

Warfield Parish Council

Heritage Trail



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The Brickworks, Priory Lane & Warfield Street

Warfield, like many villages which have ebbed and flowed since the compiling of the Domesday Book, is full of history. This short walk is the second in a series of Heritage Loops - all designed to bring life to some of the 'stories' of both people and buildings within the Parish.

Start & finish: Maize Lane (off Warfield Street) - park on the verge of this no through road, taking care not to block any entrances.

Walk south down **Maize Lane**, crossing over **Harvest Ride** and continue into **Goughs Lane**. The land to your right was the site of the **Goughs Lane Brickworks**, specialising in "large bricks" used in the construction of Victorian Brick Bread Ovens. The pit infill site is on the right of the path. After approx. 25 metres, turn right into opening signed **Greystock Road**. You are now in the area of the **Thomas Lawrence Brickworks** which, believe it or not, was still operating as a commercial business until 1985. Thomas Lawrence was born in 1824 and died in 1901. His original business was as a Draper in Binfield. By 1893 he not only had thriving brickworks at Swinley, Easthampstead, Pinewood and Wokingham as well as Warfield but also dominated the local retail scene with a vast department store in Bracknell High Street selling everything from food to ironmongery and a lot more besides. **Brick-Kiln Lane**, linking **Goughs Lane** with **Priory Lane** has now vanished, as has almost all evidence of the old brick industry. However, the old 'settling' or 'rubber ponds', (now a newt reserve) can still be seen at the end of **Flemish Place**, (first turning on your left). The return wheel of an overhead ropeway was located just beyond these ponds and transported the wet clay to other parts of the site nearer **Priory Lane**. The modern representative 'chimney', erected by the developers, as a memorial to the former significance of the site, can be seen in the field on your right. The kilns on the Warfield site were

either down draught or beehive type kilns, with free standing chimneys, similar in shape to the existing memorial. Originally coal fired, they were converted to oil in the 1960's but became uneconomic due to the 1970's oil crisis. Leave the site by the path that links **Goddard Way** with **Priory Lane**. At the **Goddard Way** end there are the remains of the Old Stables on the left and these give some indication of the type of brick originally produced. Late twentieth century production specialised more in a soft red brick which could be easily shaped by rubbing on a coarse surface, thus known as a 'rubber' brick. Their colour is caused by the iron oxide in the Bagshot Sands. Turn left in **Priory Lane**. A 'twin drum' Ransom stationary steam traction engine which drove the overhead rope-way stood on the site now occupied by the 4 new houses, on the left, at the end of the lane. Other Warfield brick works extended down the left hand side of **Folders Lane**, where **Lakeside** now is, to its junction with **Shepherds Lane**. These were owned by the Bracknell Brick, Tile and Pottery Co Ltd and stretched across the recreational area to **Quelm Lane**, where a large and impressive clay pit can still be seen behind **Braybrooke Road School**. While still at the end of **Priory Lane**, look at the corner of **Folders Lane** (north side), with the **Warfield Road**. This was the site of the fold where cattle which grazed on Priestwood Common (enclosed in 1814) were penned overnight.

Now return down Priory Lane to the junction with Goddard Way. Immediately on your left are examples of the 1960's pleasant detached houses architect designed for the senior managers now being attracted to the 'New Town' by Bracknell Development Corporation to run such operations as Ferranti, Racal, The Met. Office and Waitrose. These houses were built on what was '**Shorland Oaks**' (still the name of the road on your left). Shorland was a farmer who lived in what is now known as "St Michael's Grange" in **Osborne Lane**. He planted the oaks with a government subsidy in about 1820. A later Shorland married the granddaughter of the famous William Herschel who discovered the planet Uranus and whose son "discovered" fingerprinting whilst a Judge in India. They lived in the Rectory House, **Church Lane**, see loop 3.

Cross straight over **Harvest Ride** into **Old Priory Lane**. On your right is the new bridleway, **Hedge Lane**. It provides a very pleasant, and still rural, route back to **Maize Lane**. The Parish Council initiated the planting of over 400ms of new mixed hedgerow during the winters of 2003/4 and, although far from maturity, it is growing well and will add an important wild life corridor to this more urban part of the Parish. At the end of **Old Priory Lane** near the junction with **Warfield Street** is **Priory House**. Warfield Priory was established around 1760 when the coach road to London

became viable thus allowing the Sisters of Mercy, who had an enclosed priory at Tyburn, near Marble Arch, to establish a satellite chantry here in Warfield – (the 1881 census still showed 3 Sisters living there – the 1891 showed none!). The Sisters prayed for the souls of those hanged at Tyburn and we assume for those who swung from the gibbet in nearby **Quelm Lane**. Opposite the Priory, by the pond, was **the drovers enclosure** where the drover's herds were corralled for the night, while the Drovers retired to the comforts of the Four Horseshoes.

Turn right into **Warfield Street**, cross over and continue past **Gibbins Lane** to **Horseshoe House**, at the junction with **Herschel Place**. You are now looking at possibly the most significant building in Warfield. The Horseshoes, later the Four Horseshoes, was both pub and the parish nerve centre from the time that the Black Death decimated the old village around the church, right up until the 1960s when it became a private house. There used to be a long low barn like building behind the pub, known as the **Flead House** which had an early version of a bowling alley and where all important, and not so important, parish affairs were discussed over many a pint of the home brewed ale. This building was in effect the village hall. Being linked to the pub it was a much more attractive meeting spot than the old Parish Rooms near the church. This

public house also had (and still has) a "priests hole".

Further along **Warfield Street**, on the right, is another interesting old building, **Nibs Nook**, originally one of the many farmhouses within the parish. In the late 18th Century, this house was occupied by a Thomas Mitchell. He was not only the village Poundmaster but also in charge of both the Drovers Enclosure and the Priestwood Fold. In the late 1700's he was caught "red handed" skinning a sheep he had stolen from the Pound. History suggests that he was the first sheep stealer to be deported to Australia, in one of the early 'Convict Fleets'. Carrying along **Warfield Street**, the Old Bakery Mews on your right was the site of the **Warfield Bakery**. This was still producing rolls, and specialist products for the wholesale market, until the start of the 21st Century. Behind it was also the site of the old village pound where stray animals were impounded. Further still, but this time on the left is the old **Non-conformist Chapel**. We may feel that the Church of England has its schisms in current times but today is nothing compared to the mushrooming of alternative places of worship from the mid 1800s through to the 2nd World War. Soon after the Chapel turn right into **Maize Lane, to end your walk**. On your right is the start of **Hedge Lane**, the new bridleway referred to earlier.