



Start at The John Selden

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

Old Durrington Remembered

Alfred Overington was born in Durrington in 1913, where his family had run the local forge for generations:

“The forge closed about 1930 – round about then – because farming went away from this part of the country. We used to shoe all the horses from Goring Castle (sic) and all the farms around. When I was a schoolboy there used to be at least ten or twelve horses waiting outside the forge in the mornings. So it was quite a busy agricultural area in my youth...”

“I’m not sure [my father] wanted me to become a blacksmith because it was sweated labour. I don’t think anyone would voluntarily go in to be a blacksmith... In my youth they used to start the forge at 6 o’clock in the morning and be on ‘til 5 or 6 at night. But in the summer ... they’d stop from 12 until about 3 o’clock in the afternoon – because it’d be too hot”.

Gillian Wells, born in Durrington in 1935, remembered the Rev. Penfold as being “a nice man,” although he was, “always very correct.” He was very tall, but his wife was “very tiny,” although she gave birth to a large family of sons and daughters. Gillian remembered that the couple opened up their extensive gardens once a year:

“I remember the Vicarage because there was an annual fete every year so the Vicarage gardens were open and all the stalls in the field next to it with pony rides and hoopla and things like that... But as children, on the Vicarage lawn we used to dance round a maypole and one of the vicar’s daughters used to sit at an open window playing a piano so that music floated out and the children danced round the maypole.”

Gillian remembered it all being “rather lovely.”

Further Reading

How to Make a Boring Life Sound Interesting, by Jean Kirk. A fascinating and personal history of Durrington and Salvington.

Edwardian Durrington and Salvington, the story of a community between 1901 – 1913, by Jane Dore. A vivid picture of a community on the threshold of change.

Durrington, sources for local history, by Chris Hare



The John Selden

rule of the King. John Milton described Selden as ‘the chief of learned men reputed in this land.’ Selden died in 1654, having lived to see the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. In the nineteenth century a pub called ‘The Spotted Cow’, demolished in 1910, stood on the site of the present-day ‘John Selden.’

2 Old cottages and buildings There is a fine selection of eighteenth and nineteenth century houses in, or to the east of, Salvington Road. **Walnut Tree Cottage** in Ashacre Lane is a Grade II listed building dated 1762. Most impressive is The Old House opposite in Ashacre Lane (not easily seen from the road due to trees and bushes), which is believed to



Walnut Tree Cottage



Half Moon House

3 Walking up Half Moon Lane, we come to two historic buildings on the left. The first, no. 11, dates from the early nineteenth century with later additions. Today it is **Half Moon House**, but was once the Half Moon Inn, which was later converted into a laundry with adjacent tea rooms. The green at the front was once occupied by Salvington Pond.

4 **No. 43 Half Moon Lane** dates from the late eighteenth century and has a mansarded or ‘hipped roof,’ a style of building abandoned in the nineteenth century. At the time of writing the property was up for sale, having been occupied by the same family for 130 years. Salvington Nurseries, also known as Taylor’s Nurseries were attached to the property.



43 Half Moon Lane

have been a medieval hall house that was remodelled in the seventeenth century and thoroughly restored in 1911. It is believed to be the oldest surviving building in Salvington or Durrington.



Old Sussex House

5 Returning to Salvington Road, we come to **Old Sussex House**, which occupies a significant area of ground on the northern side of the road, just to the west of The John Selden and dates back to the seventeenth century. It was originally a farmhouse, and retained an agricultural use until the 1960s. There is very impressive ‘knapped’ flintwork on the front elevation, the work of skilled craftsmen, who could shape flint to fit together like bricks. Within the grounds is Old Sussex Cottage, which itself dates from the late eighteenth century. Outbuildings, including a barn, still survive and lend a distinctly rustic feel to this part of Salvington.



Durrington First School

6 **Durrington First School** was originally built in 1908 to serve children in Durrington up until the age of 13 (after which schooling was voluntary and dependent on scholarships and exam grades). It is reported that the first pupil enrolled into the school was Albert Charman,

who left a year later to find work. He was killed fighting during the First World War. The current school building was opened in 1937 to cater for a rising roll, largely drawn from the expanding estate of council houses north of Salvington Road. Discipline at the school appears to have broken down during the Second World War, with ‘children out of control and committing serious offences.’ In 1944 the school was temporarily closed after children were said to have ‘run wild’ and caused considerable damage. No such reputation hangs over the school today.

7 **Durrington Library** was opened in 1938, the year after the new school and was a sign of the growing population of Durrington, which was rapidly changing from an agricultural village into a suburb of Worthing. It was at this time that Salvington Lane was widened and resurfaced and renamed Salvington Road. The library was remodelled with a glass roof in 1986.



