Turn left opposite Congresbury Farm into West Stree, take footpath past St. Anthony’s Catholic Church. Just past the iron gates of Congresbury Manor, the path turns left and then right. For that short spell you are on part of what was the Wiltsire and Berksshire Canal.

Turn left into Kemnay Gardens into Warwick Crescent. Turn left into Spa Road back towards town.

On the right hand side of the road is Royal Way, which marks the site of Magna Factory for making maps, maps and twice. It was founded in 1583 by Charles Magna, a Methodist who also found the United Church.

The bridge on the road marks the site of a bridge over the Wiltsire and Berksshire Canal.

This Canal was opened in January 1790 and ran from Swindon via Woodhouse to join the Thames and Severn Canal at Cricklade.

It had facilities to Cirencester and Cirencester.

It was finally abandoned in 1864 after twenty years of inactivity.

No.34-38 Spa Road, a pair of early 19th Century houses, made of red brick with Welsh slate mansard roofs, there is a fine full length mirror on the front wall of No.38 and the above plaque.

No.14 and 16 Spa Road were built about 1816 when the house was being developed as a Spa to rival Bath.

No.16 has an ornamental iron gate on the front.

No.14/12 are a terrace of four houses built in conjunction with the Spa. They have typical tall Regency wrought iron balconies. No.14 has a fine fan relief. No.13 and 15 are now homes but was the Regency Hall.

The Linus, formerly Brunswick House.

This is dated 1795, the year of the ill-fated marriage of the future George IV to Caroline Brunswick. (Now flats.) It was the home of Dr. William Kear in the late 18th Century.

The Rachel Fawler Centre

Built as a Congregational Church in 1773. The interior has interesting wrought iron balconies. It is now a community centre.

The courtyards in front of it was where another temple gate stood.

The Kings Arms Hotel

Built in 1720 where the Rise of the Tail Road from London was opened. The Old Company’s Coach from Bath to Bristol ran every evening at 7.30pm. The White Hart Coach from Bath to London changed horses every morning at 8.00am and the Sun Coach from Reading changed every afternoon at 4.00pm on its way to Bitter and Decapont. In total two coaches called at the Kings Arms, as they changed horses every eight miles; this must have been an essential service for about fifty hours.

The coachmen finished when the railway reached Chippenham in 1839 and visitors were finished from the station. As late as 1952 The Kings Arms had its own bus to pick up visitors from Malmesbury station.

By 1912 The Kings Arms became a stop on the Bath Electric Tramways, surprisingly enough a bus company. The Kings Arms was one of the earliest beds to have its own garage in supply period in decorating restrictions.

The Hasting (local courts) used to be held on the cobbled front and it is 1855 (where there was severe disturbance when the Riot Act was read and the Militia was called to.

End of Trail One.

Original Trail researched by Isabel unique for Malmesbury Town Trust.

Updated 2018 by Malmesbury Tourist Information Centre.

35 High Street, Malmesbury SN16 0LN

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Mellisham was founded beside the Avon, where the river was shallow enough to be fordable. Mellisham Handley extended to over 5,400 acres and included eight Mills, Westend Mill and Woodmill.

Adjoining Mellisham was Elkhorn and Chesham Forest, a Royal Hunting Forest much favoured by the Norman Kings.

Mellisham became a centre of weaving. The white broadcloth that was manufactured was exported through London to France, Spain and even Russia. It started as a cottage industry with the weavers working in their own homes, but gradually as the process was mechanised, the industry was concentrated in large Mills beside the Avon. The first working Mill in Mellisham was the Midford Mill which finally closed in 1838.

In 1843 Mellisham attempted to find a way to challenge the supremacy of Bath, but the enterprise was never successful. However, it left a fine sandstone façade to the Baptist Church in the High Street.

In 1850 the town was known as Woolhampton, and the town was extensively rebuilt. The High Street and the Market Place were paved at a cost of £15,000.

The market place was the centre of the town, and the market was held every Saturday.

In 1865, the town was visited by Queen Victoria, who was accompanied by Prince Albert and the Duke of Cambridge.

The Market Place was extended and a new Market Hall was built.

The Market Hall was a building that was originally used as a market and is now the Town Hall.

Behind the Town Hall was a building that was originally used as a warehouse and is now the Town Hall.

The adjacent buildings were used as offices and shops.

The Market Place was used for various purposes, including fairs and market days.

