

Historic Town Walks

The historic centre of Hungerford is delightfully compact, and most visitors will take about two hours to follow the suggested route. For those with more time available, there are suggestions at several points in the guide of diversions to see other points of interest.

This guide is divided into seven sections (A-G). Instead of following the entire walk at once, you may prefer to divide it into three shorter excursions:

The Upper & Lower High Street (A & G)
The Courtyard, Church Street, The Croft, and Canal (B & C)
Bridge Street, Charnham Street & Eddington (D, E, & F)

Each of these shorter walks will take approximately 40 minutes.

A: The Market Place and Upper High Street

Begin the walk at the Town Hall in the centre of the town. This building, which houses the large Corn Exchange, the Magistrates Room (where the local magistrates court was held), as well as the Town Hall itself, was built in 1870. It replaced the previous town hall of 1786 which was a detached building standing in the market place, just in front of The Courtyard. The present building is in the Byzantine style peculiar to the later Victorians, with red brick, and yellow terracotta decoration. Hungerford's Town Hall is owned and maintained by the Town & Manor of Hungerford, and is said to be the only Town Hall in the country not supported by the rates.

The Market Place in front of you has been the site of many markets and fairs through the ages, and a street market is still held here each Wednesday. It is worth noting that the church is apparently nowhere to be seen. Unusually, it lies well away from the market place, as we shall see later in this guide.

Cross the High Street to The Three Swans Hotel, one of the most important of Hungerford's many coaching inns. The bow windows were added during the 1960's. The milestone reminds us that Hungerford lies not only on the well-known London to Bath road, but also on an important north-south road, from Oxford to Salisbury.

Walk up the street (away from the railway bridge), and pause before you reach Park Street. The building on the corner (114) lost its symmetry in 1976 when part of it was demolished to widen the road.

Park Street was named Cow Lane until well into the 20th century, a reflection of its importance as the main route for herding the cattle to and from the Hungerford Common, which lies at the top of Park Street. The Common is an unspoilt area of about 200 acres which is used not only for the grazing of the Commoners' cattle, but innumerable other recreational activities ranging from picnics and kite flying to circuses and dog-shows. A 9-hole golf course was laid out on the Common just before the Second World War, and in 1821 a great prize fight was held here which is said to have attracted 20,000 spectators! Jim Davis' book entitled "The Great Fight on Hungerford Common" gives a splendid account of the event.

Cross Park Street, and walk past The Plume and number 111, which was The Craven Arms until it closed in the late 1920's. Both were coaching inns.

As you pass 110/109, look up at the rainwater head which is dated 1722. The frontage is far from symmetrical, which suggests that the core of the building is of an earlier date, in this case 17th century. Notice the panelled parapet, with its orb finials, partly concealing a steep hipped roof with three pedimented dormers. There is a scroll bracketed hood over the doorway.

Number 107 is a classic late Georgian building. The bricked-up windows on the north face were probably in the original design, and are not an example of the havoc caused by the window tax which lasted until 1851. The plans of many Georgian buildings came from pattern books, containing designs which could be adapted to individual choice by the builder. Here it was chosen to brick in the windows in the north wall. The windows of each of its three storeys are in perfect proportion, with interesting rising-sum decorations above them. Note the fine door case, of Greek Doric design, and the stone eaves cornice. These details are typical of circa 1820. For nearly 100 years (from 1818-1914) the house was the family home of the Major's, who were doctors in the town.

The brickwork of number 104 is a good example of Flemish bond (alternate courses of stretcher/header/stretcher bricks). There are some bricks on its front wall which are dated, perhaps by the original bricklayer. One is under the left ground-floor window [E+S 1783], and another to the left of the window [17 W+S 8?].

Next door (number 103) is built almost entirely of blue headers only, known as header bond.

Number 100 has its present day front door within the bricked-up arch of a former carriage entrance. Earlier this century this property was Macklin's dairy.

Until the early 19th century, a pond stood in the main street at this point, between 96/97 and 36/37 opposite. The pond was used at times for a ducking-stool. At one time it was surrounded by rails, and lime trees were planted in 1718, but as they failed to thrive, they were replaced by firs. The pond was eventually filled in during 1805.

It would be easy to walk past numbers 86/85 without realising their historical importance. The white-washed pebble-dash frontage of this pair of cottages completely conceals the remains of a two-bay cruck framed timber house of medieval origin, probably dating from as long ago as the 14th century, and quite possibly the oldest remaining building in the town. The crucks, and various other parts of the structural timber, are left exposed in certain parts internally.

