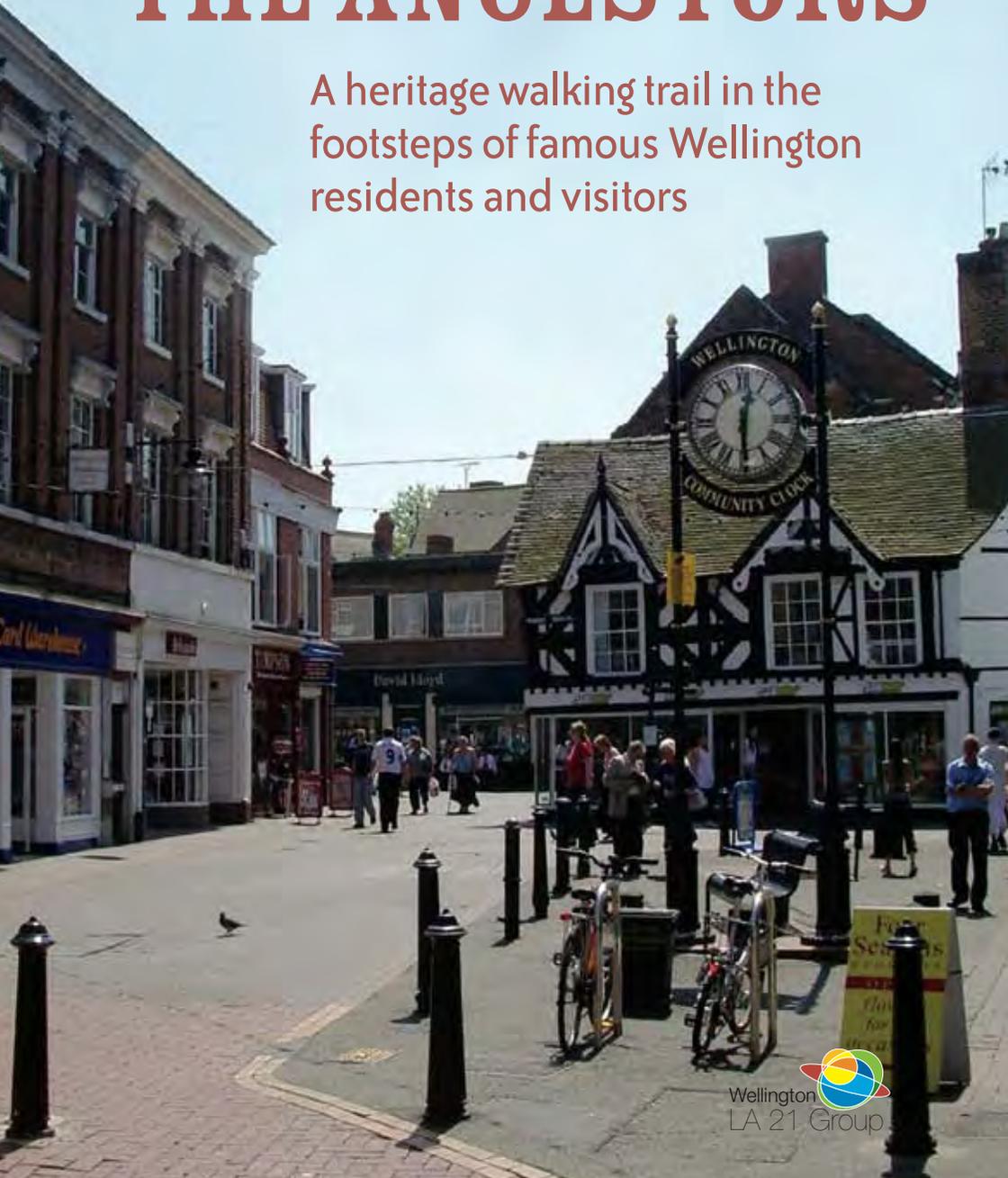


The 'Discovering Wellington' Project presents:

WALKING WITH THE ANCESTORS

A heritage walking trail in the footsteps of famous Wellington residents and visitors



WALKING WITH THE ANCESTORS

Throughout Wellington's long and illustrious history many notable figures have traversed the streets of the ancient Shropshire market town. The Walking With The Ancestors heritage trail attempts to follow in their footsteps, uncovering various locations associated with an assortment of famous, forgotten and downright notorious characters who visited and lived in the area, many of whom went on to profoundly influence the course of history in the arts, science and politics.

SQUARE ROUTES

The *Walking with the Ancestors* trail begins and ends in Market Square, the heart of Wellington itself. The Square was laid out sometime after the town received its first market charter in 1244 and was formerly much larger than today, with Bell, Crown and Duke Street gradually emerging from permanent market stalls that became established on the site over the centuries. As a meeting place Market Square has always been at the centre of local affairs and, until the beginning of the 1800s, the manor court that governed Wellington met in a small timber-framed hall that stood on columns to the west of the main thoroughfare. Although the hall itself was removed, a general Thursday market continued in the Square until 1866, when the current facility was opened in neighbouring Market Street. Many well-known figures have visited the locality and in 1642 King



Market Square, Wellington

Charles is rumoured to have raised his standard here, on the eve of the English Civil War. Dr William Withering, famed for his pioneering studies into the application of digitalis, was also born in the Square, while the Houlston family established one of the largest provincial printing houses in England here during the early 19th Century.



Wellington Market

MOVING RIGHT ALONG

The *Walking with the Ancestors* trail offers the opportunity to explore many localities in the medieval town centre streets that extend in a grid pattern from Market Square. In Walker Street, there is the chance to investigate one of the area's many literary connections and follow in the footsteps of the famous poet Philip Larkin, who was Wellington's Librarian in the mid 1940s while, nearby, a walk through the main shopping thoroughfare of New Street leads to the birthplace of the best-selling Victorian novelist Hesba Stretton.



