



Rykneld Square

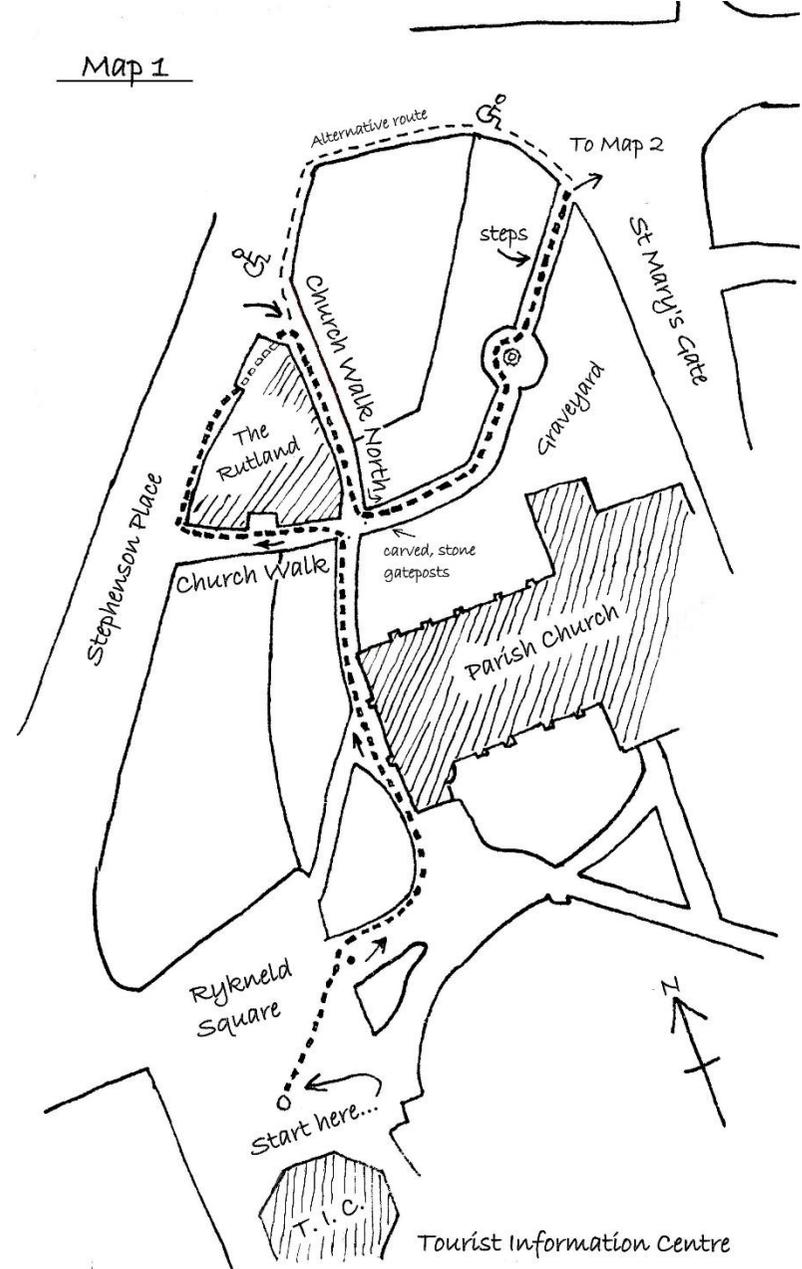
Why start here? In the first place, the area around Rykneld Square was probably part of the first settlement in the town we now know as Chesterfield. This raised ground overlooking the rivers would have been a relatively secure location in prehistory. There is a circular plaque right in the middle of the square to mark the location of a Roman Fort, built around 60CE.

In fact, the word Rykneld comes from the name of one of the lesser-known Roman roads that cross the country: Ryknild Street (sometimes called Icknield Street.) This ran from Bourton-in-the-Water, Gloucestershire to Templeborough, South Yorkshire.

Secondly, we're standing close to the unique Crooked Spire which adorns the tower of St Mary and All Saints Church. The spire is *the* image of Chesterfield.

Thirdly, Rykneld Square hosts the Tourist Information Centre – *the* go-to location for further exploration of the town.

Fourthly, there may be an event taking place in the square that is worth our attention. But, if not, starting from here allows us to begin in a calm and reflective mood before the excitement that is to come.



Map 1 - West side of the Churchyard

We set off and walk towards the church, passing between two green iron gateposts.

The construction of the present church began in 1234 and it has been enlarged and expanded since then, reaching its present form in 1842. Later on, we'll have a look for evidence of previous church structures...

And the spire, Chesterfield's iconic landmark? It's not actually attached to the tower, but sits there, relying on its weight to keep it in place. To find out more, it will be necessary to add a visit to the church to the end of the journey.

Walk round the west end of the church and gaze up at the west window. It was commissioned in 1898 by Philip Markham as a tribute to his father, William Markham, and depicts scenes from the story of Joshua.

To our left are many gravestones stacked against the surrounding wall.



By the end of the nineteenth century the graveyard was full. In 1932 the Borough Council assumed responsibility for the church yard and, mindful of the precarious state of some of the tombs and stones, arranged many of them around the edge of the grounds.

Moving on from the west end of the church we come to a crossroads in the path.



The Rutland Inn is before us. We are going to walk *clockwise* around the pub and return to this point from the opposite direction. Walk towards Stephenson Place.

