

## SHOPPING/MARKET

Baldock has a range of interesting shops including a number of speciality shops selling a range of products including antiques and home furnishings. The main shopping streets are High Street, Whitehorse Street and Hitchin Street. Some shops close early on Thursdays.

Baldock has a good outdoor market held every Wednesday in the High Street.

## EATING OUT

Baldock has an excellent selection of restaurants and take aways - there are more than 20 places to eat. Cuisine available includes English, Chinese, Greek, Indian, Italian and Thai. The town also has a number of pubs offering a range of food from light bar snacks to 3 course dinners.

## SPORTS & RECREATION

A few minutes walk takes you out of Baldock into the beautiful Hertfordshire countryside where there are many interesting villages to visit. Just to the north of the town is Ivel Springs, a nature reserve part of which was once 12 acres of watercress beds. The Springs also mark the beginning of the Kingfisher Way, a nature trail along the Ivel. On the southern edge of the town are Weston Hills, a public area of beech wood on the Chiltern escarpment. The hills are popular with walkers (Car parking is available).

- **Knights Templar Sports Centre**, Tel: (01462) 631300  
Provides a state of the art fitness suite, dance studio and a modern 4-court sports hall.
- **North Herts Leisure Centre**, Baldock Road Tel: (01462) 679311  
A leisure pool with waves, flume and lanes, plus squash courts, multi-purpose sports hall.

## PARKING (See Map)

Free parking available along the High Street and large free car park off Simpsons Drive. Pay & Display car park adjacent to the railway station.

## BALDOCK MUSEUM

The Museum occupies part of the Town Hall located on the corner of Hitchin Street and the High Street. The Museum features a variety of displays on the history of Baldock.

**Opening times:** Wednesday 10.00am - 3.00pm  
Sunday 2.00pm - 4.00pm

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Leaflets on local attractions in and around Baldock are available from the Visitor Information Point at Baldock Library (see below). Information on local hotels and Bed & Breakfast accommodation is also available at the library.

## ANNUAL EVENTS

Baldock Fair - October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Baldock Festival - Early May

## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

- **Library**, Simpsons Drive - Tel: (01438) 737333

**Opening times:**  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.30am - 7.30pm  
Tuesday 10.30am - 5.00pm  
Saturday 9.30am - 1.00pm

- **Community Centre**, Simpsons Drive - Tel: (01462) 894109  
Light refreshments available.

**Opening times:**  
Monday to Thursday 9.00am - 10.00pm  
Friday, Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm

- **St Mary's Church Hall**, St Mary's Churchyard  
Homemade refreshments available.

**Opening times:**  
Wednesday & Saturday 10.00am - 12.30pm

Produced by North Hertfordshire District Council

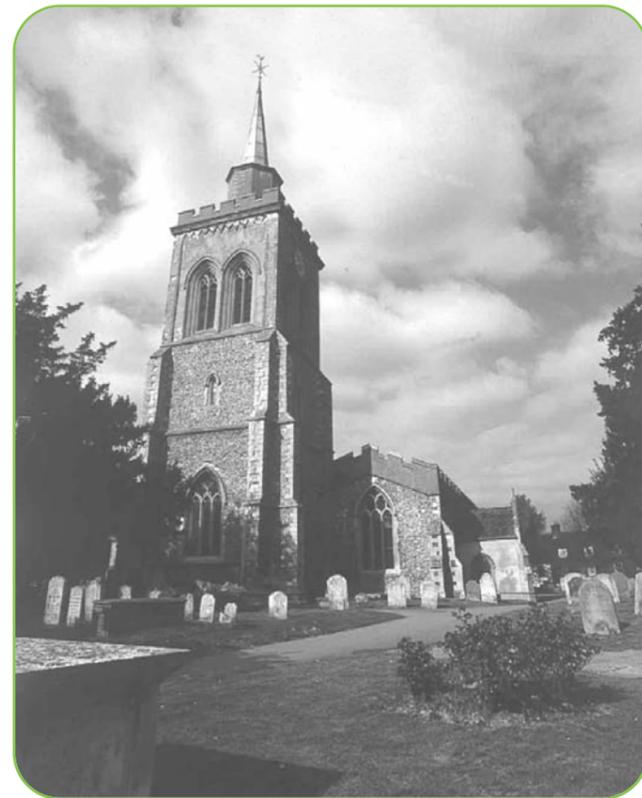
**Baldock Museum and Local History Society**



