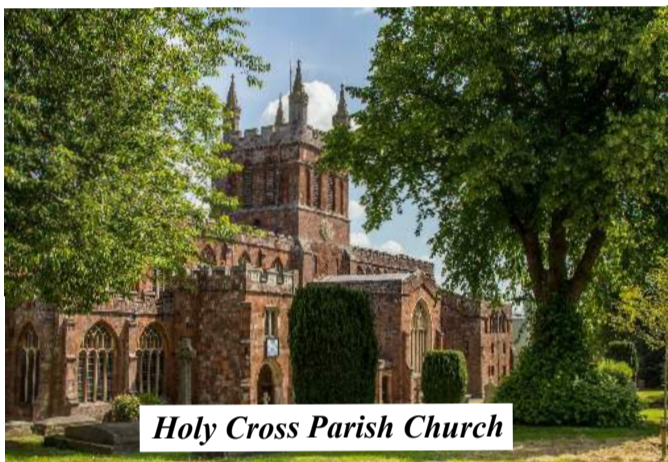


The town of Crediton has a long distinguished and well-documented history. We hope that visitors to Crediton will enjoy using the Town Trail to find their way to places of interest.

The origin of the name Crediton (or Kirton as it is also called) is thought to be derived from "tun" (farmstead) on the River Creedy which runs to the east of the town. The locals call themselves Kirtonians. No evidence has, so far, been found to indicate where the first settlement stood, but it is thought to have been approximately in the area of Tolleys at the east end of the town. The foundations of a Romano British farmstead or home have been found just outside and to the east of the town.

The Saxon saint and missionary, Boniface who was born in Crediton in 680AD, became one of the greatest early Christian missionaries, founding the Christian Church in northern Europe which is today part of Germany and the Netherlands. He is known as "the Apostle of the Germans". A cathedral was established in Crediton in 909AD and when the see was moved to Exeter in 1050AD a collegiate church was founded on the site.



Holy Cross Parish Church

At the bottom of Union Terrace, carry on into the High Street. As you walk along notice the number of alleyways and courts that go back off the street. In the 18th century and before these would have contained weavers' cottages.

Opposite Searle Street turn left into Silbury Place <sup>15</sup> possibly the finest example of such a court still remaining. Each court would have had a well and an area for drying yarns. Should you wish to complete the Crediton Town Trail at this point



Dean Street

continue straight up the hill to the car park. However, to follow the West Town section of the Trail retrace your steps and continue walking along the High Street. Walking on the left hand side of the High Street, you will see St. Lawrence Green across the road. Still keeping to the left, bear left into Lansdowne and, at the Y junction take the right fork into Threshers.

On the right off the road, in a courtyard stands the ancient



Spurway Almshouses



Welcome to Crediton



Newcombes Meadow

Woollen cloth was made in Crediton as early as the 12th century. By the 14th century the town was known for the quality of the cloth produced, and until 1536 the only wool market in the west of England was held here before it too was removed to Exeter. By the 15th and 16th centuries the manufacture of finer cloths, known as kerseys, began to bring prosperity to the town. In the 17th century a yet finer cloth, serge, was produced. In the latter years of the 18th century the trade went into decline, due in part to the external wars of that century, and partly due to the Industrial Revolution and the transfer of most of the cloth making trade from the West Country to the north of England. In the late 18th and the 19th centuries tanning and shoemaking were the main industries in the town.

During the Civil War the town was affected by the changing fortunes of both sides being alternately occupied by rival armies. In 1644 Crediton was visited by Charles I who reviewed his troops on Lords Meadow. A year later Fairfax's men paraded there.

In the 18th century Crediton experienced a series of damaging fires, the worst of which was in 1743. About 460 homes were destroyed, 14 people killed and 2000 inhabitants 'reduced to the most melancholy circumstances'. When the homes were destroyed, weavers' looms and other tools of the town tradesmen were burnt too.



St Boniface statue

chapel of St. Lawrence <sup>16</sup> Built about the year 1200, this chapel had a "recluserium" for an anchorite living a solitary life in his cell. The chapel was for some years converted into cottages before being restored by Mrs Drake of Winswood in 1924 in memory of her husband. The east and west walls and part of the north wall are thought to be those of the original building.

