



NB, much of this document has been gleaned from the Chichester Society's own walks, available at: <https://chichestersociety.org.uk/trails/>

	walk route 3.2 miles (5.2 km)
	connecting the walls, shorter walk
	options
	foot paths
	city walls
	pedestrian areas
	references to notes

0.25 km

CHICHESTER 1h 30m from Victoria,
 train divides at Horsham

towpath to Hunston and Birdham greenway

Notes

Chichester dates from the time of the Romans and is still based on the grid plan, the four main arterial streets dividing the town into quadrants, each with its own character.

The Romans built the first walls in the 200s. The town became a burgh under Alfred the Great.

The Normans built a motte and bailey in the north east quadrant, a simple earth and wooden affair. Archbishop Lanfranc in 1075 moved the seat of the See of the South Saxons north from Selsey, making Chichester a city. First recorded in 1193, a portion of the South East quadrant was kept separate from the rest of the city under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The City prospered in the middle ages from the production and sale of wool and woollen products, some of it abroad from its harbour nearby (from Dell Quay).

Some time after 1253 the Dominican friars (black friars) took up residence in the South East quadrant where St Johns church is today. From about 1230 Franciscan friars (grey friars) lived around St Martins Square but in 1269 they moved to the site of the castle.

In the early modern period, however, the town declined relative to other ports. The harbour gradually silted, although it was in use for ocean going vessels up until 1800.

The city was formerly divided into ten wards, two for each of the four main streets, together with wards for the Pallant and the Vintry, which latter included St. Mary's Hospital and the Grey Friars, but in 1896 the number of wards was reduced to three.

Chichester Harbour is designated a site of outstanding national beauty, and has Fishbourne, with its Roman Villa, at its head.

A Currently owned by the Prebendal School, this area was part of the former water meadows of the River Lavant known as Westgate Fields. The Lavant is a winterbourne, usually only flowing in the winter months. Its course was diverted around the city in Saxon times, both to supply fresh water but also to offer some defence in an era of Viking incursions. The river was culverted in 1871 (little more than an open sewer at that

time) with the creation of Market Avenue.

Widespread drainage and sewerage improvements undertaken in 1892 removed the river from the sewer system.

In 1994 the Lavant flooded and Chichester was only spared widespread damage because the Victorian culvert under the city withstood the immense pressure of water pumping through it over a period of weeks.

B Until the Avenue de Chartres was built in 1964/5, the city walls could be approached from the south across fields. The great bastion of the wall here is one of the few survivors. Chichester is one of only four towns in England to retain their defensive walls largely intact. Originally built by the Romans and refortified in both Saxon and medieval times, the walls remain on their original plan. Although the wall and bastion you see today have been repaired and restored, the core material is Roman.

C The wall alongside the Avenue de Chartres is early nineteenth century. The roundabout junction is the site of the old West Gate, demolished in 1773. Part of the masonry of the gate can still be seen abutting the Old Cottage Restaurant. On West Street is The Chichester Inn, one of the city's few remaining traditional pubs.

D The Bishop's Gardens were once for the private peace and contemplation of the bishop and his guests but are now for public enjoyment. There are many fine tree specimens in the gardens, including Ilex (Quercus ilex), a Maidenhair tree (Ginkgo biloba), the 'memory tree' and Chichester's tallest tree – a Wellingtonia (Sequoiadendron giganteum). Also many garden flowers.

E The path through the gardens passes by a Tudor red brick wall with ornamental turret to reach the Bishop's Palace (not open to the public), parts of which date back to the 16th century. A 12th-century chapel and hall previously stood on the site. Turn right, through the ancient stone gateway, into Canon Lane.

F Turning left into the flower-lined pathway of St Richard's Walk brings you into the cathedral cloisters. Ahead is a grassy quadrangle known as 'Paradise', which is where members of the

cathedral congregation and those living in the Close could choose to be buried into the nineteenth century. Admiral Sir George Murray was buried here in 1819.