Christ Church, New Church Road

Market Square was not always the historic centre of town and a short walk along Church Street leads to The Green and All Saints parish church, the probable location of Wellington's original Anglo-Saxon settlement, which may have been founded up to 1400 years ago. All Saints has connections with many well known visitors to the area and the current church

was rebuilt in 1797 after sustaining heavy damage during the English Civil War, proving not all guests were welcome! The church is one of many places of worship dotted around the town and an excellent point from which to begin exploring the varied sites of interest in Wellington's suburbs.



Sunnycroft, Holyhead Road



Bowring Park

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

To follow the *Walking with the Ancestors* trail, just refer to the map in the centre of this booklet. The walk is divided into a long distance route which takes in sites situated in Wellington's suburbs and a shorter trail around the town centre. Depending on which route you choose to take, you could complete the journey in anything from 20 minutes to 2 hours. There are plenty of opportunities to take a break at the many excellent cafes, sandwich bars, pubs and restaurants en route or time to stop and look in Wellington's market and array of specialist shops. Further afield, Sunnycroft, a Victorian period gentleman's residence owned by the National Trust, is open to visitors on selected days between March and September, while nearby Bowring Park is an excellent place to take a break and admire Wellington's close connection to The Wrekin Hills. The choice is yours! Now read on to discover more about the many famous characters associated with the town and, for more details about the trail, please visit our website:

www.wellingtonla21.org.uk/discover

THE GOOD DOCTOR WITHERING

William Withering was born in Wellington's Market Square in March 1741. During his lifetime, he made important contributions to the study of Botany and Mineralogy but is best remembered for his groundbreaking medical research which continues to have a major impact today, well over 200 years since his discoveries were first made.

EARLY YEARS

Owing to the lack of official postal records and 18th Century town plans the exact location of Withering's birthplace in the Market Square is unknown, although he is thought to have been born at number 14 (pictured below) which is currently occupied by a shoe shop. Withering was educated by Henry Wood, Curate of High Ercall church, but it may have been through his father Edmund, an apothecary/surgeon, that he received some initial medical training. However, it seems more probable that the young William became a pupil of his uncle, Doctor Brooke Hector of Lichfield, as it was often the custom for apprentices to become apothecaries themselves which he did not. Withering left Wellington in 1762 to study medicine at Edinburgh University, graduating as a 'Doctor of Physic' four years later when he was



Withering's birthplace (centre) Market Square

appointed Physician at Stafford General Infirmary. In 1769, Withering took a post at Birmingham General Hospital and it was while travelling back to Stafford to see patients that he made his great discovery.



Dr William Withering

THE PURPLE FOXGLOVE

During a break in the journey, Withering was asked to examine an elderly lady suffering from dropsy (a general swelling of the body caused by an accumulation of fluid, known nowadays as congestive heart failure) whom he diagnosed as having little chance of recovery. After enquiring of her condition a few weeks later, Withering was surprised to hear the woman had improved after taking a remedy supplied by a 'Grand Old Dame' from Shropshire! After experimenting with the mixture himself, he concluded that the ingredient which had cured the patient was contained in the leaves of the Purple Foxglove (*Digitalis Purpurea*). The plant had been used in the treatment of ailments for many centuries but its toxicity often induced poisoning in patients when administered in large doses, making it unpopular with medical practitioners. Between 1775 and 1784, Withering scrupulously recorded the cases of 156 patients treated with digitalis and established an effective dose for the drug that avoided unpleasant side-effects, while he also found creating an infusion from the plant's leaves (dried powder) to be a more effective treatment than boiling them (decoction). These conclusions formed the basis of his work *An Account of the Foxglove and Some of its Medical Uses* (1785) which helped to force a re-evaluation of medical opinion and legitimise the use of digitalis in cardiac treatment.

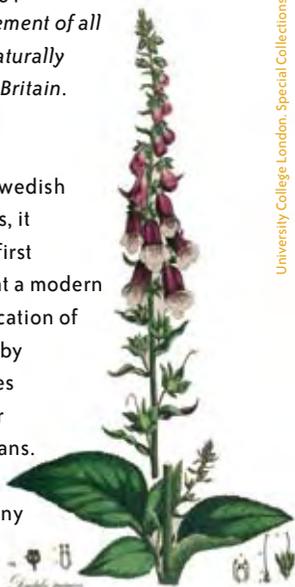
LUNAR ACTIVITIES

When Withering moved to Birmingham he was invited to join the Lunar Society, a dining club that met monthly on the Monday nearest the full moon. As an influential meeting place for scientists, inventors and philosophers, the group was second only to the Royal Society and counted luminaries such as Erasmus Darwin and James Watt among its members. Like his contemporaries, Withering had wide ranging interests that were reflected in his other work.

In 1776, Withering published *A Botanical Arrangement of all the Vegetables Naturally Growing in Great Britain*.

Inspired by the work of the Swedish botanist Linnaeus, it represented the first serious attempt at a modern scientific classification of British plant life, by classifying species according to their reproductive organs. Withering had first studied botany at University, although he originally claimed the subject had given him 'disagreeable ideas'!

It seems probable that his interest in plant classification developed as a consequence of his medical research and, in much the same way as he had done through his pioneering work on the Purple Foxglove, Withering used 'the botany' to dispel many of the claims made for the medical effects of plants and vegetables based on folklore and superstition.



