

**Route A –  
George  
Street**

## Route A – George Street

### A1 War Memorial

Constructed in 1922 - renovated in 1991 - and always a key feature of the annual armistice ceremony. 40 ft high with an 8ft bronze statue.

### A2 Town Hall Building

Original town hall built 1846 from private funds. Burned down in 1919 by disgruntled ex-servicemen riled by an insensitive town council. In 1936 its replacement was constructed out of Portland Stone, built in a neo-classical style with many art deco features.

### A3 Duke of Clarence Pub

Now the "Locked Escape Rooms", the pub was first mentioned in 1771 with the ancient farmhouse "Peddars House" just a few yards further up Upper George Street.

### A4 Former Post Office

The General Post Office and Telephone Exchange was opened in 1923 after the closure of the old one in Cheapside. The lamps either side of the entrance are original and grade II listed.

### A5 Former Cinema

Opened in 1937 as the Union cinema and changed its name to the Ritz in 1949. Then became a nightclub and had various names over the years. Famous acts played there including the Beatles in 1964.

### A6 Luton's First Cinema

The current "Downtown Desserts" is the site of the town's first permanent-built cinema. The "Anglo-American Electric Picture Palace" opened in 1911 with sound being introduced in September 1929.

### A7 Former Alma Ballroom

From this spot, the Alma Ballroom would have dominated this junction from its opening in 1929 to demolition in 1961.

### A8 Bones Music Shop

Now a tanning shop, this building was a celebrated music shop from 1895 to 1978. Philip Bone sold musical instruments and led a celebrated mandolin band.

### A9 Liberal Club

This building still exists in Manchester Street today, it was once home to the Luton and South Beds Liberal Club and was erected in Manchester Street in 1895.

### A10 Former Sainsbury's

Opened in 1926, 74 George Street featured a large Sainsbury's store until 1972. The building is still there with the distinctive red marble side columns and original tiles.

### A11 Gas Showrooms

The art deco building was by 1939 a gas showroom and there was a small theatre at the top built for demonstrations and cookery classes some of which features the chef Zena Skinner.

### A12 Wellington Street

Wellington Street was laid out as private land during the 1840s and its houses were originally erected to serve as the homes of Luton's middle classes. By the end of the 19C it was Luton's premier shopping street.

### A13 Lloyds Bank

The building occupied by Lloyds Bank is one of the iconic structures in George Street, opened by "silk mercers, general drapers and merchant tailors" C.S. Beecroft & Sons in 1880.

### A14 King Street

King Street was the last street to connect with George Street with its oldest buildings dating from the 1860s. The end of the street was King Street Congregational Church built 1889 and demolished 1971.

### A15 ABC Cinema

The 2,000 seat Savoy Cinema opened in 1938 and in 1939 Luton had six cinemas. The name has changed several times and the cinema eventually closed in November 2000.

### A16 National Provincial Bank

55- 61 George Street: The bank opened in 1936 and the Evening Telegraph marvelled at the "quality materials and the detailing. Utilising Australian walnut wood." The front façade originally had 2 fitted flagpoles – you can still see restraints and collars.

### A17 Shoe Shop and Warehouse

The 1897 date of this building is high up on the corner by the roof. For many years it was a shoe shop & warehouse on the corner of Cheapside.

### A18 Bank

London, County & Westminster Bank on the corner of Chapel Street and George Street, Luton. The building was erected in 1897 and demolished in 1963.

### A19 Chapel Street

Chapel Street – one of Luton's oldest thoroughfares - was known as Hog Lane in the early 1800s. Through the establishment of a number of Methodist chapels, in 1814 and 1852, it changed its name.

### A20 Boots Building

27 George Street was first listed in a directory in 1871 when George Pigott, butcher, was in occupation. By the time of the directory for 1903 Boots Cash Chemist (Eastern) Limited was in occupation. Boots continued to occupy the building until at least 1960. The current occupier is estate agent, Taylors.

### A21 Fishers Butchers

AE Fisher butcher owned a fair deal of property in the town centre. You can still see the outline of the letters "Fisher" underneath the new paintwork on the corner.

### A22 Red Lion Pub

There has been an inn on this site since 1536-1541, and the first recorded tenant was John Smith 465 years ago. As road transport improved, the Red Lion became an important coaching house with stables for 40 horses.

### A23 Market Hill

Market Hill has been a focus for the southern end of George Street for centuries. Once it was the domain of the Corn Exchange from 1867 to 1951.

