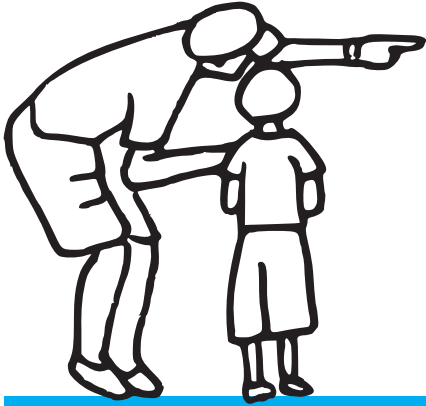
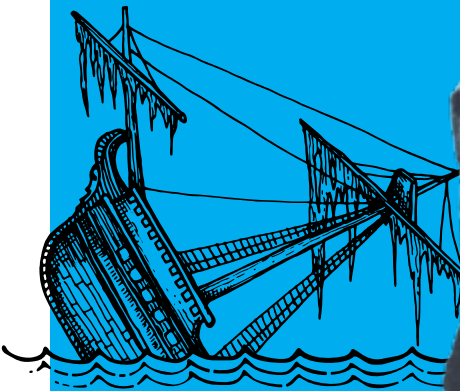
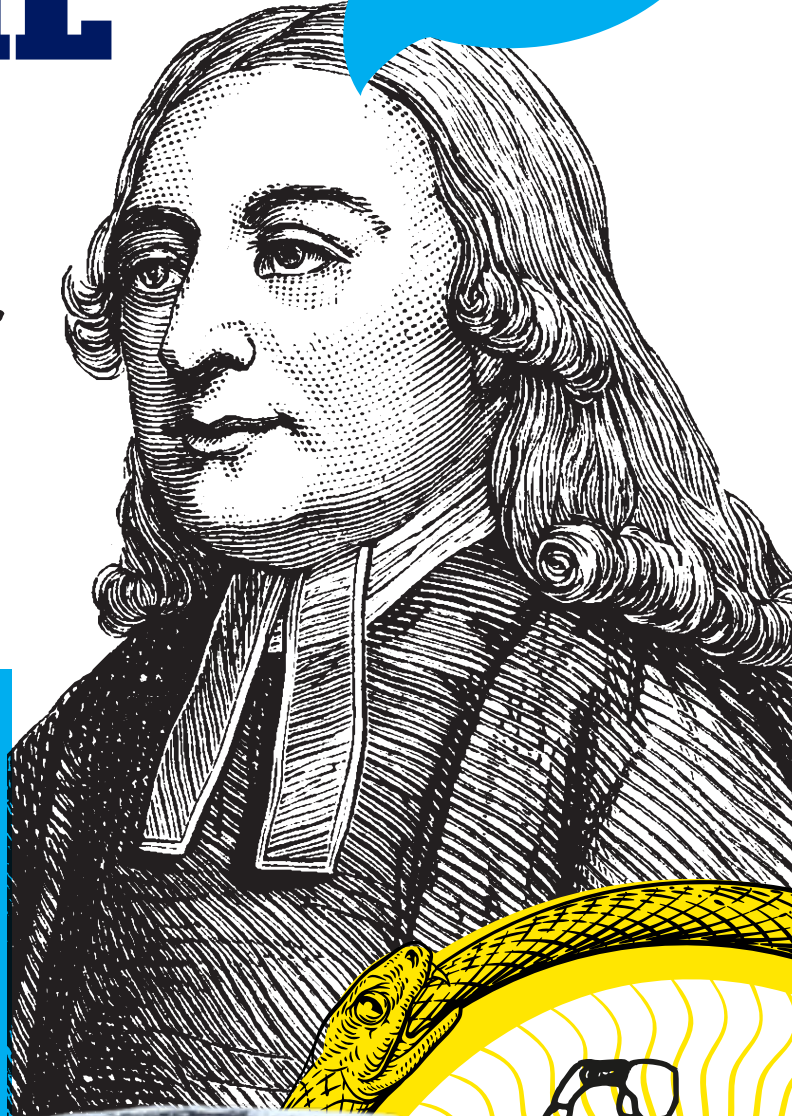


# HIGH STREET DISCOVERY TRAIL

**HI!**  
KEYNSHAM



Discover 2,000  
years of change  
in a riverside  
market town



We don't know when people first started to settle in Keynsham, but it was probably in prehistoric times – in 1965, a resident found Stone Age tools buried in her garden.

