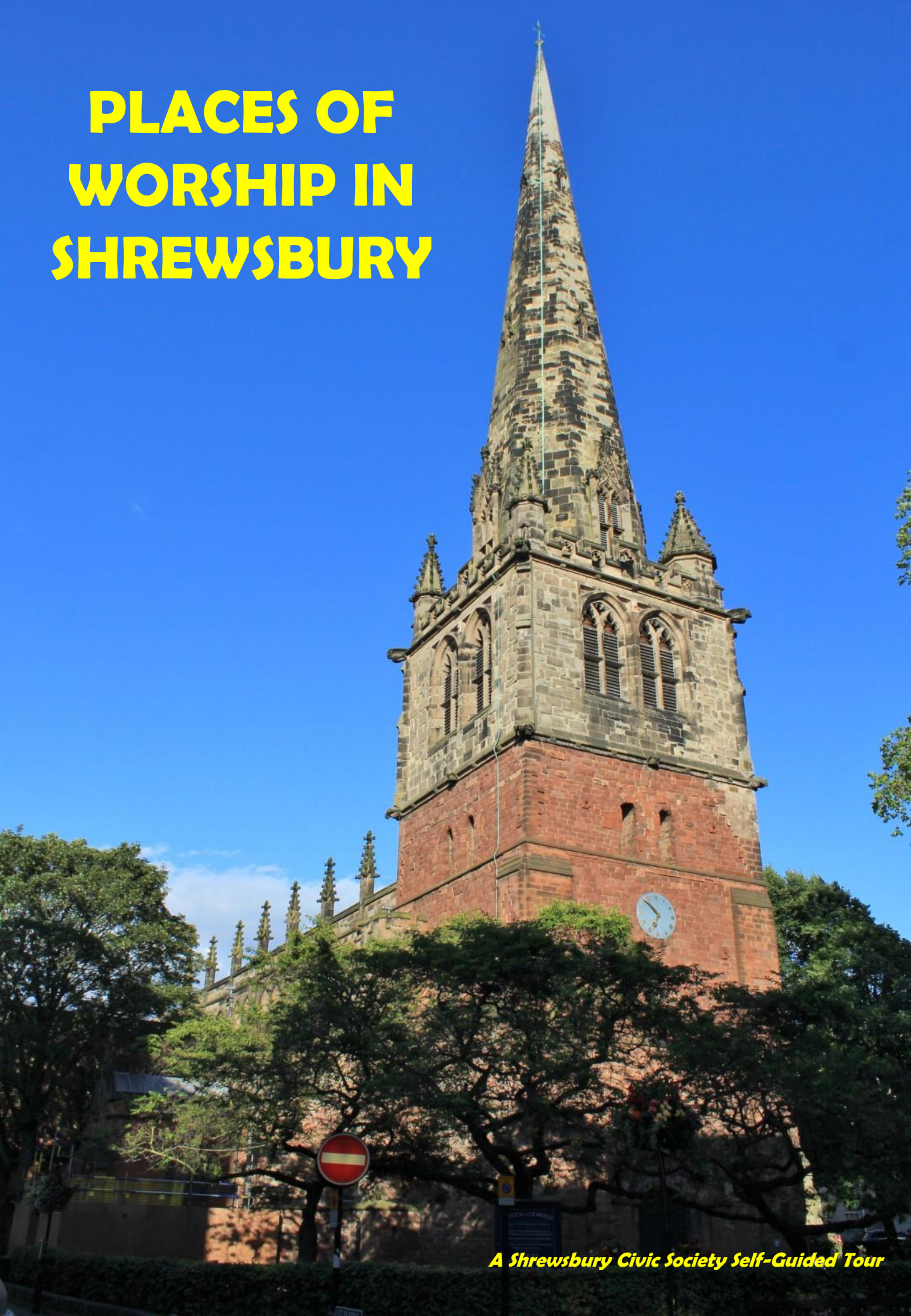


# PLACES OF WORSHIP IN SHREWSBURY

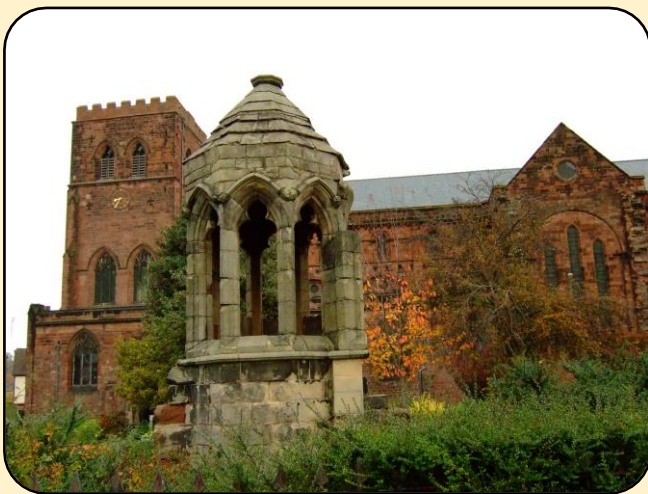


*A Shrewsbury Civic Society Self-Guided Tour*

*This information document is intended to allow people in Shrewsbury, whether visitors or locals, to see and perhaps visit some of the many places of worship in Shrewsbury that are of historic interest. The list is in alphabetical order so that the user of the document can determine their own itinerary. Please note that this list is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive. Shrewsbury Civic Society also publishes more detailed information on the places of worship in Shrewsbury, which can be purchased at the Bear Steps Shop. We also have a printed self-guided tour which can also be bought at our shop.*

### **1: Abbey Church, Abbey Foregate**

The one-time medieval abbey is now the Church of the Holy Cross, which is the main surviving structure from the time of the Reformation. It was founded in 1083 by Roger de Montgomery, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury, who is buried within the church. Huge Norman columns stand out inside the church. The bones of St Winifride were brought to the abbey in 1137, but her shrine was removed during the Reformation. The refectory pulpit has also survived and can be seen opposite the abbey.



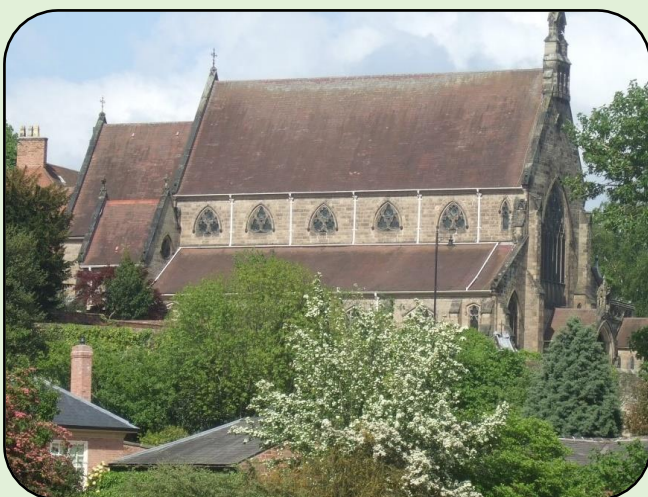
### **2: Abbot's House, Butcher Row/Fish Street**

Nothing to do with Shrewsbury Abbey, this building was ordered by the Abbot of Lilleshall Abbey, which seemed to have struggled financially. This building was erected between 1457 and 1459, perhaps