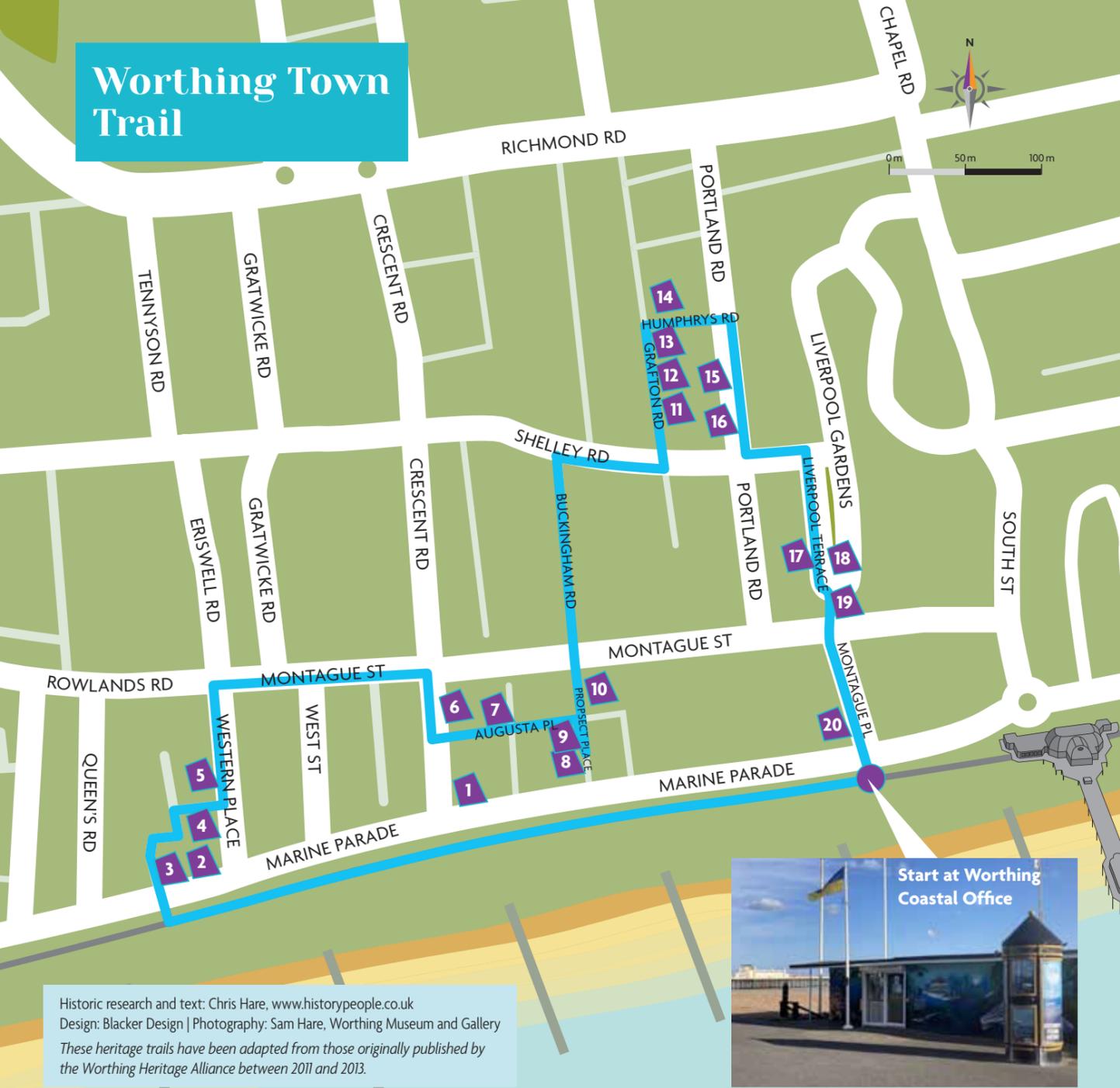


Worthing Town Trail



Start at Worthing Coastal Office

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 These heritage trails have been adapted from those originally published by the Worthing Heritage Alliance between 2011 and 2013.

