

INTRODUCTION

The 'bridge' in Sawbridgeworth is appropriate as the parish has postal addresses on both sides of the River Stort Navigation. From the year 1086 its name of 'Sabrichesworde' has survived in a recognisable form and despite having several changes it still contains 14 letters, and remains the longest single station name on the Cambridge railway line.

START

1

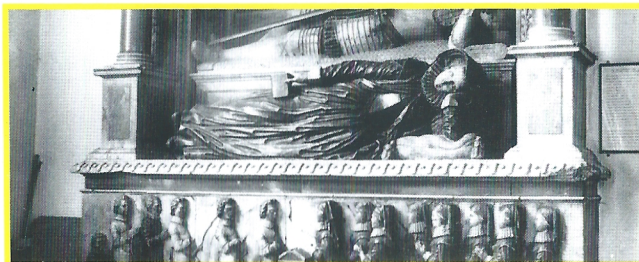
Before you begin your walk through the churchyard consider for a moment the nearby buildings in Church Street. The white painted clapboard building 'church house' on the south side was provided expressly for the benefit of the parishioners of Sawbridgeworth under a trust deed of 1652. One of the trustees was Sir John Leventhorpe of Mathams.

Beside the gates and abutting the churchyard wall are the almshouses built by Mrs.T.J.Mann in memory of her son H.E.Mann. On the gable is an emblem formed from angling items that form the initials T.J.M.

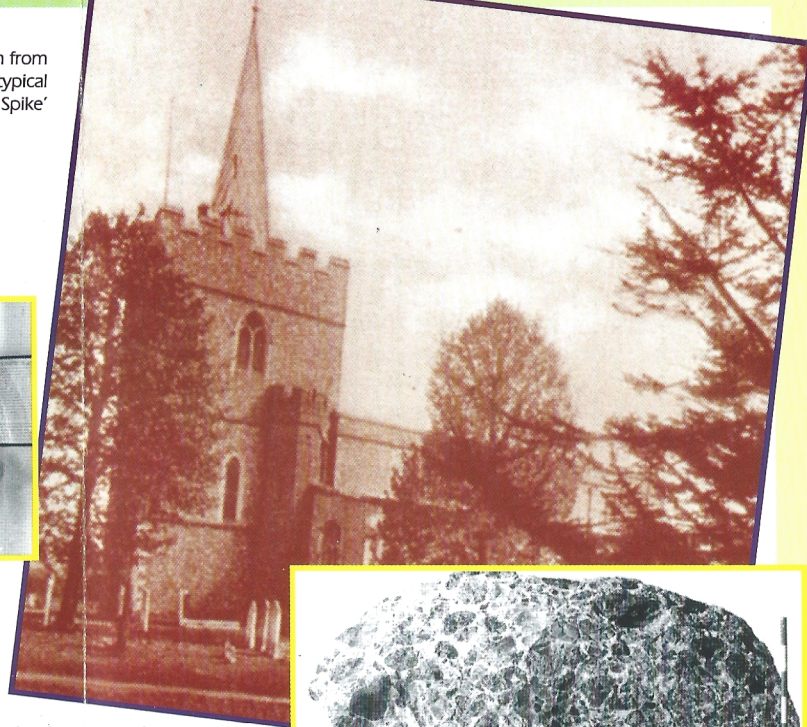
Using a method of construction commonly found in East Anglia, Gt.St.Marys church has a facing of flints on rubble walls, with several parts dating from the C13th. It has had many alterations at a later date that have obscured the early work. An interesting feature is the Hertfordshire puddingstone in the base of the south west corner of the tower. This item, now much reduced in size, may have been a 'preaching' stone for itinerant preachers of the Saxon period before Augustine came to England in 596 to pursue his campaign of converting the pagans to Christianity.

Inside the church there are several fine monuments to the Hewitt, Mildmay and Chauncy families, all one time owners of Pishiobury, and a splendid Tudor monument to Sir John Leventhorpe and his wife Joan. In the churchyard,

Monument to Joan, wife of Sir John Leventhorpe.



