

# HISTORIC FRODSHAM



Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme

Early settlement in the Frodsham area was on higher ground. Pre-historic hill forts are evident nearby and a roman road have passed through nearby Overton. The importance of Frodsham is noted in the Domesday Survey of 1086 – Frod's village held by Earl of Mercia.

Ranulph de Blundaville, The Norman Earl of Chester, marked a shift in settlement to an area lower down by the marshlands when he founded the town as a free Borough in approximately 1230. Burgage plots of one acre were established along what is now known as Main Street and people were freed from their agricultural dues and encouraged to earn their living from trade. Many of today's buildings stand on these original plots and the Golden Lion has records existing which trace the plot back to 1361 when it was granted to Henry Torfote, an up and coming local man at the time.

The town soon became a thriving centre of trade and an important local market town helped further by the introduction of a nearby small port. The market and local industry continued to flourish until the mid 14th century when the Black Death halted expansion. The market was re-established under rights granted by Charles II in 1661 and a continuance of those rights see a regular market still held today, every Thursday. In the mid Victorian period a Butter Market was held in the town, a photograph of which can be seen below.

The areas greatest changes have occurred over the last century with the introduction and increased use of the motorcar. Although the street pattern has remained relatively unchanged, the layout within has been altered to accommodate and allow for traffic management and parking. The trees that line Main Street, which were originally planted in 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, form a significant street scene feature that has been maintained. Also of interest in the street scene is the jubilee clock on the pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Golden Lion, which is believed to have been erected in 1925 to celebrate the visit of King George V.

The area has retained an interesting variety of buildings from the past and some of the key buildings, many of which are listed and feature blue plaques, can be identified on the map to the right. The town symbol, a honeybee, seen throughout on plaques and street furniture, was adopted in honour of Reverend Williams Charles Cotton, a former parish vicar and authority on bee-keeping.



In the mid Victorian period a Butter Market was held in the town. This photograph shows the market taking place in an area that has now become one of the town's busiest road junctions, making a similar event today practically impossible. The imposing Georgian building on the right of the photograph is Crosbie House (16) and the distinctive Bears Paw can be viewed on the left (9). The Library (11) and the Fishermen's Cottages (14) can just be made out in the rear of the picture in the sweeping view up towards High Street. The reverse view, looking from the High Street down towards Main Street, can be seen in photograph (1).

## 47 – 51 Main Street

Cottages with 17th century origins and some oak framing, all built separately. The properties look considerably different today than in this photograph taken c1900. The most obvious change being the pebble dashed facades and loss of window detailing. The cottages were restored in 1985. Listed Grade II.

Interestingly in the lower left corner of the picture is the "Brook Stone" glacial erratic which can still be seen today at the junction of Marsh Lane and Main Street.



## 53 – 57 Brookstone cottages - Main Street

These cottages have 17th century origins and contain some oak framing. As can be seen from this photograph taken c1900 little has changed over the past century except their colour. The cottages were restored in 1980. Listed Grade II.

## Brook House – 38 Main Street

This building was built c1830 in a late Georgian style. It has been David J.G. & Co builders and contractors yard since 1940 although at one time it was believed to have been part of a tenney. The building, Listed Grade II, can be seen on the right of this picture taken c1900. Also in shot on the left is Ashley House.



This photograph offers a rare glimpse of a view west along Main Street around the turn of the 20th century. On the left, just in picture, is what is now the Yuet Ben restaurant (24) built in 1852 this Victorian house was formerly the "Manor House School". The Rev R.P. Sorwick was principle from 1863 and the school's most famous pupil was undoubtedly Prince Warabo from Opo in Nigeria, who attended during the 1880s. Unfortunately the prince later died from pneumonia and was buried in the parish graveyard, at Overton, where his grave can still be seen today.

Also on the left of the picture is "The Gables" (26) an elegant Georgian house built in a classical style by John Urmsion in the late 18th century. The symmetrical pavilion wings are perhaps the most striking feature. Urmsion and his partner William Crosbie together established a successful salt works on the banks of the River Weaver. By 1792 they were exporting approximately 7000 tons of salt annually to Liverpool and beyond. Listed Grade II the building has changed little over the last century.

In the centre, to the rear of the picture, Millstone House (28) is visible at the road junction between Main Street and Marsh Lane. Millstone House is a timber framed building which for many years was a public house known as "At the sign of the Millstone". The name probably derived from the association with water mills that were believed to have once stood at the end of the street. The building is internally dated at 1693 although is believed to be possibly older.