Durrington Library

As you walk on westwards along Salvington Road, notice the 1968 Swanedan telephone exchange (on your right), built in 1968 (that replaced the house known as ‘Red Cedars’), and regarded as a great innovation, as henceforth all calls in Salvington and Durrington were to be automatically connected without having to go through the operator. Note, also, on the south side, Bakers Court, built in 1987. This was originally the site of Cootes Bakery, built and established by the Coote family in 1900, until sold to Knowles Bakery in 1946



The Park View (formerly The Lamb)

8 **The Park View** (until recent years known as ‘**The Lamb**’) The first known written reference to The Lamb pub is in a guide book of 1808, although an inn on the site may have existed by 1740. According to local legend, the first landlord was a retired shepherd – hence ‘The Lamb.’ The current building was constructed in 1914 and completely replaced the old building. Records survive from 1769 of Thomas Lilywhite

and John Parsons of Durrington being fined three shillings and fourpence ‘for drinking in the Public House in time of Divine Service,’ although somewhat perversely Edward Pascoe was fined ten shillings for drinking in his own home during the church service – perhaps he was an old offender? At this time, parish accounts show that two gallons of beer were regularly provided for ‘corpse watchers’ – those paid to watch over the deceased of the parish until burial. It was considered a great slight on the memory and reputation of the dead to allow a corpse to be unaccompanied between death and committal.

9 **The Old Forge and Rose Cottage** The Overington family were associated with these buildings for over 250 years. Henry Overington came to Durrington from Hampshire in 1740 to run the local blacksmith’s. The family continued to run a business on the property until recent times. During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, Overingtons held all the important offices of the parish, including Overseer of the Poor, Highway Surveyor, Churchwarden, and Parish Constable. They were also parish councillors and latterly, town councillors. When party-politics came into local government in the 1950s, Alfred Overington refused to adopt a party political colour and remained a ‘Durrington representative’ for many years, until finally defeated by the Conservatives.



The Old Forge and Rose Cottage

In the nineteenth century, a 'Dame School' was run by Avis Overington from Rose Cottage. In 1959, one of her descendants claimed that naughty children were tied to the grandfather clock in the cottage, forcing them to be still, for fear they might pull it over on themselves!

A row of flint cottages that stood in front of The Forge, facing Durrington Hill, were demolished about the same time as the new Lamb was built; it is ironic, therefore, that modern flint-faced houses have recently been built on the spot.



Greenstede House

10 Opposite the new cottages in Durrington Hill is **Greenstede House**, formerly Hebron, which has a steeply pitched roof and some fine knapped flintwork. It is believed to date from about 1600.

11 Continuing north up Durrington Hill is the English Heritage Grade II Listed parish church of **St. Symphorian's**, which was consecrated in 1916 and only fully completed in 1941. Rev. William Penfold was responsible oversaw the construction and was a man greatly respected in the community. This twentieth-century church does incorporate into its structure remnants of a medieval chapel that was allowed to fall into decay during the seventeenth century. It would appear that the congregation at that time were at odds with their vicar, William Stanley, whom they accused



St. Symphorian's

of neglecting his church duties and being more interested in promoting the royalist cause during the English Civil War. Stanley was ejected from his living but later reinstated, only to be expelled a second time. His successor, William Pixe, was himself removed from office after the Restoration of Charles II. By 1677, the chapel was in such a terrible state of disrepair that the people of the parish asked to be exempted from having to contribute to its upkeep, as the cost would be more than they could bear and would lead to 'theire utter ruine and undoing'. In 1680, the church authorities took pity of Durrington and the parish was united with West Tarring and the chapel was allowed to become a ruin, amongst which generations of local children made a playground.

12 Taking care of the traffic on this often busy road, cross over to the eastern side of Durrington Hill where you will find **The Manor House** and



The Manor House

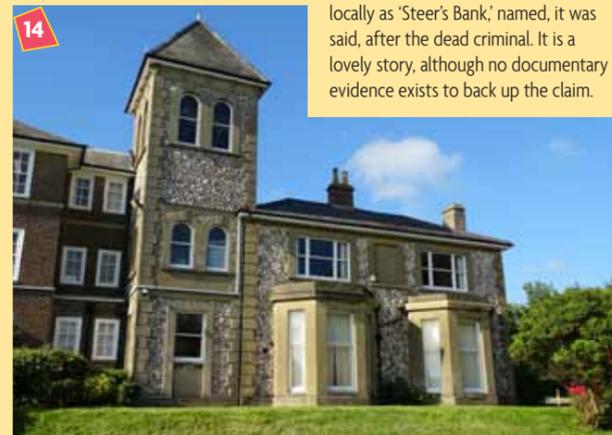
the Dower House. Both these buildings were once part of the same property and owned by consecutive Lords of the Manor of Durrington. The current buildings are eighteenth century, but a manor house stood on this site from medieval times. The old coach house and associated buildings were converted into their present use in 1961.

