

In 2006, Royal Tunbridge Wells celebrated the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Chalybeate Spring by a young nobleman, Dudley Lord North in 1606. The discovery of the Spring was fundamental in the birth of Tunbridge Wells and its subsequent development as a favoured resort of the gentry and royalty during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and later in forming the town's character and reputation as a pleasant place to live, work and visit.



The Chalybeate Spring
1793

Dunorlan Park
1872

Throughout the past 400 years, Royal Tunbridge Wells has attracted visitors and residents of all walks of life, many of which have played an important role in the history and development of the town itself. To celebrate this important birthday and the lives of these notable figures in the history of Royal Tunbridge Wells, a series of commemorative claret-coloured

plaques was erected to mark buildings of particular significance in the town's history. The stories behind those persons featured on the plaques are described here and linked together, along with other points of interest, in this special Anniversary Heritage Walking Trail.

Each point along the route, which incorporates a plaque, is marked

with a symbol. The walk takes around two hours (blue route). For a shorter walk of one hour, follow the purple line leading from the main route. You can begin at any point on the route, but The Corn Exchange (1), or the Museum (17) are suggested as the best starting points.

We wish you a pleasant promenade.

HOW TO GET TO ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Royal Tunbridge Wells takes less than an hour by train from London (Charing Cross) and Hastings, and regular, direct services run from both daily. The Pantiles is a five minute walk from the railway station.

The town is a half hour drive from the M25 and M20 and a pleasant drive from the Channel ports. Ample car parking is available in the town.

Cover Image: An engraving of the Pantiles in 1748 after a painting by Thomas Loggan from Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery.

Selected historic images courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery and The Historical Graphical Record of Tunbridge Wells Society, found at www.royaltunbridgewells.org



www.visittunbridgewells.com

For further information about Royal Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding area, contact:

Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre
Unit 2, The Corn Exchange, The Pantiles
Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5TE

Tel: 01892 515675

e-mail: touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk; or visit our website: www.visittunbridgewells.com

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council accepts no responsibility for accidents or injuries incurred as a result of following this walk.

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this brochure, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors, omissions or subsequent changes.

This leaflet can be made available in large print or any other format.
Telephone:
01892 554229

HERITAGE WALKING TRAIL

WALKING THROUGH 400 YEARS OF HISTORY

A special Heritage Walking Trail through Royal Tunbridge Wells published to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of the discovery of the Chalybeate Spring



TW834

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THE PLAQUES

Fourteen notable figures from history with connections with Royal Tunbridge Wells are commemorated in this series of special plaques. Their stories are told in more detail here, and the plaques themselves can be discovered by following this Heritage Walking Trail (overleaf) which links together all the plaques, as well as other points of interest in the town.



THE CORN EXCHANGE,
THE PANTILES
Edmund Kean
Actor

2

Regarded as one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of his day, Edmund Kean performed at the small theatre, now the site of the Corn Exchange as well as making numerous appearances in London's Drury Lane and two in New York.



40/46 THE PANTILES
Richard 'Beau' Nash
Leader of Fashion

4

Richard 'Beau' Nash, a well-known dandy and leader of fashion in the 18th century, became self-appointed Master of Ceremonies at Tunbridge Wells, presiding over balls and gaming in the former Assembly Rooms at Nos 40-46. Nash split his time between Tunbridge Wells and the town's 18th century rival, Bath.



63A MT SION
Richard Cumberland
Playwright & Novelist

9

Cumberland Walk and Cumberland Gardens through which you have just walked are named after Richard Cumberland, playwright, leading local resident and civil defence activist in the Napoleonic era. Nos 45-63 Mt Sion are built on the site of his house. Cumberland also served as Secretary to the Board of Trade in the late 18th century.



1 CALVERLEY PARK
Lord Dowding
Air Chief Marshal

12

One of the town's heroes, Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding, lived at No 1, Calverley Park. Lord Dowding was Commander-in-Chief of RAF Fighter Command from 1936-1940, including during the Battle of Britain, and retired to Royal Tunbridge Wells until his death in 1970.



