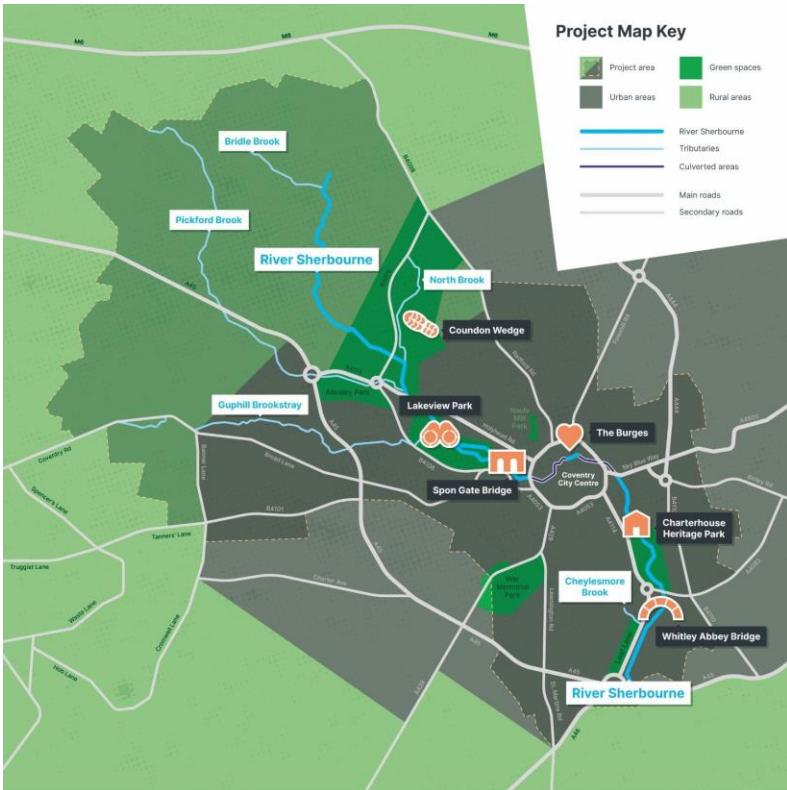


Project Map



About us

We're bringing back the source of our city. For people, for wildlife, for the future.

Connecting the people of Coventry with the River Sherbourne and its rich and diverse heritage.

For more information please contact: Sherbourne@wkwt.org.uk

Please follow us on Facebook for the latest information on events and activities @TheSherbourneValleyProject

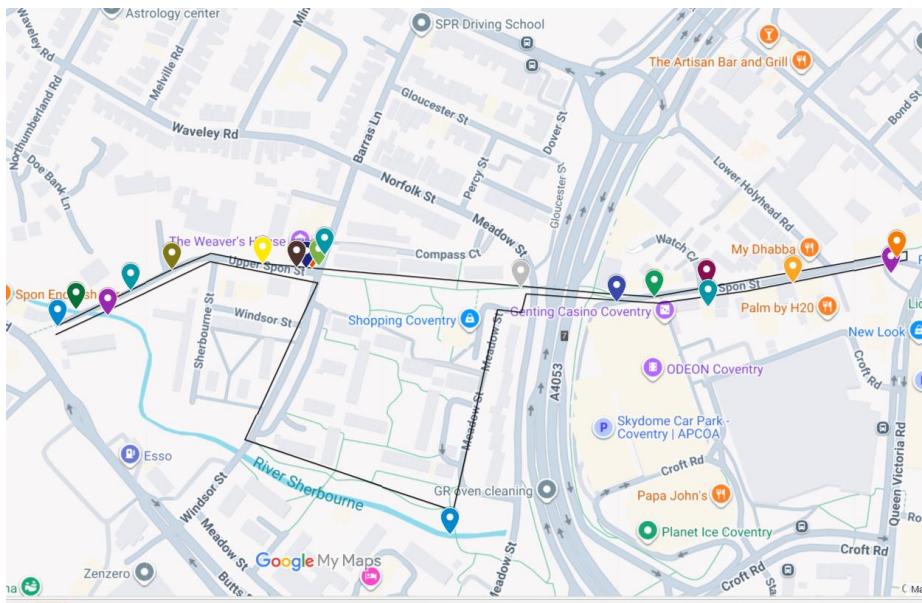


Spon end History Trail

A short 1.8km walk Spon end has a very rich history with many historical and cultural curiosities.



