

# Alfred's Final Journey

(Approximately 1 mile of level walking, generally suitable for wheelchairs, allow about 1 hour).

**From St Maurice's Covert, cross Market Lane towards the Cathedral Green.**

The open space ahead is the site of **New Minster** founded by Alfred the Great and completed by his son, Edward the Elder. Alfred was buried here soon after his death in 899 until 1110 when the New Minster moved to Hyde Abbey. In solemn procession the remains of Alfred, his queen Ealhswith and son Edward, together with a fabulous gold cross donated by Canute, were carried through the city to the new Abbey Church in the northern suburb of Hyde. To follow the route:

**Turn right in front of Morley College 31, founded in the 17th century for widows of the clergy, and right again into Market Street. Reaching the High Street turn left, along the Pentice.**

Alfred refounded Winchester in the 9th century using the Roman town defences as his framework. Retaining only the Roman High Street, he created an entirely new street pattern which survives to this day and through which you are now walking.

**Turn into Parchment Street at the next corner on the right, cross St George's Street at the lights and turn left. At the next corner, turn right into St Peter Street and continue to the Royal Hotel, which dates from Stuart times.**

Just ahead, on the left, is the entry to **Milner Hall 32**.

**Continue past St Peter's Roman Catholic Church and turn left up the driveway by the church.**

Built in 1926, the building features a Norman doorway seen to your left, salvaged from the St Mary Magdalen leper hospital.

Walk up the slope and through the churchyard to Jewry Street. Turn right towards the traffic lights. Continue across the junction on the site of the Roman, Saxon and Medieval North Gate. Continue along Hyde Street.

On the left is Hyde Abbey House - a famous private school in the 18th century.

**At King Alfred Place turn right.**

The main gate into the **Hyde Abbey** monastic precinct was located here, set back from the street frontage. To the left is the church of **St Bartholomew**, part of which pre-dates the abbey.

In 1863, John Mellor excavated the site of **Hyde Abbey** and claimed to have found King Alfred's bones. Few records were kept and considerable doubts over the find have concluded they are not Alfred's. The bones were reburied in **St Bartholomew's 33** churchyard, marked by a stone slab with a simple incised cross.

**Return to King Alfred Place with Hyde Gate to the right 34.**

Information panels in the main archway explain the layout of the abbey.

**Continue to the end of King Alfred Place.**

Pause in Hyde Abbey Garden which reflects the abbey church and marks the site of Alfred the Great's medieval tomb.

**Turn right along the footpath with the brick boundary wall on your right. Turn right again at the next street.**

The stone bridge upstream provided the monks with access to the abbey's outer courtyard.

**Turn right along the streamside path to Hyde Gate and walk to Hyde Street.**

Pass the red brick Dutch-gabled building, the surviving wing of **Hyde House** built after the dissolution of the abbey in 1538. Through the cast iron gates is **Hyde Barn**, built in circa 1750 after the house was demolished.

**The Counting House of the Winchester Brewery** is to the left, part of one of the many breweries which thrived in Hyde in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 17th century pub was the site of the Winchester residence of the Bishop of Worcester, who was responsible for compiling the Domesday Book.

**Cross at the traffic lights to the right side of Jewry Street.**

This was the centre of Medieval Winchester's Jewish community. Past the Theatre Royal is the Corn Exchange **35** built in 1836 (now Winchester Discovery Centre). Further on is the northern wing of County Gaol built in 1805. Beyond is the gaol's central wing that served as the governor's residence.



## King Alfred the Great

King Alfred ruled Wessex from 871 until his death in 899. At the time of his enthronement the Vikings had taken control of half of the country and were threatening Wessex. After initial setbacks, Alfred's armies won a great battle at Edington in 878, resulting in the conversion of the Viking King Guthrum to Christianity. Alfred developed a sophisticated military strategy involving the establishment of fortified centres. His capital at Winchester was the largest. He gradually won back some of the lands taken by the Vikings and his diplomacy led eventually to the formation of the English nation. The fifth son of the King of Wessex, Alfred was not expected to rule and so developed a love of learning in his early years. Despite ever pressing military duties, he found time to translate Latin texts into English to encourage wider literacy, developed a philosophy of kingship, reformed Saxon law and was a patron of the Church. This remarkable combination of soldier, statesman and scholar earned him the title 'the Great' - an honour bestowed on no other English king.



A rare silver penny displaying King Alfred during an excavation on Cathedral Green in the 1960's. Produced by the moneyer Lulla for Alfred between 875-885, this coin is on display at the Winchester city Museum.

