

INTRODUCTION

Street is a thriving settlement with a busy shopping area and a strong manufacturing focus today, but it does not have a long commercial history. As recently as 1825 it was a small rural place, with an economy founded on farming and quarrying. During the 19th century the Clark family developed tanning, sheepskin rug-making and shoe-making here, and by 1860 a quarter of a million pairs of shoes were made in Street every year. Nine hundred people were employed in the business. After 1870 shoe-making became mechanised, and by the turn of the 20th century 1,200 workers were working in Street.



Clarks Spring Shoe dating from about 1850 now in the Shoe Museum. It's elegantly shaped but has no heel.

In addition to providing employment for a large number of people, the company of C. & J. Clark also provided workers' housing and public buildings for the expanding settlement. The periods of development that contributed most strongly to Street's architectural character were 1880-1913 and 1920-1928. In the 1880s William S. Clark was "prosperous in his family and business" and turned his attention to providing healthy modern accommodation for his workforce and to improving the amenities of Street. The buildings were designed in the fashionable Arts and Crafts style, using local materials and vernacular building features. The 1920s saw some very early and enlightened town planning in Street, in the form of attractive building by the Urban District Council, which provided council houses that were among the earliest in the county.

The rural nature of the settlement is still preserved in some of the former farmhouses, while the polite architecture of genteel family homes, the functional yet attractive buildings of the factories, the wide range of civic premises, and a variety of places of worship are important elements of Street's special personality.

DISABLED ACCESS

The trail is generally accessible for wheelchair users, although there are no specially provided ramps. There are disabled toilets at Northside and Southside car parks and at Clarks Village. Street has a shopmobility scheme, whereby powered wheelchairs and electric scooters can be borrowed at no charge. Telephone 01458 440155 for details.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

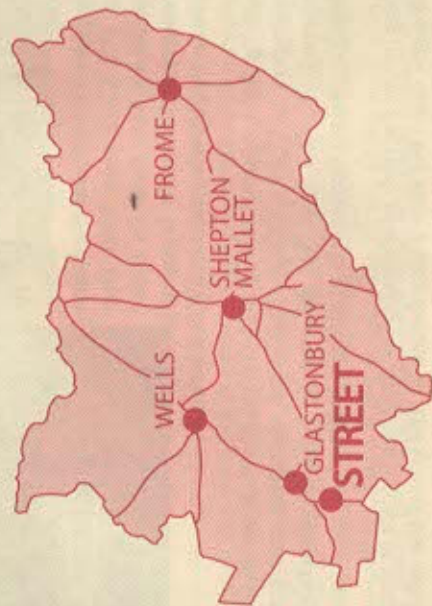
This trail has been adapted from Michael McGarvie's Guide to Historic Street.

FURTHER READING:

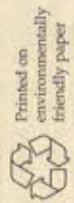
- Mary E. Hart
- A Street Trilogy
- Michael McGarvie
- The Book of Street
- Clarks of Street

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

Information about accommodation, restaurants, recreation facilities and much more is available from: The Tourist Information Centre, Clarks Village Farm Road Street Somerset BA16 0BB Telephone 01458 447384 Email: street.tic@ukonline.co.uk website: glastonburytic.co.uk/street



