

Part One Origins

Chorley starts at **St Laurence's Church**. **1** The central parts of this church date back to the fifteenth century, although it's probable there were crosses and chapels preceding the current building on the same site. The Church, until 1793 a mere chapel belonging to the parish of Croston, looked over a crossing point of the River Chor. This became more important in medieval times as trade between the moorland east and the more fertile west developed.



Across from the Church is the **Town Hall** and the square to its rear. **2** This formed part of the original Town Green, where the first market cross stood.



The Site of the Original Town Square and Market Cross

Typically markets emerged on the west (or people's or even "Devil's") side of a church. So did Chorley's, with additional stalls spilling down what is now Market Street. On the south side of St Thomas' Road stands the "**Manor House**". **3** This was more likely a steward's or younger son's house on the Gillibrand Estate.



The Gillibrand "Manor" House

A stroll along Dole Lane leads to the very active Chorley Theatre, originally the **Empire Cinema** of 1910, **4** A left turn takes you down Peter Wink, now called Theatre Walk, leading into **Market Street**. **5**



The Chorley Theatre



Market Street

This street fronted farms two centuries ago with the gradual sprawl of stalls becoming shops. Across is **Fazackerley Street**. **6** This was named after H.H.Fazackerley, respected magistrate and heir to the Gillibrand Estate, who decided Chorley should have a new market place. Hence the current, highly successful **market area** dating from 1828. **7** It came to be surrounded by diverse buildings, one notable being the **Chorley Pilot Industrial Co-operative Society** (1864).



The Market c. 1900

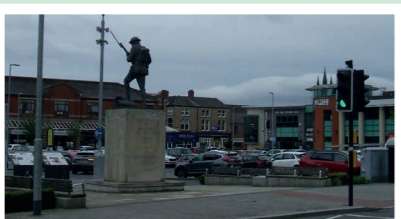


Fazackerley Street



Site for the Co-op Building

The market extension (1876), known as the **Flat Iron** was once a **cattle market**. **8** It also hosted **Chorley Fairs** and temperance meetings. Here stood **Sante's Theatre**, destroyed by fire in 1914.



The Flat Iron (a market extension of 1870s) and The Chorley Pals memorial



Water Street c. 1950

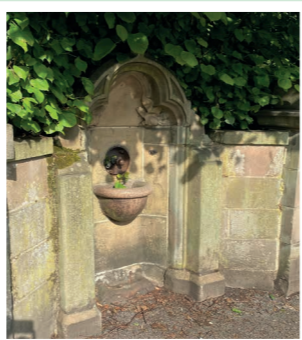


At the start of the nineteenth century Chorley had around 4000 inhabitants, but it was soon to be more than a market centre. Running northwards from the west end of St Laurence's is **Park Road**, known initially as **New Road** in 1822. At its start one can appreciate **Church Brow** leading down to **Chorley Bottoms**; this was the original steep route towards **Preston**. Beyond **Chorley Bottoms** is **Water Street**, where Chorley's first, water-powered, textile mills gathered. **9** One could say Chorley's industrial revolution sprang from here.



St Laurence's Lodge

On the opposite side of **Park Road**, is **St Laurence Lodge**, once the home of Chorley's perpetual curate and advocate, **Oliver Cooper**, who served his chapelry and community from 1763 to his death in 1825. **10** Before the fountain, at the south corner of **Queen Street** there is the site of **Terrace Mount cottages**, now replaced but once the birthplace of **Henry Tate**, the sugar magnate. **11**



The Fountain

Shortly before **Astley Park Gates**, there is a **fountain** set in the wall. This was placed by **Cooper's daughter Anne** and her husband, **John Pollard**, who was one of the first great doctors in the town. **12**

Astley Park Gates are soon looming, reminding us that landed estates once reached the very heart of Chorley. **13** **Astley Hall** was begun as an Elizabethan manor house, much extended in the middle of the next century and seen as the jewel in Chorley's crown. However, these imposing gates were moved from the edge of the **Gillibrand Estate** when, after the **First World War**, **Reginald Tatton** donated **Astley Hall** and its surrounding park as a memorial to Chorley's people who had given their lives in war service. The war memorial itself stands just inside the gates.



The Astley Park Gates



Beresford House (The Old Rectory in 1823)

On the east side of **Park Road** the first dwelling is **Beresford House**, a fine symmetrical Georgian building. This was Chorley's first rectory, built in 1823. **14** More fine town houses, once belonging to merchants, millowners and professionals, line that side of the road. Beyond **Park Street** is the **Ar-Rahmah Academy**, **Islamic Education Centre**, using the building of the former **Wesleyan Methodist Church**, itself replacing the early one of 1842. **15**



The Islamic Education Centre

Park Street leads to the foot of **Parker Street** where there are some fine former handloom weavers' cottages. **16** Close by is the **Unitarian Chapel** dating from 1725. **17** The landlord, replacing the last Chorleys at **Chorley Hall**, was **Abraham Crompton**, who gave the plot for what was originally a **Presbyterian chapel**. His grandson's grave is found by the north side. A famous connection is **Beatrix Potter**, granddaughter to **Jessie Crompton**, herself great granddaughter to the first **Abraham Crompton**.



