

TUDOR SHREWSBURY



This information document is intended to allow people in Shrewsbury, whether visitors or locals, to see and perhaps visit some of the many Tudor buildings 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 Tudor Shrewsbury, which can be purchased at the Bear Steps Shop. We also have a printed self-guided tour which can be bought at our shop.

1: Castle Gates House, Castle Gates

Standing close to Shrewsbury Castle, this building dates from the late 16th century/early 17th century. It was originally built in Dogpole by Sir Francis Newport, Earl of Bradford, and was later dismantled and re-erected on its current location when a later earl wanted to build a more modern brick dwelling on its original site. The building was still used by the earl for entertaining his mistress. He was later to leave the house to her in his will.



2: Cross Keys Inn, High Street

Not originally built as an inn, this building dates back to 1575. It was probably built for the draper, William Jones, and it extends up Grope Lane. There is an extensive hall on the first floor. It became a pub c.1820 and remained so until c.1900. It is now a coffee shop, which was restored in 1990. The restoration was true to the Tudor building but added some more contemporary carvings – look out for Michael Heseltine and Margaret Thatcher back-to-back above the words ‘Poll Tax’ on the front gable.



3: Drapers' Hall, St Mary's Place

The wool and cloth industry brought great wealth into Shrewsbury during the medieval and Tudor periods. The Guild of Drapers dominated this industry, receiving a charter during the reign of Edward IV. This building dates to the late 1570s, and the furniture within it is said to be original. The hall is now a restaurant. Shrewsbury's Guild of Drapers is one of very few in the UK that has occupied its current hall since Tudor times.





4: Ireland's Mansion, High Street

Robert Ireland was a Shrewsbury draper, and his mansion was built between 1575 and 1580. There are three separate houses within this overall structure. Ireland originally occupied the centre bays, renting out the two tenement blocks at either end for revenue. It has four projecting bays and four gabled dormers, and currently has shops on the ground floor within office above the shops and accommodation in the attics.

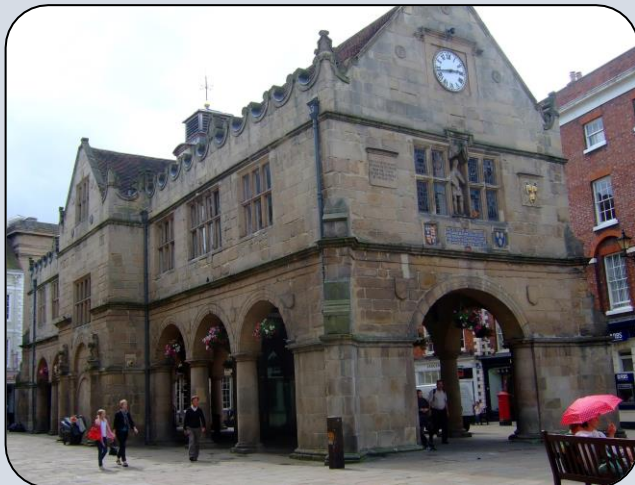
5: Old House, Dogpole

The Old House dates from the end of the 15th century and was extended in the 16th century. There is extensive wood panelling within the building, which is not open to the public. The house was owned by Anthony Rocke in the first part of the 16th century, and he was a courtier to Queen Catherine of Aragon. It is said that Catherine's daughter, Mary, once stayed at the house, though this was before she became Queen Mary I.



6: Old Market Hall, the Square

This hall was built in 1596 and was unusual because it is made of stone at a time when most market halls were timber-framed. The Square had been the marketplace for the town since 1261, and the hall was built to provide a chamber for cloth dealers and a covered area for the sale of corn. The market was superseded in Victorian times by an inner market hall that has long been demolished. This older market hall was restored in 2001/2002 and is now a café bar and cinema.



EXTRA

Perche's House, Windsor Place, was built in 1581. Its frontage is now hidden by the shops on Castle Street, but a good view of it can be seen from the top of St Mary's Water Lane. John Perche, who served as town bailiff on four occasions, was another rich merchant engaged in the cloth trade.