Number 84 is the only remaining thatched cottage in the High Street. No doubt most of the street was thatched until the popularity of tile in the 18th century, and until slate was brought to the town along the canal after 1810.

Most of the remaining buildings further up the High Street are Victorian terraces. Several are well worth a closer study for those readers with sufficient time.

Cross the High Street whenever you choose. As you walk further up the High Street, you will notice that the buildings tend to become rather less grand. There is a definite narrowing of the street as you get closer to the old southern limit of the town, now marked by the corner with Atherton Hill. On the left is a building (66) which used to be The Salisbury Arms. Beyond the limits of the planned medieval town are Salisbury Row (on the left -previously called Moon Lane) and a fine crescent of white-painted houses set well back on the right - Atherton Crescent, built 1919.

Start to walk back down the west side of the High Street, back towards the Market Place. Remember to take the opportunity to look at the buildings on the east side, whose proportions one can better appreciate from this distance.

Between 43 and 41 High Street, set well back from the road is a large brick building, with an expansive area in front, now paved in brick. This was the National School, which was built in 1814, providing education for most of the children in the town until 1910 when the new "Council School" was opened in Fairview Road. The adjacent house (number 41, "Cameo House") was the schoolmaster's house, and was clad in Bath stone at the same period. The few stone buildings in Hungerford nearly all date from the decade or two after 1810, when the Kennet & Avon Canal was opened.

34 High Street is another splendid house. Note the tile hanging on its exposed south gable, the Venetian windows with rubbed dressings, and its fine door case with Tuscan columns, broken pediment, and curvilinear fan light. In the roof are triple hipped dormers. The house dates from 1778.

Wilton House, (33) has a four gabled front, surmounted by orb finials. Again there are rubbed dressings over each window. The core of the building behind is of much older construction than this early 18th century frontage would suggest. Notice particularly the pattern of the brickwork -red dressings with blue panels in between - and the molded courses between each storey. The core of the house dates from the 16th century, and there is evidence of an even older mediaeval hall behind.

The frontage of the Congregational Church (later United Reform and, since 1987, Christchurch) was built in 1840. Number 32 used to be the Methodist Manse, and the original chapel of 1817, which stands to the rear, was later used as a schoolroom. Note the exceptional rubbed dressings over the archway. This facade dates from c.1800, but the building behind again is from the 16th century.

Number 31 has "stone" quoins and dressings, with arched windows at the ground floor. This building used to be the Penny Savings Bank. Number 28 (Charles Lucas and Marshall, solicitors) is a most interesting building. Look high up on its south gable, and you will see a curious shaped window frame, and clear evidence of the addition of a false frontage to the building. On the north gable are several pieces of exposed timber framing again demonstrating the addition of the new brick frontage in the late 18th century.

Hungerford Arcade probably dates from the 16th century. Much of the timber frame construction was exposed during the extensive alterations of the 1970's. It has a four-gabled frontage of most irregular symmetry, and original mullioned and transomed wooden casements with leaded lights. These windows would have been common before the introduction of sash windows c.1700. In this case they date from the mid 17th century.

Number 25, now Wine Rack, is also a very old building, much altered during the nineteenth century to bring it up to "modern" standards. It was a grocers for most of the 20th century.

Walk on to the adjacent building, now called The Courtyard.

B: The Courtyard and Church Street

The Courtyard is one of Hungerford's architectural treasures! There are a number of interesting features, including the Regency shop fronts on both sides of the central passageway.

The wall of the High Street frontage is made of brick tiles (also known as mathematical tiles), which are uncommon in Hungerford. They were used as light-weight cladding to older timber-framed buildings to make them appear to be of brick.

From the Market Place, turn into the central passage. On your right is the original jettied Tudor timber-frame building. In the covered courtyard is a sign declaring that, in the time of "Good Queen Bess", the building was originally an inn known as The Greyhound (owned by Edward Popham of Littlecote). From 1813 it was an ironmonger and saddlers premises until the conversion in 1985/87.

Walk through the courtyard and double back on the right into Crown Passage, where there are further views of the timber framing, but this time without the jettied. Return to the courtyard, and walk out into the car park. On a wall to the west is a plaque marked as "Richard Killick 1871" who was the owner of the grocers shop in the High Street (number 17).

