

the ashlar was badly dressed when the tower and south front were re-fashioned in 1733.

In 1648, 1,500 Scottish soldiers, who had been taken prisoner by Cromwell at the Battle of Ribbleson Moor, were locked in the church for two weeks before being marched to Chester. When the doors were opened, 44 men were found to have died. This gruesome episode earned the church the title 'Derbyshire's Black Hole'

On your tour of the church, you will find many fascinating features: box pews, originally installed in 1834; a Flemish-style eighteenth century chandelier; a tie-beam dated 1599; a thirteenth century stone coffin; fourteenth century clerestory windows on the north side; and a number of memorials to the Bagshaw family, whose most famous member is Rev. William Bagshaw, the Apostle of the Peak. He held secret services at Ford Hall, on the eastern edge of Chapel, after losing his ministry at Glossop when he refused to conform to the Book of Common Prayer. Also look out for the beautiful pink-tinted stone used in the fourteenth century extension work. This distinctive stone was extracted from Crist Quarry, which is now buried under the A6 by-pass. A modern stained glass window at the head of the north aisle was designed by David Pilkington.

In common with many other Derbyshire churches, Chapel's church has a gloriously wide chancel arch. Nowadays, the nave is on the same level as the chancel, but this has not always been the case – notice how the footings of the nave columns are hidden below the current floor level.

21. CHURCH BROW

Church Brow, the steep cobbled street that runs from the church to Market Street, is the most picturesque street in town. This is Chapel's answer to Gold Hill in Dorset, famous as the setting for a television Hovis commercial. Some buildings on Church Brow feature an odd form of decoration around their entrance ways in the form of horizontally-placed stone slabs which project from the head and foot of the door frame. As little attempt was made to achieve symmetry when these stones were selected, the effect is highly eccentric, but quite charming!

A good number of houses located elsewhere in the town share this same decorative feature. Look out for examples of the 'Chapel Style' when walking around the town.

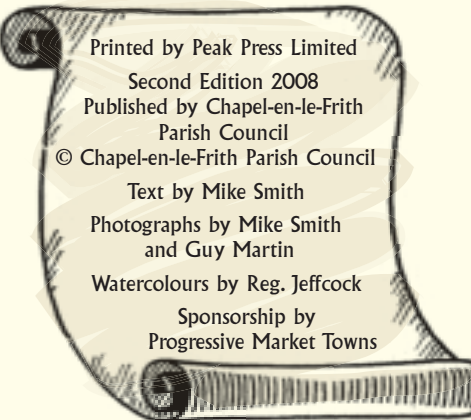
Before reaching the bottom of Church Brow, turn right into Terrace Road.

22. TERRACE ROAD

You will be surprised to learn that the narrow cobbled way known as Terrace Road, which runs diagonally across the Old Town, was once the main route through Chapel. One clue to the street's former importance is that the street name is



carved in stone on Topping House, a seventeenth century terrace at the head of the road. Return to Market Street via the steps below the stocks and walk down the hill back to Thornbrook Road or Morrison's store.



A Shopping Guide and a Guide to the Parish are available from a number of local outlets. Chapel-en-le-Frith Civic Society publishes a pack of walking trails covering the many footpaths in the fine countryside that surrounds the town. They can be obtained from the Hearse House Visitor Centre.

CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH



CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH



THE CAPITAL OF THE PEAK

In the thirteenth century, a vast area of the Peak District bordered by the rivers Goyt, Etherow, Derwent and Wye, was covered by a Royal Forest that served as a hunting ground for the Norman kings.

In 1225, the Earl of Derby gave permission for the foresters to build a chapel in the forest (a Chapel-en-le-Frith). The foresters' chapel was constructed on a spur of land below Eccles Pike, in a wide valley sheltered by the long, high ridge of Combs Moss. The settlement that grew up around the new church quickly became a centre of government for the Royal Forest of the Peak and an important stopping point on the trade routes which ran between Cheshire and Yorkshire.

