

THE AMERSHAM SOCIETY WELCOMES YOU TO

OLD AMERSHAM

A right pretty market (town) of one street well built with timber - John Leland, c. 1544

WALK THE PATHS AND ENJOY THE TOWN'S HIDDEN CORNERS

With thanks to
Dulcie Denison Will Trust
Amersham Town Council
The Chiltern Society

- ### PLACES TO LOOK OUT FOR
- BURY FARM
 - VAGABOND NOTICE
 - THE GRIFFIN
 - OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL
 - CROWN INN YARD
 - MARKET HALL
 - THE GABLES, 27 HIGH ST
 - THE KINGS ARMS
 - KINGS CHAPEL
 - AMERSHAM MUSEUM
 - ELMDESHAM HOUSE
 - ELEPHANT & CASTLE COTTAGES
 - COTTAGES IN HIGH ST
 - DRAKES ALMSHOUSES
 - THE EAGLE
 - THE SWAN
 - PIERS PLACE
 - TOWN MILL
 - ST MARY'S SCHOOL
 - THE MALTINGS
 - FLINT COURT-TOWN COUNCIL
 - FORMER BREWERY
 - ST MARY'S CHURCH
 - SARACENS HEAD
 - CHIMNEY COTTAGE
 - FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE
 - THE WORKHOUSE
- OUTSIDE THE TOWN**
- MARTYRS MEMORIAL
 - SHARDELOES LAKE PATH



BREWING WAS AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY

Barley was roasted to make malt. The Maltings date from 1829 but the brewery, (now Badminton Court) may date from 1624. It was owned by the Weller family from 1775 to 1929.

Flint Barn Court was used as offices, stables, storerooms and cart sheds. Weller drays delivered beer to 133 public houses owned by the family. Weller family graves can be seen outside St Mary's Church.

RIVER MISBOURNE

The River Misbourne was the town's main source of power until electricity. As well as turning Town Mill and Bury Farm Mill, the water served brewers and (furthest downstream) tanners. Businesses needing a lot of water were located on the north side of the High Street, these were tenants of the Rector of Amersham, not of the Borough, so had no vote.

THE MARTYRS MEMORIAL

Lollards wanted to read the Bible and say their prayers in English, not Latin, which few people could understand. Six men and one woman were condemned to be burnt at the stake on the hill overlooking Amersham at trials in 1511 and 1521.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE GEORGIAN FRONTS

Most houses in Old Amersham are 17th century or earlier and have timber frames. The brick fronts were mainly added between 1790 and 1810 by the landlords, the Tyrwhitt-Drakes in a modernisation plan. Timber frames may be seen today at the sides of some of the buildings.

A MEDIEVAL HIGH STREET

The High Street was kept wide enough to accommodate the weekly market and annual fair granted by King John in 1200. The long thin (burgage) plots on the south side of the High Street were rented out to tradesmen. Their houses fronted the High Street and behind was a plot, used for workshops, cultivation and livestock, which stretched to The Platt.

THE DRAKE FAMILY CONTROLLED OLD AMERSHAM

William Drake of Shardeoes bought the adjacent Manor of Amersham (with two seats in parliament) in 1637. In 1662 he purchased the Rectory. The Drakes were squires, rectors and (until the Great Reform Act of 1832) MPs for the borough.

They built the Almshouses in 1657 and the Market Hall in 1682. They bought houses - and votes - in the town but sold the freeholds, mostly to tenants, in 1928. They prevented canals and railways coming through the valley, which preserved the town from Victorian development.

21 June 1811
The Magistrates acting for this Hundred have given a peremptory Order to the Constables and other Peace Officers to apprehend all Common Beggars, Ballad Singers and other Vagrants so that they may be dealt with according to Law.

AN 1811 WELCOME TO THE TOWN

The sign on the first house in Amersham might worry some visitors.

BURY FARM

This was the ancient manor house for the Borough of Amersham until it was sold to the Drake Family in 1637. Bury Farm was occupied in the 15th and 16th centuries by wealthy Lollard sympathisers, the Saunders family. Later in the 17th century it was the home of Giulielma Springett who was courted by the Quaker, William Penn.

COACHING INNS

Amersham was an important coaching stop in the 1700s, being one day's ride from London on the road to Banbury. There were at least seven inns with archways into a stable yard for changing horses. Victorian railways gradually replaced coaches. Not all of the inns are still pubs but there are clues that give away the former use of the others.