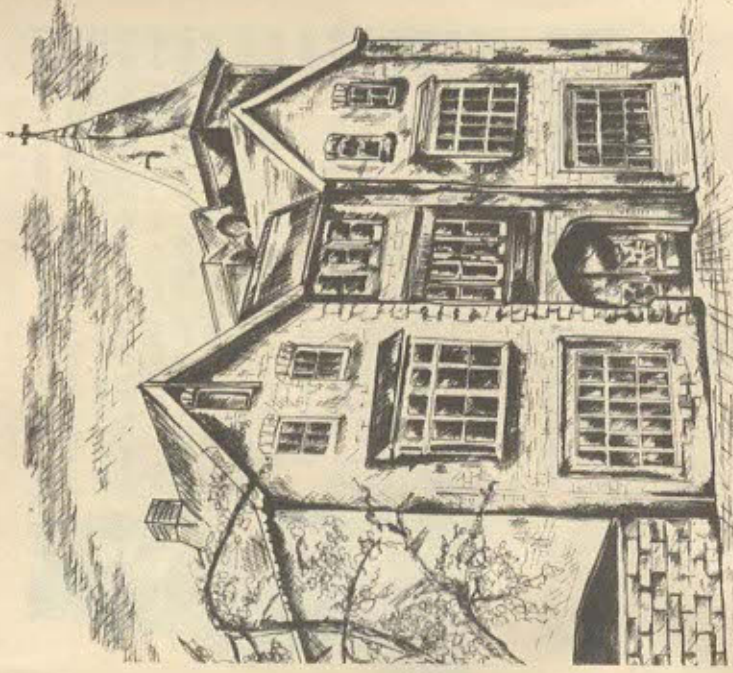
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STREET

HERITAGE TRAIL

60p

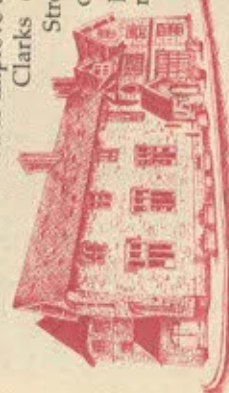


An easy walk around the historic settlement of **Street in Somerset**

Approx 3 1/2 miles taking 1 3/4 hours

THE TRAIL

1 The trail begins at the Crispin Hall, which stands in the High Street. This important feature of Street was designed by G. J. Skipper for William S. Clark and opened in 1885. It was intended to improve the cultural facilities for



Clarks employees and other Streetonians. It was originally built as a public hall, library and reading-room, and a gymnasium was added five years later. The Crispin Hall housed an important collection of fossils found in the local blue lias quarries. Some spectacular examples of fossilised creatures were found, including ichthyosaurs up to eight feet long which had been preserved for 60 million years. An ichthyosaurus was adopted as the emblem of the Street Urban District Council when it was established in 1894.