as a means of generating revenue. The abbot may have used the top floor apartment when he visited Shrewsbury. Several shops were available for rent on the ground floor. The evidence of these still exists in the shape of the arched openings that would have had stall-boards for protection.



### **3: Catholic Cathedral, Town Walls**

Shrewsbury's Catholic Cathedral was consecrated in 1856 and is one of the smallest cathedrals in the country. It was designed by Edward Pugin, the famous Victorian church architect. It is the only cathedral in the whole of Shropshire. Six of the windows were produced by the renowned stained-glass artist, Margaret Rope, who was born in Shrewsbury. Rope also designed the cathedral's war memorial..





#### 4: Claremont Baptist Church, Claremont Street

Claremont Baptist Church dates from 1878, when it was built to replace an older chapel that had become dilapidated. The frontage is of a classical design and is made from Ruabon bricks, which gives a fierce red appearance. The columns are in the Corinthian style. The current building dates only from 2012, though the original frontage was retained. It now operates as a café, with a separate church for worship in Crowmoor.

#### 5: Ebenezer Chapel, Town Walls

The Ebenezer Chapel has now become part of Shrewsbury High School and is used for teaching purposes. It was originally built for the Methodist New Connexion in 1834, and has been described by Nikolaus Pevsner, the architectural historian, as 'the most handsome classical chapel front in Shrewsbury'. It has five bays, separated by Corinthian style columns and two porches.