G **The Cathedral** Turning left, the massive wall of the cathedral appears on the right. Note the gargoyles. Some are medieval but others were placed here in the 1990s when the cathedral was restored and feature cathedral officials! The building was constructed by the Normans using limestone from the Isle of Wight and from Normandy. Two great fires in 1114 and 1160 greatly damaged and weakened the early cathedral structure. It was not felt that the building could carry the weight of bells, so a separate bell tower was built of Isle of Wight sandstone. The spire was added in the fifteenth century. During the summer of 1834 the city was hit by six substantial earth tremors. In 1861, during restoration works, the cathedral spire collapsed into the nave. Fortunately no one was killed or injured. The spire was subsequently rebuilt to a design by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

[The cathedral has two carved reliefs of exceptional rarity among English sculpture dating from the 12th century; the remains of a Roman mosaic pavement, viewable through a glass window; a set of thirty-eight medieval misericords, dating from 1330; the graves of Gustav Holst and the Gothic "Arundel tomb" of Richard FitzAlan, 10th Earl of Arundel (1313–1376). Modern works of art include tapestries by John Piper and Ursula Benker-Schirmer, a window by Marc Chagall, a painting by Graham Sutherland (Noli me Tangere), a sculpture and a font by John Skelton and a reredos for the St John the Baptist's Chapel by Patrick Proctor.]

H The statue of St Richard by sculptor Philip Jackson was Chichester's Millennium Project. It commemorates one of Chichester's outstanding personalities. Pious and courageous, he resisted pressure from both the monarch and the cathedral clergy and thoroughly reformed the corrupt practices he found in the city. This included prohibiting the common practice of clergy keeping concubines and of offering 'sortilege', the irregular practice of using the Bible for divination rituals. He was

created a saint within a few years of his death in 1253. His tomb became a popular shrine for pilgrims visiting each year until demolished on the orders of Cromwell in 1538. Retrace your steps to cloisters and continue forwards.

I Vicars Close, where the Vicars' Choral would have lived, is considered one of the most beautiful and peaceful residential streets in the city. At one time the buildings opposite (now the backs of the shops in South Street) were also residences of the Vicars' Choral.

J Canon Gate ensured the security and privacy of the Cathedral Close and dates back to Tudor times, when there was a nightly curfew. Ecclesiastical courts were held in the room above the gate, as were the 'pie powder' courts held during the annual Sloe Fair every October.

K The White Horse opposite, (now Prezzo,) was one of Chichester's oldest inns, dating back to at least 1533. The building was re-fronted in the eighteenth century although the original Tudor timber-framed jetty can still be seen at the back of the building when viewed from West Pallant. A sign hangs from the original ornate eighteenth century wrought-iron bracket and you can still see the White Horse stained glass in the windows.

L 69 South Street was from 1729 to 1742 the home of Benjamin Martin, an eminent mathematician of the time. Martin made scientific instruments which he supplied to academic institutions, including Harvard College, in what was then the Colonies.

M The Vicars' Hall was built in 1397 for the Vicars' Choral, a body of clergy who performed prayers and masses for wealthy patrons, sometimes in return for the gift of property and land. The crypt itself is believed to be far older, possibly by two hundred years or more, making it one of the oldest buildings in the city. John Keats is believed to have been inspired to write his ghostly poem, *The Eve of St Agnes*, following his visits in 1819, while the naturalist and writer, W.H. Hudson, recounted what appears to be a nightmarish vision of The Crypt following his visit in 1899.

N The Market Cross was built in 1501 and was a gift to the city from Bishop Storey, to provide

shelter from sun or rain to the tradesmen on market days. The clock, cupola and bust of King Charles I are seventeenth century additions. The old medieval market took up a large area here where the four city streets meet. Over time, new buildings encroached onto the market area reducing the space available for stall-holders.

Q The row of shops here on the north side of West Street were once all part of the Dolphin and Anchor Hotel, which closed in 1997. Until 1918, there were two inns – The Dolphin and The Anchor. On the parapet, a golden dolphin and a golden anchor mark the position of the two inns. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were great political and religious rivalries in the city, with the Dolphin taking on the Whig cause, while The Anchor adhered to the Tories.

P This building was built in 1906 as the Oliver Whitby School, replacing an earlier building. The school was founded in 1702 to give a good education to poor children of Chichester and the parishes of Wittering and Harting. It was also known as the bluecoat school. The new building was designed by architect Reginald Blomfield in the so-called “Wrenaissance style”. It is believed that the oval windows on the second floor lit five bedrooms where the school staff stayed. The boys’ dormitories were to the rear.