Leave the Courtyard by walking north onto Church Street, which is one of the two original east-west roads of the town. The land on the far side of the road demonstrates the typical size of the Hungerford burgage plots. The property starts with the house fronting onto the High Street (Kennet House), and on its original burgage plot are now a book-shop, the library (1967), a car park, and the fire station (1968). This distance is about 180 metres, although at its front, it is only 16 metres wide (double the standard medieval plot width).

Turn left to walk west along Church Street, alongside the car park. Opposite (i.e. on the south side) is the entrance to Prospect Road, originally the "Back Lane" of the western properties on the High Street.

The large building beyond the fire station, and set back from the road, is the Wesleyan Chapel. The school-room closed in 1910 when the Council School opened in Fairview Road. Spare a moment to study the little burial ground in front of the building - including such names as John Hogsflesh of Eddington Mill (died 1842), and Mary, wife of Richard Gibbons of the ironworks in Eddington, who died in 1856.

As you proceed further along Church Street, note the splendid mixture of building styles -stucco (4,5, & 7); blue brick with red dressers and white key stones (48 and 47); flint, and tile hung with mullioned windows (46 & 45); blue chequered bricks (44); and again blue brick (all headers this time) with red dressers (9). Stop at Croft Road and look further along Church Street - spot the two thatched cottages, some of the few remaining in central Hungerford.

C: The Croft, the Church and the Canal

From Church Street, turn down Croft Road, and stop under the railway bridge. The original 1847 Brunel line from Reading terminated at Hungerford until it was eventually extended to Devizes in 1862. This extension necessitated the building of a massive embankment through the centre of the town, and several new bridges, one of which you are standing under now. When the single track was converted to double track in 1896 these bridges all required alteration, hence the 3 metre extension on the north side.

Walk on into The Croft - a pleasing quiet green away from the bustle of the High Street. Originally given to the town for a children's play area, it now forms part of the Town & Manor land. It probably formed the village green of the older village of Hungerford before the new town was laid out circa 1200.

The Croft Hall was built in 1900 on the site of the old Free Grammar School of 1653. Bear left past the Nursery School and Parsonage Farm - a fine five bay house with triple dormers. Walk past the main entrance to the churchyard, where the wrought iron gatepost is embossed with its donor -John Platt Jnr, 1886, who owned the town brewery.

Ahead of you is the Old Vicarage (the modern Vicarage is to its left). Walk towards the gates of the Old Vicarage, and step over the Tumble Stile, one of very few in the country still in use. Walk down the path through the churchyard past the headstone commemorating James Dean (1836), one of the coachmen who worked the Bath Road through Hungerford during the coaching period which was so important to Hungerford's development.

St. Lawrence's Church is well worth a visit. It was built of Bath stone in 1814 when the previous church had fallen into an unsafe state. It is an early example of Gothic Revival architecture, and was designed by Mr. Pinch of Bath. Extensive changes (mostly to the interior) were made in the 1880's. A guide book and history of the church can be obtained inside.

AT THIS STAGE THERE ARE TWO ALTERNATIVE ROUTES. If the weather is bad, you are advised to return to The Croft, walking past Croft Hall and the Sports Ground, through Church Lane (and its splendid "drunken" posts erected in 1863 when a turnstile was removed) to the High Street. Turn left and rejoin the guided walk down at the canal bridge (page 17).

The more interesting route will follow the canal tow-path back into the town. Walk past the Church towards the swing bridge over the canal. Look back at the church tower, where the date 1814 is inscribed above the belfry window.

If you have sufficient time, you would be well rewarded by a walk over the swing bridge onto Freeman's Marsh - an area full of wildlife. Return to this point to continue the guided walk.

Turn east to follow the canal tow-path back towards the centre of the town. You will pass the back of Parsonage Farm (where the canal goes over a culvert which drains the low ground of the farm onto the marsh), and then the back of the Nursery School, Croft Hall, and the sports club.

Hungerford Lock was re-opened after restoration of this section of the canal in 1974. A plaque adjacent to the lock gives further information, and shows an Archimedes screw pump in use at the culvert near the church in 1910.

Walk on towards the town. The stone house adjacent to the canal used to be the storage house on Hungerford wharf, and a crane stood near it at the water's edge. The Hungerford canal bridge is typical of many on the Kennet and Avon Canal - a bridge which has stood since the canal was first opened in 1799, and yet is strong enough to carry the heaviest of modern vehicles in the 1980's.

