

# PARKS 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 parks in Shrewsbury. The entries are in alphabetical order so that the users of this 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 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 Gardens**

The jetty that once served the abbey was located on this land, close to where the English Bridge now stands. There was once a house here that belonged to the bridge-builder John Carline, who, together with John Tilley, built the English Bridge in 1774. The park was at one time known as Mr Palin's Pleasure Gardens, and people would come here to walk amongst the various pieces of sculpture that are still on display. The modern park is still known for its flora.



### **2: Castle Gardens**

The gardens here are part of the castle that was built by Roger de Montgomery, first Earl of Shrewsbury, in 1069, later amended by various people, such as Edward I and Thomas Telford. The gardens are split into two parts by the curtain wall and the gateways into the castle, the lefthand one of which was formerly in the original St Nicholas chapel. The curtain wall slopes down towards the library because it once connected to the upper town gate. The military equipment is part of the museum within the castle main hall.

### **3: Dingle in the Quarry**

The Dingle was where stone was once quarried. It was then abandoned, and a pool formed in the lowest part, which was once used for as a waterhole for cattle. When the Quarry was landscaped in 1879, the area was redesigned with paths, shrubs and a formal area of flower beds. The pool became a water feature, with a statue of Sabrina, Goddess of the River Severn. The fountain in the middle of the flowerbeds was cast in Coalbrookdale.



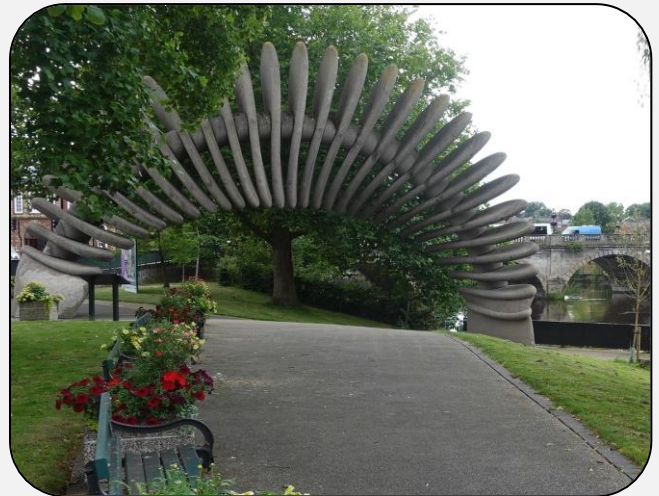


#### 4: Library Gardens

These gardens stand before the library, which began life as a 'free' grammar school in 1552. The gardens were originally part of the school playground, which once had a narrow road that joined Castle Gates. There is a statue to Charles Darwin, commissioned in 1897 by the Horticultural Society. There is also a memorial to the author, Mary Webb. The gardens were rearranged in 1983, as part of the library restoration, to provide all-year colour with minimum maintenance.

#### 5: Mardol Quay Garden

This is located where Mardol Quay, built in 1607, was once situated. Warehouses that once adorned this part of the town were later converted to different uses, such as a car repair shop, and, later still, demolished in order to widen Smithfield Road. The garden was redesigned, and a sculpture inserted in 2009 to mark the bicentennial of Charles Darwin's birth. The garden also marks Shropshire's geological history with a timeline set into the paving.



#### 6: Old St Chad's Churchyard

The only remnants of the Norman church that once stood on this site are the Lady Chapel and the gravestones dotted around the churchyard. The original church collapsed in 1788 and the replacement church was built elsewhere. The church dated back to the first settlement in Shrewsbury, and excavations in 1889 exposed graves that are from the Anglo-Saxon era. There was also a crypt or undercroft beneath what was once the north transept.



### EXTRA

The various pieces of stonework that can be seen in the Abbey Gardens (see no. 1 above) are items stored by John Carline from the various building projects that he undertook. Many are from buildings in the town that no longer exist, including, perhaps, items from the former 18<sup>th</sup> century Shirehall in the Square.

## 7: St Alkmund's Church

Allegedly founded by Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians and daughter of King Alfred the Great, a church has stood on this site since Anglo-Saxon times. From then until 1261 Shrewsbury's main market, known as the King's Market, was held in the grounds around this church and St. Julian's. Apart from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century tower, the current church dates to the 1790s. It was rebuilt at that time as the church authorities were spooked by the collapse of Old St Chad's in 1788.



## 8: St Chad's Churchyard

St Chad's was built in 1792 as a replacement for the Norman church that had collapsed in 1788. The church was affected by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Burial Act that closed urban burial grounds because they were becoming overcrowded. This led to the opening of Shrewsbury general cemetery in 1856. St Chad's is now kept as semi-natural woodland. There is a fictitious grave to Ebenezer Scrooge (of Christmas Carol fame) and a real grave to Charles Bage, the designer of Ditherington Flax Mill.

