

Burbage Heritage Trail

Burbage Heritage Trail

Route 1 — Start at St Catherine's Church

The trail begins at the centre of the old village of Burbage. A settlement has been here since before Roman times and later the Manor of Burbage (Burbach) was held by the Abbey of Coventry from 1043 and is mentioned in Domesday. Three trees of significance have stood in this area. In 1706 William Townsend planted an elm to help shield those placed in the village stocks. A second elm was planted in 1887 to mark the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign and the present copper beech tree was planted in 1953 to mark Elizabeth II's accession.

St Catherine's Church (1) is dedicated to Catherine of Alexandria and has recorded history dating from 1209. The registers date from 1562. The oldest part of the church is the tower where the foundations are believed to be Saxon. The present church was extensively rebuilt in 1842 although the South door dates from 1633.

Archer Cottage (2), named after George Archer 1810–1884 who was the Parish registrar. Over 500 years old it was originally the Parish Town Hall.

Cedar Lawns (3) is an 18th century house once surrounded by large grounds. The nearby Constitutional Club was built circa 1700 and from 1711–14 was the home of Prime Minister George Canning.

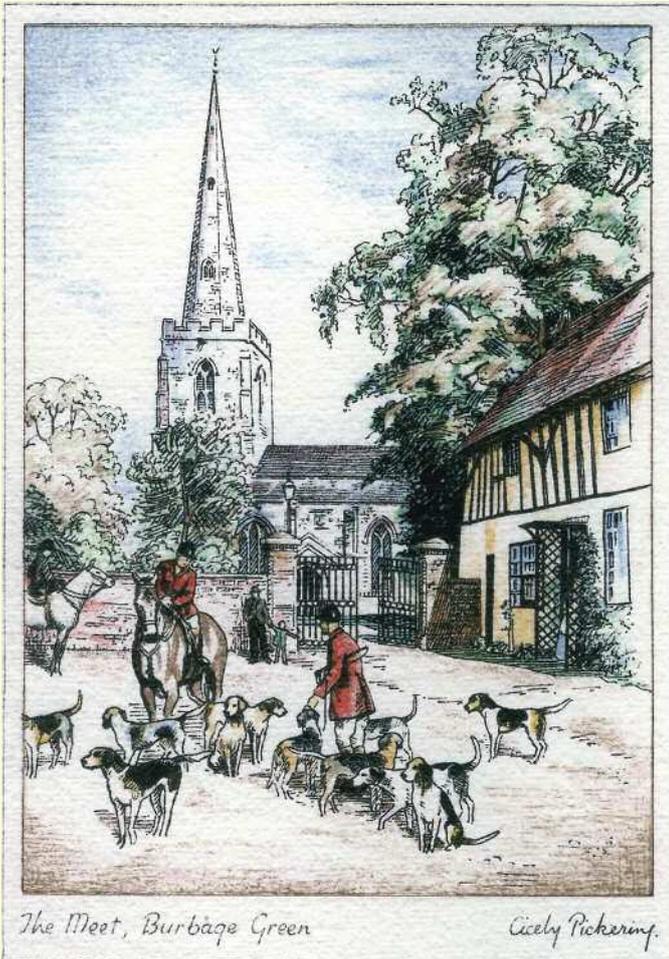
Stanton Houses were the premises of Charles Hands (4), the local tailor for over half a century.

Burbage Manor House (5) dates from the 17th century with many additions. Originally the home of the Lords of the Manor, the large grounds contain fish ponds thought to date from the 11th century.

Burbage Hall (6) has parts dating from the 16th century with a 17th century exterior and was once used as a hunting lodge for the Earls of Gainsborough.

The Grange (7) dates from 1608. The historian, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner described this house as having the best interior for a house of the period.

The Co-operative Society (8) was established in 1873 as the Burbage and District Industrial



The Meet, Burbage Green

Cicely Pickering.



Information compiled by
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www.burbageheritage.co.uk

Co-operative Society Ltd and could supply everything from cradle to grave.

Tong Lodge (9) was built in 1845 and is an elegant three storey house and was the birthplace of Charles Chamberlain Hurst, an eminent early pioneer of the science of genetics.

Lower Church Street (10) has changed little.

The present Congregational Church (11) was built in 1895 using bricks made locally.

The Croft (12) was formerly the Roebuck Inn and was the staging post for coaches using the Watling Street between Chester and London.

The Horsepool (see information board) was saved from development by public subscription.

A diversion could be made using Pughe's Path alongside the Infant School to Pughe's Paddock rose garden. Information is displayed here about the importance of horticulture to the village in the 19th and 20th centuries and the eminent rose breeders



The Grange (7)

who lived and worked here.

