

Centuries before the Norman Conquest, much of Bookham (Boc-ham, the settlement at the beech trees) had been given to Chertsey abbey by a Saxon ruler of Surrey. Both Great and Little Bookham, like many other villages on this side of the North Downs, are sited along the narrow band of fertile sandy gravel soils between the open chalk grassland (once colonised by beech woods, then largely cleared by grazing animals) and the heavy oakwood clays (good for timber for fuel and houses). Here clean water was easily available from periodic springs or shallow wells. Although the ridgeway would have been the drier route, it was more exposed in bad weather. By 1086 Great Bookham contained 36 households, a church and a watermill, which must have been on the River Mole, an hour's walk from the village centre.

The abbot of Chertsey reorganised Great Bookham into a single-street village with houses occupying the whole width of each plot, gardens reached from a back lane. Gates across the roads stopped animals from straying into the village. The early Norman church still stands at one end of the High Street, in the middle of a large graveyard. The monastic grange (to collect produce for the abbey), which once stood behind the church, has vanished. The other end of the High Street widened into a market place: King Henry III granted Bookham a charter for a weekly market and an annual fair in 1243. Surrounding the village were the intermingled strips of the arable open fields, beyond which were the great common wastes of Bookham Common and Ranmore Common.

Chertsey abbey was dissolved by King Henry VIII in 1537. The next year, panelling for Henry's remarkable Nonsuch Palace near Ewell was made from timber felled on Bookham Common. In 1550 the manor of Great Bookham was granted to Lord William Howard, later created Baron of Effingham. Little Bookham (seven households in 1086) was held by the Hansard family during much of the Middle Ages but was in the hands of the Howards from 1498 to 1635. A number of half-timbered Tudor cottages survive in Bookham: each house is shown (with a sketch) on a big map of the larger manor drawn in 1614-17. Great Bookham remained in the Howard family until 1801; many Howards were buried in Great Bookham churchyard between 1633 and 1857

In the early seventeenth century three large brick houses were built in widely-separated parts of the manor. Part of Slyfield survives, but Eastwick has gone entirely and there is little trace of the 1631 Polesden. A century later, Bookham Grove was built across the 'White Way', a droveway which had continued the line of the High Street over the downs to Dorking. An Act permitting a turnpike (that is, a toll) road between Leatherhead and Guildford (now the A246) was passed in 1758. When a detailed map of the manor was made in 1787, many of the individual medieval field-strips had already been absorbed into the new Eastwick Park, and enclosure of all the common fields was complete by 1822. In 1860 the southern end of the parish was cut off to form a new parish (Ranmore) attached to Thomas Cubitt's newly rebuilt house at Denbies, on the hill above the present vineyard.

The railway arrived in 1885, a branch line linking Leatherhead to the 'Guildford New Line' at Effingham Junction. Before then, the only 'public transport' was an occasional horse-drawn coach travelling along the turnpike, and a cart which went to London twice a week. The two leading figures in the village around 1900 were Arthur Bird, the last lord of the manor of Great Bookham, who began buying up and 'developing' Bookham and Mrs Mary Chrystie, who bought and closed many public houses. Great Bookham Common was bought by the local people in 1923 and given to the National Trust to prevent its 'development', and the owners of Banks and Little Bookham Commons thereupon did the same. Mrs Ronald Greville, the great Edwardian hostess, bequeathed her house and lands of Polesden Lacey to the Trust in 1942.



Easy walks around
the villages of the
Bookhams

Great Bookham Village Heritage Trail

Nearly half of the area of Great Bookham parish is public open space owned by the National Trust: Polesden Lacey and Ranmore Common to the south within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the three Bookham Commons to the north. The High Street is the core of the old village but the busy commercial heart extends into Church Road, Lower Road and Lower Shott.