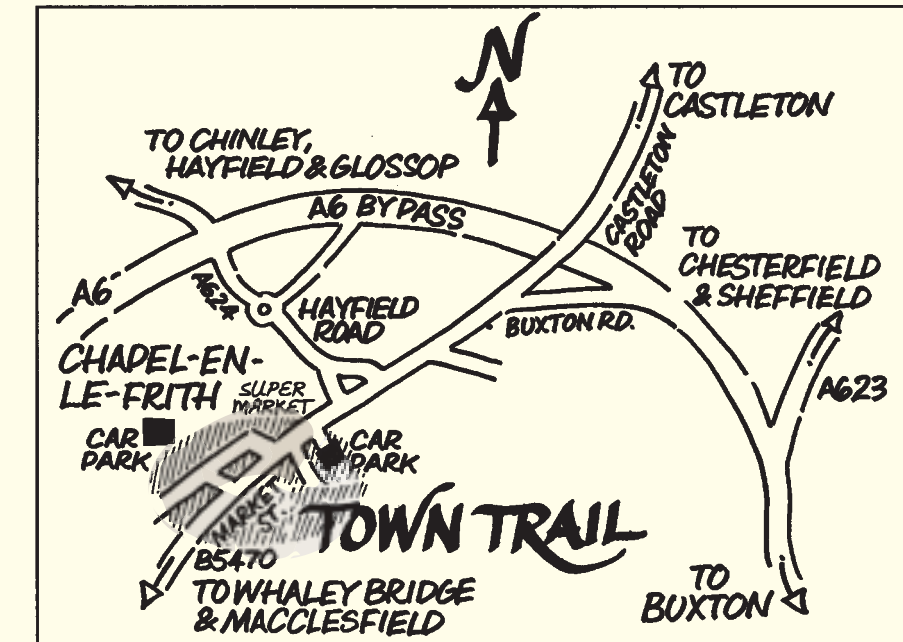
The modern parish of Chapel-en-le-Frith is home to some 9,000 people. As one would expect in a town with a history that stretches across seven centuries, there is a substantial "Old Town" at its core. Old stone houses cling to the hillside below the parish church, which occupies the site of the original thirteenth century chapel, and there is a cluster of ancient inns on the perimeter of the Market Place - clear evidence of the town's historic role as a staging post on coaching routes.

The Old Town area of Chapel-en-le-Frith is one of the Peak District's best kept secrets, for it stands on rising land behind the façades of the main



street and is largely hidden from the view of passing motorists. Even the Market Place is raised above street level.

On your next visit to the Peak District, pause in Chapel-en-le-Frith and follow the Old Town Trail, which will unlock the secrets of the Old Town and guide you along picturesque streets and alleyways, where you will discover fascinating old buildings.



THE OLD TOWN TRAIL

Vehicles can be left in the FREE CAR PARK on Thornbrook Road, where the trail begins. Alternatively, you can walk from MORRISON'S STORE to the start of the trail on Market Street. You can also join the trail at the Market Place by walking from Mirey Meadow CAR PARK (behind the Co-op on Market Place).

Whilst following the trail, you will come across many SPECIALIST SHOPS, as well as CAFÉ BARS, PUBS and RESTAURANTS. Do pause to take advantage of what they have to offer!

To begin the trail, walk along Thornbrook Road to its junction with the main road (Market Street). Cross to the north side of the street and walk up the hill towards the Market Place.

1. HOUSES ON MARKET STREET



Four of the houses in the terrace which faces Thornbrook Road have an entrance which is raised above street level. Access to each house is by a flight of steps encased in a stone staircase. Notice how the successive stairways give a visual rhythm to the streetscape.

There is a fine view across the road of the very elaborate doorway of Park House, a building that was once occupied by the manager of the old brewery which operated at the Market Street end of Park Road.