## Guide to

# Baldock

## Historic Market Town



*Free of Charge*

## WELCOME TO BALDOCK

Baldock is a small market town nestling below the Chiltern Hills on the crossroads of the ancient Icknield Way and the Great North Road 37 miles north of London. The town is one of five Hertfordshire towns classed as being of national importance for its historic character, and the town centre contains over 100 listed buildings.

The medieval street plan survives with its impressive wide main streets lined with many elegant Georgian houses, a testimony to the wealth that brewing, malting and the road brought to the town. There are also many older buildings, some dating back to the late Middle Ages, and a particularly fine and impressive parish church.

The Market Place



## ROMAN BALDOCK

Baldock stands on the site of a Roman town that had itself grown out of an Iron Age settlement. Sited at the junction of three Roman roads, it covered up to 120 acres by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. The settlement was inhabited for some time after the Roman rule collapsed but was abandoned by the 6<sup>th</sup> century. There have been extensive excavations of the site and many remarkable finds.

## TOWN OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Baldock was founded in the late 1140's by the Knights Templar, a religious order dedicated to fighting the Saracens in the Holy Land, the profits from the town being used to help finance the war.

The new town made rapid progress and by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century had become prosperous with a sizeable and wealthy community of merchants, several of whom were engaged in the export of wool to Flanders. The Black Death of 1348 and succeeding visitations of the plague greatly reduced the population and prosperity of the town which had still not recovered in 1548 when it was described as a "market town much decayed". Nevertheless during this period Baldock was able to support a well-endowed guild founded in 1465 "The Brotherhood of the Name of Jesus".

## GEORGIAN PROSPERITY

Baldock slowly recovered through the 17<sup>th</sup> century in part because of its growing involvement in the malt trade. This recovery received a great impetus during the 1720s with the increasing demand from the London breweries for the slightly scorched brown malt, a Hertfordshire speciality, that was required to make the newly popular drink of porter. The open commons to the east of the town were renowned for the quality of their barley and the skill of the town's maltsters was such that by 1792 Baldock was "noted for making most excellent malt, and the quantity made being exceeded but by one town in the Kingdom."

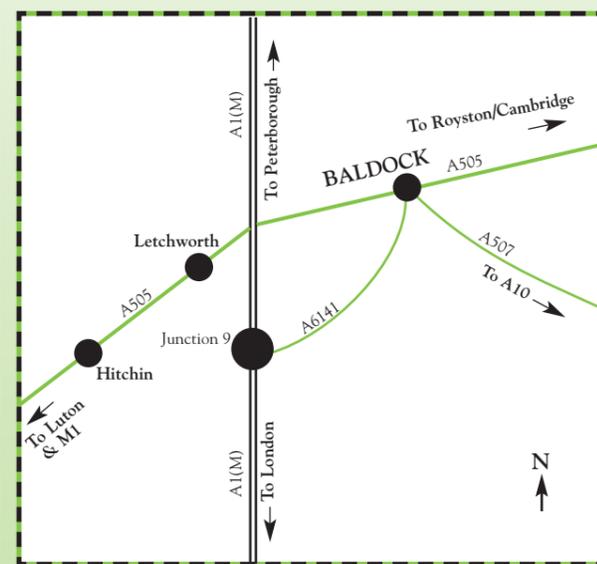
The 1720s also saw the creation of local Turnpikes (toll roads) which made significant improvements to the roads enabling bulk produce like malt to be moved more easily. This led to more road traffic through the town to the benefit of its coaching inns and other traders. This, along with malting and a substantial brewing industry, brought renewed prosperity to the town which was described in 1779 as "a very considerable place being large and well inhabited."