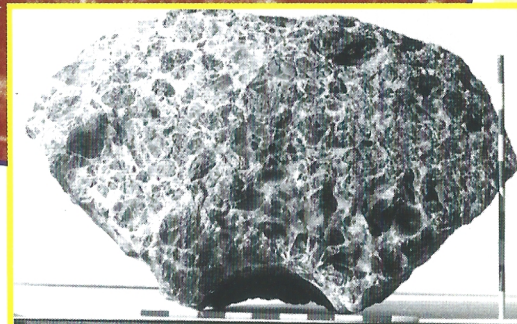
Great St Mary's Church from the South showing the typical 'Hertfordshire Spike'



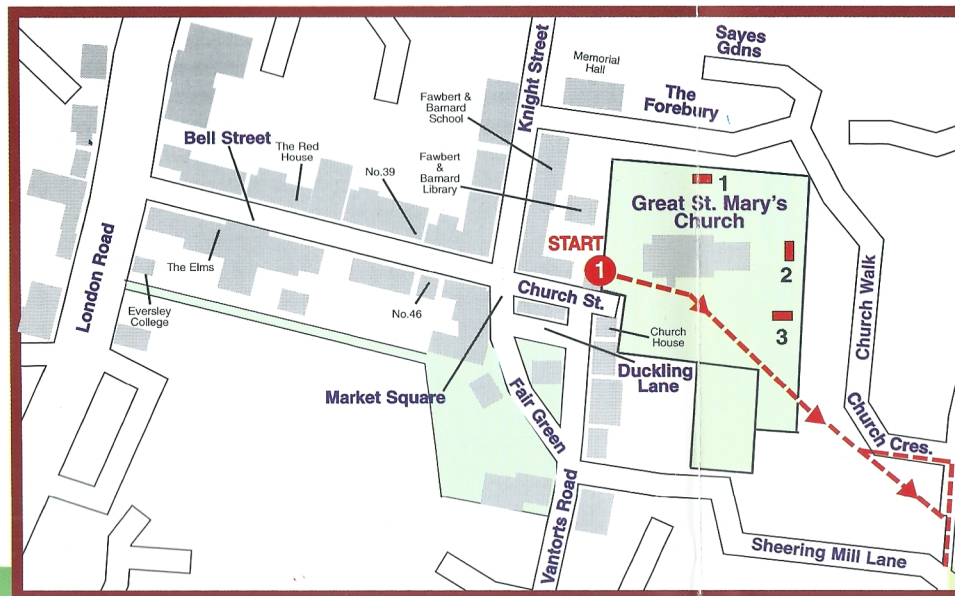
are the graves of some notable parishioners,

- (1) Sir Edmund Barnard
Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council
- (2) Corporal Vick
Present at the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, and
- (3) John Strange Jocelyn
Earl of Roden who lived at Hyde Hall.

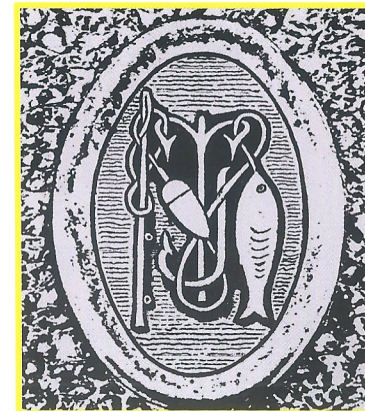
The trail follows Church Crescent and by means of a short 'twitchell' (local for path) it joins Sheering Mill Lane, and turns left and proceeds to the Navigation.



Part of a Roman Quern, for grinding wheat, made from Hertfordshire puddingstone.



The initials T.J.M. carved in stone (see text on left)





