



ASHWELL

Places of Interest

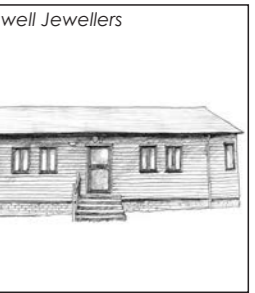
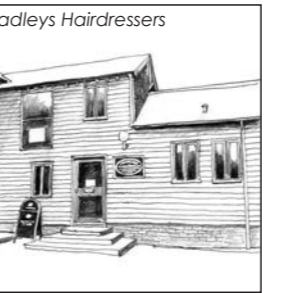
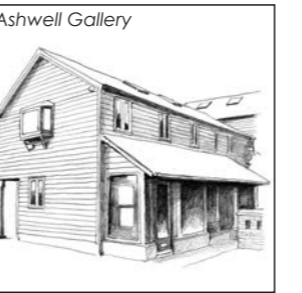
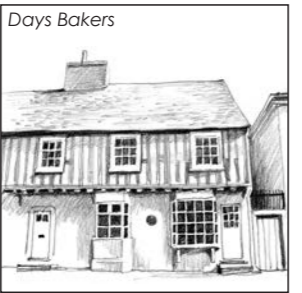
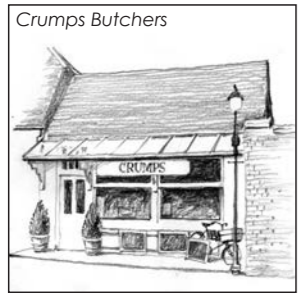
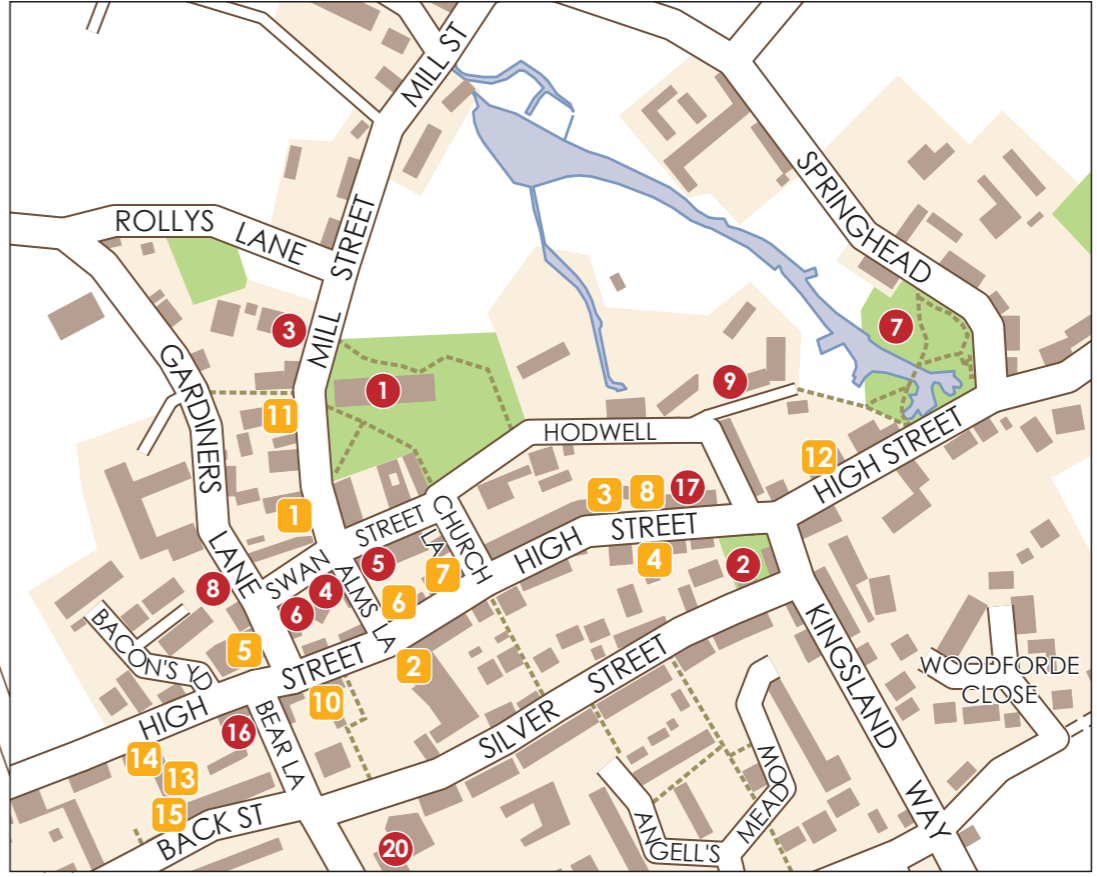
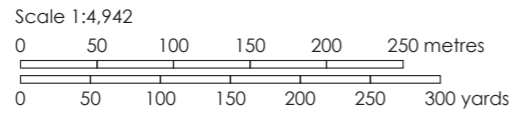
- 1 St Marys Church
- 2 URC Church
- 3 Merchant Taylor's House
- 4 Museum
- 5 Parish Room & Post Office
- 6 Cottage Garden
- 7 The Springs
- 8 Cob Wall
- 9 Lock Up
- 10 Recreation Ground
- 11 War Memorial
- 12 The Cemetery
- 13 Small Gains*
- 14 Village Hall
- 15 Arbury Banks*
- 16 Bear House
- 17 Forrester's Cottages
- 18 Bluegates Dairy
- 19 Bluegates Farm*
- 20 Ashwell Primary School

