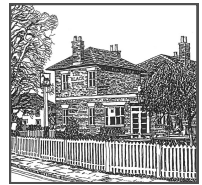
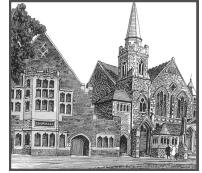


A Walk around Chipping Barnet 2

Wood Street & High Street



Exploring Barnet's history

Barnet Walks Series, No. 4 (Chipping Barnet Walk 2: Wood St & High St)

Text: Fiona Jones; Illustrations: John Sanders

www.barnetmuseum.co.uk

This walk around Chipping Barnet begins at Chipping Barnet Library on Stapylton Road.

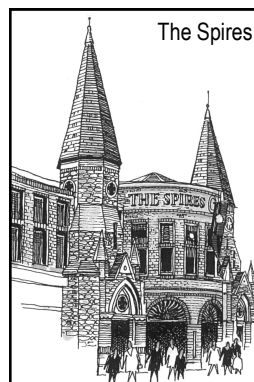
There are some main roads to cross – at the time of writing there are crossings or traffic islands on these roads near to the route of the walk.

Numbering of features and buildings in the text corresponds to those on map on p.7.

1. Chipping Barnet Library opened here in 1991. Previously the library was located at the Hyde Institute and Reading Rooms in Church Passage.
2. Just along from the library, on the corner of Carnarvon Road, is Wesley Hall, a Methodist Church community centre built in 1990. Wesley Hall is used by many community groups during the week and informal worship takes place on Sundays.
3. Cross the road opposite the Spires back entrance, turn left and continue along Stapylton Road to St Albans Road. Ahead is the Territorial Army Centre which opened in July 1938 on the site of a nursery garden. In the eighteenth century Barnet and Hadley was a significant nursery garden centre (commemorated in the adjacent road named Nursery Row). The nursery garden on this site was owned by two successful nursery families, first Emmerton and then Cutbush.
4. Turn right into St Albans Road. The car park on the right, just past Chipping Close, is the site of Barnet Market (see p8), which has taken place in various locations around the town, including in front of St John's Church. It has been at its current site since at least 1874. A variety of goods have been sold over the years, but in the past the mainstays were cattle, pigs and corn. The last cattle auction was held in 1959 and it has since been a general stall market.
5. The large building on the corner of St Albans Road and High Street (on the left) is Exchange Buildings, constructed in 1891 on the site of the nineteenth century Corn Exchange, where local farmers and merchants traded cereals.
6. This location used to be the site of the Green Man inn (closed 2007), which had existed from the late seventeenth century. By the turn of the nineteenth century it was a large complex spreading across the junction of what is now St Albans Road. It was a posting house, providing changes of horses to private carriages. The Green Man was the largest such inn in Barnet with 26 pairs of horses, and had a fierce rivalry with the Red Lion (on the corner of Fitzjohn Avenue). There were even fights between the staff of the two inns. The rivalry was partly commercial and partly political. The Green Man was a Whig establishment (the Whig Party was the forerunner of the Liberal Party) and the Red Lion was Tory. Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston (nineteenth century Whig Prime Ministers) stayed at the Green Man, which also hosted the Barnet Band's first engagement in 1889.
7. St Albans Road was built in the 1820s by renowned road engineer Thomas

Telford to relieve traffic congestion (it was called New Road initially). It cut through the yard of the Green Man, so that a new, smaller inn had to be built.

8. Turn right out of St Albans Road and walk down the High Street. About half way down on your right is The Spires Shopping Centre, which opened in September 1989, and began redevelopment in 2015. It was built on the site of High Barnet Methodist Church and Barnet barracks. The spires from the church were retained and give the shopping centre its name. The church had opened in 1892, although Methodists first met in Barnet in the mid eighteenth century in a cottage in Hadley.