The Purple Foxglove

University College London, Special Collections

TIMELINE

Withering's contribution to scientific discovery was extensive and varied. Here is a brief outline of his life and the major achievements therein:

- 1741:** Born at Market Square, Wellington.
- 1766:** Graduates, MD at Edinburgh.
- 1767:** Withering commences practice at Stafford and meets Helena Cooke, a botanic artist who illustrates his later work and to whom he is married in 1772.
- 1775:** Withering moves to Birmingham and becomes a member of the Lunar Society.
- 1776:** The first edition of *A Botanical Arrangement of all the Vegetables Naturally Growing in Great Britain* ('the botany') is published in 2 volumes. The work is an immediate success and a second and third edition follow in 1787 and 1792.
- 1779:** *An Account of the Scarlet Fever and Sore Throat...* Withering's paper documents a severe outbreak of the disease that occurred in the Birmingham area during 1778 and contains early reference to his use of digitalis in the treatment of dropsy.
- 1784:** *Experiments and Observations on the Terra Ponderosa*. Withering is credited with discovering Barium Carbonate, which he recognised as distinct from Barium Sulphate. The Mineral, used in the preparation of rat poison and sugar refining, is later renamed Witherite in his honour.
- 1785:** Publishes *An account of the Foxglove and some of its medicinal uses* and elected a fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) for his work in the field of mineralogy.
- 1789:** Receives fellowship of the Linnaean Society for his botanical work.
- 1792:** Retires from medical practice but continues to devote himself to the study of botany and agriculture at his home, Edgbaston Hall.
- 1799:** Withering dies at the age of 58 and is buried at Edgbaston Old Church, Birmingham. He had suffered ill health since at least 1783, when he contracted tuberculosis which he self-diagnosed.

BREAKING THE CIRCLE

Withering's contempt for mythology was illustrated in later editions of 'the botany' where his pioneering work on the classification of fungi led him to seek an explanation for the natural phenomena of 'fairy rings'. The mysterious circular entities, which appear in grass, sometimes measuring hundreds of metres in diameter and surviving for many centuries, had puzzled generations of observers, who attributed them to everything from mischievous elves and fairies, to amorous hedgehogs and lightning strikes. Yet, by digging into the soil around several such rings, Withering ended any speculation regarding the identity of the true culprit, which he recognised as the roots of 'Marasmius Oreades'; the 'fairy ring mushroom'!

LITERARY CONNECTIONS

For a small market town in east Shropshire, Wellington has a surprising number of connections with some important figures in British literature. From a world renowned literary dynasty to a best-selling Victorian novelist and one of the Twentieth Century's most famous poets, the town has played a starring role in bringing them all to prominence. However, it is to the Market Square in the later half of the 1700s that we must turn to begin our story...

F. HOULSTON AND SON

Edward Houlston opened Wellington's first booksellers in 1779, laying the foundations for a business that became one of England's largest provincial printing houses. After his death, the firm continued trading under the name of his widow Frances and son Edward and began publishing from its Market Square premises in 1804, specialising in religious and educational material. As the company grew Edward Houlston opened a London branch of the business, transferring much of its trade to the capital. The firm ceased publishing in Wellington after his death in 1840 and its local premises were eventually given up around ten years later.



All Saints Parish Church

PATRICK BRONTE

Among Houlston's earliest published texts were two small volumes of poetry by Patrick Bronte, a young Irish Curate who arrived at All Saints parish church in January 1809. During a short stay of less than a year, he made connections that had a lasting impact on his life and without which he may never have fathered a world famous literary dynasty: Charlotte, Emily and Anne Bronte.

When he arrived in Shropshire, Bronte served under Rev John Eyton, a powerful evangelist preacher. Three years earlier, the new curate had completed a degree at St John's College Cambridge,

Bronte Society



Patrick Bronte

an institution renowned for its evangelical tradition and, once in Shropshire, Bronte quickly established links with other people who shared his beliefs and helped shape his destiny. At All Saints, he befriended local schoolmaster John Fennell and fellow curate William Morgan who introduced him to the 'Madeley Circle', a group of like-minded individuals that met in the nearby town at the house of Methodist preacher John Fletcher's widow. Through the circle, Bronte learnt of and successfully applied for a curacy at Dewsbury in Yorkshire, a 'promised land' for practising evangelists. However, the story did not end there as, by 1812, John Fennell also moved north to become head of a boarding school near Leeds. He was responsible for introducing Bronte, then residing at Hartshead, to his future wife Maria Branwell, whom he met after being invited to the school to examine the abilities of Fennell's pupils in Classics. So, while Wellington may not be able to lay claim to being in Bronte country, it almost certainly helped put the family there in the first place!

HESBA STRETTON

Although a comparatively little known figure today, the best-selling Victorian novelist Hesba Stretton was once a household name whose stories sold several million copies, were translated into numerous languages and gave rise to an entire school of writing.



Hesba Stretton

Her father's shop provided much of the young writer's initial inspiration, she was not published until the age of 27, when she wrote under the pseudonym Hesba Stretton. The surname was borrowed from her favourite Shropshire village of All Stretton, where she visited relatives throughout her life, while 'Hesba' was an acronym of the initials of her five brothers and sisters. Her breakthrough arrived courtesy of Charles Dickens who in 1859 published her short story *The Lucky Leg* in *Household Words*, a journal of which he was then editor. The inspiration for the tale was provided by an anecdote told to Benjamin Smith and related to the authoress by her elder sister Elizabeth, which she then worked up into a story. Unbeknown to Hesba, Elizabeth sent the piece to Dickens who requested more work. She subsequently became a regular contributor to a number of contemporary periodicals and magazines, providing the platform for her greatest success.

Miss Stretton, real name Sarah Smith, was the daughter of Wellington's first postmaster Benjamin Smith who owned a booksellers and stationery business in the town at 14 New Street. Although the wide range of books in her



14 New Street

Jessica's First Prayer originally appeared as a serialisation in the *Sunday at Home* journal in July 1866. After attracting scores of letters from captivated readers, it was published in book form and went on to become a worldwide hit, selling at least 2 million copies by the time of Miss Stretton's death in 1911. The story of a young girl's spiritual awakening, the novel established a formula which she repeated with great success over many years, while providing the inspiration for other writers' tales of destitute children finding salvation at the hands of generous benefactors. In this respect, she was highly influential in highlighting many real issues affecting the plight of children in late Victorian and Edwardian society and was later instrumental in helping to establish the NSPCC.