## 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Baldock's fortunes began to change during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Local malt was no longer in such demand and although the trade was still considerable it was not so important as before. The coming of the railway in 1850 was not generally beneficial to the town which lost its trade from the Great North Road.

As a consequence, Baldock has remained a small town and, although the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought many changes and the loss of traditional industries, it has retained much of its charm.

## HOW TO GET TO BALDOCK



**By Road** - Baldock is easily accessible from Junction 9 of the A1(M), the A505 and A507 both run through the town.

**By Rail** - Baldock is 50 minutes from London Kings Cross and 30 minutes from Cambridge.

# Historic Baldock

Below is a selection of some of the interesting buildings to be seen in Baldock

**1 THE WILDERNESS (43 - 53 HITCHIN STREET)** - Built in 1735, probably for the maltster Robert Pryor. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the Pryor family dominated the malting and brewery trade of Baldock.

**MALTINGS** - There are still a few relics of the malting trade. 19<sup>th</sup> century maltings, from c 1790-1815 this was the site of James Ind's malthouse and brewery.

James' eldest son Edward founded Ind Coope at Romford. The Inds lived in the adjoining house Nos 40 & 42 Whitehorse Street.

Former Malthouses

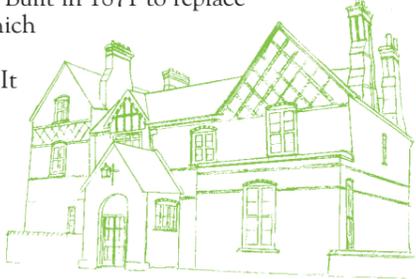


The former Musgrove Maltings has a 16<sup>th</sup> century

kilnhouse behind the 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage and 18<sup>th</sup> century kilnhouses up the yard. More 18<sup>th</sup> century malthouses may be seen at the High Street end of Mansfield Road, once the Lion Maltings.

Look out for the distinctive vents on the roofs of the old kiln houses.

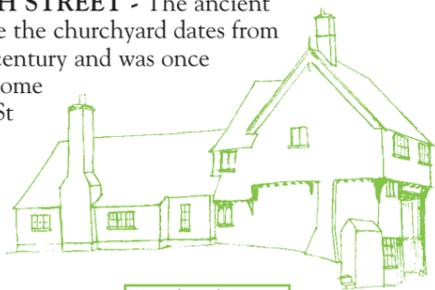
**3 BUTTERFIELD HOUSE (4 HITCHIN STREET)** - Built in 1871 to replace the old rectory which stood behind the present building. It was designed by William Butterfield one of the foremost architects of the Victorian Gothic revival style.



Butterfield House

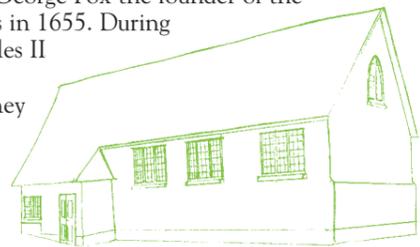
**4 ST MARY'S CHURCH** - Described as the second largest medieval parish church in Hertfordshire, it is a reflection of the wealth of Baldock during the Middle Ages. St Mary's was almost totally rebuilt during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and much improved in the 15<sup>th</sup>, only part of the chancel remains from the old church of the Templars. There are three fine medieval screens stretching across the church, the south chapel being particularly elaborate.

**5 1 CHURCH STREET** - The ancient house beside the churchyard dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century and was once the residence of some of the rectors of St Mary's in early Tudor times. Notice the small medieval windows on the churchyard side of the house.