The market was held every Saturday and was attended by many people.

The market was a centre for the local community, providing a focal point for social and economic activities.

The market was also used for the sale of goods and services, including food, clothing, and household items.

The market was an important part of the town's history, reflecting the economic and social development of the area.

The market was an important part of the town's history, reflecting the economic and social development of the area.
Turn left opposite Corriggs Farm into West End. Take frequent left past St Anthony’s Catholic Church. Just past the iron entrance gates surrounding iron boundary fence, the path turns left and then right. For the short spell you are on part of what was the Wilshere and Berkshere Canal.

Turn left into Knaresworth Gardens into Warwick Crescent. Turn left into Spa found back towards town. On the right hand side of the road is Rose Walk, which marks the site of Maggs Factory for making mops, ropes and hose. It was founded in 1835 by Charles Maggs, a Melksham, who also founded the United Nations. The being in the road marks the site of a bridge over the Wilshere and Berkshere Canal.

This Canal was opened in 1799 and ran from Stenson to Melksham and Swindon to join the Thames and Severn Canal at Cricklade.

It had offshoots to Chippenham and Calne.

It was finally abandoned in 1904 after twenty years of closure.

No.16-28 Spa Road, a pair of early 19th Century houses, made of ashlar with Welsh slate mansard roof, there is a Spa Fire insurance box on the front wall of No 16 and the above plaque.

No.16 and 18 Spa Road were both about 1830 when Melksham was being developed as a spa town. No 18 has an ornamental porch surviving under the eaves.

No.16-24 are a terrace of four houses built in conjunction with the Spa. They have typical Regency wrought iron balconies. No 14 has a fine Box Relief. No.16-18 and 20 are now houses but was the Regency Hotel.

MELKSHAM TOWN TRAIL
No 1

This is dated 1795, the year of the ill-fated marriage of the future George IV to Caroline Brunswick. (Now flats.) It was the home of Dr William Kent in the late 19th Century.

The Rachel Fowler Centre

Built as a Congregational Church in 1775. The interior has interesting wrought iron balustrades. It is now a community centre.

The courtyard in front of it was where another turnpike gate stood.

The Kings Arms Hotel

Built in 1750 when the line of the Toll Road from London was altered. The Old Company’s Coach from Bath to Bristol called every morning at 7am. The White Hart Coach from Bath to London changed horses every morning at Eltham and the Five Coaches from Reading called every afternoon at 4pm on its way to Exeter and Devonport. In total ten coaches called at the Kings Arms, as they changed horses every eight miles, this must have necessitated miles for about fifty miles.

The coaching days finished when the railway reached Chippenham in about 1840 and visitors were fetched from the station. As late as 1958 The Kings Arms had its own bus to fetch visitors from Melksham Station.

By 1932 The Kings Arms became a stop on the Bath Electric Tractionways, surprisingly enough a bus company. The Kings Arms was one of the earliest hotels to have its own garage to supply petrol to visiting motorists.

The Harrows (local event) used to be held on the cobbled forecourt and in 1860 there were severe disturbances when the Road Act was read and the Militia was called out.

End of Trail One.
Melksham was founded beside the River Avon, where the river was shallow enough to be forded. Melksham Hundred extended to over 8,400 acres and included eight Mills, Wren's Wood and Woodwool.

Adjacent to Melksham was Blackmoor and Chippenham Forest, a Royal Hunting Forest much frequented by the Norman kings.

Melksham became a centre of weaving. The worsted broadcloth that was manufactured was exported through London to France, Spain and even Russia. It started as a cottage industry with the weavers working in their own homes, but gradually as the processes were mechanised, the industry was concentrated in large Mills beside the Avon. The last working mill in Melksham was the Mamers Mill which finally closed in 1888.

In 1814 Melksham attempted to found a Spa to challenge the supremacy of Bath, but the enterprise was never successful. Nowadays, it is a fine handwritten Regency Sunday Service in Spa Road at a moment.

In the early 19th Century, a Canal was built from Sonnington to Chippenham and Cirencester which ran through Melksham, but by 1934 it had been abandoned.

In the 19th Century, several industries were connected to the Towns, including the Spencer Engineering Works in Swanage Road and the Whitley Umbrella Works. In 1861 Charles Minge founded a business producing ropes, mains and tarps. Other industries included Tewce's, a further carpet factory founded in 1892, Beresford Carriage business founded in 1825 and there were Timbol Mills. These businesses have since disappeared. The remaining businesses include West End Furniture Ltd, the owners of Tewce's and Mills beside the Broughton Grifter Road and the Argo Company, manufacturers of modern textiles, which is now called Cooper Textiles.