WALKS WITH WRITERS

The literary journey begins at 3 Market Square, the location of Houlston's printers. Today, the premises are occupied by a travel agent but the building's heritage is commemorated by decorative tiles depicting a print press (pictured, right) that adorn the shop front. In nearby New Street, the former booksellers where Hesba Stretton was born and found much of her initial inspiration are similarly occupied by modern day businesses while, further a field, Old Hall in Holyhead Road was once the location of Martha Cranage's Day School for Girls, the institution where Miss Stretton was educated.



LARKIN'S WELLINGTON

Philip Larkin, one of the 20th Century's most renowned literary figures, published his only two novels and his first collection of poetry while living in Wellington, where he began his professional career as a Librarian in 1943. Although he only stayed in the town for a little under three years, most scholars of Larkin's work now count his time in Wellington as crucial to his development in establishing an individual style separate from the writers he sought to emulate and in moulding his attitudes towards life, love and relationships.

SINGLE-HANDED AND UNTRAINED

©Estate of Fay Godwin/National Portrait Gallery, London



Philip Larkin

In the autumn of 1943, Philip Larkin was living at home with his parents in Warwick, having recently graduated with first-class honours in English from St John's College, Oxford. A letter from the Ministry of Labour enquiring about his future work

plans proved to be the impetus for the fledgling author to apply for the position of Librarian to Wellington Urban District Council, after seeing an advertisement in the Birmingham Post. In his own words, Larkin arrived at the Walker Street Library 'single-handed and untrained' and was not particularly taken with his new surroundings either. In a letter to his friend Jim Sutton, written from lodgings in New Church Road, he lamented 'The library is a very small one, I am entirely unassisted in my labours and spend most of my time handing out tripey novels to morons.'

It appears the facility had changed little since its 1902 foundation and was, incredibly, still maintained by the same caretaker-librarian who had been appointed when the library first opened! In addition to his professional duties, which lasted from 9.00 in the morning until 8.30 at night, Larkin was expected to clean the floors and light the boiler and gas lamps. There was no telephone, the library's dusty shelves were piled high with long-withdrawn books and 'in all', Larkin concluded, 'it was like the advertisement pages of late 19th and early 20th century novels come to life'

DEPRIVATION AND DAFFODILS

Larkin commented in later life that 'deprivation is for me what daffodils were for Wordsworth' and, while he clearly regarded his day job as an impediment to his true vocation as a writer, his situation does seem to have given him the time and space he needed to pursue his literary ambitions. By late 1944, Larkin was resident at Glentworth, a lodging house in Mill Bank that offered the complete lack of comfort he appeared to need in order to write. 'I am an artist in hostile surroundings' he bemoaned in another letter to Sutton. Recoiling from the bugles sounding at the nearby Drill Hall and the 'rubbishy singing and music' issuing from the radio in the next room, Larkin took refuge in the library where, between shifts in the reading room, he worked on the book that eventually became *A Girl in Winter*.



Wellington Library, Walker Street

DIRTY BOOKS!

Despite his hardships, Larkin later completed a second novel, *Jill*, and his first collection of poetry, *The North Ship*, neither of which should detract from his considerable achievements in dragging Wellington Library into the 20th Century. By the time Larkin left to take up a post at the University of Leicester in 1946, readership at the Library had doubled and loans had increased from 3000 to 6000. Although by adding authors such as Lawrence, Foster and Joyce to the formerly antiquated stock, Larkin was accused in some quarters of 'filling the library with dirty books'!



YMCA Building, Tan Bank

By the end of his tenure in Wellington Larkin's opinion of his adopted home appears to have mellowed, to the extent that he actually seems to have regretted leaving, although he was clearly grateful to escape the 'increasing workload and hopelessness' of his post. In 1962, Larkin was invited back to Wellington to open an extension to the Library and was surprisingly happy to make a return; 'The implication that I was not regarded by those concerned as an unfortunate episode best forgotten was so gratifying that I gladly accepted' he later commented. Although many of the features of the building that Larkin recognised had been modernised, he clearly retained a degree of affection for his time as Wellington's Librarian, for he still held onto a note from one of his former customers; an old lady who, due to failing eye site, had decided not to retain her membership of the library but wished to thank Larkin for choosing her books.

THE LARKIN TRAIL

Although Wellington Library is much changed since Larkin's day, the 'handsome stone façade' he recognised in 1943 still forms the centrepiece of the Walker Street building today, while the 'split-level and splendid' extension he opened in 1962 stands adjacent to Larkin Way; the footpath officially sanctioned in his honour. Many of Larkin's other local haunts survive, too. The former headquarters of the Urban District Council, where Larkin would have been interviewed for his post, are situated opposite the Library while *Rasputin's*, the public house Larkin knew as *The Raven*, stands further up Walker Street at its junction with Duke Street. Next door to his former local are the old premises of the YMCA where Larkin learnt to play billiards and, in Tan Bank, a nightclub now stands on the site of the Grand Theatre, a cinema he visited often. Another favourite hostelry, *The Charlton Arms Hotel*, stands in Church Street and it was here that the young librarian entertained his Oxford friends, including the authors Kingsley Amis and Bruce Montgomery (better known by his pen name, Edmund Crispin). Two of the three boarding houses Larkin stayed in also survive and *Ladycroft*, the street where he lived before leaving Wellington, is only a short distance from the *Charlton Arms*. A walk along King Street will take you past the *Drill Hall*, whose bugles were the subject of Larkin's considerable ire, and *New College* (formerly the *Girls' High School*) where *Ruth Bowman*, Larkin's fiancée at the time, was a pupil.



