

Shaftesbury's Heritage Trail

Shaftesbury has been a place for travellers since it was founded by King Alfred the Great in the 9th century. This came about due to Shaftesbury's earlier importance as a place of pilgrimage to its important Abbey. More roads radiate to and from Shaftesbury than any other town in Dorset.

The only way to really discover and appreciate the fabulous beauty and historical interest of the town is to go around the town on foot. The following tours are recommended, both of which have many sitting places to have a rest. Look out for the eight heritage panels and twelve blue plaques which can be found at the more interesting parts of the town, with information on the town's history and the buildings.



The short tour is mainly flat. It will lead you to magnificent views and will help you discover the most interesting and historical aspects of the town. This tour lasts about 30 minutes.

The long tour is steeper but it is the ideal way to discover ehouses and small picturesque courtyards in the lower part of the town. This tour lasts about an hour.

For both walks

The start point is behind the **Town Hall** with a beautiful view of the famous **Gold Hill**, the favourite spot of many photographers, artists and directors (featured in the famous Hovis bread 'boy with a bike' advertisement directed by Sir Ridley Scott. He is well known for his films including *Gladiator*, *Black Hawk Down* and *Hannibal*). The **Sun & Moon Cottage** and **St Peter's Church** are on your left. Have a look at **Gold Hill Museum** which, in the past, was a 'doss house', the massive buttress wall on your right is all that remains of the Abbey precinct wall.

Go back up the High Street and, if the Town Hall is open, take a look at the mural by local artist Phillis Wolff which depicts four periods of the life of the Abbey.

Short Tour

Facing the Town Hall, turn right and follow the signs to Park Walk. On the right, you will find the Shaftesbury Abbey, founded by King Alfred, which is worth visiting. On your left, admire the thrilling view of Melbury Hill and Cranborne Chase; most of what you see was once owned by the Abbess of Shaftesbury and was also a

Information Panels



Shaftesbury Town Hall

The present Town Hall was completed in 1827. St. Peter's is the oldest surviving church in Shaftesbury.

Park Walk

Originally within the precincts of Shaftesbury Abbey. In the 1760s this was a fashionable promenade with superb views across the Blackmore Vale.

Castle Hill

Has an extensive view to King Alfred's Tower in Wiltshire. During the civil war, a small castle was built towards the western end of the escarpment.

Blue Plaques



1. Shaftesbury Town Hall

Built in 1827 by Earl Grosvenor who owned most of Shaftesbury, it replaced the opened-arched New Guild Hall. The clock tower was added in 1879.

2. Gold Hill – panel on Gold Hill Museum gate

Gold Hill is one of the most scenic sites of the trail and is well known as the 'Hovis' hill in the boy with a bike advertisement. The massive wall is all that remains of the Abbey precinct wall that once separated the Abbey from the town.

4. Gold Hill House

Nearby stood the medieval Guild Hall, replaced in 1569 by the new Guild Hall, which stood in the middle of the High Street near St Peter's church.

5. Sun & Moon Cottage

A priest's house for St Peter's church in the 16th century, the Sun and Moon Inn was at the heart of Shaftesbury's market days for over 200 years.

6. Ox House

Ox House (c.1600), later enlarged, probably belonged to John Grove, a Shaftesbury benefactor. The house featured as 'Old Grove Place' in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.

9. Edwardstow

The centre part of the house predates the Dissolution of Shaftesbury Abbey in 1539 and is the oldest house in Shaftesbury.

8. Toby's Court

Site of Lord Arundel's town house c.1590, later the Rose & Crown Inn. Present building c. 1835 may include parts of the old house.

medieval hunt territory. Enjoy the panoramic views of the Blackmore Vale from Park Walk and consult the panoramic dial for orientation. The decorative tiles at the base of the sheltered viewpoint tell the Abbey's story.

At the end of Park Walk, turn right at the crossroads at Pine Walk, where you can continue to enjoy the view of St James Street below. Follow the signs to Castle Hill until St Johns Hill and then turn right. A small part of the road (be careful: no footpaths) leads you to an entrance on the left called Castle Hill. A short distance away you can admire the spectacular view on the northern side of Shaftesbury. This is the oldest part of Shaftesbury dating back to the 9th Century. Look out for 'Edwardstow' on of the oldest cottages in the town. The west of Castle Hill is the site of ancient diggings and you can see down to the hamlet of Enmore Green.

The Fountain Inn at Enmore Green has got a fresh water well which, in the past, was one of the wells that supplied the town with water. The water was carried to the top of the hill, probably by donkeys, and was sold in the streets. The ancient Byzant water ceremony, unique to Shaftesbury, was an opportunity for the Town Corporation and residents to give thanks to Lord Gillingham who was the owner of the hamlet.