VICTORIA LODGE
Decimus Burton
Architect

13

This sandstone gate is one of three entrances to Calverley Park. To your right as you come through the gateway you will catch a glimpse of Calverley Park Crescent, also part of Decimus Burton's 'new town'. The colonnade, which once boasted 17 shops, is now private houses. Decimus Burton became an architect of national importance during the 19th century, best known for his work in Regent's Park and in Hyde Park in London.



HOTEL DU VIN &
BISTRO
Queen Victoria

14

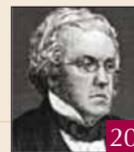
The building now home to the Hotel du Vin was remodelled by Decimus Burton in 1840 from Mount Pleasant House (later Calverley House), said to have been built in 1762. Mount Pleasant House was used as a residence by the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria (later Queen Victoria) on their visits to Tunbridge Wells during the 1820s and 1830s. Princess Victoria also attended church services at King Charles the Martyr Church (see 37 on map). A brass plaque marks her seat in the upper gallery.



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,
CHURCH ROAD
Canon Edward Hoare
Vicar and Leading Churchman

16

Canon Edward Hoare was the leading figure in religious life in Tunbridge Wells for over forty years, and as vicar of Holy Trinity Church from 1853, attracted large congregations, many of which came to Royal Tunbridge Wells specifically to hear him preach. A memorial to Canon Hoare stands at the entrance to Culverden Park Road in the town.



THACKERAY'S
William Makepeace
Thackeray
Novelist

20

William Makepeace Thackeray, author of 'Vanity Fair' amongst others, lodged and wrote in this little tile-hung house, then known as Rock Villa and now a restaurant. Staying at the house for an extended period, his works include an essay about Tunbridge Wells, and part of his novel, 'The Virginians' is set in the town. Thackeray also spent part of his childhood in the town, staying at a cottage on the Common (see 21).



MAYO HOUSE
Dr John Mayo
Medical Doctor

25

A prominent medical doctor in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Dr John Mayo and his son Thomas (not linked to the American Mayos) had their practice in this house.



10 EARLS ROAD
EM Forster
Novelist

26

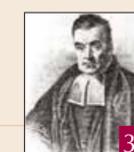
The well-known writer and author of works such as 'A Room with a View', 'A Passage to India' and 'Howard's End' lived here from 1898-1901 as a young man and attended school in nearby Tonbridge.



THE CHALET,
86 MT EPHRAIM
Edmund Nye &
Thomas Barton
Producers of Tunbridge ware

27

This charming long white building was the workshop of Nye and Barton, leading exponents of the Tunbridge ware souvenir industry for 58 years. Intricate wooden marquetry often depicting local places of interest, Tunbridge ware is unique to this area and became very popular in the 19th century. Examples can be found in the Tunbridge Wells Museum.



69 LONDON ROAD
Rev Thomas Bayes
Mathematician &
Non-conformist minister

32

The well-known mathematician and inventor of Bayesian statistics Rev Thomas Bayes lived here for 30 years. His work is still used today in a wide range of applications including the social sciences, ecology, computing and the justice system.



JORDAN HOUSE,
68 LONDON ROAD
Humphrey Burrows Snr.
Humphrey Burrows Jr.
Producers of Tunbridge ware

33

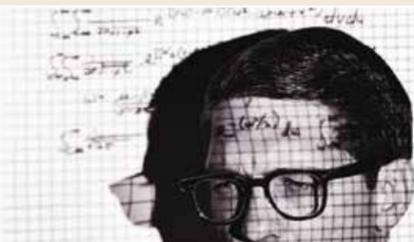
Jordan, a leading Baptist of the town is thought to have made Tunbridge ware here, and later Humphrey Burrows and his son (also Humphrey), manufactured and sold the intricate wooden ware from this black-columned house during the first half of the 19th century.



58 LONDON ROAD
Lord Robert Baden Powell
Founder of the Scout
Movement

34

Lord Baden Powell was given his first lessons by his mother and later attended Rose Hill School where he gained a scholarship to Charterhouse School in Surrey. The school once occupied Vale Towers and subsequently moved next door to Rose Hill House. Lord Baden Powell went on to found the Scout Movement, and during the Second Boer War in South Africa, he successfully defended the city in the Siege of Mafeking. Baden Powell continued to maintain links with Royal Tunbridge Wells later in life until his death in Kenya in 1941.



