

Chipping Sodbury

CIRCULAR WALK & TREASURE HUNT

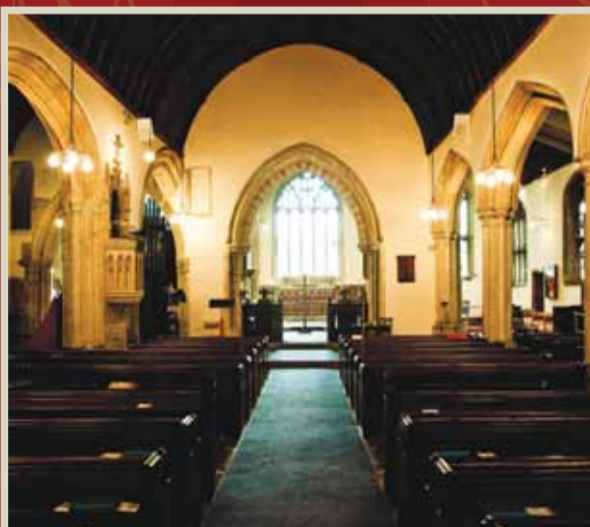
Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the production of this leaflet. Also to Jim Elsworth, Laura Lee Phillips, Rich McD and South Gloucestershire Council. Photographs are the property of Rich McD Photography.



The Millennium Garden



Chipping Sodbury Mop Fair



St John the Baptist Church

J.K. (Jo) Rowling was born in Chipping Sodbury War Memorial Maternity Hospital in July 1965. Bloomsbury Children's Publishing suggest: - 'Such a funny-sounding name for a birthplace may have contributed to her talent for collecting odd names'. The town's name 'Chipping' comes from the old word for market and Sodbury is recorded in Anglo Saxon as Soppabyrig which meant 'Soppa's fort' or 'Soppa's stronghold'. Chipping Sodbury is the home to a population of approximately 5,000 residents.

Chipping Sodbury was built in the 12th century, when the then owner of the Sodbury estates, William Crassus, planned a 'new town', based on a grid pattern, whereby long strips of land with a narrow dwelling fronting on to the wide market street, remains largely unaltered today. The feudal system of burgage plots created a medieval middle class of tenants who paid rent to the local landlord enabling them to earn a living at their various crafts and businesses. Chipping Sodbury was known for its weaving and leather trades.

Built on the cross-roads of the east-west route Oxford to Bristol, which came across the common, up what are now Hatters Lane, Broad Street and High Street then on to Bristol, crossing the north-south route between Kingswood Abbey, Gloucestershire and Keynsham Abbey – the old pilgrim's way and the salt route from Droitwich, which passed through Chipping Sodbury via Brook St and in to Horseshoe Lane and on to Keynsham and the South.

The main street through Chipping Sodbury was known as High Street until about 1800 when it was divided into High Street and Broad Street at Wickwar Road. In medieval times and up to the late 18th century buildings stood in the middle of Broad Street – The Shambles or Butcher's Quarters near the Wickwar Road end and the Market Building near the Town Cross.

Drovers came through Chipping Sodbury driving cattle, sheep, geese etc on their way to markets further to the east and even on to London. Behind Tudor House is accommodation once used to house the drovers en-route. The route probably passed through Old Sodbury and across what is now the A46 and on towards Chippenham.

Much of Chipping Sodbury is built from locally quarried rock. However, while a variety of stone is evident in the buildings around the town, the most frequently used is Carboniferous Limestone, which has been quarried at Chipping Sodbury since the Middle Ages.



◆ If you are able to go inside No 29 High Street (Cotswold Vintners) you will be able to see that the ceiling is being held up by a post from an old four poster bed. Don't worry it is structurally safe now.

The Ridings is now used by football, rugby, golf, running, tennis & cricket enthusiasts. The area now known as Chipping Sodbury, was once part of the Saxon Kingdom of Mercia which for a while came under the control of the Danes. It is thought that 'Ridings' might have been of Danish origin.

When Chipping Sodbury developed into a commercial centre, the inhabitants dwelt in 'Burgage' plots, but having no land to graze their animals the 'Ridings' became the Borough's common grazing ground. Animals were grazed on the Stub Riding and turned onto the Mead Riding after crops had been gathered. At one time the 'Ridings' was a home for a pest house in which local people with infectious diseases were housed well away from the main town. The Millennium Garden, a quiet place to rest, is located at the start of the Ridings, near to the children's playground in St John's Way.

