

9 The Mill at the South Gate
The old mill faces you at the end of Mill Lane. There was a water-mill on this site from the 12th-20th century and this medieval 'mill at the south gate' belonged to the castle. As

As you follow the path along the ramparts note the pretty row of brick cottages known as Beansheat Terrace. Behind them you will glimpse the old Wilder's iron foundry (built 1869) with fine iron-cast windows. Beneath the foundry and new houses lies the lost parish church and graveyard of St Rumbold, named after a Merian saint and one of Wallingford's earliest churches. You pass the earlier high level door for off-loading goods from carts and the iron protectors at ground level to avoid cart-wheel damage.

8 Beansheat Terrace & Wilder's Iron Foundry

Wallingford's 9th century ramparts and outer ditch enclosed the town on three sides, with the river on the east - about two miles of defences, probably capped by a wooden palisade. Over time the original water-filled ditch has been largely filled in and the banks have been eroded to about two-thirds of their original height. Note how you are standing at roof-top level with the outer ditch below you. A 5th-7th century pagan Saxon cemetery was found outside the ramparts near here, so there must have been a settlement here before the building of the burh.

7 The Saxon Ramparts

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6 The Coach and Horses
The brickwork on this pub is characteristic of many Wallingford buildings. The weather-vane of a man with a plough, appropriate for makers of agricultural machinery!
vitrified headers - the short bricks as distinct from the long ones which are called stretchers - have been fired longer to give them their blue colour. (For point 7, walk across the Kinecroft to the steps/ramp and follow the path left along the top of the ramparts)



To reach point 12, follow the little passage through the houses and cross the town ditch. Note the iron railings, cast by Wilder's and bearing their name on the plinth after Saxon times.

11 Old Malt-house
Mating was an important local industry from medieval to modern times. This 17th century malt-house with its original wooden windows was one of at least seventeen in the town. It is built of clunch (hard chalk) on a flint and brick plinth. It is part of the outbuildings of a fine 16th century house, which lies hidden behind a laurel hedge, fronting the river. This area was once Lower Wharf from which barge traffic plied the Thames, transporting goods to and from London. It may have been a wharf since early

10 St John's Green
Looking back to the old foundry, you'll see a fine weather-vane of a man with a plough, appropriate for makers of agricultural machinery!

St John's Green, and the houses round it are on the site of the medieval Hospital of St John, in existence by the 13th century and endowed by Simon de Montfort and many townspeople. It also ran a leper hospital in Crowmarsh. The tree on the Green has replaced an oak planted in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

Opposite are the Almshouses, built in 1681 and still in use, endowed by local ironmonger William Angier and his sister Mary. The windows were altered in the 19th century. Next door was an early 20th century garage, built by Wilder's to house their new motor car and cycle department. As you walk down Lower Wharf to point 11 note that the buildings to your left are higher up, lying on top of the Saxon rampart. The old ditch, with running water, divides you from them.



you walk to point 10 (on the green) note the porcellins insignia of the borough carved on the window brackets of the old foundry - the town owned the building. You will also cross the Saxon ditch.

of Hart Street is a splendid timber-framed building, formerly the King's Arms. To the right is a row of restored timber-framed shops. Further along on your left, look up to spot the former Primitive Methodist chapel, built in 1889. Opposite is Pettit's shop (1856) and an arcade, the entrance of which used to be the way into the Victorian Police Station (1857). Its plastered ceiling still survives.



18 St Leonard's Square

St Mary's Street leads into St Leonard's Square which marks the far end of the medieval Market Place. Today the Wesleyan

Methodist Chapel and former Free Library (1871) hold sway. Return to the Market Place via St Martin's Street, which takes its name from a lost 10th century church that once stood at its junction with the High Street, where now Waitrose dominates. The ancient churchyard lies beneath the store and some 200 medieval and Saxon skeletons were found during its construction.

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Wallingford Museum

Opening Hours
Tuesdays-Fridays & Holiday Mondays: 1400-1700
Saturdays: 10.30-1700
Sundays (June-Aug only): 1400-1700
(CLOSED December-February)

Admission Charges (admission includes free audio tour)
Adults unlimited admission for whole season **£4.00**
Children accompanied by an adult **FREE**
(sorry - no unaccompanied children)
Parties (adult and schools) are welcome by prior appointment (Tel: 01491 651127)

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The bridge was predated by a ford but is first recorded in 1141. The central arches were rebuilt after the great flood of 1809 and it was widened by seven feet. The medieval

15 The Bridge

The medieval church of St Peter was destroyed during the Civil War and rebuilt in 1769, with the addition of a spire designed by Robert Taylor in 1777. Opposite is Wallingford Baptist Church, founded in 1794 by Robert Lovegrove, a local solicitor who built the chapel in the garden of his home, Calleva House, which fronts the High Street. Ahead, on the other side of the entrance to the Castle grounds. For point 15, walk on to the bridge to the recess about half way across.



