



Hoddesdon

Heritage Guide

Over the last 900 years, Hoddesdon has grown from a small hamlet of around 300 people to a bustling and vibrant town of around 37,000 people. During that time there have been some key people who have helped to develop the town to what it is today.

Hodda's Dun

1086
Hodda's Dunn recorded in Domesday Book – Population 300 – 350.

St Katherine's

1253
St Katherine's Chapel built, as a chapel of rest.

Hoddesdonsbury

1336
Sir William Cecil (Secretary of State and later Lord High Treasurer to Elizabeth I) acquired the Manor of Hoddesdonsbury.

Public water!

1450
Sir Marmaduke Rawdon built Rawdon House, and provided the town with its first public water supply, flowing from a statue known as the Samaritan Woman (erected c.1630).

Rathmore

1567
Rathmore House built by John Borham, a local businessman.

Woodlands

1746
John Warner, local foundry owner, built a large house called Woodlands.

The Clocktower

c.1760
Hoddesdon Clock Tower built, on the site of St Katherine's Chapel.

1086

1253

1336

1450

1567

1608-13

1622

1732

1746

c.1760

1803

c.1830

1836

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Hoddesdon timeline

Charter Fair!

1871
Charter granted to Richard de Boxe, Lord of the Manor, giving town permission for a market and an annual fair.

Star Inn

1871
Star Inn built (currently Wetherspoons)

Drinking water

1871
The New River was built to bring fresh drinking water from Ware into London.

Plomer's chapel

1871
Robert Plomer built a private chapel of ease in Pauls Lane.

Lowewood

1871
Lowewood built. John Warner's daughters later lived there.

Brewery

1871
William Christie and George Cathrow acquired the brewery, which became one of the largest breweries in Hertfordshire.

Brewery Closes

1871
Christie's Brewery closed.

High Leigh

1871
Robert Barclay took ownership of the High Grounds estate and renamed it High Leigh. Subsequently donated Lowfield to be used for cricket and football. The part of the estate now called Barclay Park was given by the family to the town by Deeds of Gift in 1935 and 1936.

Barclay Park

1871
This was officially opened on 12th May during the town's celebration of the Coronation of George VI.

Library

1871
Public library opened in Lowewood.

St Pauls

1871
Peal of bells, manufactured by John Warner and Sons, and donated by the Christie family installed in the parish church, which was renamed St Pauls.

Spinning Wheel

1871
John Warner's son Septimus built the Spinning Wheel.

The Tower Centre

1967
The Tower Centre built with shops, flats and a bowling alley.

Police Station

1967
Woodlands demolished and a Police Station built on its site

Civic Hall

1976
The Civic Hall was opened, a multipurpose building, including theatre and cinema.

Library moves

1977
Public library relocated to the High Street.

Museum

1982
Lowewood Museum opened.

Tower Centre

2013
Tower Centre redeveloped.

Love Hoddesdon

2013-2018
Love Hoddesdon Business Improvement District established.

This leaflet was produced by Love Hoddesdon BID Ltd as part of its heritage project. Its contents were compiled by Dr. Diana Forrest of Hoddesdon Parish Church for which we are extremely grateful.