Q The former church of St Peter the Great was only completed in 1852. Previously the congregation of this parish worshipped in the north transept of the cathedral, but by the 1840s it was felt appropriate that the parish should have its own church. It was not practical to have two sets of services taking place in the cathedral and there was an ongoing hostility between the cathedral authorities and the parishioners of St Peter the Great. By the 1970s, conversely, church attendances were falling, and St Peter’s was no longer viable. It has been through several commercial uses since it closed in 1979 and is presently a pub. The memorial garden to the left marks the spot where the church tower would have been built, but this plan never came to fruition.

R Numbers 22 and 23 West Street are fine examples of Georgian town houses. The former

housed Chichester Library from 1947 to 1967, while number 23 is of note for its beautiful decorative rainwater head found just below the eaves, surmounting the downward drainpipe, currently painted white.

S Edes House (Grade I listed) is named after John Edes, a wealthy city maltster, who died before it was completed in 1696. It was the first ‘modern’ house built in the city; a brick and stone construction with a tiled roof. Previously all buildings in the city were timber framed with thatched roofs. The city council had banned all thatched roofs and given existing householders six months to update their properties or face a fine.

T Built in the grounds of Edes House in 1936 is County Hall, headquarters of West Sussex County Council. To the right is the back of Chichester Library, 1967, a fine example of mid-twentieth century architecture. It was the first library in the country to install a computer system. Opposite the library is The Novium, Chichester’s 21st century museum, built on the site of a Roman bath house, and opened in 2012.

U The promenade around the walls offers very good views at this point – north across the city towards the South Downs, giving a sense of the city’s ancient connection with its landscape. As you look down into the gardens of Orchard Street, to the left, note the large remnant of a detached bastion of the Roman wall, located at the rear of some flats.

V Providence Chapel was built in 1809 out of Mixon stone (Bognor rocks) from the famous reef off Bognor. There is a memorial plaque to two Protestant martyrs burnt at the stake in Chichester in 1555, during Queen Mary Tudor’s reign. They were not Chichester men, but were executed here as a warning to their like-minded co-religionists.

W 31 North Street is a fine example of a bow-fronted eighteenth century town house (now a shop) with oriel windows and a neo-classical entrance.

62 North Street was the home of Marjorie Wilkinson, an early convert to the Society of Friends (Quakers). It is believed that George Fox, the founder of the movement, addressed a meeting here in 1655. Marjorie’s home became

a place of regular Quaker meetings for many years, leading to her arrest and prosecution. In 1684 she was imprisoned for her Quaker activities.

X Fernleigh was built in the early 19th century by Chichester coal merchant, Charles Cooper. Notice that flakes of flint have been placed in the mortar between the flint nodules. This practice of 'galleting' was done to strengthen the mortar, a necessary precaution when so many flints were being deployed in the construction. Flint became a popular building material at this time as a consequence of a tax imposed on bricks, and the local abundance of flint, in chalk of the South Downs. Galleting also helped to deflect rainwater from the mortar and was regarded as an attractive feature in its own right.

Numbers 41 and 42 North Street appear to be typical buildings of the late Georgian period, but the later brickwork disguises timber framed buildings from the Tudor era.

Y On the northern corner of North Street and Guildhall Street is the Ship Hotel. This Grade II* listed building was built between 1804 and 1806 as the home of Admiral Sir George Murray, who had gained fame as a commander with Nelson at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801. It is said that Nelson wanted Murray to be his second-in-command at Trafalgar, but Murray was in England at the time attending to family business. Like his brother, Richard, who lived opposite him at Fernleigh, Sir George became mayor of Chichester.

Z In 1918 the Duke of Richmond presented Priory Park to the people of Chichester as a perpetual memorial to the fallen of the Great War. Before this it had only been available to certain residents and clubs for a fee. The friars established a priory here in 1269. The Franciscans, or Greyfriars, were abolished in England during the reign of Henry VIII and their former chapel was converted into the city's Guildhall. All criminal cases were held here, including some famous trials. Seven smugglers were sentenced to death in 1747 and subsequently hanged together on the Broyle (the rising ground immediately north of the city walls).

a Take the path signed to the Chichester

Walls. Take the promenade that runs along the walls. Below on the right is a statue with a long history. This figure of an aged man was placed in the park in 1873 and is known locally as 'The Druid'. Previously it had stood by a vault in the cathedral when it was known as 'Old Father Time'. Originally, however, it had been commissioned by the Corporation in 1777 for the South Street water conduit and represented Neptune. It is made from Coade Stone.