### A24 The Crown Inn

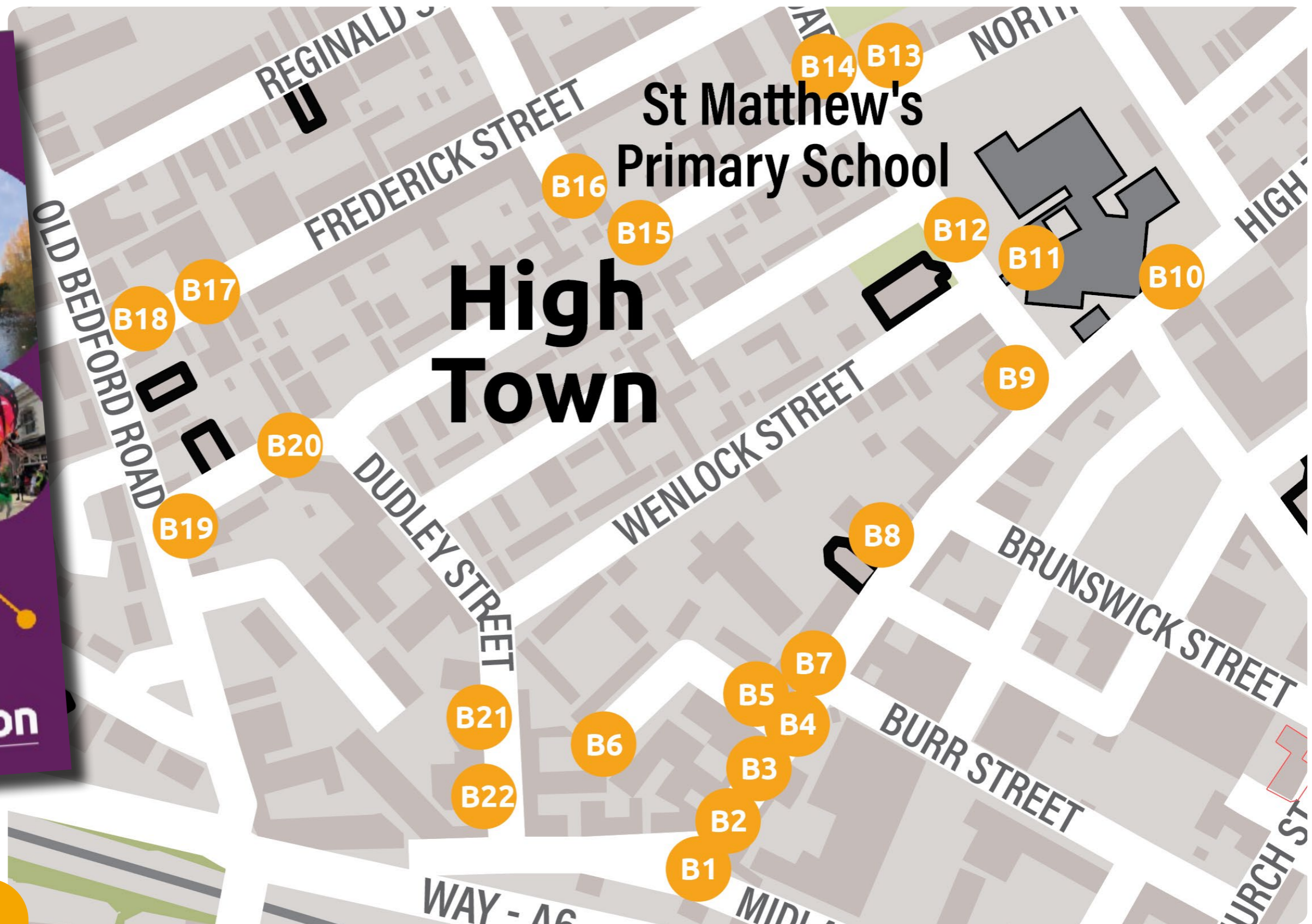
There has been an Inn on this site from at least the 16th century. The current building is early 19th century, was extended, and is Grade 2 listed. The pub was given a number of different names from the 1980's, but has now reverted back to the Crown.

### A25 Park Street

Park Street leads south as George Street gives way to the route towards Luton Hoo.



Luton Town Hall building



St Matthew's  
Primary School

# High Town

## Route B – High Town

## Route B – High Town

### B1 Station House

The oldest non-religious building, a fragment of the High Town suburb before the new railway cut it off from the town centre.

### B2 Former Railway Inn

The Railway holds the record for the most name changes in a current Luton pub.

### B3 Blockers Arms Pub

The name of this public house comes from the hat trade, blocks being the things on which hats are shaped.

### B4 Bricklayers Arms

This public house first appears in 1824 in the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service.



### B5 Former Redrup and Starkings Bakers

A prominent chain of bakers in the town who opened a shop and factory on the corner of High Town Road and Cross Street.

### B6 Philip Wright Hats

The historic site of Walter Wright hats, Philip maintains a presence here with his business that continues to manufacture innovative hat designs.

### B7 Former Plaza Cinema

The High Town Electric Theatre, 24 High Town Road, opened on 24th August 1912. The cinema closed in October 1937, it was reopened as the Plaza before finally closing. It became a warehouse, demolished in 1979.

### B8 High Town Methodist Church

The new chapel, seating 800, was completed in 1854 to accommodate the large numbers wishing to worship.

### B9 The Painters Arms

This public house is noted in by former Department of Environment in October 1988 as having been rebuilt in 1913.

### B10 Danny's Bed Former Butchers

The bed shop still has iron work on the exterior that features hooks to carry joints of meat as well as pipes to provide gas for lamps.