On the right of the picture is Ashley House, (3) an elegant Georgian house most probably constructed between 1741 and 1766 by Robert Wainwright Ashley as his town residence. Listed Grade II.

## Iron Church - Main Street

Originally built as a chapel of ease c1874, St. Dunstan's became the temporary parish church during the restoration of St Lawrence's in nearby Overton from 1880-83. The chapel proved unexpectedly popular, particularly with the elderly, saving many the tiring climb up to Overton. It has remained in use as a church and is today an Evangelical Chapel. In 1995 it was relocated 3 metres to the left to allow the construction of Chapelfields Road. The bell, a prominent feature above the Main Street entrance, is said to be a replica of a bell from I.K. Brunel's ship, the "Great Eastern", broken up on Tramere beach. This photograph shows the interior of the church c1880.



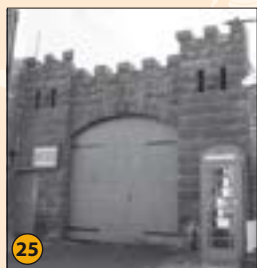
## The Old Post Office – 75 Main Street

The home of the town's original post office. Miss Ellen Farrell was postmistress in 1850 and Miss Ann Price in 1874. Samuel Ormrod was Postmaster in 1892 and was succeeded by his sister Miss Elizabeth when the post office relocated across Main Street in the early 1900s. This picture shows the Post Office and its dedicated staff with their equipment c1895.



## Old Hall Hotel – 81 Main Street

Originally two 17th century cottages, the buildings were merged and the fronts rebuilt in the 19th century. The unified building became known as "Ty Gwyn", The White House. In 1844 the building was home to Daniel Ashley Jnr, superintendent registrar and clerk to Runcom Board of Guardians. In the rear garden of the property there are two tide stones marking the level the Mersey reached during high tides in 1802 and 1862. Now a successful hotel, the building, garden wall and tide stones are all Listed Grade II. This photograph shows the Old Hall c1890.



Commemorative Barracks Archway – Main Street

Dedicated to the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment the archway leads to the army drill hall. The hall, built in 1901, served as a civic centre for the town on many occasions seating up to 800 people. Listed Grade II.



68 Main Street

This timber-framed building was only recently discovered during renovations in 2003. It most likely dates from the 17th century and would have been previously thatched. The above picture shows the building in 1950 when the butchers occupied the shop. The inset shows the building today looking dramatically different and no longer concealing its historic secret. The building continues to remain in use by the Coward family as a women's fashion shop.



## Thatched Cottages 83 – 89 Main Street

Originally four 17th century oak-framed, thatched cottages, which have changed little since this photograph taken c1880. The most notable change is perhaps the disappearance of the two chimney stacks and a doorway which most likely occurred when Nos. 87 and 89 merged. These are the oldest and date from the mid 17th century William Harrison, a carpenter, later added No. 85 followed by his brother Thomas, a joiner by trade, who later added No. 83. The cottages are currently the area's only existing thatched properties. Listed Grade II.



## The Bears Paw Hotel – Main Street

Originally built as an Inn in 1632 this building, in earlier years, was referred to as the "Lion's Paw". The inscribed headstone over the entrance bears the coat of arms of Earl Rivers of the Savage Family, the crest being a bear's paw. The addition of a post office room saw the name change to "Bears Paw Hotel and Posting House" in the 18th century. The name later changed again with the arrival of the railway to the "Bears Paw & Railway Hotel" as can be seen from this picture taken c1880. Listed Grade II.



## 119 – 121 Main Street

Originally oak-framed and thatched, these three cottages were built in 1628. A chip shop was opened in Mersey Power Cottage in 1908, and one evening during World War I, about 60 soldiers were served egg and chips whilst sitting in the street.



## K4 Telephone Kiosk – Church Street

This unique telephone kiosk is a rare example of one of only 50 K4's ever produced. There are believed to be only four still publicly in use throughout the entire country. Introduced in the late 1920s and designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, "The Vermillion Giant" incorporated a post box and stamp-dispensing machine. Listed Grade II.



## 84 Main Street

This is a fine example of a 17th century timber framed cottage that like many in the town would have originally been thatched. The Roman numeral carpenter's marks, still visible on the oak timbers, allowed them to be easily prefabricated. The cottage can be clearly seen on the right of this picture taken in the early 20th century which also shows the significant contribution the trees make to the street scene. Listed Grade II.



