

In 1800 Chorley was still a village and township with around 4000 souls. By 1900 it was a mature town and borough, containing some 30,000 people. This walk illustrates the developed town's nineteenth century economic and social nature as well as some significant events and achievements.



Off Union Street, in Byron Street, there is the Congregational schoolroom. It also carries a plaque in memory of Walter Norman Howarth, the chemist who synthesised Vitamin C in 1933 and was awarded a Nobel Prize. **21**

Across the road is the fine memorial to the Chorley Pals, part of the East Lancashire Pals who nobly volunteered in the First World War and were slaughtered at the Somme. **22** Felly Street covers one of Chorley town centre's four lost coal mines **23** Further on looms the Library. From 1906 the grammar school was located here. The site was the brainchild of one of Chorley's greatest sons, Henry Hibbert- self-educated businessman, sportsman, politician, mayor, MP, educationalist and fire service patron. **24 G**

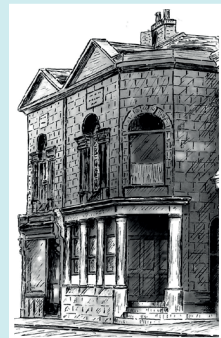


The Chorley Pals' memorial



The Library

On the car park (and planned new Town Square) site, at the corner opposite St Laurence's was Chorley's first town hall, provided by John Hollinshead in 1802. Chorley's old coaching inn, the Royal Oak dominated the rest of the site until demolition in 1937. **H**



The Old Town Hall (1802)



The "New" Town Hall (1879)

The current Town Hall stands across. It dates from 1879 and appeared two years before Chorley was incorporated as a borough. **25** The St Laurence's vestry had managed local government until 1853, when an Improvement Commission took on urban responsibility prior to 1881. The Commission's prime mover was Robert Rawlinson, public health expert and the major force behind the establishment of Chorley Cemetery in 1860 and improved sewerage systems.

Southwards along Market Street, there is a fine gateway to Mount Pleasant, the site of St Mary's Catholic Church of 1853. **26 I** The arch itself (1910) is a tribute to Canon Crank, a priest much committed to the poor of Chorley at the turn of the nineteenth century. To the right of the arch there is a stone commemorating Roger Wrennall (or "Wrenno") a noble Catholic martyr of Elizabethan times.



Part Two From Township to Town



Key to the Blue Plaques the Trail Passes

- G** Sir Henry Hibbert
- H** John Hollinshead
- I** Monsignor Canon Thomas Crank
- J** Richard Smethurst
- K** Luke Berry
- L** Sir Robert Rawlinson
- M** Henry Rawcliffe

Across Market Street is the pedestrianised Chapel Street, so called because one of the earliest Methodist chapels was at the foot of it (1792). The building was later used by Chorley's Catholics and then became a Mechanics' Institute. **27 J**



Possible site of the first Methodist Chapel (1792)



The Site of Disraeli's statue



Canon Crank's Arch



The Baptist Chapel

At the junction of Cleveland Street, an empty plinth above the first storey used to hold a striking statue of Benjamin Disraeli, a monument currently in Astley Hall garden. **28** Another chapel, the Baptist, was established further up Chapel Street; courtesy of its wall plaque one can date it from 1848. **29**

At the head of this street, another row of Chorley's handloom weavers cottages appears on the left, with St George's Church (1825) standing tall on the right. **30, 31 K L** This was one of the first large new churches funded by the Church Building Commission under the 1818 Act.



Handloom Weavers' Cottages, Chapel Street



St George's Church (1825)

Further on the left is the fine ornamental Shepherd's Building, revealing the relative wealth of Chorley by 1903. Be certain to look up to find the Good Shepherd. **32**

Across the busy dual carriageway sits the railway station, a successor to that of 1843. **33**



The Shepherd's Hall



The Modern Station Building

St George's Street leads back to Market Street past pleasant Victorian terraces. Gillibrand Street holds the site of the hospital, established in 1893, by Alderman Rawcliffe, a great benefactor of the town. **34 M** This replaced the earlier Dispensary (1828), situated at the foot of nearby Parson's Brow.



The Cottage Hospital extension



Cunliffe Hall

On the east side of Market Street, is Cunliffe Street and Cunliffe Hall. This was a Primitive Methodist Ebenezer of 1866 and now a Masonic lodge. **35** The end of Market Street faces a massive Asda car park. **36** The nearest section of this, in the cleft of Bolton Street and Pall Mall, was the old Chorley township town land. Hence came the National School in 1825 (later St George's), then the fire station, public convenience and abattoir. The junction was known as Big Lamp, after the standard that once stood here. Off to the right are the fancy London street names the vestry gave to the emerging streets after 1804: Pall Mall, Cheapside, Fleet Street. At the junction of Fleet Street and Cheapside is to be found the base of the Weeping Cross, a structure which once may have marked the southern edge of town. **37**



St George's School (1825), the Institute to its right



Later edition of the Big Lamp



Base of the Weeping Cross



Site of the old township land

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.

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Part Two From Township to Town



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

Chorley's Town Trail

Second Edition

Walking The Past

This is the second 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. The walk covers largely the southern part of the town centre (Points 21–37 on the map overleaf) picking out evidence of the economy, with sight of the new market and industry.

In 1800 Chorley township was primarily noted for its farms and small market. However coal mining had long been developing in the small pits of Gillibrand land and soon the town centre held four deeper mines. Then the cotton industry flourished as seen in the many mills, encouraged by the arrival of the Lancaster Canal (1796) and the railway (1840).

The entrepreneurial middle class have now emerged to share power with the old estate owners. Their varied denominations are evident in church and chapels, political maturity in the new Town Hall. The vastly increased numbers of citizens gain the necessary social facilities- school, hospital, theatre.

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



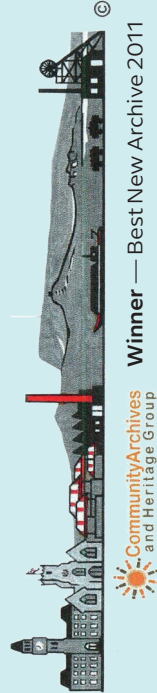
CHORLEY HERITAGE CENTRE

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 seven in this Second Trail. You can find out more about these figures in the Heritage Group website www.chorleyheritagecentre.co.uk



Name	Significance	Location
John Hollinshead 1717–1802	Developer of Hollinshead St. Donor of first Town Hall, 1802.	New Town Square
Richard Smethurst 1756–1822	Donor of land for the Methodist Chapel here 1792. Developer of Chapel Street. Founder of Smethurst Cotton Mills.	MAX Spielmann, Chapel Street
Sir Robert Rawlinson 1810–1898	Mason, engineer, author, improver of Chorley's public health.	Anise, Chapel Street
Henry Rawcliffe 1826–1907	Alderman, JP and founder of Rawcliffe Hospital 1893–8	Surgery, Gillibrand Street
Sir Henry Hibbert 1850–1927	Mayor and MP. Chair of Lancashire County Council. Patron of education and the Fire Service.	The Library, Union Street
Luke Berry 1848–1928	Councillor and late Victorian photographer. Creator of the Album of Chorley 1890–1900	29 Chapel Street
Monsignor Canon Thomas Crank 1863–1946	St Mary's priest 1897–1932. Creator of Mount Pleasant archway and church enhancement. Friend of the poor.	Mount Pleasant Archway, Market Street