Smuggling and Rioting

For centuries, Worthing had been a small agricultural hamlet with an interest in fishing, then, within a generation, the population increased from about 500 people to over 2000. A generation after that it had doubled in size again. New, affluent residents, had to learn to live with poorer people, who moved into Worthing from the countryside, looking for work and accommodation. Not all these working folk were content with the low wages of lawful employment, but instead joined the growing ranks of smugglers, who landed contraband on the Sussex coast in the early nineteenth century.

It was said that some of the wealthy landed families of Worthing turned a blind eye to smuggling, or even condoned this criminality. On the night of 22nd February 1832, a battle took place in the streets of the town between the smugglers and the coastguards. William Cowerson, one of the smugglers' leaders, was shot dead by an officer of the coastguard.



For more information about the heritage trail series, please go to www.timeforworthing.uk

Rotary PEOPLE OF ACTION
 Worthing Rotary is pleased to sponsor this publication in recognition of the importance of the heritage of the town. Rotary in Worthing started a century ago and has made great strides in improving the quality of life of countless individuals through its devotion to community service. The first proper meeting was held at the Central Hotel (now the Grand Victorian) near the Station, on 1 March 1922. All our members are volunteers, working together in a common cause to help those in need. If you are interested in joining us or find out more, please get in touch. Search Worthing Rotary or email: worthingrotary@gmail.co.uk

Start at The Coastal Office. As you stand on the Prom, facing the Coastal Office, turn to your right and walk westwards, past the Lido which was built as a bandstand in 1925 and operated as an open-air swimming pool from 1957 – 1989.

As you walk along the Prom, to your right you will see an information sign relating the tragic story of a Lancaster bomber and its crew that crashed near here in December 1944.

1 Further on, also on your right, you will notice the distinctive 'bow-fronted' terraces, some date back to the Regency period, but some are modern replicas.



2 Soon, on your right you will see the distinctive turret of the **The Old Lifeboat House**. The house, now a private residence, was built in



1874. The lifeboat was housed in the lower storey of the building, while the little tower was a place for observation. The lifeboat was launched from a ramp close to the pier. A lifeboat was stationed in Worthing from 1853 until 1930. An annual Lifeboat Day was a big event in the town, with the bedecked vessel being pulled through the streets by horses. It was the tragic loss of eleven fishermen attempting to rescue the crew of a stricken barque in 1850 that led to the stationing of a lifeboat in Worthing.

3 Next you will come to the **The Old Coastguard House**, which dates back to 1822, at which time smuggling was endemic along the Sussex coast. Clashes between coastguards and smugglers, both at sea and on land, were frequent events. A Lieutenant Seeworthy was in charge of the Coastguard House in those days. By the 1850s, effective policing, reformed tariffs, and an improving economy had all combined to make the smuggling of old a receding memory.



Now use the next pedestrian crossing to cross the road safely, then make your way into the twitten (old Sussex word for an alley) that runs from the Old Coastguard's House.

4 The cobblestone twitten wall to your left marks the historic boundary between Worthing and Heene. During the days when smuggling was rife, the Worthing Town Commissioners (the council of their day) ordered it to be built with the aim of keeping out



the Heene community, whom they identified as lawless. The Chairman of the Commissioners at that time was Sir Edward Ogle and hence the wall came to be known as Ogle's Wall.

Turn left and then right until you come to:

5 **Edinburgh Cottages** in Western Row are one of Worthing's best kept secrets and today very popular as holiday homes. It should be remembered, however, that when they were cottages for fishermen, whole families would have squeezed into these small dwellings. Worse still, sanitary provisions were of a very basic nature, and this, coupled with the general stock in trade of fishermen, including clothing, nets, etc., suggests that conditions in the Row, especially



in summer, may not have been very fragrant!
On exiting Western Row, turn left into Western Place and then right into Montague Street.

On your right you will see a row of old cottages at the north end of West Street, survivals from Worthing's early days and probably the home of fishermen.

Continue along Montague street until you come to a T-Junction. To your left is Crescent Road, ahead of you is the pedestrianised part of Montague Street, and to your right is West Buildings. Turn right into West Buildings.