A "kissing gate" on your left at Castle Hill leads to a panoramic site on the west promontory (with a compass viewpoint). However you cannot go any further, so you will have to retrace your steps. Follow the path that circles Castle Hill to Bimport. See on your left Ox House, which appears in Thomas Hardy's "Jude the Obscure" (see the weathercock).

Turn right immediately to go to Abbey Walk, the site of the great Abbey gate. The former school is on your left and the Westminster Memorial Hospital is on your right. At the end of Abbey Walk is the War Memorial, in the style of a Celtic cross. Then turn left onto Park Walk again to get back to the Town Hall, enjoying the views on your right once again.



High Street, Shaftesbury. Cir. 1830s

Long Tour

Go down Gold Hill. On your left, you can see the range of terraced houses. Some of them were probably public houses and shops in the past. Some stalls were placed between the buttresses on the west side of the ramparts and the poultry cross and a fish stall occupied regular sites at the top of the hill in this thriving market place.

Continue down the slope and turn right in St James Street. You will see The Two Brewers inn on your left. Further along this road is the Pump Yard on your right. It is a very beautiful court where you can admire an ancient water pump.

Go on until Tanyard Lane and turn right. A few yards away, turn right again, and then turn left to go up Stoney Path and join Park Walk and turn left. At the end of Park Walk, follow the same indications as for the short circuit. You can end your walk by a visit to St Peter's Church and enjoy the 15th century vault then visit the town's two museums.

Other areas to explore

Shaftesbury has a number of other interesting areas some are passed when walking to and from the town's car parks. Look out for the information panels and blue plaques along the way.

For more information about the town and its Abbey visit the Gold Hill Museum at the top of Gold Hill and the Abbey Museum along Park Walk (open from April, or Easter if earlier, to end of October).

Information Panels



Tesco Car park

Once the site of a medieval farm owned by the Abbess of Shaftesbury.

Angel Lane Car Park

Agriculture was an important local industry, with machinery being made at nearby premises in Victoria Street.

Angel Square

In 1667 Shaftesbury became the first postal town to be established in Dorset, and was to become the centre for the re-distribution of mail to surrounding villages and towns.

Bell Street Car Park

Once the site of the town's cattle market. In the 1950s the market was moved to a site further east near Christys Lane.

Barton Hill Car Park

Shaftesbury's literary fame features in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.



Information Panels

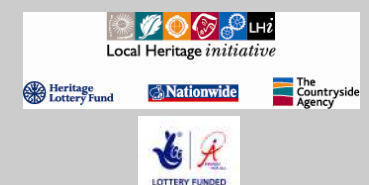
Each panel is fully illustrated and covers information on the following topics.



Blue Plaques

For more information about Shaftesbury and its past a short history book called "*Shaftesbury. A town of slopes and views*" is available for £3.00 from the either of the two museums or the Shaftesbury & Gillingham Tourist Information Centre.

Produces by the Shaftesbury & District Historical Society, Shaftesbury Civic Society and Shaftesbury Town Council.



www.shaftesburyheritage.co.uk

With acknowledgment to Shaftesbury & Gillingham TIC

Blue Plaques



3. Grosvenor Arms

The medieval New Inn, later Red Lion, was a posting inn on the Great West Road. Bought by Earl Grosvenor in 1820 and renamed Grosvenor Arms.

5. Connell's Estate Agents

Site of the George coaching inn. The present building housed the Victorian horse-drawn fire engine manned by volunteers.

7. The Retreat

Site of William Lush's Blue Coat school which gave free education, clothes and apprenticeships to poor boys from c. 1757 until 1870.

10. Shaftesbury Arts Centre

Opened on 1st November 1957 in the former Market Hall, which ran from Bell Street to the High Street and was in use for nearly a century.

12. Swans Yard

This yard was named after a noted coaching inn called 'The Three Swans' which stood on this site until about 1794



PARKING GUIDE FOR SHAFESBURY

P Somerfields front (57) Rail St / Blake St 2 hrs	P Angel lane (60) 4 hrs	P Cattle market Free Closed on Mon / Thurs some Saturdays & evenings
P Somerfields back (96) Rail St / Blake St 4 hrs	P Barton Hill (Blake St) (79) Free max 72hrs	P Tesco 3 hours
P Longmead Free max 72hrs	P Coach Park	

6% of parking available is for the disabled with permits

10p

HERITAGE TRAIL

- Shafesbury Tourist Information Centre
- Coach drop off points
- Toilets
- Disabled Toilets
- Petrol Stations
- Banks
- Museum
- Walks
- Pubs
- Restaurants
- View Points
- Supermarkets
- Playground
- Heritage Trail Panels
- Blue Plaque

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