### B11 St Matthews Primary School

A school for boys and infants was created in a wooden church building in Hightown in 1870. In 1874 separate junior schools for boys, girls and infants were opened in Havelock Road.

### B12 St Matthews Church

This was the fifth new Anglican church in Luton. Its foundation stone was laid by the Duchess of Bedford on 28th September 1875.



### B13 Norton House School

Now a Grade II listed building, it was originally built as 'The Cowper Arms' a temperance hotel and coffee house, for the Bedfordshire Coffee Company in 1882.

### B14 Children's Sick and Convalescent Home

The first Childrens' hospital in Luton was a pilot project, lasting 5 years, used to test the demand for such services in the town.

### B15 Barford Brothers DyeWorks

The Barford Brothers' dye and bleach works was founded in 1894 by Gilbert and Ernest Barford and dyed items for the local hat industry.



### B16 Mussons Path

A service road to allow hats manufactured in Reginald and Frederick Street to be collected and transported to the town centre.

### B17 Randall Ribbons

One of the few surviving hat accessory businesses in the town, established 1918.

### B18 Former Printers, Dickinson and Adams Garage

There are still surviving fragments of the buildings, built in 1910, that bore the brunt of a large WW2 bomb killing over 30 people.

### B19 The Rabbits Pub

A pub that was one of the haunts of a WW1 ex-soldier association before the 1919 burning of the Luton Town Hall.

### B20 Seventh Day Adventist Church

This church was built on the crater caused by a large WW2 bomb.

### B21 Merida Hats

A former hat factory in Dudley Street, the sign to reference travelling salesmen can still be seen at one of the pavement entrances.

### B22 Former Reslaw Hats

This corner plot was one of the first large hat factories to be built away from the town centre.





**Route C**  
– Plaiters Lee

## Route C – Plaiters Lee

### C1 The George II

Nos. 66 & 68 are Grade II listed buildings dated around 1870s, it's thought they may be earlier; No.66 is a former hat factory.



### C2 The Hat Factory Arts Centre - 65-67 Bute St

In 1927, this building was under construction and occupied by J & K Connor Ltd. It is in contemporary style.

### C3 The Hat Press

This hat press has come from the Hat Factory (65-67 Bute St). It was given to the Borough by William Horseman, then Chairman of the British Hat Guild.

### C4 Gurney Hat Factory / Storefront

Dated 1889, this attractive building is Grade II listed, it is styled in 'Neo-Jacobean' with 'Dutch' influences. Constructed from red brick and stone dressings.

### C5 Great Northern Pub

Opened as The Ship in 1859 – renamed 1879 with the coming of the GNR. Grade 2 listed, Luton Grey bricks and glazed bricks.

### C6 Hat Works c. 1840s

This Grade II listed building possibly dates back even to the 1840s. This makes it one of the oldest remaining hat industry buildings. It has a striking façade of Luton grey bricks and stucco 'dressings' (white brick work).

### C7 Barbers Lane

This narrow lane now leads to the Hat Garden near the entrance to the Mall, where the river Lea runs through the town centre.

### C8 Wheelwrights Arms c.1800

This public house dates from early 1800s. The owners of the pub carried on trade of wheelwright in neighbouring premises.

### C9 32 Guildford Street Hat Factory

This striking building with red brick with a 'Dutch' style parapet is built on the site of the wheelwright's premises, and redeveloped by Luton Culture to regenerate the old hat making district.



### C10 30 Guildford Street Hat Factory

A fine example of the 'neo-classical' style of architecture dating from 1919. Distinctive in their use of white concrete rendering, and a pierced parapet at top of building.

### C11 Millyard Gates

A reminder that other trades existed in area. In the yard you can see roof-level remnants of warehouse lifting equipment. It is now a cool music venue called the Bear Club.



### C12 Former Facers Coal and stable rear

Horses were crucial to the hat industry as they pulled the carts loaded with boxes of hats to and from the station.

### C13 Former Temperance Coffee House, 53 Cheapside

Now a Grade II listed building, it was originally built as 'The Cowper Arms' a temperance hotel and coffee house, for the Bedfordshire Coffee Company in 1882.

### C14 The Engine Pub

In the 1864 directory it was recorded as the Railway Engine, but returned to using the Engine in the pub directory for 1969, and is still the Engine today.

### C15 Former Vyse's Hat Factory, 47-53 Bute Street

Factory was built for the Vyse company in 1930. V for Vyse can be seen between the 2nd and 3rd floor central windows. Art deco style suggests date in 1930s, and the factory had to be rebuilt following the fire in 1930 (killed 8 people).

### C16 50 Guildford Street Hat Factory. 1890

This factory was built in the 1890's. It was taken over by Lambie & Cain, as a straw hat factory. It continued as a hat factory into the 1990s as the home of Balfour Hats. It is grade II listed.

### C17 Hat Factory 40 Guildford Street

This imposing Grade II listed building was built in 1905 using a cast iron frame. At five storeys high it is one of the tallest structures in the conservation area.