6 This once marked the western extremity of the resort town of Regency Worthing. Fields lay between here and the cottages of 'Little Heene'. Not until the 1870s was the gap filled with new housing, following the creation of the West Worthing Commissioners in 1865, charged with developing the Heene end of town.

Turn left into Augusta Place.

The road was named after Princess Augusta, the second daughter of George III and sister of George IV. She stayed in Worthing during the winter of 1829–30, still grieving for the loss of her husband, Sir Brent Spencer (as Sir Brent was not of noble birth, they married secretly and she could not grieve publicly for him). The house where she stayed was named Augusta Place following her visit.

7 On your left, the former New Street Brewery (corner of Augusta Place and New Street) once went by the memorable title of 'Pacy's Bloodhole'. This nickname referred to the habit of local fishermen gutting their fish in the bar!

Walk along Augusta Place towards the multi-storey car park, turn right into Prospect Place

8 **Numbers 1 and 1A** **Prospect Place** constitute one of the earliest buildings in the town centre, dating back to the late



eighteenth century. Only the timely intervention of Worthing's then Conservation Officer, Eric Cockain, ensured that the building was not sold at auction for redevelopment. The inlaid porchway is reminiscent of an upturned boat. At the back of the building are porthole windows, all of which suggests that someone of a nautical disposition was once in residence.

9 At the back of 1 and 1A is a small building with a corrugated roof. This is all that remains of a building that was once the barracks of the Salvation Army when they first came to Worthing in 1883–84. The Salvationists faced bitter opposition in the town from the 'Skeleton Army', which violently disrupted their marches and prayer meetings. On one hot summer's evening in 1884 a mob several hundred strong attacked the Salvation Army barracks, smashing all the windows.

Retrace your steps, re-cross Augusta Place into the northern part of Prospect Place.

10 The flint cobble-fronted cottages in **Prospect Place** contrast with the bow-fronted terraces of Montague Place and Bedford Row, where the wealthier citizens lived. However, residents here in the nineteenth century were not poor by the standards of the day and these homes were superior to those in nearby Surrey Street, which in turn were more desirable than the slums in the area that is now Portland and Chatsworth Roads.



Walk across the pedestrianised section of Montague Street and into Buckingham Road.

Buckingham Road is unremarkable and largely dominated by an early 1970s high-rise car park, of a design very current at that time.