Rawdon House

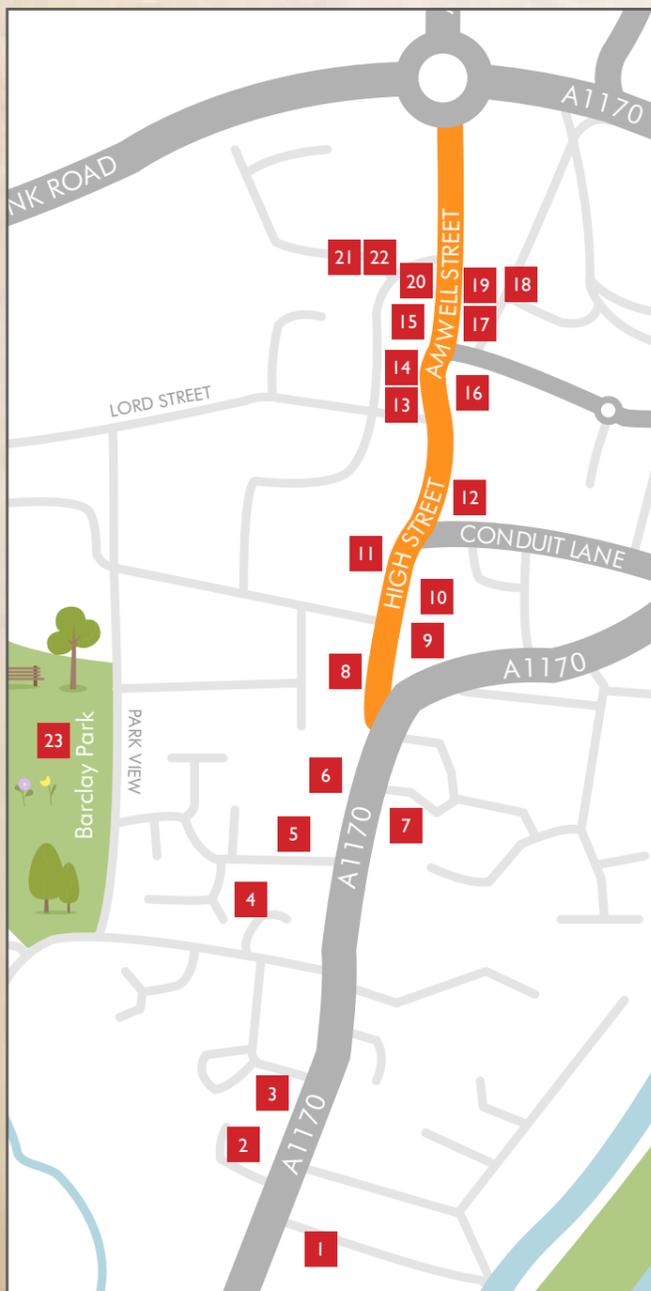
1840
Rawdon House purchased by John Warner and it became a school for girls run by Mrs Ellis

Lord Street

1851
Charles Webb, a gold lace manufacturer, bought High Grounds, Lord Street, and replaced the house with a much grander building.



A map of Hoddesdon



1. The Spinning Wheel - built in 1870 by John Warner's son, Septimus.

2. Old Police Station - This was formerly a large house called Woodlands (demolished in 1967). It was built by John Warner, who ran a foundry, and contributed to the education of children in Hoddesdon.

3. Lowewood - Members of the Warner family lived at Lowewood from 1835 until 1936. In 1936 it was given to the town by Mr Douglas Taylor for use as a public library and museum. It is now the home of Broxbourne Museum, opened in 1982. *Can you find the Samaritan Woman in the grounds of the Lowewood Museum? Why was she made?*

4. The Grange - Built in the 1650s for Sir Marmaduke Rawdon's son. From the 1850's to 1905, the Grange was used as a preparatory school. One of our country's Prime Ministers received his preparatory education here. *What was his name?*

5. Rathmore House - built in 1746 by John Borham, a local businessman, whose initials and date are on the wall. The house was a GP surgery for over 100 years until 1969.

6. Estate House - built in the 16th century, this was the site of the Birdbolt Inn. In the early 20th Century it housed the Middle Class Academy and was known as Hoddesdon Villa.

7. Rawdon House - built in 1662 by Sir Marmaduke Rawdon, a wealthy merchant adventurer. James I visited the house on many occasions. It was a school for girls in the mid-19th century. From the 1890s to the 1960s it was St Monica's Priory and occupied by the nuns of the Order of St Augustine. *What is the link between this house and the town's first piped water supply?*

8. Golden Lion - built in 1535, one of Hoddesdon's oldest inns

9. Hogges Hall - this building still contains remnants of its 15th century hall. It was owned by the builder John Alfred Hunt in the mid-19th century. His firm built St Catherine's Estate in 1883 and St Cuthbert's Church in 1908.

10. Montague House - early 18th century building. John Loudon Macadam lived here. *What was he famous for?*

11. Fawkon Walk - Named after a house called Fawkon on the Hoop, owned by a wealthy landowner Thomas Thorowgood. Once home to the Congregational Church and the Girls' British School which were demolished in 1967 to make way for the shopping precinct.

12. Town Pump - it used to be outside 86 High Street (Rickmores Electrical Centre). *Can you find the paving stone marking the boundary between Greater Amwell parish and Broxbourne parish, outside Poundstretcher?*

13. Three Cups Tavern and Temperance Hall (now Swagga) - Opened in 1883 as a place to get non-alcoholic drinks, to counter the number of premises in the town selling alcohol.