Map



Explore the Cultural and historical finds in Spon end

This map and all the links to gain further information can be accessed online using the following QR code.



Trail points continued

Spon End Gate The grandest out of all the gates. Spon Gate (originally known as Bablake gate).



This old engraving depicts the complex structure which stood proudly alongside St. John's church at the end of Spon Street. The image was engraved by J. Greig from a drawing by J. Smith and was published on the 1st July 1817. The view is of the outside of the gate from Spon Street looking in towards the town. St. John's church would be through the gate and on the left. More information on the gates and the wall can be found [here](https://www.historiccoventry.co.uk/wall/wall.php)

<https://www.historiccoventry.co.uk/wall/wall.php>



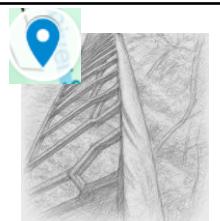
As one of Coventry's most historic buildings, St John's holds a special place in the heart of the city. St John's was built by Medieval Religious Guilds in 1344 on land given by Queen Isabella.

Located on the corner of Medieval Spon Street, this Grade I listed masterpiece of architecture is one of the most beautiful churches in England. Carved from rose sandstone, the church is steeped in history.

During the Civil War the building was used to house Scottish Royalists, giving rise to the saying 'Sent to Coventry'.. There are even muscat shell damage from the civil war in the walls. For more information on the church see this link <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church/st-john-baptist-coventry>



The old windmill pub . The premises is a Grade II listed building with a history dating back to the 14th century when it was constructed around a tree trunk. The original feature of the fireplace conceals a priest's hole, while the pub had its brewery at the rear until 1930 and is still preserved as a display <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/whats-on/coventrys-oldest-pub-virtually-unchanged-31043097>



The marks on the bridge are made from the ropes that have been past over the bars when it was on the canal . It was moved here in the 1980s . For more info on the bridge see this link <https://www.sherbournevalley.co.uk/bridges-ruins-other-structures>



Trail points continued



The river used to flood regularly in this area . One photo from the telegraph is attached as photo 2 and here is the link to the article showing many more photos and information about them .<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/gallery/spon-end-floods-august-1970-21735778>



Traveling under the ring road to get into the city Centre you are actually traveling roughly the same route you would have in the medieval times



Coventry was the best medieval city in England until it was bombed. Coventry counted as a jewel in the United Kingdom's military-industrial crown. German intelligence was well-informed about the city's industries and key infrastructure – exactly where in the city aero engines were manufactured; radar sets; military vehicles and navigation aids, and so on.



Formally this building was at 8-10 park street but moved here after the 2nd world war to save the building when they built the ring road . Over 700 houses went under the bulldozer to make way for the new road scheme.to read more about the scheme follow the

link <https://www.historiccoventry.co.uk/postwar/postwar.php?pg=develop>



This would have been where lots of the watch factories would have been. Unfortunately, all these factories have gone but a nod to the area can be seen with the name of the close. for more information on the watch factories see this

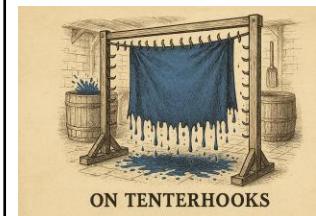
link https://www.historiccoventryforum.co.uk/articles/Fyza_Tariq-Watch_maker_blog.pdf



A door to the court rather than a home. The industrial population of Coventry expanded very quickly in the early years of the 19th century and, as a result, there was enormous pressure on space within the city's creaking medieval street plan.

A great article on this can be found here <https://cov-soc.skizzar.site/2023/08/11/life-in-coventrys-crowded-courts/>

Trail points



Opposite the Old dyers arms .

Here is where the old dyeing pits were located. The name of the pub is a nod to the history of the area. Coventry's was once famous for its production of sought-after blue fabric - hence the saying 'as true as Coventry blue' - and it is believed that these pits were involved in the process of cloth preparation.

