **8** just opposite the brewery, the home of Edward Weller (another grandson of William Weller) from 1872-79. Samuel Ford, Head Clerk to the brewery lived at Flint Cottage **9** between 1856 and 1898.

Before reaching the Church turn left along a footpath. Against the wall of the church notice a cluster of graves surrounded by railings - the Weller family plot **10**. There are also many memorials to them in the northwest corner inside the church.

Cross the road and return towards the town centre. Now a restaurant, no. 3 Whielden Street was the Nag's Head **17** pub until 2006. Built in the 1840s, in 1872 this was owned by Wethered's brewery (of Marlow), rivals of the Wellers. Continue to the end of Whielden Street and turn left into Market Square.

No. 14 High Street is the The Crown Hotel **18**. This 16th century building may have succeeded an earlier inn on the site. The current building has a Tudor wall painting in one of the bedrooms. As well as being a coaching inn, it was a posting house, a place where horses could be changed or hired.

Walk past the Market Hall to no. 30 High Street, The King's Arms **19** (see picture on cover). The building was originally two separate timber-framed 15th century hall houses either side of the covered entrance to the inn yard. The left front was covered in brick by the Georgians, then re-fronted again with old timbers by Benskins in 1936. They also acquired the part on the right, which has its original frontage.



The Crown Hotel

Continuing west along the High Street you come to a fine Tudor building, nos. 56-60, The Worthies. The house is so-called because there are wall paintings from the 1550s of 6 of the 9 Worthies, favourite subjects of paintings in the Middle Ages. The carriage arch tells you it was once a coaching inn, the White Hart, leased to a maltster in 1691 **20**.

A few doors further, just beyond Fairfax Mews, the 17th century building with an 18th century façade was the home of a wealthy maltster **21** John Martlew in 1632. Amersham was unusual in having many wealthy maltsters and brewers at that time.

Continue along the path, soon with the River Misbourne on the left. As the river emerges from the tunnel note the date 1634 **11**. Giles Watkins bequeathed a brewery on this site in 1636, although whether this stone is original to that date is questionable.

Continue on the same riverside path, but do not cross the bridge. Instead, turn right onto Church Mead (Meadow) and right again to follow the wall towards a gate. Go through the gate into the Memorial Gardens and towards the gate at the opposite end. As you approach the road notice the white buildings on the left (1-3 The Broadway). This was the Griffin Maltings **12** which William Weller bought from the Wingfield family in 1783 before building the larger maltings on Barn Meadow.

Emerge from the Memorial Gardens and turn left (east) along The Broadway. From this side of the road, you can admire the Georgian elegance of the Griffin Inn **13**. The inn was once owned by the Drake family. During the civil war, the Roundhead cavalry were quartered in the courtyard. Oliver Cromwell may have stopped there in 1642 when he received a great welcome from the people of Amersham after the Battle of Aylesbury and certainly dined there in 1645 on his way to Uxbridge to meet the King's Commissioners. Go a bit further on and notice the white, timber-framed buildings of nos. 16-22. This was once the "Sareazans" Head, sold in 1609. In 1724 it was bought by the Drake family and became a private house but a new Saracen's Head soon opened in Whielden Street **14**.



The Griffin



The Eagle

Two dynasties, the Wellers and Drakes

John Lawrence sold an interest in the Amersham brewery and two local pubs in 1775 to William Weller, a maltster from High Wycombe. Three of his sons (John, William II and Joseph) became brewers. One of John's sons (Edward) and one of William II's sons (William III) continued the family business. Three of William III's sons (William IV, Edward II and George) became brewers. The company expanded to over 140 pubs, locally and in neighbouring counties. They were noted for a beer called Weller's Entire, a type of stout, much esteemed locally. When George, the last of the brewers, died in 1929, his son Gerard put the Estate up for auction. It was bought by Benskin's Brewery of Watford, who only wanted the tied houses. So ended over 150 years of brewing in Amersham by the Weller family.

When William Weller moved to Amersham he was 'in trade' and so of a much lower social status than the Drake family, Lords of the Manor and great landowners since the early 17th century, with their grand mansion at Shardeloes. But when George Weller married brewer's daughter Blanche Masterman in 1871 they moved to a new home, The Plantation, at Amersham Common. Situated between Shardeloes and Latimer House, George wanted to create his own country estate, becoming part of the local gentry. Ironically, the Wellers sold their estate within a year of the Drake family doing so - death duties having greatly reduced both their fortunes.

Malting

Malt is an essential ingredient for brewing beer. It provides both flavour and sugar to ferment to produce alcohol. The barley is first steeped by soaking it for 8 hours, draining and allowing it to dry before repeating the process. Then the grain is spread out and turned over regularly for 3-5 days to allow it to germinate (sprout). Finally, it is roasted in a kiln to make malt. Malt was an important and valuable commodity. The Saunders family rented The Bury (a large manor house, now Bury Farm) from the Lord of the Manor from about 1450 to 1624. In 1586 they paid a rent of 84 bushels of malt to Edward, Earl of Bedford.

Go back a few yards to the zebra crossing, and use it to cross the road, then turn right and soon left into Whielden Street. No. 8 was The Hare and Hounds, **15**. It may have suffered a significant fire, and was rebuilt in the early 1940s, and then as houses in 1974. Continue up Whielden Street until you reach The Saracen's Head **16**.

This was certainly operating as an inn by 1742. It was the first pub bought by William Weller in 1775 from John Lawrence when he moved to the town.



The Saracen's Head

Further west along the High Street, you reach The Swan Inn **22**, another early coaching inn. One of the chimneys is dated 1671, but the building may be older, with references in legal documents to the "Swanne" in 1655. Between 1800 and 1851, John and Alice Day were the innkeepers and they left money to found the Day's Alms-houses (71-89 High Street), which can be seen from the Museum.

Continue to no. 130, Piers Place **23** the home of John Weller. Cross the road and head right (east) to The Eagle **24** which has an 18th century front on an older building. Licensed as a beer house in 1838, it could only sell beer, cyder and perry. Bought by the Wellers in 1872, when the entire brewery estate was sold in 1929 it was described as being "on the outskirts of the Town in the High Street.



The Swan Inn

You soon reach The Elephant and Castle, **25** a beer house in 1830, tied to Weller rivals Wethered's brewery in 1872.

You are now almost back at the Museum **1** and the end of the walk.



The Elephant & Castle