

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. **A**

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.

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



The Site of the Original Town Square and Market Cross



The Gillibrand "Manor" House

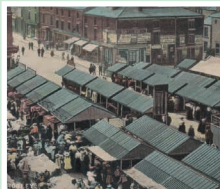


The Chorley Theatre



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.

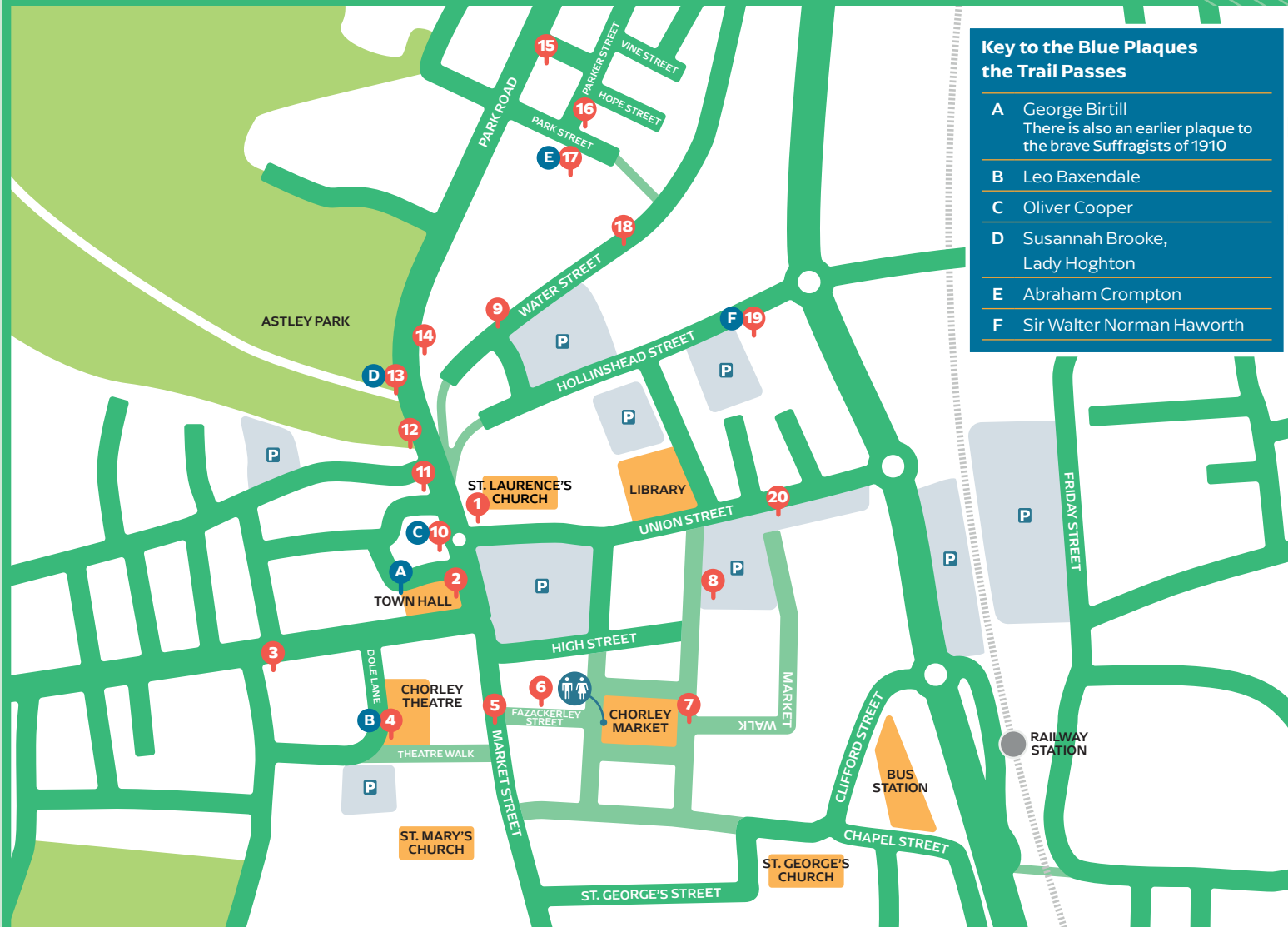


The Flat Iron (a market extension of 1870s) and The Chorley Pals memorial



Water Street c. 1950

Part One Origins



Key to the Blue Plaques the Trail Passes

- A** George Birtill
There is also an earlier plaque to the brave Suffragists of 1910
- B** Leo Baxendale
- C** Oliver Cooper
- D** Susannah Brooke, Lady Hoghton
- E** Abraham Crompton
- F** Sir Walter Norman Haworth

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



The Fountain

On the opposite side of Park Road, is **St Laurence's 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 C** 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**

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 D** 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



The Foundation Stone of Park Road Chapel

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 E** 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.



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 F**



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 (covering points 21–37) 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.