The park also contains a large mound. This was the 'motte' of Chichester Castle. In 1216 the French and their English allies seized the castle as part of an attempt to overthrow the unpopular King John. The castle, a wooden fort rather than a stone building, was demolished in the reign of John's successor.

b This sculpture by the artist John Skelton, (nephew of Eric Gill) was commissioned in 1964 by Chichester City Museum, originally sited here. The Museum has since relocated to The Novium.

c The medieval chapel with its great sloping roof of St Mary's Hospital and Almshouses was built in 1290. Widows and widowers of the city still reside in small bed-sitting rooms within this ancient structure. The chapel is renowned for its oakbeamed vaulted roof and the rustic carvings (misericords) in the chapel choir stalls.

d Much of St Martin's Square is a perfectly preserved corner of Georgian England, with an array of fine brickwork and elegant doorways and fanlights. The medieval church of St Martin's was rebuilt in 1803 and then, owing to its dilapidated condition, demolished in 1906. The outer walls now enclose a peaceful memorial garden which can be entered by an iron gate.

e 71 and 72 North Street, just to the north of Lion Street, appear to be Georgian, but are far older, timber-framed buildings that were re-fronted in brick and re-roofed in the eighteenth century.

f The Council House and Assembly Room represent the blossoming of civic pride in eighteenth century Chichester. A medieval council house had stood in the centre of North Street but was regarded as being far too lowly for the resurgent Georgian city. The new building was erected in 1731 and fifty years

later the lavish assembly rooms were added at the rear. Balls and recitals attracted all the wealthy fashionable families during the Georgian and Victorian eras. In 1840 Franz Liszt elicited rapturous applause when he gave a piano recital of his music here.

g 16 North Street; in the eighteenth century the building on this site was the studio of the Smith Brothers of Chichester. George and John painted landscapes, while their younger brother, William, painted still life. George, who was also known for his pastoral poetry, was the only one of the three to live past middle age.

h This little alley or 'twitchen' called The Crooked 'S', is believed to refer to the butcher's shambles (slaughterhouses) once located here. The presence of raw meat in such a confined space on a hot summer's day, would have presented many health risks to our ancestors, who relied on heavy salting to preserve meat in an era before refrigeration.

i St Olave's Church is the oldest religious building in the city. It is said to have been founded by Norwegian merchants in 1050 and dedicated to their martyred king, Olaf II, who died in battle in 1028. The ancient little church, which was partly re-built in Victorian times, closed in 1953 and became a Christian bookshop three years later.

j The Market House was opened in 1808 to provide a larger covered area to the market traders. It was designed by John Nash. Initially stallholders paid one shilling a day for their pitch which was regarded as a good investment by the traders, some of whom remained a familiar sight for many years. Only the portico remains of Nash's original design. Substantial alterations took place in 1900 including the upper floor, which originally opened as the Technical Institute and Art School. Two notable artists associated with the school were George Herbert Catt, the school's principal, and Eric Gill, the school's most famous pupil.

k 92 East Street until recently was The Royal Arms Inn, also known as The Punch House. In Victorian times the inn is said to have sold an alcoholic milk punch. The building dates back to at least 1591, when Queen Elizabeth I visited Chichester. Tudor beams are still

retained beneath the Georgian façade. The building contains some fine moulded ceilings dating from the sixteenth century, unfortunately hidden by suspended ceilings. If you look up to the first floor and the roof above you can gauge the full extent of the original building.

l 58 East Street is another former inn that also dates back to Tudor times. It closed in 1988 when it was known as The Fleece, but it has variously been known as The Golden Fleece, The Bell, and The Coach and Horses. The Puritan MP and regicide, William Cawley is said to have been born here in 1604. In the 1820s, one of the city's Members of Parliament, William Huskisson, used the inn as an election headquarters. Huskisson held many high offices of State, including, President of the Board of Trade and Leader of the House of Commons. He was killed by a train while attending the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1830, the first person to die as a result of a railway accident. Note the upper floors and roof line of this old building.

m The imposing classical style building on the corner of Baffin's Lane was built in 1832 as the city's Corn Exchange. Its massive pediment is held up by six cast-iron columns. A large house was demolished to make way for this grand edifice – a symbol of the city's prosperity as a market town. Though a centre for trading, it was also used for entertainment purposes and in 1896 the first motion picture was screened here. The old corn bins usefully doubled up as extra seating on these occasions.