Saying to be on "tender hooks "is to be stretched thin as they would have stretched out the material to dry it in this area too. so many sayings have come from just this product. For more information see this link <https://theweavershouse.org/as-true-as-coventry-blue/>



Spon Gate Bridge – after 1765 when the bridge was rebuilt, with the distinctive column in view. The backs of the buildings all seem to have direct access to the water with a quay and moorings. Punt style boats were used to move items up and down the river. See the image showing this although it is likely the artist may have used some artistic license.

This is a copy of a painting by Van Art of Coventry



Trail points continued



Routes into the city Can you find the ordinance survey mark. This route marked one of the routes into the city as part of the pilgrimage. The modern Pilgrimage also includes the bridge. The Spon End Bridge route into Coventry is a significant part of the Coventry Pilgrimage, which is a circular route that follows 'A Coventry Way' and includes sections that have supported pilgrims in the past. To find out more follow this link <https://www.acoventryway.org.uk/coventry-pilgrimage/>



Chapel This was part of the cloth makers guild. People would stop here, pray and make donations. It was a functional chapel until the dissolution of the monasteries where it became a cottages. Because it's sandstone it's quite quickly falling apart. For more info follow this link https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101342909-chapel-of-st-james-and-st-christopher-sherbourne-ward#google_vignette



Spon Gate School in the 18,000 the whole area would have been full of this style of houses, but most have now been knocked down. The history of Spon gate School in Coventry is marked by its transformation over the years. The original Spon Street Ragged School dates to 1869 and was used as classrooms until around 1880. The school was enlarged in 1891 and again between 1903 and 1906. The original building suffered bomb damage in 1940 and was subsequently demolished. The current building, which is likely the 1903-6 block, could incorporate the 1891 work. The school became Spon Gate School in 1947, and the existing building is probably the 1903-6 block.
heritagegateway.org.uk



Black Swan Terrace is on Spon Street; one of the most important historic routes in Coventry. It forms part of the east-west axis running through the city which led on to Fleet Street, High Street, Earl Street, Jordan Well, Gosford Street and Far Gosford Street. People would have come down Spon Street towards the city from the important cities to the North West such as Lichfield or Chester. This part of Spon Street was called Spon Causeway as it formed a causeway across the flood plain of the Sherbourne leading to Spon Bridge. It shows a great example of a Medieval frame which protects the building. For more information follow this link <https://theweavershouse.org/history-of-black-swan-terrace/>

Trail points



Ghost signs .These traditional signs are called ghost signs they can be found throughout the city on historic buildings, as they are with most old industrial cities. These signs are fading, hand-painted advertisements from a previous era, offering a glimpse into the city's past businesses and high street history. They provide a link to Coventry's past, showing which shops and products were once popular in the area.

To find out more go to <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/help-hunt-ghost-signs-this-halloween/>



Door thresholds .Doors were higher as they had steps to keep up away from the filth that was on the ground. This street at this time would have been dirty and smelly. A threshold is the sill of a door. Some cultures attach special symbolism to a threshold. It is called a door saddle in New England. Door thresholds cover the gap between the floor and the door frame, helping to prevent any water leaks, insects or draughts from entering through the opening.



6 Cottages were built as one structure on Black Swan Terrace in 1455 replacing existing buildings, which cannot have been so well-built and probably had become derelict or had suffered some catastrophe such as a fire. They were built by Coventry Priory for rent. The cottages were all built to the same plan each with just three rooms, two downstairs and one upstairs, and they were what we would today call live-work units. People had their businesses and lived in the same three rooms. They were built on burgages, long plots, which extended some 50m back from the street to what was called Windmill Field – and that was the pattern for all the houses along this street. There is loads of information on this on <https://theweavershouse.org/history-of-black-swan-terrace/>



The cottages have been restored to show how it would have looked in 1540. This shows how John Croke, a Coventry narrow-loom weaver and his family would have lived and worked. At the back of the Weaver's House is a medieval garden showing the plants that would have been grown for food, flavoring, medicine and household use. Well worth a visit inside follow link for more information <https://theweavershouse.org/>