Burbage War Memorial (13) was erected in 1921 and replanted in 1999 to mark the 75th anniversary of the Royal British Legion, all by public subscription.

The present retirement home was built on the site of the original Moat House (14) that was used by the Rev. Dyke from 1795 as the Rectory. This fine Georgian mansion was demolished in 1956 and the present Rectory built.

The end of Grove Road (15) was formerly known as Back Lanes.

The Cross Keys Inn (16) has been an ale house for 200 years.

The National School (17) was built in 1871 with money and land endowed by Baroness Cowper. It ceased to be used as a school in 1975 but continued in community use until 1996 when it was demolished and modern houses built.

Route 2 — Start at Library

These crossroads marked a major route into the village from the Watling Street (A5) used by stagecoaches en route from London to Chester. During WW2 the area was considered of strategic importance and a trench was constructed by the Home Guard as a last line of defence for the village.

Cottages (18) demolished in the 1960s to make way for the Library were surrounded by a wall made from the same local stone as that surrounding the house built in 1829 opposite (19).

This building (20) was known as the Boot Inn in 1846 and was a post office in the 1890s.

Windsor (Wind soar — old English for a windless ridge) Street (21) and the Red Lion that has held a licence since 1707.

The cottage (22) that once stood here was believed to be a Toll House and the Fair was held on the fields behind.

The Holyoak family were blacksmiths for three generations on this site, the last horse being shod in 1948 (23).

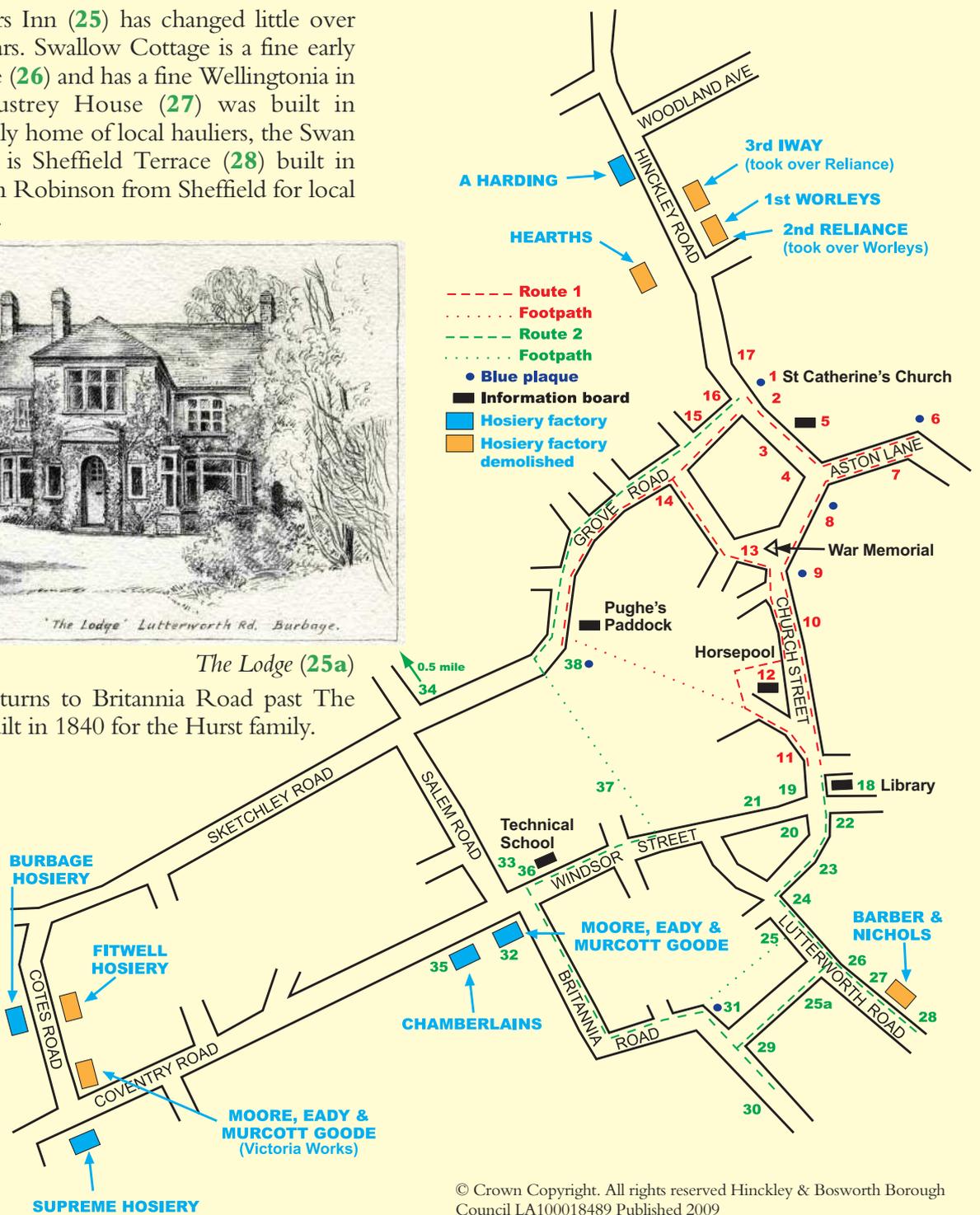
Burbage Liberal Club (24) closed in 2007 after over 100 years.