The Rutland was originally a private house. In 1806 its inhabitant was Mr Bower, the church organist; however the building has been a pub since at least 1870.



Go down Church Walk and turn right on Stephenson Place – named for George Stephenson, the railway pioneer. He’s an adopted son of Chesterfield having moved here only ten years before his death in 1848.

Continue under a wrought iron supported canopy and turn right into Church Walk North.



(Wheelchair users and those who have difficulty with steps should continue along Stephenson Place and curve round to the bottom of the graveyard steps.)

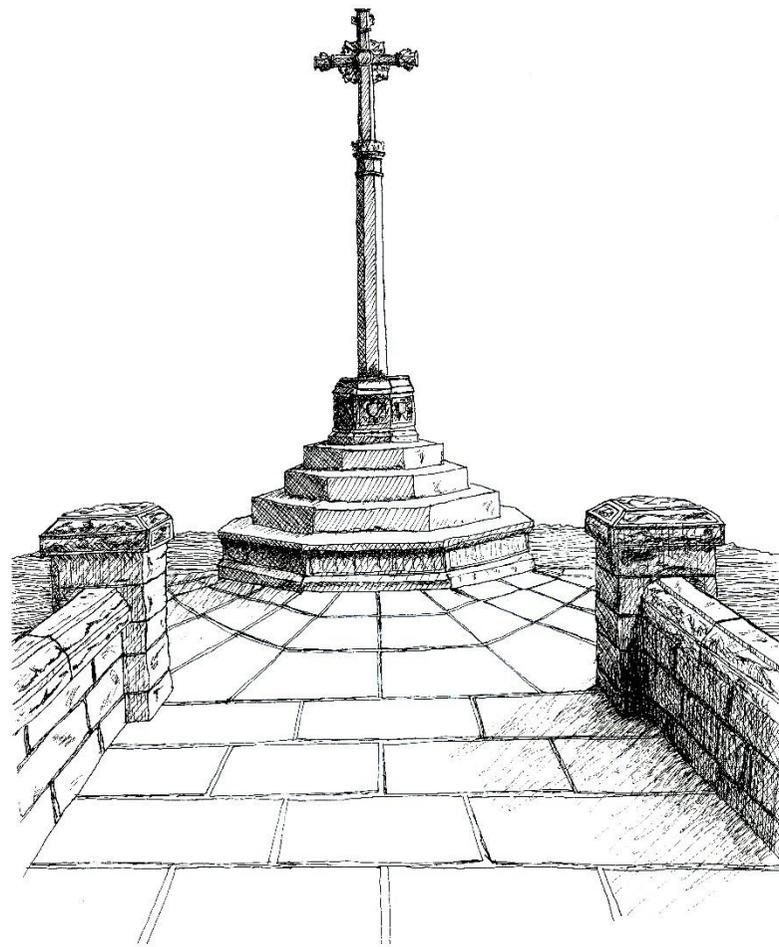
Church Walk North is a narrow-ish passage, albeit quite short. However, it gives us a feel for some of the treats to come.



Back at the crossroads, turn left and go between the carved, stone gateposts. In this part of the churchyard many gravestones are still in position.



Originally this area was the town's market place. Once the market had been moved to its present location, a graveyard was established here.



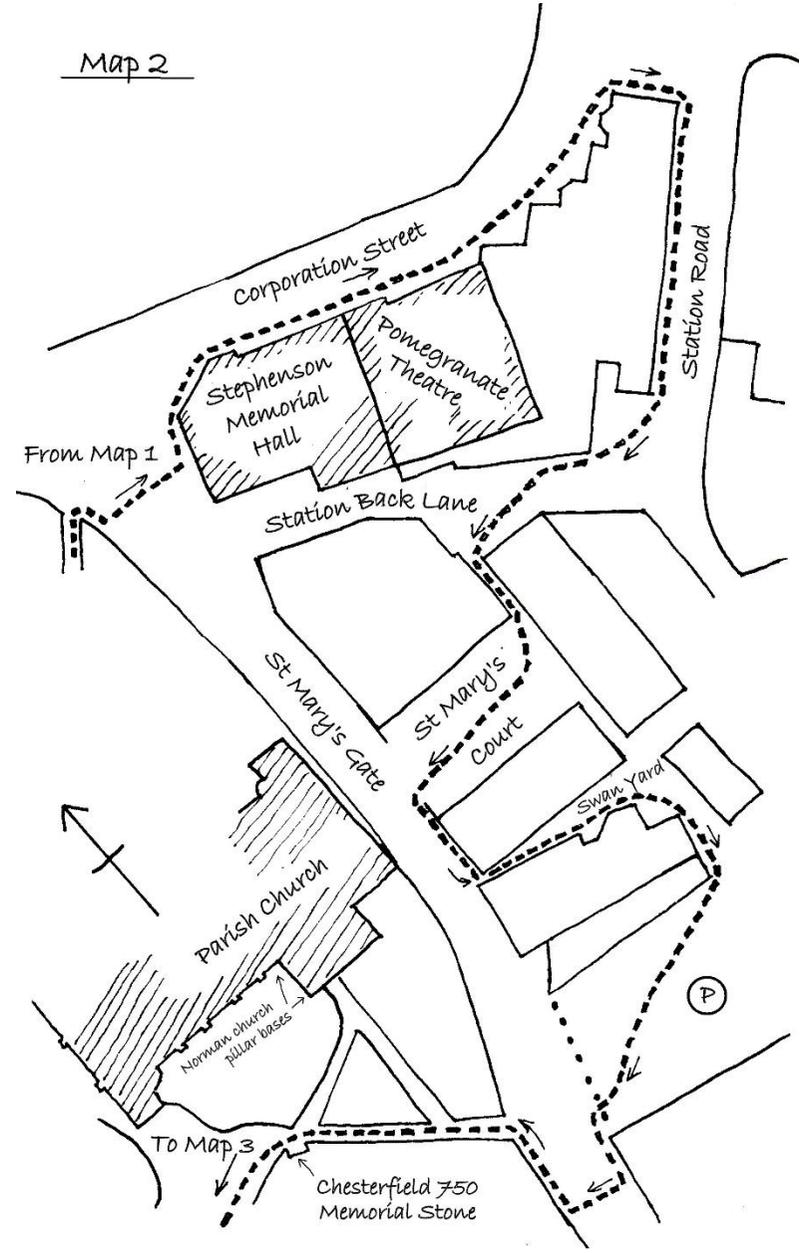
We soon come to a tall, stone memorial cross. The cross is Chesterfield's original cenotaph and was erected in 1918.