#### 6: Lady Chapel, Old St Chad's, Belmont

The Lady Chapel is the only standing part of Old St Chad's, which, at one point, was the largest church in the town centre. The old church collapsed on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1788 at 4 am, causing massive destruction. The young county engineer, Thomas Telford, had warned the church authorities that the building was unsafe, but he had been ignored. The collapse of St Chad's raised concern amongst other church authorities, leading to several unnecessary rebuilding projects.



### EXTRA

There are several churches outside of Shrewsbury's 'loop', several of which are worth a visit, including Holy Trinity Church in Meole Brace, St Giles Church on Wenlock Road, All Saints Church in Castlefields, St Michael's Church in Ditherington, now the Freemasons' Hall, and St George's Church in Frankwell

## 7: Methodist Church, St John's Hill

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Methodism had grown in popularity and there was a need for a larger place of worship. The church on St John's Hill was built for this purpose in 1879. It is a red-brick building, with stone decorations and a full width pediment. However, congregations dwindled into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the church became unviable. It has now been converted into apartments.



## 8: St Alkmund's Church, St Alkmund's Place

Although the tower and spire are late medieval (1475), the nave and chancel were rebuilt in 1795 as a result of the scare following the collapse of Old St Chad's. There are three unusual iron-framed windows (from Coalbrookdale) in the style of the Gothic Revival. The east window is enamel-painted rather than stained-glass. It was designed by the Birmingham artist, Francis Eginton.



## 9: St Chad's Church. St Chad's Terrace

This is the only Grade 1 listed circular church in the country. It was built in 1792 to replace the collapsed Old St Chad's, and it is said that it was intended to be a traditional rectangular church, but a planning or minuting error led to the acceptance of the design for the circular church of today. The interior has several cast iron columns and a font of polished Silurian limestone.



## EXTRA

Shrewsbury's churches often have their own tales to tell, many of them related to their founding or to some ghostly anecdote. The graveyard of St Chad's has a gravestone to Ebenezer Scrooge, the eponymous anti-hero of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. A film of the book was shot in Shrewsbury in 1984, and the gravestone was created for it. It still lies there.

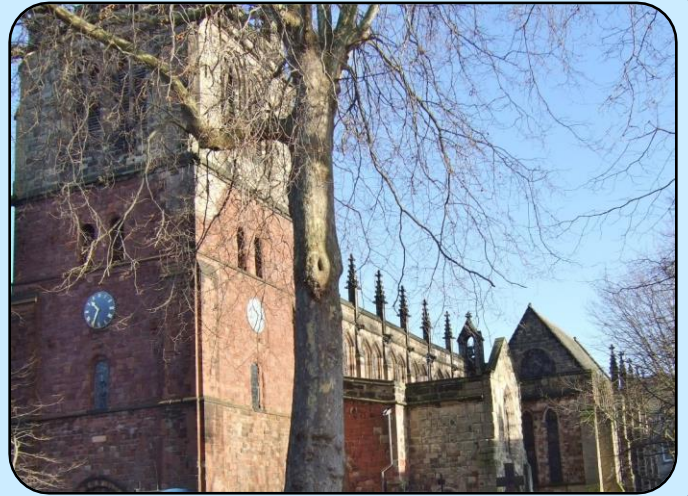


### 10: St Julian's Church, Fish Street

Originally named for St Juliana of Nicomedia, the church was founded in Anglo-Saxon times. There is no trace of this early church, with the oldest surviving part of the building (the lower part of the tower) dating from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. The rest of the church was designed in a classical style, but the south wall, which can be seen from High Street, was said to have been redesigned by the Victorians to make it 'less plain'. It is now in private hands.

### 11: St Mary's Church, St Mary's Place

This is the best-preserved medieval church in the town, and it also has one of the tallest church spires in the country. The spire is constructed from differently coloured sandstone, depending on when it was added. The extreme top of the spire was replaced in 1896 after the original top collapsed during a great storm in 1896. The 14<sup>th</sup> century Jesse window dominates the church, though there are many other impressive stained-glass windows.