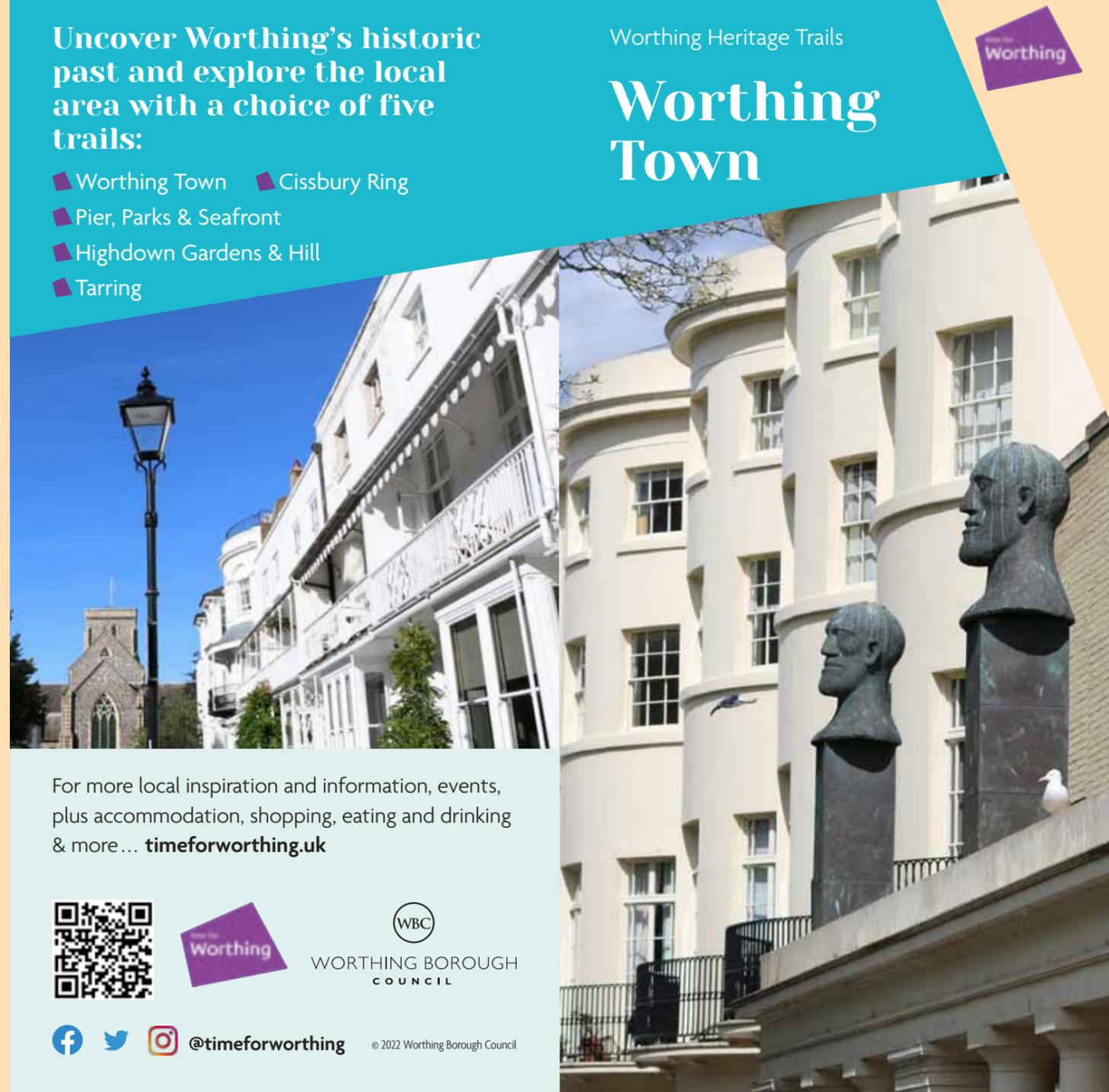
Walk to the end of Buckingham Road and turn right into Shelley Road.

The Shelley family were once landowners in Worthing, although the family had much larger estates north of the town and at Horsham. Sir Timothy Shelley was the first Chairman of the Worthing Town Commissioners (forerunner of the council), appointed in 1803.

Worthing Town

Uncover Worthing's historic past and explore the local area with a choice of five trails:

- Worthing Town
- Cissbury Ring
- Pier, Parks & Seafront
- Highdown Gardens & Hill
- Tarring



For more local inspiration and information, events, plus accommodation, shopping, eating and drinking & more... timeforworthing.uk



Introduction to Worthing Town

This walk takes you around the historic centre of the seaside town of Worthing. Before 1750, there was a small agricultural village at the top end of High Street, but the development of the seaside area only really began following the visit of Princess Amelia, the youngest daughter of King George III in 1798.

Worthing became a popular seaside resort during the Late Georgian and Regency periods, before the economy faltered in the 1830s. The arrival of the railway in 1845, ushered in a new period of prosperity. The opening of the first pier in 1862, and sale of the last town centre fields for housing in the 1870s, closed the door forever on Worthing as a rural backwater, and led to the town being granted borough status in 1890. This trail takes you back across the decades to those years of rapid change, and to the buildings that survive from the nineteenth century days of confidence and expansion.

Duration: The walk is about 2 miles (3.25 km) and should take about an hour and a half to complete.

Terrain: The route is on paved ground and involves the crossing of the seafront road at a pedestrian crossing. Other, smaller roads will be crossed and there are some narrow pavements. Please be mindful of traffic when crossing roads.

Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Walking briskly can help you build stamina, burn excess calories and make your heart healthier. Getting out in the open air and in nature has many health benefits for everyone.