### Bring your walk around King Alfred's Winchester alive!

Uncover the gripping history of his ancient capital city by taking a tour with one of Winchester's official tourist guides.



winchestertouristguides.com



If you would like this leaflet in a larger format, please contact the visitor information centre

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# CITY WALK

A tour of King Alfred's Winchester



Follow in King Alfred's footsteps on this tour of Winchester's historic landmarks.

This walk is divided into three loops so you can choose how much to do. Set out from the famous statue of King Alfred and explore the heart of the ancient capital, the upper city and Alfred's final resting place in Hyde Abbey Gardens.



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# CITY WALK: A tour of King Alfred’s Winchester

## The Heart of the Ancient Capital



(Approximately 1 mile of level walking, generally suitable for wheelchairs, allow about 1 hour)

The walk begins at the Winchester Visitor Information Centre in the Victorian Guildhall, where the City Council meets.

Turn right towards King Alfred’s statue **1**.

The High Street started life as a routeway some 2,500 years ago, leading to a crossing point on the River Itchen. It was the main thoroughfare for Roman, Saxon and Medieval Winchester and lays claim to be the oldest street in any English city.

A short distance ahead is the Mayor’s official residence, **Abbey House 2**. Excavated remains of St Mary’s Abbey, founded by Alfred’s Queen, Ealhswith in the early 10th century, can be seen along Abbey Passage to the right.

Opposite Abbey House is **St John’s House**, originally part of a Medieval hospital. The first floor was used as a meeting place for the Mayor and citizens of Winchester in the later Middle Ages.

The Victorian statue of **King Alfred the Great 1** is on the left. Continue straight ahead to the river. A plaque to the right marks the site of the Medieval Eastgate.

The **City Bridge 3** is said to have first been built by St Swithun, the 9th century bishop and patron saint of Winchester. The current structure, built in 1813, is thought to occupy the same site. Across the road is the **City Mill 3**.

Turn right and follow the river walk.

To your right is a surviving remnant of the original **Roman town walls 4**. First built of stone in the 3rd century AD, the wall was regularly repaired and rebuilt following the original Roman lines.

The **River Itchen** provided part of the eastern defences of the city by forming a moat. The river also provided power for 12 mills flourishing in or near Winchester by the mid-12th century.



Continue to **Wharf Mill**, which is on the site of a Medieval mill. Turn right to see the best-preserved part of the **City Walls** to their full Medieval height. Continue to **Wolvesey Castle 5**.

The Medieval bishops’ complex occupied the entire area now used as playing fields. To the left is the current bishop’s residence **6**, built as a replacement in 1684.

Opposite is **Winchester College 7**, founded by William of Wykeham in 1382 and believed to be the oldest continuously running school in England.

Cross **College Street** and continue to the main college gate and past the headmaster’s house.

The next building, now a private residence, is where **Jane Austen 8** spent her final weeks receiving medical care. She died here and is buried in the cathedral.

At the end of **College Street**, turn right to face **Kingsgate** with the tiny church of **St Swithun** above.

Continuing through the gateway, you come to the **Close Wall**, first built in Saxon times to separate the monastic communities from the rest of the town.

Turn right and go through **Prior’s Gate**.

On your right is the Medieval **Cheyney Court 9**, where bishops met to hear legal cases involving the areas they controlled, known as the **Soke**.

Passing the medieval stables on your right, now used as music rooms, you will see the main buildings of **Pilgrims’ School 10**. The oldest parts of the complex are two adjacent, early 14th century timber-framed halls, said originally to have provided accommodation for pilgrims. Today, among the boys educated there, are the boys of the cathedral and college choirs known as **Choristers** and **Quiristers** respectively.



Ahead is the **Deanery 11**, originally built in the 13th century as the home of the prior of the cathedral.

Head towards the cathedral.

Note the blocked arches in the wall on your right. The larger central arch provided the entry to the medieval monks’ dormitory. Go through the 13th century doorway a little further on and up the steps to **Dean Garnier Garden 12**, where interpretive panels explain the cathedral architecture and the plan of the close.

Leave the garden and continue towards the cathedral. On your right are the massive columns marking the entrance to the former **Chapter House 13**.

On reaching the cathedral nave turn left, walking beneath the flying buttresses designed by architect T G Jackson to support the south nave wall in 1911.

At the west front of the cathedral **14**, the stone in the wall to the left indicates the extent of the **Norman westwork**, demolished around 1300.

Turn past the west front to the site of the **Old Minster** dating from the 7th century, now marked out in brick.

The **New Minster** was built on the instructions of Alfred the Great and completed by his son Edward the Elder. It was located alongside the Old Minster until 1110 when the church was moved to the northern suburb of Hyde.