Go past the cross and down the steps to St Mary's Gate. Ahead of us is the George Stephenson Memorial Hall, home to both Chesterfield's Museum and the Pomegranate Theatre.

The Hall, funded by private donations and opened in 1879, cost £13,735. By 1889 the Trustees could no longer service their debts and the Hall was sold to Chesterfield Corporation for £4000. (M1c 1)

As we step on to St Mary's Gate, we're walking on what might be the course of the Roman Rykneld Street as it ran through the fort. 2000 years of journeying are being overlaid with our footprints.

Map 2



Map 2 - St Mary's Court & Swan Yard



Cross St Mary's Gate and walk past the Museum entrance. Turn right down Corporation Street and walk past the Pomegranate Theatre.



In 1898 what was originally a public hall was enlarged and developed as a theatre. Formerly the Corporation Theatre and then the Civic Theatre (from 1949 to 1982), the Pomegranate Theatre is the oldest civic theatre in the country. It takes its name from the pomegranates which feature on the Town's coat of arms. (M2 1) More on those pomegranates later.

As we turn right into Station Road we can take time to look east. We're gazing out over the valley of the River Rother. Down there is the A61 and Chesterfield Railway Station. The valley is a major transport route - just a little further north is the start of the Chesterfield Canal.

Go along Station Road. Turn right into Station Back Lane, cross over and keep a lookout for the next turning. It's called Saint Mary's Court, and it leads us between two tall buildings into a rather splendid courtyard. The tall buildings frame the east window of the church.

We get a new angle on the spire's twist, and we can see the Peregrine nesting platform to the right, just above the parapet of the tower.



Look to the sky. Is there a long-winged, long-tailed falcon above us?

Go out of the courtyard onto St Mary's Gate for just a few steps, turn left and then dive into Swan Yard.



This is Swan Yard.

The first archaeological evidence of fort was located during excavations in the late 1970s. In the area of Swan Yard the remains of timber buildings were found.

The building on our right was formerly the White Swan pub.

At the end of the passage, we can look east again. The settlement on the other side of the River Rother is Spital. In the middle ages there was a leper hospital situated there – away from the town – and the word “hospital” has become the modern name of Spital.

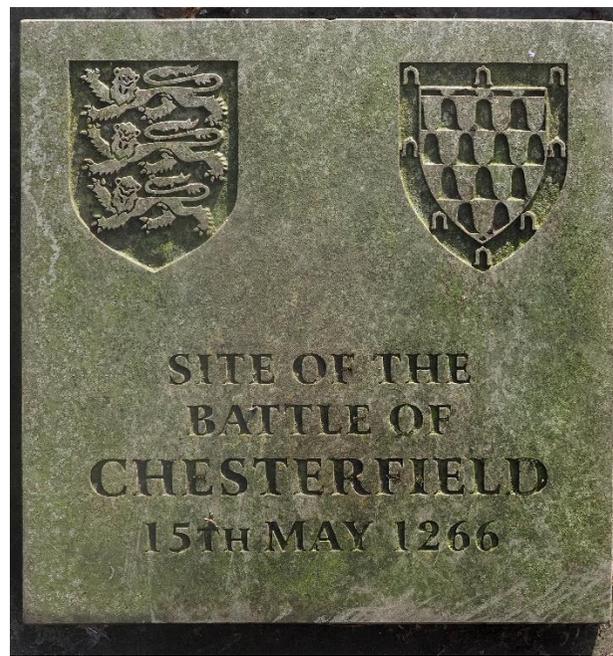
Walk round to the right and taking care as we cross the car park come out onto St Mary’s Gate again. Go slightly downhill and use the light-controlled crossing to get across this ancient, but very busy thoroughfare.

Walk back a little way and enter the churchyard again.