2. THE HEARSE HOUSE VISITOR AND INFORMATION CENTRE

The building with a porthole-like window is the Hearse House of 1818. A large archway frames the room that once housed the parish hearse, which was available for hire at a small fee to anyone who could provide a horse. The names of the Minister of the Parish in 1818 and his church wardens are engraved on a stone plaque above the doorway. Whether the stone mason who inscribed these names so meticulously expected these good people to retain their posts indefinitely or whether he

anticipated that fresh inscriptions would be produced as new officials took office is not clear!

The Hearse House was restored by the Chapel-en-le-Frith Civic Society and opened as a Visitor Centre by the Duchess of Devonshire in 1992. The centre houses exhibitions and has a comprehensive selection of tourist information about the town and surrounding district. A touch screen on the outside of the building gives 24-hour information about events and places of interest.

Now cross Market Street to the Town Hall and Library, where there are further display racks with a wide range of information leaflets.

3. TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY

The Town Hall, which has a church-like appearance thanks to its tall lancet windows and high gable, was erected in 1850 at the expense of Dr Slack of Bowden Hall (an estate on the eastern edge of the town). The building, which was originally known as "The New Sessions House" and accommodated the Magistrates' Court, now contains the Library as well as the Parish Office. It has a stage, two well-equipped kitchens and two rooms available for hire.

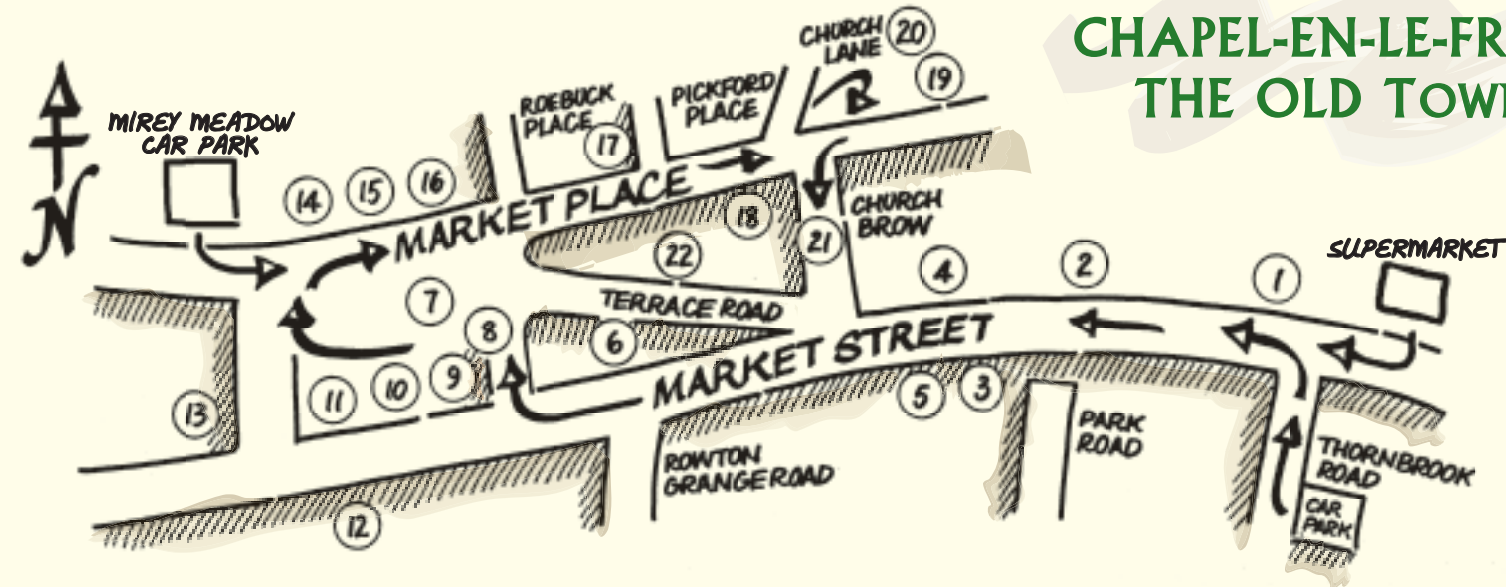
Enter the building via the front door and walk up the steps to view a permanent exhibition of paintings by Neil Bennett. The

pictures depict aspects of the town and scenes from the many picturesque hamlets in the parish. In the smaller of the two upper rooms there is an exhibition of paintings by Norman Phillips.