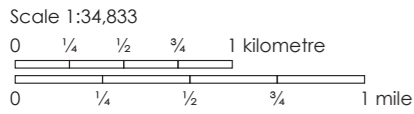
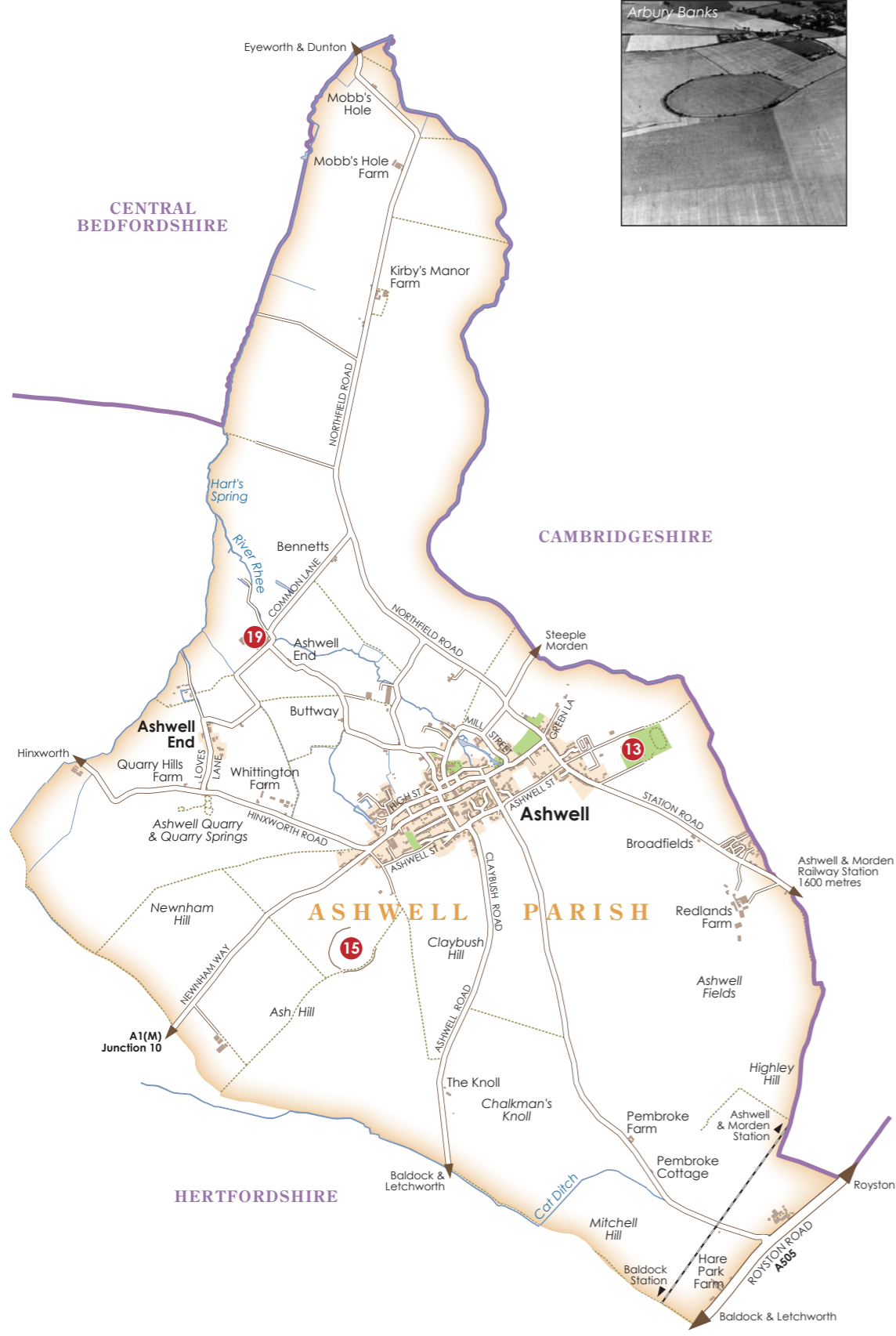
*(see Parish map on reverse)