Retrace your steps to the top of the High Street and cross over at the traffic lights, to face Queen Elizabeth's Academy <sup>17</sup> formerly a Grammar School, the charter being from Edward VI, and confirmed by Elizabeth I. Before moving to this site in 1860, the school was situated in the Lady Chapel of the Parish Church.



St Lawrence Chapel

Cross the road to St. Lawrence Green <sup>18</sup> The base and part of the shaft of a stone cross in the centre of a flower bed was originally part of the town cross which stood in the High Street approximately at the bottom of St. Saviour's way, where it marked the limit of the market area. St. Lawrence Green, was first laid out as a garden in 1897 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In 2000 a granite cross was erected to mark the millennium.



St Lawrence Green

To continue, walk along the back of the green and turn right down a narrow path which leads to the High Street. The building on the corner is said to have been the Cock Inn. It is believed cock-fighting

took place near here <sup>19</sup> as, although the area is served by three entrances, it is otherwise hidden. A look-out could therefore have been placed at each entrance.

Turn left into the High Street and walk along as far as the Congregational Church. Cross the road into St. Saviour's Way and return to the car park.

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## CREDITON town trail



High Street

### Birthplace of St. Boniface

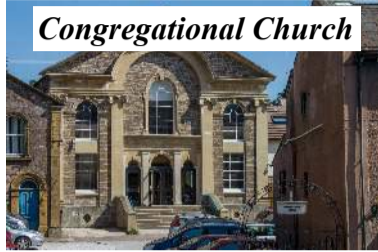
### Site of the first Cathedral in Devon 909AD - 1050AD



Town Square

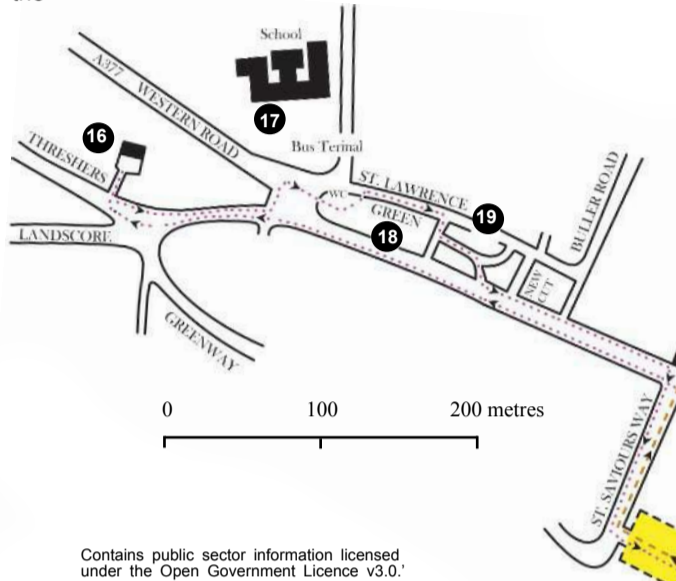
The Crediton Town Trail starts from the town's main car park at the top of St. Saviour's Way. Places of interest are on the map to enable visitors to join the trail from other parts of the town – for example, the Parish Church 8, the Town Hall 2 or the railway station 20.

To commence the Trail, turn right out of the car park into St. Saviour's way and head towards the High Street. Straight ahead is the Congregational Church 1, opened in 1865. Records indicate that tenders for the building were accepted only from its own members living in the town, the result being a fine building (Grade 2 listed) to seat 650 people at a cost of £1600.



**Congregational Church**

At the bottom of St. Saviour's Way turn right into the High Street and cross the road with care. From here you will see the



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general style of architecture of the main street noting the upper floors and the contrasting later shop fronts. The fire of 1743 destroyed the whole of this part of the town so there are no buildings that predate the early Georgian period. Continue along the High Street, remembered by many visitors for its sloping camber. The building on the corner of Searle Street 2 was the Crediton Public Rooms (now known as the Old Town Hall). Built in 1852, the Hall contained an Assembly Room and a Public Reading Room. The Assembly Room was used for Music Hall performances, concerts and talks. In the early 20th century the hall was used as a picture house on Saturdays until the 1930s. Now owned by the Crediton Area Development Trust, it has been extensively renovated. The Museum and Heritage Centre is on the ground floor and a large hall known as the Victoria Room is on the first floor.



