

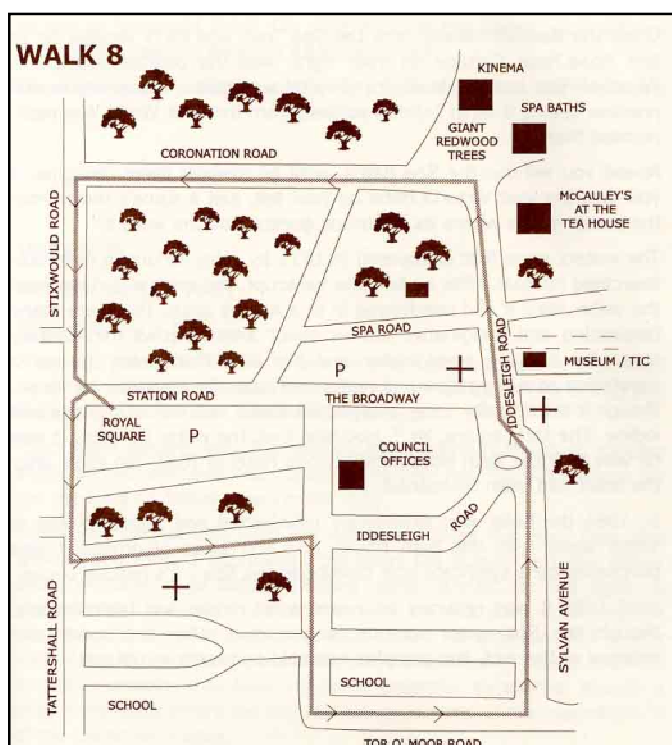
Walk 8 - The Village

A half hour ramble through the heart of Woodhall Spa

Start from Royal Square - Grid Reference: TF 193631

From Royal Square, take the footpath south along Tattershall Road, crossing the entrance to Victoria Avenue on your left. Soon after, look for a small wooded walk, on the left also - Long Avenue (it is signposted); take this. Some of this walk's horse chestnut trees remain. The walker will pass the Roman Catholic Church of St Peter and Our Lady on the right. At the end, turn right and follow Stanhope Avenue as it passes part of St Hugh's Preparatory School and then turns sharp left to become Tor 'o' Moor Road.

Walk along here for a short way and take the next left, Sylvan Avenue. This shady way winds itself back to the Broadway passing St Peter's Church on the corner. Cross the Broadway and carry straight on past the former chapel and Cottage Museum. The house on the corner, on the right, was of special significance to Napoleon, see walk 2.



Cross the disused railway, now the Spa Trail, and carry straight on to Spa Road. Rose Cottage on your right, was the original hospital in Woodhall Spa before the Alexandra Hospital was built - it scarcely seems possible seeing it now! Injured soldiers from the First World War recuperated there.

Ahead you will see the Spa Baths, walk on towards them. Imagine, if you can, the vast Victoria Hotel on your left, just a stone's throw from the pump rooms where its illustrious guest took the waters.

John Parkinson, who was searching for coal, first discovered the waters in 1811. After he became bankrupt, the shaft closed and the water filled it and overflowed in to a nearby ditch. There are many fascinating and imaginative stories about arthritic cows miraculously cured by drinking pond water and the like. It certainly gained a reputation as a purgative and restorer of appetite amongst the locals, though it tasted salty. Later analysis showed

it was rich in bromide and iodine. The local squire, Mr. T Hotchkin took the water for gout. It was he who built the Bath House and Victoria Hotel in 1834, ten years after the shaft had been re-opened.

In 1884 the hotel was extensively refurbished and improved and in 1887, along with the Bath House and 100 acres of ground it was purchased by a syndicate who developed the Spa - its heyday began.

Until 1983 it was retained as a centre for physio and hydrotherapy, though the Spa water was no longer used. After the spectacular collapse of the well, the complex was sold and remains unused.

Walk on past the baths and follow the road, as it turns left you will see our unique Kinema, built originally as an Edwardian concert hall overlooking tennis and croquet lawns and a bandstand in the Spa Grounds between the Petwood House Hotel and the Victoria Hotel. The projection is from behind the screen, so the best seats are in the front. When it opened in 1922 it was one of only 68 in the whole country. Recent extensions, in keeping with the original design of the building, have added a second screen. Note the two giant redwood trees nearby.

Follow the road as it winds to the left, then as it bears right through the woods to Stixwold Road. On your right, in the spring, you will see some of the famous Petwood Rhododendrons. On reaching Stixwold Road, turn left for a short walk back to Royal Square.