Prior to the building of the railway in 1840, the canal was a thriving means of transport, and contributed much to Hungerford's prosperity.

Evidence of the extensive use of the canal can be found by studying the canal bridge arch, where the soft corner stones have been worn into deep grooves by the ropes of earlier horse- drawn canal traffic.

Note the timber-framed cottages along the canal side, which formerly were a part of number 1 High Street. The original jettling can be seen near the corner of the wall, where a brick frontage has been added.

Walk up the alley towards the High Street, past the delightful bow-fronted shops - now a tea-shop. During the restoration of these buildings, it was revealed that they were originally single storey, and thatched, and that a brick frontage was added when it was changed to a two storey building, probably in the 19th century.

Turn to cross the canal bridge, maybe pausing for a while at the crown of the bridge (but take care of the traffic which passes very close to the kerb at this point). The view of the old wharf (on which a small residential estate was built in 1973), the timber frame buildings, and the lock, is a very fine one at the heart of the town. Boat trips are available from the wharf at times advertised on the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust's notice board adjacent to the bridge.

D: Bridge Street

This part of the guide begins on the Canal Bridge. Whilst you stand on the bridge, look towards Bridge Street, and take the opportunity to study the fine dormers which are a feature of this part of the town. As you look north along the street, note how the natural curve of the road is broken, and traffic seems to take a sudden left turn out of sight. The reason

for this is explained later.

Because the pavements in Bridge Street are rather narrow, one can better appreciate the buildings by viewing them from the opposite side of the road. You are advised, therefore, to continue walking along the west (left) side of the road, whilst studying the buildings on the Opposite (east) side.

Adjacent to the canal bridge and set back from the line of other buildings, is The Limes, built in 1826, on land previously occupied by several smaller cottages. When the canal was dug at the end of the 18th century, a number of cottages were demolished on both sides of the street. The Limes, one of the most splendid of Hungerford's detached houses (most of the houses in the heart of the town being terraced) was built by Thomas Viner, a hop merchant, who ran the adjacent malthouse. The house has many Regency features, including a splendid fanlight over the front door, and a bracketed eaves cornice. No doubt the original slates for the roof were brought by canal!

The Old Malthouse (number 15) has some gorgeous dormers in its mellow roof! After Thomas Viner's death, it was Blakes, saddlers and harness makers, until the First World War.

The Craftsman (number 16) used to be Beard's the coal merchant for over a century until 1964. It was conveniently sited near to the canal wharf. There was extensive stabling behind, through the cobble- stoned passage, no doubt much used during both the coaching and the canal periods.

The central part of Peter Stirland Ltd used to be The Barley Mow Inn from about 1830 until it closed in 1956. The bracket for the inn sign still remains.

Number 20 has tripartite windows on the ground floor, and displays some interesting brickwork - rubbed, gauged brick dressings, with decorative use of blue headers including a two course band at first floor level.

The John of Gaunt Inn is owned by the Town and Manor of Hungerford. Prior to about 1790 the building was Hungerford's first work-house. It has also been called the Duke of Lancaster's Arms, a title held by John of Gaunt. It stands at what was until 1894 the northern extremity of the town, the river marking the old boundary. The part of Bridge Street to the north of this was the site of the mediaeval Priory of St. John (founded 1232), and Charnham Street was part of the Domesday manor of Charlton, and was actually in Wiltshire until the boundary changes of 1894. The oriel window of the John of Gaunt provides an excellent view of the road in both directions. There is a simple but interesting bracketed porched door onto Bridge Street.

The path running along the north side of the John of Gaunt Inn, marked with the "No Cycles" sign, leads past a small cottage with the curious name of Borden Carriage, and thence to the canal and Hungerford Common.

Continue to walk along Bridge Street, on the west side, around the corner. The straight section of road from The John of Gaunt to The Bear was built in 1740. Prior to this, the old road out of the town went across a ford through the river, to the south of what is now the War Memorial gardens. During the early 18th century, there were so many complaints about the poor access to the town that land was bought from the Bear and a new road and bridge were built.

As you cross the bridge over the river Dun, notice the converted stable block of The Bear at the waters edge. A few paces further is a small entrance into The Bear, where a courtyard has been pleasingly restored.

E: Charnham Street and Eddington Village

Charnham Street is part of the old coaching road from London to Bath and Bristol. For several centuries, therefore, it has been a busy area, and although the opening of the M4 in 1971 did ease the traffic congestion for a few years, the amount of traffic has increased again, and the road is once again a bustling and often noisy thoroughfare. Readers are advised to take special care on this part of the walk, especially when crossing the road!