In the village there are two of nearly everything: banks, butchers, cafés, chemists, greengrocers, hairdressers, newsagents, public houses, restaurants and small supermarkets; specialist shops include a saddlery and a bakery which has baked on the premises for over 100 years. Little Bookham adds two hotels, two restaurants and a village shop 'open all hours'.

The total length of trail is 2/3 mile (1km). Buildings mentioned in the text are shown as nos. 1-24.

The trail starts in the Lower Shott car park, just off the A246. ['Shott' means a bundle of strips of land all running in the same direction]. The car park occupies the front garden (notice the specimen trees around) of the large cream Bookham Grove House **1** built for Admiral Brodrick about 1760. The new Dorking Road, just to the left of the long low stable block **2**, opens into beech avenues (the trees which gave Bookham its name) on the way to Polesden Lacey. When Bookham Grove's garden was laid out, the main road had to take a Z-bend in front of Grove Cottage **3**, a late Tudor house once an inn called the Saracen & Ring, after the coat of arms of the Dawnay family who lived at Bookham Grove from 1775. The road bend was only straightened out about 1960.

Cross the road at the traffic lights and turn left.

The pavement here is divided by a line of yellow bricks which marks the former extent of the front gardens of the houses

which preceded the shops in the High Street. When Mrs Chrystie (see Basic Bookham) closed the Saracen & Ring, she had the exuberant Victoria Temperance Hotel **4** built to replace it. Next door are Englands Cottages **5** a half-timbered Tudor House extended to the left and now split in two. Further down is the large 18th century brick Fairfield House **6** with its mansard roof, bulging to give extra space. Next to this is a terrace of Tudor timber-framed cottages later cased in brick which connect with the core of the of the Royal Oak public house **7** whose rent included 'a red rose and a quart of lampreys'.

Cross the High Street, and stand at the entrance to the Royal Oak yard and look back the way you have come.

From here you can see some of the old houses that remain above and behind the shops. The highest roofline belongs to one of two medieval hall houses half-hidden here **8**. These were originally only one storey, from ground to roof.

Since there is no pavement here, recross the High Street and go into the small forecourt of the Old Crown public house at the crossroads.



Former Victoria Temperance Hotel (4)



St Nicolas Church (22)



Church Cottages (17)



The Royal Oak Public House (7)



Bookham Grove House (1)

The Old Crown **9** was rebuilt in 1932 in the then popular 'roadhouse' style for Hodgson's brewery. Looking back up the High Street, the left-hand part of the one-time house of c1820 in yellow London stock brick **10** has been a working bakery for well over a century. Notice the roof tile shaped like a fabulous wyvern on the roof of the shop at the corner of Lower Road and Church Road **11**, linking two separate older ranges of about 1600 and 1780.

Recross the High Street, leaving the Old Crown behind, and follow the Lower Road to the Baptist Church.

The Chrystie Memorial Hall was built in 1912, but was leased by the Baptists in 1925 and later bought and extended on both sides **12**. Slinfold Cottage immediately opposite **13** was one of several blacksmith's shops in Bookham.

Walk up Townshott Close, one of the two back lanes of the medieval village.

The public library on the right **15** was designed by William Butterfield in 1856-8 and given by the Viscountess Downe (of Bookham Grove) to the village as a school in memory of her son. It remained a school until the 1980's.

Cross over Lower Road at the traffic island and follow the flint wall to the left down Church Road. This corner was occupied for 350 years by an elm tree planted in 1627.

The house with a small front garden across the road **15** is called the Tyrrells after its owner in 1665; the present brick

front conceals an older timber frame. The plate-glass shop windows of Gothic House **16** disguise an early 19th century building. On the other side of Lower Road here, the range of cottages next to the churchyard **17** date from the sixteenth century being at first a single house. The small shop on a flint base links to the terrace behind, which carries a date of 1734 **18**. The tiny shop at the far end of the parade was a doctor's surgery **19**, as was the annexe to the Tyrrells.