14 St Peter's Church

Opposite the entrance to Castle Priory, against the wall, is an iron vent pipe, one of several survivors from the hydro-pneumatic sewerage system installed in 1891. Note the extraordinary mix of fabrics that make up the long wall round Castle Priory as you walk on to point 14.

As you walk down Thames Street, notice on your right the plaque to Victorian artist George Dunlop Leslie RA who lived in Riverside. Another important family of artists, the Haylars, lived close by in Castle Priory (behind the imposing gates ahead) in the house which had once been home to Judge William Blackstone. Under the car-park and the house on the corner of New Road, lay St Michael's church and churchyard - 35 burials and a bell-pit were excavated in 1974. In the late 19th century the car-park was a cattle-market. The present Rowing Club was a malt-house, with a distinctive vent on the roof.

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12 St Leonard's Church

Saxon-work in the south wall of the chancel of St Leonard's church.

arches are visible under the bridge (access down steps). It is 250m [800ft] long with 19 arches. Two Town Councillors are still annually appointed as *Bridgemen*. In the past they oversaw the *Bridge Estate*, properties in the town, the rents from which helped to pay maintenance costs. A 1571 charter allowed tolls on transport passing over and under the bridge. The tollhouse, where you are standing, was demolished in the 1930s.

The castle site, with its tree-covered Norman motte, lies behind the town wharf and Castle Mansions (1999). Up river is *Queen's Arbour*, meadows which were once part of the outer castle defences.


As you return to the High Street, note the 19th century iron lamp-posts on the bridge, cast by Wilder's, with new lanterns added in 1981.

16 The High Street


Just beyond the junction with Thames Street, note on your left Calleva House (c1760) with its fine brickwork. Further along on the same side are Nos 17, 18 and 19. These began as a row of 14th century houses, each with a semi-basement and a raised ground floor shop. The vaulted stone basement of No 18 survives. They were rebuilt as a single timber-framed jettied house (lived in by Mayor Will Loader in 1647 - see point 2) subsequently divided again into three. On the north side of the High Street is *The George*, Wallingford's oldest inn, with records from 1517 when it was the *George and Dragon*. Note the fine jettied timber-work and typical courtyard. The Lamb Arcade on the corner of High Street has a Georgian façade hiding the Tudor timber-framed structure of the former *King's Hedd* (1548) - visible outside from Castle Street. *Cross the High Street to reach the pedestrian precinct of St Mary's Street.*

17 St Mary's Street

The lost church of *St Mary of the Stalles* (or *the Less*), stood here, part of the medieval market area. Several good Victorian shop-fronts survive in this street, and also a Tudor gabled house that became the 17th century *White Hart Inn*. Note the moulded pendants at the base of the gables and the Tudor roses in the spandrels. A 16th century doorway has a carved Tudor rose in one spandrel and a blank shield in the other. As you emerge back into the Market Place, the Catholic Church is set back on your left. It was built in 1799 as an Independent Chapel. Continue down St Mary's Street, passing the church. On the corner



A Walk around Wallingford's History



INTRODUCTION TO WALLINGFORD'S HISTORY



FOR centuries people believed that Wallingford was a Roman town, partly because of the rectangular shape of the old town defences and the grid-like pattern of the streets. In fact, Wallingford is a Saxon fortified town (*burh*) - the best surviving example in England. Its earthenwork ramparts and ditch were built in the late 9th century by order of King Alfred as part of a defensive network against Danish attack. Wallingford was one of the two largest *burhs*, equal in size to Winchester, Alfred's administrative capital. By the 11th century it was the leading town of Berkshire.

After the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror and his army crossed the Thames here

before marching on London. He ordered a castle to be built at Wallingford which became the most prominent in central southern England and gave Wallingford a continuing royal importance. It was Empress Matilda's stronghold in the 12th century during the civil war with King Stephen. The town's charter was granted by Matilda's son, Henry II in 1155 in recognition of the town's support during the war. This gave it many rights and liberties, exceeding even those of London. Wallingford is one of only four towns mentioned in *Magna Carta* in 1215. Among the castle's many royal inhabitants were: King John; Richard Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III; Edward the Black Prince and his wife

Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent; Henry V's widow, Catherine of Valois, her young son Henry VI and his guardian Owen Tudor, grandfather of Henry VII. During the 17th century Civil War, Wallingford Castle was a major Royalist stronghold, and almost the last in the country to fall. It withstood a twelve week siege in 1646 before obeying royal orders to surrender to Parliament.

