

Explore Ottery St Mary

The Development of the Market Town

Ottery St Mary is first mentioned in the Domesday book in 1086. In 1226 it was granted a Royal Charter, permitting a market, originally at the Flexton, the heart of the old town, next to the parish church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin.



Ottery St Mary Town Square c.1905

Even though founded probably earlier, the first mention of the church was in 1259 when it was consecrated by the Bishop of Exeter. Little of this church remains as in 1337 John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, gained a Royal Licence from Edward III to create a Collegiate Church. He remodelled the church on Exeter Cathedral, which are the only two churches in England with transepts formed of towers. The new parish church opened in about 1342. The Collegiate was dissolved in 1545 and 'the church, the churchyard, the Bell Tower, and Our Lady's Chapel, The Vestries, the Cloisters and the Chapter House, with their appurtenances' were granted to the people of the town.



Ottery Parish Church, Present day

The Conservation Area



Market Day in Broad Street, c.1905

Even though the road layout is Medieval, or possibly earlier Saxon, the building styles have been shaped by two fires. In 1767 fifty houses were destroyed in the vicinity of the parish church. The rebuilding of these created a Georgian and early Victorian appearance along Silver Street, Cornhill and Paternoster Row. Of the 47 Listed Buildings in town 35 of them are in this area. The Great Fire of Ottery in 1866 destroyed one hundred buildings along Yonder Street, Jesu Street, Tip Hill, and Mill Street and the rebuilding in this area created a Victorian and early 20th century commercial centre to Ottery St Mary. One can still imagine Broad Street full of animals on market day and the businesses developing to support it.

To cater for the residents small shops were spread throughout the town, but over time they have become concentrated in the centre of town and dominated by small locally owned businesses. Whether these were the umbrella manufacturer, florist, butchers, bakers, cabinet maker, collar manufacturer, chimney sweep, dressmaker or drapers listed just along Mill Street a century ago or the modern businesses of today.



Mill Street, c.1910

Community Events

Each November 5th Ottery St Mary becomes home to one of the strangest community events. This is Tar Barrels night where local teams, mostly named after present or past public houses, carry burning barrels through the streets. The beginnings of this tradition are lost in the mists of times but this unique event has put Ottery on the map.



Tar Barrels Night, November 5th

Another annual event is Pixie Day, held in June. Young children dressed as pixies re-enact a local legend when the pixies kidnap the church bell-ringers. Each year the townsfolk come out to release the bell ringers from their Pixie captors.

1 Ottery Motor Services	15 Paul Ashby Crane	34 Browns	7 Silver Otter Cafe	10 Hall Est Agents
2 Cashay	16 Broad Street Cafe	35 Tumbling Weir Hotel	8 Leah Marca	11 Otter Wishes
3 Sainsbury's	17 Country Farm	1 Otter Motors	9 Kirkness & Co	12 Frockalicious
4 Hind Street Gallery	18 Otter Produce	2 Riverside Motors	10 Silver Street Tattoos	13 Crusty Cob
5 Redfems Est Agents	19 K&M Butchers	3 Alansway Body Repairs	11 C & L Aquatics	14 Potion Vapor
1 Ottery Veterinary Clinic	20 The Volunteer Inn	4 The German Kitchens Company	12 Joshua's	15 Abbots
2 Otter Financial Services	21 Downs Motors	5 Perkins Farm & Per	13 Otter Garden Centre	16 Brain Freeze
3 Poppadom	22 Southwest Hatchbacks	6 Beacon Garage	14 EM&F	17 Otter Angling
4 Ottery Office & Computer	23 Jeans	7 Devon Tiles	15 The Kings Arms	18 Lamb & Flag
5 Bargain Arts	24 Charcoal Grill	8 Grandison	16 The London Inn	19 Rusty Pig
6 Star of India	25 Shaw Dog Grooming	9 Otter Auction Room	17 China Chef	20 Coldeharbour Farm Shop & cafe
7 Dillys Florist	26 Cutting Edge	10 Salters Garage	18 Ottery Gents	21 Camerars Underwater
8 Pullen & Symes Opticians	27 Wall Art Print & Design	11 Smartbuild	2 Prospect Beauty	22 Mazzard Farm Cottages
9 The Ottery Foot Clinic	28 The Bay Tree Cafe	12 Chunk of Devon	3 The Sewing Room	23 McColls (Post Office)
10 Brain Wave	29 The Ottery Fishmonger	1 Christopher Piper Wines	4 Boots	24 Easterbrook & Eaton
11 Ticky Boo	30 You & Me	2 County Cobblers	5 Gilbert Stephens	25 Something old Something New
12 Curious Otter	31 Cut & Curl	3 Pearsons News	6 Coles	26 Rosey's Chippy
14 The Recycled Candle Co	32 The Barber Shop	4 Seasons Tea Rooms	7 Lovells Garage	27 Samosa Lady
	33 Christine Ashby	5 Exe Mortgages	8 Otter Furniture Store	28 Hospiscare
		6 Georgian House Gallery	9 Roberts	29 Pure Therapy

MAP NOT TO SCALE

Shop Ottery St Mary



Town Square

Ottery St Mary counts itself lucky with a huge variety of good quality, often quirky, independently owned shops. Looking to buy your daily groceries? Then do visit the bakers, butchers, fish monger or greengrocer we are still fortunate to have. Those after gifts, presents or furnishings, just walk around and see for yourself how much choice there is. And let us not forget our traditional ironmongers, florist, opticians, cobblers, newsagents, and much more.

Parking is free for two hours in the main car park next to Sainsbury's, or those hoping to stay longer can park in the Land of Canaan car park for a very reasonable fee.

Eat, Drink & Stay Ottery St Mary

Whether you are after a quick cup of coffee, some breakfast, lunch or dinner, Ottery St Mary offers a wide variety of options, dotted around the centre of town, and clearly marked on this map. The town provides a diverse foodie offering, with locally sourced food and drink existing side by side with more exotic tastes, flavours and aromas. About half a dozen restaurants offer take-away too. In addition to food and drink in the town, please check out the map for some great restaurants and farm shops just outside.



Rusty Pig

Looking to stay in Ottery, then look at our hotels, B&B's and Self Catering Cottages under the accommodation section.