

Credits:

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Banbury Town Cryer - Anthony Church

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MUSEUM



Exploring Banbury Town - Parsons Street, St Mary's Churchyard & Tink-a-Tank Sound Trail

The Banbury Museum reminiscence group decided to take up the challenge once again and continue to build the sound trail project. It was decided to add to the existing sound trail by covering the 'old town' area of Banbury; also to offer other older people in the local community the opportunity to join the project. This time the extended group have developed five sound points that follow on directly from the Market Place where the original sound trail concludes. The area covered this time are:

Parsons Street: one of the oldest streets in the town. Caught in the crossfire between church and castle, Parliamentarians and Royalists during the civil war, it managed to survive. It has a very colourful history dating back to at least the sixteenth century, when it apparently played a large part in the town's 'red light' area frequented by the 'ladies of the night.' In the 1930's it was a thriving commercial area of the town where 'you could buy everything you needed.' Pilsworth's occupied so many buildings on both sides of the street, it was effectively a department store. There were so many well established businesses and such a buzz then, that its commercial importance continued for several decades. Much attachment and affection for the street is still evident in the older generation of local people, which is captured in their recollections.

St Mary's Churchyard: the current church was constructed around the 1800s and replaced the medieval church, which was in a bad state of repair and demolished in the 1790s. Some of the original features from the medieval church including the bells and the organ, were reinstated. More intriguingly in the graveyard, the font dated about 1320, can still be seen and nearby a tomb on which rests an incumbent cleric. Apparently these two items were destined to make it back into the new building but alas they never did. The churchyard is overlooked by a row of almshouses that have possibly been there since the 1440s.

Tink-a-Tank: is more commonly known as Church Passage and runs between the church and High Street. The longest surviving building in this passageway was built in 1836; originally the Mechanics Institute, it was the first public library in the town. It had a music room, a museum, offered art and science classes and hosted lectures with public speakers. Once all the activities had outgrown the space, new premises were built in Marlborough Road. These were funded by Bernard Samuelson, owner of the local ironworks at the time and famous for the development of the turnip cutter.

NORTH BAR,