

ABOUT US

We are a partnership dedicated to increasing engagement with Historic Yardley as a unique and special place.

For more information about our partners and our exciting programme of events and activities, visit:

<http://historicyardley.co.uk>

Download the app:

1. Download the '**Places and Trails**' app from the App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android)
2. Search for '**Historic Yardley**' or browse under '**Middle England**'

WELCOME TO HISTORIC YARDLEY

Over a 1000 Years of History



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BEGINNINGS

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You are in a special place that has over a thousand years of history. Imagine a clearing in the ancient Forest of Arden, where settlers made their home and started to farm – possibly as early as the 6th century.

‘Gyrdleahe’ (Yardley) probably refers to ‘a clearance in the forest’.

The first record we have is the year 972, when Yardley is mentioned in King Edgar’s charter. Yardley is also listed in the Domesday Book, in 1086.

MIDDLE AGES (UP TO LATE 15TH CENTURY)

By the late 1200s, the dense oak forest had mostly been cleared. Some of the buildings we see today were built at this time.

Tudor and Stuart times (16th and 17th centuries)

Yardley belonged to the Crown for 138 years. It was granted to Queen Catherine of Aragon, wife of Henry VIII, as part of her divorce settlement. Blakesley Hall originates from the time of Elizabeth I.

Georgian and Victorian times (18th and 19th centuries)

Around 1768, the manor of Yardley was bought by John Taylor, a manufacturer and co-founder of Lloyds Bank. Yardley was still largely rural and part of Worcestershire.

Modern times (20th and 21st centuries)

The people of Yardley voted to become part of the City of Birmingham in 1911. In the inter-war years, Yardley underwent massive urbanisation. In 1969, Old Yardley became a Conservation Area, one of the first in Birmingham. In 1972, Yardley celebrated its millennium – one thousand years of history.



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ST EDBURGHA'S CHURCH

Parts of the church you see today go back to the 13th century. Our church is dedicated to Saint Edburgha, the granddaughter of King Alfred the Great. The oldest part of the church is at the opposite end to the tower – look for the small window and priest's door (2). The oak porch is 15th century (3). The tower and spire were the last to be built, also in the 15th century (4).

To see inside the church, check out the open days:

<https://stedburghasyardley.com/>

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WOMEN IN YARDLEY'S STORY

Our church is dedicated to Saint Edburgha, a granddaughter of King Alfred the Great. According to legend, when she was 3 years old, her father offered her jewels, a chalice and a copy of the scriptures. She rejected the gems, and this was seen as a sign of godliness. She later went to Winchester and also became the Abbess of Pershore. She died in the year 960.

Catherine of Aragon was the first wife of Henry VIII and was the widow of Henry's brother, Prince Arthur. Can you spot the church doorway with Catherine's symbol of the pomegranate alongside the Tudor rose?



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MYSTERY MARKS

Look for the furrows on the side of the church tower.

Nobody knows exactly what they are. Perhaps they were made by farmers sharpening their implements, or by archers sharpening their arrows. Another suggestion is that wedding goers used scrapings from the wall as confetti.

HERITAGE TRAIL MAP



KEY:
Boundary of Conservation Area
Statutorily Listed Buildings



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THE TRUST SCHOOL

The Trust School was probably built in the 15th century. It was a school for the poor, paid for by local wealthy families. The school closed in 1908, and children went instead to Church Road School, which still exists today.

Look up and see if you can spot where the school bell used to hang, above the first-floor window and under the gable.



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THE VILLAGE

Have a stroll through the village and admire some of the houses. Number 433 is known as the Cottagers' Institute and was built in 1882, with the aim of educating Yardley's adults, when it was still a largely rural parish. Other houses date from the 18th and 19th centuries.



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CHURCH FARM

Church Farm has been owned by the Yardley Charity Trust (now the Yardley Great Trust and Yardley Educational Foundation) for over 500 years. The farm buildings you see now date from the 19th century.



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BLACKSMITH

Next door is the blacksmith, which still operates as a forge today.



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SCHOOL LANE

The building on the corner was a girls' school in the 19th century but is now the parish hall. Across the road is a nursing home, built on the site of the former vicarage. Behind the school are almshouses, built in 1903 for older people of the parish.

School Lane has a number of dwellings from the 19th century.

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OLD YARDLEY PARK

Enjoy a leisurely walk through Old Yardley Park. Have a look at the copse in the middle of the park (12) – this was occupied by a manor house and moat up to around 1700.

Much of the park shows evidence of ridge and furrow (13), a pattern on the land that was made by ploughing centuries ago.

The tennis courts (14) have a history going back to 1884.

Spend time in the formal rose gardens (15), which have recently been restored.

You are now back at your starting point.



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BLAKESLEY HALL

A 10-minute stroll from Yardley Village, you will find Blakesley Hall, a very fine Tudor house. It is one of the oldest in Birmingham, built in the reign of Elizabeth I, in 1590. It was owned by Richard Smalbroke, from a wealthy merchant family.

For details on opening and special events, see:

<https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/blakesley-hall>