Ballroom dancing took place in the inter-war years. The cinema closed in 1980, since when the building has been put to several retail uses.

n The parish church of St Pancras was rebuilt in 1750, the old church having been devastated during the English Civil War. It is built of flints that have been cut (knapped) on all six faces to give square blocks which have been laid with very thin mortar courses – thinner than with brickwork.

o The curved brick-built building on the corner of St Pancras and The Hornet, was originally a pub called The Unicorn Inn. The Unicorn was the headquarters of The Corporation of St Pancras, a mock corporation

established in 1689 to celebrate and commemorate the overthrow of the Roman Catholic James II and the succession of the Protestant William of Orange. Every year the corporation held a banquet at which it was resolved, “that they should dine and eat of all ye good things of the season, and that there should be a plentiful supply of wine and ale...”, So drunk did the members become that apprentice boys had to push them home in wheelbarrows – hence the nickname of the corporation – The Wheelbarrow Club. The Unicorn closed as a pub in 1960.

P The Chapel of St John the Evangelist is a fine example of a yellow brick Georgian church in a neo-classical style, although its octagonal shape is rather unusual. Grade I listed, it was designed by the London architect James Elmes and opened in 1813 as an Anglican proprietary chapel, built and run as a business to solve the overcrowding problem in the city’s tiny parish churches. The funds to build it came from the issue of shares; the income from the sale and rent of private pews was used to cover the running costs, including the minister’s stipend. The church has not been used for regular services since 1973 and is now managed by the Churches Conservation Trust.

Q The Friary of the Blackfriars once dominated this part of Chichester, until it was closed during the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s. The former Blackfriars site was developed as Newtown from 1808 – comprising St John’s Street, New Town and Friary Lane.

R Baffin’s Hall (now auctioneers) was built in 1721 as a Presbyterian Chapel later becoming the General Baptist Chapel and, finally, a Unitarian Chapel. The Rev. John Fullagar, minister here from 1818–1861, was very active in the life of the city and helped found the Mechanics’ Institute, a school, and the Chichester Savings Bank.

S You are now entering a part of Chichester known as the Pallants, an area once under the direct jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The name may refer to this being a paled or fenced-off area within the city, or be a corruption of *palatinate*, meaning ‘an area ruled by others (granted by the King)’, in this case to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Up until the

beginning of the eighteenth century this was a poor district, dominated by the leather industry. The four streets of the Pallants mimic the four principal streets of the city. Mentioned in 1479 and demolished in 1713, there was formerly a wooden cross where the four Pallants met, and where the leather workers sold their wares.

T Henry Peckham built Pallant House in 1713, using the latest ideas in brick construction. His new house would have seemed very out-of-place amongst the squalid tenements, and a thorough redevelopment of the Pallants took place over the next century. The leather workers were moved out to Little London. Today Pallant House has been extended and is a gallery of modern art. The birds on the entrance piers are supposed to be ostriches (a jest reputedly on the family name ‘peck ‘em’), although to generations of Chichester school children, it remains the ‘Dodo House’! The monogram HP appears in the metal overthrow to the gate piers.

U 7 and 8 North Pallant was sold in 1786 to the composer, John Marsh (look for the blue plaque) who converted it into one big house. It was later divided into two houses again and number 7 was purchased by the Chichester Literary and Philosophical Society as its headquarters in 1831.

V The Old Theatre was built in 1792. It closed in 1850 and few of its former internal features remain. Georgian and Regency audiences were loud, drunken and hard to please. This behaviour could also extend to the actors. On one occasion the actor playing Shylock in the Merchant of Venice was so drunk that he cut himself open while trying to incise his ‘pound of flesh’.