It's possible that the nearby River Avon was used to transport the stones for Stonehenge from Wales to Wiltshire. Later, the Romans built houses, at least two villas and a crossing over the river.

# HI!

## KEYNSHAM



Keynsham possibly had its own minster church in early medieval times, before Keynsham Abbey was founded in the 1100s. In 1685, the town's County Bridge over the Avon played a role in the Monmouth Rebellion, the unsuccessful attempt to depose the Catholic King James II. After the dissolution of the monasteries there was a period of decline, but the town's fortunes improved in the 1700s with the rise of the brass industry along the Avon and Chew valleys.

In the 1920s, the arrival of a chocolate factory – JS Fry & Sons – brought big changes to Keynsham. Thousands of jobs were created, bringing lots more people to the town. After the Second World War, house building and general prosperity led to significant growth and redevelopment in Keynsham. Though many historic buildings have been lost, there is still a wealth of architectural interest, archaeological gems and fascinating stories for visitors to discover.



### ABOUT THE TRAIL

This trail begins in the heart of Keynsham High Street. Explore the historic high street shops, discover ancient ruins and enjoy some of Keynsham's most beautiful green spaces.

The route is just over 1.5 miles. The route is paved and there are no steps, but there are some steep sections in the Memorial Park and on Dapps Hill. Public toilets are available in Keynsham Library and the Memorial Park Pavilion.

Optional extensions to the route will take you north to the former Fry's chocolate factory, and south past Albert Mill's restored waterwheel and along the River Chew.





## 1 CLOCK TOWER

Start your walk by Keynsham Clock Tower where you will see many images of the town's history displayed. Look out for the stained-glass image of a woman with a red halo and golden cup. This is St Keyna, a holy woman who lived over 1,500 years ago and who was possibly the inspiration behind Keynsham's name. According to legend, St Keyna lived a solitary life on the banks of the serpent-infested River Avon. It is said that the power of her prayers turned the serpents to stone. You might see some of those 'serpents' in old walls as you follow this trail. The story was probably inspired by the ammonite fossils that are abundant in this area.

As you stand by the Clock Tower, look around at the modern buildings and try to imagine what they might have looked like in the past. Keynsham has a lot of history, though not all of it is immediately visible.

