

walk notes

A circular pavement walk of 9 km taking in the stuccoed terraces of Pimlico and that part of Westminster behind the abbey originally known as Tothill.

Old Amersham circular walk

This 10.5 km walk starts and ends on a steep hill, descending to the valley of the Misbourne. There are two hills mirroring these on the other side of the valley, after passing through quaint Old Amersham. Despite the hills it is a fine country walk on footpaths of varying terrain with fine views over the valley.

Old Amersham

Records date back to pre-Anglo-Saxon times, when Amersham was known as Agmodesham, and by the time that the Domesday Book was written around 1086 it had become known as Elmodesham. In 1200 Geoffrey, Earl of Essex obtained a charter for Amersham allowing him to hold a Friday market and a fair on 7 and 8 September.

Old Amersham has a wide variety of periods of architecture – houses of all shapes and sizes. There are more than 150 Listed Buildings and much of the town is a conservation area. This town, possibly more than any other small town in England, preserves in its streets the same general appearance that it had in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The exact age of most of the houses can't be confirmed, as many of them have been altered and added to over the centuries. The oldest parts of nearly all the houses are the backs – the fronts having been modernised according to the fashion of the period. The earliest houses still standing are timber framed, with wattle and daub in the spaces. Local oak provided the main timbers. Flints were found in the chalk in this area and were split to face walls. The roofs were originally of thatch, but in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, brick and tile making were local industries. Tiles made at least 300 years ago are still on many roofs in Old Amersham and more recently slates have also been used.

The area to the East of the Market Hall is

known as Market Square and until 1939 the fourth side of the square was formed by a double row of cottages down towards The Broadway. The local council issued a slum clearance order and these cottages were demolished in 1939.

Visit <http://amershamhistory.info/>

The Amersham Martyrs

The Amersham Martyrs were Lollards, who followed of the teachings of John Wycliffe. Bishop Smith of Lincoln, whose diocese included Amersham, was determined to stamp them out. He targeted their leaders to make an example of them and strike terror in the hearts of their followers. Six men and one woman were burned to death at Amersham, all barbaric, the degree of cruelty shown to some the is beyond all reasonable comprehension.

William Tylesworth was the first and was put to death in 1506. He appears to have been a leader in the area and may have possessed a Wycliffe Bible.

The Bishop achieved much of his aim and 60 Lollards renounced their faith including Tylesworth's only daughter, Joan Clark, and her husband. The 60 were branded on the cheek with a hot iron, made to wear a symbol of a faggot, and on certain festival days had to parade with a faggot on their shoulder and a lighted torch in their hand. Despite her abjuration and branding Joan was still forced to light the fire that took her father's life.

In 1521 there was a further purge.

A memorial to the martyrs was built in 1931 on the hillside overlooking Amersham and the walk passes it on the return.

Chiltern Way

The Chiltern Way is a circular walking route of around 200 km (125 miles), that was established by Chiltern Society volunteers in 2000, passing through all four counties of the Chilterns (Bucks, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire) taking in some of the finest scenery in the country. There are three optional extensions taking the total route to a maximum of 278 km (172 miles).