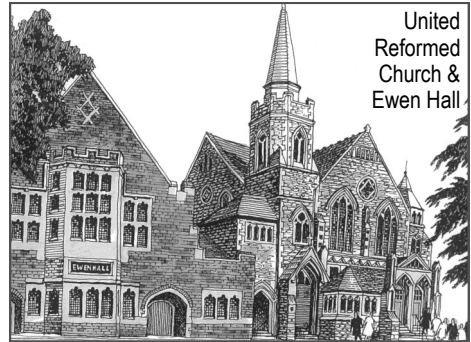


From the mid nineteenth century the land which is now The Spires car park was Barnet Barracks, used by Herts and Middlesex Militias. During the Second World War an anti-aircraft Company trained there. After this the army mainly used the Barracks as offices.

9. On the opposite side of the road is Boots (number 142), which has been there since around the turn of the twentieth century. Originally The White Bear pub, it became the Salisbury Arms in the first half of the nineteenth century and was then occupied by a series of chemists. (To confuse matters there was another pub called the Salisbury Arms/Hotel at number 126, opposite Salisbury Road, from 1839 to 1988.) The building has been known as Boundary House, because it marks Chipping Barnet's boundary.
10. Barnet's first cinema was opened at 120-122 High Street in 1912. Originally called Cinema Palace, it's name changed a number of times. It closed in 1959 and was demolished in 1961. Before the cinema, the post office was here. It is now in an Edwardian building on the opposite side of the road (see no. 12).
11. Numbers 116-118 used to be the home of the *Barnet Press*, run by the Cowing family. John James Cowing opened a printers, book shop and stationers here around the turn of the nineteenth century, and in 1859 his sons started the *Barnet Press*.
12. Back on The Spires side of the road is the Post Office. In earlier times post offices often operated from inns, and for 150 years Barnet post office was run from the Red Lion on Barnet Hill. When the postal headquarters in London were destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666, the acting postmaster moved temporarily to Barnet.
13. Continue down High Street and turn right into Church Passage, just before the Parish Church of St John the Baptist. First established in the mid-thirteenth century (c.1250), it was rebuilt in the fifteenth century (c.1420), and redeveloped and enlarged in 1875.* At the end of Church Passage come out into Wood Street, so called because it was the road to Barnet Wood. It is one of

the oldest roads in Chipping Barnet and in medieval times it was a drover's road, along which cattle, sheep, horses and turkeys, etc, were driven on their way to Barnet Market. It linked Barnet to the Roman road, Watling Street. Wood Street is now a conservation area because of its many Georgian houses.

14. Turn right and walk along Wood Street to the United Reformed Church. Founded in 1669 as Barnet Congregational Church, the current building dates from 1893. The adjacent Ewen Hall, built in 1907, was one of many buildings that became temporary hospitals during the First World War.

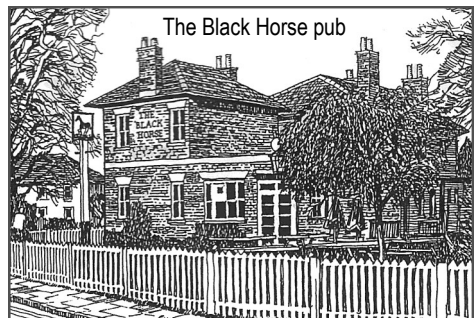


15. Next to the Ewen Hall is the Jesus Hospital, one of several almshouses in the locality. It was founded in 1679 by James Ravenscroft, a merchant and lawyer who became known in Barnet as the 'Great Benefactor'. The Parish Church of St John the Baptist contains monuments to the Ravenscroft family, including the tombs of James's parents, for which he left money to maintain. The surplus from this covered the 1875 church enlargement and contributed to other local buildings. The Jesus Hospital Charity also gives grants to other local charities.

16. Further down, next to Coe's Alley, are Garrett's Almshouses. John Garrett, a London merchant who died in 1728, left money for their construction.

17. Continue to the mini roundabout. The Black Horse pub has existed since the early eighteenth century. Barnet Fair (see p.8) held on nearby Barnet Common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided it with good business. The Black Horse had a stockade for stray animals, and there was a drinking trough in the middle of the road outside (see no. 21). In the nineteenth century the pub provided dressing rooms for Barnet Football Club.