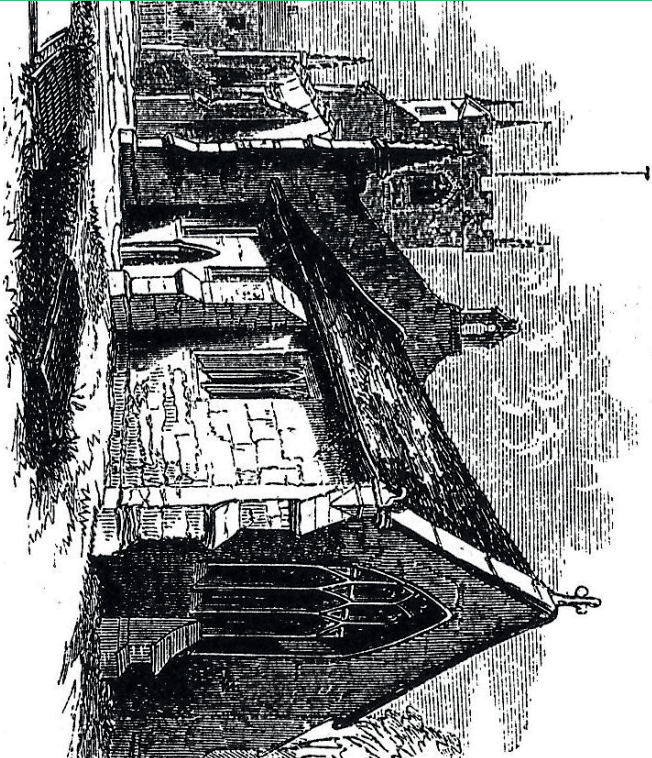
Chorley Heritage Centre Group recognise their debt to other local historians and authors, including John Wilson, George Birtill, Jim Heyes, Kenneth Hodgkinson, Jack Smith and John Harrison.

Thanks are also due to those who prepared the text and images, Bill Walker, Logan Santus and especially Stew Grieve.



Origins

Part One



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

Second Edition

Chorley's Town Trail

Walking The Past

checkoutchorley.com



Chorley
Council

checkoutchorley.com

Find out more: astleypark.co.uk

There's so much to discover in Chorley.

For inspiration for great days visit:

delightful walled gardens.

history of the families who once owned the hall

in the intriguing collections and then take a stroll

through the internal Elizabethan courtyard or

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



started to grow.

town centre where Chorley first

and covers the northern side of the

Laurence's Church and the original

the oldest surviving building, St

borough at the end of the

Parish to becoming a thriving

outlying township of Croston

This the first of two trails

telling the story of how Chorley

developed from an insignificant

developed from an insignificant



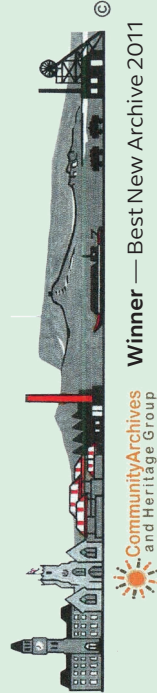
CHORLEY HERITAGE CENTRE

Chorley Heritage Centre Group

Fifteen Years of Achievement

President: Sir Lindsay Hoyle

- ▶ 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), and Lancashire Local History Federation Annual Conference (2024).
- ▶ Providing 40 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.
- ▶ Launching two new town trail leaflets and a schools' modelling project (2025).
- ▶ Establishing Chorley's first blue plaque trail honouring key creators of the town (2026).
- ▶ Campaigning for a **Community Hub containing a heritage, exhibition and information centre, and a meeting point** for Chorley's cultural groups.



Winner — Best New Archive 2011

CommunityArchives
and Heritage Group

Chorley's Blue Plaque Trail

The Chorley Heritage Centre Group are to add 13 blue plaques at certain points of the trail. They commemorate figures who contributed significantly to Chorley's town centre. There are six in this First Trail. You can find out more about these figures in the Heritage Group website www.chorleyheritagecentre.co.uk

Name	Significance	Location
Abraham Crompton 1649–1724	Owner of Chorley Hall from 1718. Donor of land for the Unitarian Chapel 1725.	Park Street
Oliver Cooper 1741–1825	Perpetual Curate Advocate for Chorley's rights and church extension.	St Laurence's Lodge
Susannah Brooke, Lady Hoghton 1762–1852	Owner of Astley Estate. Patron of St Peter's, schools and almshouses.	Astley Park Gates
Sir Walter Norman Haworth 1883–1950	Organic chemist. Definer of Vitamin C. Nobel prizewinner 1937.	In front of Hollinshead Street URC
George Birtill, OBE 1912–2000	JP, mayor, editor Chorley Guardian, local archivist, historian and author.	Town Hall rear
Leo Baxendale 1930–2017	Cartoonist. Creator of Bash Street Kids. British Comics Awards Hall of Fame.	Chorley Theatre

