

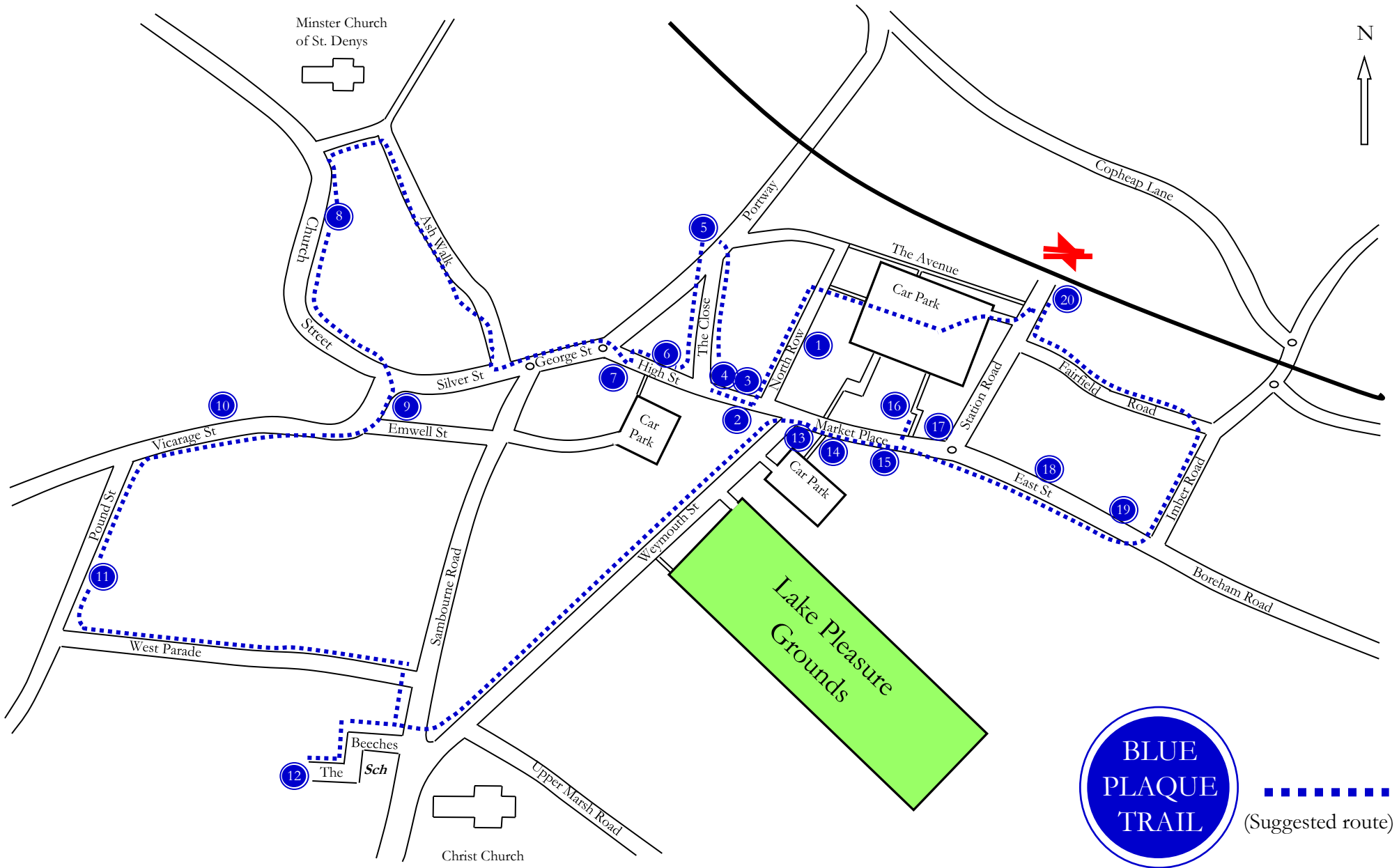


Warminster is a market town nestling within the chalk downland of Southwest Wiltshire, halfway between Salisbury and Bath. Surrounded by three Iron Age (c. 750BC) hill-forts, the town centre retains nearly all its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in a streetscape that has not changed substantially since the 1880s, despite considerable growth over the intervening period.

The Blue Plaque Trail may be completed in either direction, in full or in part. The full walk takes approximately two hours to complete at a gentle pace over firm and reasonably level ground. The numbers on the map overleaf highlight the location of plaques, and brief details of the buildings are included here. Not all buildings are open to the public. Although the trail seeks to highlight some of the more important buildings and features, the true character of the Town can best be found by enjoying the diverse architecture and many features that will be seen along the way.