### 12: The Unitarian Church

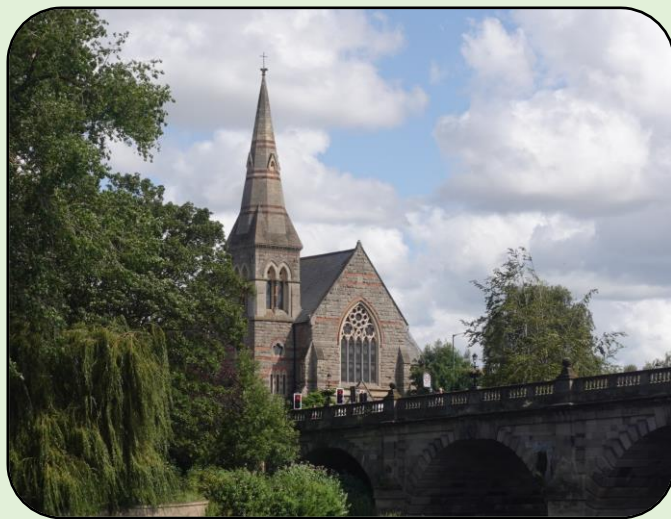
Opened in 1691, this was Shrewsbury's first dissenting church. It has been redesigned on a number of occasions, though the wooden panelling and the clock are early 18<sup>th</sup> century features. This was also where the young Charles Darwin was brought to worship by his mother and a plaque to this effect stands on one of the walls

### EXTRA

The Baptist Church on Claremont Street is not the only former place of worship that is now within the hospitality industry. The Church of St Nicholas, Castle Street, took its name from the Norman chapel of St Nicholas, once located in the outer bailey of the castle. It was a Presbyterian church that became redundant after 1972 when the Presbyterians merged with the Congregationalists. St Nicholas is now a bar/grill.

### 13: The United Reform Church, Abbey Foregate

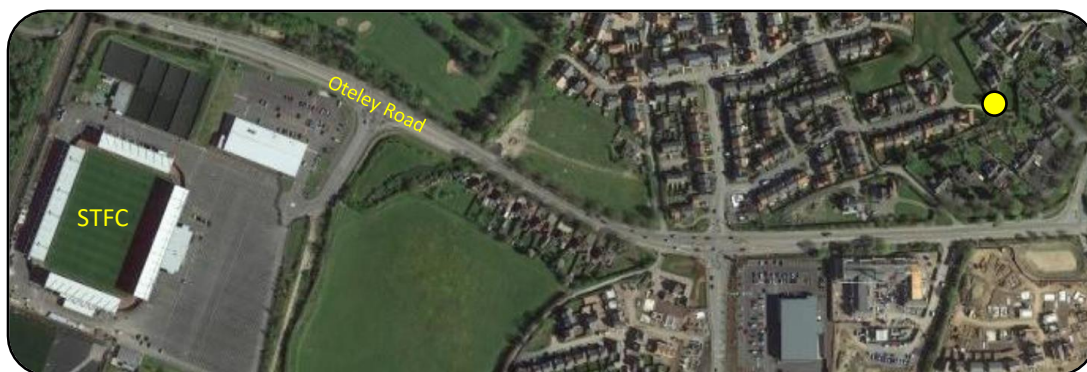
The United Reform Church was opened in 1864 as the Congregational Church. It kept this name until 1972, when the Congregationalists united with the Presbyterian Church of England, after which it took the name of United Reform Church. It is the only non-conformist church in Shrewsbury to have a tower and spire.