From the Bear corner, turn left and walk west along the south side of Charnham Street, adjacent to the Bear Hotel. On the opposite side of the road is a terrace of brick buildings making liberal use of blue headers for decoration. After Friars Pardon (number 22) is one incorporating an old shop front with a faded shop sign above it, and number 24, which is thatched.

Opposite the Bear car park, with its old coach from bygone days, is a splendid three storey building, known as the High House, and more recently Charnham Close. During the early 19th century this was the old workhouse (after the one in Bridge Street, and prior to the new 1840 building in Park Street). At one time this was probably the site of the Green Dragon inn. On its west side is a splendid cascade of terraced roofs.

Further along to the west is a terrace of thatched buildings, numbers 27-29. The eastern end of the terrace is a brick gable with a parapet and stone coping. This is very unusual with a thatched roof, and may indicate that the terrace continued at one time further towards the High House, the brick gable having been built when some cottages were demolished. As you walk beyond the terrace, notice the timber framing on the west gable. You can see that the eaves level was originally much lower, so that the upstairs windows would have been dormers, The brick front was added during the 18th century. Through one of the windows can be seen old fireplaces and the remains of cruck construction indicating that this group of cottages could date from before 1500.

Beyond these thatched cottages, slate roofs predominate. Special amongst these is the roof of the detached cottage, number 30, now a newsagent's shop, which displays graded slates (where there is a range of sizes from small slates near the ridge to very large ones near the eaves). Further along the road are Victorian terraced cottages leading to the open country beyond. The pitch of the roofs gets gradually shallower as one nears the last building, the Sun Inn. Number 36, which used to be the old gas showroom, has a particularly interesting gable facing the street, where the chimney flues clearly pass either side of the first floor window!

Cross now to the north side of the road, and walk back towards the Bear corner, Note the Victorian post box in the wall of the "High House", from where you get perhaps the best view of the Bear Hotel, which dates at least from 1495. Above the main entrance is a classic painted inn sign depicting the Black Bear, and featuring the arms of the Leybourne—Pophams, of Littlecote, who were owners of the Bear during the 17th and 18th century.

The modern development site of the Wesleyan until its demolition in been the site of another opposite the Bear was built on the chapel, which stood here from 1869 1972. Prior to the chapel, this had inn, The White Hart, since 1686.

Further along the eastern part of Charnham Street is the Red Lion on the north side, whilst on the south side are The Lamb Inn and Faulknor Square. The south and west terraces of the square were both built circa 1740, but there are interesting differences in style.

The old fire station housed Hungerford's fire engines from 1892 until the new station in Church Street was built in 1968. Note the turret on which is a fine weathervane, incorporating HVFB (Hungerford Volunteer Fire Brigade).

Further along the road is the village of Eddington. It is little more than an extension of Hungerford now, but earlier this century it was a self-contained village in its own right, with an iron foundry, blacksmiths, several inns, a post-office, as well as a village store.

Walk further east along the A4 road, and cross the bridge over the River Kennet, famous for its splendid trout fishing. There has been a bridge over the Kennet since at least 1275, when the road through Savernake Forest to Marlborough was called "The King's Street". The present stone bridge has five low arches, quite sufficient for the broad and shallow waters below, and dates from 1827.

After crossing the Kennet Bridge, bear left into Oxford Street. It contains a delightful variety of building styles. Number 1 (now rendered) used to be Jessett's bakery, and next door is the old post-office, still with its Victorian post-box in the wall. There is flint, stone and brick banding at numbers 3 and 5, and then a three storey Georgian building ("Buckland House") with interesting "dressings within dressings" at the windows on the first floor, and a date stone of 1835.

Further along can be seen liberal use of blue headers at numbers 9 & 10 (along with another date stone - 1814), before the only exposed timber framing in the village, at numbers 11 and 12. On the opposite corner is Linden Cottage, which is of flint and brick, but whose later extension extends nearly to the roadway itself, and appears to straddle its own garden boundary wall! At the very end of Oxford Street, at the junction with Wantage Road, is the building which used to be the old general store, run by Misses Winkworth, and which still features the delightful corner doorway, a relic from quieter days!