- 1 **THE OLD MEETING** Presbyterian Chapel opened in 1704. Home of the Sunday School 1785 - 1865. British School for Girls 1872 and for Infants 1923 - 1931.
- 2 **CHAPEL OF ST LAWRENCE** Founded early C13th, seized by the Crown in 1549 and purchased by the townspeople in 1575. Administered by 12 Feoffees and maintained as an inter-denominational chapel known as a peculiar.
- 3 **CORDENS** Site of Haden's ironmongery early C19th. Sold to Sydney Corden some fifty years later and remaining in his family until 1978 when Charles Corden died. The business continued under his name until 2023.
- 4 **WARMINSTER ATHENAEUM** Designed by W. J. Stent, opened 1858 as a reading room, library and lecture hall. Later became The Palace Cinema (1912 - 64), an arts centre and theatre (1969 - 97), and a centre for the community (2000).
- 5 **PORTWAY HOUSE** Site of the medieval manor of Newport, held by the Mauduit family. Present house built for the clothier Edward Middlecot in 1722, then used by the agents for Longleat, the Urban District Council 1955-74, Public Library 1957 - 82.
- 6 **THE CHANTRY** Believed to have been designed by the Longleat surveyor c.1755. First recorded occupant John Seagram, Surgeon, 1783, remaining in the family until James Bartlett, Brewer, bought it in 1889. A dental practice from 1935 until 2007.
- 7 **ORGAN INN** Built on land owned by the Pilchard Charity, first recorded in 1710, but trading earlier. Housed an overflow from Common Close school 1835. The Inn closed 1913, becoming a butchers, then a fishmonger and greengrocery, and reopened in 2006.
- 8 **LORD WEYMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL** Founded c.1707 by Thos Thynne, 1st Viscount Weymouth, with 23 free places for local boys; Master, Rev R. Barry. Renamed Warminster School in 1973.
- 9 **CRAVEN HOUSE** C17th building with North front rebuilt in late C18th by the Webbs, Clothiers. Home of William Webster, Veterinary Surgeon, for forty years before WWII. Housed Warminster Rural District Council 1949-74.
- 10 **WREN HOUSE** An early Georgian clothier's house, built c.1720-30, featuring a Venetian window and six panel door with a Gibbs surround.
- 11 **WARMINSTER MALTINGS** C18th origin, rebuilt for Morgans 1879. Later run by Dr E. S. Beaven, pioneer barley breeder and maltster.
- 12 **THE UNION WORKHOUSE** Designed by Kempthorne and built 1837. Later the Poor Assistance Institution, with separate accommodation for vagrants. Under the 1948 Act, became Sambourne Hospital which closed 1989.
- 13 **LITERARY INSTITUTION** Designed by E. Blore, opened 1838 as a reading room, library and museum. Later became a gentlemen's club and housed the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in WWI.
- 14 **CHINN'S COURT** Malthouse and butcher's premises with cattle stalls, slaughterhouse, preparation room, plucking shed, stable, tack-room and cart shed with hay loft over. Chinn's butchers and fishmongers fronted the Market Place.
- 15 **THE OLD BELL** Warminster's oldest surviving inn, recorded as The Bell 1483. The colonnade provided shelter for farmers selling grain at the Saturday market. In the C19th The Wiltshire Volunteers drilled in the yard and the Royal Mail horse van was housed there.
- 16 **'BEYOND HARVEST'** This 1990 bronze sculpture, by world renowned sculptor Colin Lambert portrays a girl sitting on sacks of corn, gazing towards Copheap and commemorates the days when Warminster's was one of the west country's foremost corn trading centres.
- 17 **MASONIC HALL** Built by Scott & Smith, Corn Factors, c. 1863 and occupied by them for seventy years. Purchased by Longleat Lodge in 1935, later becoming the Masonic Hall for all Warminster Masons.
- 18 **YARD HOUSE** Possible site of Warminster Scudamore manor house. Acquired by Edward Halliday 1664, rebuilt 1771 and 1891. Leased to sisters of the Ursuline order 1906 who set up St George's Catholic school and chapel. Redeveloped 1987.
- 19 **EASTWAY** Home of Dr Edwin Sloper Beaven from 1907-41, maltster and internationally famous barley breeder and amateur astronomer. At own expense bred Plumage Archer (1914), Golden Archer (1932) and other barleys, increasing barley yields per acre by 20%.
- 20 **RAILWAY STATION** Originally planned by Wiltshire, Somerset and Weymouth Railway, continuing the broad gauge from Thingley. Opened by Great Western Railway in 1851, extended to Salisbury 1856, changed to standard gauge in 1874.

# WARMINSTER TOWN TRAIL



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(Suggested route)