Thomas Bayes
Mathematician, inventor of Bayesian statistics



Dr John Mayo
Prominent medical doctor in the 18th century



Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding
Commander-in-Chief, Fighter Command



EM Forster
Renowned novelist of 'A Passage to India' & others



Decimus Burton
Nationally recognised architect



Richard 'Beau' Nash
18th century leader of fashion

Each of the fourteen commemorative plaques is marked on the map with a  symbol. Further details of each featured person are found overleaf.

1. CORN EXCHANGE

Sarah Baker, a dancer and flamboyant personality of her day, had a theatre built on the Lower Walk of the Pantiles in 1801, which later became the Corn Exchange. The Goddess of the Harvest still stands above the building where the Tourist Information Centre is located.

There is a lot more to see and learn about Royal Tunbridge Wells. The staff in the Tourist Information Centre (located in Unit 2) will be delighted to help you discover other places to visit, events and accommodation in the area

2. CORN EXCHANGE

– Edmund Kean, Actor.
[With the Corn Exchange behind you, turn left and stroll along the Lower Walk then climb the steps back on to the Upper Walk of The Pantiles and commence your promenade strolling the full length of the colonnade. Pause in front of the former Royal & Sussex hotel with the coat of arms of the Duke and Duchess of Kent above the door.]

3. THE PANTILES

You are standing on the former site of the 18th century bookshop belonging to the dwarf Thomas Loggan, a well-known artist at the time. No 68 was Upton's, a popular coffee house of the same era, and No 48 alone keeps its original columns. To see some of the original Pantiles (clay tiles baked in a pan used to pave the Walks), visit the Museum (17).

4. 40/46 THE PANTILES

– Richard 'Beau' Nash, Leader of Fashion.

5. 43 THE PANTILES

By day musicians serenaded promenaders from the charming 'Musick Gallery' above No 43, to your right. This famous, traffic-free shopping area still retains the spirit of bygone times, coming alive with events such as open-air jazz concerts and markets. Just ask the Tourist Information Centre for more information.

6. OLD FISH MARKET

This black and white building dating from 1745 is on the site of the original open Fish Market. The fish was transported daily from Hastings and was sold along with game and poultry. In 1895 the Fish Market was largely rebuilt using the designs of local architect William Barnsley Hughes. MacFisheries purchased the business in 1930 retaining the size and features of the original Fish Market.

7. THE BATH HOUSE AND CHALYBEATE SPRING

The Chalybeate Spring was discovered accidentally around 1606 by Lord North, whilst he was riding through Waterdown Forest which was once sited here. The iron in the water was thought to have health-restoring properties and soon drew many visitors to the area. Each summer a 'dipper' dispenses water from the Spring which still flows in front of the Bath House. The latter dates back to 1804 and below it the original Cold Bath still exists. Opposite the Spring a house built in 1660 still stands – the Pantiles Vintry since 1768, now a delicatessen and café.

[Proceed out of the Pantiles and cross Nevill Street; turn left and take the small alleyway, Cumberland Walk, on the right, just before the Church of King Charles the Martyr (37). Take the second set of steps on your left into Cumberland Gardens and at the end of this charming path, turn right up the hill and pause in front of Jerminham House.]

8. JERNINGHAM HOUSE

This gracious tile-hung building was one of the earliest lodging houses in Tunbridge Wells.

[Continue up the hill along Mt Sion, passing Caxton House, Nash House, Dumford House and Fairlawn House, also former 18th century lodging houses. Cross the road and continue up Mt Sion, passing Ivy Chimneys dating from the 18th century, Cecil Court, and the site of a bowling green.]

THE HERITAGE WALKING TRAIL

9. 63A MT SION

– Richard Cumberland, Playwright & Novelist.

[Turn left into Little Mt. Sion and then right into Belgrove and the Grove.]



THE CHALYBEATE SPRING TODAY



SAMPLING THE WATER AT THE CHALYBEATE SPRING, 1955

10. THE GROVE

This park is the oldest in Royal Tunbridge Wells. It was the gift of the self-styled Earl of Buckingham in 1703, given to the towns-people to provide a 'grove and shady place'. Today it is a secluded haven of limes, oaks and beeches; a welcome respite from the bustle of the town. Younger visitors may enjoy a moment or two at the children's play area.