Mop Fairs are held over one weekend in March and again in September every year, traditionally Lady Day and Michaelmas. One end of the town becomes traffic free on a Friday night and Saturday for fairground attractions to entertain all comers. There has been a long tradition of Mop Fairs, originally they were held to allow farm workers, labourers and servants, to find new employment. Attending the Mop Fair wearing an emblem of their trade on their lapel, indicated to potential employers they were looking to be hired.

In the mid-18th century, Chipping Sodbury was considered a safe place to stay for the officers captured by the Bristol Privateers. At this time piracy was illegal but privateering was not. A privateer was supposed to have been given a 'letter of Marque' from the government allowing them to attack and steal from merchant ships of certain countries. When Bristol Privateers, captured a ship they would dock it in the Port of Bristol. The prisoners from these ships were usually imprisoned, but officers above the rank of midshipman could be sent on parole to Chipping

In the twentieth century the quarries were considerably enlarged to extract limestone for road stone and aggregates. Carboniferous Limestone was formed 350 million years ago from the bed of a tropical coral sea teeming with a rich array of marine life. You can see one type of coral, called Lithostrotion, in the large wall just past the church as you walk from the car park towards the High Street.

Sodbury. Chipping Sodbury was considered a safe place, as it was far enough from Bristol to prevent escape or conspiracy. The officers had an 8pm curfew, and could walk only a mile along the road, but in all other respects were 'free'.

The predominantly rural character of Chipping Sodbury means that it is still the centre for hunting. It lies within the territory of the Badminton based Beaufort Hunt. Each May, the annual Badminton Horse Trials are held just 6 miles from the centre of Chipping Sodbury.

¹² One of the most attractive features inside **St John the Baptist Church** is the almost unique pillar pulpit. This was rediscovered behind a triple decker pulpit, during the Victorian restoration. It was at this time that most of the memorials were removed to the bell chamber. The 13th century octagonal bowled Font is at the opposite end of the church to St Katherine's chapel, named after the patron saint of weavers, it houses the tomb of Sir John Walshe; King's champion at Henry VIII's coronation in 1509. As tutor to his children he employed William Tyndale, who, in 1522, started his translation of The New Testament.

The wool trade, weaving of cloth, tanning of leather, carriage of coal & lime, limestone quarrying, the malt trade and of course farming have all been prominent industries in Chipping Sodbury over the years. During the 17th Century, Daniel Defoe, the novelist who wrote Robinson Crusoe, commented that Chipping Sodbury had one of the greatest Cheese Markets in England.

Chipping Sodbury has always been a place for people to find accommodation as they passed through.



¹³ When the Town Hall is open to the public, pop in and see the various artefacts from the past. As you enter the first room you will see the magnificent medieval fireplace on the left. What is thought to be the Mayor's chair incorporating the Seal can also be seen near here.

In the main stairway you can see the old Town Chest carved from a single block of oak and strapped with iron bands. It was used to house the town records. Its keys, dating back to 1440 hang in the case nearby along with the 1680 mayoral mace.



15th Century Seal



Old Town Chest

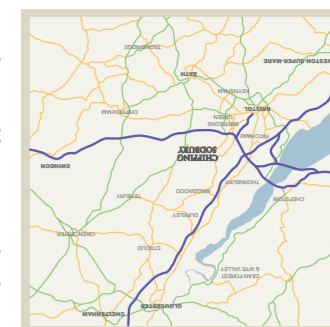


Mayor's Chair



Carboniferous Limestone (Lithostrotion)

The Tourist Information Centre, The Clock Tower, High Street, Chipping Sodbury, BS37 6AH. Tel: 01454 886686
Email: chippingsodburytic@gmail.com
or visit: www.yateandchippingsodbury.co.uk
or www.visitchippingsodbury.com to find details of events.



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Getting to Chipping Sodbury
By Car:
Free Parking
Chipping Sodbury is 9 miles from M5 (J14) and just 5 miles from M4 (J18)
Public transport:
Nearest Railway Station – Yate (2miles)
Bus Services:
X42, 482, 483, 581, 620, 342, X27, 41, 84, 86, 202, 222, 342

Street is steep. The path along by the river Frome may at some times be muddy.
wheelchair friendly and that Brook which are pushchair friendly but not steps giving access to Brook Street please be aware that there are large
For those with access difficulties easily accessible to all.

award winning town. The majority of this walk is why Chipping Sodbury is a Britain in Bloom walk around, at any time of year, you will realise Cotswolds an interesting place to visit. As you this picturesque town lying on the edge of the variety of building styles and roof lines making listed properties in the main streets. There are a town plan, is a conservation area with over 120 the widest in the country and original medieval with its wide market street, thought to be one of wherever you like, this beautiful market town, and hostilities you can resist. Start and finish you choose, depending on how many of the cafes of Gloucestershire, taking as little as or as long as through Chipping Sodbury, in the south Circular Walk and Treasure Hunt.