## 9: St Julian's Detached Churchyard

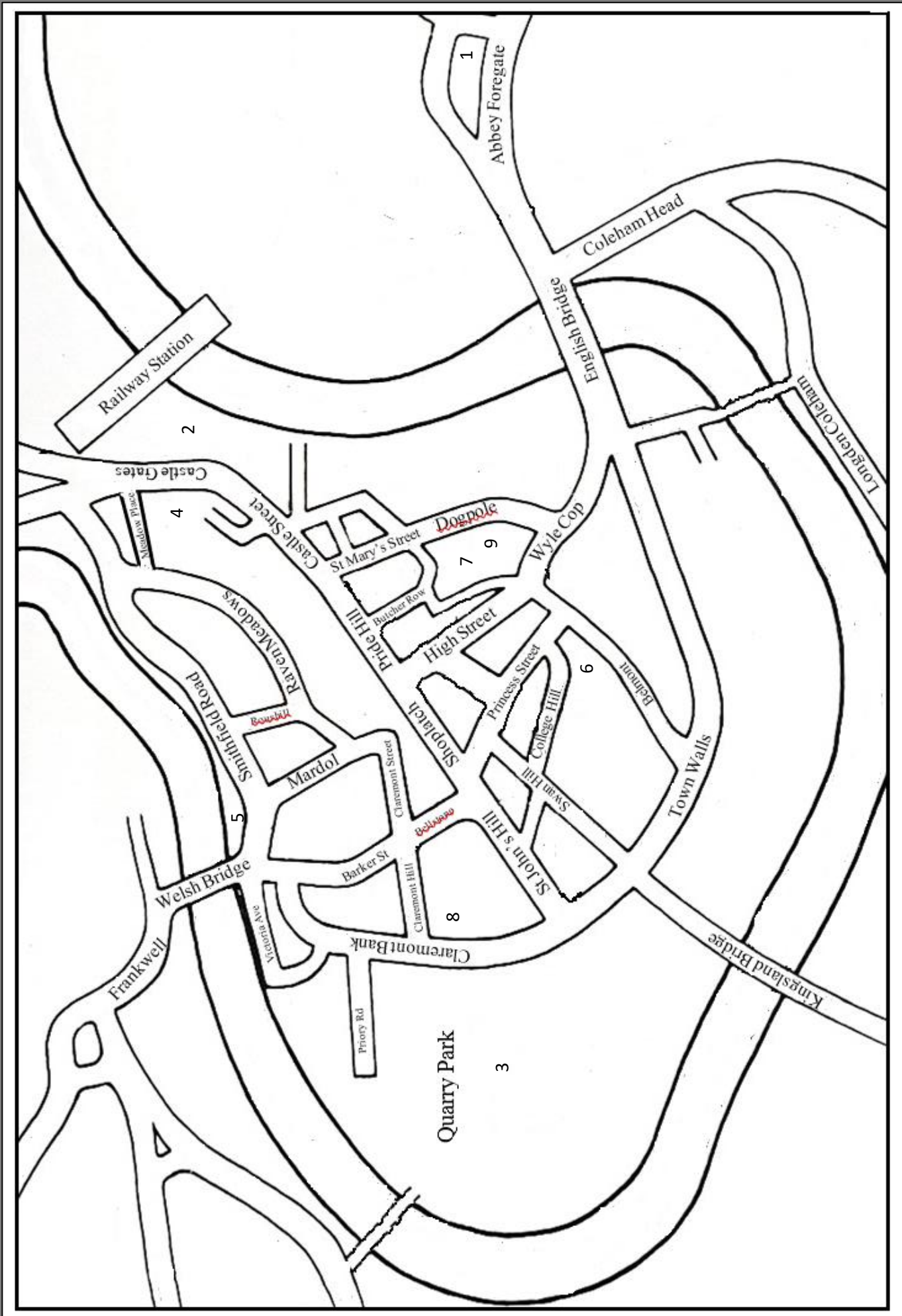
This was founded in the early 1800s when a local grocer, John Oakley, sold part of his garden to St Julian's to be used as an additional graveyard. This was at a time when burial space in the town was becoming scarce. Oakley, his wife and his daughter are buried there. The Town Council is now responsible for the peaceful graveyard, where the tombstones seem to form a paved area.



## EXTRA

The Quarry is a park that was created from the quarry that once produced stone for the town. It was laid out in 1719, with avenues of lime trees. These trees lasted for some 250 years until they were replaced after they had grown to an unsafe height and a falling branch killed a young girl. The current trees are approximately 75 years old.

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



1

Abbey Foregate

Railway Station

2

Coleham Head

English Bridge

Longden Coleham

Castle Gates

4

Dogpole

7

Wyle Cop

Raven Meadows

5

High Street

9

Smithfield Road

Mardol

Shoplach

Princess Street

College Hill

Town Walls

Welsh Bridge

Barker St

8

St. John's Hill

Swan Hill

Frankwell

Claremont Bank

Kingsland Bridge

Quarry Park

3

Priory Rd

Claremont Hill

Claremont Street

Balamont

Meadows Place

Castle Street

Ride Hill

Butcher Row

St. Mary's Street

Meadows

Belvedere

Claremont Hill