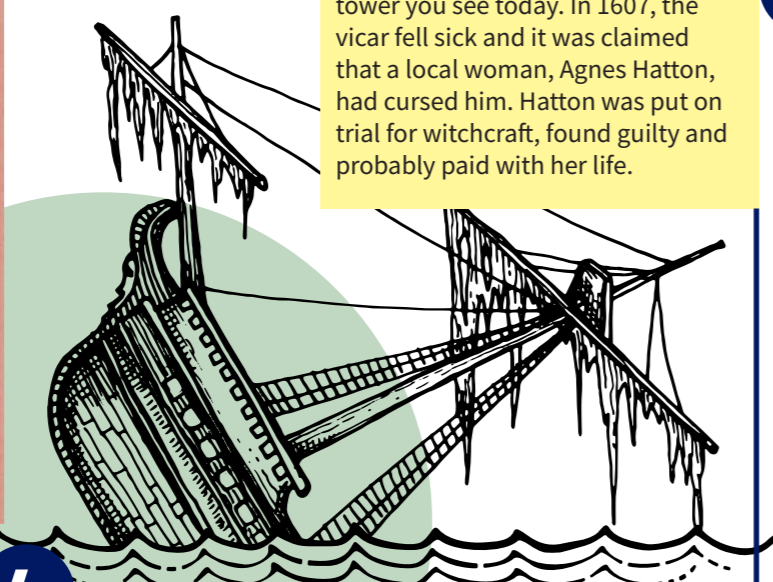
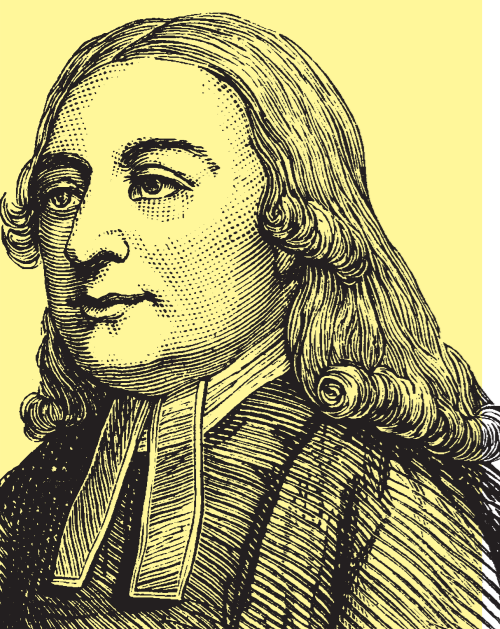
## 2 NUMBER 53 HIGH STREET

Continue along the High Street. The Georgian building at number 53 was built in 1804 as a Wesleyan chapel. John Wesley was an important church figure in the 1700s. He had many followers in Keynsham. When a new church was built, the building was sold to the company who owned one of the Keynsham mills. Later, it became a boot eyelet factory, then an electrical store.



## 3 NUMBER 47/49 HIGH STREET

Keynsham Picture House opened in 1908 during the earliest years of modern cinema. When the first film was shown, admission was 3d (just over 1p). However, when war broke out, the owners struggled to sell tickets. The venue closed in 1915, becoming a motor repair garage instead. Keynsham's own purpose-built cinema opened on Charlton Road in 1936.



## 4 KEYNSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

There has been a Baptist church and burial ground on this site since 1802. The building you see today opened in 1835.



## 5 ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Built around 1270, it is Keynsham's oldest surviving building. It has changed a lot over the years, perhaps most dramatically when the steeple collapsed during a storm in 1632. It was replaced by the west tower you see today. In 1607, the vicar fell sick and it was claimed that a local woman, Agnes Hatton, had cursed him. Hatton was put on trial for witchcraft, found guilty and probably paid with her life.

Rev Walter Mann was a pastor here (1884-1932) with a fascinating story. He survived two shipwrecks when travelling to South Africa to conduct missionary work, and was known for his pacifist views during the First World War.

## 6 ARCHWAY ON STATION ROAD

When you exit the churchyard, walk down Station Road and cross the bypass. On your right you will pass a reconstructed archway from the former Keynsham Abbey Mansion, which was built using stone salvaged from the abbey. Some of the ornate carvings date back 1,000 years. At the top of the doorway you will see the coat of arms of the Bridges, a wealthy local family who owned the land here for hundreds of years.



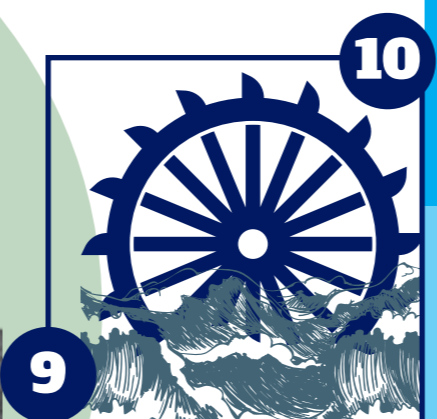
## 7 SOMERDALE ROMAN VILLA

Two Roman villas have been excavated in Keynsham. You can see the remains of one of them by the entrance to Somerdale Road. A small dwelling, bath house, burials and an inscribed pedestal were unearthed in 1922 when construction work for the Fry's chocolate factory began. Visit Keynsham Library to see mosaics from the much bigger Durley Hill Villa, located north-west of the present town centre.