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www.yateandchippingsodbury.co.uk



South Gloucestershire Council



¹The Clock Tower was originally erected just after 1871 as a simple tower, as a memorial to Lt. Colonel Blathwayt of Dyrham; a commemorative plaque is sited on the road side of the shelter which was added in 1948. In 1995 part of the shelter was converted to the town's Tourist Information Centre.

²The Police Station

was built on the site of the demolished Duke William Inn in 1862. It is one of the finest examples of 19th century police stations in the country.



In 1878 The Petty Sessional Court was built next door to the police station. The court moved in 1981 to modern buildings in Yate. Look at the roof and you can see where the site where the wartime air raid siren was situated. The siren rang out over 500 times during World War II; fortunately Chipping Sodbury never suffered any bombing.



³No 26 High Street has late medieval origins, altered in the 16th and 17th centuries; it was presented to the town by Mr F Fox as an **Institute and Reading Room** c. 1910. It had history as a Literary Institution in 1870 and is also thought to be the site of the much earlier **Weavers' Guild**. In the centre of an important group of coped gabled houses, note the oval windows in the attic.

⁴No 39 High Street,

known as Hobbs House, is where Tom and Henry Herbert, The Fabulous Baker Brothers, of the 2012 Channel 4 television series are both based.



⁵The Moda House used to be known as View House, an important townscape feature, closing the upper end of High Street, it looks down the street to the beautiful Cotswold Hills in the distance. Built late 17th century and remodelled early-mid 18th century. In the late 1920's it was the home and surgery of Dr. D H Sarafian who gave it the name 'Moda', after a suburb of Istanbul, where he grew up. It remained a home and surgery until the doctor's practice moved to Yate. The house was sold and converted to a Hotel, in the 1970's. It is now a beautifully decorated B&B.

⁶The Friends Meeting House,

has been a private residence since the 1980's. It was built in 1692, after a visit by George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends, as a Quaker Chapel and used as such until 1932. Since then it has been used for meetings by various groups including the Women's Institute and Jehovah's Witnesses. During the 1940's soldiers were billeted in part of this building. The private house beside the river at the bridge was one of the corn mills on the River Frome until the 1920's.



Originally the River Frome formed the northern boundary of Chipping Sodbury. The 20 mile (32 km) long **River Frome**, rises in Dodington Park, travels through Chipping Sodbury and flows in a south westerly direction through to Bristol, joining the river Avon in Bristol's Floating Harbour. The river was used to power several mills along its course in Chipping Sodbury.

⁷The Grapes 16th century is another of the old coaching/market inns. It has the original plank door, with moulded muntins and Iron strap hinges.



⁸Rounceval House built around 1670, was originally occupied by the Steward of the Lord of the Manor, Daniel Burcombe who was also the Town Constable. Home to Dr Paul Downton Leman and his family from 1830 to 1953, but was requisitioned during World War II by the Ministry of Agriculture. It has been a hotel since 2003.

⁹Hill House has

undergone changes in its existence; in 1682 it was The Crown Inn. A 17th century cottage standing on the right-hand side was incorporated into the building and in 1790 the facade was added, to give it a Georgian appearance removing the original gables. Notice the four false windows on the top floor, the central windows on the level below are glazed but a few inches behind is a wall, this gives the symmetrical style symbolic of Georgian architecture.



¹⁰Coppers Cottage, situated in The Parade, is named after 'Copper' the tramp that used to live in the outbuildings that were converted to the present cottage.



¹¹Jubilee Park is a tranquil area where you can relax by the river. If you walk through the park and cross the footbridge you

can walk back to Brook Street on the other side of the river and clearly view the bridge in Brook Street. Or you can walk through Ridge Woods Chipping Sodbury's own nature reserve which runs along the edge of the disused Barnhill Quarry which provided limestone for several centuries. To get from Brook Street to Wickwar Road follow the Frome Valley Walkway. **Wickwar Road** was originally only a short road to the church and a path to The Ridings. It was fully opened as a turnpike road to the North in the late 1700's. In the 1960's a row of 16th century cottages stood on the East side of the road but these were removed for road widening, The trotting horse trade sign was salvaged from the saddlers shop that faced on to Broad Street and now hangs above number 47 High Street.