SAWBRIDGEWORTH 2000 MILLENNIUM TRAIL

Sponsored by Sawbridgeworth
Town Council

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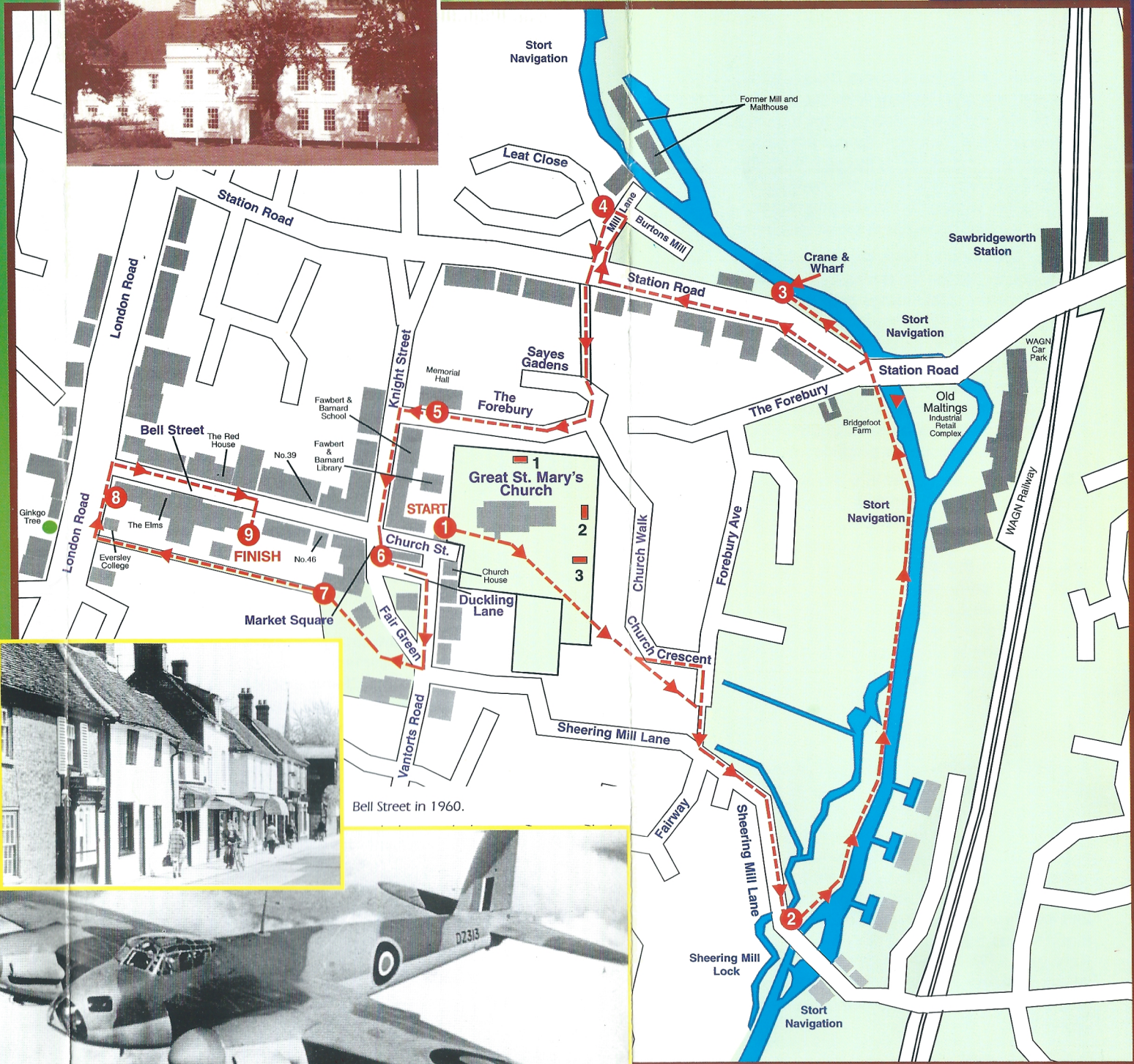
The key to the improved prosperity of the villages and towns on the banks of the River Stort was the opening of the River Stort Navigation Company. Founded by Sir George Duckett and Mr. Thomas Adderley in 1769 the company improved the river with locks and a deeper channel to allow barges to transport up to 70 tons of cargo to and from London.

In particular the transport of malt from the maltings was changed from road transport to the navigation, thus avoiding the difficulties of mud and water during the winter months.