14. The White Swan - 16th Century Inn. One of the few inns which retains its original name.

15. The Star - Built 1450. The oldest inn in Hoddesdon. *Can you find the Tudor/Elizabethan paintings on the wall?*

16. 124-128 High Street - Built before 1630. Was an inn called the Thatched House and became Christie's Brewery offices.

17. 130-134 High Street - Built 19th Century. Part of the Christie Brewery buildings. The brewery closed in 1928. At its height, this became one of the biggest breweries in Hertfordshire.

18. The Bell Inn - This was a private house in 1546. It was an inn (then called the Hollibush) by 1615.

19. Clock Tower - built c1835 on the site of the old Chapel of St Katherine, over the years it has been used as the town hall, home for the town's fire engine and even a small prison.

20. Myddleton House - This may have been the home of William Myddleton, Elizabethan poet, naval adventurer and brother of Sir Hugh Myddleton. It became an inn (the Queen's Head) in about 1720 but reverted to a house in 1852.

21. St Catherine and St Paul's Church - Built by Robert Plomer in 1732 as a private chapel. It was purchased by the Church in 1820. Plomer's building forms the nave of the church. A chancel and north and south aisles were added in 1865. A tower was added in 1887, and a peal of eight bells was donated by the Christie family in 1901. *Can you find the memorial stone to the Girls' National School, outside the front of the church?*

22. Barclay Hall - This was the Boys' National School, built in 1844.

23. Barclay Park - It was given to the town by the Barclay family. The park was formerly part of the High Leigh Estate which was purchased by Robert Barclay, a great benefactor of the town in 1871.

HODDESDON STORIES

The following is a collection of just a few historical stories....

1. The New River

The New River, which runs through Hoddesdon, was built between 1608-13 to bring fresh drinking water from springs near Ware into London. It was the vision of Capt Edmund Colehurst of Bath, who started the work but ran out of money. It was then financed by Sir Hugh Myddleton (a Goldsmith) and later by James I. It is a man-made gravity-fed water channel. It originally ran from Chadwell Spring outside Ware to Clerkenwell. It still supplies 8% of London's water.



2. Admiral O'Brien, 1785-1857

Donat Henchy O'Brien had a distinguished career in the Royal Navy, reaching the rank of Rear-Admiral. He wrote books about his adventures during the Napoleonic Wars and his escapes from French fortresses. After he retired he lived at Yew House (which was situated where Cedar Green is now). His favourite walk, the lane leading to the marshes, has been named Admiral's Walk after him.

3. St Catherine and St Paul's Church

In 1732, Robert Plomer, a prosperous local businessman built a new chapel of ease. This was purchased by the Church in 1820 and consecrated in 1823 by William Howley, Bishop of London. Hoddesdon officially became a parish in 1856 and the existing building was extended by adding a chancel and north and south aisles by 1865. A tower was added in 1887, and a peal of eight bells was donated by the Christie family in 1901. At the ceremony to dedicate the peal of bells, the church was formally dedicated to St Paul, perhaps influenced by the already-existing Pauls Lane nearby. In 1976, after internal modernisation, it was rededicated to St Catherine and St Paul, and remains so today.

4. Harriet Auber's Hymn



Harriet Auber (1774-1862) lived in Amwell Street Hoddesdon. She wrote more than 25 hymns and was also the author of much devotional poetry. On Whit Sunday in 1829, sitting at a bedroom window, the inspiration came to her to write a Whitsun hymn. Having no pen or paper to hand, and not wanting to lose the inspiration, she scratched on a pane of glass in the window the first lines of the hymn 'Our blest Redeemer ere he breathed His tender last farewell' for which she became famous. There is a memorial to her in the east window of St Catherine and St Paul's Church.

5. A great legacy for children

Mrs Easter Jones was a comparatively wealthy spinster, who, at the age of 81, in 1818, bought some land, built a school and endowed it with £1,000 to educate girls from poor families. This was the first known school for the children of the poor in Hoddesdon. She specified

that the girls were to be taught to 'spell, read, knit and work at the needle'. There is a memorial stone to Mrs Easter Jones and the school, outside Hoddesdon Parish Church.



