

CITY WALK

A tour of King Alfred's Winchester



King Alfred the Great

In 871 John of Worcester excavated the site of **Hyde Abbey** and claimed to have found the bones of King Alfred buried. Few records were kept until his death in 899. At the time of his enthronement the Vikings had taken control of half of the country and were threatening Wessex. After initial setbacks, Alfred won a great battle at Edington in 878, resulting in the conversion of the Viking King Guthrum to Christianity. Alfred developed a sophisticated military strategy involving the establishment of fortified centres. His capital at Winchester was the largest. He gradually won back some of the lands taken by the Vikings and his dynasty died eventually to the formation of the English nation, fifth son of the King of Wessex, Alfred was not expected to live and so developed a love of learning. In his early years, despite ever pressing military duties, he found time to translate Latin texts into English to encourage wider literacy, developed a philosophy of kingship, reformed Saxon law and was a patron of the Church. This remarkable combination of soldier, statesman and scholar earned him the title 'the Great' - an honour bestowed on no other English King.

Information panels in the main archway explain the layout of the abbey.

Continue to the end of King Alfred Place.

Pause in Hyde Abbey Garden which reflects the abbey church and marks the site of Alfred the Great's medieval tomb.

Turn right along the footpath with the brick boundary wall on your right. Turn right again at the next street.

Turn right along the streamside path to Hyde Gate and walk to Hyde Street.

Pass the red-painted building, the surviving wing of Hyde House built after the dissolution of the abbey in 1538. Through the cast iron gates is Hyde Barn, built in circa 1750 after the house was demolished.

The Counting House of the Winchester Brewery is to the left, part of one of the many breweries which thrived in Hyde in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 17th century pub was the site of the Winchester residence of the Bishop of Worcester, who was responsible for compiling the Domesday Book.

Cross at the traffic lights to the right side of Jewry Street.

This was the centre of Medieval Winchester's Jewish community. Past the Theatre Royal is the Corn Exchange built in 1836 (now Winchester Discovery Centre). Further on is the former wing of County Hall built in 1805. Beyond is the gaol, central wing that served as the governor's residence.

At High Street turn left to return to St Maurice's Covert

Alfred's Final Journey

(approximately 1 mile of level walking, generally suitable for wheelchair users, allow about 1 hour).

From St Maurice's Covert, cross Market Lane towards the Cathedral Green.

31 The open space ahead is the site of New Minster and founded by Alfred the Great and completed by his son, Edward the Elder. Alfred was buried here soon after his death in 899 until 1110 when the New Minster moved to Hyde Abbey in Saxon times.

Turn right in front of Morley College **31**, founded in the 17th century for widows of the clergy, and right again into Market Street. Turn left into St George's Street, and continue to the remains of Alfred's Palace.

Alfred founded Winchester in the 9th century using the Roman town defences as its framework. Retaining only the Roman High Street, he created an entirely new street pattern which survives to this day and through which you are now walking.

Turn into Parchment Street at the next corner on the right, cross St George's Street at the lights and turn left. At the next corner, turn right into St Peter's Street and continue to the remains of Alfred's Palace.

Just ahead, on the left, is the entry to Milner Hall **32**. Continue past St Peter's Roman Catholic Church and turn left up the driveway by the church.

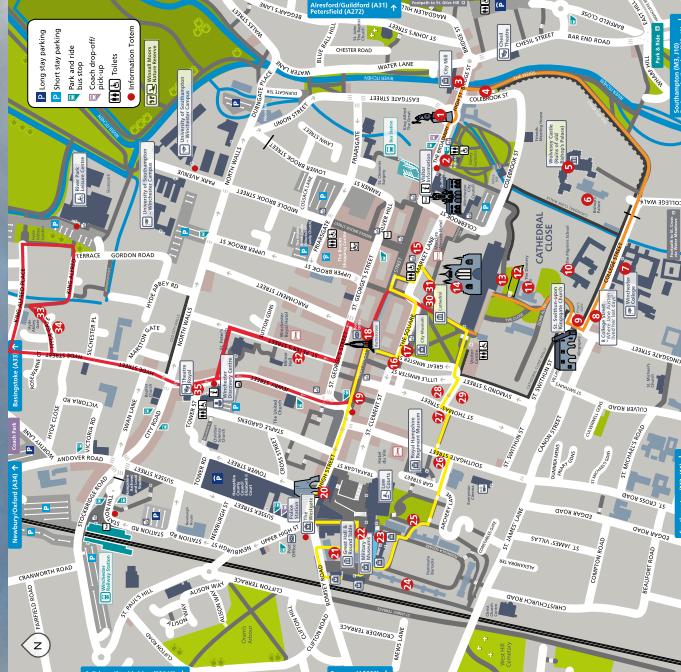
Built in 1926, the building features a Norman doorway seen to your left, salvaged from St Mary Magdalene Hospital.