¹²St John the Baptist Church

built in 1284 some 150 years after the town was laid out, the first Chapel of Ease (The Mother Church being at Old Sodbury) was dedicated on the site. Over the centuries the church has been extended, the phases of construction can be seen by the different styles of stonework, particularly by the 104 feet tower and south aisle which were added in the 15th century. The church underwent major restoration in 1869, with a porch modified by George Edmund Street, the architect who was also responsible for the new nave in Bristol Cathedral at the same time; he then went on to design the Royal Courts of Justice in London. Although the church has a clock inside, it has never had hands or a face it only indicates the time by the sound of its bells. Notice there is a Sun dial on the side of the church.



¹³The Town Hall was originally built in 1452 as a Guild Hall. It has undergone several renovations since then, firstly in 1738, then the Victorian Gothic facade that still remains was added in 1858.

In the 1970's the Town Hall was modernised and re-opened after being greatly extended in 1981. It is now under the Trusteeship of Chipping Sodbury Town Lands Charity and used as a focus for community events. It retains many original features including a medieval fireplace and 16th century timberwork.



¹⁴The George Hotel was first recorded in 1439, as overnight accommodation by pilgrims on their way between Kingswood Abbey near Wotton-Under-Edge and Keynsham Abbey.



¹⁵The Squire has a long history as a Coaching Inn since the 17th Century.

¹⁶The Presbytery

was originally The Swan Inn dating back to at least 1685. In 1838 it was purchased by Sarah Lunn for £1,300, using the wealth she had inherited from her deceased sister, who had been married to Philip St Martin Comte de Front, Sardinian Minister to the Court of St James. She gave the building to the Catholic Church as the Presbytery and the stables at the back were converted to the **¹⁷Church of St Lawrence**.



Many of the premises in **Broad Street** are reputed to be Elizabethan and some fine examples still exist. Of particular interest are the beautiful old mullion windows and the very old door to No. 82.

The name **Hatters Lane** is believed to have been derived from the weaving industry supplying the hat trade in the neighbouring villages.

¹⁸The Tudor House, built c.1460, is believed to be the oldest private residence in Chipping Sodbury. A Medieval galleried open hall house

of raised cruck truss construction, with a jettied first floor. Over the years this property has had many changes. In the early 1900's it was a lodging house, by 1950 it had been sub divided into cottages which became run down and derelict and were in danger of being demolished but following renovation in 1956 became the head-quarters of the local Conservative Association.



¹⁹There has been a Market Cross in Chipping Sodbury since 1349. It was usual for a cross to be erected where a market was held, to remind everyone that all dealings took place in the presence of God! The original market cross was superseded in 1553, parts of this Cross are incorporated in the present day **War Memorial** which stands near the site of the medieval Market Cross. The memorial is inscribed with the names of those who fell in WWI and WWII.

Horse Street was opened up in the late 18th century as a turnpike road out of town to London. It was an important route for travellers and cattle drovers. It boasts a variety of fascinating buildings and mews houses all laid out in the original town plan. No. 21, aptly named **²⁰Brick House**, is the only brick building in the main street.



²¹No. 29, Melbourne House dated 1740, one of its previous owners moved to Australia and became an architect designing many buildings in Melbourne. This property was also owned by Daniel Ludlow, an apothecary who employed an assistant who promoted the link between cowpox and small pox. The assistant subsequently went on to find fame as the man who spread vaccination against small pox around the world – his name was **Edward Jenner**.

Horse Street once had a bar gate which stopped cattle wandering into or out of the town. Straying cattle were put in the **pound** which stood near the Boot Inn situated further along Horse Street.



²²At number 43 Horse Street you will find the **Milestone** dating back to when Horse Street opened as the turnpike road. It indicates a distance of exactly 108 miles to Hyde Park Corner in London. In the 18th century milestones were compulsory on all turnpike roads, to inform travellers of distances and to help coaches keep to schedule and for charging for changes of horses at the coaching inns. The distances were also used to calculate postal charges before the uniform postal rate was introduced in 1840.



²³Town Pump the only other surviving town pump underneath which the well remains to this day.

