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MAP LOCATIONS

- 1** Honiton Railway Station
- 2** St Michael & All Angels Church
- 3** Livermore Rd / Littletown Rd.
- 4** Fairfield Gardens, King St.
- 5** Black Lion Court, High St.
- 6** 71 High St. Robson Financial
- 7** 44 High St. Bird's Nest Chinese Restaurant
- 8** St. Paul's Church, High St.
- 9** 92 High St. Holland & Barrett
- 10** 128 High St. Job Centre
- 11** Burwood House, Exeter Rd.
- 12** Ottery Moor Lane
- 13** St Cyres Hill, Awliscombe
- 14** Heathpark Way

12. OTTERY MOOR LANE

Look left to see the lane that leads to the entrance of St. Rita's and right towards the new estate where there was once an encampment.

In 1891 a large encampment of Romany Gypsies was established here. That same year, Edith Smith, a Romany woman now buried at St. Michael's, died nearby at Bramble Hill. Between 1937 and 1939, St. Joseph's (now St. Rita's) cared for 46 Basque refugee boys escaping the Spanish Civil War. Soon after, 13-year-old Egon Silbernagel arrived from Germany on the Kindertransport scheme. Post-war, he was reunited with his mother, a Holocaust survivor.

Stay here...

13. ST. CYRES HILL, AWLISCOMBE

Looking through the entrance of Mountbatten Park you will see that beyond

it, in the distance is St. Cyres Hill where the Tracey Estate and Egland House can be found.

Florence Jane Neumann, born at the now-demolished Tracey House in 1859, married Walter Fell Smith at St. Paul's Church in 1880. He worked for the Bengal police, and Florence alternated between Devon and India for several years. A family photo shows an Indian 'Ayah' (nursemaid or 'nanny') outside Tracey House holding one of Florence's children. In 1945, Florence donated 75 items of Indian jewellery to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter.

Nearby Egland House hosted the 'Donut Dollies' during World War II, American Red Cross women who supported U.S. troops based at the Dunkeswell Airfield.

In 1923, 18 Roman coins were found between St. Cyres Hill and Combe Raleigh, concealed in a nodule of ironstone. These coins and others found are displayed at the Allhallows Museum in Honiton and the RAMM in Exeter.

Walk back to the entrance of Ottery Moor Lane to Exeter Road. Stop here.

14. HEATHPARK WAY

Looking right the road takes you to Exeter. About half a mile on the left hand side is the entrance to the Heathpark Industrial Estate. Here you will find a commemorative plaque to the Ugandan Asian refugees.

In 1972, around 28,000 British passport holders fled Uganda and were resettled in the UK. Sixteen camps were established, including Heathfield Camp in Honiton. From October 1972, 1,800 people passed through this former army base, supported by local volunteers. The camp, previously used by the army and for training, was prepared to welcome the new residents. Volunteers helped the often-traumatized arrivals, and locals donated clothes and toys. Despite challenges, many refugees thrived, contributing significantly to the UK.

The tour ends here.

Your Self-Guided Tour through Honiton's Multicultural History

1. HONITON RAILWAY STATION

Look for the site of the original Victorian building demolished in 1971.

Established in 1860, Honiton station's tunnel was constructed by Irish 'navvies' such as World War I veteran Timothy O'Brien and his son Jeremiah, who eventually became the head railman at Honiton station. They used gunpowder, picks and shovels to do the work.

Turn right out of the station and all the way up Church Hill to the little roundabout at the top of the hill.

2. ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

Look for the gravestone of Edith Smith just inside the lychgate of the churchyard on the left.

Honiton's former parish church - before St. Paul's was built in 1835 - hosts many Romany Gypsy graves, including Edith Smith, a young mother of four who died in 1891. The churchyard also contains the grave of Ratanbai Kara Jetha, a Ugandan Asian refugee who died shortly after arriving at Heathfield camp in 1972.

Turn left out of the churchyard and walk down Waterleat Avenue, turn right onto Lowerbrand Lane, left onto Littletown Road and then right onto Livermore Road.

3. LIVERMORE ROAD / LITTLETOWN ROAD

A little way along Livermore Road, there is a good view of Roundball hill behind you.

Roundball Hill, a distinctive landmark, overlooks the former Roundball Rifle Range. In 1897, Persian-born Albert Abid commissioned a silver bowl trophy for the Devonshire Volunteer Regiment's competitions at the range. Abid, who had served the Shah of Persia and the Nizam of Hyderabad, purchased Dulford House near Kentisbeare in 1894.

At the end of Livermore Road turn left onto Streamers Meadows. Follow it all the way to King St, turn left here and walk towards Fairfield Gardens, the first cul-de-sac on the left.

4. FAIRFIELD GARDENS

The annual fair in town took place here bringing immense excitement, with special trains bringing in crowds for the event. In 1861, the renowned black Lion Tamer Martini Maccomo performed here with Manders menagerie, earning titles like 'African Hercules' and 'Tiger Tamer'. Prominent showfolk included Tom and Betsy Rowland, whose descendants continue to operate fairs throughout the South West today.

From Fairfield Gardens walk back up King Street, until you see King's House Day Hospice. Turn left here and follow the building's stone wall to Black Lion Court.

5. BLACK LION COURT, HIGH STREET

Look for the Black Lion statue at the entrance to the High Street.

