

# BATTLE TOWN TRAIL

1. Behind the Great Gatehouse is the **Abbey**, which was founded by William the Conqueror on the field where he defeated Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Enter via the Abbey Gatehouse for which there is an admission charge.

In front of the Gatehouse is the 'Abbey Green' near the centre of which is the cobbled **bullring** which remains as a relic to the 'sport' of bull baiting.

2. With your back to the Gatehouse, look left to the **Pilgrims Rest**. This is the most notable building on this side of the Abbey Green. It is a 15<sup>th</sup> century half-timbered hall house on the site of an earlier building. It was restored in 1933. Note the covered eaves and pointed arch door.
3. Moving North up the High Street you will see a group of **17<sup>th</sup> Century buildings** altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
4. Further along this row is a **19<sup>th</sup> century coaching inn** with its large archway.
5. A little way on is an early **19<sup>th</sup> century building**, this was previously the Post Office.
6. The next row of buildings contains a **17<sup>th</sup> century house** which was later brick faced and tile hung. There was a medieval kitchen to the rear of the building. Like many others in the town, its character is best appreciated by looking up - in this case note the pairs of arched windows.
7. The imposing stone building, formerly the bank and holding the **town clock**, was established in 1848 with an elevation which probably dates from around 1900.

8. The **adjoining building** was built in about 1700 and has interesting brackets supporting the canopy over the door and the modillions under the cornice.
9. On the corner of the entrance way is a building which is thought to have once been the oldest **ironmongers** in the country, starting up in 1680. It has currently the oldest shop front in the town, installed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an unusual feature being the vertical wooden security shutters.
10. A further few yards on is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century '**slip**' built on a passageway between earlier buildings.
11. Almost next door, originally an 18<sup>th</sup> century **coaching inn**, now with a 19<sup>th</sup> century front is a building with simple symmetrical 'Georgian' architecture with an interesting curved corner and brickwork corbelled out to make it easier for the carriages. The former ostler's (stableman) cottage is to the right, between buildings.
12. The **Bull Inn** dates from 1688 and is built of ashlar masonry salvaged from the Abbey kitchen. The leaded lights are consistent with this date and continued into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. From the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, sash windows came into use and are seen more often in town houses.
13. The final building on the trail on this side of the High Street is the **Almonry**. Before you reach it look left to Western Avenue, where a row of white clapboard cottages quite common to the area are located, a reminder of how small our ancestor's houses were.

A house has most likely been on the site of what is now known as the Almonry since 1090 when the town was first laid out. Despite its name it never actually was an Almonry. It probably got

the name as it was built on land set aside for the use of the Almoner of the Abbey.

The current building was originally a 15<sup>th</sup> century hall house with a timber frame subsequently under built in stone, perhaps from the destroyed Abbey. The addition of chimneys took place in 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. An unusual feature of the building is an internal courtyard which also has a well. The once bustling cattle market behind the Almonry has been redeveloped and is now the Market Square.

Take the pedestrian crossing and return south down the High Street, passing several attractive buildings then turn left into Mount Street.

14. The first group of buildings immediately on your left was originally used by a **blacksmith**. Even though it was an industrial building, it was designed with care, as shown by the three arches. This row is mainly 17<sup>th</sup> century with recent shop fronts. The composition is attractive with varying roof heights and contrasting gables. Look further down the side passages for half-timber work.
15. Further along this part of Mount Street is the late 19<sup>th</sup> century **Roman Catholic Church**, which has interesting textured brickwork. The Presbytery is 18<sup>th</sup> century and has a pediment over its front door. Just beyond, the **Zion Chapel** building, built before 1820, is a complete contrast to the brick.

Follow Mount Street into Caldbec Hill where, at the top to the left, is a windmill in the site where Harold supposedly assembled his army before the Battle of Hastings.