Prior to returning to Hungerford itself, a pleasant diversion can be made to see Eddington Mill, a fine Georgian mill house, with adjoining mill. Return along Oxford Street nearly to the Kennet Bridge, and follow the Public Footpath to the right, upstream along the river's edge. The window dressings of the millhouse are particularly attractive, with rubbed brick and white keystones.

Return along Charnham Street towards the Bear, passing the petrol station, which stands on the site of Henry Gibbon's Kennet Iron Works, one of the two high quality founders in the town at the turn of the century. The other was George Cottrell's Eddington Works on the site of the present modern garage in Eddington. The first building past the petrol

station is now Charnham Court. It was built by Henry Gibbons for himself and his foundry manager, and one wonders if the fine fanlights were specially made by his foundry.

When you reach the Bear corner, cross with great care to Riverside, the classical Georgian building standing on the corner of Charnham Street and Bridge Street. This fine house used to dominate the Bear corner, and must have had splendid views west along Charnham Street. Its qualities are perhaps a little harder to appreciate now that the chestnut tree in front of the house has grown so large. Of special interest is its door case with curved brackets, pediment and fanlight, the tripartite windows, the parapet and high hipped roof. It dates from the second half of the 18th century.

F: Returning along Bridge Street

From the Bear Corner, walk back along the east side of Bridge Street, and enter the War Memorial gardens, dedicated in November 1920, and restored in 1987. These gardens stand on an island between the two branches of the River Dun. The island used to be the site of the Priory of St. John, established in 1232, and dissolved by Henry VIII in 1548.

Walk to the very end of the island, where the two branches of the River Dun merge again, where there is a thoughtfully positioned seat! Look to your right up stream. This was the site of the old ford, and you will see that it is in direct line with the older pre-1740 part of Bridge Street.

The buildings in this northern part of Bridge Street are best seen from the War Memorial itself. They comprise an interesting collection of individual terraced buildings, of different design, and different height. Some are rendered, and the variety of colours gives a pleasing effect. The two on the right (numbers 1 and 2) have steeper pitched tiled roofs, whilst the rest have rather flatter roofs of slate. The two brick buildings in the middle used to be called Great Priory House (number 4), and Little Priory House (number 3), respectively.

Numbers 12 & 13 are a matching pair. The door cases are particularly interesting, with columns and broken pediments, with modillioned cornices, and fanlights with geometric design. Each building has a bay window. Number 13 used to be the home of Mr. Wooldridge, who was in charge of the canal wharf during its hey day, and who ran a well-known local builders business for many years after.

Continue past the John of Gaunt Inn, and study the buildings on the opposite (west) side of the street. Mill Hatch was built in 1935 on the site of the old Town Mill (or Queens Mill) which was mentioned as long ago as 1576, but probably dated at least from 1275 when there were two water mills in the town. Mill Cottage was the miller's residence, and its steep roof pitch suggests that originally it was probably thatched. The Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1864-66, and the school room and a new frontage were added in 1907. Rising above the mellow tiled roof line of Bridge Street is the large bakery chimney of number 10.

As you walk past the garage showrooms, you can see the old bar of The Barley Mow with its shallow arch above. A little further on, at cobbled entrance of the old coal yard, you can see the timber framing of The Old Malthouse, which is revealed as another example of re-fronting. Looking ahead towards the High Street, you can appreciate the line of the old main street of Hungerford before the canal bridge was built in 1799. Walk up the slope of the canal bridge and look again at The Limes on the left, noting how it is set back from the line of the adjacent buildings.

G: The Lower High Street

Whilst standing at the crown of the canal bridge, you will see the iron brackets which used to support the old gas lamps. Adjacent to the one on the eastern parapet is a bench mark, which marks 100.36 metres (329 feet) above sea level. A short walk along the canal tow-path here would take you onto Hungerford Common. Notice the false window at the first floor level on the southern wall of The Limes, adjacent to the canal.

Bridge House (131) is a very interesting building, showing many alterations over the passage of time. The core of the building, and the part of the house running back adjacent to the canal showing the brick and flint wall, date from the 17th century. The rectangular frontage was added circa 1760, and the splendid bow ends on both the north and south gables were added circa 1812. The wrought iron bridge and porches, with front doors at both the ground floor and first floor levels, are Regency additions, and one of the delights of the town.

College House (130) is an original brick and slate building dating from about 1830. Originally occupied by a local doctor, it was for many years a private boarding school until the First World War.