The Market Place

The Abingdon Market Place is originally granted to Melksham in 1269 by Henry III, also held to fair at Melksham, on the 29th September. In 1520 this was changed into Tomsbury Market, and a three-day fair on the first, fourth, and ninth of September. In 1498 the Provost and Nam of Melksham who held the Manor of Melksham obtained the right to hold an additional fair on the 13th and 16th of July.

The fairs continued until 1888. It was the custom to devote the first day to the sale of cattle, sheep and horses, and the second day to sheep-marking. Travelling showmen exhibited models such as that of Niagara Falls, constructed of 800 weight of coloured glass, and the fair was attended by the "Baker's Show" of strolling players.

In the 19th Century the Market was held on alternate Tuesdays with Thursday, and it finally closed in 1899.

The Melksham Market Company was formed in 1847 and acquired from the masters of Place House an excellent house adjacent to the Market Place where they erected the Chinese Market House.

At the same time, the Wilts, Somerset and Weymouth were building an extension on the Railway from Chippenham to Wootton.

In the centre of the Market Place was a monumental well, the money for which was raised by public subscription, it can be seen in early photos and was demolished in 1952.

The Market Place was also the site of an early link-up and the stocks which are still in the possession of the Town Council but are currently stored in The Rachel Fowler Centre.

The Town Hall is similar to that of three bays with some bay pediment, it was designed by J. G. Evans of Tidmore

The building was originally a cheese store, later it was used as a hall hall and it is now the Assembly Hall, used for events.

The Urban District Council acquired the Town Hall in 1914 for £1,200.

The small building attached to the Town Hall by an archway, built at various times been a Police Station and the headquarters of the Fire Brigade but is currently a cottage run by The Rotary called The Art House.

Proceeding along King Street

On the right hand side is No 6, at present a china shop, The Savannah. It is in early 18th Century and was originally the White Hart Hotel and specialised in theatrical clientele.

In 1885, the various included a theatrical manager, two pantomimes and three choral stagers. Unfortunately, this led to its licensing being withdrawn in 1886 owing to it being run as a house of 18 rooms.

The next door house, No 5, has a 17th Century step from with a large amount of books.

No 10 is known as Quaker Cottage and the date 1706 can be seen over the door.

There had been Quakers in Melksham since 1659. The Quaker Meeting House being built in 1754. Quakerism gradually declined, in 1930 the Melksham Meeting was discontinued and the building is now Offices.

Continue down the road and on the opposite side of the road, No 54 is a handsome late 18th Century house with an admiral frontage and raised roof.

On the right hand side of the road, No 42, this is probably the site of the forge belonging to the Abbas of Amesbury, the house having a coating of the 17th Century.

The forge is marked by the small fountain in the wall. This was the last working forge in Melksham, closing in 1930.

Almost opposite No 42, sticking out onto the road is the temple cottage (6659). Melksham was temple about 1730, the accuracy raised from the temple was used for the palace of this world. As well as this temple there was one adjusting the Bachelors Tower Centre, another at Show, Lewesbury, Arwells and Bawell Lane.

They were still in place as late as 1865 when Thomas Wren, a baker of Melksham was summoned by Henry Heritage, the toll collector of passing the King Street Gate with a load of stones. The defendant indignantly contended that as the stone was for mending his own property he was exempt from toll. He was informed by the bench that the exemption was only for stone used in public works and was ordered to pay the toll with costs. The temple was finally abolished in 1847.

Farther along King Street, now known as Basington Road, are two very fine 18th Century farmhouses, firstly the Cogges Farm Barn. This marks the site of the warm belonging to Amesbury Abbey.

Cottages in Nannon-French for rabbit.

Rabbits were introduced into this country by the Normans. They were considered very rare and exotic and were even sold by the very rich. The farmhouse has an interesting projecting broad-eave that is visible from the road.
Go to the end of Union Street, turn left into Lowbourne and walk to the pedestrian crossing a few yards away.

This is the end of the Southern route. From here you can proceed to Central route A or alternatively carry on walking along Lowbourne to return to King George V Park.