Retail business

- 1 Crumps Butchers
- 2 Days Bakers
- 3 Pharmacy
- 4 Rhubarb & Mustard Café & Shop
- 5 Village stores
- 6 Sue Birch Hairdresser
- 7 Ashwell Dentist
- 8 Country Properties Estate Agents
- 9 Ashwell Garage
- 10 Rose & Crown Pub
- 11 Bushell & Strike Pub
- 12 Three Tuns Pub & Hotel
- 13 Bradleys Hairdressers
- 14 Ashwell Gallery
- 15 Ashwell Jewellers

for further details on Ashwell Retail Outlets visit
<https://www.ashwell.gov.uk/directory/retail-businesses/>





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Ashwell



Discover over 1100 years of history and enjoy welcoming retail services in our unique village.



Post-medieval Ashwell

From the sixteenth to the late nineteenth centuries Ashwell became a farming community. The marketplace filled with buildings and gardens, while the inns and beerhouses served local trade. Barley was a particularly important crop: malted and brewed with water from the chalk springs it produced excellent beer. At that time farms and inns would have brewed their own beer for workers and guests; commercial breweries such as **Fordhams** and **Pages** (whose malthouse is now the **Village Hall**) were built in the 19th century. In 1863 the parish was enclosed: new farms were created on the four open fields (North Field, Quarry Field, Claybush Field, and Redlands Field) that for centuries had been farmed in common. Rural industries such as the making of straw plait for hats provided work, particularly for women. Most men worked on the land, or at trades connected with farming.

Ashwell Today

Most residents of Ashwell no longer work in agriculture, but farming continues to define the landscape of the parish. Fields of wheat, barley, sugar beet, peas and oil-seed rape change colour with the seasons. In summer dairy cattle graze the pastures of **Bluegates Dairy**, while ley grassland and maize produce silage to feed them through the winter. There is also a pig unit and a flock of rare breeds sheep in the parish.



The paths and byways of Ashwell offer many opportunities to relax while exploring the landscape and history of the parish. A leaflet containing Ashwell footpaths is available from local village retailers. If you have questions about Ashwell or wish to report a problem, please contact the Ashwell Parish Clerk: clerk@ashwell.gov.uk or via the website www.ashwell.gov.uk

This leaflet has been produced by Ashwell Parish Council.

About Ashwell

Ashwell is an attractive, characterful village in a landscape that is much more than simply a beautiful setting for the buildings: the fields, paths and byways record the ways in which people have lived and worked here for several thousand years.

Prehistoric Ashwell

By Roman times **Ashwell Street** and the **Icknield Way** to the south of the parish were important routes. There were other tracks and paths, but they and many archaeological features are now only visible in aerial photographs; the Bronze Age barrow (burial mound) that stands at **Highley Hill** is one of many in the south of the parish. Southwest of the village, **Arbury Banks** is an Iron Age hillfort that was also used in the early Roman period. Another Iron Age settlement lay between the village and **Ashwell End**.

Roman Ashwell

In the Roman period Ashwell parish was not only a prosperous agricultural landscape with villas set in well-tended fields but also a religious centre. A shrine to the goddess **Senuna** stood at **Ashwell End**. Finds in **Pricem's Field** suggest there was a villa there, and cropmarks show another villa to the west of **Claybush Hill**.

Saxon Ashwell

In the sixth and seventh centuries Ashwell was probably the centre of a large Anglo-Saxon estate. The modern village is largely the same as that planned and created early in the tenth century, probably for **Edward the Elder**. The Saxon village was centred on a marketplace in the area from Ashwell Springs to **Gardiners Lane**, bordered by **High Street** and **Hodwell**. The boundaries of individual properties, the burgess plots, set out at that time can still be traced today.

The earliest reference to Ashwell is in the will of **Aethelgifu** who died around 990. By 1086 Ashwell was a major settlement, one of only five boroughs (market towns with some rights to self-defence) in Hertfordshire.

Medieval Ashwell

Ashwell flourished as a market town in the late Anglo-Saxon and early medieval periods, but as competition with **Baldock** (founded c. 1140) and other towns increased, Ashwell gradually fell behind. In the 1300s the parish was still attracting people from as far afield as France, and was able to build the parish church of **St Mary**, with the largest tower in Hertfordshire. Other late medieval buildings include the building that now houses **Ashwell Museum** and the Guildhouse of the Brotherhood of **St John the Baptist**, both of which faced the marketplace. **Kirby Manor Farmhouse**, **Bear House** and **Dixies Farm** were the homes of prosperous farmers.