[Leave by the way of Meadow Hill Road and cross Grove Hill Road into Mountfield Gardens and on into Calverley Grounds.]

11. CALVERLEY GROUNDS

This town centre park has much to offer. The scented lavender beds, the sunken Italian Garden, the 'Golden Jubilee' rose beds (each rose chosen for its royal connections), lie amongst the rolling hills of this park. For those in need of refreshment, there is also a café in the grounds.

[Continue through the grounds as far as the entrance to the private road – Calverley Park. Walk straight ahead and stop outside at No1, the first driveway on the right.]

12. 1 CALVERLEY PARK

– Lord Dowding, Air Chief Marshal during the Battle of Britain.

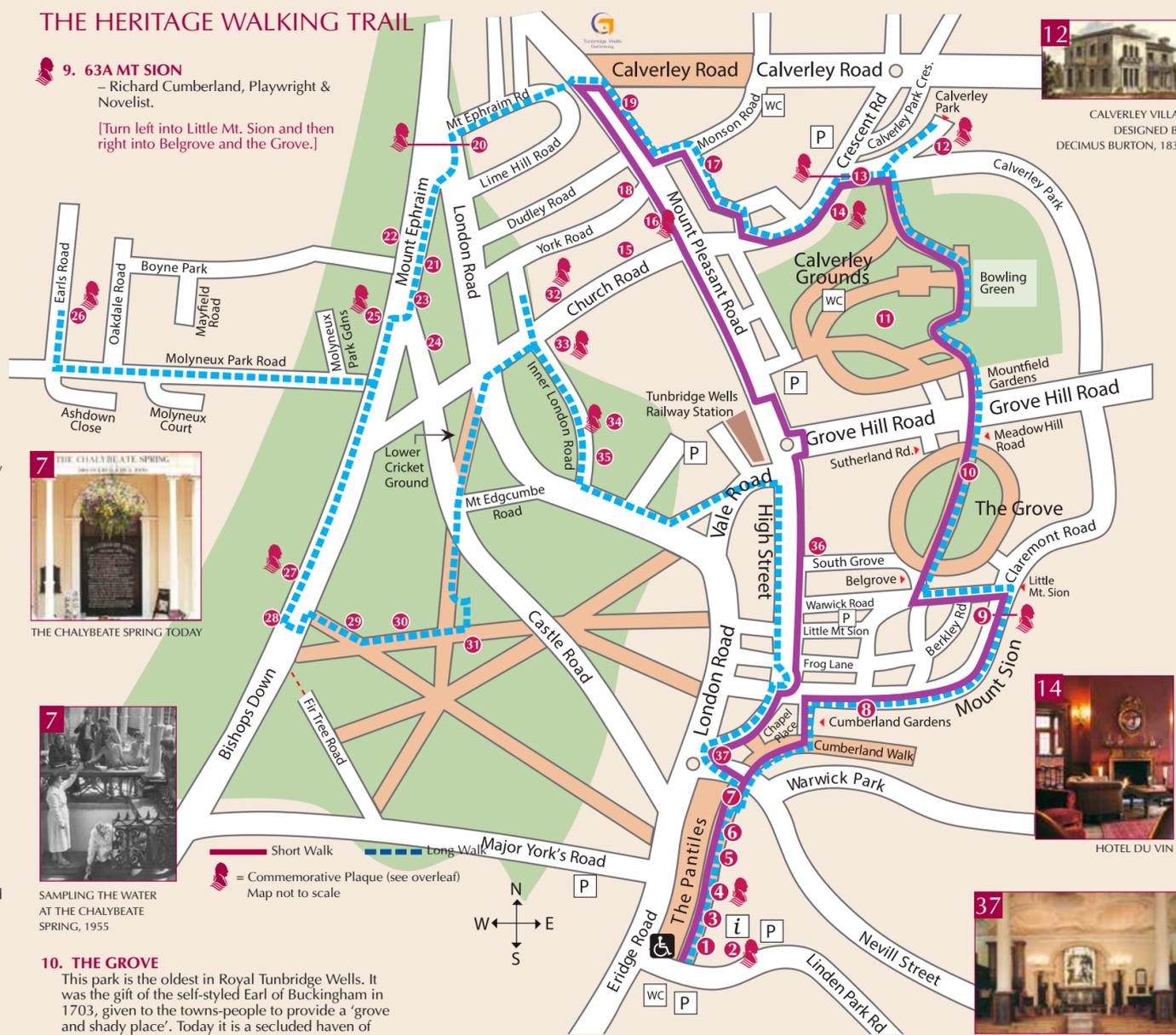
[Turn back on yourself and return to the entrance of Calverley Park and turn to your right to the stone archway leading to Calverley Grounds from the main road.]

