

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.

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** 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



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 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**

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



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** 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**



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](http://www.chorleyheritagecentre.co.uk).

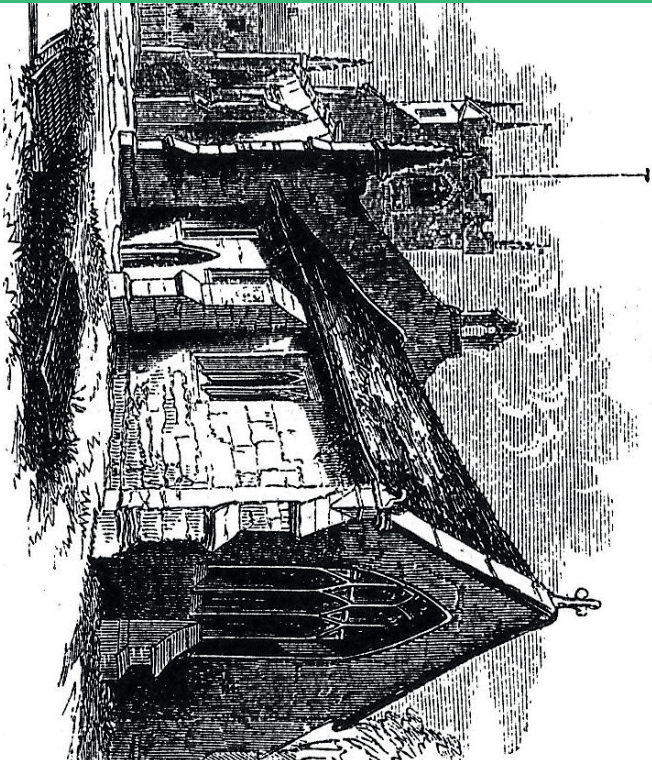
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## Part One Origins



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

# Chorley's Town Trail

## Walking The Past



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CommunityArchives  
and Heritage Group

Winner — Best New Archive 2011

## Chorley Heritage Centre Group



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  
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in the intriguing collections and then take a stroll  
through the internal Elizabethan courtyard or  
delightful walled gardens.

Find out more: [astleypark.co.uk](http://astleypark.co.uk)  
There's so much to discover in Chorley.  
For inspiration for great days visit:  
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Chorley  
council

CHECK OUT  
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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** Fellery 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**

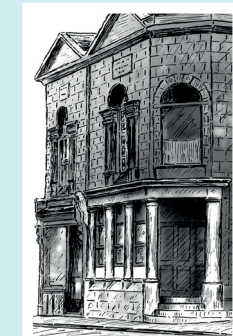


The Chorley Pals' memorial



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.



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** 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



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**



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 hiding 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** 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** 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

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## Chorley Heritage Centre Group



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 picking out evidence of the economy, with sight of the new market and industry. 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.



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Find out more: [astleypark.co.uk](http://astleypark.co.uk)

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