Now return to the north side of Market Street

4. PRIMITIVE METHODIST BETHEL

The building now occupied by a firm of joiners is the Primitive Methodist Bethel of 1852. The chapel has a neat, symmetrical façade which has been well maintained by the present occupants. Primitive Methodism had its origins in Burslem and the first



CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH THE OLD TOWN

The Stocks could well date from the Cromwellian period. If you pose here for a shot from a camera, spare a thought for the people who had shots of a rather more unpleasant kind aimed at them when they were secured to the device!

9. THE CROSS

Although the heavily weathered Market Cross is certainly old, it is of unknown origin. There have been rather far-fetched claims that some of the marks on its surface indicate a date of 1636. Judge for yourself!



10. THE WAR MEMORIAL

The memorial, which was erected by public subscription in 1919, is a far more generous tribute than that found in most towns – all the local men who served in the Great War are listed, rather than simply those who died in battle. Of 559 men who served, 78 were killed (their names are marked by crosses). In 1994, the Parish Council added an inscription to the memory of all the local people who served in the Second World War.

11. THE HORSE TROUGH

The Jubilee Horse Trough and Drinking Fountain was constructed in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. A display of plants is maintained in the trough.

12. MARKET STREET INNS

Visitors to Chapel are never short of a drink. On the short stretch of Market Street which faces Market Place there are two inns and one former inn.

In former days, the Dog Inn was known as the Talbot – commemorating a type of hound that featured on the coat-of-arms of the Earls of Shrewsbury. During the reign of Elizabeth I, one of the Earls of Shrewsbury was Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire and the custodian of Mary Queen of Scots when she stayed at the Old Hall in Buxton.

At one time, the Royal Oak was the meeting place of the Magistrates' Court and also a departure point for the Peak Ranger and the Celerity – stage coaches which ran to Stockport and Manchester. The Royal Bank of Scotland, which is sandwiched between the Dog Inn and the Royal Oak, occupies the site of the former Pack Horse Inn.

13. THE KING'S ARMS

This inn, which was a stopping place on the Buxton-Manchester Turnpike, was once known as Town Head and consisted of two farm houses – Old

House Farm and New House Farm. You may be able to spot some remnants of the old farmhouses on the Eccles Road side of the building.

14. THE POST OFFICE

The Post Office, on the north side of the Market Place, carries the inscription ToB 1773. The building once housed Swan Inn, also known as the Swan with Two Necks.



15. CARLTON HOUSE

The arcading on this building is an incongruous, but rather attractive feature of the Market Place. The building stands on the site of the former Market House.

16. THE ROEBUCK

Long before the introduction of relaxed licensing hours, the Roebuck had the right to open until 4pm on Market Day for the benefit of 'farmers and corn and provision merchants.' In the early eighteenth century, the inn was known as the New Hall.

17. THE MARKET STREET 'PLACES'

The street known as Market Place extends beyond the market area to the Parish Church. Running away from its north side, there are three alleyways

known as Roebuck Place, Pickford Place and Church Lane. Peep into these narrow passages to discover a picturesque huddle of stone cottages, some dating from the seventeenth century. There are delightful glimpses of the church tower above the gritstone roofs.

Cross back to the south side of the street.

18. MORE FORMER INNS

A house known as Black Greyhound Cottage stands on the site of the Black Greyhound Inn and

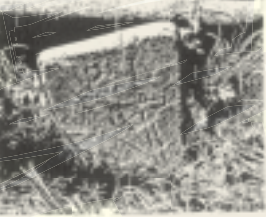
a large house to the east has a relief of a bull's head above its doorway. The former Bull's Head Inn occupied these premises from the early seventeenth century to the Second World War. As is the case with so many old English inns, it stands just outside the church gates. Notice its fine set of mounting steps.