6. A Double Murder

Esther Warner was the wife of John Warner, and her parents lived in Borham House in Hoddesdon. They had recently dismissed Thomas Simmons, one of their servants, who had been courting their maid, Elizabeth Harris. Elizabeth had refused his marriage proposal, and on the night of 20th October 1807, he returned to Borham House threatening murder. He stabbed Esther Warner and a Mrs Hummerstone, both of whom died of their injuries. He also stabbed Mrs Borham, though not fatally, and cut Elizabeth Harris's hand as she tried to ward him off. Simmons was tried, and executed by hanging, watched by a large crowd.

7. The Clock Tower

It was built in 1836 on the site of the old Chapel of St. Katherine. It was funded by local businessmen and estate owners, whilst members of the Vestry purchased a mermaid weather vane to crown the new tower. The tower was originally known as the Town Hall and the single storey buildings attached to it were used for many purposes, including being used to house the town's horse drawn fire engine, and between 1842 and 1883, it had two cells for the temporary imprisonment of suspected criminals before a new Police Station was built. A new clock for the tower was bought in 1870. The surrounding buildings were demolished in 1967.

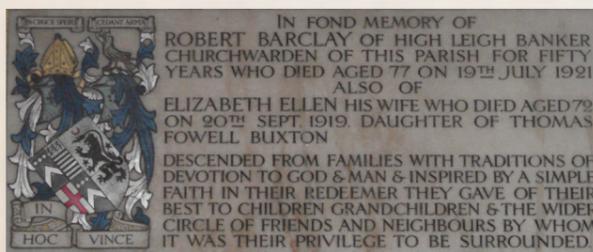


8. Christie's Brewery

The Christie family ran a brewery in Hoddesdon from 1803. Charles Christie (1829-1898) took over the running of it from about 1862, taking the name C.P. Christie and Co. He enlarged the brewery, and it became one of the biggest in Hertfordshire. The brewery closed in 1928.

9. Robert Barclay

Robert Barclay (1843 - 1921) was a banker and in 1871, at the age of 28, he bought High Leigh and moved to Hoddesdon. He was a benefactor and gave the use of Lowfield as a sports ground for the people of the town. Mr Barclay had the lake made in the grounds of High Leigh and planted the beech trees along the path now known as Beech Walk. After he died, his family gave Barclay Park to the town for recreational use.



10. John Warner



John Warner (1776-1852) was a Quaker, whose father ran a brass-founding business. When his father died, John took over the business (at the age of 40) and expanded it, as John Warner and Sons, to include the manufacture of church bells. In the 1830s John built a large house called Woodlands (sited where the old Police Station building stands), which had beautiful gardens and an Orangery. In 1835, he bought Lowewood for members of his family to live in. In 1840 he bought Rawdon House and in 1845 rented it to Mrs Ellis for her to run a girls' school. John was concerned with the welfare and education of poorer people. He built the Boys' British School in 1841, in a field adjacent to Rawdon House. When the secondary school in Stanstead Road became a comprehensive school, it was named after him.

11. A World-Renowned Gardener

Benjamin Williams (1837-1890) was the son of James Williams, head gardener to John Warner of Woodlands. Benjamin joined his father at the age of 14, as gardener at Woodlands and soon acquired fame as a cultivator of pansies. His knowledge and experience of cultivating fruit, vegetables and flowers grew, and he became an exhibitor of fruits and vegetables in Hoddesdon and neighbouring towns. He worked with Rev William Ellis to produce a book on orchids called the Orchid Growers' Manual, which became famous. Other books followed. He later became the owner of Victoria and Paradise Nurseries, in Hornsey, then Upper Holloway. This became world-renowned as an exotic nursery.



12. Invention of the Workmate

Ronald Price Hickman OBE (1932-2011) was an automobile designer and inventor. Hickman's inspiration for the Workmate came in 1961. While building a wardrobe, he used an expensive chair as a sawhorse and inadvertently cut its leg off. To overcome this problem, Hickman came up with a multifunctional bench - a combined sawhorse and vice on a foldable alloy frame. He set up his own company, Mate Tools, above a barn in Brewery Road, Hoddesdon (now called Mayhem) and continued to refine his design. His request for a licence for the product was rejected by several companies. Hickman sold the benches himself at trade shows until Black & Decker began producing them in 1973. By 1981 it had sold 10 million benches and by 2011 more than 100 million.

