

A WALK IN GREAT MALVERN

Led by Stephen Hartland



Christ Church

Refreshments in CHRIST CHURCH at 10.00 am. It is a big Dec design by *T.D. Barry & Son* of Liverpool, 1874-5, in rock-faced sandstone. The tall tower and spire is distinctly High Victorian, with its angles cutting back from the wall plane in a sculptural way.

At 10.25 am we walk to GREAT MALVERN RAILWAY STATION to meet Peter Clement of Malvern Civic Society who will guide us around the station. The station is one of the best surviving small Victorian stations in England, by *E.W. Elmslie*, 1860-2. Rock-faced Malvern stone, with lots of gables and dormers. Deep platform canopies on both sides, with elaborately pierced ironwork and cast-iron columns with bold three-dimensional coloured foliage capitals by *William Forsyth*. Network Rail has recently spent £8 million on restoration of the platform canopies and ornate ironwork. The work on the foliate capitals was carried out by Barr & Grosvenor of Wolverhampton.

A separate booklet about GREAT MALVERN RAILWAY STATION is available from Peter for £2.00.

We leave on the east side into THORNGROVE ROAD, with classical and Gothic Victorian villas. At the top, facing us across Avenue Road, is the former IMPERIAL HOTEL, by *Elmslie*, 1860-1. In 1919, the IMPERIAL

HOTEL was bought by Miss Poulton and Miss Greenslade, who turned it from a hotel to a school. This building is now home to Malvern St James Girls' School. Also French Gothic, but in red brick with stone dressings, with an array of three-centred and basket-arched windows and a picturesque oriel above the entrance with a conical spirelet, on a huge corbel. The central tower has alas lost its top stage and pyramid roof.



THE IMPERIAL HOTEL AT GREAT MALVERN.

Now west over the railway bridge circa 1860 by *Elmslie* which carries Avenue Road over the railway. Stone railway bridge with moulded arch and pierced ashlar parapet. End piers with paired attached half- columns. To the north THE WORM, a corrugated-iron-roofed walkway which used to link GREAT MALVERN RAILWAY STATION with the IMPERIAL HOTEL, allowing First Class passengers to enter the hotel without venturing out into the open. It has not been used for decades and has fallen into disrepair.



THE WORM

Continuing west along AVENUE ROAD with many Gothic villas, PRIORY HOLME, 1885; THORNBURY, 1888; and MARCHWOOD, 1887. On the north-west corner of Imperial Road, is BATSFORD, of 1869-70 by *Haddon Bros.*, with steep barge-boarded gables and an angle porch.



BATSFORD

More by *Henry Haddon* opposite: Another Gothic villa in TIBBERTON ROAD, south: FRANCHE, 1889. Opposite it, LAWNSIDE LEA, stuccoed classical.



LAWNSIDE LEA

Back on Avenue Road going west, on the south side earlier villas, of 1861-2, probably by *Elmslie*: LINDFIELD and ENDERLEY, both with irregular gables and trefoiled barge-boards.



ENDERLEY

Beyond, in the angle of Avenue and Albert Road, LAWNSIDE, stuccoed and rambling (with extensions by *Elmslie* of 1884). Across Albert Road, THE GROVE, a fine Gothic design dated 1867 and probably by *Elmslie, Franey & Haddon*.



LAWNSIDE

LAWNSIDE was the home of Edward Chance, an entrepreneur, of Chance's Glassworks, Smethwick, which supplied the glass for The Crystal Palace and the glass for the clockface of what is now called the Elizabeth Tower.

A grey stone plaque records the fact that there were many notable visitors to the house, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Lord Tennyson, G. K. Chesterton, Bernard Shaw and Sir Edward Elgar.

The house was run as an independent girls' school from 1884 to 1994 and was subsequently converted to apartments.

Further up and across Priory Road, on the left is PRIORY PARK MANSION, now the headquarters of Malvern Hills District Council, by *Henry Haddon* of *Haddon Bros.*, 1874-80, for A.M. Speer, a South American merchant. Very large. Stone, with brick chimneys, the windows Perp or even Tudor but the half-hipped gables, bays and dormers much more French in inspiration.



PRIORY PARK MANSION

Behind the Mansion we walk through PRIORY PARK, originally its gardens. The park retains much of Speer's layout, with winding paths, and an octagonal Victorian *Macfarlane & Co.* bandstand, re-erected here in 1984. Swan Pool pre-dates Speer and is of the 1820s, now crossed by timber and stone bridges.



PRIORY PARK BRIDGE

We leave the park onto Grange Road. Down to our right is the WINTER GARDENS, originally by *John Johnson*, 1884-5, Italian Gothic, but now mostly by *A.V. Rowe*, 1927-8, and later.



PARK VIEW

We walk up to ABBEY ROAD. On our left is PARK VIEW, now flats, but was Dr Wilson's purpose built water cure clinic (built at a cost of £12,000 in 1845) which was known as the Establishment, i.e. hydropathic establishment. It was the first purpose hydropathic establishment built in Britain. Early Victorian classical of 1845 with Ionic pilasters and a heavy Doric porch. The long wings are by *Healing & Overbury*, 1930. On the east side, the ABBEY HOTEL, by *S.W. Daukes*, 1845-9, quite early for this exuberant display of heavy timbered gables; the Gothic stone ground floor gives the date away. Jacobethan timber staircase inside.



ABBEY HOTEL

Beyond is the much-altered c16 south front of the PRIORY GATEHOUSE. In the mid-19th century the gatehouse was used as a court. A fruit and game shop operated downstairs on the west side for several decades too. Later, solicitors, estate agents and architects had offices here. One architect was *Arthur Troyte Griffith* whose friend, Edward Elgar, used to visit him in his office.



PRIORY GATEHOUSE

We walk through the PRIORY GATEHOUSE and the hairpin of Wells Road up to Belle Vue Terrace and the MOUNT PLEASANT HOTEL, circa 1816. Three storeys in red brick with moulded stucco cornice and coping; hipped slate roofs. Three windows, stucco lintels with keystones, that to the centre Palladian with Gothick glazing bars, those to the sides of 2-lights. Hung sashes, no glazing bars. Stuccoed Tuscan doorcase with moulded pediment, triglyph frieze, side lights. Section to the right

has 2 windows with paired lights on 2-storeys above C19 and modern shop fronts. Side elevation includes a full-height bayed window with hung sashes with glazing bars. **We stop here for lunch** – and it's all downhill after here!



MOUNT PLEASANT HOTEL



After lunch we make our way to MALVERN COLLEGE via Abbey Road, passing MALVERN HOUSE on the left. Erected by Dr Wilson in 1852 to provide more accommodation for his patients.

George Bernard Shaw stayed here several times in the 1930s, during the Malvern Festival, when it was used as a vegetarian hotel. T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia) was also a visitor there, where he struck up a friendship with Shaw.

We continue along Abbey Road, and congregate at the Victorian Pillar Box, on the corner of Orchard Road.

The fluted Doric pillar box first appeared during an experimental period in 1856. They were made by Smith & Hawkes, Eagle Works, Broad Street, Birmingham with vertical apertures.

The following year, the design was adapted further with a horizontal aperture, which was thought to reduce the chance of rainwater damaging the mail. Of the twelve that are still in service in England, eight have vertical apertures, and four have horizontal apertures.



VICTORIAN PILLAR BOX

Opposite the Victorian Pillar Box, in College Road, is ST EDMUND'S HALL, where James Fletcher will commence the third part of our walking tour around MALVERN COLLEGE.

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

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