19. CHURCHYARD

Before entering the church, explore the churchyard. The stone stump that is topped by a sundial is some 300 years old. A much older stone stump nearby is a Saxon cross that was found in

1920, when it was spotted in a wall at Ollershaw, some three miles away. Have a look at the knotted stonework on the cross. At the eastern end of the graveyard there is a curious stone known



as the Woodcutter's Grave, a simple slab which bears only the letters P.L. and a crude depiction of an axe. The stone is said to mark the grave of a thirteenth-century forester. Also look out for tombs with rhyming verses.

20. CHURCH OF ST THOMAS BECKET

In 1225, the foresters of the Royal Forest were given permission to build a chapel-of-ease to the mother Church of St Peter at Hope. They dedicated their building to St Thomas Becket, who had been murdered 55 years earlier. The church was extended in 1380, by which time it had been recognised as an independent parish church. In 1890, some fragments of the original thirteenth century chapel were found during a restoration of the chancel. The exterior of the building has a crumbly, mottled appearance, because



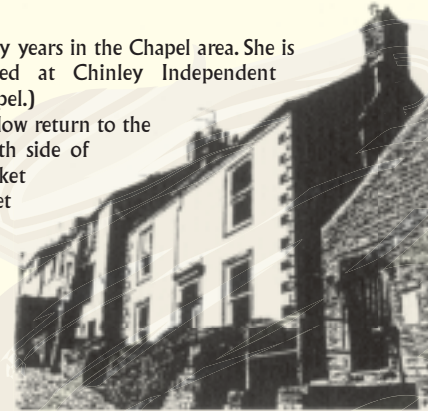
5. PRIMITIVE METHODIST CENTENARY SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School, built in 1910, has now been converted into residential units. An inscription on the eastern façade of the building betrays its original function.

(Chapel's Methodist Church is situated at the eastern end of Market Street, some 200 yards beyond the junction with Thornbrook Road. In 1994, the building was given a fine modern extension which merited a Gold Award from the town's Amenity Society (now the Civic Society). John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, made his last visit to Chapel in 1786, when he may well have been the guest of Grace Bennett, who lived in Market Street. At one stage, Grace was engaged to Wesley and spent six months in Ireland with him. However, they never married because his brother Charles objected to their relationship. Grace then married John Bennett, one of Wesley's leading preachers, and spent

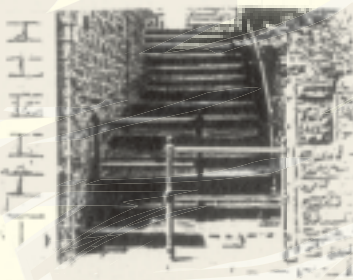
many years in the Chapel area. She is buried at Chinley Independent Chapel.)

Now return to the North side of Market Street



6. LITTLE STEPS AND BIG STEPS

From the foot of Church Brow there is a fine glimpse of Chapel's Old Town, which clings to the hillside below the Parish Church. Much of the Old Town is



hidden behind the façades of Market Street, but two successive flights of steps to the west of Church Brow - the Little Steps and the Big Steps - give access to its cobbled streets and alleyways.

Immediately after the National Westminster Bank, walk up another flight of steps to the Market Place

7. MARKET PLACE

Chapel's sloping, cobbled Market Place is raised above the level of Market Street.

A large mural by Claire Taylor in STOCKS CAFE depicts the Market Place on a cattle market day in 1897. The cattle market was moved from this site many years ago and then ceased to exist altogether, but an open-air market does take place here every Thursday.

A remarkable feature of the Market Place is the large number of inns that surround it – an indication of Chapel's former importance as a stopping place on trans-Pennine routes.

Most of the Market Place is cobbled, but a raised paved area has been created around the four monuments which stand there.

8. THE STOCKS