16. Head back towards the High Street, passing a **row of cottages** with interesting features including a massive chimney stack dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

17. Turn left through the new development at Old Ladies Court emerging onto the High Street and again turn left where you will see a **former chapel**, built around 1881-5, with intricate work on the doorways and arches.
18. Continuing back along the High Street a **wrought iron archway** indicates where the Newbery Jam factory once stood. The factory started in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but was demolished to make way for the new development in Abbey Court.
19. Beyond the next row of shops is **Langton Hall**, one of the grander houses built in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was actually started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as a two storey half-timbered building but around 1700 it was heightened, hung with tiles and balustrades added as second floor level, giving it an unusual form of Georgian style. It was extended and the shop fronts with interlacing “Gothic” glazing bars added in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
20. Continuing past the Abbey Hotel are early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses with stucco facades and a **16<sup>th</sup> century building** with a 17<sup>th</sup> century façade.
21. In the recess of **Senlac House** there are two fine Doric columns tucked in between the shop windows.
22. Further on is the **parish church of St Mary**, first built around 1100 to provide a place of worship for the townspeople outside the Abbey precinct. Externally it looks like a typically handsome but plain late Medieval church but inside it exceeds that expectation showing greater age and more ambition. Founded by Abbot Ralph (1107-24) aisles and the west tower were added to the naïve about 1200, and the chancel rebuilt a little later. The fine fittings include an alabaster tomb and monument to Sir

Anthony Browne, master of the Kings Horse, guardian of Princess Elizabeth and the first owner of Battle Abbey after it's suppression.

23. Past the garage is **Priors Lodge**, built as part of the Battle Abbey estate including clear evidence of 12<sup>th</sup> century work. The house is believed to have been occupied in 1538 by the last Abbot, John Hammond, immediately after the Dissolution.
24. **Battle Railway Station** is a further 600 yards. Look out for the World War II air raid shelter in the garden of the corner property as you turn into Station Approach. The station was built in 1852 and is regarded as the finest small station in the early English style in England.  
  
Returning from the station, walk back up towards the High Street with the buildings on your left.
25. **The Auction Gallery** marks the end of the Medieval town. The present building was built in 1936 as a cinema. Part of the site was the former House of Correction and the hall of the cinema was built on the exercise yard and the cells, 4 double for women and 4 double for men.
26. A row of cottages follow, all of which were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for Battle Abbey Estate workers.
27. By the mini roundabout, you will see the **Chequers**, which may be a Medieval building though there is little evidence earlier than 16<sup>th</sup> century.
28. Next door is **Pyke House**, part of a 19 bay range of 15h century Wealden houses built by the Abbey Estate as a speculative venture.
29. **Cleveland Lodge** was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the estate office for the Duke of Cleveland, then

the owner of the Abbey estate. Rents were paid at the lower door to the right of the front door.

30. The route then takes you along the stretch of the **Abbey Precinct wall**, built at the same time as the Great Gatehouse around 1338. The sandstone wall is full of colour and texture and worth a close look before you return to the Abbey Gatehouse.

We hope you have enjoyed exploring this delightful town and learning about its history.





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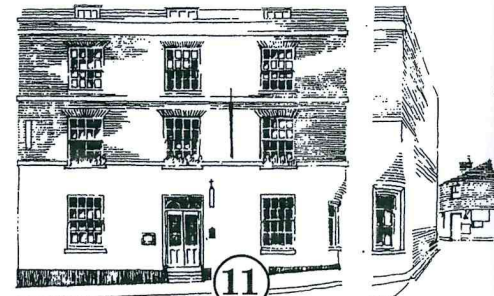
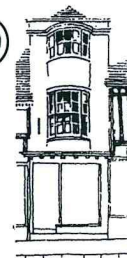
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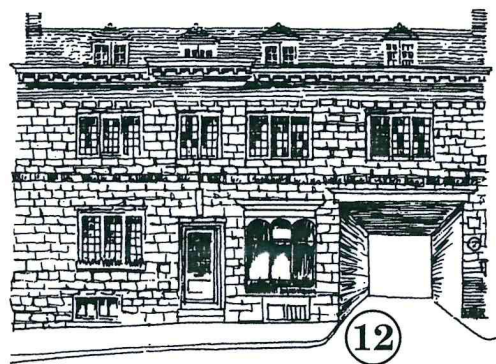