C. Northern route (Green) 0.7 Miles

Follow the direction of the LWW sign at the end of the gardens at Murray Walk (see third paragraph from the end of the Central route A directions).

The original towpath follows the line of the old canal situated in the gardens of the houses on the right-hand side.

After about 125 metres the path opens up onto an open area where the canal has been completely filled in and grassed over. Cross the open area heading in the same direction and then over the end of Bowman’s Court onto the short tarmac path going north. The path peters out and the way ahead is a high grassy mound which is on the exact line of the old canal. The builders of the housing estate obviously used the canal as a dump for excess soil. Proceed along the top of the mound, following the line of the gardens of the houses. Alternatively, the parallel tarmac footpath of Awdry Avenue can be used.

In 100 metres cross Loxley Close and continue in the same direction for about 50 metres. On reaching the southern arm of Methuen Avenue (which is actually a crescent) cross over and follow the earth footpath north between the gardens in the same direction as the LWW sign.

After about 80 metres the path emerges onto Methuen Avenue – northern arm. Cross the road and the small grassy area at the entrance to the children’s play area. Here can be seen the next LWW sign pointing north along the footpath.

Follow the direction of the sign for about 100 metres to arrive at a steel kissing gate. This is the farthest point of this detailed walking route.

Looking out across the open field can be seen an electricity pylon. This was placed alongside the remains of the old Forest lock on the Wilts & Berks Canal. The lock cottage was demolished in 1961.

To continue with the rest of the walk – retrace your steps back to Murray walk and then head west towards the River Avon as detailed in Central route A.

Mellisham Wharf c1900  Church Street c1910  Forest Lock c1900
A. Central route (Red) 1.1 Miles

The walk starts from King George V Park at the Adventure Centre beside the River Avon.

Head south via the tarmac path forking left towards the tall poplar trees. Continue on past the children's play area on our right, towards the exit onto Lowbourne.

At the exit onto Lowbourne turn right and follow the footpath to the pedestrian crossing and cross the road when safe to do so.

Enter Ruskin Avenue next to the crossing and follow the path to the next corner. (Observe the Lost Waterway (LWW) sign on the opposite corner). Cross over and follow the sign direction for about 70 metres. You are now on the line of the old Wils & Berks Canal and to the north is Clackers Brook. To cross this brook the regency navigators had to build a culvert and embankment.

Turn left along the gravel footpath in a northerly direction and the way drops down with the embankment up above you on the left. If you wish you can at the lowest point drop down further to the bank of Clackers Brook and looking west towards King George V Park you can see the old culvert that was built by the navigators 200 years ago. An easier viewing route is by returning back to the top of the path and then descending to the right of the oak tree.

Returning to the path continue north and near the end of the embankment bear right into and then access to the far corner of a car parking area. Follow the footpath of Hampshire Place to the top.

Turn right for a short distance and then cross the road and follow the LWW sign into the path between the houses to come out onto the service road parallel to the main A3102 Sandridge Road.

Turn left for a short distance and then at the end of the service road cross over the main road with great care and continue towards King George V Park to the corner with the mini-roundabout joined by Forest Road.

Cross over Forest Road and you will see the next LWW sign on the lamp-post and just across the path you will see the very distinct brick outline of the bridge across the old Wils & Berks Canal.

Turn right and follow the path along Forest Road for about 300 metres until you see the LWW sign on the right side of the road pointing to the route forward along Murray Walk to the left.

Follow Murray Walk to the rear of the gardens of the houses on the right there you will see the LWW sign pointing north. This is the start point for the Northern route [See Northern route C].

Continue west along the wide tarmac path towards the River Avon. Along the way the path crosses the bridge over a small tributary stream of the main river.

On the left-hand-side, just before the river, take the small path down to the edge of the River Avon.

Follow the river bank path south back to King George V Park.

B. Southern route (Blue) 1.2 Miles

The walk starts from King George V Park at the Adventure Centre beside the River Avon.

Walk south along the edge of the River Avon to the Bath Road footpath. Turn right, walk a short way and cross the road by the pedestrian crossing.

Turn right and very soon turn left along the footpath keeping by the river and along the northern edge of Sainsbury’s supermarket car park until you reach the gate to Conigre Mead nature reserve.

Passing through the gateway follow the fork right and very shortly there is a viewing platform. From here is a close view of the River Avon.