## 8 KEYNSHAM ABBEY

Retrace your steps back along Station Road and turn left onto Abbey Park, the residential road immediately after the train station entrance. Follow the road to the end until you reach the remains of Keynsham Abbey, founded in the 1160s by William FitzRobert, 2nd Earl of Gloucester. A big community would have lived here in medieval times, including clergy, millers, brewers, bakers, farmers, gamekeepers and cooks.

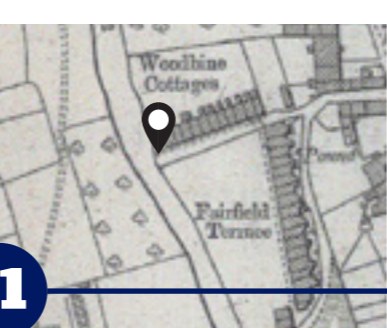


## 9 THE COLOUR MILL

Continue into Keynsham Memorial Park, down the steep footpath and under the bypass. After 300 metres you will find a weir and restored waterwheel on the River Chew. This marks the location of possibly the oldest mill in Keynsham, recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. Originally a grist mill for grinding corn, it was later converted to a wool mill, a brass mill and an ochre mill. In 1705, ironmaster Abraham Darby bought the mill, and manufactured items included Lisbon pans and Guinea kettles. Examples are on display in Keynsham Library.

## 10 FLOOD MEMORIAL STONE

A few metres uphill from the weir is a memorial stone for the catastrophic flood of 10 July 1968. Torrential rainfall caused a wall of water to surge down the River Chew. Road bridges were swept away, shops and houses were damaged, and families were evacuated. Seven lives were lost in total. This memorial stone is an ancient monument that used to stand on County Bridge, marking the boundary between Somerset and Gloucestershire. The bridge was swept away in the flood, and the stone was recovered from the river.



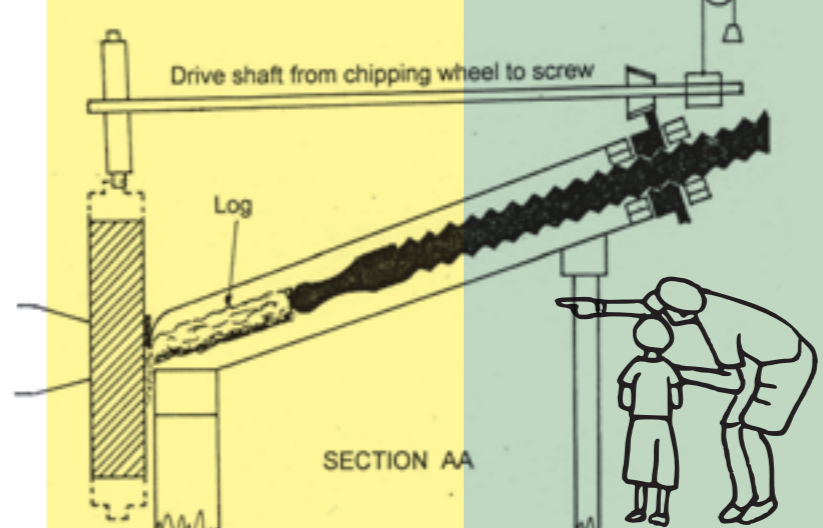
## 11 BRICKTOWN

Continue along the footpath beside the river, walk under the road, then cross the footbridge to join the footpath on the other side of the river. On your left is a grassy slope that was once home to two terraces of brick houses, known as Bricktown. Built cheaply in 1879 without electricity or running water, the homes were declared unfit for habitation just 15 years later. In 1967, the council issued a clearance order. The houses were demolished and the land was incorporated into the park.



