

Chipping Norton Heritage Trails - Town Centre (East)



Start your walk by the Town Hall. This magnificent structure was built in 1842, largely at the expense of Squire Langston of Sarsden House. It replaced an open market hall, not unlike Witney's surviving Butter Cross. One of its pillars now stands outside the lower hall, on an even older stone base.



Question 1: How many stone columns were there supporting the old market hall? Hint: Look at the bronze plate on the base of the column.



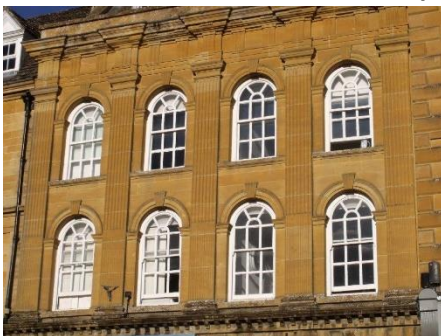
The original Coop building, facing the Town Hall steps, replaced a fine Baroque coaching inn called The Talbot. The excellent town museum is housed on the first floor of the present building.

Question 2: When was this front range built?

Hint: Look up at the gable over the arcade entrance.

The postal address of the distinguished row of tall, largely Georgian, buildings looking down on the marketplace is 'High Street', but it is always known locally as 'Topside'.

Question 3: Which Topside business has these elegant upper-floor windows?





The former White Hart Inn, which closed in 2003, was re-fronted in grand Baroque style in 1725, but it was probably an inn from the 15th century. Look through the reinstated archway and you will see the early rear range with its overhanging jetty.



Question 4:

What violent

event happened here in 1754? Hint: Look on the oval plaque.



The properties on Topside all had long 'burgage' plots reaching to Albion Street. Go through the doorway to the right of the newsagents to see one that survives.

Question 5: What is the name of the family that made rope here?

Hint: Look on the oval plaque.

This elegant building (right) includes one of our favourite shops.

Question 6: When was it constructed? Hint: Look at the lead

rainwater hoppers. Walk along to the end of Horsefair. The gabled building rounding the corner into London Road is called Cock's Almshouses, and the flats are still administered by the Town Council.



Question 7: What is the date of these almshouses? Hint:

Look high up on the gable.

Cross Horsefair and follow round the hoardings screening the former hospital until you can see through the wire mesh screen.

This sad building was once Hill Lodge, the fine home of John Ward. He demolished some ancient almshouses and moved the street to give himself a large front garden. Cock's Almshouses were built by Ward as their replacement. The house became the town's War Memorial Hospital in 1920.



Question 8: What is the name of the street curving round two sides of its front garden?



Return along Horsefair. This former pub (left) has had various names but was originally the Three Tuns. A copious spring, emerging behind and below it, once flowed past Hill Lodge and into a tite or public water tank off Spring Street - which was at that time known as Tite End.

The Blue Boar, facing down the marketplace, has a long history as an inn.

Question 9: What is the name of the steep hill on which it stands (once known locally as "The Bricks")?



The Guildhall is one of the town's oldest and most important buildings. The carved, arched doorway and the stone-mullioned windows are particularly attractive. Its earliest timbers have been dated to 1520.



Question 10: What did the building become after 1607? Hint: Look on the oval plaque.



The picturesque jumble of small units that make up Middle Row probably started as early infill of a larger marketplace. Some buildings include timber-framed walls and probably date from the 16th century. La Vechia Cantina also has handsome moulded oak beams inside.

Question 11: What is the street number of the shop with this lovely bow window above an iron grille?



Before its outer walls were rebuilt in stone around 1950, The Bunch of Grapes (now called Bitter and Twisted) looked

Photo courtesy of Chipping Norton Museum



a lot more picturesque. Its cellars once extended under the street and went much deeper

than they do today. There are even tales of tunnels! Surprisingly, at least one building stood where the road is now.



Question 12: What is sold in the shop that has this fine period front?

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Answers: 1. Nine 2. 1890 3. Sue Ryder 4. A political riot 5. Keck 6. 1730 7. 1870 8. Spring Street 9. Goddards Lane 10. The Town Hall 11. No 2 12. Books