Walk to the slope and through the churchyard to Jewry Street. Turn right towards the traffic lights. Continue across the junction on the site of the Roman Saxon and Medieval North Gate. Continue along Hyde Street.

On the left is Hyde Abbey House - a famous private school in the 18th century.

At King Alfred Place turn right.

The main gate into the Hyde Abbey monastic precinct was located here, set back from the street. Turn right to the left is the church of St Bartholomew, part of which pre-dates the abbey.



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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

It's time to explore Winchester's historic landmarks.

Follow in King Alfred's footsteps on this tour of Winchester's historic landmarks.

This walk is divided into three loops so you can choose how much to do, set out from the famous statue of King Alfred and explore the heart of the ancient capital, the upper city and Alfred's final resting place in Hyde Abbey Gardens.

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Bring your walk around King Alfred's Winchester alive!

Uncover the gripping history of his ancient capital city by taking a tour with one of Winchester's official tourist guides.

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King Alfred

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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 hour.

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

Turn right towards King Alfred's statue. **1**

The High Street started life as a roadway some 2,500 years ago, leading to a crossing point on the River Itchen. In the early 11th century, the road became the main thoroughfare for Roman, Saxon and Medieval traffic, and has remained to the present day as a busy street in any English city.

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

Opposite Abey House is **St John's Hospital**, originally part of a Medieval Hospital. The first floor was used as a meeting place for the Mayor and citizens of Winchester in the later Middle Ages.

The Civic Bridge **3** is said to have been built by King Alfred. 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 wall was regularly repaired and rebuilt following the original Roman lines.

The **River Itchen** provided part of the eastern defences of the city by forming a moat. The river also provided power for 12 mills, flourishing in or near Winchester by the mid 12th century.

The Upper City

(approximately 1 mile of steep steps, generally unsuitable for wheelchairs, allow up to 1.5 hours)

From St Maurice's Cover walk towards the High Street and then turn left. At its corner on the left is the new Market Hall built in 1772. Turn left into Market Street and then right into the Square **15**.

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, believed during the Monmouth rebellion, on the wall of the Museum.

Continue past the City Museum 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.

On reaching the cathedral have turn left, walking beneath the living buttresses designed by architect G. J. Jackson to support the south nave wall in 1911.

At the west front of the cathedral **14**, the stone in the wall to the left indicates the extent of the Norman westwork, demolished around 1300.

Turn left as the next bend on to the site of the Old Minster dating from the 4th century, now marked out in brick.

The New Minster was built on the instructions of Alfred the Great and completed by his son Edward the Elder. It was located alongside the Old Minster until 1110 when the church was moved to the northern suburb of Hyde.

Follow the diagonal path with the railings on your right, crossing the site of the New Minster church. Turn left just before the Wessex Hotel towards the tower of St Maurice's Cover **15 where this loop ends.**

Passing the medieval stables on your right, now used as **Plumns 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 choirs known as Choristers and Quiristers respectively.

Continue up the High Street, crossing Southgate Street.

On the right is the Saxon street **Staple Gardens**, the site of the wool market in the mid-14th century. Straight ahead is the **Westgate** **20**, marking the line of the western city defences. A museum on 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.

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

To the left is **Seale's House** **25**, 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 Seale's House and the church, passing the Guard House **7 on your left. Cross Southgate Street, then turn left 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 of the **King's House** built by Christopher Wren for the King in 1683. Used throughout the 19th century as barracks, the house burned down in 1894.

Go through the Great Hall and out into Queen Eleanor's Garden **22**

The large front garden is a short distance ahead on the left marks the site of the church of St Peter (later St Thomas). Cross St. Thomas Street and continue into Minster Lane **23**.

Continue towards the cathedral.

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. Just before the Wessex Hotel, turn left to return to St Maurice's Cover.

Cross the square and walk to the right of the former Sergeant's 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.