Optional detour 1

13 You may wish to continue northwards up Durrington Hill, passing the flint-dressed **Elmbank Cottages** on your left. Eventually you will come to the junction of the A27 Arundel Road, with Salvington Hill continuing northwards.

The area north of the A27 is known as High Salvington, and includes some buildings of interest, including the oldest working windmill in Sussex. If on foot please only cross here at the pedestrian crossing: this is the busiest road in Worthing and should not be crossed in any other way.

14 Across Arundel Road and to your left is **Swandean**, which today houses a hospital for the severely mentally ill. It was originally built in the 1860s for



Swandean



Elmbank Cottages

the Dalbaic family, who sold the house in 1896 when it was converted into an Isolation Hospital following a severe outbreak of typhoid fever in the town. In later years children suffering from Scarlet Fever were treated at Swandean. Before a telephone was installed in 1907, the matron used to cycle down into Worthing if she needed the assistance of a doctor and carried a stout stick over her handlebars in case she met with any 'rough elements' while passing through the wooded area of north Durrington.

Edgar Overington, when acting in his capacity as Highways Surveyor, claimed that the corpse of a gibbeted highwayman, still welded into his chains, was found in a bank on the Arundel Road by Swandean. Overington had expected to find such gruesome remains at the spot, as it was known locally as 'Steer's Bank,' named, it was said, after the dead criminal. It is a lovely story, although no documentary evidence exists to back up the claim.

Return now to Durrington Hill and walk down Durrington Hill, back past St. Symphorian's and cross over New Road into Durrington Lane. You will see the 1920s Recreation Ground on your right and then you will come to Pond Lane, turn right here.

15 There was a pond in **Pond Lane** until it was drained by the local authority in 1985, by which time it had become heavily silted and something of a tipping ground. Heavy rains in 1995 and 2000 saw the area flood, although improved drainage in recent years seems to have overcome the problem. Two historic properties remain in Pond Lane. The Thatched Cottage, on the left, dates back to at least the mid eighteenth century (in 2023 it was severely damaged in a fire and awaits restoration at the time of writing). Fifty years ago it was the home of 'Adele,' the famous beautician. Opposite is **Durrington Farmhouse**, which also dates from the eighteenth century. In the 1960s and 70s it was home to Betty Anderson MP, created Baroness Skrimshire in 1970. She was the first female Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons.



St. Mary's Farmhouse



Durrington Farmhouse

Optional detour 2

16 **St. Mary's Farmhouse.** You may continue to walk southwards along Durrington Lane for about 500m until you come, on your right, to St. Mary's Farmhouse, another eighteenth century farmhouse and listed building. St. Mary's suffered two unexplained fires in the 1970s, and the owners sought its demolition. However pressure from local residents ensured the building's survival and it was fully restored. Sadly, the equally historic outbuildings, including a barn and flint walls, were demolished and a modern development stands on the site today.

The tale of two villages

Today it makes perfect sense to link Salvington and Durrington into one Heritage Trail, but historically they were not a single entity. Salvington, until 1902, was part of the parish of West Tarring. For 27 years, Salvington formed part of Durrington Parish, then in 1929, both became part of 'Greater Worthing.' As the mass of residential development engulfed both villages during the course of the twentieth century, so the cluster of old buildings in both places appeared, incorrectly, as if they were two halves of one ancient village.

There is an engaging theory that the origin of the name Salvington lies in it being the farmstead of Seawolf, an Anglo-Saxon settler; while Durrington, apparently, was a swine pasture for Deora's people. Until recent times, local people pronounced the name of their village as 'Derentun,' which is exactly how it was spelt in old documents of the medieval period.

Duration: 90 minutes, linear route, 1.5 miles (2.4 km).

Terrain: Follows pavements and crosses local roads. Steep incline in places.

Nearby trails: Tarring; West Durrington.

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.

The Worthing Heritage Alliance is an umbrella organisation of the towns historical, archaeological, geological, and amenity societies, and exists to promote and protect Worthing's heritage – past and present.

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

- Worthing Town
- Cissbury Ring
- Pier, Parks & Seafront
- Highdown Gardens & Hill
- Tarring
- The Blue Plaque Trail
- West Durrington



A view of Durrington in 1858

We hope you enjoy exploring Worthing's rich heritage. For details of other trails in this series, plus more local area information: timeforworthing.uk and timeforworthing.uk/worthing-heritage-trails. For details of local train and bus timetables and routes see www.westsussex.gov.uk/travelinfo



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