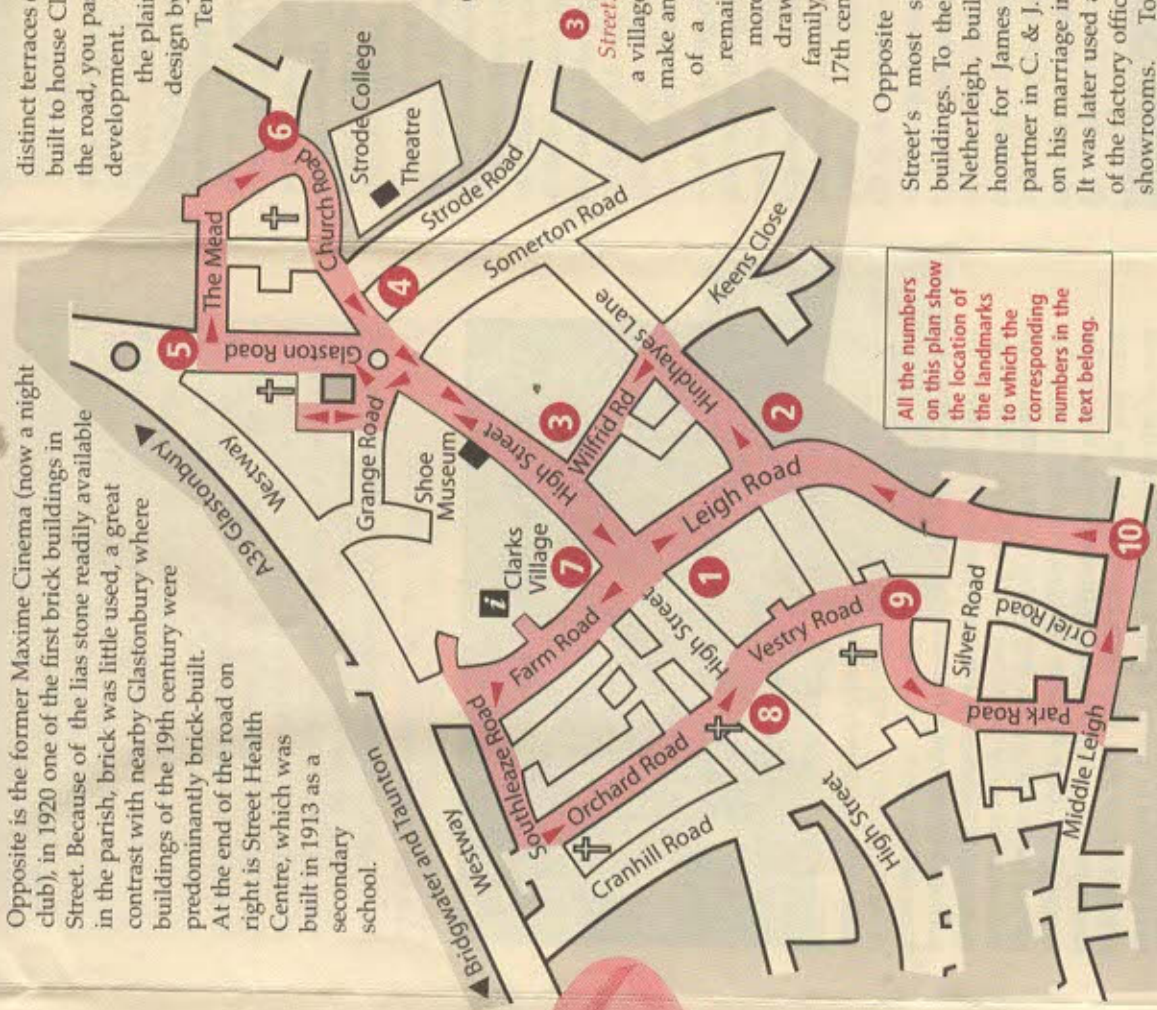


Thomas Hawkins, who lived at Sharpam Park close to Street, was an early enthusiastic collector who reckoned to have "secured to our cabinets ... every fossil organic remain that has been found ... in Somerset". Local quarrymen soon found it to their advantage to look out for fossils in the course of their work, and to treat them with care. Another local man, Alfred Gillett, spent many years studying geology and collecting fossils, and from his collection came the exhibits for the museum in the Crispin Hall. Fossils from Street are in the Natural History Museum in London, the County Museum at Taunton Castle, Wells Museum, and a number of other museums and private collections.

Walk down the turning leading off High Street, Leigh Road. On the side opposite the Crispin Hall is the Public Library, built in 1924. On the right-hand side of the road you will find the Vestry Room of 1887, which housed the fire engine at one time. It also once housed the Urban District Council, and at the back was the ARP station during the Second World War. Further along is the former police station. Further on still is Leigh Road Methodist Church, and next to that, the former Technical School and Strode School, built in the very late 19th century. Clarks workers and apprentices could still learn how to make by hand a pair of shoes at the Technical School long after the process had been mechanised and divided into separate functions in the factory.

Opposite is the former Maxime Cinema (now a night club), in 1920 one of the first brick buildings in Street. Because of the lias stone readily available in the parish, brick was little used, a great contrast with nearby Glastonbury where buildings of the 19th century were predominantly brick-built. At the end of the road on the right is Street Health Centre, which was built in 1913 as a secondary school.

distinct terraces of industrial housing in this little road, all built to house Clarks factory workers. As you walk down the road, you pass from the latest to the earliest phases of development. On the right is Lawson Terrace, the plainest in style, which was built in 1891 to a design by William Reynolds. On the left, Cobden Terrace (1889) contains 20 cottages, and has much charm; but unfortunately for the architect, G.J.Skipper, Mrs Helen Clark did not care for the folksy features and the cupola, and Skipper was replaced by Reynolds for the next building phase. Wilfrid Terrace dates from 1885. It was designed by Skipper and was the first housing provided for Clarks factory workers, although houses had been built for outworkers some years earlier.