Glentworth, Mill Bank

WALKING WITH THE ANCESTORS



ITINERARY

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Orleton Park ▲ | 6 New College ⇄ | 11 7 Ladycroft (site) |
| 2 Fountain Place ◆ | 7 Wrekin College ◆ | 12 Apley Lodge ▲ |
| 3 Drill Hall ⇄ | 8 33-35 Albert Road ◆ | 13 Glentworth ⇄ |
| 4 Chad Valley Wrekin Toy Works ♥ | 9 Constitution Hill School ◆ | 14 Old Hall ⇄ |
| 5 Victoria Toy Works
(Victoria Avenue site) ♥ | 10 Victoria Toy Works
(King Street site) ♥ | 15 Sir John Bayley Club ◆ |

HJ GAUNTLETT

On hearing *Once In Royal David's City*, your initial thoughts might not immediately turn to Wellington. Yet it was here in 1805 that HJ Gauntlett, the creator of the popular carol, was born. Gauntlett's family lived in the town

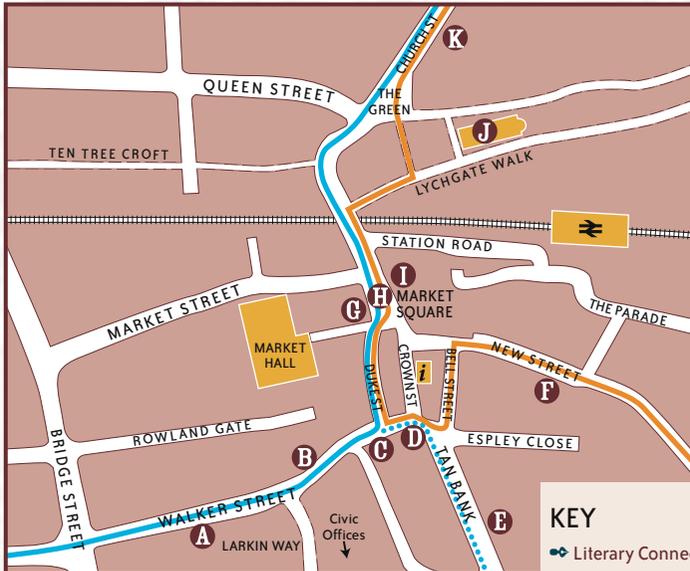
Royal College of Organists



HJ Gauntlett

until 1814 when his father Rev Henry Gauntlett, a curate at All Saints church, took up a post in Olney, Buckinghamshire. Here, young Henry became church organist yet, despite showing great promise, his father was apparently unhappy at the prospect of him becoming a musician and in 1826 he was articled to a firm of London solicitors instead. Despite the obstacle of a legal career, Gauntlett's musical ambitions persisted and he quickly established a reputation as one of the capital's leading organists, in a period that also marked the beginning of his campaign to reform Protestant congregational music.

Aside from being actively involved in the compilation of practically every collection of published hymns for nearly fifty years, Gauntlett provided the energy behind the most radical changes to English church organ building for two centuries. In collaboration with the renowned designer William Hill, he introduced a Continental organ based on the models of Holland and Germany, which increased the independence and extent of the pedal board and expanded the organ's expressive capabilities. By the time of Gauntlett's death in 1876 he had established an enviable reputation for learning that was formally recognised in 1843, when he was granted the Lambeth Doctorate by the Archbishop of Canterbury; the first time the honour had been awarded in 200 years. Gauntlett's reforming zeal and unswerving belief in the sanctity of his own opinions made him an unpopular figure in some quarters, while he was also derided for his lack of formal qualifications. However, Gauntlett finally gave up law in 1846 after becoming a Doctor of Music, the same year he was chosen by Mendelssohn to play in the first performance of *Elijah*, at Birmingham Town Hall. The great composer was certainly in no doubt of Gauntlett's abilities, declaring 'he ought to have a statue'!



ITINERARY

- A Wellington Library
- B Former Urban District Council Offices
- C The Raven ('Rasputin's')
- D YMCA Building
- E Grand Theatre (site)
- F Smith's Booksellers
- G Houlston's Printers
- H Market Square
- I Withering Birthplace
- J All Saints Parish Church
- K Charlton Arms Hotel

KEY

- ◆ General/Other sites
- ◆ Literary Connections
- ♥ Toy Stories

- ◆ Sir John Bayley
- ▲ Civil War Sites

THE KING RIDES OUT

Before the first major battle of the English Civil War had even been fought, Wellington was the scene of a highly significant moment in the early history of the conflict. It was on the outskirts of the town in 1642 that King Charles effectively declared war on his Parliament, when he proclaimed he would defend the freedom and liberty of the Church and State against his enemies.

National Portrait Gallery, London



King Charles I

WAR BEGINS... IN WELLINGTON!

The 'Declaration of Wellington', as it became known, was considered so important at the time that the Royal Mint issued new coinage to mark the delivery of Charles' famous speech but just how did this monumental address come to be made in the town?

Charles and his legion of supporters stayed in Wellington from Monday 19th to Tuesday 20th of September 1642, while travelling from Nottingham to Shrewsbury. The King had enjoyed limited success in recruiting men to fight for his cause in the east Midlands, where his standard, which he raised in the city on August 25th, blew down in a gale! Having been assured of more fervent support

REPLACEMENT PHOTO TO GO IN HERE



Orleton Park

in Shropshire, Charles chose Wellington, roughly one day's march short of the county town, as a rendezvous point for his followers. On arrival, he supposedly raised his standard again, in Market Square, before moving on to Orleton Park, although uncertainty surrounds the actual location in which the King chose to make his historic address, the site of which could have been at nearby Apley Castle.