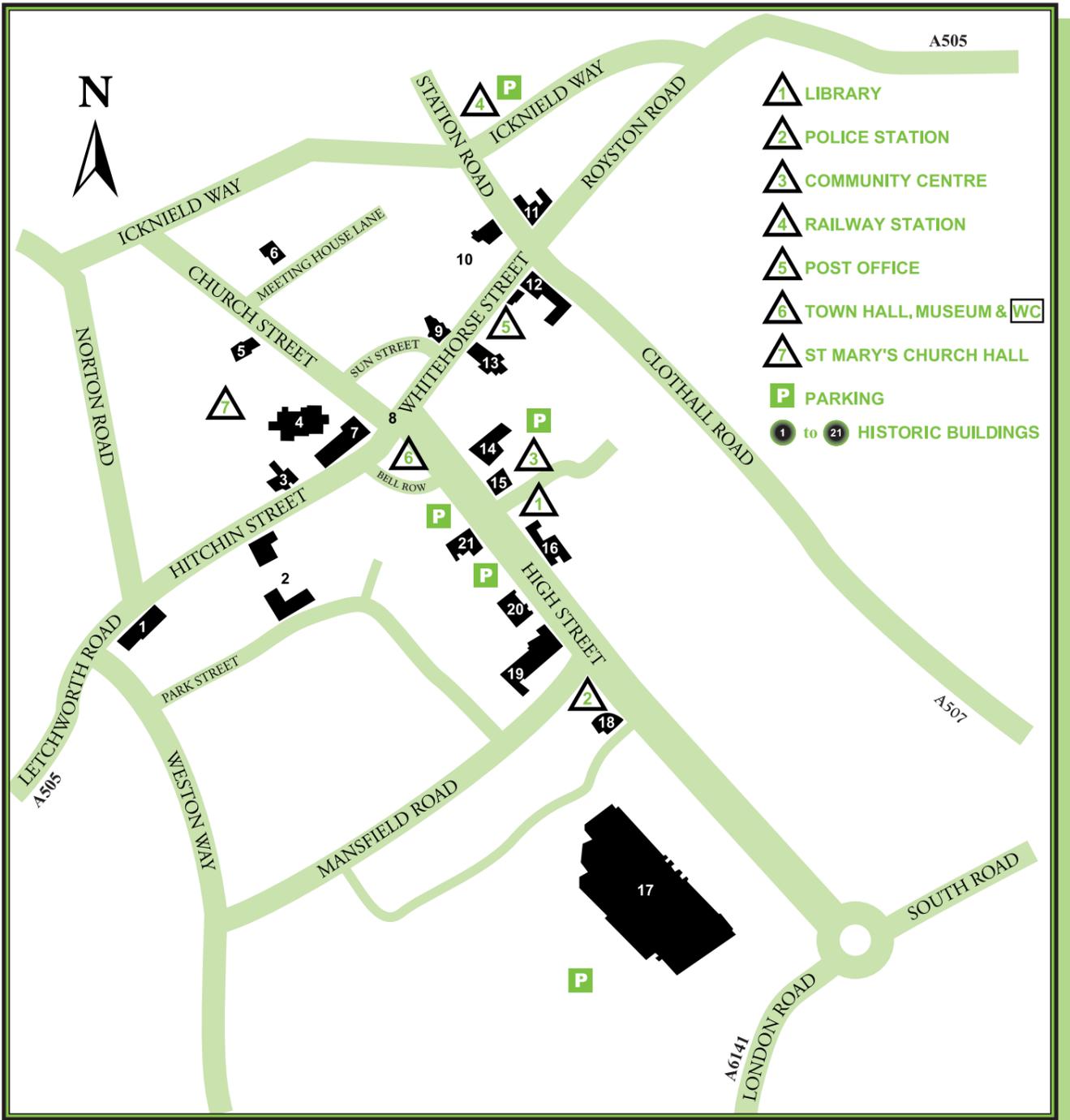
1, Church Street

**6 QUAKER MEETING HOUSE** - Acquired in 1696 it was mostly rebuilt c 1750, the last meeting was held in 1909 and it was sold in 1950. The first Baldock Quakers were founded by George Fox the founder of the Society of Friends in 1655. During the reign of Charles II they suffered persecution yet they increased in number. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century some of the town's wealthiest brewers and maltsters were Quakers.