7: Owen's Mansion, High Street

Owen's Mansion was built in 1592 by Richard Owen, who was a prominent woollen cloth merchant. The building is a good example of the Shrewsbury School of Carpentry, as seen by the curved braces and the carved timbers, which form cable moulding. It is likely that the final mansion was completed at different times. The finials above the gable windows are figures of a warrior and his lady.



8: Rowley's House/Mansion, Barker Street

Despite their position of splendid isolation today, these buildings were once sited amongst a jumble of passageways, dwellings and yards. The black-and-white house was built c. 1590 for William Rowley, who was a draper and brewer. It was probably not a residential dwelling because there are no chimneys. The mansion was built in the early 17th century and is considered to be the first brick building erected in Shrewsbury.



9: Shrewsbury Library

The dissolution of the abbey during the reign of Henry VIII left a dearth of educational premises in Shrewsbury. Petitions were organised to change this, and the result was the Free Grammar School of King Edward VI, better known simply as Shrewsbury School. (It was 'free' only in the sense that it was not controlled by the Church). The complex is a mixture of buildings that date from 1450 (Rigg's Hall) to 1630 (the main façade). The school is said to have stocked its own library well before the Bodleian Library in Oxford.



EXTRA

The three friaries in Shrewsbury were closed down during the Reformation and allowed to fall into disrepair. Only part of the one-time Franciscan Friary still stands today, but place name evidence still points to their one-time existence. These are the apartments off St Mary's Water Lane, which are named Blackfriars (after the Dominicans), Greyfriars Bridge (after the Franciscans) and Priory Road, which indicates the location of the former Augustinian Friary



10: 40 Pride Hill

This building probably dates from the early 16th century, with 17th century additions. It comes from a time when space on main shopping streets was restricted, so shops were necessarily very narrow. Designers compensated for this by adding jettied floors above ground level. There are cusped concave lozenges underneath the first-floor window.

11/12: Henry Tudor in Shrewsbury

Henry Tudor, later King Henry VII, stopped overnight in Shrewsbury in 1485 at the building now known as Henry Tudor House (11). At the time Henry was on his way to the Battle of Bosworth, where he defeated Richard III and became King of England. The building dates back to 1429 and is now a popular inn. It stands on Barracks Passage, which is said to be haunted by the ghosts of those who died at the battle and wished to return to the place of their last peaceful night.