AT THE HEAD OF AN ARMY

On the morning of the 20th September, the King amassed his forces for the first time and, as a prelude to the famous proclamation, 'military orders for discipline and good government' of his army were read to the troops, who then probably numbered about 4000 men. Charles' declaration to his supporters was certainly a powerful address, later described by the Earl of Clarendon, in his book *History of Rebellion*, as 'not fit ever to be forgot'! After reminding the troops of their duty to follow his instructions for good conduct, the King made a promise to live and die with his followers, issuing a resolution that, he declared, would make his men believe they could not fight 'in a better quarrel'. At the centre of the King's proclamation was a pledge to defend the Protestant religion established in the Church of England, maintain the 'just privileges and freedom of Parliament' and to govern by the 'known laws of the land' consented to him by that Parliament. It seems the grave nature of the situation was not lost on the Monarch either and he declared he would not expect 'aid or relief from any man' should he fail 'in these particulars'.

THE SIEGE OF APLEY CASTLE

King Charles' Wellington declaration was certainly not the end of the town's involvement in the Civil War. Several sieges and skirmishes took place during the conflict with much of the trouble centred on the Charlton family's historic home of Apley Castle. As the only defensible house of any size within the vicinity of Wellington, the fortified manor house was an obvious target for Parliamentary forces and a Royalist garrison was established at Apley in early 1643, after an attempt to capture the house by the opposition had earlier been repelled. The situation was complicated by the death of the lord of the manor Francis Charlton, whose widow Mary was left to raise their three children alone. In what was probably an attempt to seize the estate, her brother-in-law Robert Charlton, a prominent Parliamentarian, attempted to gain custody of the children. Mary quickly remarried but Thomas Hanmer, her husband, was later arrested and charged with high treason by the Royalist command in Shrewsbury when he complained about the plundering troops stationed in his home. After agreeing to maintain Apley himself, Hanmer was released by

Prince Rupert but Robert Charlton, then commanding Parliamentary forces stationed in Wem, took advantage of the situation and despatched troops to attack Apley and Wellington. The ensuing siege, in



The second Apley Castle



Apley Castle today

which the medieval All Saints church was badly damaged, ended when Royalist forces from Shrewsbury counter-attacked. However, Hanmer had broken his promise to defend Apley and the house was sequestered and partially demolished so that it could not be used as a garrison again.

'ONE-LEGGED' CHARLTON

Before the siege, Mary Charlton had apparently conveyed her children to Essex to escape the clutches of their Uncle Robert. Her son Francis, who later became a Lawyer, eventually took control of the Apley estate but quickly moved to London, where he established a legal practice. After the monarchy was restored, he was invested with the Royal Oak by Charles II for his family's support during the Civil War but later became embroiled in plans to overthrow the King amid widespread fears of his Catholic brother James succeeding to the throne. Francis, who became known as 'one-legged Charlton' after having a leg amputated at the age of 21, fell in with an insurrectionary movement to raise a rebellion led by the Duke of Monmouth, the King's illegitimate son. In 1683, Charlton was arrested and sent to the Tower of London for his part in the Rye House Plot, a failed plan to ambush the King and his brother at a manor house in Hertfordshire. He was also accused of raising money to buy arms for a Scottish-led rebellion to support Monmouth's plans. Although some of the conspirators were executed, no evidence could be found to convict Charlton and he was later released without charge.

CIVIL WAR WALKS

Orleton Park, the conjectured setting for King Charles' declaration, is a 15 minute walk along Haygate Road from the town centre, while the remnants of Apley Castle lie to the north of Wellington, off Whitchurch Drive. Apley was formally much larger than it is today and the lodge on the corner of what was once the entrance road to the estate now stands isolated in Whitchurch Road.

CECIL LAWSON

Cecil Lawson, who was regarded by many of his contemporaries as one of the leading modern British landscape artists of the late 19th Century, was born in Wellington on December 3rd 1849. During his lifetime, Lawson's bold and innovative style gained favourable comparisons with such greats as Turner, Constable and Gainsborough before illness tragically intervened and ended his career at the age of just 32.

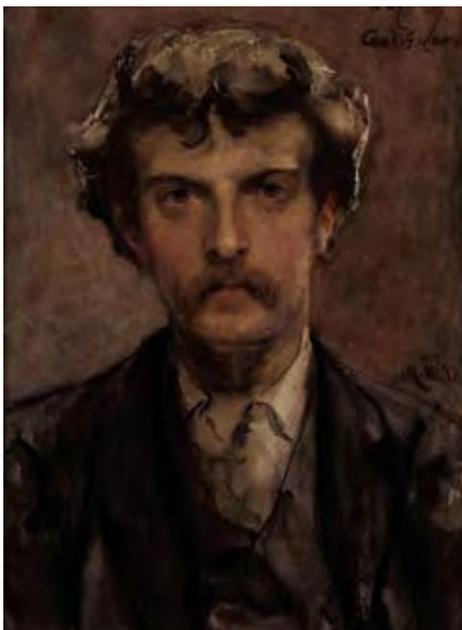
FOUNTAIN PLACE

Cecil Gordon Lawson was born at Fountain Place, a small corner of Wellington that took its name from the public water-pump located on the junction of Glebe Street, New Church Road and High Street. He appears to have been devoted to art from an early age and apparently sketched unaccompanied in the open air for the first time while living in the town where he initially received training from his father William, a Dundee-born portrait artist, and elder brother Wilfred, who later enjoyed success as an illustrator and painter himself. The Lawsons presence in Wellington is probably explained by his mother Elizabeth, who was a native of the town, and the family appear to have settled in the area during the early 1840s. Besides Cecil and Wilfred, a third child, Malcolm, was also born locally and later made his name as a composer and arranger of traditional Scottish music. His credits include *The Skye Boat Song*.