The splendid 19th century private residences in Calverley Park and Calverley Park Crescent are the work of the architect Decimus Burton, who left his mark on Tunbridge Wells with this development and several other buildings in the town centre (see 13, 14 & 15 on map).

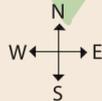
13. VICTORIA LODGE

– Decimus Burton, Architect.

[Turn left out of the gateway and continue down Crescent Road.]



Short Walk Long Walk
= Commemorative Plaque (see overleaf)
Map not to scale



14. THE HOTEL DU VIN & BISTRO

– Queen Victoria.

[As you continue on your way the clock tower of Holy Trinity can be seen directly ahead on Church Road.]

15. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

An imposing structure, this 'Gothic' Decimus Burton church was completed in 1829 as a Parish Church for the town's increasing population. It is now home to the lively Trinity Theatre.

16. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

– Canon Edward Hoare, Vicar and Leading Churchman.

17. TUNBRIDGE WELLS MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Originally dating from 1885 but opened on this site in 1952, the Museum offers an intriguing insight into the Tunbridge Wells of yesteryear. Displays include local history, Tunbridge ware (decorative woodwork unique to the area), dolls and toys, natural history and art (free admission).

18. CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (now a shop and café)

Built between 1845 and 1848, possibly by Jabez Scholes, a local stonemason, the fine Tuscan portico of this former church was added some 20 years later.

19. OPERA HOUSE

The green triple domes of the Opera House, which opened in 1902 rang with the voices of many famous performers. Nowadays they are filled with an equally lively clamour as the building has been transformed into a public house occasionally staging an opera.

20. THACKERAY'S

– William Makepeace Thackeray, Novelist.

[From here, continue uphill on the footpath which crosses London Road, crossing this busy road with care.]

21. BELLEVILLE

As Thackeray gazed from his window in Rock Villa, happy memories came flooding back to him of his childhood in Tunbridge Wells, for it was in Belleville that he often stayed as a boy. The cottage nestles on a rocky slope, below which donkeys were once stabled.

22. ROYAL WELLS HOTEL

In the 1830s the Mount Ephraim Hotel was built over part of the old Hare and Hounds Tavern. This picturesque white-washed building is now the Royal Wells Hotel, crowned with the Royal coat of arms.

23. ST. HELENA

A charming tall-chimneyed cottage built around 1830 is perched on top of the hill behind a grassy slope. During the Second World War, air raid shelters were built into the caves beneath.

24. GIBRALTAR COTTAGE

Further down the hillside, this most unusual house rests against a wall of rock. There has been a cottage on this site since 1700. Pause at the bench and admire the panorama of the town below you.

[Cross the road with care.]



CALVERLEY VILLAS
DESIGNED BY
DECIMUS BURTON, 1832



HOTEL DU VIN



CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR

25. MAYO HOUSE, 66 MT EPHRAIM

– Dr John Mayo, Medical Doctor.

[Turn right into Molyneux Park Road and take the 3rd right into Earls Road.]

26. 10 EARLS ROAD

– EM Forster, Novelist.

[Return back along Earls Road and left into Molyneux Park Road back to Mt Ephraim. Upon reaching Mt Ephraim, turn right.]

27. THE CHALET, 86 MT EPHRAIM

– Edmund Nye & Thomas Barton, leading exponents of the Tunbridge ware souvenir industry.

28. MOUNT EPHRAIM HOUSE

In 1663, after a fever, Catherine of Braganza convalesced in the original house on this site, which was later used as an Assembly Room for the entertainment of high society.

[Cross the road at the zebra crossing and turn left down the footpath opposite.]