We hope you enjoy exploring Worthing's rich heritage. For details of other trails in this series, plus more local area information: timeforworthing.uk

- There are five trails in total:
- Worthing Town
 - Cissbury Ring
 - Tarring
 - Pier, Parks and Seafront
 - Highdown Gardens & Hill

Cross over the pedestrianised Montague Street and into:



20 **Montague Place**, formerly Montague Lawn, dates back to the late eighteenth century and the origin of Worthing as a seaside resort. Notice the bow-fronted windows on the buildings to the south. The terrace was once fronted by gardens – hence the name 'lawn' – but these were removed in the 1920s. The large red brick wall on the opposite side of the road to the terrace forms the western elevation of a commercial building where once stood Sumner Lodge, one of Worthing's most imposing houses, which, in its early days was let out to wealthy visitors during the summer season – indeed it is marked on early maps as 'Summer Lodge'.



Cross Marine Parade on the pedestrian crossing and return to the Beach Office.

18 The **'Desert Quartet'** of four monumental male heads was sculpted by Dame Elisabeth Frink in 1990. Her original design for a tableaux of horses, men and a dog, was rejected by councillors, one of whom objected to the anatomical detail of the naked figures. Some have seen in the Desert Quartet (or 'Frink Heads' as they are known locally) the artist's considered response to the rejection of her first designs. Nonetheless, the bronze heads are now estimated to be worth several millions of pounds. Dame Elizabeth died in 1999.

19 Holder's drapery and haberdashers shop occupied a site on the corner of Liverpool Terrace and Montague Street from 1900 until it closed in 1973. This area in front of the shop became known as Holder's Corner – a name that is still in use today. A harsh concrete stairway now leads down into Montague Street.



A food rationing queue outside Holder's Corner in 1940

Cross Montague Street.

Note the blue plaque commemorating Holder's Corner.



Turn right into Humphrys Road



Humphrys was a Victorian benefactor, who left money for the maintenance of the almshouses that still bear his name.

Turn right into Portland Road.

15 On your right you will come to a distinctive knapped (split) flint building that was originally built in 1861 as the **Christ Church Schools**. Its flint work shows highly crafted 'knapping', where the stones are split and laid, as far as possible, to resemble brick courses.



The current premises have been expanded into what was once a neighbouring residential property.

Leave Portland Road and turn left into Shelley Road, and then right into Liverpool Terrace.

17 **Liverpool Terrace**, to your right, was completed by 1830 and commemorates Lord Liverpool, Prime Minister 1812–27. The terrace is very similar in appearance to those found at Brighton and represents a refinement of the early style of bow-fronted terrace, typified by Bedford Row, built nearly 30 years earlier. Alexander Terrace (opposite Liverpool Terrace), however, is a modern replica.



Continue southwards along Portland Road, until you come to:

16 The **Hare and Hounds** has been a public house since 1852, although the building itself dates from the late eighteenth century.

Turn left into Grafton Road.

11 The **mid-Victorian villas** in Grafton Road typify the style of home that professional middle-class people, such as doctors, solicitors, and accountants, would aspire to own. All such properties would have servants to look after the residents. Indeed, even the more modest homes of tradesmen and skilled artisans would have had at least one servant to meet their needs.



Continue northwards until, on your right, you come to:

12 The **Provident and Relief Benefit Society** opened their purpose-built soup kitchen in 1892, during a harsh winter when unemployment was high. The soup on offer was in reality more of a stew, consisting primarily of mutton and pearl barley. No salt was added. The idea was to fill the bellies of the poor, rather than to entice them back with a tasty meal. The soup kitchen closed in 1924, although a temporary one in Ivy Arch Road was opened during the winter of 1938–39, when unemployment reached record levels in the town.



Next you come to:



13 The **Spiritualist Church** is built in the Art Nouveau style. Note in particular the stained glass windows which are a distinctive feature. Celebrity spiritualist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (author of the Sherlock Holmes novels), performed the opening in March 1926. Opposite the church, No. 55 Grafton Road, built in 1836, was once a dairy.

14 **Christ Church** is one of the most impressive flint built buildings in Sussex. As well as knapping (use of split flints in construction), galeting was also employed, whereby flint flakes were placed in the mortar to strengthen it. Built in 1843, the church was the first in the town in the neo-gothic style. Unlike the Chapel of Ease (later St Paul's), Christ Church had 'free' pews and was therefore open to people of all classes. A fishermen's gallery in the southern transept was later added. The explorer John Turtle Wood, who rediscovered Ephesus, is buried in the churchyard.