Fountain Place, New Church Road

National Portrait Gallery, London



Cecil Lawson

By 1861, the Lawsons had relocated to London where Cecil's work began to draw praise from established artists, such as the illustrator Fred Walker. Consequently, he abandoned large-scale painting to concentrate on minute studies of flowers and fragments of landscape, earning a living as a professional artist by the age of 14. However, Lawson had rekindled his passion for larger pictures by the end of the decade and spent a year of self-imposed study at the National Gallery that resulted in his first major work.

TO CHEYNE WALK

The key to firing Lawson's imagination was his family's move to Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, with the exclusive riverside address forming the backdrop for a series of paintings he exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1870 and 1871. Buoyed by his success, Lawson embarked on a series of ambitious pieces that enhanced his growing reputation among fellow artists but whose use of modern compositional techniques failed

to satisfy the Academy. Lawson subsequently ventured to Europe for further inspiration but found travel only strengthened his resolve to paint the English countryside on his own terms.

Despite finding acclaim with pieces such as *The Hop Gardens of England* (1876) it was largely thanks to the Grosvenor Gallery, established in 1877 as an antidote to the widely perceived power and 'conventionality' of the Academy, that Lawson's fame was founded. The excitement created by his work is well illustrated by a contemporary account of his first private viewing at the gallery in May 1878, when *The Minister's Garden* and *A Pastoral* were displayed. "He was the chief attraction and the lion of the hour... The great men clustered around him. One of the most venerated names in English art took him by both hands and said, 'You have done with ease what I have striven all my life in vain to do'. Another, scarcely less eminent cried out 'Where have you been hiding all these years, to be burst upon us now?'" Other luminary figures of the day appeared equally enamoured, such as Oscar Wilde, who praised Lawson's 'wonderful landscapes' but the success he had worked so diligently for was to be short-lived.



'A Humn to Spring'

Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries, London



'The Hop Gardens of England'

UNDER THE AUGUST MOON

In 1879, Lawson married the artist Constance Phillip and the couple moved to Haslemere, Surrey where he created *The August Moon*. The painting, which is generally considered to be among his best, was Lawson's attempt to definitively show the colour in a moonlit landscape and represented the beginning of a more sombre period in his work. Sadly, this change of direction was accompanied by an alarming decline in his health, although he continued to paint and travelled to Yorkshire and Devon before illness finally forced him to rest in December 1881. In an attempt to recuperate Lawson visited the Riviera, where he completed *On The Road to Monaco* (his final picture) before returning to England the following spring. After exhibiting at the Grosvenor Gallery, Lawson's health declined again and he died from an acute respiratory infection and pneumonia in Kensington on the 10th June 1882.

ARTISTIC ROUTES

Little is known of Cecil Lawson's early childhood in Wellington and the whereabouts of the location where he first painted in the open air remain elusive. However, Fountain Place, the artist's birthplace, is situated at the end of New Church Road at its junction with Glebe Street and High Street. Documentary evidence from the mid-19th Century suggests the Lawson family home either stood on the site of, or in fact was, the semi-detached property on the left of the picture on the opposite page.

TOY STORIES

Wellington's association with toys began in 1916 when a Birmingham business, Johnson Brothers, acquired the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at the top of New Street. The company was already a well-known toy producer and acquired the premises in order to expand its range to include fabric dolls and teddy bears. By the early 1920s, the soon-to-be world famous Chad Valley Wrekin Toy Works was born.

NORAH WELLINGS



Norah Wellings

Norah Wellings, who is considered by many experts to be the finest ever English designer of soft toys, began her career with the Chad Valley Company during 1919 and, in partnership with her brother Leonard, later founded the Victoria Toy Works in 1926. Norah initially rented an office at the family plastering business in Victoria Avenue, where she began to manufacture dolls with just six employees. The venture proved so successful that the company was soon able to acquire new premises at the former King Street Baptist Chapel in 1929, eventually employing around 250 staff and establishing a reputation for quality that quite literally traversed the globe.

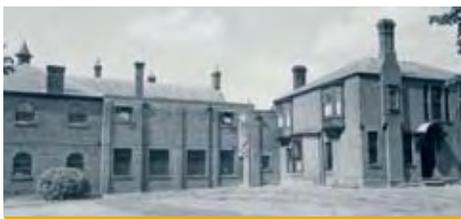
Gillian Trotter



Norah Wellings 'Little Pixie People'

LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVES

By 1930, business had grown sufficiently for the Victoria Toy Works to open a London showroom which handled trade in the south of England and sales from the British Industry Fair, where the company first exhibited in 1927. The admiration for Norah's displays at the annual event was such that she was asked to design the dolls for the famous Christmas toy window at Harrods, for whom she created many other unique items. The Toy Works eventually supplied products to leading department stores around the world and, at the height of production, around 70% of items manufactured at the King Street plant were made for export. Many other dolls found their way abroad via shipping companies, such as Cunard (who sold Norah's creations on practically all of their ocean going liners) while some 100,000 were supplied annually to the Royal Navy, the



Victoria Toy Works, King Street

BAYLEY'S COLLEGE

From the modest surroundings of two semi-detached houses in a Wellington suburb, John Bayley established a small private school in 1880 that is better known today as Wrekin College. Bayley, the son of a Lancashire mine worker, began his career as a pupil teacher in the north-west yet, despite his own lack of formal qualifications, gained a national reputation as an educationalist and was eventually knighted.

ON CONSTITUTION HILL

John Bayley arrived in Wellington during 1877 as master of the Constitution Hill Board School. In conditions he described as 'on par with the Arctic Circle', Bayley surmounted the problems of inadequate buildings and overcrowding to achieve remarkable results that won respect from parents throughout the district. By the late 19th Century, Wellington had become a prosperous market town and Bayley took advantage of the situation to open a new school catering for the area's increasingly wealthy residents. In March 1880 he tendered his resignation at Constitution Hill and, with five pupils in tow (all of whom he had taught at the board school) established a new foundation at numbers 33 and 35 Albert Road. From these humble beginnings Bayley created an entire campus that was largely completed by 1913, when Wellington College (as it was known until 1921, when Bayley sold the institution) accommodated around 200 students. Bayley was knighted in 1928 and remained a Wrekin governor until 1934, maintaining an interest in the college's academic affairs until his death in 1952.