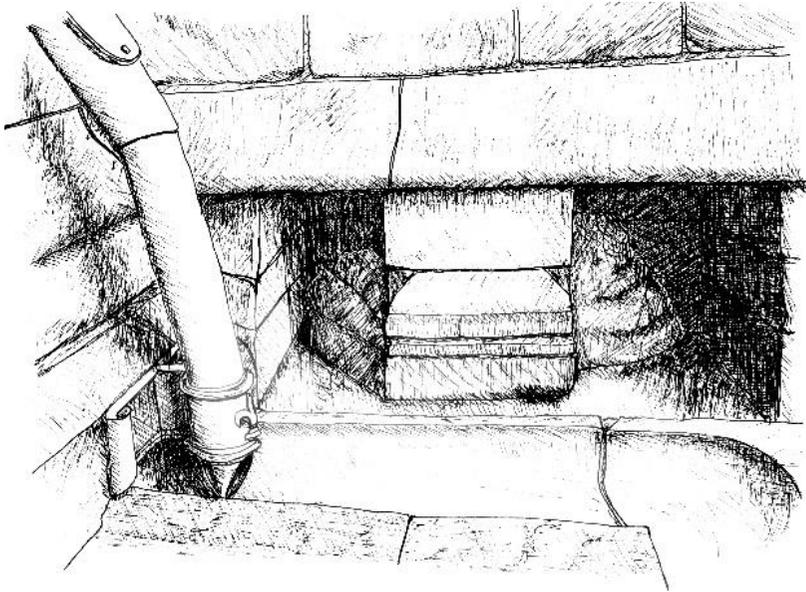
Now we can explore the churchyard. Look for an oak tree planted in 2023 to mark 70 years of Queen Elizabeth II’s reign



a plaque to mark the 750th anniversary of the Battle of Chesterfield



and, oldest of all, the feet of two pillars. These stones might be the only remaining parts of the Norman church which stood here before the present church was built.



Walk on towards Rykneld Square.

The rest of the walk is text and photograph only.

Church Way & Old Ship Lane

Walk out of the church yard towards the Tourist Information Centre and keeping it on our right-hand side, go down Church Way. Now we move from an area which has so much history about it into a much more modern part of Chesterfield.

On our left we can see a pub called The Rectory, formerly known as The Crooked Spire Pub.



Despite its current name this building was never the home for the incumbent at the Parish Church.

Head down St Mary's Gate for the last time.

York House, built around 1930, was originally occupied by the Inland Revenue.

Look across St Mary's Gate at number 42, a Grade 2 listed building from the mid eighteenth century. The blue plaque by the door records that this building was once the offices of the Scarsdale Brewery Company.

Turn right into Vicar Lane. Ahead of us is an imposing archway.



Notice a line of square silver studs in the road. If we cross them we will have entered the Vicar Lane Shopping Centre. That comes later on. For now, our route takes us left down Old Ship Lane.

Why is Old Ship Lane so named when we are *so* far from the sea? Perhaps it's because two former public houses – the Ship and the Anchor – were situated not far away.

Walking down Old Ship Lane the high brick wall on our right is Vicar Lane Shopping Centre. The Victoria School used to be here. The school opened in 1845 for 300 girls and boys and was named in honour of Queen Victoria. The school closed in 1930.

In the small car park on the left are some cycle storage lockers. Chesterfield benefits from an active campaigning group, Cycle Chesterfield, which has been successful in promoting more sustainable travel in the borough. Pop in to the Tourist Information Centre for details of how to access these lockers.

One last look to the east. Hollis Lane is a relatively modern street. At the bottom, behind some railings, is a tunnel which used to carry a railway line running north south under the east of the town to the former Central Station. The station, situated a little to the north of the Parish Church, closed in 1963.

Cross carefully over Beetwell Street and turn west. At about this point we leave the valley of the River Rother and enter the valley of the River Hipper.

Auckland's Place & Spread Eagle Yard

Walk west along Beetwell Street. Cross over the junction with Hipper Street.

This is often busy, so take care.

On our left is the Police Station, built in the 1980s.



This is the latest location of the police HQ in Chesterfield. The force was first established in 1836 and, since 1967, has been part of Derbyshire Constabulary.

Beyond the Police Station we come to Auckland's Place. This point marks the western end of Beetwell Street. Until New Beetwell Street was created in 1924 the area in front of us would have been an almost impenetrable maze of narrow alleys known as the Dog Kennels. More of them later.

Auckland's Place, named for Charles Auckland - Town Councillor in the 1870 - leads down onto Markham Road, named after Violet Markham. She was a pioneering social campaigner in the early years of the 20th century. In 1925 she was the first woman to be elected to the Borough Council and she served as a councillor for six years. (M4 1)

On the other side of Markham Road is the modern Ravenside Retail Park.



Walk west again and soon we can turn our back on the noise and rush as we walk up Spread Eagle Yard. Although there is space for car parking to begin with, the yard gets narrower and narrower. Eventually it becomes a tunnel. Here you can get a feeling for what many of the alleyways and passages of bygone Chesterfield must have been like.

We emerge onto Beetwell Street again, just outside the Spread Eagle pub. In the middle ages the land here belonged to the Guild of the Blessed Mary. The building dates from c1800. The pub was licensed in 1846 (but it was probably an inn from before that) and by 1849 the plot included nine cottages, four gardens, stables and piggeries.

Go west again, cross over the top of South Place and pause to look at the plaque giving details of the Bowling Green.



It's often claimed that the Bowling Green dates from the early medieval period, but the first historical reference to it is 1651.

A view of the Bowling Green from the Library.



