



Stafford

Town Trail

Stafford Lions Club

consists of a group of men and women who dedicate some of their spare time to helping vulnerable people, groups and individuals, in and around Stafford.

Events are held throughout the year with every penny raised going to worthy causes in the local community.

They also have a varied and interesting social calendar ensuring fun and friendship is enjoyed by all.

There are many ways in which you could help the Lions.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Chris Hilditch on 01785 664322



STAFFORD LIONS
SUPPORTING
STAFFORD PEOPLE



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Stafford Town Trail

There are few places in Staffordshire with such a wide variety of architectural styles as the county town. The Stafford Town Trail features two Norman churches, each with later influences and additions, a number of Tudor and Stuart half-timbered buildings, along with handsome Queen Anne and Georgian town houses. The public buildings include the Classical Shire Hall, the French Gothic Borough Hall, and the early Edwardian Baroque County Buildings.

The Stafford Town Trail should take you no longer than an hour, although you may wish to explore the additional sites [A - F].

Much of the route is pedestrianised, with good wheel-chair access.



The trail starts at the **ANCIENT HIGH HOUSE** [01], the largest timber-framed town house in England. Now a museum with period room settings, a Yeomanry museum and regular exhibitions, the house was built in 1595 for the Dorrington family. Charles I and Prince Rupert stayed here in 1642.

Take a left along St. Mary's Passage to **ST. MARY'S CHURCH** [02]. The largest Collegiate church, begun c.1190, and extensively restored in the 1840s by Gilbert Scott. Opposite the church entrance is **ST. MARY'S SCHOOLROOM** [03], built in 1856.

Turn left into Church Lane to see the **EVANGELICAL CHURCH** [04] opened in 1839, on the right and the **SOUP KITCHEN** [05] which has a 19th century front to an earlier building, on the left.



01

Constructed by the Dorrington family in 1595 the Ancient High House is the largest timber-framed town house in the country.

King Charles I briefly stayed at the house during the first few months of the English Civil War. Letters signed and dated by the king at the High House survive.



02

The Collegiate Church St. Mary, the parish church of Stafford. Built in the early Norman period to the east end of the original Saxon chapel of St. Bertelin.

Much altered and enlarged and features a number of architectural styles.

Restored by Gilbert Scott 1841 - 1844.



08



09



A



11



12



14

At the end of Church Lane on the left is the former **SHERIFF'S OFFICE** [06], a small timber-framed building with a jettied first storey.

Turn right towards the **ALMSHOUSES** [07] built in c.1660 'for six poor men and six poor women' by Sir Martin Noell, a native of Stafford and MP for the Borough. Retrace your steps to the end of Church Lane and cross over to Water Street walking past the **MALTHOUSE** [08] built by George Brewster in 1837 on the left. Cross Mill Bank and visit the remains of the **TOWN MILL** [09], also built by George Brewster in 1834.

Formerly the Sheriff's Office.

Half-timber construction with overhanging first floor, typical of Stafford's 16th century town houses.



06

Built by Sir Martin Noell, who made his fortune as a London Merchant and later invested in the colonies on Barbados.

He stood as MP for Stafford in Oliver Cromwell's Parliament of 1656 and was one of those who favoured offering Cromwell the Crown.

Noell died of the plague in 1665.



07

Enter **VICTORIA PARK** [10], opened in 1908 and later extended, and take a pleasant walk through the park, along the River Sow to the **BROADEYE WINDMILL** [A] built in 1796 by John Wright. Return to the park entrance at Mill Bank and walk to the traffic lights turning right on to Greengate Street. Walk on to **GREEN BRIDGE** [11], the site of the original ford across the River Sow and a bridge since at least 1285 [Great Bridge]. From here look right to the **PICTURE HOUSE** [12], built in 1914 and in operation until 1995.

Retrace your steps up Greengate Street crossing over **SOUTH WALLS** [13] where **CHETWYND HOUSE** [14], now the Post Office is on the left. Traditionally built in c.1746 for the Chetwynd family. Half a century later, the house became the property of William Horton, father of Stafford's shoe industry. He was a friend of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist and MP for Stafford 1780 - 1806, who stayed here on his visits to the town.



10

Formerly known as the Victorian Pleasure Gardens, later extended with a bowling green and flower gardens on the east bank.

The Izaak Walton Walk opened in 1903.

Two parks were linked by the building of the Coronation Bridge in 1911.