John Bayley outside his college

WITH THE BEATLES

Since its foundation, many well known figures have walked the halls of Bayley's college. Pop impresario Brian Epstein, who discovered and managed The Beatles, was a student here between 1949 and 1950 and included a picture of the Bayley House team he represented in his autobiography. The character actor Harry Andrews studied at Wrekin from 1925 to 1927 and, in a highly accomplished career encompassing over 100 film roles, his credits included 55 Days At Peking, Moby Dick and Superman. However, he is probably best remembered for his portrayal of Sgt. Major Tom Pugh in the wartime classic Ice Cold in Alex (1958).



Where it all began - 33 and 35 Albert Road

WHERE TO LOOK

Many of the buildings that comprise Wrekin College were erected during Bayley's time in charge. The campus begins at the top of Constitution Hill, where part of the former Board School of which he was once Master is situated, while the two houses in which the foundation began stand in nearby Albert Road. Bayley's influence stretched beyond the confines of this area of the town and the former regimental hut he provided as a memorial to the local men who lost their lives in the Great War now forms part of the Sir John Bayley Club in Haygate Road. After most of the college buildings had been erected Bayley turned his attention to building a new home on the outskirts of Wellington, beneath The Ercall Hill. He later claimed his original intention was to open a preparatory school on the site, although Buck-a-tree Hall, which was begun in 1913, was never used for that purpose and is today a hotel.

PROTECTING YOUR HERITAGE

After you've walked around Wellington we are sure you will agree it is a town worth protecting for future generations to enjoy. You can be part of helping to ensure this happens.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Wellington Local Agenda 21 Group is a voluntary organisation that encourages local people to get involved in issues which impact our everyday lives. Decisions made on the doorstep can make a real difference and the Local Agenda 21 process exists to help individuals and groups work together to find local solutions to global problems affecting the environment, from organising litter picking to developing sustainable transport projects.

The group maintains a long term commitment to helping support and protect the natural and historic environment around Wellington. If you would like to learn more about our work and how you can get involved, visit us at:

www.wellingtonla21.org.uk

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Written by: Marc Petty

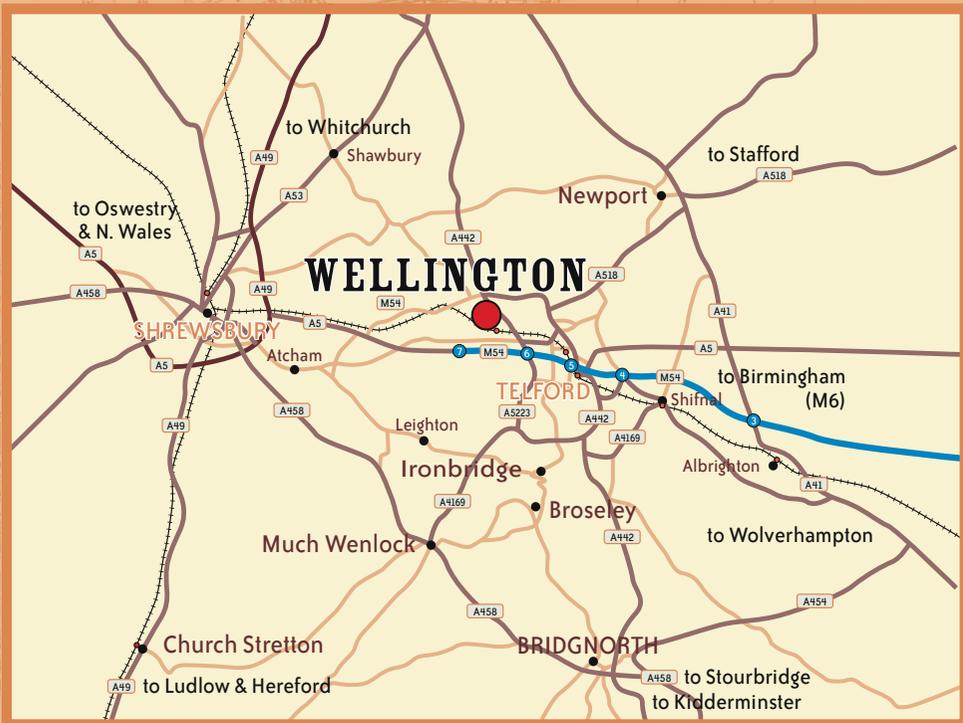
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VISIT HISTORIC WELLINGTON

BY TRAIN OR CAR...

Wellington is a traditional market town located close to the centre of Shropshire, just 10 miles from the county town of Shrewsbury and 4 miles from Telford shopping mall. If you are visiting the area for the first time, why not take advantage of our excellent rail facilities? Wellington Station is located in the centre of the town and has regular services to and from the Midlands and Wales. It is also an ideal location from which to begin the Walking with the Ancestors trail or to visit the town's market and many specialist shops. Wellington is conveniently located near to the M54 motorway and can be accessed from either junction 6 or 7. From the north, take the A442 south of Whitchurch or the A518 from Stafford.

ON TWO WHEELS...

Wellington is located on Route 81 of the National Cycle Network and secure parking facilities are available at a number of locations around the town centre. If you are staying in the area, you may wish to investigate the other Discovering Wellington project cycling and walking trails. You can pick up copies of our booklets at the Wellington News shop in Crown Street and at selected libraries, tourist information centres and heritage attractions throughout Shropshire.

For more information about historic Wellington and other local heritage attractions, visit us online at:

www.wellingtonla21.org.uk/discover



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