Then turn back and go down South Place. Here we get a good idea of the land sloping down to the river. Originally the river would have meandered its way across the flat valley bottom. Nowadays its course is much straightened and hemmed in by walls. This makes it much more likely to burst its banks when it floods. This happened most recently in 2023 and many of the large shops on the Ravenside Retail Park were flooded - as well as houses further upstream.

Follow the Bowling Green wall on the right and turn right off South Place into a small car park area.

The Coach Station

After leaving South Place, keep the buildings on the left as we walk west. Beyond the second building, turn left. This is our last view of Markham Road and the Ravenside Retail Park.

Follow the path up to the Coach Station, carefully crossing Beckingham Way.

The Coach Station itself was opened in 2005.



Walk up round the east end of the Coach Station and onto New Beetwell Street again.

Now we begin a fairly straight stretch of the route, apart from crossing from the south to the north side of New Beetwell Street.

Walk along with the multi-storey carpark on your left



and spot the Town's coat of arms fixed on the high-level walkway that links the car park with the Pavements Shopping Centre.



Pick out the cockerel, the magpie, the pomegranates, the ram and the wall. And the motto "Aspire." (See later in the book for a more detailed explanation of this heraldry.)

Use the crossing under the high-level walk way to cross New Beetwell Street. Don't go into the Shopping Centre but continue west.

New Beetwell Street

Look to your left as we begin this map and see the rather stately bulk of the former Register Office – built in the 1940s.



In 2018, Registration moved to the Town Hall.

Halfway up Park Road we can look over our shoulders and see the trees of Queen's Park. At the top of Park Road, we get a tantalizing glimpse of New Square and the Market Place – treats still to come.



We also get our first view of the Market Hall.

We turn left into West Bars. In this case "Bar" is an old word meaning gateway, and this point would have been the western gateway to the market.

The Portland Hotel (1899) is one of the largest pubs in the Town Centre.



Originally it was the “railway hotel” for the Chesterfield Market Place railway station. The station was opened in 1897 and it served the Lincoln to Chesterfield line, which ran east from here along the route of New Beetwell Street where we have just been walking. The line closed in 1951 and the station, which became the premises of Charles Credland Ltd, a paint and wallpaper company, was demolished in 1973. (M61)

Finally on this stretch we come to Future Walk building. This is situated on the site of Chetwynd House (1963 - named for George Chetwynd, former Accountant General of the Post Office and inventor of the Postal Order.) In 1963 around 600 Post Office employees were relocated to Chesterfield. The new building’s name refers to “the walk” that each postie does to deliver letters. The railings alongside of it (designed by local artist, Mark Veevers) show a pattern of envelopes.



If there's time, pop across the road, go through the arch under the building to see "Rosewall" - Chesterfield's Grade-II listed Barbara Hepworth sculpture...



Shentall Gardens and the Town Hall

Just as we turn away from the Future Walk building and cross West Bars we can enjoy the ornate splendour of the Sun Inn.



Originally owned by the Brampton Brewing Company, the Sun Inn was built in 1914 and is striking for its stone and white tile exterior.

Slightly further on, and set back from the road, is another noteworthy building.



23 West Bars is a handsome, Georgian house, built in about 1830. This grade-II listed building had been a solicitor's office for its entire 190 year history but is now being redeveloped.

Next we walk up through Shentall Gardens, named after Sir Ernest Shentall, Mayor of Chesterfield from 1913 - 1919. We're climbing again up the valley side. At the top we'll come to the present-day War Memorial and the Town Hall. There's an alternative route to avoid the steps.

Looking back, we can gaze over the gardens to the green copper-roofed former Court House – built in 1965 and now divided into residential apartments.



We can lift our gaze a little higher and look to the horizon for a view of the Peak District hills.

Across Rose Hill, the Town Hall was built between 1935 and 1938 and cost £142,500.



Inside beautifully crafted walnut panelling that was designed especially for the building includes desks, chairs and cupboards. An Egyptian theme runs through the building and the entrance hall just inside from the main steps, which we can enter if the building is open, has the feel of an Egyptian palace or temple.

The Town Hall is the centre of local government in Chesterfield. The town became a Borough in 1835 and the newly formed Council first met in the old Guild Hall on South Street. In 1920 Emma Louise Bond was the first woman to stand for election to the Borough Council.



Turn east and walk along Rose Hill. As we do we can look north across the car parks and see the commanding bulk of the three-storey Masonic Hall.



It was built in 1876 at a cost of £2,730 3s 6d. The company which built the hall was run by Amy Wright. She lived at 9 Beetwell Street, just next to the Spread Eagle pub. (M7c 1)

We continue east. There's a semicircle of green to our right.

In the distance the Spire beckons us, as do several of Chesterfield's "black and white" buildings, but we are going to turn downhill again on a curving path.

We can go either side of the grass and the sloping path leads us downhill again.

New Square & Soresby Street

Continue down the hill past Chesterfield's former Revenue Hall. Then it became the Borough Council's Customer Service Centre. Now this service is housed within the Town Hall.



The Revenue Hall was built in 1989 on the site of a former Civil Defence Centre.

We turn left in front of 87 New Square.



This imposing, Grade 2-listed building was probably built after a ninety-nine year lease was granted on the plot in 1765. The blue plaque replaced the inaccurate original in 2024.

