

The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that IERCHESFONTE was held by the Abbey of St. Mary at Winchester, the lands of Urchfont being endowed to the Abbey at this time as one source of revenue, with a value of £27, a population of less than one hundred, and having three mills.

Urchfont, the spelling of which has changed many times over the centuries, seems to derive the 'font' element from the Latin fons, suggesting the possibility of a Romano-British settlement.

The Church is possibly built on the site of a much earlier one. Its dedication to St. Michael and All Angels is suggestive of a pagan building in much earlier times. Links with the Anglo Saxons of the 11th century can still be found in the local field names.

At the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, the Abbey lands passed into the ownership of Edward Seymour, later Duke of Somerset. Urchfont descended with the Somerset titles until 1671 when it passed to the Earls of Ailesbury. In 1720 it was sold to Lord Carleton and then inherited by his nephew, the Duke of Queensberry of Amesbury House.

In the meantime William Pynsent had acquired lands in Urchfont and Eastcott. In 1765 the Pynsent Estate was left to William Pitt (the Elder) who sold it on to the Duke of Queensberry and for the first time for more than 200 years Urchfont was again under single ownership.

This was not to last and, in 1788, this inheritance together with other lands, was sold in succession to William Salmon, George Watson-Taylor, and finally to Hamilton Rivers-Pollock in 1928. A significant portion was acquired by the Heytesbury Hospital Trust in 1841.

Hamilton Rivers-Pollock died in 1940, and the manor and estate were bought by Wiltshire County Council in 1946 as a Residential Adult Education Centre, the first of its kind in the country.

An important social change occurred in 1947 when a large number of dwellings, formerly of the Manor estate, were auctioned into private hands.

In the early 20th century, Urchfont was a self supporting village. Today, at the commencement of the 21st century the village continues to be a thriving community.