W The Fountain Inn is one of the last of Chichester’s old inns. The city once had over 70 licensed premises. *The Fountain* dates back to 1796. It abuts the city walls and Roman brickwork is clearly visible in the back bar. HG Wells’ grandparents ran the inn in the 1830s and his mother, Sarah, was born here. The south gate was demolished in 1773 shortly before the building became an inn.

X What is known today as the Chichester Canal is in fact part of the former Portsmouth & Arundel Canal. This was opened in 1822 and

consisted of a 12-mile canal from Ford on the River Arun to Chichester Harbour (Salterns Lock) and a shorter cut from Langstone Harbour to Portsmouth Harbour, connected by a 13-mile dredged 'bargeway' through the natural harbours and channels in between. John Rennie was the Surveyor and Engineer. A 1.5 mile branch led from Hunston on the main route to a basin in Chichester. This and the short connecting length of the main line from Salterns Lock to Hunston were built to a larger gauge and equipped with iron swing-bridges to enable coastal ships of over 100 tons to reach Chichester. This was the only part of the canal that enjoyed even a modest success, bringing in building materials and coal, and taking away manure. It carried trade until 1906, while the rest of the canal had been unused since the 1840s.

Transferred to the City Council in 1892 and sold on to West Sussex County Council in 1957, the surviving four miles were abandoned in 1928. The entrance lock and a short length were retained as yacht moorings; the rest of the route to Chichester was leased to the local angling club and gradually silted up. Two main road bridges were replaced by unnavigable culverts.

In the late 1970s the Portsmouth & Arundel Canal Society was formed with the aim of restoring the canal. Concentrating on the length from Chichester to Salterns, it became the Chichester Canal Society and more recently to Chichester Ship Canal Trust.

Taking over the lease from the anglers in 1984, the Society began by dredging Chichester Basin. Then, assisted by Waterway Recovery Group volunteers, they began to work back down the branch towards the main line; by the late 1990s they had reached the junction at Hunston and were working westwards along the main line towards Chichester Harbour. Navigation became possible to near Crosbie Bridge. The stretch from there to Salterns Lock at the Harbour awaits restoration.

Coffee Shops

Chichester has many independent and chain coffee shops. Two get full marks in reviews - *Hoxton Bakehouse* South Street and *Common Grounds* Little London and are marked on the map.

Pubs

1 George & Dragon

It is thought that the first stage coach to London went from here. In earlier days it got the name 'Bucket of Blood'. Now known as the George, it is a hotel, has a beer garden and serves ales such as Harvey's Best, Timothy Taylor's Landlord, and Tribute.

2 Park Tavern, 11 Priory Road

A friendly Fullers pub, with all that usually entails.

3 The Old Cross 65 North Street

Formerly the Green Dragon, the pub was rebuilt in 1928 and commemorates the Tudor market cross. An ale house has stood here since 1688. A Greene King pub, known for its food.

4 Hole in the Wall 1 St Martin's Street

There are several theories about the name. The brewery dated back to at least 1684; St Martin being the patron saint of the Worshipful Company of Vintners. A friendly pub with eight real ales. Big Smoke Brew Co.

5 Chichester Inn

Built on the site of a medieval house belonging to the Dean of Chichester Cathedral, it was rebuilt in 1692 and by 1754 it had become an inn known as the Three Kings. After several name changes it became the Chichester Inn in 1992. Whilst it is more of a hotel now, it has a beer garden and serves real ales such as Harvey's.

6 The Crate and Apple 14 Westgate has a focus on food, beer details not known.

7 The Duke and Rye West Street

This is a Marston's pub, located in the former church of St Peter the Great. No beer details.

8 Dolphin and Anchor

The name dates back to two principal coaching inns - see note O. Now a Wetherspoon's pub

9 Trent's Bar-restaurant South Street

Formerly the King's Head, there was an ale house on this site since 1599. Its façade was added to the Tudor building in 1740. A Greene King pub that prides itself on its food. Presumably Greene King ales.

10 The Fountain 29 Southgate

Probably Chichester's oldest surviving pub abutted the south gate of the City. A popular Hall & Woodhouse pub, Badger ales.