## Queens Head Hotel

Built in the early 17th century, this pub is one of the oldest public houses in Frodsham. The name of the pub changed from the Kings Head, to the Queens head, during Queen Victoria's reign. John Urmsion and William Crosbie, partners of a local salt works, bought the property in 1782. The building has an interesting range of outbuildings to the rear, said to have been the meeting-place of court of manor and later of the Brotherly and Friendly Society of Frodsham. In 1799 the site also boasted a cotton manufactory. Listed Grade II.



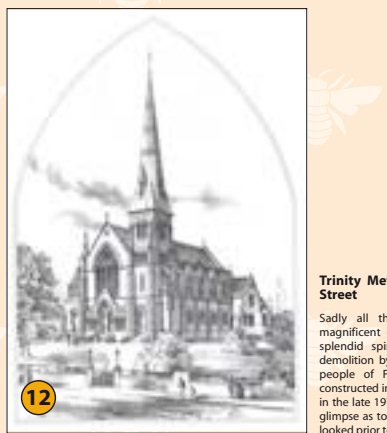
## The Old Police Station

The old police station was purpose built c1880 to replace an earlier station on nearby Red Lane. This picture shows the arrival of King George V on the 8th July 1925 with the old police station, still in use at this time, in the background.



## The Library – High Street

Built in 1837 this building previously served as a Wesleyan Association Tabernacle Chapel, accommodating up to 350 people. Shortly after closing in 1937 it became a county library. The building can be seen on the right hand side of this picture, which shows a view east, down the High Street towards Main Street.



## Trinity Methodist Church – High Street

Sadly all that remains of this once magnificent church is its imposing and splendid spire, which was saved from demolition by public donations from the people of Frodsham. The church was constructed in 1873 and partly demolished in the late 1970s. This etching offers a rare glimpse as to how the church would have looked prior to demolition.



## Old Cottage – 44 High Street

Although now one property the old cottage originally consisted of three late 16th century small dwellings as shown in the photograph. The dwelling in the centre, a one-roomed cottage, incorporated a full cruck timber frame suggesting that the property perhaps dated from the 14th century. It is because of this that the present dwelling, which now incorporates this possibly older cottage, is said to be the town's oldest inhabited cottage. Listed Grade II.



## Fisherman's Cottages, 28 – 32 High Street

These cottages, interestingly built on outcropping red sandstone (which is designated as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest), are known as the "Fishermen's Cottages". They serve as a reminder that considerable quantities of fish were once caught on the Rivers Weaver and Mersey and that fishing formed a vital part of the town's economy. As can be seen in this old photograph, one of the cottages was originally two separate dwellings and thatched. The cottages appear considerably different today primarily due to their pebble dashed facades and various window alterations.



## Frodsham Railway Station

The Station was built in 1849 for the Birkenhead, Lancashire and Cheshire Junction Railway Company and originally incorporated a stationmaster's house. In 1893 the station house was moved en-bloc further away from the platform. This photograph taken in 1900 shows the arrival of a steam commuter train and a Victorian canopy on the station which unfortunately is now sadly lost. Listed Grade II.



## Cholmondeley Arms – 12 Church Street

This building, dated 1891 on the front gable, appears to have changed little since this photograph was taken c1900. It was previously a beer house known as the "Albert Inn" when the Atlas Brewery owned it.



## Crosbie House (Pollard buildings) – 2 High Street

William Crosbie, a former mayor of Liverpool, built this property in the late 18th century. The building forms part of a good group of Georgian buildings on the corner of High Street/Church Street that have seen a variety of uses over the years. In 1851 a large part of the building was used as a private boarding school for boys. During the early half of the 19th century half the building was a drapers shop owned by John Guest Williams. Two of his apprentices James Proud and Edwin Pollard eventually went on to run the business and it later became known as "Proud and Pollards" and later still "Pollard Brothers". This association with Pollard explains why the buildings are sometimes today referred to as Pollard buildings. Listed Grade II. This picture shows what is now No. 4 High Street (part of the same Georgian group) extensively decorated most likely for the coronation of King George V.



## Golden Lion Hotel – Main Street

The hotel is built on an original burgage plot which records allow to be traced as far back as 1361 when it was granted to Henry Torfote, an up and coming local man at the time. The present building dates from the early 19th century although the cellars are believed to be much older. From 1822 – 1845, the hotel was known as "White Hart". Listed Grade II.



## Trustees Savings Bank – Main Street

Built in 1852, this imposing building has been used mainly as a bank. In its earlier years parts of the building were used for civic purposes such as a library, a drill hall and an armoury. A room was also once provided by the trustees to allow town meetings to take place which lead to the building often being referred to as the Town Hall. Listed Grade II.