If there's time, explore New Square (known for a time in the eighteenth century as Swine Green.) In the late twelfth century the town's market was moved from north of the Parish Church to the area now covered by the Shambles, the Market Place, the Market Hall and New Square. This area was gradually enclosed by buildings on the north and south side.

Today New Square is the venue for rallies, festivals, speciality markets and the town's Christmas tree.

89 New Square was built in the mid-nineteenth century and by 1880 was recorded as a Bank on the Ordnance Survey map of the time. (M8 2)

The Market Pub building probably dates from 1813. (M8 3) When it became a pub it was originally called The Post Office Vaults.

Step east a little way - the building on the corner opposite, 1 High Street, was for many years the town's Post Office.



Here's a challenge: walk to the front of 1 High Street and see if you can tell which part is the original eighteenth century construction and which part is the 1924 addition. A pretty good match!

We make our way out of New Square by turning up Soresby Street. This road was laid out in 1813.

The name comes from the Soresby family who can trace their roots in Chesterfield back to 1700. A house called Soresby House stood on the land to the west.

At the junction with Rose Hill we can see what was until very recently Rose Hill United Reform Church. Built in 1822 this was originally an Independent Chapel.



On the land behind the Chapel used to stand the first school in Chesterfield associated with the Church of England. It was known as the National School - opening in 1815 and closing in 1930.

We turn right onto Rose Hill and then continue straight ahead, past the junction with Glumangate, onto Knifesmithgate

Here we get our first view of some of Chesterfield's many Tudor Revival buildings.

The early twentieth century saw a great deal of development in Chesterfield's town centre and much of the original medieval street pattern was changed. Many of the new buildings from that time were built in the Tudor Revival style which was associated with the Arts and Craft Movement.

There is a great website if you want to find out more about the [town's "black and white" buildings](#)

Several street names in Chesterfield end with the word "gate." The word comes from the old Norse word *gata* and means "street."

Elder Way

5 Knifesmithgate has an unusual first floor frontage. Three arched windows and an interestingly curved roofline. This building formerly housed T P Wood's bottling plant. T P wood was a Chesterfield business man who served three times as Mayor. His business pioneered the bottling of spring water. (M9 1)

The Golden Fleece pub is unusual - it has two different entrances on two different streets - this one on Knifesmithgate and the other on the High Street.

It's worth us making a short diversion to look at the black and white building – formerly The Victoria Centre - on the corner of Knifemithgate and Elder Way. This is an Arts and Crafts building of the highest quality.

The Victoria Centre was completed in 1930. (M9 2) It hosted a cinema, ballroom, billiard hall, restaurant, shops and a branch of Barclays bank. A number of famous bands played here including Bill Haley and The Comets and The Who.

Look for the sequence of “grotesques” which adorn the pillars along the frontage of the building. Some of them still retain traces of the gold leaf with which they were originally covered.

Here's a selection:



Elder Yard was changed from a narrow alley way to a full sized road in the 1920s and renamed Elder Way.

In the mid seventeenth century Chesterfield, like many other towns and cities, included people unhappy with the established church. These people were called Dissenters and included (amongst others) Ranters, Diggers, Baptists and Quakers.



Elder Yard Chapel was built in 1693 and served the Dissenting congregation which had been present in the town for some years. (In 1662 the established parish priest, John Billingsley, who had written against Quakers, was ejected from the vicarage.)

The Chapel eventually, by 1818, became a Unitarian Chapel. The remodelled gardens were opened in 1934 by Violet Markam.



Until a few years ago, a Co-op Department store ran the whole length of the west side of Elder Way. A glass bridge spanned the road at first floor level from the Department Store to a Co-op supermarket on the east side.



It's possible to identify the new brick work on either side which indicate where the bridge was.

As we turn right at the end of Elder Way, we can look at the multi-storey carpark and reflect that another of Chesterfield's dissenting religious buildings, a Quaker Meeting House – dated 1697, once stood there. It was demolished in 1974.

In the 17th century, the Quakers and other dissenters were harshly persecuted by the authorities for refusing to obey the laws of the Church of England. Susanna Frith, a member of the Quakers in Chesterfield who spoke out against these travails, was fined several times herself for not paying tithes and excommunicated in 1668. (M9c 1)

Just before we leave Saltergate, there is a Georgian building with a ground floor archway.



A school for the Unitarians was established here in 1828. The upper floor and arch were built in 1846. (M9c 2)

Coming up...Shepley's Yard.

The “Top of Town”

Before we dive into Shepley’s Yard (George Shepley had a malthouse here in 1849) we can admire the new building on the large roundabout/carpark. The carpark is known locally as “the Donut” and was established in the 1970s. The new building hosts a variety of office spaces and is just one part of the proposed Northern Gateway development.



Turn into Shepley’s Yard.

Heading deeper into the yard we find ourselves in a quiet backwater. We're round the back of the Unitarian Chapel.



We go into the longest enclosed section on the walk and emerge on Knifesmithgate again at the front of the Victoria Centre. This covered section was known locally as the “Vic veranda.”



The Victoria centre is now closed, but what a asset it would be for the town to have this building open and housing a variety of community projects.

Head east under the “Vic veranda” until we can turn left into Broad Pavement.

Originally a medieval lane, this route was known as Narrow Lane until at least 1849. (M10 1) It’s still pretty narrow, but cars are allowed to drive along it, so take care.