Fearing that the castle might one day be retaken and again used against them, Cromwell's Council of State ordered its demolition in 1652, so what remains today are the still impressive earthworks on which the walls once stood.

Begin your Walk in the Market Place

1 The Market Place

The timber-framed, stucco covered **Town Hall**, built in 1670, was designed to look like costlier stone. The earlier medieval Guild Hall stood south of the church. The open area beneath the Town Hall was once used for market stalls. The Borough courts and Quarter Sessions were held in the chamber above. The 18th century Judge, Sir William Blackstone, author of *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, worked here as the town's Recorder (legal advisor). His books were widely used by the makers of the American Constitution and legal system. A blue plaque on the west wall commemorates him. Above the steps (added in 1933) is the shield of the Borough. The portcullis motif has been the Borough insignia for over 300 years and appears on the town regalia. Notice how the shape of the fine Venetian triple window on the end of the Town Hall has been mirrored in other buildings around the Market Place, which has been the heart of the town since Saxon times. The **war memorial** was erected in 1921.



The **drinking fountain** was donated in 1885 by Alderman Hawkins who owned *Field and Hawkins*, a prominent drapers shop on the north side of the Market Place

until 1980. The business began in 1808 in the most easterly shop as *Fields*. New plate glass windows were fitted to the two eastern buildings in the 1890s. The shop on the west has been rebuilt after road widening.

The **Corn Exchange** was built in 1856, its original purpose denoted by the carved decoration over the doorway. Its roof is supported by magnificent iron beams cast by Wilders, the local iron-founders. It can be viewed from inside in the fine theatre, which featured in the TV series *Midsomer Murders*.

The **Old Post Office** was built in 1936 on the site of the *Mermaid Inn*. Over the door is a rare monogram of Edward VIII, who abdicated in 1936 so was never crowned.

2 The Church of St Mary-le-More

The present, largely Victorian, church stands on the site of a smaller medieval church. The tower was built in 1653, partly re-using stones from Wallingford Castle, demolished a year earlier. On a stone about 2m up on the southwest buttress of the tower is the inscription *Will Loader 1653. Loader was the royalist Mayor in 1647 until 'butt out of the maioralitie of this Burrough by virtue of an Ordinance of Parliament'. He returned to office in 1662 after the Restoration of Charles II.*

3 Church Lane

On the corner of the lane was the *Eight Bells* pub - note the surviving hanging bracket once used for the pub sign. This was another of the 50 or so Wallingford pubs operating in Victorian times to serve a population of a little over 2,000. The lane follows the line of a Saxon street, linking the Market Place to the Kinicroft and the original Saxon ramparts.

At the junction with Goldsmith's Lane you can see to the right the old buildings of the Wells family's Wallingford Brewery, taken over by Ushers in 1928. The brewery served a wide local area. The Elementary School (opposite) was in use from 1861-1968 and is now the

Wallingford Community Centre.

Wallingford's Royal Mint may have operated in Goldsmiths' Lane. Moneyers (usually silversmiths or goldsmiths) were licensed by the king to produce Wallingford coins from the 10th-13th centuries.

4 The Kinicroft

This open space is enclosed on two sides by the town's 9th century Saxon ramparts. For more than five centuries the Kinicroft was open grazing for cattle belonging to the burgesses (as its present name suggests) but archaeology has revealed an extension to the line of Church Lane into the Kinicroft, with early medieval houses alongside it. The town shrank when it fell on hard times around the end of the 13th century, reviving only in the late 17th-18th century as the vast growth of London opened up new trading opportunities by river.

5

Flint House, home of Wallingford Museum

The flint-work hides a fine 15th century oak-framed hall house. An upper floor has been inserted in the central open hall; earlier gable ends can be traced in the stonework and timber framing is visible inside. *Stone Hall*, as it was called in 1548, stands on land that once belonged to the Priory of Holy Trinity, a cell of St Alban's Abbey. Holy Trinity was one of Wallingford's 11 medieval parish churches, most now lost. The Priory was dissolved in 1525 by Cardinal Wolsey who used the money towards building his New College in Oxford (Christ Church). Today the building houses Wallingford Museum, where you can learn much more about the town's rich history.

The town's west gateway once stood where the High Street cuts the Saxon ramparts. *Wallingford House*, opposite Flint House, was the grand home of Edward Wells the brewer.