The Chequers Inn (25) has changed little over the past 200 years. Swallow Cottage is a fine early Victorian House (26) and has a fine Wellingtonia in the garden. Austrey House (27) was built in 1915 as the family home of local hauliers, the Swan family. Beyond is Sheffield Terrace (28) built in 1877 by William Robinson from Sheffield for local hosiery workers.



The Lodge (25a)

The route returns to Britannia Road past The Lodge (25a), built in 1840 for the Hurst family.



Hosiery in Burbage

The Parish Workhouse (29) stood on the corner of Workhouse Lane. It was in use from the 17th century to 1840 when the inmates were moved to Hinckley.

Whitehouse Farm (30) dates from 1815. The land opposite was allocated to veterans from WW1 as allotments and is known as Comrades' Fields.

Cheadle House (31) was built in 1900 for the Higham family — they came from Cheadle in Cheshire. A bomb fell in Freemans Lane during WW2 — it was probably jettisoned after raids on Coventry.

The 19th century hosiery factory now known as The Barracks (32) was a major employer in the area. During WW2 it was home to American paratroopers prior to D-Day in June 1944.

Salem Road (33) was once called Stepping Stones Lane because of frequent flooding. The houses were built for workers at the nearby horticultural nursery. A diversion can be taken along here to see the memorial (34) on Featherston Drive to the crew of the Wellington bomber that crashed in 1945.

Two original framework knitters' cottages (35) are found on Coventry Road.

The Sycamores (36) became a public house in the 1920s. A plaque was unveiled on the 60th anniversary of D-Day by veterans of the American forces billeted here.

An Information Board detailing the importance of the hosiery industry to the village is on Windsor Street outside the former Technical School (see map).

An earlier Wesleyan Chapel (37) was erected in 1815 and the present building dates from 1866. The cast iron lamp post in the car park is a war memorial. The day school founded in the 1850s used the side building until 1927 when a new school was built on Grove Road.

The school, now Burbage CoE Infant School, (38) was built on land donated by the Hurst family and was the site of the Burbage Experimental Station (see Blue Plaque on school wall).

Pughe's Paddock was restored in 2007 and planted with roses that were bred by Herbert Robinson and Charles C Hurst (see Board).

Knitted hose became the height of fashion in the reign of Elizabeth I. The hose were hand knitted from fine silk thread and it was a very laborious operation. In 1589 a clergyman from Nottingham named William Lee conceived the idea of a knitting machine that could make the process less arduous. Over the next ten years he developed his machine to such an extent that he was able to knit fine silk stockings 'fit for a Queen'.

A cottage industry began to be established and because William Iffè brought his knitting frame to Hinckley in 1640, the industry became a mainstay of the local economy. The residents in Burbage also took to the knitting machine and it is estimated that by 1844 there were 450 knitting frames in the village involving whole families in the process of turning yarn into stockings.

Fortunes fluctuated but for the majority the living was little more than subsistence. The knitting frames belonged to the knitting masters and when the industrial revolution took hold, the frames were taken from homes and put into the newly built factories. Conditions in the early factories were much worse than in cottages and child labour was widely used because it was cheaper than paying an adult.

Several factories were built in Burbage from the end of the 19th century and with them employment and wealth followed. The peak of manufacturing for the hosiery and knitwear industry was from the 1930s to the 1960s and with the technical improvements being made production increased from one stocking every 15 minutes to one being manufactured in seconds. During WW2 the non essential manufacture of stockings ceased and the factories were used for war production and storage. At the end of the war, the introduction of nylon enabled stocking production to begin again to meet the ever growing demand for stockings and tights.