18. The next road on the right is Union Street, which was built in 1837 to provide a short cut from Wood Street. It was originally called Hart's Horn Lane after an inn of that name, which once spanned the width of the road and covered five acres of land. For a time Barnet Town Hall (built in 1889) was located in Union Street, as well as a number of churches and schools. The Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Society also met there. The road is thought to have been renamed Union Street to direct people to the Barnet Union



Workhouse (in Wellhouse Lane), in particular to encourage paupers to use Union Street rather than the more upmarket Wood Street. The workhouse opened in response to the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834. Previously individual parishes had looked after poor people, but now parishes were brought together into Unions and those too young, old or sick to maintain themselves were sent to the workhouse. When the workhouse closed, its infirmary continued as a Public Assistance Hospital, known as the Wellhouse. In 1948 it became a National Health Hospital and in the early 1950s changed its name to Barnet General Hospital (now Barnet Hospital), the name Wellhouse stigmatised by association with the workhouse.

19. A little way down Union Street on the left is the Catholic Church of St Mary Immaculate and St Gregory. Land for the church was bought in 1853, and the initial buildings were replaced and enlarged in 1878. Following a disastrous fire in 1973, a new building was consecrated, and this was enlarged in 2016-17. (Note that Union Street bears to the right and the road straight on becomes Stapylton Road.)

20. Come back along Union Street and turn right into The Avenue. On your right you will see the almshouses of the Leatherseller's Livery Company, which date from the mid nineteenth century. They were paid for by Richard Thornton who had been Master of the Company. Thornton Road (which the Almshouses also back onto) was named after him.

21. Cross the road to Ravenscroft Park. The stone drinking trough on the pavement is the one which used to be in the middle of the road outside The Black Horse pub.

Walk round towards Wood Street to the park entrance. The park was originally part of Barnet Common, which was the land between Wood Street, Barnet Gate, Mays Lane and Barnet Hill. Commons were used by smallholders for grazing animals and collecting wood, and Barnet Common was also used for pasturing large numbers of animals for Barnet Fair and Market. The fair itself was held here in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Around this period, areas of common land around the country began to be enclosed by their Lord of the Manor, taking away the rights of ordinary people to use them. Some of Barnet Common was enclosed in 1729 and the rest in 1815, except for the land that became this park, which opened in 1883. In Barnet, in return for the common being enclosed, the Lord of the Manor set up a charity for the poor.

22. Walk back along Wood Street on the opposite side of the road from before. A little way down (between Hillside Gardens and Leecroft Road) is Hertswood Court, sheltered housing. This building used to be the Elizabeth Allen School. Elizabeth Allen died in February 1727 and left land so that a school could be provided for poor girls and boys. Initially the rents did not produce a sufficient sum to do this, but Elizabeth Allen's school was finally built and opened in 1824. It closed in 1973, although the Elizabeth Allen

charity still exists and provides educational funding.

23.

Walk down the road to Cattley Close. The large white building was once the home of William Cattley, a horticultural benefactor and enthusiastic collector of plants himself, cultivating orchids and tropical plants. The *Cattleya* genus of orchids is named after him. He was the first patron of famous botanist John Lindley. He died in 1835 and is buried in High Barnet Churchyard.



In 1923 Victoria Cottage Hospital moved here from Barnet Hill (now the site of Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School). It had opened in 1888 to celebrate Queen Victoria's 1887 Golden Jubilee, and was enlarged in 1897 for her Diamond Jubilee. In the mid twentieth century it became Victoria Maternity Hospital, closing in 1995.

24.

Continue down the road to Barnet Museum. Its local history collection was started in 1927 by the Barnet Record Society (now Barnet Museum and Local History Society), a group of local people who were concerned that Barnet's heritage shouldn't be lost. In 1938 a museum opened at 31 and 33 Wood Street to display the collection. During the Second World War the Museum closed and the building was used as an ARP headquarters. In 1940 a bomb destroyed 33 Wood Street, although much of the Museum's collection in the strong room was not damaged. The Museum is currently at 31 Wood Street, and continues to be staffed by volunteers.