Leaving the viewing platform follow the river along the grassy footpath to another viewpoint close to Western Way Challeymead bridge. The planned Melksham link canal will enter the river just at the other side of the bridge.

Continue along the grassy footpath for a short way and then come back onto the gravel footpath and turn right heading south. See if you can spot any of the creatures illustrated on the information boards.

The nature reserve narrows considerably at the southern end. Pass through the gateway and very shortly turn left through another gateway into the cemetery. This is very large. Follow the path north alongside the hedge for a short way then turn right in the direction of the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, which can be seen on the skyline.

The path winds about but when level with the next gateway to the nature reserve on the left, turn right and take the pathway in the direction of St Michael’s parish church, leaving the outer cemetery and passing into the inner one.

Exit the cemetery onto the driveway of St Michael’s Court (also known as “School Lane”) alongside the church. Turn left and follow the driveway, passing The Rectory on the left, into Canon Square, where you will see the war memorial which is the site of the annual remembrance day service.

Keep to the left and exit the square into Church Walk, which has some of the oldest buildings in Melksham, some dating back to the 16th century.

Follow Church Walk into the busy Bank Street. Turn left and walk via the high pavement to the pedestrian crossing. Cross the road and turn right. Walk a short distance towards the town centre and then turn left into Union Street opposite Church Walk.
The Wilts & Berks Canal was built between 1795 and 1810 linking the Kennet & Avon Canal (originally the Western Canal) at Semington near Melksham to Abingdon on the Thames in Berkshire. Branches connected Chippenham, Calne, Longcot and Wantage to the main line and freight included coal, corn, stone, iron, timber, lime and chalk. The North Wilts branch from Swindon to the Thames & Severn Canal at Latton (near Cricklade) was completed in 1819. When the Wilts & Berks was built Melksham had a population of just over 5,000 and the village of Swindon a mere 1,000.

The canal was finally abandoned by Act of Parliament in 1914. Some building has taken place on the line of the canal but much of it still exists in the form of lock and bridge remains, embankments, towpaths, hedgerows and ditches.

In canal-side towns and villages many roads and building names mark this era and there is strong support for restoring this significant piece of our transport heritage.

**The Walk**

**Towpath to Melksham Wharf**

Begin your walk at the Southern end of Melksham at the West End Inn, (Hungry Horse), Semington Road. Opposite the West End Inn (once West End Farm) is Waverley Gardens and you will find a footpath halfway along the north side of the road (1) - this was the canal towing path. Just to the South is the site of West End Farm bridge, and Drinkwater House, home to John Lewington, canal carrier and boatman.

The canal itself was on the right-hand side of the towpath and is now incorporated into the gardens of the houses in Kenilworth Gardens. The red brick wall on your left is built from a similar type of clay brick that was used on the canal. The bricks were baked in purpose - built kilns along the route of the canal and were larger than normal bricks to avoid tax and to speed up building - 700 W & B bricks were equivalent to 1000 statute bricks.

Follow the path until you reach the electricity substation on your left (2). The houses on this side were built during the canal’s lifetime and can be seen in old photographs of Melksham Wharf. The towpath ahead comes to a dead end at the site of the wharf - so take the path to the right and turn left into Kenilworth Gardens. Follow the road around Warwick Crescent and turn left at the junction with the busy Spa Road (3).

Looking ahead you will see a hump in the road - this is the site of Spa Road bridge (lowered in 1924) which carried the main Devizes to Melksham road over the canal. As you approach the ‘bridge' you will see a housing development to your right which is on the site of the rope factory owned by Charles Maggs (4). The road is aptly named Rope Walk. Ropes up to a quarter of a mile long were produced at this canal side factory and transported on the canal to Abingdon on the Thames and beyond. Charles Maggs also founded Wiltshire United Dairies, the first to develop condensed milk.

As you reach the brow of the 'bridge’ you will see Wharf Court on your left, a large development of flats, standing on the site of Melksham Wharf.

**Melksham Canal Trail**

Approximately 1 hour walk at a generous pace
Lowbourne Bridge to Forest Lock

Again the canal along here has been lost to gardens, however the towpath hedge remains. To retrace the line walk along Forest Road and left into Murray Walk – the canal is straight ahead of you where the road meets the field. It was at this point that the canal was spanned by a lift bridge (10), operated in a drawbridge fashion. Recent investigations have revealed that a high level trestle bridge was built from the canal at this point to the former Spencers Factory (now housing) at Beauchamp Road to provide a direct route for the workers at the engineering works. The bridge ran high above the flood plain on iron supports and the embankments, which still stand today. Back at Murray Walk road rejoin the narrow towpath which runs high on an embankment from the fields to the left. This short stretch takes you to Awdry Avenue where the entire embankment has been filled in and grassed over.