The Foundation Stone of Park Road Chapel



Parker Street Handloom Weaver Cottages



The Unitarian Chapel

A descent of **Chapel Steps** takes you to **Water Street**. At the town centre end is **Chorcliffe House**, once the mansion of **John Silvester**, local gentleman and magistrate. He was one of those authorising the action of the **Yeomanry** at the infamous **Peterloo** of 1819. He also read the riot act in **Water Street Chorley** in 1826 when **Bolton's Mill** was attacked by handloom weavers. **18** **Hollinshead Street**, is named after **John Hollinshead**, landowner, merchant and benefactor. At the head of the street stands the elegant **Hollinshead Street Chapel** on 1792, originally a **Countess of Huntingdon Chapel**, then **Congregational** and now **United Reform**. **19**



Chorcliffe House



Hollinshead Street Chapel

Union Street, runs alongside the **Flat Iron**. **20** The street was likely named after the **Act of Union with Ireland** in 1801, a plan to draw **Ireland** close in the midst of the **French Wars**. This may be a good point to rest or even leave the second part of the tour until another day. Shops, cafes and transport are to hand.

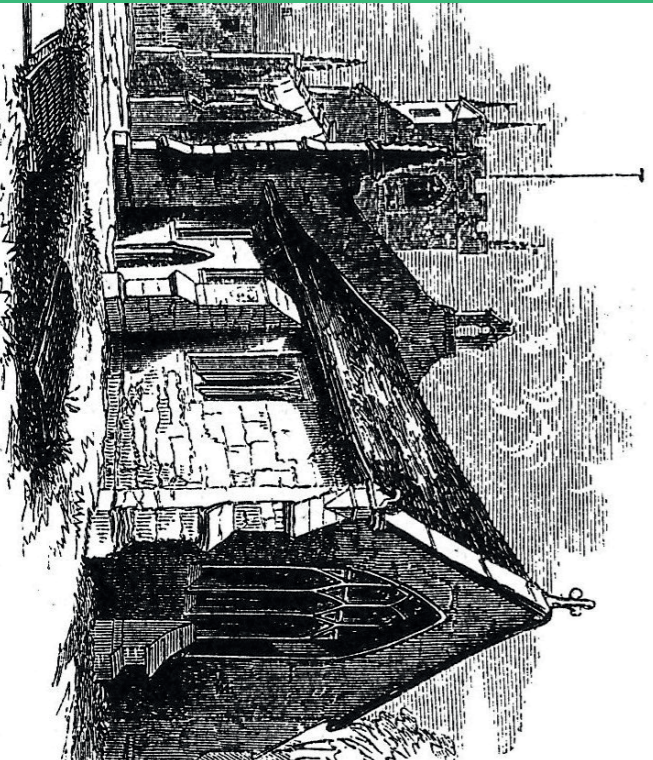
We hope you have enjoyed this stroll. More can be found out by accessing a fuller version on the **Chorley Heritage Centre Group website** www.chorleyheritagecentre.co.uk.

With acknowledgements to **Chorley Council** for their kind grant, **Chorley Heritage Centre Group** and the **Chorley Chamber of Trade**.

Chorley Heritage Centre Group recognise their debt to other local historians and authors, including **John Wilson**, **George Birtill**, **Jim Heyes**, **Kenneth Hodkinson**, **Jack Smith** and **John Harrison**.

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Part One Origins

An introduction to
the history of Chorley
and its town centre.

Chorley's Town Trail

Walking The Past

This the first of two trails telling the story of how Chorley developed from an insignificant outlying township of Croston Parish to becoming a thriving borough at the end of the nineteenth century. It begins with the oldest surviving building, St Laurence's Church and the original site of the market at Town Square and covers the northern side of the town centre where Chorley first started to grow.



Why not immerse yourself in an important part of Chorley's history and enjoy an enlightening and entertaining visit to Astley Hall, the 'jewel in Chorley's crown'?

Travel through time at Astley Hall, a breathtaking 16th century Grade I historic house in the stunning Astley Park, where you can discover over 400 years of history. Discover the fascinating history of the families who once owned the hall in the intriguing collections and then take a stroll through the internal Elizabethan courtyard or delightful walled gardens.

Find out more: astleypark.co.uk

There's so much to discover in Chorley. For inspiration for great days visit: checkoutchorley.com

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CHORLEY HERITAGE CENTRE

Chorley Heritage Centre Group

Fourteen Years of Achievement

President: Sir Lindsay Hoyle

We still need a permanent Chorley Heritage Centre. However we have registered several notable successes:

- ▶ Achieving **national accreditation** status, working with West Yorkshire Archives, 2011
- ▶ Winning the award as **Best New Archive** from the Great Britain and Ireland Community Archive and Heritage Group (2012)
- ▶ Organising the town's first **Heritage Fair** (Town Hall 2013).
- ▶ Hosting the **national conference** of the GB and Ireland Community and Heritage Groups (2014).
- ▶ Providing exhibitions and voluntary stewardship at the **Astley Farmhouse, Library** and other sites.
- ▶ Saving important artefacts and documents from the skip -e.g. hard copies of **Chorley Guardian**.
- ▶ Winning two Heritage Lottery Fund grants, recently for **Chorley Celebrates Myles Standish (2020-1)**
- ▶ Providing enrichment for schools, for example creating study packs, activity sessions and working with **Homescapes** to develop the **Mayflower Garden** at Duxbury, 2022 onwards.
- ▶ Longstanding partnership with **UCLAN**, from creating the **Commander Lightoller** Exhibition, to 'Temperance 190', a project selected by the Institute of Historical Research for its centenary.
- ▶ In 2023 Celebrating Chorley's **Windrush Generation** with a major Library exhibition, a day of events and a community evening party in June.



CommunityArchives
and Heritage Group

Winner — Best New Archive 2011