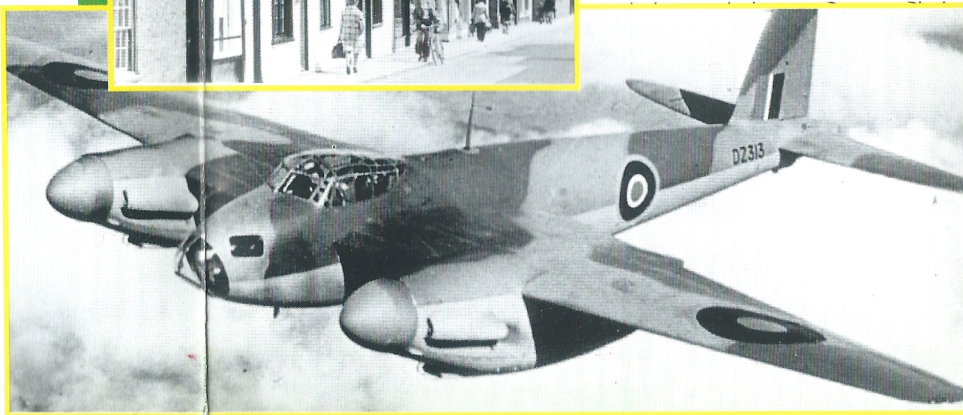
Sheering Mill lock house was built for the lengthsman who would maintain the banks of the navigation and operate the lock gates. A very important task in the winter months was to regulate the flow of water to prevent flooding, and in the summer to ensure that the level in his stretch remained high enough to allow the passage of the barges.

During the 2nd. World War Sawbridgeworth contributed greatly to the war effort, not only from its farming contribution but as a manufacturer of equipment for the army and airforce. Lawrence Moorings was the site of Walter Lawrence & Co. a woodworking concern who made pontoons and parts for (wooden) aeroplanes. After the war they reverted back to the high class joinery business.

A de Havilland Mosquito Mk IIIB (the 'Wooden Wonder'). The wings and fuselage were manufactured by the joinery works of Walter Lawrence & Co Ltd. in Sheering Mill Lane.



Bell Street in 1960.



3

By following the towpath the course of the River Stort is seen on the left hand side at a level several feet below the water level of the navigation. Further on the river is crossed by a footbridge at the point where it leaves the navigation. This section demonstrates the changes made to the river for the benefit of the boat traffic.

The original outline of the malthouses is well preserved as viewed from the towpath, but they have been mostly converted to housing and some light industrial units. Malting, the conversion of cereals: barley, into a form of sugar: maltose, was a major industry and provider of employment up to beginning of the C20th. The demise of the malthouses and the navigation can be directly attributed to the influence of the railway arriving in 1842. Malt ceased to be made locally, the barley could now be taken direct to the breweries and the malting carried out on site.

Small malthouses are readily converted to town houses and they are much sort after, but the larger malthouses are major projects to convert into flats. The malthouses on the other side of the railway are converted into flats, while those nearest to the towpath are light industrial units.

4

On leaving the towpath, cross Station Road and to the left is a small green area alongside the navigation. A lone cast-iron post is all that remains of the crane that was positioned on the Public Wharf for the general use by the local population to load and unload their produce. Orchard Court on the other side of the road has been a malthouse and a sack factory, but is now flats. The next house, Orchard House, was the country home of Mr. Richard Orchard, cocoa and tea dealer with a warehouse in Soho, London. To ease the shortage of small change in 1800 Mr. Orchard issued 1/2d and 1d tokens. Proceeding to Mill Lane, off Leat Close, where some of the buldings of the watermill, now

converted to flats and houses, exist at the bottom of the lane. General access to the site is not available, but the building on the right hand side was the granary. On the left may be seen and heard the millrace with part of the turbine casing still in place. The turbine was made by 'Armfield' with horizontal vanes and provided the power for the mill. The house adjacent to the millrace is of particular interest as within it has the buck (body) of a post windmill, thought to have come from Harlow Common around 1830 being an obstacle to the improvements to the roads for the turnpike.

5

Returning to Station Road cross to the twitchell and proceed past Sayes Gardens to The Forebury and turn right. A short disance on the right hand side is the Memorial Hall. This hall has functioned since 1949 as the village hall for Sawbridgeworth, after its previous life as a gymnasium, chapel and theatre on the wartime airfield of 'RAF Sawbridgeworth'.