Follow the embankment past Bowmans Court and Loxley Close and straight over the minor road leading to Methuen Avenue and along the path through the houses. Cross another minor road and follow the hedge on your left behind the garages to the field, and the end of this trail. About 150 metres ahead is the site of Melksham Forest Lock (11) which raised the canal nine feet from the three mile pound through Melksham. The lock cottage (12), which stood to the left of the lock, was demolished in 1961.

Access to the cottage was only via the towpath.

The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to restore the canal to a navigable state from the Jubilee Junction with The Thames near Abingdon to the Kennet & Avon near Melksham via the Vale of the White Horse and Swindon. A major branch will also be restored along the proposed Cricklade Country Way north from Swindon to a new junction with The Thames & Severn Canal at Eysey. A new route has been proposed to link the Kennet & Avon Canal at Semington with Melksham; details can be found on the website.

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Produced with the support of Melksham Town Council.

This wharf was once a busy canalside settlement where, before the railway and a decent road system had emerged, grain for the Melksham mills was brought in, together with coal for the town from the Somerset coalfields. Unfortunately all signs of the canal have been destroyed, including the wharf house, which stood next to the bridge. Carefully cross the road and look down onto the canal line, now the garden of “Withleigh” (a private house) built in 1927 on the site of a smithy which served the canal. Here you can see the steps, which lead down to the canal towing path. The footpath here was closed in about 1948 and diverted to create Hardic Walk.

Melksham Wharf to Gallows Bridge

Almost opposite the entrance to Wharf Court is Hardic Walk – take this path to Milton Avenue. Turn right here and then left into Sangster Avenue – the canal is now on your left in the back gardens of the houses along this road.

At Pembroke Road turn left and just past the small electric substation building look back into the gardens on the left, you will be able to see the tree/hedgerow which was the towpath hedge. Originally the hedge was planted as hawthorn, a strong and cheap method of fencing. It was roughly around this spot that Gallows Bridge footbridge stood (5).

Gallows Bridge to Lowbourne Bridge

Turn right into Ruskin Avenue and walk northwards past the residential home Brookside on your right – built directly on the line of the canal (6). Just before you reach the army cadet centre take the footpath to your right but stop before you come to the end of the tall wire fence on your left – here a few trees mark the old line. The land enclosed within the fence is part of the large embankment that took the canal 110 ft above Clackers Brook (7). It was around this point that the ‘2 miles to Semington’ milestone would have stood. As you follow the path around to the left you will cross the brook below at the base of the embankment. The face of its box ashlar culvert has survived well.

The canal continues northwards in the form of gardens however, so you must detour to the right following the concrete path between the flats in Hampshire Place and take the narrow path leading to Sandridge Road (8). Turn left here and at the junction with Forest Road you will see the bridge parapet ahead of you. This parapet formed the north wall of Lowbourne Road bridge (9) and now remains as the most significant structure to survive in Melksham. Work was carried out by the Canal Trust to repair the parapet and approach wall in 1995.
**MELKSHAM IS GREAT**

MELKSHAM IS GREAT is a project by artist Verity-Jane Keefe for and about the town of Melksham. A series of sculptures have been made and installed, on a route developed from ancient pathways, connecting the historic town centre, with the new development to the east and back round again. Made at Novacast Foundry in Melksham, a gem within the town, continuing a long established tradition of metal casting.

The works have been developed following a four year period, looking closely, researching and talking to residents, revealing the everyday brilliance of Melksham. The sculptures are in celebration of the industry’s and local phenomena that have defined and shaped the town, and made it great. Follow the route or keep your eyes peeled as you’re going about your everyday travels. Melksham is Great.
Melksham House, 27 Market Place (Grade II)
Melksham House was the home of George Blathwayt at the beginning of the War. He and his wife moved to Somerset in 1916. The House was then given over to the British Red Cross and became Melksham Hospital No. 2 in November 1916. It housed 32 soldiers in 6 wards. After the War it was bought by the Avon India Rubber Works as their Sports and Social Club.