All the numbers on this plan show the location of the landmarks to which the corresponding numbers in the text belong.

3 At the end of the road, turn right into High Street. The Bear Hotel on your right was once a village ale and cider house, but was rebuilt to make an attractive coffee house in 1894, as part of a vigorous temperance movement. It remained teetotal for 85 years, before once more becoming licensed premises. The Bear draws its name from the crest of the Strode family, who became lords of the manor in the 17th century.



Opposite are Street's most striking buildings. To the left is Netherleigh, built as a home for James Clark, partner in C. & J. Clark, on his marriage in 1835. It was later used as part of the factory offices and showrooms. To the right is the main facade of the factory, with its delightful clock tower of 1887 and flat-topped water tower of 1897. Behind lie a range of other C. & J. Clark factory and office buildings.

There is a Shoe Museum here, which you should visit if you have time.

Further to the right is the Old Rectory, which was bought by the rector, Lord John Thynne, in 1840 to accommodate his curate, the Revd Merriman.

Continued over

It was superseded by Elmhurst Grammar School a few years later.

The charming house that faces down Leigh Road is Hindhayes, built in 1807 by a farmer, Joseph Clark, who was father to Cyrus and James Clark, founders of Street's shoe-making industry.

2 Turn left and walk along Hindhayes Lane. The building that is now Vine Surgery was once Hindhayes Farm. Turn left down Wilfrid Road. There are three

Two Interesting Churchmen of Street

In 1824 Lord John Thynne, third son of Lord Bath, was appointed to the living of Street and Walton by his father, who was patron of the living. Such an intellectual and aristocratic man seemed unlikely to settle well into such an unfashionable rural parish, but in the event he proved a success. He spent a great deal of his time in Street and founded a Friendly Society so that the poor could obtain relief in times of sickness. He established schools in Walton and Street, built a new Rectory, extended the church and generously donated towards new fixtures, furniture and an organ.

The Revd James Merriman, Lord John's curate, was another intellectual and talented man, and much loved by local people for his kindness and generosity. He cut back on his own rations in order to give more to charity. He learned shoe-making so that he could identify more closely with his parishioners, and installed a work-bench in his study. Merriman left Street to become a missionary in South Africa, where at length he became Bishop of Grahamstown. The Hon. John X. Merriman, his son (born in the Old Rectory in High Street), entered politics, and became Prime Minister of Cape Colony from 1908 to 1910. The Merrimans are still remembered in Street, having given their name to Merriman Road and Gardens.

Walking down High Street you pass Mullions Hotel on your right. This attractive building dates from the late 17th century, when it was a prosperous farmhouse. As late as the 1840s it was still a farmstead with yard and outbuildings. Across the road is the gracious building of the Quaker Meeting House, built in 1850 on the site of an earlier meeting house.

The Society of Friends at Street

The Society of Friends, often known as Quakers, have been an important and influential part of the Street community for three centuries.

George Fox of Leicestershire founded the sect in the 17th century. They

became known as Quakers because "they bade people tremble at the word of the Lord".

Bristol quickly became a focus of Quaker activity, with between three and four thousand people attending meetings. A document written in 1659 records that in 1655

5 Cross the road and walk along The Mead. A Roman road crossed the grassy field on your left, joining the Isle of Avalon to the higher land to its south. Street probably derives its name from this road. The manor was called Street in documents of the late 12th century, although the name did not appear in the Domesday Book, the area being described there as Lega, a Latinisation of Leigh. There are still parts of Street parish called Leigh today, including Overleigh and Middleleigh.

The Roman road has been partly excavated and seems to have gone out of use in the 13th century, when the present causeway road may have been constructed. The low-lying land here was called Pressmoor (from Priest's moor). The course of the River Brue has changed over time, and in this area it was made into a deeper, narrower channel with a millstream to serve the Abbey's mill at Beckery. The bridge that joined Glastonbury and Street is called Pons Perijis (the perilous bridge) and is linked in folklore with the legend of King Arthur.