At the end of Broad Pavement, we turn right and make our way round into Cavendish Street. To the east there’s a view of more black and white buildings, including the Winding Wheel Exhibition, Entertainment and Conference Centre. This stunning, Grade II listed, black and white building originally opened in 1923 as the Picture House Cinema. It became the Odeon in 1938. Chesterfield Borough Council took ownership in 1987.

The Winding Wheel Centre is named for the 600 year-old builders’ wheel that was discovered at the top of the church tower in 1947. The wheel, now on display in the Museum, featured prominently in a recently composed Medieval Murder Mystery Musical about Chesterfield called “The Crooked Spire.”

There’s also a view of the Spire here from an angle we haven’t seen before.

There has been a Blue Bell Inn on this site since 1849 - the current building dates from the 1930s.

We turn into Cavendish Street which was laid out in the 1830s.

Much of the west side of the street was once a cinema. The Regal opened in 1936, changed to the ABC for many decades before returning to its former name. It closed in the 1980s.

Perhaps the most distinguished looking building is the former Deacon’s Bank.



We cross Knifesmithgate for the last time, skirt the end of Burlington Street, look back and enjoy the asymmetry of Deacon’s Bank and walk down the edge of Ryknild Square (we’ll be back...)

Vicar Lane

We're very close to our starting/finishing point, but there's a way to go yet...

We go into Church Lane. Ahead of us, just breaking the skyline is the tower on top of the Market Hall. Almost immediately we turn left into Steeplegate. The name of this new street (created in the year 2000) was chosen from suggestions made by members of the public. However, it's a bit strange – no one in Chesterfield refers to “the crooked *steeple*.”

Notice the metal studs in the road? This means we're now in the Vicar Lane Shopping Centre which was opened in 2000.

This area of Chesterfield town centre is one of its most recently developed. You can see looking around that there are no historical buildings. The route of Vicar Lane goes back into the medieval period and was probably established at the same time as the Market Place. Like many streets from the original medieval town layout Vicar Lane became more and more built up.

Vicar Lane was widened in the early part of the 20th century. (The junction of the western end of the road with South Street was only 11 feet wide and had gained the nickname “death corner!”)

Eventually the Vicar Lane Shopping Centre development began in 2000. Steeplegate, a new street, was established and modern buildings were erected along the length of Vicar Lane.

We can have a look around the “amphitheatre.”



Can you spot the deliberately lowered roof line to the north which allows a view of the spire? Notice the big screen above us. Scattered below the big screen are a few tokens cemented into the floor. David Mach was the artist who invited local people to submit items which could be placed here. Many of them are now hidden by the circle of "grass."



David Mach also created the strange creatures on the wall of the archway to the east.



Walk west and we can see how the developers included a variety of first-floor frontages.

We cross the metal studs to Leave Vicar Lane.

The Yards & Low Pavement

We turn south onto South Street and cross over to find an archway leading into Falcon Yard.



During the twentieth century this area of Chesterfield was completely redeveloped, replacing many narrow alleys which used to lead from the Market area down to the River Hipper.

These notorious slums, known as the Dog Kennels, (M12 1) were home to many of Chesterfield's poorest industrial workers. Some of the trades carried out here were stocking knitting, hat and glove making and the weaving of gingham.

In amongst the slums were some notable buildings. The Theatre Royal was built in the late eighteenth century and closed in the late 1870s. In 1881 the building housed the generators for the town's street lighting (the first use of electric street lighting in the UK.)

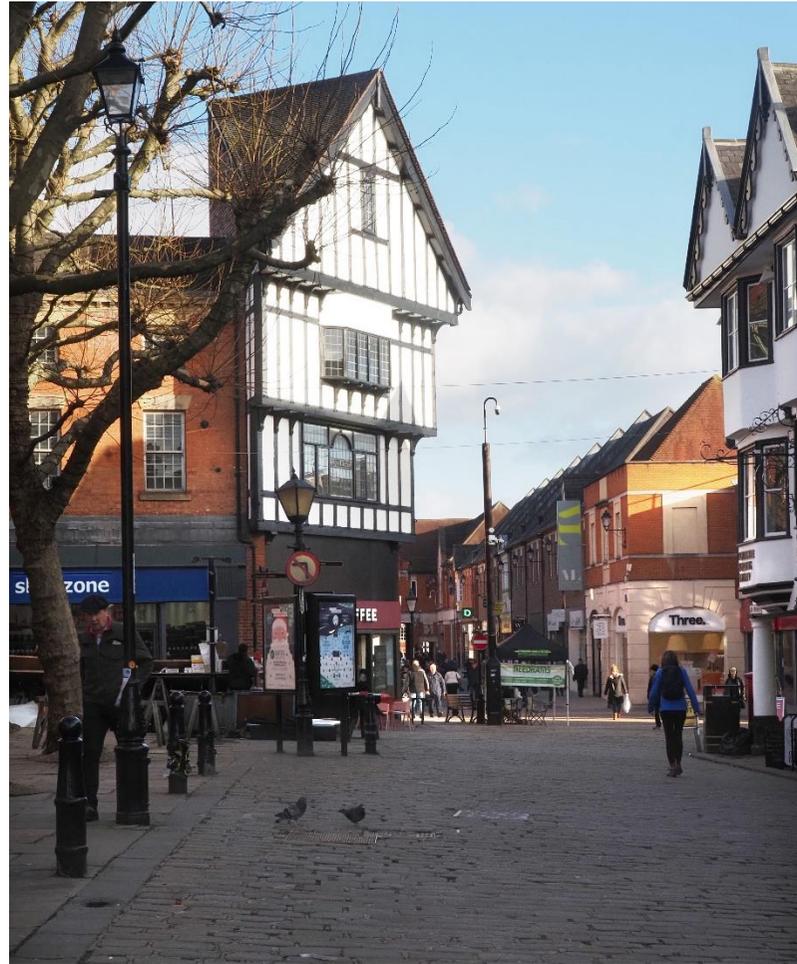
In 1847 a Municipal Hall was built on the site of the former Guild Hall. It continued in use, originally as the town's Council chamber and latterly as a court house, until its demolition in 1965.