**The Old Town Hall**

Continue on the left hand side of the High Street, turn left at the Ship Hotel into Market Street. Crediton was first granted a weekly market in January 1231 (Henry III) and an annual Fair of three days in August to include St. Lawrence Day. In December 1309 a second weekly market was granted (Edward II) and a spring cattle Fair came into being. This cattle fair continued until 1951.

For centuries the market was held in the High Street, but in 1836 Mr James W Buller, of Downes, Lord of the Manor, built a new market for the townfolk, partly to clear the High Street of cattle and market buildings. Only a small part of that once extensive market remains. Called the Pannier Market, it is on the right of Market Street. Weekly markets ceased in 1962. Today the market area is occupied by the Town Square 3. This is home to a twice monthly Farmers' Market and a variety of other events. The building on the left hand side at the bottom of Market Street 4 which now houses the Mid Devon District Council offices, was built in 1847 and served as the town's Police Station for over 120 years.

Turn right into Parliament Street. On the left, opposite North Street, is the Manor House 5. Continue along Parliament



**Manor House**

Street towards the library. The road in front of you then becomes Belle Parade. The name evokes memory of French naval prisoners of war at the beginning of the 19th century who, having given their word (parole) not to escape, were allowed to walk there.

Just before the library, turn right, down a path beside the building leading into Newcombes Meadow. Take a moment to look at the blue plaque on the rear of the library in memory of Arthur Richardson, violin maker. Walk along the path past the bowling green and pavilion, towards the statue of St Boniface 6 passing a well (dedicated to St. Boniface) to your left – one of two Holy Wells in the town, the second being Libbets Well, situated near the church, possibly dedicated to St. Elizabeth. The St. Boniface statue was unveiled by Princess Margaret in 1960. To continue, turn right and walk up the steps behind the statue to the War Memorial 7.

Turn left into Union Road. Cross Church Street to enter the Parish Church of the Holy Cross 8. Do expect to take some

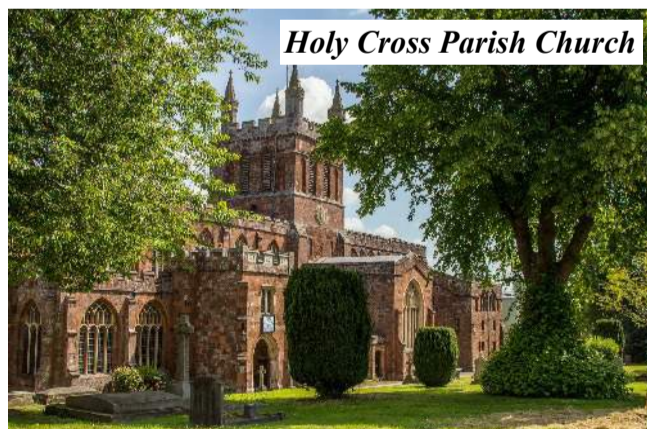
- Town Trail
- Additional 'West Town' Route
- Car Park
- Town Square



**War Memorial**

time here within this famous building which has a peal of twelve bells, a wonderful Harrison and Harrison organ, splendid examples of Victorian stained glass and a number of nationally important monuments including the eye catching memorial to General Sir Redvers Buller VC.

In 739 AD King Aethelheard gave land in "Creddie" to Forthhere, Bishop of Sherborne, to found a monastery. In 909AD Crediton was chosen as the seat of the first Bishop of Devon and Cornwall. This continued until 1050AD when Bishop Leofric moved his seat to Exeter probably for a mix of economic, political, security and social reasons.



**Holy Cross Parish Church**

Work commenced on a collegiate church in 1150 (the lower part of the tower of this Norman church survives in the present tower) and it would seem that work continued in the later 13th century by the addition of the Lady Chapel and the Chapter House. However, by the beginning of the 15th century the building was in ruinous condition and much of the building you see today was rebuilt in the Perpendicular Gothic style. When the collegiate church was dissolved in 1545, at the end of the reign of Henry VIII, the townspeople of Crediton bought the church from the King for £200. Twelve Governors were appointed by a charter of Edward VI in 1547 to control the temporal affairs of the church. Today the present board of Governors (one of only three in the country) continue in this role.

On leaving the church return to Union Road, turn left and walk along East Street. On the opposite side you will see Hayward's School 9 built in 1860. Ernest Bevin, the famous Labour politician and post-war Foreign Secretary, was a pupil of Hayward's School until he left in 1890. Opposite Hayward's is the former Palace Cinema, now a bar.

