



**GEORGIAN
SHREWSBURY**

This information document is intended to allow people in Shrewsbury, whether visitors or locals, to see and perhaps visit some of the many places in Shrewsbury that date back to Georgian times. The entries are 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 Georgian 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: Bowdler's School, Beeches Lane

This former school is one of a few charity schools that were set up in the 18th century by Thomas Bowdler, who was an alderman and a draper. According to Bowdler's will, the purpose of the school was to clothe, instruct and find apprenticeships for the poor children resident in the parish of St Julian's. The only 'cost' to the children was the necessity for them to attend the church on a Sunday. The building has two storeys, along with a hipped roof.



2: Lion Hotel, Wyle Cop

The hotel comprises a timber-framed structure within an 18th century remodelled building. The walls and ceiling are decorated, and the overall effect is one of mid-Georgian rooms and public areas. The stone lion over the main door dates back to 1777. The hotel was once an influential coaching inn, and in 1753 it boasted the first regular weekly public coach service to London. The archway to the carpark once led to the inn yard and the stables. It has been widened since the days of stagecoach drivers.

3: Number Two, the Square

This building typifies a style that was popular in the days of Queen Anne. The rainwater heads show the letters T and W, which are the initials of Thomas Wolley, a vintner and draper. Just below these letters are the numbers 17 and 30, which reveal the year 1730. At that time the Square boasted several coffee houses, the legacy of which is seen in the name 'Coffee House Passage', which can be found to the side of the Museum and Art Gallery.





4: Number Six, Belmont

Otherwise generally known as the Judges' Lodging, this is assumed to have been where travelling circuit judges were accommodated during the times when they heard cases in Shrewsbury. It is, however, sometimes referred to as Judge's Lodging, which means it may have been the home of a particular judge, though the name of this judge is not recorded. The building dates back to 1701. It is now privately owned.

5: Number Six, Quarry Place

This town house was built in the later 18th century for Reverend Richard de Courcy, who was the vicar at St Alkmund's. It was designed by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard, who is best known for designing the first iron bridge at Ironbridge. It possesses three storeys and a pedimented doorway. It is said to have become a nursing home by the start of the 20th century and a hospital for officers during the First World War.



6: Old Liberal Club, Belmont

This building follows a common practice in the 18th century of building a modern frontage onto an older timber-framed house. Belmont was perhaps the most fashionable area of the town in Georgian times, and the owner probably did not wish to feel behind the times. This modernisation involved a new brick frontage with sash windows and a pedimented doorcase. An extra storey was also added to the building, probably in the middle of the 18th century.

EXTRA

The Hercules statue, which can be found in the Quarry Park, is attributed to Jan van Nost, who died in 1729. It was not originally sited in the Quarry, but at Conover Hall, being moved to the park's entrance in 1851. He was moved to his present position in 1881.

7: Residential Areas: St John's Hill, Swan Hill and Cross Hill

Houses along these streets tend to have frontages directly onto the pavements and huge gardens at the back. The names of the streets also changed as a result of gentrification. For instance, St John's Hill was formerly Pig Hill. The streets lacked drainage, were dirty and experienced the regular slaughter of animals. This ended in 1756 by means of an Act of Parliament, which allowed the areas to become the Georgian models of the modern day.



8: 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. The flagstones from the altar to the main door mark the position of the former town walls.

9: The Crescent, Town Walls

This was built in 1793 as a shallow curved terrace in 1793, perhaps as Shrewsbury's answer to the more famous Crescent in Bath. It was designed by Joseph Bromfield, who was known for his use of large bay windows. There are four houses, all built on the line of the medieval town walls. Each has three storeys at the front and five at the back. The Darwin family lived in the Crescent before moving to Mount House.



EXTRA

On 9th July in 1788, at the stroke of 4 o'clock in the morning, the central tower of the original St Chad's Church collapsed, destroying much of the nave as it fell. Just prior to the collapse, the relatively new county surveyor, Thomas Telford, had warned that the church was not safe. He was ignored. Today, only the Lady Chapel still stands, although the graveyard can still be visited.



10: The Quarry

This one-time common land was turned into an area of walkways lined by trees in 1719, said to have been paid for by the mayor of the day. Of all the walks, the main one was the promenade alongside the river, which was lined with lime trees. By the river, and opposite the boathouse of the modern-day Shrewsbury School, is a thick pole, which is where the former ferry across the river was secured.

11: Victoria Avenue

Although this road is named after Queen Victoria, it existed in Georgian times as a dirty part of the town, with tanneries and a muck yard in the vicinity. Records speak of considerable 'seepage' oozing into the river. The dominant building in modern-day Victoria Avenue is the Armoury, which was originally built in 1806, but not on its current site. It was moved to Victoria Avenue from its former site on Armoury Gardens, close to the London Road.



12: The Welsh Bridge

The current Welsh Bridge was opened in 1795 as a replacement for a former bridge, known as St George's Bridge. The first carriage to cross the new bridge is said to have been on its way to the races. Just upstream from the bridge were Mardol Quay and Frankwell Quay, which is where goods were unloaded at a time when Shrewsbury's river trade was significant. The peak of the river trade occurred in the 18th century.

EXTRA

After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, the former French emperor was sent into exile on the Atlantic island of St Helena, where he was guarded by the 53rd (Shropshire) Regiment of Foot. During that period, an officer of the regiment was presented with a locket that contained a lock of Napoleon's hair. This locket can be seen today by visiting the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum in Shrewsbury Castle.

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

