

## HERITAGE TRAIL WALK THREE

### NEWPORT PAGNELL HERITAGE TRAIL

#### WALK THREE

#### WALK BEGINNING

We start this walk in the High Street outside the Swan Revived Hotel. On the opposite side of the road is an early 17th century half-timbered shop, numbered 38 High Street. As you can see this has a very distinctive appearance. It has been many things as a shop including back in time an antique dealer. Said to date back to the early 17th century this ancient building stands on a prominent site in the High Street. The old timber framing is now on view for all to see after being covered up for many years.

Walking further down the High Street we come to a traffic roundabout, which is called Cannon Corner. It was believed that a cannon was left there after the English Civil War. Either side of the traffic roundabout are two iconic buildings – one, currently the MOZA restaurant. (This was formerly the HSBC/Midland Bank built in 1920) with the Cannon public house opposite. If you're able have a look inside and see the ornate ceiling.

The Cannon was originally called the Wine Vaults. The Wilmers of Gayhurst, a village just outside the town on the Northampton Road, set up a brewery at the back of this building in 1860 and it was only in 1980 that the remainder of these brewery buildings including a tall chimney was demolished. Wilmer beer bottles can be seen in the town museum in Silver Street. Continue down the High Street on the left-hand side. You will come to an entrance archway which leads to The United Reformed Church founded in 1660. The original building was put up by nonconformists over 350 years ago on the site of an ancient meeting barn. The first preacher at this church or chapel was The Reverend John Gibbs, who had been the town's vicar until 1659. This role ended because he refused to administer Sacrament to a well-known drunkard. This man however had influence and some wealth and his actions led to Gibbs no longer retaining the post of vicar. As a result, Gibbs began secretly preaching to a separate independent congregation at the old barn, now thought to be the structure at the back of the U.R.C. main building. This was very dangerous at that time and many times he evaded the authorities by means of escaping through the back door into a back alley called Paggs Court. This alley way still exists. Over time things improved and the congregation built their own chapel. The Bull family arrived in the town in 1768 and for many years played a major role in the chapel. As you face the main door, look to your right and around the corner you will see a special stone in the wall commemorating on the 26th October 1880 the Congregational Church.

Next to the U.R.C. archway is The Old Manse. This was built in 1703 and was run as an academy by the Reverend William Bull to train young non-conformist priests. William Bull was a friend of The Reverend John Newton of Olney and attached to the wall you will see a chain used by Newton's friend William Cowper, the poet, to tie up his horse when he came to visit. Inside the building boasts a secret priest hole used to hide priests from persecution. More recently the building has been used as offices.

Next door is a betting shop, which was once the town's post office before it moved up the High Street to its present position. Using the crossing, cross the street and stop outside number 60 High Street.

This very impressive three storey town house boasts a Queen Anne frontage, but inside would suggest an older building on the site. Note the fine front door-case with its fanlight above and its hipped tile roof. It has been the home to a solicitor, a doctor and a banker. Births, marriages and deaths were also once upon a time registered inside when the building was used as the offices of the Newport Pagnell Urban District Council. Further down on the same side you will come to number 68, which is now used as the offices of the Nationwide. This building was once a 16th century home. The timbers are just about the only original building material left. The buildings either side were demolished in 1969, but Bucks. County Council restored this building, endeavouring to do so in the original style. A little further down on this same side hidden between numbers 78 and 80 High Street down a passage is the town's Methodist Church. Built in 1815 – there is a plaque to testify to this fact on the gable end – it is similar in design to many other such Methodist churches built in the early 19th century.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

A building called 'The Cedars' was partly demolished in 1935 to create a link road from the High Street to Bury Street and Silver Street. The garden of this building is now a row of semi-detached houses. Parts of the building stand either side of Cedars Way.

Further down the same side of the High Street you will come to The Dolphin Inn. This inn is one of the oldest buildings in the town. It is 16th century and one of the town's ancient inns.

Next door is Brewery House. This is a Queen Anne period house and the clues are apparent in the shell porch and door-case. It was the home to the brewery owners, whose business once stood alongside this house. (See the brewery below). When the brewery ceased operation, an agricultural engineering works called Cooper's took over the premises and continued operation for more than 50 years. This business also ceased functioning and in 1990 the buildings were all demolished and the present medical centre/Boots replaced them. This area, where there is now a traffic island, is called Market Hill. It was an area that once saw major events in the town's history. Cross the road to the other side of the traffic roundabout and before you is a building that was once the Town Hall Chambers. This building has seen many uses over the years. It was built in the early part of the 19th century as a 'British School'. It was enlarged in 1845 and again in 1899, when it became the Town Hall. The imposing western front and entrance were added at that time. From 1937 it was known as Church House. Despite the fact that it was still in the hands of the Council it continued to be the main meeting venue in the Town. Upstairs the main room was capable of holding up to 200. It hosted public meetings, dances, local theatre groups' productions and school activities. Eventually the Parochial Church Council sold it to the Baptist Church. They later moved to Lovat Hall and the building was subsequently sold for redevelopment. Take note of the frontage, which was designed by well-known local architect Richard Sheppard in 1845.

Walk over the little car park and you will come to another building of a similar size and appearance, now St. Bede's Roman Catholic Church. It too was built in 1845 by Richard Sheppard. It once functioned as the Town Lock-up and Magistrates' Court where another building had stood. Around 1881 it served as the Temperance Hall for the Plymouth Brethren, a non-conformist religious group. Richard Sheppard was a founder member. Later the building became The Mission Hall.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The Temperance Movement began in the early 19th century. Before this, although there were movements against drunkenness and excess, total abstinence from alcohol was very rarely advocated or practised. There was also a concentration on hard spirits rather than on abstinence from alcohol and on moral reform rather than legal measures against alcohol. An early temperance movement began during the American Revolution in America, with farmers forming associations to ban whiskey distilling. The movement spread to eight states, advocating temperance rather than abstinence and taking a stance on moral issues such as Sunday religious observance. The American Temperance Society was formed in 1826 and within 12 years claimed more than 8,000 local groups and over 1,500,000 members. At roughly the same time temperance societies were founded in England, inspired by a Belfast professor of theology and Presbyterian Church of Ireland Minister Rev. John Edgar in 1829. The 1830s saw a tremendous growth in temperance groups, not just in England and the United States, but also in British colonies. As a result there was a branch of this organisation in the town. Walk down to the end of the High Street and you will see that bearing left is Station Road, so called because it once led to the Railway Station. Across the road is a building that was formerly The Newport Arms public house when the railway closed in 1964. Before that it was The Railway Tavern, selling Newport Fine Ales and Stouts, an inn from which the Railway bus pulled by a horse departed. To the left as you look at the restaurant there used to be a building for stabling when the railway bus was in use. Note that these were the days of flooding in those parts of Newport Pagnell. Further down on the right are a row of houses just before you get to the roundabout. The large houses are said to have been built by the architect Richard Sheppard with bricks from a railway viaduct constructed over the Wolverton Road. The viaduct was built for the proposed railway from the town station to Olney in 1865/6. This would have linked Olney to the Midland Railway line and connecting Bedford to Northampton. The line to Olney was never built and as a result the viaduct was demolished. The Station Road car park is situated on the area, which was once the final buffer stop for the railway sidings.

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