Walk along The Mead to look at the Parish Church.



An Early Church

This church lies in an approximately oval churchyard, and its setting on the very edge of the Somerset Levels is important to its history. The church in its enclosure is probably the place known in early Saxon documents as Lantokay the enclosure of St Kai, a Celtic saint. It was dedicated in the Middle Ages to St Gildas, another Celtic Christian. It may be one of a number of early Christian hermitages or small oratories dotted about the islands and edges of the Levels. Another, connected by legend with St Bridget, lay at Beckery on the Glastonbury side of the Brue, and yet another stood on the very top of Glastonbury Tor. Roman pottery and the remains of walls have been found within the churchyard, and it is possible that the church stands on the site of a Roman villa.

6 Walk past the churchyard to look at Bowlinggreen Mill (now private flats). This site was developed for sheepskin



7 Walk on a little way and turn right into Farm Road.

Walk on past Clarks Village until you find Street Farm on your right. This was built as a farmhouse in the first half of the 19th century. It was bought by James Clark in 1890. Walk further along the road, past the delivery entrance to Clarks Village, bearing right a little way into a private road, and you can glimpse the large building that stands on the site of the medieval manor house. Close by stands a large barn, now converted to other uses. There have been a number of rebuildings, but there has been a grange barn at Street since at least 1239, when Glastonbury Abbey documents record one. The manor house itself has also been much rebuilt, but The Grange (inside Clarks Village), now used for offices, may contain some medieval fabric.

Walk back a little way and turn into Southleaze Road, and then take the next left, Orchard Road. Laura Terrace on the left was a speculative development of 1890, built by a local quarry owner, William Pursey, and named after his daughter. Near the far end of the road is a small row of cottages built in 1860 by Cyrus Clark for shoe outworkers. They have workshops for shoe-making at the first-floor level above the back sculleries. The large building at the corner is the old Board School (now

Living Homes department store), built in 1859 to accommodate 350 pupils, but extended before the end of the century to take up to 1,150 children. It remained a school until 1974. On the opposite corner is the United Reform Church, built as the Congregational Chapel in the 1850s.



At this point in the trail you can choose between the shorter and the longer routes. For the shorter route turn left and walk back along High Street until you reach the start at the Crispin Hall. If you would like to do another half-hour exploring

Bristol quickly became a focus of Quaker activity, with between three and four thousand people attending meetings. A document written in 1659 records that in 1655 "several of his faithful servants and ministers from the Counteys of Westmorland & Lancaster" travelled to Somerset to preach the gospel. Several members of the local farming community were drawn to the new faith. By 1656 a Street meeting had been formed, and monthly meetings were held at East Lydford. A small burial ground was acquired two years later. Quakers were subject to some persecution in Somerset, suffering beatings, despoiling of their goods, and even imprisonment. With the passing years attitudes towards the Friends became more tolerant, and Quakers became respected members of the local community.



Past the Meeting House is a terrace of varied buildings, one of which is the pretty Regency Goss House, built c.1810 for his own use by a carpenter, William Goss. Ahead is an open area known as The Cross, where the main roads from Glastonbury, Somerton and Bridgwater meet. Its character has now been eroded by having as its focus an unattractive mini-roundabout, but this area was for many years an important central place. At the end of Grange Road stands a delightful cast-iron drinking trough with a decorative lamp standard, which formed an attractive centre-piece to the area from 1893.

4 Overlooking The Cross is The Street Inn. It was once a prominent local meeting place, and an important coaching inn. Its stables survive behind the main building.

Cross the road to walk a little way along Grange Road, which was once the main entrance to Glastonbury Abbey's Farm or Grange. Grange and Brutasche Terraces were built in the late 19th century to accommodate Clarks workers. At the bottom of Brutasche Terrace stands the old toll gate, which once stood beside the little turnpike cottage that you will pass later.

Walk back to The Cross and turn left down Glaston road, passing Street Baptist Church. Soon you reach Turnpike Cottage. This early 19th-century cottage was built for the collection of tolls by the Wells Turnpike Trust. The Trust was responsible for the upkeep of the road from the mid-18th until the late 19th century.