## 12 ALBERT MILL

Continue along the river and cross the old bridge opposite Chew Bridge Cottage. Take a left onto Dapps Hill and left again to Albert Mill. Though it is a residential building today, it began life in the 1800s as a major industrial complex. By 1964 it was the last working dyewood mill in the country, processing imported wood into a powder for making blue and red dyes for cloth. The stone wheels are called edge-runners. They were powered by water and were used to crush the timber.



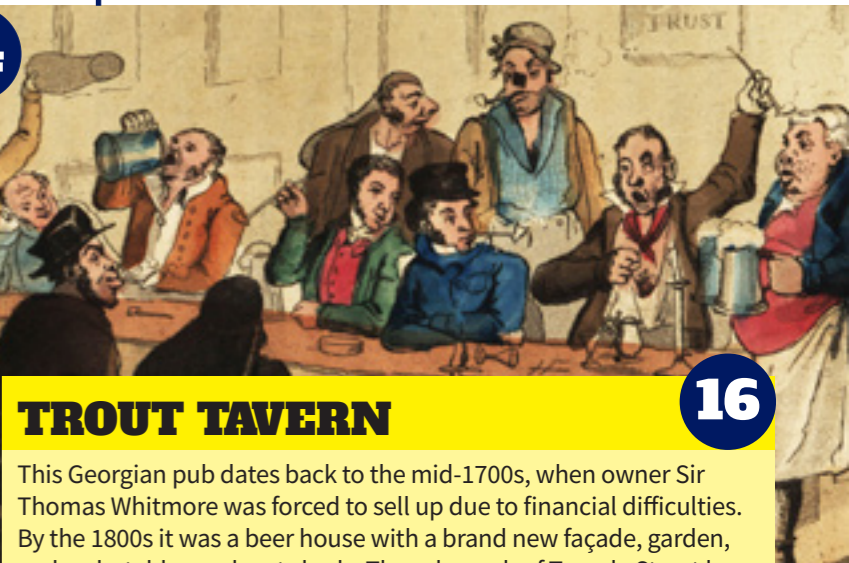
## 13 DAPPIFER'S HOUSE

Retrace your steps and continue up Dapps Hill. On the left, behind the wall, is Dappifer's House, nestled in an old parade of dwellings that have Jacobean-style windows and beams. In medieval times a dappifer was a steward or manager of an estate. The name suggests that a predecessor building on this site may have been connected to the abbey.



## 14 SHIP INN

Dating back to the 1600s, this is one of the oldest pubs in Keynsham. When it was built, the bridge at the bottom of Dapps Hill may have been the only river crossing in the area. Travellers would have used the bridge and stopped at the inn to drink, socialise and play games. In the 1970s the building was under threat of demolition but was saved, thanks to local protestors.



## 16 TROUT TAVERN

This Georgian pub dates back to the mid-1700s, when owner Sir Thomas Whitmore was forced to sell up due to financial difficulties. By the 1800s it was a beer house with a brand new façade, garden, orchard, stables and cart sheds. Though much of Temple Street has been redeveloped, the Trout and surrounding shops give us an idea of what the street may have looked like nearly 300 years ago.

## 15 BETHESDA UNITED FREE METHODIST CHAPEL

Now Simply Carpets, this building opened in 1860 as a breakaway from the Wesleyan Chapel in the High Street. It was in use as a church for over a hundred years. The chapel's tiny graveyard was later paved over and people started to report strange happenings. Mirrors were mysteriously broken, woodwork smashed, wallpaper torn and paint spilled. The incidents came to an abrupt end when the directors had the building exorcised.





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This trail has been co-created by Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society, Keynsham Town Council and Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The trail is part of Keynsham's Local Cultural Programme, a strand of Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zones scheme. A nationwide initiative helping to make high streets more attractive, engaging and vibrant, the Local Cultural Programme is led by Keynsham Cultural Consortium and funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Heritage High Street Fund, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Future High Streets Fund, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. **See [www.hikeynsham.co.uk](http://www.hikeynsham.co.uk) for more information.**



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