29. WELLINGTON ROCKS

The town abounds with unusual rock formations like these, including High Rocks to the west of the town and Toad Rock at Rusthall. These result from movement on the fault line of the sandstone ridge running through the town.

[Carry on along this path to the shade of Victoria Grove.]

30. THE COMMON

The Common has long been a place of diversion for residents and visitors alike, offering cricket and formerly races at the old Race Course. Thickly wooded in areas, rough in others, many varieties of flowers can be found and sheep grazed here until recently.

31. VICTORIA GROVE

Amidst the foliage which has now grown up, an elegant tree-lined walk is still visible. Elms, limes and sycamores were planted in 1835 by the residents of Tunbridge Wells as proof of their devotion to the then Princess Victoria, who enjoyed visits to the town.

[Turn left through the Grove and, at the far end, take the rough footpath that forks to the left then cross Mount Edgcombe Road and continue on the path, skirting the Lower Cricket Ground. Cross the road at the lights into Church Road. Turn left into Inner London Road and stop outside No 69.]

32. 69 LONDON ROAD

– Rev Thomas Bayes, Mathematician and Nonconformist Minister.

[Turn back on Inner London Road, crossing Church Road]

33. JORDAN HOUSE, 68 LONDON ROAD

– Humphrey Burrows Snr. and Humphrey Burrows Jnr, Producers of Tunbridge ware.

34. VALE TOWERS, 58 LONDON ROAD

– Lord Robert Baden Powell, Founder of the Scout Movement.

35. VALE TOWERS, 58 LONDON ROAD

Mr Allfree, a 'confidant' of the Russian Royal Family, erected this castle-like building as the Romanoff House School for the 'classical education of young gentlemen'.

36. HIGH STREET AND CHAPEL PLACE

The High Street perhaps more than any other part of the town, forms a link between the old and new. Whilst many shops retain beautiful original Victorian fronts – the finest is perhaps that of the goldsmith at No. 19 – these lovely old buildings house a wide variety of modern shops and boutiques with delightful and original items, designer clothes and restaurants. The speciality shops in and around Chapel Place are a browser's paradise.

37. CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR

Visitors who came to 'take the waters' in the 17th century were for some time without a place for prayer. To remedy the situation, they donated generously and around 1678 a chapel was erected and later extended. Described as the 'jewel of the Pantiles', the present church features a turret and a charming clock presented in 1760 by Lavinia Fenton, actress and mistress of the Duke of Bolton. Inside, the fine ceiling is the work of Henry Doogood, chief plasterer to Sir Christopher Wren. Princess Victoria also attended church services here. A brass plaque marks her seat in the upper gallery. The church is open Mon-Sat, 11am-3pm.

Your walk ends here if you started from the Corn Exchange, but if you began from a different landmark, read on from (1).

The Heritage Walking Trail is available online at www.visittunbridgewells.com

VICTORIA CROSS GROVE, DUNORLAN PARK

A twenty-minute walk out of the town centre will bring you to Dunorlan Park, restored in 2004 with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund award. One of the less well-known features of Dunorlan Park is the grove of twenty-one young oak trees set in the grassland near the Bayhall Road entrance.

Planted over the winter of 1994–5, it commemorates ten recipients of the Victoria Cross who had connections with the borough of Tunbridge Wells. It was dedicated by the Mayor, Councillor Hugh Wright, on 8 May 1995, which was the fiftieth anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

The Victoria Cross was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856 as a way of recognising acts of outstanding bravery by members of the armed forces. The first medals were awarded by Queen Victoria on 26 June 1857. Among those honoured on that day was Charles Lucas, a resident of Tunbridge Wells who was recognised for his bravery as a sailor on board HMS Hecla during the Crimean War.

Among the other nine Victoria Cross recipients commemorated are three from Victorian and Edwardian times, four from the First World War and two from the

Second World War. Their stories are told on a special interpretation panel erected in 2006 as part of a series of enhancements to the Victoria Cross Grove. A memorial sculpture by Charles Gurrey features an extract from a poem written by Andrew Motion, the former Poet Laureate, specially commissioned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to commemorate the ten Victoria Cross recipients. The unveiling of the new memorial in 2006 coincided with the 150th anniversary of the Victoria Cross and with the 400th Anniversary celebrations for Royal Tunbridge Wells.