6 *Walk past the churchyard to look at Bowlinggreen Mill (now private flats).* This site was developed for sheepskin tanning by C. & J. Clark in the mid-19th century. Previously their tanning had taken place at the main factory site in the High Street, but the Pollybrook, an open stream running down the road, had become severely polluted by waste liquids from the tanning process. This, together with the pressure placed on water supplies and sewage disposal by the rapidly increasing population, resulted in some serious outbreaks of cholera and typhoid. There were deaths and illnesses in many families, and each of the Clark brothers lost sons in the epidemics. The site at Bowlinggreen made it easier to manage waste in a safe manner. Some years later, one of the earliest achievements of Street Urban District Council was to secure a supply of pure drinking water for Street by piping spring water many miles from the Mendip Hills. In 1877 the tanyard was converted to a leatherboard mill, making board from rags and rope fibre, and eventually also using scrap leather. *Walk back towards The Cross along Church Road, passing Crispin School, the Strode Theatre, and Strode College on your left.* These institutions opened in the early 1960s.

Turn left and walk up High Street. On the corner of Wilfrid Road stands Greenbank Swimming Pool with its spacious grounds. This much-loved open-air pool was the gift of Alice Clark to the people of Street in 1937. It took its name from the house opposite, which was the home of W.S. Clark from 1866. That house in turn took its name from the Rochdale home of Helen Bright, who married W.S. Clark.



On the right, opposite the end of Wilfrid Road, is one of the entrances to Clarks Village. This retail shopping area was opened in 1993 and has become a popular attraction, bringing many thousands of visitors to Street.

Just before the rank of shops on the right is a terrace of three houses: one (48) was a farmhouse in 1843, and the other two are respectively an extension to that house and a converted stable block. One of the shops in the rank was the Temperance Hotel, and a commemorative plaque on the building marks this.

The High Street shopping area lies ahead of you. Street has an excellent selection of shops and, as well as catering for all the usual small shopping centre needs, specialises in shoes, leather and sheepskin goods and clothing.

and the longer route. For the shorter route turn left and walk back along High Street until you reach the start of the Crispin Hall. If you would like to spend another half-hour exploring Street, then follow the longer route.

The Longer Route

8 *Cross High Street and walk along Vestry Road.* The building on the right-hand corner is the Old Vestry Room, which stands on the site of the village pound, where straying farm animals were held until a fine was paid by their owners. In the Middle Ages the lord of the manor sometimes had the right to keep strays. Just past Holy Trinity Church, on the corner of Vestry Road and Merriman Road, is Street Rectory, which was built in the last years of the 19th century.

9 *Turn right into Merriman Gardens.* Merriman Road and Gardens were built as Council housing by Street UDC from 1911 onwards.

This was one of the earliest municipal housing schemes in the country. As you leave Merriman Gardens, walk straight on up Park Road. Turn left into Middle Leigh and walk on until you pass the attractive blue lias buildings of Tannery Cottage and Tannery House. They once belonged to the Clothiers, a farming family who began Street's commercial association with tanning. *Walk past these two properties, turn left into Leigh Road, and go a little way into the open yard to look at the range of buildings in the Old Tannery.*

10 Arthur Clothier started production at the Tanyard in 1807 and it quickly became one of the largest in the West of England, employing over 100 workers. One of the employees, Cyrus Clark, had the idea of producing sheepskin rugs, a venture that proved so successful that in 1821 he was taken into partnership with Clothier. Cyrus later formed the company of C. & J. Clark with his brother James. The tanyard continued its association with the Clothier family until the 1890s. It was later run by the Co-operative Wholesale Society to produce a fine leather called glace kid. It now houses a number of different businesses.

Walk on down Leigh Road. You will pass Hindhayes Infants' School on your right. It was built in 1928, to a pioneering light and airy design, and set in attractive and spacious grounds, a great contrast with earlier school premises.

Continue along the road until you find yourself once again beside the Crispin Hall.