31 and 33 Wood Street were previously part of the Barnet Brewery complex, while 33 Wood Street was later a private girls' school known as Barnet College.

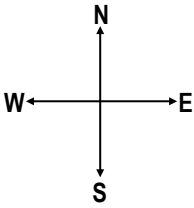
Also available in the Barnet Walks series: *East Barnet; New Barnet; Chipping Barnet I (Barnet Hill)*

Barnet Museum has further information about much referred to in this Walk. The Museum's collection covers many aspects of life in Barnet, from ancient times to present day, including objects relating to the Battle of Barnet, both World Wars, domestic life, shops & pubs, sport & leisure, costume and health, as well as temporary exhibitions. The museum has an extensive archive, and is a centre for family and local history research. Founded in 1938, the museum is a charity run by volunteers. Group visits outside opening hours are available by appointment. *Contact details & opening times p8.*

Thank you very much to Terence Atkins, Carla Herrmann and Gillian Gear (1943-2015), for their help and advice while writing this booklet.

Map showing the route of the Walk

Scale: 2.5cm = c. ¼ mile



Number of features and buildings in the text



Further along Wood Street to the west, on the southern side of the road, is Wellhouse Lane. This passes Barnet Hospital, and also leads on to the Physic Well (at the end of Wellhouse Lane, turn left into Trinder Road and then right into Well Approach).

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A Short History of Chipping Barnet

A thousand years ago Barnet was a wooded area with small scattered settlements. (The name *Barnet* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *baernet*, probably meaning a *place cleared by burning*.) In around 1100 a main road north out of London was constructed and Chipping Barnet grew up alongside this at the junction with Wood Street. (In later centuries, part of this road and a new branch north at Hadley became the Great North Road.) The town became known as *Chipping* Barnet to distinguish it from the settlement to the south-east (East Barnet). The name reflects the importance of the market, with the name *Chipping* probably coming from the Anglo-Saxon word *cheap*, meaning *market*. King John granted a market charter in 1199, although the market probably existed before this.

In 1471 the Battle of Barnet was fought to the north of the town. One of the final battles of the Wars of the Roses, it was between the Yorkist king Edward IV, and the Lancastrian Earl of Warwick (the 'Kingmaker'), fighting on behalf of Henry VI. Edward's victory, along with Warwick's death, helped to consolidate Edward's position as king. A monument to the battle was erected in 1740. It stands at the junction of Hadley Highstone and Kitts End Road.

In 1588 Elizabeth I granted a charter for Barnet Fair (a horse and cattle fair, which soon became accompanied by a pleasure fair). It became well known (*Barnet Fair* became the Cockney rhyming slang for *hair*) and prosperous, with animals coming from all over Britain. In the mid nineteenth century Barnet was said to be the biggest cattle fair in England. By the mid eighteenth century the fair had also become a significant horse racing venue. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were many attempts to close the fair (thought to be vulgar and encourage petty crime), but it managed to survive, and is now held in early September.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth, Barnet became famous for its Physic Well, a mineral water spring thought to have therapeutic qualities. Diarist Samuel Pepys visited it in 1664 and 1667 ("got to the wells at Barnett by seven o'clock [morning] and found many people a-drinking"). The Physic Well is just off Wellhouse Lane; the present building is from the 1930s.

Situated on the busy main road from London, Chipping Barnet catered to the needs of travellers, and this trade was an important part of Barnet's livelihood. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, before the arrival of the railway, there were around 150 coaches daily, as well as carts and animals. There were dozens of inns with stabling for hundreds of horses, as well as associated trades. Inns also provided locations for social and civic functions, such as post offices and courts.



Barnet Museum & Local History Society

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Barnet Museum is open Tue-Thu 2.30-4.30pm; Sat 10.30-4pm; Sun 2.30-4.30pm. Admission free. Group visits available. The Local History Society organises lectures and outings.