A little bit further away, below the Bowling Green, stood the House of Correction which was in continuous use from 1614 to 1912.

And slightly further down the hill was the location of the town's first Workhouse. By the late 18th century there were about 28 residents who spun wool and lint, were sent out to work locally and slept eight or more to a room. In the 1830s land was purchased for a new Workhouse housing 300 "inmates" north of the town centre.

[The Dog Kennels website](#) is a great resource for this part of town.

As we weave our way up Falcon Yard, left along Central Pavement...



and back down Theatre Yard...



we're getting in some good practice for the Shambles that are still to come.



There's a short alternative route to avoid the steps in Theatre Yard.

We emerge into a modern courtyard in front of the Library. We could go in...

...but our way lies north. We skirt the edge of the Pavements Shopping Centre which was opened in 1980. Walk to the edge of the Market Place and turn left onto Low Pavement.

This stretch gives us, at last, our first good view of the Market Place and the Market Hall.



55 Low Pavement was the site of the Kit Bag Club. Opened in 1939 by Greta Walker and Mary Woodhead the club provided books, magazines and other entertainments to soldiers stationed in Chesterfield. (M12 2)

In the early 1970s a plan was devised to redevelop the centre of Chesterfield. It would have involved demolishing the Market Hall and building over a large part of the centre of the town.

Read on to discover what happened to this plan...

The Market Place and The Shambles

Continue along Low Pavement, past the Crown and Cushion Pub until we come to a second black and white building on our left. This is The Peacock.



The nature of this building, one of the oldest in Chesterfield, was only revealed in 1974. On 2nd February of that year, Phyllis Hanson, a noted artist of the town, discovered a fire in the Peacock Inn. The fire, once extinguished, exposed the timbered construction of the building which was subsequently dated to c.1500 - making it one of the oldest of the town's surviving buildings.

This discovery became the climax of the Save the Market Campaign. The Borough Council's plans to radically reshape the whole market area by building over it were abandoned.

The Shambles, Pavements and Market Hall were retained and refurbished. This sympathetic development has been recognised as a significant example of how an historic town centre can be maintained.

If the Peacock is open, we can pop in to the secluded courtyard behind it, and see if we can go upstairs, too, for a look at the timbered chamber on the first floor. It's likely that this building would have been a medieval guildhall.

Now, after several tantalising glimpses, we are free to explore the Market Place. The 1857 Market Hall contains a fine Assembly Room on the first floor which can be reached by the stairs up from the entrance on the north side. It's quite an experience to explore this building because the slope of the ground means that there are several different levels inside and it's easy to get lost.

Depending on which day of the week it is there may be a variety of stalls to visit in both New Square and the Market Place.



The Town Pump is situated just west of the Market Hall.



Look up at the first-floor frontage of the Nat West bank building for a display of engraved glass depicting various localities in Derbyshire. We could go inside, up the escalator and, on the first floor, read an interesting interpretive panel giving the history of the building.

When at last we tire of exploring, we make our way to the eastern edge of the Market Place and dive into The Shambles.

The route we follow means that we see every passageway but without ever retracing our steps or crossing our path. We'll dip in and out until finally emerging at the southern end of Palmersgate.

Off we go...

Chesterfield's legendary timbered Royal Oak has only been a pub from about 1775 and has nothing to do with the Knights Templar of the 12th and 13th centuries. Probably dating from the 16th century, it was later divided into two butchers' shops. In the 19th century the building was added to the Royal Oak public house to the south. (M13cc 1)

At last, turning left we walk a short way before turning left again up Packers Row.

This climb takes us up to Burlington Street and we are nearly home.

Burlington Street to Finish

The final straight – and straight it is. All that remains is for us to stroll down Burlington Street (laid out in the 1830s), carefully cross Church Way and re-enter Rykneld Square for the third and final time.

On the way, stop and look up at the first-floor frontage of the Burton building. This was Montague Maurice Burton's first store. Burtons became one the UK's major tailoring companies and provided a "jacket, trousers, waistcoat, shirt and underwear" (M14 1) for soldiers when they were demobbed after the Second World War. It's possible this is the origin of the phrase "the full monty."



In Rykneld Square we are back where we started 2000 years ago.

I opened with a brief extract from Daniel Defoe's 1726 description of Chesterfield. Now we've finished our walk, it's worth reading his description in more detail:

"Chesterfield is a handsome populous town, well-built and well inhabited... which is a rich fruitful part of the country, though surrounded with barren moors and mountains. Here is, however, nothing remarkable in this town but a free school and a very good market, well stored with provisions." (M14 2)

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