In the past they... Note the moulded pendants at the base of the... (adult and schools) are welcome by prior... Cross the High... It was built in 1799 as an Independent Chapel. Continue... Market Place, the Catholic Church is set back on your left... blank shield in the other. As you emerge back into the... Tudor timber-framed structure of the former... Waitrose dominates. The ancient churchyard lies beneath... The lost church of... George and Dragon... The High Street... The castle site, with its tree-covered Norman motte, lies... As you return to the High Street, note the 19th century... The High Street... Opposite the entrance to Castle Priory, against the wall,... The less... The bridge was predated by a ford but is first recorded in... The coach and Horses... The brickwork on...
FOR centuries people believed that Wallingford was a Roman town, partly because of the rectangular shape of the old town defences and the grid-like pattern of the streets. In fact, Wallingford is a Saxon fortified town (burh) - the best surviving example in England. Its earthwork ramparts and ditch were built in the late 9th century by order of King Alfred as part of a defensive network against Danish attack. Wallingford was one of the two largest burhs, equal in size to Winchester, Alfred's administrative capital. By the 11th century it was the leading town of Berkshire.

After the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror and his army crossed the Thames here before marching on London. He ordered a castle to be built at Wallingford which became the most prominent in central southern England and gave Wallingford a continuing royal importance. It was Empress Matilda’s stronghold in the 12th century during the civil war with King Stephen. The town’s charter was granted by Matilda’s son, Henry II in 1155 in recognition of the town’s support during the war. This gave it many rights and liberties, exceeding even those of London. Wallingford is one of only four towns mentioned in Magna Carta in 1215. Among the castle’s many royal inhabitants were: King John; Richard Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III; Edward the Black Prince and his wife Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent; Henry V’s widow, Catherine of Valois, her young son Henry VI and his guardian Owen Tudor, grandfather of Henry VII. During the 17th century Civil War; Wallingford Castle was a major Royalist stronghold, and almost the last in the country to fall. It withstood a twelve week siege in 1646 before obeying royal orders to surrender to Parliament. Fearing that the castle might one day be retaken and again used against them, Cromwell’s Council of State ordered its demolition in 1652, so what remains today are the still impressive earthworks on which the walls once stood.

### INTRODUCTION TO WALLINGFORD’S HISTORY

#### Begin your Walk in the Market Place

1. **The Market Place**
   
   The timber-framed, stucco covered Town Hall, built in 1670, was designed to look like castellated stone. The earlier medieval Guild Hall stood south of the church. The open area beneath the Town Hall was once used for market stalls. The Borough courts and Quarter Sessions were held in the chamber above. The 18th century Judge, Sir William Blackstone, author of Commentaries on the Laws of England, worked here as the town’s Recorder (legal advisor). His books were widely used by the makers of the American Constitution and legal system. A blue plaque on the west wall commemorates him. Above the steps (added in 1933) is the shield of the Borough. The portcullis motif has been the Borough insignia for over 300 years and appears on the town regalia. Notice how the shape of the fine Venetian triple window on the end of the Town Hall has been mirrored in other buildings around the Market Place, which has been the heart of the town since Saxon times. The war memorial was erected in 1921.

2. **The Church of St Mary-le-More**
   
   The present, largely Victorian, church stands on the site of a smaller medieval church. The tower was built in 1653, partly re-using stones from Wallingford Castle, demolished a year earlier. On a stone about 2m up on the southwest buttress of the tower is the inscription Wil Loader 1653. Loader was the royalist Mayor in 1647 until ‘just out of the mouth of the Burgh by virtue of an Ordinance of Parliament’. He returned to office in 1662 after the Restoration of Charles II.

3. **Church Lane**
   
   On the corner of the lane was the Eight Bells pub - note the surviving hanging bracket once used for the pub sign. This was another of the 50 or so Wallingford pubs operating in Victorian times to serve a population of a little over 2,000. The lane follows the line of a Saxon street, linking the Market Place to the Kinecroft and the original Saxon ramparts.

   As the junction with Goldsmith’s Lane you can see to the right the old buildings of the Walls family’s Wallingford Brewery, taken over by Ushers in 1928. The brewery served a wide local area. The Elementary School (opposite) was in use from 1861–1968 and is now the Wallingford Community Centre.

4. **The Kinecroft**
   
   This open space is enclosed on two sides by the town’s 9th century Saxon ramparts. For more than five centuries the Kinecroft was open grazing for cattle belonging to the burgesses (as its present name suggests) but archaeology has revealed an extension to the line of Church Lane into the Kinecroft, with early medieval houses alongside it. The town shrank when it fell on hard times around the end of the 13th century, reviving only in the late 17th–18th century as the vast growth of London opened up new trading opportunities by river.

5. **Flint House, house of Wallingford Museum**
   
   The flint-work hides a fine 15th century oak-framed hall house. An upper floor has been inserted in the central open hall, earlier gable ends can be traced in the stonework and timber framing is visible inside. Stone Hall, as it was called in 1548, stands on land that once belonged to the Priory of Holy Trinity, a cell of St Alban’s Abbey. Holy Trinity was one of Wallingford’s 11 medieval parish churches, most now lost. The Priory was dissolved in 1535 by Cardinal Wolsey who used the money towards building his New College in Oxford (Christ Church). Today the building houses Wallingford Museum, where you can learn much more about the town’s rich history.

   The town’s west gateway once stood where the High Street cuts the Saxon ramparts. Wallingford House, opposite Flint House, was the grand home of Edward Wells the brewer.