

Walk 1

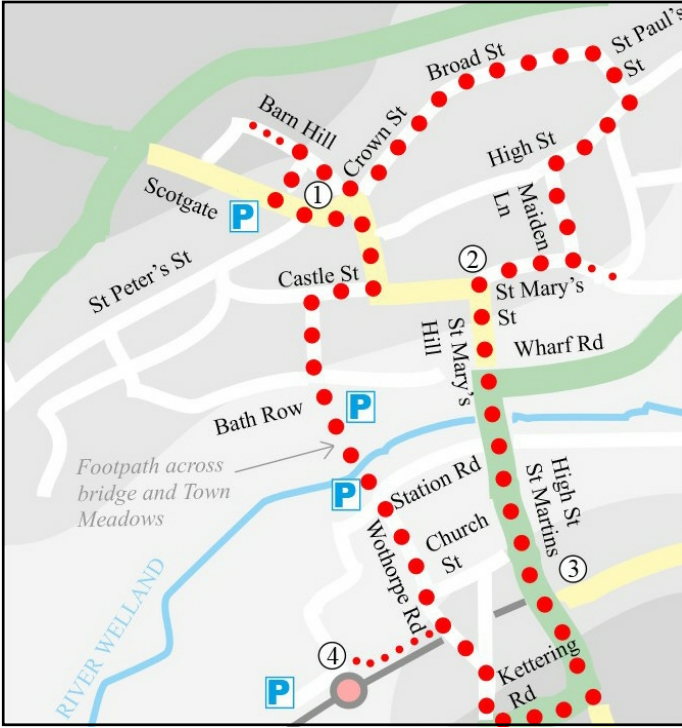
GEORGIAN STAMFORD



St Mary's Hill



When it comes to glorious Georgian architecture Bath deservedly takes all the plaudits. However in the southern tip of Lincolnshire is a small town which gives it a run for its money! This is not the planned crescents and landscaped squares of a rich mans playground but a busy market town which due to the high quality of the local stone and a lack of later development has preserved its 18th century appearance.



A wander through this ancient Saxon town with limestone Georgian buildings and Medieval churches on every turn. Use the red dotted lines on the map to follow the route which I took but please take a diversion and explore its rustic back lanes.

Distance: 1.5 miles

Parking: Numerous pay and display car parks; I used one in Scotsgate but there are others in Bath Row and Station Road.

The churches are usually open and can be spectacular inside. Please contribute to the money box by the doors. Most houses are private so please respect owners privacy.

① **Church of the All Saints, PE9 2AG.**
The first stop after I headed into town from Scotsgate car park was this spectacular Medieval church with its unusual arcading (series of arches) around the exterior.





All Saints

These thin pointed arches known as lancets date from the 13th century although much of the structure dates from the 15th century when it was rebuilt by a local wool merchant. Successful laymen were happy to spend their fortunes rebuilding churches as they believed it would grant them safe passage through purgatory. However after Henry VIII founded the Church of England such practices ended and the rich instead splashed their cash on new country houses. Burghley House just outside Stamford is a fine example of this shift during the 16th century.

While admiring All Saints look out for some fine gravestones in the churchyard and take a look inside at the spectacular angel roof. The 18th century antiquarian William Stukeley published his works on Stonehenge and Avebury while he was vicar here from 1730-47. His house still stands at the top of Barn Hill, which is worth a quick diversion to look at the fine buildings and view down this cobbled back lane.



Barn Hill

From All Saints I turned up Red Lion Street and into Broad Street, I headed back down High Street until reaching the wonderful library with its commanding portico (originally the entrance to the market). From here I turned left down Maiden Ln and at the bottom looked round the left corner at St Georges Sq before heading back up St Mary's St to ②



Library



Look out for the decorative metal water traps and down pipes on Georgian buildings. Guttering at the time was a something of a status symbol and celebrated by prominent and decorative pipework.



St Mary's

② *St Mary's Church, PE9 2DF.*

This church has a spectacular tower and spire which like All Saints is over 700 years old, notice the same bands of pointed arches (blank arcading). On top of this is a broach spire, one with an octagonal base and small triangular pieces filling in the corners, which is distinctive of this part of the country.

From St Mary's turn down the hill, over the bridge at the bottom, past The George of Stamford and up High Street Saint Martins on the other side.



High Street Saint Martins



Another feature to admire from the Georgian houses in the town are their doorways. As you can see from these photos they have an eclectic range of styles with a similar variety of panelling in the doors themselves. The carving with alternate blocks down the sides (second from the right) is known as a Gibbs Surround after the famous architect James Gibbs who made it fashionable in the 18th century. Stamford is in a fortunate position in that it lies close to quarries which produce some of the finest building stone in the country, hence its widespread use in the town. There are some timber framed buildings but nearly all of them are masked by later stone frontages as owners looked to keep their properties fashionable.

③ **High Street Saint Martins, PE9 2LF.**

Another fine display of Georgian and Victorian buildings as pictured below. It was founded as a separate settlement on the south side of the River Welland by King Edward the Elder in the 10th century after the town north of the river had been won back from the Danes.



High Street Saint Martins



Look out for the decorative brackets under the eaves and concave hoods over doors which are characteristic of late 17th and early 18th century style buildings.

Towards the top of the hill turn right down Kettering Road and then take the first right by the attractive almshouses, down Wothorpe Road. Keep to the pavement on the left until you cross the railway then turn left down a narrow footpath at the end of the bridge down to the station.



Stamford Station

④ **Stamford Station, PE9 2JN.**

It's only appropriate that such an architecturally rich town as Stamford should have a glorious station like this. It was designed by Sancton Wood in 1848 in a Tudor style with a distinctive little turret. The taller three storey block at the end was the Station master's house.



Head back onto Wothorpe Road and at the bottom of the hill where it turns right into Station Road, carry on in a straight line over the road and down the footpath by the side of the car park and across the bridge. This footpath over the meadow takes you to Bath Row. From here there are a number of routes you can take back to All Saints, but I headed straight up the hill, turned right into Castle St and then left at the end back to the start.



If you want to find out more details about the town's architecture then look out for the Buildings of England series by Nicholas Pevsner (in this case the Lincolnshire edition)

If you would like to discover more about Georgian houses and Medieval churches then look out for my two books pictured below. They are packed with photos and drawings explaining in an easy to understand manner how they were built, what the different styles were and where you can find some outstanding examples. They are available from Amazon, my publisher's website www.countrysidebooks.co.uk and your local bookshop at around £8.99 each. Go to my website www.trevoryorke.co.uk for more details and to take a look inside each book.