The seventeenth-century Gables Cottages **20** later housed the staff for Bookham Gables next door. Sole Farm was once the largest farm in the parish. When Arthur Bird (see Basic Bookham) sold the farm, he gave one of its barns to the village as a meeting place in 1906. The original barn **21** survives within modern extensions. Another barn was moved on rollers to form the first house of his 'development'; it had stood on rat-proof cast-iron 'staddles' which were re-used in the wall in front of the Barn Hall.

Retrace your steps and go through the gate into the churchyard.

St Nicolas' Church **22** has expanded steadily over the years, and still shows features of each century from the eleventh to the twentieth. Two interior features at least should not be missed: the Norman and Transitional arcades (with older windows above them) in the nave and the beautiful Lombardic lettering of abbot Rutherwyck's rededication stone of 1341 in the chancel.

Turn left from the church porch and leave the churchyard by the far gate.

'The Hermitage' **23** across the road was formerly called Fairfield Cottage (since it stood in the field where the Michaelmas fair took place until about 1800). The seventeenth-century core of the house was occupied by the authoress and diarist Fanny Burney between 1794 and 1802, after her marriage to General Alexandre d'Arbly.

The name of the contemporary half-timbered house to the left also echoes the former use of the land: Hop Garden Cottage **24**.

Cross Lower Road and turn up East Street, the other back lane of the medieval village.

The houses on the left are all recent, standing in the field where the annual fair was held until the 19th Century. Between the varied buildings on the right you can catch another glimpse of the medieval hall house end on to both roads **8**.

At the end of the road, turn right and cross the A246 at the traffic lights to return to the car park.

Eastwick and Little Bookham Heritage Trail



Footpath from Rectory Farm (near 14)



Grapevine Cottage (26)



Old Pound Cottage (23)



The Old Windsor Castle (22)



Half Moon Cottage (17)



All Saints, Little Bookham (16)

Bookham Station

Church Rd

Maddox Barns

Little Bookham St

Village Hall

Grapevine Cottage

General Store

Shaftesbury Cottages

Old Pound Cottage

The Old Windsor Castle

Rose Cottage

Post Cottage

School House

Dawes Cottage

Half Moon Cottage

Rectory Ln

Grange

Manor House Ln

Manor House

10 Bay Manor Barn



Maddox Farm Barn (29)



Foxglove Cottage (28)



The Old Windsor Castle (22)



Half Moon Cottage (17)



All Saints, Little Bookham (16)

This trail is best followed from Bookham Railway Station, or by using the nearby NT car park at Commonside, a popular starting-point for walks on Bookham Common. At the back of the car park is a map of the footpaths on the Common. For the weary, the 479 bus route passes close to much of the trail described below. Also, as it consists of almost a figure of eight, crossing over near the centre of Great Bookham, the trail can be divided into two shorter walks. The total length of the trail is 6km (4 miles). Buildings mentioned in the text are given a number which is shown on the map.

Leave the National Trust car park and walk along the roadside pavement to the right.

The station buildings **1** are almost unchanged since the railway line was opened in 1885. The new office block opposite **2** resembles its predecessor, the Merrylands Hotel (also of 1885) where Mrs Chrystie (see Basic Bookham) used to entertain hundreds of poor families, whom she brought down from London for the day, with non-alcoholic refreshments.

Cross the road and follow the path to the left of the office block. At first, you have open NT commonland on your left. Then you pass the low white-painted former almshouses **3** and the three storey flour mill (with a tall chimney for its steam engine) **4** of the Eastwick estate. The tiny shop on the other side of the road **5** once housed a family of ten.

Cross the road in front of the Old Barn Hall and walk into The Park, taking the first road on the right (Park View). Go through the half barrier at the end and turn right into Eastwick Park Avenue.

Much of Eastwick Park was sold off between the two World Wars as building plots for small bungalows, now being replaced by larger houses. Behind the green on the left is a school on the site of Eastwick Park House **6**, built about 1830 and pulled down in the 1960's.