Number 129 appears at first glance to be a three storey Georgian house, but this is another example of where first

appearances are misleading. The building is actually a two-bay box frame timber structure with a Queen—post roof, and probably dates from the 16th century! The three storey frontage was added about 1830, to fit in with its neighbours. The second floor windows do not open onto rooms, but are in the roof space. For many years this was the home of Munford's Printing Works, the workshop being to the left of the front door, with the shop to the right.

Next door, Wessex House, (127) is a building now housing a hardware store, council offices, and a building society. The brickwork above the modern shop fronts is worth noting — it consists almost entirely of blue bricks, only the window dressings being reds. From about 1840 until the early part of this century, this was the home and business of Mr. Earle the ironmonger.

The gateway adjacent to the building society office leads through to a small courtyard development, restored in 1983. The bollards at the entrance remain from the time of Earle's stores.

The Post Office was built in 1914 on the site of Earle's engineering workshop. Prior to this, the post office had been on the opposite side of the road, where the Co-Op supermarket now stands, and at the end of the 19th century it had been at 25 High Street (now Wine Rack).

Whilst standing near Wessex House, turn to look across to the west side of the High Street, towards the canal bridge. The group of buildings which are pebble dashed (5), are another example of Hungerford's re-fronted buildings. As you can see on the south facing gable, the original roof line was of a two-storey building, and there are clear indications of the altered roof, and new frontage, probably added circa 1800. The group of windows to the north are a nice example of 19th century shop window design.

Look now at the modern newsagents premises (6) on the west side of the street. Above the modern shop front is a building almost entirely of blue bricks. The bricked window at the first floor level used to display "W.H. Smith", and although now painted over, the sign can still be made out in certain light.

Cross at the pedestrian crossing, and begin to walk up the High Street.

Immediately on your right is a narrow lane which leads through to The Croft. This used to be called Little Church Lane (when the present Church Street was called Greater Church Lane). The gentle curve of the lane is followed by all the boundaries of the High Street properties. It is thought to arise from the original laying out of the 12th century town plan set into fields of the older Norman village.

Number 10 (the Wool Shop) has a good example of dog-tooth decorative brickwork under the eaves, echoed by numbers 11 and 12.

An archway leads to Newton's Mews, of which only the first few cottages are old. The further ones were built with great care on design in 1982, and merge very well with their older neighbours. Under this arch, on the left wall, is a meat rail, giving a significant clue about the previous use of the adjacent building - Pratts the butchers occupied the whole of the building which today houses an estate agent and kitchen furniture shop. There are attractive stone dressings to the windows.

Above the shop front of the Co-op supermarket there are more "mathematical" tiles (see The Courtyard, page 11).

Look back to the east side of the High Street. Up the street from the Post Office is a building (now numbered 125-123). This symmetrical building, with a central passage through to the rear of the building has a mass of attractive blue bricks on its front wall.

The supermarket has a central feature between the modern shop windows. It is the remains of the door case of the previous building on the site, that of the old Manor House of Hungerford, which through much of the 19th and 20th century was used as the doctors' surgery until a new surgery was built in the Croft in 1959.

Back on the west side is number 15, thought to date from the reign of Queen Anne. The original frontage is splendid, with good brickwork and narrow joints. There are modillioned eaves under a large hipped roof. One old casement can be seen in the north wall. Unfortunately, part of the frontage was extensively altered in the early 1900's when a shop front was put in. During the 1970's attempts were made to restore the building to its former glory, but sadly the changes are all too evident. The door case has particularly suffered, appearing unusually tall now that the steps up to the door have been removed.

The Victorian shop front of number 17 is virtually unspoiled despite several changes of use over the years.

The railway bridge is the third one to cross the High Street at this point. When the railway first came to Hungerford in 1847, the line stopped at a terminus station. A single track extension was made in 1869, passing through the town, across the High Street towards Wiltshire. When the line was made double track in 1896 the second bridge was built, which in turn was replaced in 1966.

Kennet House (19) has a well proportioned frontage, including a Greek Doric porch. This house was for many years the home of the second medical practice in the town.

You have now returned to the Town Hall, and the completion of this guided walk around the central part of Hungerford. There are many other interesting walks in the countryside around around the town. The canal towpath provides gentle level walks into open countryside both to the east and west. The 200 acres of the Common lies at the top of Park Street, whilst Freeman's Marsh is best reached via the swing bridge near St. Lawrence's Church. Many other walks are shown on a special map which is sited on the east side of the High Street, under the railway bridge.

Happy walking!