15



18



19



26



23



B

Further along on the left is the **SWAN HOTEL** [15], a coaching inn from 1750, where Charles Dickens stayed in 1852. **ST. CHAD'S CHURCH** [16], opposite the Swan Hotel is the oldest church in the town, founded c.1150, with excellent Norman work and founder's stone in the chancel. **THE BEAR INN** [17] on the right was also a coaching inn. Turn right down Martin Street to the **COUNTY BUILDINGS** [18], designed for the County Council by T. Hare in 1895.

At the end of Martin Street turn right on to Eastgate Street. On the left is the **WILLIAM SALT LIBRARY** [19], begun in the 19th century by local banker William Salt, who moved here in 1918 from the **OLD BANK HOUSE** [26]. Izaak Walton author of the Compleat Angler was born on the site of the **POLICE STATION** [20] in 1575. A walk can be taken to the **EAST GATE** [B], the last remaining fragment of town walls, where Elizabeth I met town councillors on her visit in 1575.

Return down Eastgate Street to **EASTGATE HOUSE** [21], a handsome red brick town house, on the corner of Martin Street dated 1683, which was the Chief Constable's office from the late 19th century until 1961 and is now the Registrar's Office. Further along on the left is **STAFFORD GATEHOUSE THEATRE** [22], formerly the Borough Hall, built in 1876 to designs by Henry Ward, in the French Gothic style.

Turn left up Market Street to the **MARKET SQUARE** [23], where a market was held from the 12th century until it was moved to the Guildhall Shopping Centre [opposite] in the 19th century.



16

St. Chad's Church dates to the early 11th century and is believed to have been founded by a man called Orme. The west front was much restored by Gilbert Scott 1873 - 1874.

Izaak Walton left money in his will to repair the churchyard wall to prevent encroachment.



17

There has been a Bear Inn on the main street since late medieval times.

Various known as the White Bear, Black Bear and Bear Inn.



21

Eastgate House is one of the earliest brick-built houses in the county town. Now the Registrar's office, it was the former office of the Chief Constables of Staffordshire.



22

Formerly the Borough Hall, constructed in the French Gothic style to designs by Henry Ward. The old council chambers are now converted into a theatre, retaining the splendour of the original building. A fine example of French Gothic architecture.



24



C



27



F



D



30

THE SHIRE HALL [24], now an art gallery and craft shop, designed by John Harvey and built in 1798 to replace an earlier Elizabethan structure was originally used for meetings and dances as well as the assize court and quarter sessions. **LLOYDS BANK** [25] on the right was originally the Old Bank, founded in 1737 by John Stevenson and incorporated with Lloyds in 1866. Next to it is the **OLD BANK HOUSE** [26], an early 19th century building given by Thomas Salt in 1872 to house his uncle's collection of books.

Turn right along Gaolgate Street passing Salter Street on the right leading to the **VINE HOTEL** [C], an inn since at least 1782. At the end of Gaolgate Street on the right hand side is a building with a painted plaque commemorating **THOMAS SYDNEY, LORD MAYOR OF LONDON 1853 - 1854** [27]. A modern roundabout now occupies **GAOL SQUARE** [D], where the Northgate or Gaolgate stood and was used as a gaol from medieval times. The present **GAOL** [E], dating from 1793 is on Gaol Road. Across the square on Foregate Street is the old **STAFFORD GENERAL INFIRMARY** [F], originally built in 1772 to the designs of Benjamin Wyatt.

Return up Gaolgate Street and turn right into Crabbery Street along which Queen Elizabeth I passed in 1575, taking wine before the former **NOAH'S ARK INN** [28], now the Surgery, dating from the 16th century. Turn left into the Guildhall Shopping Centre and walk straight through to the Churchyard [if the shopping centre is closed follow the buildings round to the left].

Pass the excavated site of **ST. BERTELIN'S CHAPEL** [29] on the left, which was used as a Grammar School and Council Chamber after the Reformation, and later demolished in 1801. Note the remaining memorial [far right] to the **DALE FAMILY** [30], a well known Stafford family who ran an ironmongers shop opposite the Ancient High House.

Turn left past the church, along St. Mary's passage and return to the **ANCIENT HIGH HOUSE** [01].

A painted plaque recording the birthplace of Thomas Sidney, Lord Mayor of London 1853 - 1854. Adjacent to this building, where the clock remains, was the Sidney fountain erected in 1889 and demolished in 1928.



27



28

The Noah's Ark dates to the early 16th century and is the earliest secular building in the town.

Built of sandstone the former home of the Dean of Stafford, it was here that Queen Elizabeth I took wine while on her way to Stafford Castle in 1575.

Echoes from the past

THE TRAIL [] LINE OF OLD TOWN WALLS []