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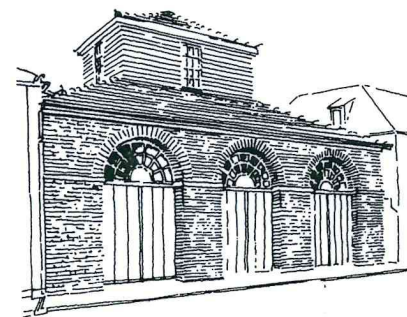
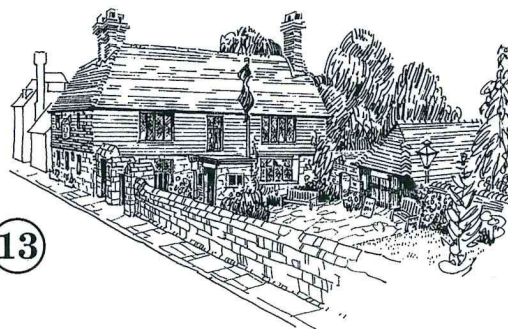
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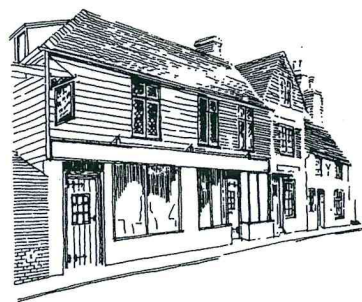
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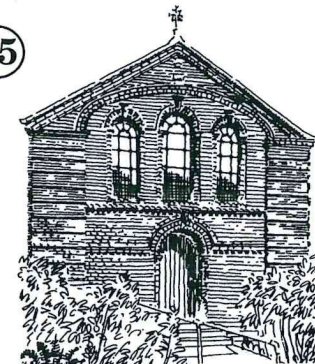
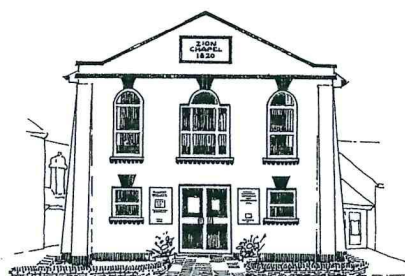
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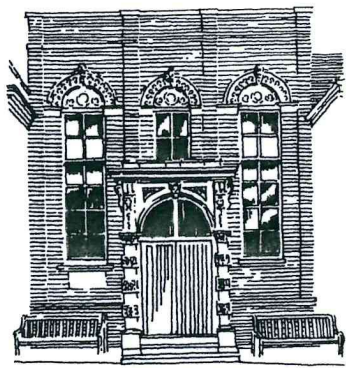


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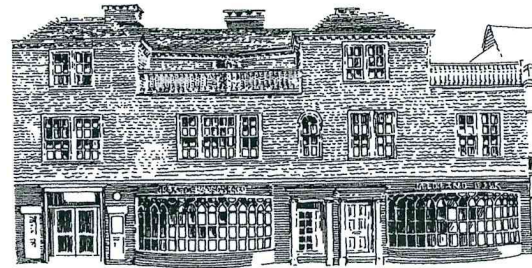
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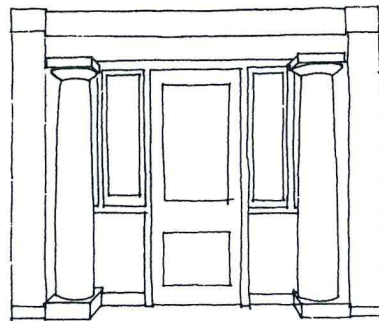
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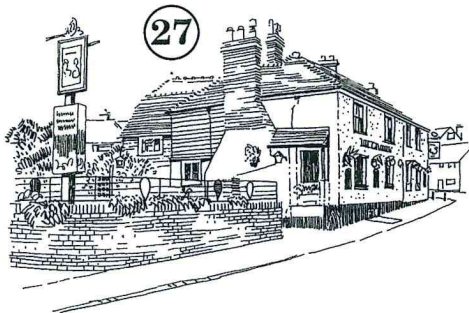
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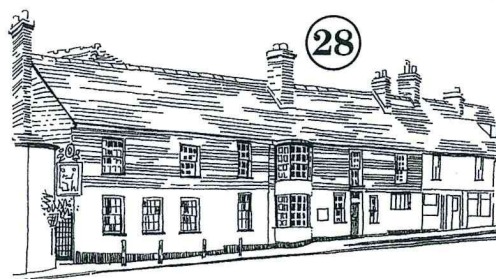
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