

CITY WALK: A tour of King Alfred's Winchester

The Heart of the Ancient Capital



1 (Approximately 1 mile of level walking, generally suitable for wheelchairs, allow up to 1.5 hours)

The walk begins at the Winchester Visitor Information Centre in the Victoria Guildhall, where the City Council meets.

Turn right towards King Alfred's

turn 1. The High Street started life as a roadway some 2,500 years ago, leading to a crossing point on the River Itchen. The street was later named for Roman, Saxon and Medieval Winchester and lays claim to be the oldest street in any English city.

A short distance ahead is the Mayor's official residence, **Abbey House 2**, excavated remains of St Mary's Abbey, founded by Alfred's Queen, Ealhswith in the early 10th century, can be seen along Abbey Passage to the right.

Opposite Abbey House is **St John's House**, originally part of a Medieval hospital. The first floor was used as a meeting place for the Mayor and Middle Ages.

The **Victoria Statue of King Alfred** **stands 4** at the end of the street to the right marks the site of the Medieval Eastgate.

The **City Bridge 3** is said to have first been built by St Swithun, the 9th century bishop and patron saint of Winchester. The current structure, built in 1813, is thought to occupy the same site. **Across the road is the City Mill 3.**

Turn right and follow the river walk.

To your right is a surviving remnant of the original **Roman town walls 4**, first built of stone in the 3rd century AD, the walls were regularly repaired and rebuilt following the original Roman lines. The **River Itchen** provided part of the eastern defences of the city by the 10th century. The tower also considered power of 2 mills flourishing in or near Winchester by the mid-12th century.



5 Continue to **Wharf Mill**, which is generally suitable for wheelchairs, allow up to 1.5 hours. **Turn right to see the best-preserved part of the City Walls to their full Medieval height. Continue to Wolvesey Castle 5.**

The Medieval bishops' complex occupied the entire area now used as playing fields. To the left is the current bishop's residence **6**, built as a replacement in 1684.

Opposite is **Winchester College 7** founded by William of Wykeham in 1382 and believed to be the oldest continuously running school in England.

Cross College Street and continue to the main college gate and past the headmaster's house.

The next building, now a private residence, is where **Jane Austen 8** died. She died here and is buried in the cathedral.

At the end of College Street, turn right to face Kingsgate with the tiny church of St Swithun above.

Continuing through the gateway, you come to the **Close Wall**, first built by Saxon times to separate the monastic communities from the rest of the town.

Turn right and go through Priors' Gate.

On your right is the Medieval **Chantry Court 9** where bishops met to hear legal cases involving the areas they controlled, known as the **Sobe.**

Passing the medieval stables on your right, now used as music rooms, you will see the main buildings of **Pilgrims' School 10**. The oldest parts of the complex are two adjacent, early 14th century timber-framed halls, said originally to have provided accommodation for pilgrims. Today, among the boys educated there, are the boys of the cathedral and college chorists known as **Choristers and Quireboys** respectively.

The Upper City

(Approximately 1 mile, some stairs and fairly steep slopes, generally unsuitable for wheelchairs, allow up to 1.5 hours)

From St Maurice's Covert walk towards the High Street and then turn left. At the first corner on the left is the 'new' Market Hall built in 1772. Turn left into Market Street and then right into The Square 16.



Originally part of the huge cathedral cemetery, this area was used for corn, wood and animal markets in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Continue along The Square

On the left is the **Winchester Provident Dispensary plaque**, and the plaque commemorating **Alice Lisle**, beleaguered during the Mornmouth rebellion, on the wall of the museum.

Continue past the City Museum 17 and turn right.

One of the first purpose-built museums outside London the museum is an award-winning tourist attraction along with the Westgate.

In the 11th century, this area was part of the Royal Palace built by William the Conqueror. **St Lawrence's Church** is said to be built on the site of the palace chapel.

Just ahead is the **Buttercross 18**, on this site since at least the early 15th century.

Turn left into the High Street.

The **Town Clock 19** and the **statue of Queen Anne** were presented to the city in 1713, following a royal visit. They adorn the **old Guildhall**, where the city's Mayor and Burgesses since 1361, and 9.30am each evening at 8pm.

Continuing up the High Street, crossing Southgate Street.

On the right is the **Saxon street Staple Gardens**, the site of the wall **20** marking the line of the western city defences. A **message** the first floor houses the city's post-medieval collection and historic weights and measures, with good views from the roof. Check with the visitor information centre for opening times 01962 840 500.

Turn left up the pedestrian way next to the Westgate.



You soon reach some of the excavated remains of **Winchester Castle**, begun by William the Conqueror in 1066. Ahead is the 13th century **Great Hall 21**, the only part of the medieval castle to survive above ground and home to the famous **Round Table**.

Go through the Great Hall and out into Queen Eleanor's Garden 22 (admission fees apply).

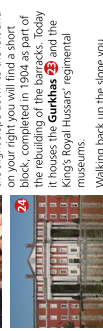


This is a reconstruction of a medieval garden. The wall forming one side of the garden is all that remains in situ of the **King's House** built by Edward I. Used throughout the 19th century as barracks, the house burned down in 1894.

Go back through the Great Hall, walk straight ahead to **Romesey Road** and the **Winchester Military Museum** complex entry gates are to the left.



On the right you will see the **Cole and the Adjutant General Corps** regiment and just beyond this are the museums of the **Royal Green Jackets (Rifles)** and the **Light Infantry** regiments. Moving forward follow the slight slope down to the left and you will see a short section of the **palace walls 23** of the rebuilding of the barracks. Today it houses the **Gurkhas 24** and the **King's Royal Hussars'** regimental museums.



Walking back up the slope you will find **Queen Anne** were presented to the city in 1713, following a royal visit. They adorn the **old Guildhall**, where the city's Mayor and Burgesses since 1361, and 9.30am each evening at 8pm.



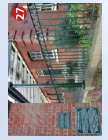
Cross the square and walk to the right of the former Sergeants' Mess, the building with the clock.

The steep slope **25** marks the eastern defences of the medieval castle. Please note the remainder of this loop is not suitable for wheelchair users.

Descend the steps. At the bottom turn left and then right, heading towards the spire of St Thomas's Church.



To the left is **Serle's House 26**, home to the **Royal Hampshire Regiment** Museum. This building and the nearby **14 Southgate Street (Hotel du Vin)** are good examples of the fine early 18th century residences built as a result of Charles II's grand plans for the city.



Follow the driveway between passing the Guard House 27 on your left. Cross Southgate Street. This street was known in the early medieval period as 'Goldstreet' because of the preponderance of goldsmiths.



Turn left and then right down the steps 28 into 13th century St Thomas Passage. At the end of the passage, turn left into St Thomas Street.



The large front garden a short distance ahead on the left marks the site of the church of **St Peteroc** (later St Thomas).

Cross St Thomas Street and continue into Minster Lane 29.

The area to the left is believed to be the site of the palace of the Saxon Kings of Wessex.

Continue along the avenue of yew trees to the War Memorial.

The remains of the **Church of St Mary** in the Cemetery can be seen to the right.

Turn left in front of the cathedral and follow the path with the railings on your right 30. Just before the Wessex Hotel, turn left to return to St Maurice's Covert.



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