On the opposite of the road is the Fawbert & Barnard School. The school was founded in 1839 by non-conformists to serve children of all faiths and background, and it moved to its present site in 1895. One of the two large classrooms was used for girls and infants and the other for the boys. In 1909 the Fawbert & Barnard Trust provided the school with a library in a separate building on an adjacent site. The roof may be seen in the direction of the church.

Next to the Memorial Hall is the library, a building erected in 1937 as offices for the Sawbridgeworth Urban District Council. Opposite the junction with Knight street the Queens Head has a 'trompe loeuil' of a cat on the windowsill, and No.22 is notable for being the oldest



timber-framed building in Sawbridgeworth, dated from c.1500. Structural details suggest it was possibly two shops, one fronting the street, and the other facing the area to the rear.



Sawbridgeworth Mill and Malthouse.

6

From The Forebury turn left into Knight Street past the Fawbert and Barnard School and notice the buildings with parapets at eaves level that were added to earlier timber-framed buildings in the interests of architectural fashion. e.g. Barclay's Bank, and Nos. 32 and 34.

Today the Market Square would not be able to accommodate the very many busy stalls that would have formed the mediaeval markets. Possibly reduced in size to as little as one fifth of the original size due to encroachment and infilling. Mediaeval markets were an essential part of everyday life, for in addition to buying and selling, they provided a social occasion for the exchange of news and to broadcast forthcoming events.

To regulate a market from its use by dishonest and fraudulent dealers, inspectors were employed to assay or check the weights of the goods being sold, and to cover the cost and raise an income the Lord of the Manor collected rent from the stallholders. The power to raise money in this way was controlled by the Monarch by the issue of a charter granting the holder the right to hold a market on specific days. The deSay family were granted a Saturday market in 1222, and that came down to the Leventhorpe family in 1447 as a Wednesday market and two fairs. Today the word 'forestall' derives from forestallers who sold produce illegally outside the market.

F.N. Lawrence, butchers, Christmas display outside their shop in the Market Square in 1900.



SAWBRIDGEWORTH 2000 MILLENNIUM TRAIL

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From Market Square turn into Duckling Lane then right past the King William IV to the east end of the Fair Green. From this side look for the shallow depression that runs from the far left corner to the right corner. This could be the path from Pishiobury to the church worn by many feet over the centuries, and possibly witness to the passing of Anne Boleyn and her retinue during her stay at the house.

Fairs, like markets, were an essential part of the years events for the local populace, being the time when workers could change their employers. The principal fair was the hiring fair held at Michaelmas-October – when the contract for the following year was made by the striking of hands, and later by accepting a shilling. Being a day of no work the opportunity was taken to enjoy oneself with the family and to indulge in the amusements of the day, with competitions for produce or goods.

The entertainment grew into amusements rarely seen today, that might include a boxing booth, a fat lady, a dwarf couple or the lamb with five legs. The attractions brought many people from far and wide until the authorities were forced to close many fairs due to riotous behaviour. A petition was raised to close Sawbridgeworth fair in about 1880 because of the dissolute behaviour. The fairs are still celebrated in Sawbridgeworth on the 28th. April and the 20th. October.

8

From the far side, west side, of the Fair Green a footpath leads between the houses to the cricket field on the left and the Old Bell on the right. Further along is the bowling green opposite the rear of the Sawbridgeworth Council Offices –Sayesbury Manor – and adjacent to the doctors surgeries. On reaching the London Road turn right and walk along to Eversley College. It is thought that this was the home of the parents of Lt. Lief-Robinson RFC.VC. who won the Victoria Cross for his shooting down of a German Zeppelin airship over Cuffley, Hertfordshire during the first World War.