Turn left and cross Lower Road at the traffic lights.

The Anchor public house **7** and the houses to left and right date from the seventeenth century. That on the corner of Eastwick Road (Woodcote) has a coach-house which held the cart which went to London twice a week **8**. This was an estate hamlet: the lower servants of Eastwick Park lived in this road, with no pavements, while the upper servants lived in St Nicholas' Avenue with larger houses and wider pavements in front. **9**. Turn left and walk up St Nicholas' Avenue.

Go through the bottleneck at the end, through Greville Court and turn right along Keswick Road and then left into Eastwick Road.

Notice the unusual United Reformed Church **10**. The allotments have been there for nearly 150 years. The tall Ralphs' Cross Cottages **11** designed in 1864-6 by William Butterfield, the architect of the village school, take their name from Ralph Sutherland, hanged here for sheep stealing.

Cross over at the traffic lights. Take the narrow fenced footpath behind the cottages.

This small diversion is to see some hidden almshouses **12** built in 1889 and named in honour of Sir Bartle Frere, a hero of the Indian Mutiny, by a local surgeon who had served under him. Walk down the slope and

turn right. At the A246, turn left and cross at the next traffic lights.

[For details of the buildings in and around the High Street, see 'Great Bookham Village Trail']

Turn left down the High Street and left at the crossroads. Continue along Lower Road to Glebe Close. Here take the narrow fenced footpath leading off to the left, crossing The Lorne.

At the next intersection (Rectory Lane) walk a few yards to the left for a view of the Grange **13** once the home of Alfred Bird, (see basic Bookham) now a centre of sheltered workshops.

Continue along the footpath, cross Manor House Lane and reach the church.

On the way you have a good view of the enormous 10-bay Manor Farm barn **14** on the left. The small Norman church of Little Bookham **16** unlike its bigger neighbour, has shrunk – see the blocked up arches on either side of the porch. The yew tree is said to be even older than the church. The central part of the Manor House **15** behind the high brick walls, a school since 1927, dates from the eighteenth century.



The Anchor public house (7)



Coach House (8)



Ralphs' Cross Cottages (11)



The Flour Mill (4)



Former house (5)



United Reformed Church (10)



Plaque on the front of Almshouses (12)

Retrace your steps to Manor House Lane, turn left and then right along Lower Road. Cross Lower Road at the roundabout and turn down Little Bookham Street on the left.

The first building on the right is Half Moon Cottage **17**, framed in timber felled in the 1490's. This was a five-bay hall-house originally with no upper floor; smoke from the fire escaped through small 'gables' at the ends of the roof ridge. Dawes Cottage **18**, the L-shaped half timbered house on the other side of the road, dates from the sixteenth

century, the earlier part being that to the left. School House **19**, doubled in width since 1884, was one of several schools in the Street at different times.

The front part of Post Cottage **20** timber framed on a brick base, dates from about 1700. The two parts of Rose Cottage **21** may be distinguished by the brickwork: the younger part is marked LM 1746 above one window. The Old Windsor Castle **22** public house's core is a Tudor farmhouse. When Mrs Weale took over the licence in 1870, she

started a general store at one end, which in 1902 moved to near its present site **25**. Where the road narrows, Old Pound Cottage **23** is of three periods; the oldest may even predate Half Moon Cottage **17**. Parts of the brick Shaftesbury Cottages of 1899 **24** have been occupied by members of the same family ever since.

The black and white Grapevine Cottage next to the shop **26** was an eighteenth century farmhouse. The Village Hall **27** was another gift by Mrs Chrystie, after she had bought

and closed the Fox Inn here. Below the road to the right is the Tudor Foxglove Cottage **28** with the Bookham River (actually a stream) running through its garden. Further on are the tarred eighteenth century black barns of Maddox Farm **29**. Turning right, here is the railway station and NT car park. Opposite the station, the footpath takes you back to the middle of Great Bookham.