²⁴No 64 Horse Street,

with two plaques on the wall. The first is the old Sun Alliance Insurance Company disc which signified to the fire brigade that the owner had paid his fire insurance and that, should a fire occur, they would get paid. The second is the lozenge shaped date stone, inscribed T 1797 M with carved mason's craft tools of an upturned mortar board over crossed trowel and hammer with a square and rule underneath.



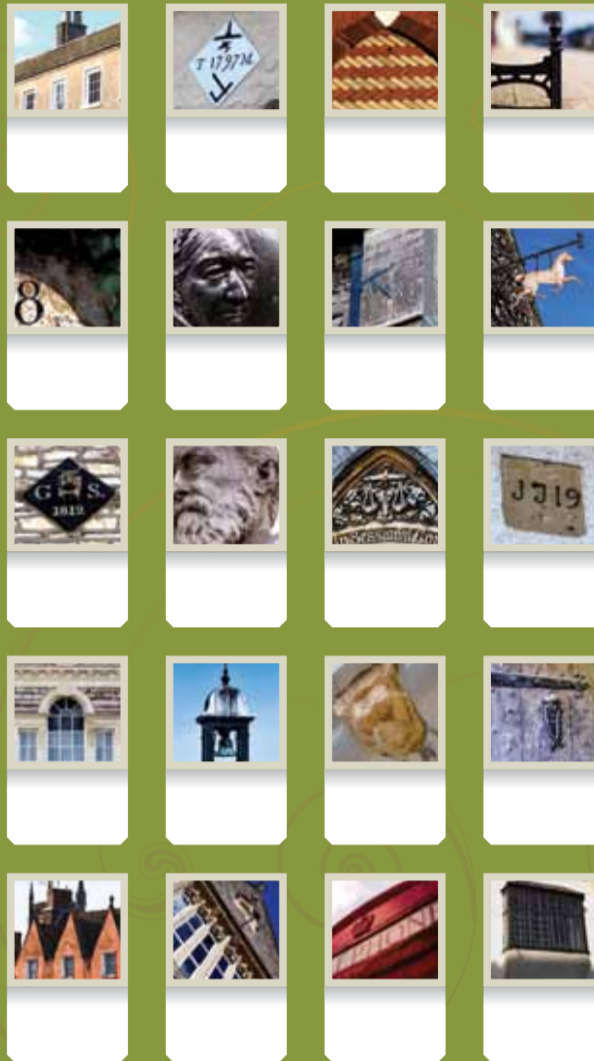
²⁵Being a market town there was a constant need to water animals. Unfortunately, no records remain of the whereabouts of all the pumps in town but two pumps remain today. The main **pump and trough** were erected in 1897, renovated in 1977, the 27 feet deep well beneath the pump still exists. Next to the pump is the **trough** which commemorates the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria. The inscription reads "for use of man and beast". Long gone are the two ornate pillars which stood at each side of the trough and which contained cups attached to chains for human use.



²⁶The Baptists have been established in Chipping Sodbury since 1656. The first **Baptist church** was built in 1710.

Treasure Hunt

Match each photo to the letter on the map. Write the letter underneath the photo to spell out the name of an imaginary group. Enquire at the Tourist Information Centre for the answer to the Treasure Hunt or by visiting: www.yateandchippingsodbury.co.uk



The original grounds and open baptistery were off Hounds Road. Covering two of the burgage plots, High Street frontage was gained in 1886, with the opening of the New Hall used initially as a Sunday school room and then in 1965 as the Church. A new Church was built in 1991 to cope with the ever growing congregation.



In front of the Baptist church hall stands the only statue in the town, a **statue** to Andrew James Foxwell, a member of the church who raised money to build the Church and founded a renowned choral society. When he died in 1903 the Baptist Church decided to erect a statue in his memory. It was erected outside the Reading Institute (No 26 High St) from 1904; it was moved in the early 1940's to its present site to protect it from the ravages of traffic.



²⁷The Old Grammar School was built on the site of The Lamb Inn, in 1790. It is now in the care of the Towns Lands Charity and houses the library and meeting rooms. Between Dec 1943 and June 1944 the Old Grammar School was headquarters of 1st US Army, 165 Signal Photo Company who left Chipping Sodbury to photograph the D Day landings.

If you would like to extend your walk, you will find additional routes; Ridge Woods, Frome Valley Walkway, The Monarchs Way, The Cotswold Way, are all nearby. Contact the Tourist Information Centre for further details.