Quaker Meeting House

**8 BALDOCK CROSS** - The two wide main streets were laid out by the Templars for use as market places and for fairs and here at their junction on Market Hill stood a medieval cross. Since the Middle Ages these market places have gradually been encroached upon by the buildings of the rows: Middle Row, Whitehorse Street and Bell Row in the High Street where the Town Hall (1897) now stands. A third row called Butchers' Row was demolished in 1778.



- 1 LIBRARY
- 2 POLICE STATION
- 3 COMMUNITY CENTRE
- 4 RAILWAY STATION
- 5 POST OFFICE
- 6 TOWN HALL, MUSEUM & WC
- 7 ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL
- P PARKING
- 1 to 21 HISTORIC BUILDINGS

**10 THE OLD WHITE HORSE** - The 17<sup>th</sup> century pub stands in the yard of the old inn and is thought to have been its "tap" or public bar.

**COACHING INNS** - The three principal inns during the coaching age were the Rose and Crown which dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the George, now the

George and Dragon which was first mentioned in 1465 and was rebuilt c. 1790 and the White Horse dating from 1614 was by far the largest, only a remnant of its west wing remains (part of 35 White Horse Street).

The Old White Horse pub stands in the yard of the old inn and is thought to have been its "tap" or public bar.



George & Dragon

The 17<sup>th</sup> century White Lion was a stop for the last of the London coaches the "Magnet" which continued into the 1850s after the railways had killed off the rest of the trade.

**11 RABAN COURT** - These 16<sup>th</sup> Century buildings were once an inn called the Talbot. The Talbot was a hunting dog and the open fields to the east of the town were famed for hunting and coursing. The dog also featured on the arms of the Burgoynes, 16<sup>th</sup> century Lords of Clothall Manor in which this area of Baldock once stood. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century these buildings became part of a large complex of maltings.



Raban Court

**14 THE MANOR HOUSE (21 HIGH ST)** - Built during the 1730s the house was purchased in 1769 by Mrs Mary Grave, mistress of the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Salisbury, "the Wicked Earl". He had abandoned his wife and family at Hatfield House and lived as a recluse with Mary at his mansion house at Quickwood near Baldock to the great scandal of Society. On his death in 1780 Mary came to live here until her death in 1789.



The Manor House

**BREWERIES** - Little remains of Baldock's breweries: the front of the Community Centre was an old malthouse and later an engine house of the town's largest brewery which from c 1730 was developed by the Thurgoods and then the Pryors who built a new brewhouse now the site of the library, and the Brewery House (now Clare House, 23 High St.) c 1780. In 1853 the brewery and its 122 tied pubs were sold to the Simpson brothers, the brewery closed in 1965.



Clare House

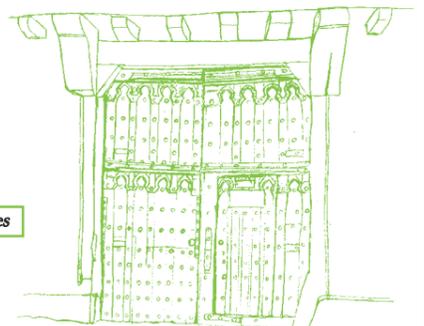
13 Whitehorse Street was the home of another of Baldock's brewers.

**17 TESCO** - This building, or at least the facade, was built c 1920 for a photographic processing company but was taken over by the Full Fashioned Hosiery Company as a stocking factory which later became Kayser Bondor.

It stands on the site of a mansion called Elmwood Manor which once stood in fifty acres of parkland, the lodge of the house still remains

**20 ALMSHOUSES** - Erected in 1621 under the terms of the Will of John Wynne, a London mercer from a local family, for the maintenance of six poor old folk. They are the oldest brick built houses in Baldock

**21 THE GATES** - The ancient gates at 24 High Street, are believed to be 15<sup>th</sup> century and are said to have come from the medieval hospital of St Mary Magdalene that stood outside Baldock.



The Gates