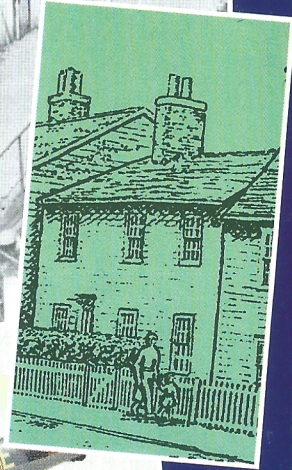
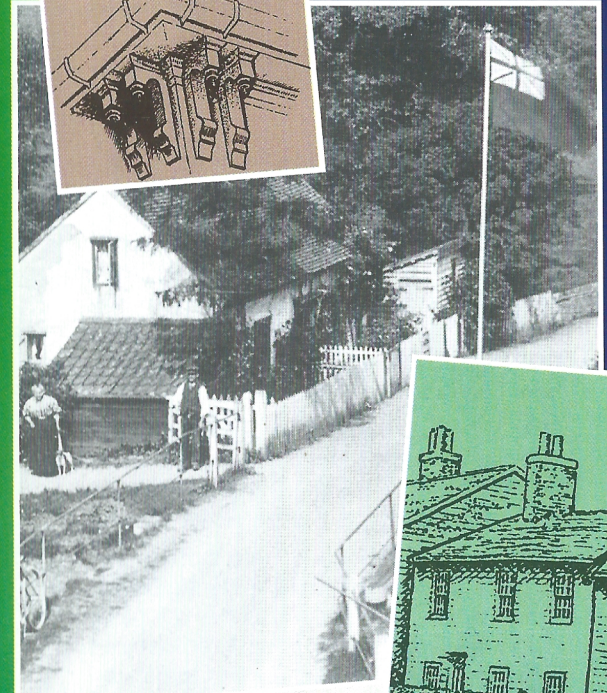
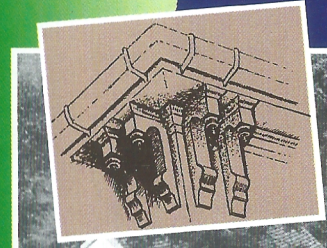
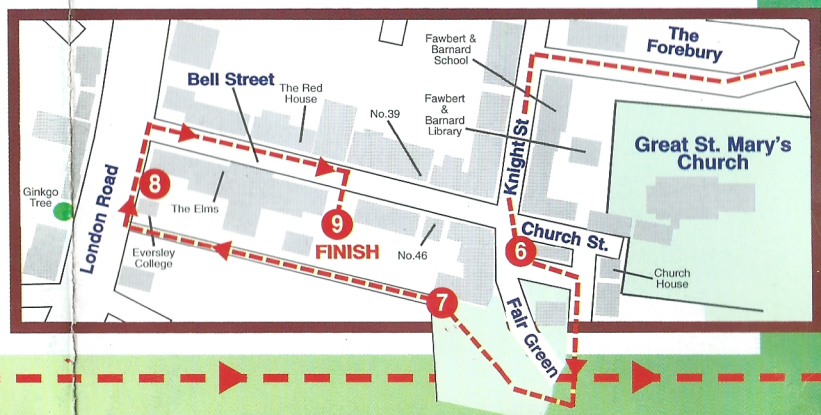
Behind the brick wall opposite and slightly to the left is a tall slim tree known as a Maidenhair tree or Ginkgo. The ginkgo is a surviving species from the Jurassic period, 200 million years ago, and is a living fossil species from the time of the dinosaurs.

The London Road was part of the turnpike road system of the Hockerill Highway Trust. This section from Harlow Common to Stump Cross completed in 1838 a major road from London to Cambridge via. Epping. Improvements made locally were the lowering of Bonks Hill and the straightening of the road to bypass the Hand & Crown turning. On the corner of Bell Street is a hand pump, although not working, it represents the many pumps that were in use in the yards and outhouses of a great many houses.

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FINISH

The buildings in Bell Street are almost without exception of C17 date, and todays evidence is the steep pitched roofs and the windows tucked up under the eaves. Of the five malshouses which had access onto Bell St. only those at the rear of Market House remain. Of the surviving features the lucarne or overhang for hoisting sacks on No.15 being the most easy to recognise. The malshouse that stood within this car park was one of the five operated in Sawbridgeworth by Mr. John Barnard. He was one of the gentlemen instrumental in the founding of the Fawbert & Barnard school. The Elms and the Red House were and still are the largest properties, both of which have gained a fine doorcase sometime around 1800. The Elms still displays its SUN firemark, and the Red House shows off the high quality of its brickwork with very narrow jointing.



An interesting and historic guided trail around some of Sawbridgeworth's best kept secrets...

FOLLOW THE TRAIL