### 14: Wesley House, Fish Street

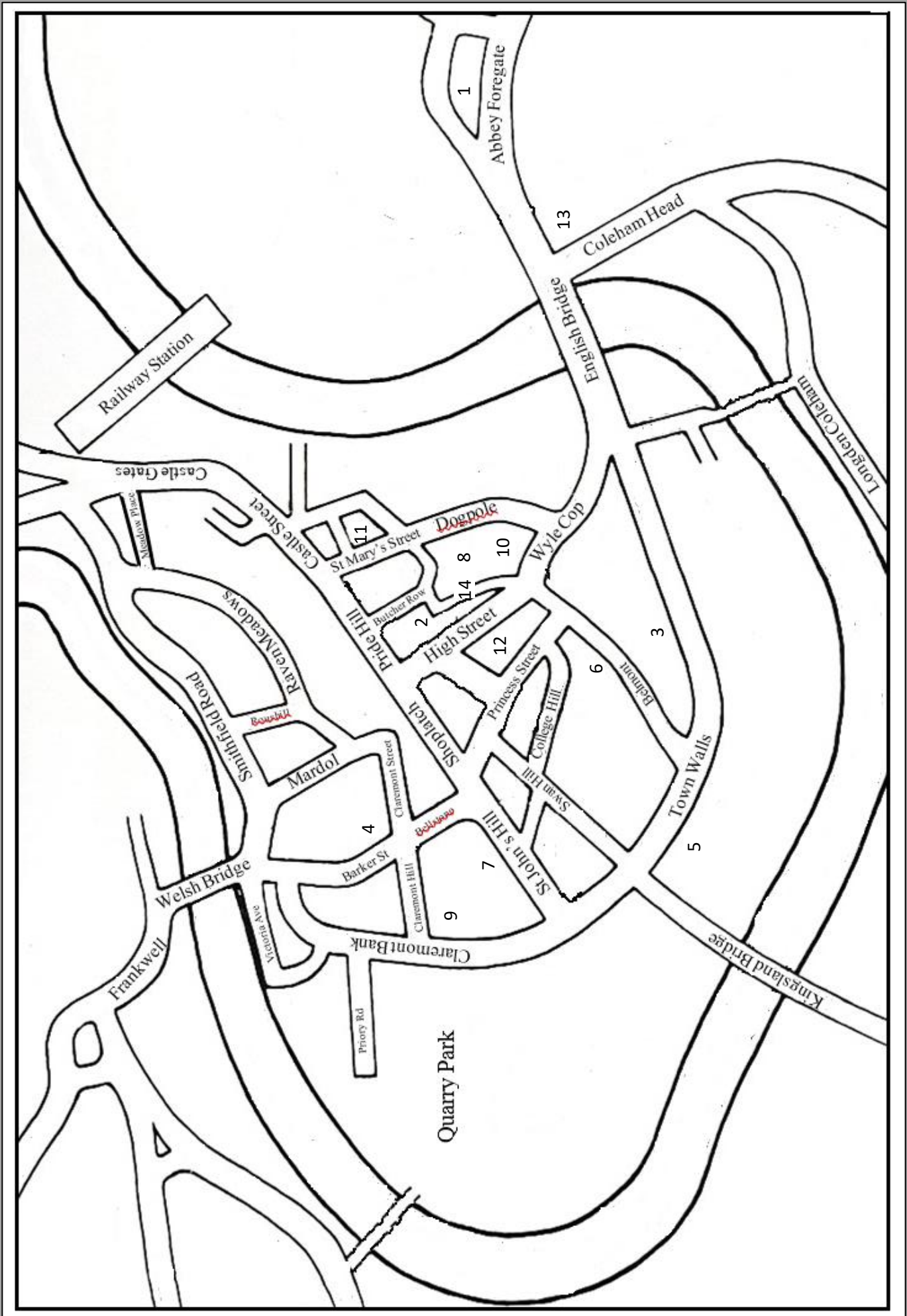
Located on Fish Street, this small 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building is where John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, is said to have preached from a window in 1761. He was in Shrewsbury to mark the opening of the first Methodist chapel in the town, which was in Milk Street and has long since been demolished.

### The Oldest Sacred Site in the UK



Just off the Oteley Road, close to the home ground of Shrewsbury Town Football Club, lies the Church of the Holy Fathers (shown as a yellow dot above). Previous excavations on this site revealed a wooden post, which was carbon dated back to 2033 BCE. Further remains here have been placed as far back as the Mesolithic and Neolithic eras.

This would suggest that the site, which now belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church, has been used for religious purposes for more than 4,000 years, which means the church is the oldest sacred site in the UK still in use for worship.



1

Abbey Foregate

13

Coleham Head

Railway Station

English Bridge

Longden Coleham

Castle Gates

Meadow Place

Castle Street

11

St Mary's Street

Dogpole

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14

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Butcher Row

10

High Street

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Wyle Cop

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Raven Meadows

Smithfield Road

Mardol

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Barker St

4

Claremont Hill

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Welsh Bridge

Frankwell

Priory Ave

Priory Rd

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4

4

4

4

4

4

Quarry Park

Claremont Bank

Shoplatch

Princess Street

College Hill

Swan Hill

St John's Hill

Town Walls

Balmont

High Street

Ride Hill

Butcher Row

St Mary's Street

Castle Street

Castle Gates

Meadow Place

Kingsland Bridge