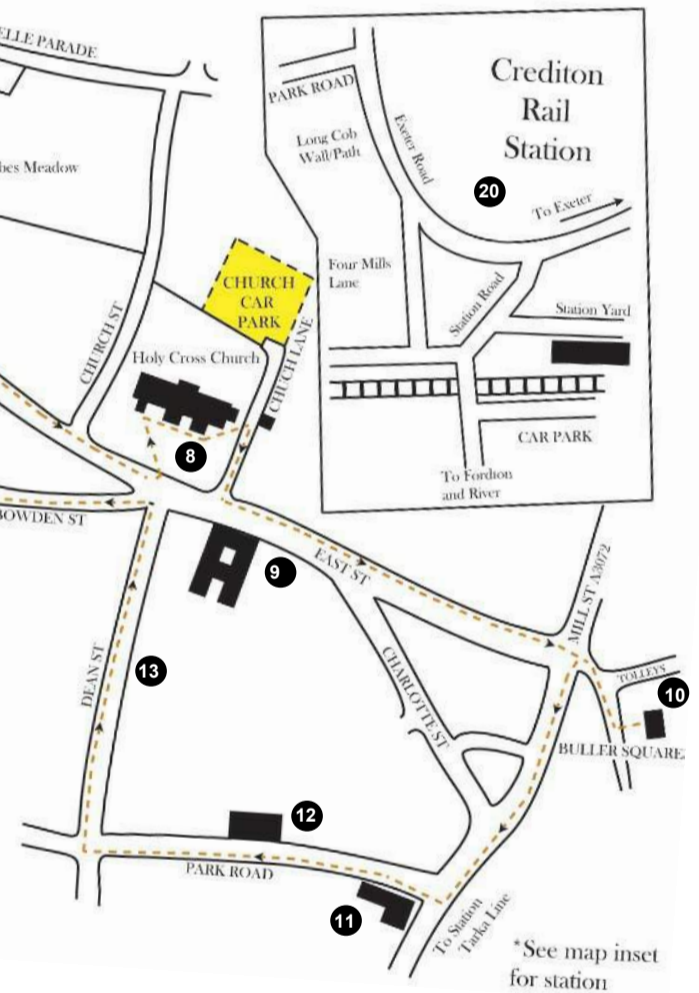
Continue along East Street. At the end, cross Mill Street with care, into the area known as Tolleys, the traditional birthplace of St. Boniface 10. A few yards to the right is Buller Square, a group of thatched cottages which were sadly largely destroyed by fire in 2012 and since partly rebuilt.

Return to Mill Street and turn left to follow the road towards Exeter. The Crown of Crediton on your right was previously The White Hart Hotel which had been a coaching house since at least the 17th century. Cross the road again with care, bear left and almost immediately turn right into Park Road.

At this point you may wish to take a detour to the railway station 20. Walk down Exeter Road, keeping the cob wall on



**Railway Station**



\*See map inset for station

your right, into Four Mills Lane. At the end, turn left, and then right, into Station Yard. In 2001 the 150th anniversary of the Crediton to Exeter Railway and the opening of the station were celebrated. The booking hall has been renovated and decorated in the colours of the L&SWR. It is now occupied as a Tea Room. Inside you can find a photographic exhibition which includes a history of the line. Return to the trail by the same route.

On the left hand side of Park Road is Winswood House 11. Further along on the right is the Roman Catholic church dedicated to St. Boniface 12. It was built in 1969 and has a national shrine to the Saint. In the church porch there is a foundation stone inscribed in Latin. The stone comes from the Ratgar Basilica in Fulda where St. Boniface is buried and was given to the church by the Bishop of Fulda.

Continue by turning right into Dean Street 13 which contains some of the oldest houses in Crediton. Opposite the Dean Street entrance to Hayward's School is Cockles Rise. The house at the bottom on the left is all that remains of one of the oldest houses in Crediton.

Turn left and climb Bowden Hill. Before Union Road was built this formed the main route between the east and west ends of the town. At the top bear right and walk along Park Street. On the left are the Spurway Almshouses 14. They were built in 1555 at the bequest of Humphrey Spurway, a Crediton clothier. Note the fire mark (a sign that they were insured against fire) above the plaque on the wall in the centre of the almshouses. This is the only one in situ remaining in Crediton.