New Hall, Market Place
Built in 1877, New Hall was used as a reading room and accommodation for lectures and meetings. In March 1915 it became the location of the regular Military Tribunals which examined the cases of those men who were objecting to being conscripted.

Second Cottage Hospital, between 24 – 22 Bank Street
The Cottage Hospital was opened in 1895 and agreed to accept up to 50 wounded soldiers at the outbreak of the War. In 1938, a new hospital was built on Spa Road. The Cottage Hospital was used under the war time powers of the Wiltshire County Council and re-opened as a maternity hospital; many women came from London to have their babies in Melksham because it was safer. After WWII, it was used as an educational centre until it was taken over by the Labour Club in 1984.

Liberal Club, 26 Bank Street
The Club opened in 1903 and from November 1914, like the Conservative Club across the road became part of Melksham No.1 Red Cross Hospital.

Avon India Rubber Co Ltd, Bath Road
The Avon Rubber Co moved to Melksham in 1890. During the First World War, so important was the output of the factory, that the Ministry of Munitions took over production from November 1915. Avon India Rubber produced a whole range of rubber goods for the Ministry of War including tyres, lifesaving apparatus, hosing and tubing.

Spencer & Co Ltd, Beanacre Road
Spencer and Co was founded by Charles Spencer in 1884 and moved to the Beanacre site in 1903. The present Foundry Close is a reminder that this was once the site of the Spencer Foundry. In 1914 there were 750 employees. Spencer & Co received contracts from the Ministry of Munitions to produce 9.2 and 18 pounder high explosive shells. They employed a large number of women and even had to open new facilities to accommodate them.

B Sawtell & Sons Ltd, Old Broughton Road
In 1859, Benjamin Sawtell founded a business in Chalmyde filling palliasses with straw for the army during the Crimea War. With his sons, he opened B. Sawtell & Sons, commencing a business cleaning feathers used for bedding at their factory in Old Broughton Road in 1892. During WWI, the company returned to their support of the war effort by supplying purified feathers for military bedding.

Wiltshire United Dairies Ltd, New Broughton Road
Wiltshire United Dairies was founded by the son of the rope manufacturer Charles Maggs. In 1888 the factory moved into a former dye works by the Town Bridge on New Broughton Road. They merged with a number of dairies including the North Wiltshire Dairy and Dairies. By August 1912 Wiltshire United Dairies ran several wholesale depots in London for liquid milk and one for 'fancy provisions'. Condensed milk was made at Melksham.

Conservative Club (Constitutional Club), 17 Bank Street (Grade II)
This 19th century building became a ward for the Melksham No.1 Red Cross Hospital in November 1914 accommodating around 30 convalescing troops.

Acknowledgements
The Melksham Remembers Project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Melksham Town Council and Wiltshire Council Melksham Community Area Board.
During 2018, as part of the First World War Centenary Commemorations, volunteers took part in a project to find out what was happening in Melksham during the First World War. This walking trail is a result of their researches and highlights some of the buildings that played a role in Melksham life during that time.

You can take the locations in any order, but they are numbered, starting and finishing at Church Street Car Park, and perhaps enjoying some refreshments in one of the many cafés and pubs in the town centre either on route or at the end.

Find out more on the Melksham Remembers website [www.melkshamremembers.org.uk](http://www.melkshamremembers.org.uk). Follow our future activity on the Facebook page MelkshamRemembers.

You can also explore the shops of Melksham during the First World War with your smartphone. Please use this QR code to find out more about the shops and buildings in Melksham town centre on your smartphone.

1. **Melksham War Memorial, Church (Grade II)**
   The War Memorial was unveiled on 23 August 1919 by Lord Methuen. The memorial cost £350 and the Vicar of St Michael, Canon Edwin Wyld whose son, Captain George Wyld was killed in December 1914, raised subscriptions of £200 from the family members of those remembered on the memorial and paid the remaining £50 himself.

2. **Church of St Michael, Church Walk (Grade II*)**
   This Grade II* listed church dates back to the Norman period with extensive alterations in the late medieval period and in 1845 by Thomas Wyatt. The Churchyard contains a number of WW1 Commonwealth War Grave Commission graves.

3. **Town Hall, Market Place (Grade II)**
   This building was built in 1847 as a Cheese Market. After the failure of the Melksham Market Company in 1898 the property was sold to Charles Awdry. It was purchased by the Melksham Urban District Council in 1914.