Rising production costs, coupled with huge consumer demand during the latter part of the 20th century meant that hosiery began to be imported,

Biographies of Recipients of Blue Plaques

Kinard Baghot de la Bere 1837 – 1932

Kinard Baghot de la Bere lived at Burbage Hall from 1881 until 1904. He began his working life as a civil engineer studying under Brunel and subsequently worked on railway projects in South America and Ireland. He retired from engineering to pursue a career in agriculture and wrote about the rural economy becoming a parliamentary advisor on agricultural matters. His principle interest lay with poultry and whilst in Burbage he discovered that sodium metasilicate, commonly known as water glass, stopped egg shells from becoming porous and could be used to preserve them for several months. Born in Gloucestershire he and his wife Catherine had six children. The youngest son, Stephen, became a renowned artist and book illustrator exhibiting at the Royal Academy.

As an active member of the Burbage Debating Society, he argued for a better water supply in 1887, something the village did not have until 1915. The east window in St Catherine's Church was donated by the family.

He left Burbage in 1904, moved to Bishop Stortford and then to Bath where he died.

Herbert Robinson 1884 – 1977

Herbert Robinson was 'regarded as one of the greatest hybridists in horticulture' when Harry Wheatcroft wrote his book *My Life with Roses* in 1959. Herbert was then at the peak of his success in breeding roses. He left school at 13 and trained at various private estates before returning to Burbage in 1916 to begin his nursery business. By the 1930s the nursery had expanded and Herbert had been awarded Royal National Rose Society Gold Medals for Phyllis Gold and Christopher Stone roses. He became an Honorary Vice President of the RNRS in 1950, an international judge and was awarded the Queen Mary Gold Medal, the RNRS Veitch Medal and in 1956 the MBE for services to horticulture.



Framework Knitter's Cottage

particularly from the Far East where production costs were much lower. Local industry, facing strong foreign competition, went into decline. From 12 factories in the 1960s employing over 1000 people, mainly female operatives, today there are none. Many of the buildings have been demolished to make way for housing, while others have been converted for use as warehouses and office units.

This board stands in the grounds of the former Burbage Technical School. This arts and crafts style building was erected in the 1890s for pupils of both the Burbage National and Wesleyan schools.

The timetable was allocated between the two schools on a half day basis. Boys were taught carpentry and gardening; the grounds being laid out to produce both food and flowers. Inside was a kitchen where the girls would be taught cooking and dressmaking.

The two schools became Burbage Council Schools in 1902 and the building continued to be used jointly by both schools until the Burbage Grove Road School was opened in 1927. After that time the building was sold and has since had many uses including that of a small hosiery factory.

Edward Crump 1878 – 1956

Edward Crump was born in Cheltenham, trained as a Civil Engineer and moved to Hinckley in 1903 as the Chief Borough Engineer. In this post he was responsible for designing the Burbage Water Scheme that brought clean piped water to Burbage in 1915. Burbage had the unenviable reputation for being one of the most unsanitary parishes in the district and for over 40 years the debate had raged about improving the water supply only to be dismissed because of cost.

Edward Crump had a distinguished military career during World War One and received the Military OBE and the Portuguese Order of Aviz. He returned to Burbage after the war and later set up business as an architect and surveyor in the town. Tong Lodge was his home for the last twenty years of his life.

Charles Higham 1855 – 1934

Stanley Higham 1883 – 1947

Charles Higham was appointed the Headmaster of the National School in December 1878 and retained that position until his retirement in 1920. He was a prominent member of the community, a parish councillor and church warden and was instrumental in getting the war memorial erected in 1921.

Stanley was one of four siblings who all became teachers under the tutelage of their father. He became Headteacher on his father's retirement in 1920 until his death in 1947.

Cheadle House was built in 1900 and named after Charles' birthplace in Cheshire.

Roger Cotes 1682 – 1716

The son of Robert Cotes, Rector of Burbage, Roger showed mathematical talent from an early age and following schooling in Leicester and London he entered Trinity College Cambridge in 1699.

He was a contemporary of Isaac Newton and wrote an introduction to Newton's theory of gravitation. At the age of 26 he was appointed the first Plumian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, but he died suddenly from a violent fever in 1716 at the age of 33. Newton wrote a tribute that 'had he lived we would have known something'.

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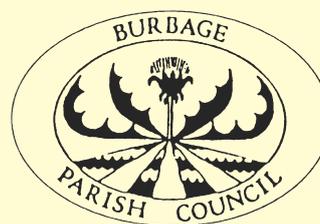


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Cicely Pickering 1908 – 1975

The illustrations in this leaflet were drawn by Cicely Pickering and are reproduced here by kind permission of her family.

Cicely was born in Hinckley into the well known stationery and packaging family and trained as an artist at Leicester College of Art & Technology in 1926 after leaving Hinckley Grammar School. She worked for the family company illustrating box covers for the hosiery industry.

Many of her pen and ink sketches and water colour drawings were used for calendars and post cards depicting the local area.

*Information prepared by Burbage Heritage Group.
Further information available from the Group's web site
www.burbageheritage.co.uk*

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