Named after the Black Lion Hotel, which once adjoined Lloyds Bank on the corner of New Street, the Black Lion statue now sits in the shopping court. The hotel was known for its hospitality towards Black African American soldiers stationed here during World War II, a period of racial segregation in the military. The hotel was demolished in 1970 to allow for the widening of New Street.

Once on the High Street turn right, cross over New Street and continue up the High Street, crossing over at the traffic lights opposite the shop Bakers. Continue to walk up this side to Silver Street on your left.

6. ROBSON FINANCIAL, 71 HIGH STREET

Look for where Silver Street meets the High Street.

The White Horse Inn dates back to the 17th century. Antonio Roderigo, a Portuguese umbrella maker and innkeeper, lived there. It is unknown why he came to live in Devon. Antonio passed away in 1834. By 1851, his wife Mercy was still the innkeeper and her son John had become the brewer.

From here look across to the Bird's Nest restaurant on the other side of the High Street.

7. BIRD'S NEST CHINESE RESTAURANT, 44 HIGH STREET

Look for a shop inscribed with the words 'HONITON LACE.'

This was the last Honiton lace shop in town. In 1851, lace maker Esther Clarke created an award-winning lace flounce for the Great Exhibition at Hyde Park. Unmatched in design and quality, it can be seen in Allhallows Museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Honiton lace.

Head back down, keeping to this side of the High Street.

8. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, HIGH STREET

Look out for the church on your right. If it's open, pop inside to see the stained glass windows at the back of the church.

Built in 1835, the church features early Victorian Romanesque architecture and a clock by local clockmaker Matthew Murch. Inside, a stained glass window and brass plaque pays tribute to Lieutenant William Marwood Mules of the 1st Bombay Fusiliers, who died during the Indian Mutiny at Multan. It ended with a British 'victory' in January 1849.

Come out of the church, turn right and continue to walk down the High Street. When you get to the traffic lights look across to SPAR and Holland & Barrett opposite.

9. HOLLAND & BARRETT, 92 HIGH STREET

The shop of silversmith, watch and clockmaker, Matthew Murch was once located here. In the 1850s he was commissioned by the Elton family of Widworthy Court to create a replacement bronze sundial for their 'Blackamoor' statue, originally crafted by Belgian sculptor John Nost in 1701 for King William III's garden at Hampton Court. Despite the statue's racist connotations, it became popular among the wealthy.

Continue down the High Street, past the Three Tuns Pub, and the Holy Family Church. When you get to the art shop, Pilgrims, look across at the large three-storey brick building on the other side of the High Street.

10. THE JOB CENTRE, 128 HIGH STREET

Sudbury Lawn, formerly home to Chilean-born Juanita Maxwell Phillips, witnessed her dedication to numerous causes. She chaired Honiton's first Suffragist meeting and served as a Women's Royal Voluntary Services coordinator in World War II, aiding evacuees and managing rationing and air raid precautions. Juanita became Honiton's first female mayor. In 1937 she played a crucial role in helping 46 Basque refugee boys due to her fluency in Spanish. Her portrait now hangs in Honiton Town Council offices.

Continue to walk down the High Street, crossing over at Dowell Street traffic lights, down past the Volunteer Pub, over the River Gissage and up out of the town, over the road at Rockwood Close until you reach Ottery Moor Lane on your right.

11. BURWOOD HOUSE, EXETER ROAD

Look across the road for a large white house with a Gothic style front, two gables with quatrefoil panels and a Gothic doorway.

Italian-born William Herbert Ferdinand De Schmid lived here from 1883 to 1905. His grandfather and father were Prussian. William gained British citizenship and became a captain in the Devonshire Regiment before becoming Honiton's Superintendent of Police in 1883. His son, Eric De Schmid, also joined the police, serving as Chief Constable of Exeter and later Carlisle, where he managed the Quintinshill train crash disaster. During World War I Eric faced prejudice due to his German-sounding surname, prompting him to change it to Spence.

Continue to walk down Ottery Moor Lane past the Catholic Church of the Holy Family until you see the sign for St Rita's College as the road bends.

Continued overleaf, with Tour Map...

Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots

DEVON'S MULTICULTURAL HISTORY

HONITON

Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots is a community multicultural history project that in 2024 set out to find, share and celebrate Honiton's diverse and multicultural heritage, past and present. The Heritage Trail created as a result of this project showcases some of the hidden histories we uncovered.

THE SELF-GUIDED HERITAGE TRAIL

Welcome to the project's self-guided heritage trail. Taking you on a journey of Honiton's hidden or forgotten diverse multicultural heritage, the tour will take about 1 to 1.5 hours to complete. Starting at the railway station, going up to St. Michael's church, then back down to the High Street, the tour will end at Ottery Moor Lane looking over to St Cyres Hill and up towards Heathpark Way.

Public toilets are available at King Street car park.

The oldest building in Honiton, dating back to 1327, is the Allhallows Museum which houses artefacts relating to many of our project stories, including the Roman Coin hoards found locally, Esther Clarke's award-winning lace for the Great Exhibition, copper advertising plates from Matthew Murch's shop, and WWII memorabilia that includes a photo of Stan Padsiadlo, a 307 Polish Night Fighter Squadron pilot who settled here in Honiton after the war. A plaque from Joseph Sturge's Anti-Slavery Depot highlights Honiton's involvement in global anti-slavery efforts.

For more information and details about each of the location's stories and others unearthed through this project visit:

www.tellingourstoriesdevon.org.uk