Follow the diagonal path with the railings on your right, crossing the site of the **New Minster church**. Turn left just before the **Wessex Hotel** towards the tower of **St Maurice’s Covert 15** where this loop ends.



## The Upper City

(Approximately 1 mile, some stairs and fairly steep slopes, generally unsuitable for wheelchairs, allow up to 1.5 hours)

From **St Maurice’s Covert** walk towards the **High Street** and then turn left. At the first corner on the left is the ‘new’ **Market Hall** built in 1772. Turn left into **Market Street** and then right into **The Square 16**.



Originally part of the huge cathedral cemetery, this area was used for corn, wood and animal markets in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Continue along **The Square**

On the left is the **Winchester Provident Dispensary plaque**, and the plaque commemorating **Alice Lisle**, beheaded during the Monmouth rebellion, on the wall of the museum.

Continue past the **City Museum 17** and turn right.

One of the first purpose-built museums outside London the museum is an awardwinning tourist attraction along with the Westgate.

In the 11th century, this area was part of the Royal Palace built by William the Conqueror. **St Lawrence’s Church** is said to be built on the site of the palace chapel.

Just ahead is the **Buttercross 18**, on this site since at least the early 15th century.

Turn left into the **High Street**.

The **Town Clock 19** and the statue of **Queen Anne** were presented to the city in 1713, following a royal visit. They adorn the **old Guildhall**, where the city’s **curfew bell** has hung since 1361, and is still rung each evening at 8pm.

Continue up the **High Street**, crossing **Southgate Street**.

On the right is the Saxon street **Staple Gardens**, the site of the wool market in the mid-14th century. Straight ahead is the **Westgate 20** marking the line of the western city defences. A museum on the first floor houses the city’s post-medieval collection and historic weights and measures, with good views from the roof. Check with the visitor information centre for opening times 01962 840 500.

Turn left up the pedestrian way next to the **Westgate**.



You soon reach some of the excavated remains of **Winchester Castle**, begun by William the Conqueror in 1066. Ahead is the 13th century **Great Hall 21**, the only part of the medieval castle to survive above ground and home to the famous **Round Table**.

Go through the **Great Hall** and out into **Queen Eleanor’s Garden 22** (admission fees apply).



This is a reconstruction of a medieval garden. The wall forming one side of the garden is all that remains in situ of **The King’s House** built by Christopher Wren for Charles II in 1683. Used throughout the 19th century as barracks, the house burned down in 1894.

Go back through the Great Hall, walk straight ahead to Romsey Road and the Winchester Military Museum complex entry gates are to the left.



On the right you you will see the Café and the Adjutant General Corps regiment and just beyond this are the museums of the Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) and the Light Infantry regiments. Moving forward follow the slight slope down to the left and on your right you will find a short block, completed in 1904 as part of the rebuilding of the barracks. Today it houses the **Gurkhas 23** and the King’s Royal Hussars’ regimental museums.



Walking back up the slope you will find Peninsula Square. To the right is the **Long Block 24**, which incorporates stone columns salvaged from King’s House. The large open square, now landscaped, was the parade ground of Peninsula Barracks.

Cross the square and walk to the right of the former **Sergeant’s Mess**, the building with the clock.

The steep slope **25** marks the eastern defences of the medieval castle.

Please note the remainder of this loop is not suitable for wheelchair users.

Descend the steps. At the bottom turn left and then right, heading towards the spire of **St Thomas’s Church**.



To the left is **Serle’s House 26**, home to the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum. This building and the nearby **14 Southgate Street (Hotel du Vin)** are good examples of the fine early 18th century residences built as a result of Charles II’s grand plans for the city.



Follow the driveway between **Serle’s House** and the church, passing the **Guard House 27** on your left. Cross **Southgate Street**. This street was known in the early medieval period as ‘**Goldestreet**’ because of the preponderance of goldsmiths.



Turn left and then right down the steps **28** into 13th century **St Thomas Passage**. At the end of the passage, turn left into **St Thomas Street**.



The large front garden a short distance ahead on the left marks the site of the church of **St Petroc** (later St Thomas).

Cross **St Thomas Street** and continue into **Minster Lane 29**. Continue towards the cathedral.

The area to the left is believed to be the site of the palace of the Saxon kings of Wessex.

Continue along the avenue of yew trees to the **War Memorial**.

The remains of the **Church of St Mary** in the Cemetery can be seen to the right.

Turn left in front of the cathedral and follow the path with the railings on your right **30**. Just before the **Wessex Hotel**, turn left to return to **St Maurice’s Covert**.