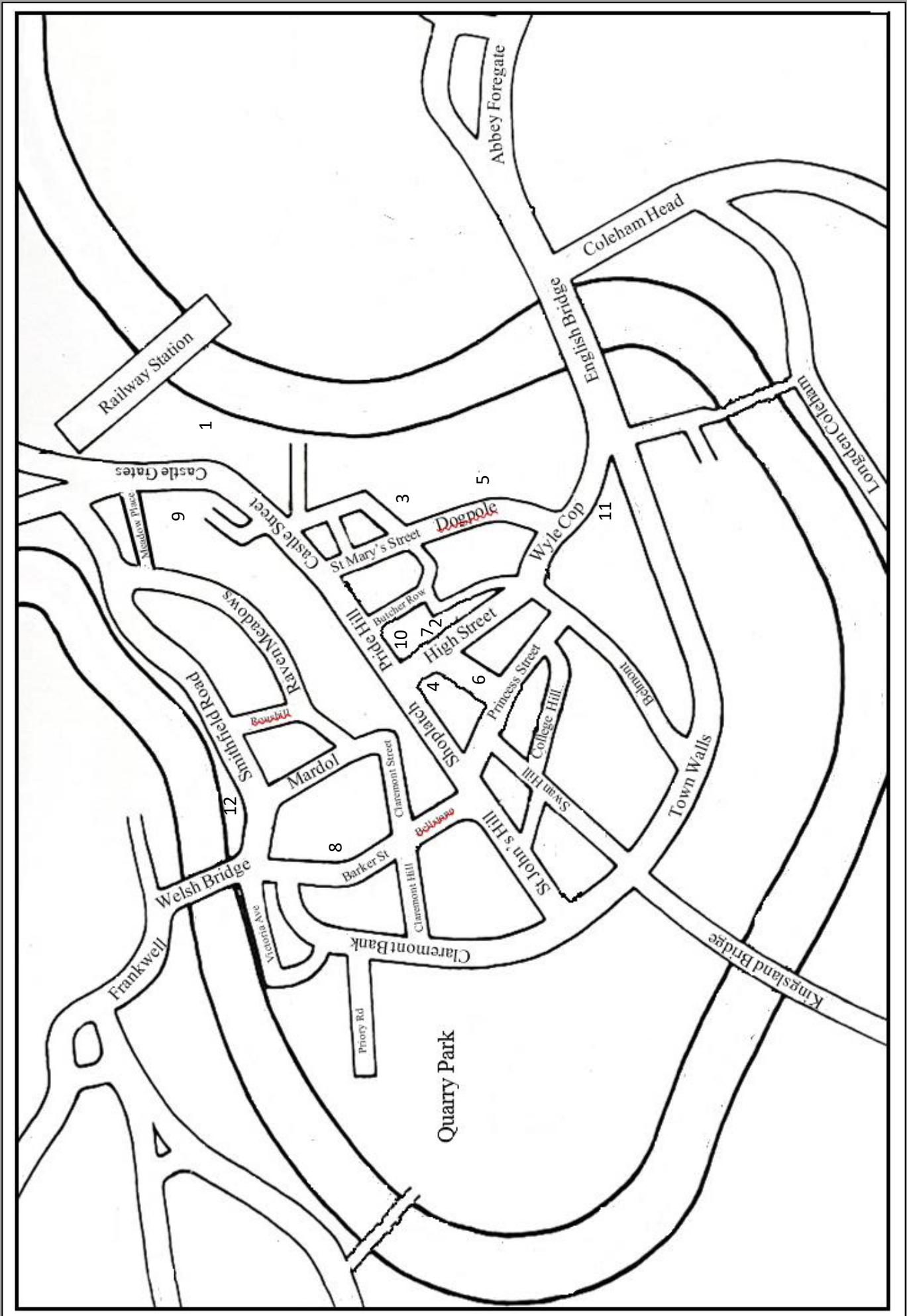
A story relating to the arrival of Henry Tudor outside Shrewsbury is placed at St George's Bridge (12), the forerunner of the current Welsh Bridge (though located slightly further upstream than the modern bridge). When Henry arrived at the bridge, he was barred from crossing by shut gates. He demanded to be given access to the town as the 'rightful' king, but the chief bailiff of the town, Thomas Mytton, refused him access, stating that Henry would only enter Shrewsbury over his body. Given the presence of Henry's army outside the town, Mytton was prevailed upon to change his mind, but he felt he needed to keep to his word, perhaps concerned about saving face. He thus returned to the bridge and, when the gate was opened, allowed Henry to step over him as he lay down on his back.

Henry returned to Shrewsbury as king in 1488 and 1495, with perhaps another visit in 1490. He is said to have set up the Guild of St Winifride, perhaps acknowledging the support given to him in 1485 by Shrewsbury Abbey.

EXTRA

Shrewsbury's medieval town walls were still in situ during the Tudor period, but they had been breached in several places by gateways through the walls. In other places, particularly Pride Hill, the walls had been built upon. The walls remained in a poor state of repair until the English Civil Wars, when they were largely repaired and augmented.

Unless otherwise stated, photographs have been provided by Bill Tomaszewski or, occasionally, Russell Game



Railway Station

Abbey Foregate

Coleham Head

English Bridge

Longden Coleham

1

Castle Gates

5

Meadows Place

3

Dogpole

11

Castle Street

St Mary's Street

Wyle Cop

Raven Meadows

10

Butcher Row

High Street

12

Smithfield Road

4

6

Market

Shoplatch

Princess Street

College Hill

Mardol

Claremont Street

Balamont

21

8

Belvedere

Welsh Bridge

Barker St

St John's Hill

Town Walls

Frankwell

Claremont Bank

Kingsland Bridge

Victoria Ave

Prory Rd

Quarry Park

Swan Hill