urchfont

heritage map



2. Mulberry House

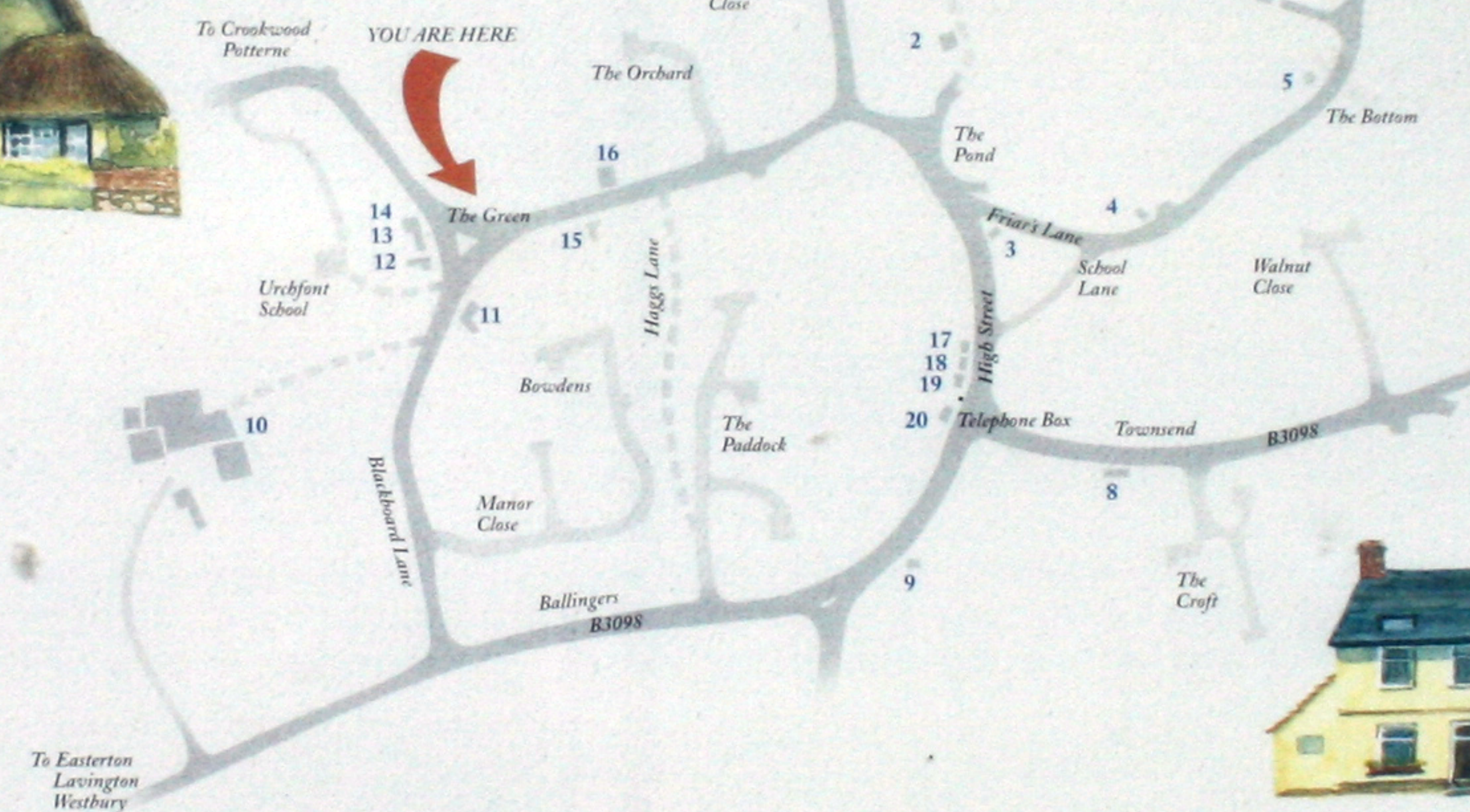


6. The Font



19. The Nags Head Inn

18. Inglefield Farm



1. The Church of St Michael and All Angels

The oldest building existing in Urchfont. The font and chancel arch date from about 1230. The present church is the result of developments, between 1300 and 1500, and also in 1864 and 1900. The chancel was rebuilt about 1330, windows and buttresses alternate, dividing the interior into six equal bays with a remarkable vaulted stone roof very rare in a village church. Medieval floor tiles were found in 1900 beneath the chancel floor.

2. Mulberry House

Built in the 18th century, with a stone tiled roof, as a front block to two cruck cottages. The Regency porch was added about 1820 when major alterations were carried out and the original four panelled front door, with moulded brackets supporting a pediment, moved to the rear.

3. Friars Cottage

Late 16th or early 17th century cottage, timber framed sandstone and brick with thatched roof. Interior has date 1633 in plaster work on upper floor. There is a well in the garden complete with old well-head.

4. The Sawmills

A late 18th century cottage with colourwashed brickwork and thatched

roof. The hanging rises like a steep cliff above and a small brook runs underground from which a pump brought up water for a steam engine; the pump still exists. The part under a slate roof was the pub, named 'The Roebuck', the remainder of the building being the saw mills.

5. Hillview Cottage

This thatched cottage is built of stone blocks in the lower half with timber framing above. The east elevation was faced with red brick in 1794.

6. The Font

A headwater of the Bristol Avon.

7. Carina Cottage

A late 17th or early 18th century small bricked timber framed thatched house, incorporating wattle and daub. Once two cottages, with each having a large inglenook. There remains evidence of two wells in the garden; one is now developed as a garden feature.

8. Red Hone Cottage

This 17th century thatched house, on stone foundations, is timber framed with colourwashed brick. Within there are exposed beams, and the timber framed walls are filled with wattle and daub.

9. The White House

A mid 18th century thatched farmhouse, of colourwashed brick and local malmstone. The upper floor has moulded stone windows with leaded glazing. Internally there are large exposed beams in the main rooms and rough hewn roof timbers and rafters. Once a cooper's and wheelwright's shop.

10. Urchfont Manor

Built by Sir William Pynsent in the 1670s; the great fire place of Tudor-Jacobean style in the present entrance hall indicating the incorporation of an earlier house. The east front is thought to have been designed by William Talman in 1690. In 1765 the estate and house were willed to William Pitt, the elder, and then sold on to the Duke of Queensberry. In 1946 Wiltshire County Council purchased the Manor for use as a residential adult education college, the first of its kind in the country.

11. West End Farmhouse

This 16th century thatched house standing on the south side of the Green, was raised to two storeys in the late 17th century. There still exists a closed-off well within the house and a timber framed thatched barn to the rear.

12. The Ark

Built in 17th/18th century as part of the Manor estate, this house, slate roofed, was heightened to three storeys about 1870-80. For many years it was known as 'Green House' and recorded in 1853 as 'A dwelling house with orchard.'

13. Manor Cottage

This 17th century thatched cottage was once a pair of cottages as is evident from its facade.

14. Oakfrith Cottage

A late 17th or 18th century thatched cottage with Flemish bond brickwork on a stone foundation. It has a fine inglenook. Note the Sun Fire Insurance mark No. 685654.

15. The Lamb Inn

The Inn dates from the 17th century, is timber framed with a thatched roof. It was extended in the 19th century and there is evidence of an earlier brewery in the floor of the upstairs skittle alley.

16. Green Acre

An 18th century thatched house, with a magnificent wisteria on its walls.

17. The Post Office

A 17th century house with a string course and a flat stone hood over the front door. It has been the village Post Office since 1967. Urchfont has had a Post Office, sited in several places in the High Street, since about 1875.

18. Inglefield Farm

An 18th century house, with a 19th/20th century extension; whose original thatched roof has been replaced by tiles. Formerly a butcher's shop, earlier a farmhouse.

19. The Nags Head Inn

An early 19th century building, colourwashed with a slate roof and pantile lean-to. During the First World War temporary showers were erected in the yard for the use of Canadian soldiers billeted in the village.

20. Hanover House

An 18th century house with slated roof. Formerly known as 'Eastville', prior to 1990.



Leaflets containing copies of Urchfont and Wedhampton heritage maps are available from:

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