

[Baldock]

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BALDOCK

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim of the Report

This report has been produced as one of a series of twenty five archaeological surveys of historic urban areas in Hertfordshire as part of the English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey Programme. All the places surveyed were either urban districts by 1900, or had urban characteristics in the past. The project is being carried out by Hertfordshire County Council's Archaeology Section in conjunction with English Heritage, who are also funding the project.

The aim of the report is to provide a framework from which decisions can be made about the management of the archaeological resource of Baldock. The report is divided into three parts:

1. A summary of what is known of the archaeological and historical development of the town using the evidence from archaeology, buildings, old maps and documents, and surviving physical elements of the historic townscapes such as ancient property boundaries. The evidence is presented as a series of thematic and period maps generated by GIS, accompanied by a brief explanatory text.
2. An assessment of priorities for the management of the archaeological resource of the town, including academic research priorities.
3. A strategy which aims to take forward the research and management priorities.

1.2 The Sources Used

The evidence for the report has been compiled from the following primary sources:

- The Hertfordshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)
- The Statutory List of Buildings of Historical and Architectural Interest
- Maps and documents held in the Hertfordshire County Record Office
- Archaeological excavation and survey reports held in the SMR

In addition, numerous articles, both published and unpublished, have been used; a bibliography is included at the end of the report.

1.3 Geography

Baldock is situated in a wide depression in the north-eastern extension of the Chiltern Hills, where the Roman roads from Braughing and St Albans cross the Icknield Way. The underlying rock is Chalk. The source of the river Ivel emerges from springs here, flowing northwards to the Ouse; the springs have always been attractive to settlers. The Weston Hills border the town on the south. The modern town is bypassed by the A1(M), which separates it from the much larger Letchworth Garden City to the west.

2.0 AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SETTLEMENT

2.1 Prehistory: Palaeolithic to Iron Age (c10,000 BC to 100 BC) (Fig. 1)

The earliest dated find is a Palaeolithic flint tool found in Walls Field (SMR 0217). It is not an area of concentrations of Mesolithic tools, only one (SMR 0218) being recorded as from 'near Baldock'. From the Neolithic to the Iron Age, however, the area of Baldock itself was part of an extensively occupied landscape (Burleigh 1995a, 107). Figure 1 shows the recorded finds and cropmarks in the vicinity of the present town. The main elements to note are the focus at the springs which are the source of the river Ivel; passing the springs, the long-distance route along the Chiltern ridge now called the Icknield Way; and the cropmarks of ring-ditches. Being unexcavated the nature of these marks is not certain, but most if not all are cemeteries of Bronze Age barrows. One has been excavated (Moss-Eccardt 1988; SMR 4765), and was indeed found to be a ploughed-down barrow with Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery in the ditch fill.

The focus was established during the Neolithic, with a possible cursus or ceremonial monument (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 49-50; SMR 9449), a doubled-ditched avenue running from at least 244m and possibly 500m to the north-west and ending at the springs. A pair of ring-ditches (SMR 7422-3) is nearby. The barrow cemeteries, identifiable without excavation, dominate the landscape around Baldock, but clearly the occupation had Neolithic origins. Scattered features, worked flints and pottery of Neolithic and Bronze Age date were found in the Clothall Common excavations (Stead & Rigby 1986, 197-200; SMR 4705). The pottery is mostly late Neolithic, with some Bronze Age; the flintwork (*ibid.*, 172-6) included an early Neolithic arrowhead and a few pieces of possibly still earlier date. A Bronze Age cremation was found at the south end of Baldock High Street on the site of the supermarket petrol station (SMR 10077), and a fragment of early Bronze Age pottery came from work at Providence Way in 1993 (Went 1994). Although Figure 1 does not show finds in the centre of Baldock itself, this is likely to be due to the lack of fieldwork and the loss of earlier land surfaces, not to lack of occupation. Ritual was part of daily life in prehistory, and this landscape has visible elements of both. It is a pity that a hoard of metalwork (SMR 0244) in Verulamium Museum is recorded merely as from 'Clothall, Baldock'.

The alignment of this landscape appears to alter by the beginning of the Iron Age, with a focus on the hillfort called Arbury Banks, 5km to the north-east. The hillfort dominated an even larger area. Remains of the period earlier than the Late Iron Age are still hard to identify in Hertfordshire, but ditches at the end of the Neolithic cursus (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 49-50) show that the springs continued to be significant. An Iron Age spearhead in Letchworth Museum came from 'The Park' at Baldock (SMR 0175). Although not as visible as the earlier and later periods, more Iron Age remains are likely to be identified in due course.

2.2 Late Iron Age and Roman (c100 BC to cAD 450) (Figs. 2-3)

In the Late Iron Age the local power base shifted from the hillfort at Arbury Banks to the vicinity of Baldock. Abundant cropmarks show that the landscape was densely occupied by what appear to be single farmsteads scattered over a wide area, but here was a distinct regional focus (Burleigh 1995a, fig 44; Bryant & Niblett 1997, 276-8). Excavations on the east side of Baldock have revealed a late Iron Age settlement covering at least 20 hectares. It was demarcated into areas: on the eastern edge, beyond a long line of pits (the remains of a substantial fence or similar constraint) was a burial zone along a low ridge, with both enclosures and cemeteries (Burleigh 1995a, 105; 1995b, 177-9). On the west side, less well explored, a smaller number of burials have been found. Two burials are high-status ('chieftain' graves) and date to about the middle of the 1st century BC, the earliest known burials of the period in Hertfordshire (Stead & Rigby 1986, 51-61; Selkirk 1983, 71-2). The county is rich in settlement and burial sites of the Late Iron Age, the first period for which the material evidence is abundant. Baldock emerged as a place of importance at an early date in this period, at the crossing of natural routes and on easily worked soil (Niblett 1995, 52). Several trackways have been identified within the settlement, and their routes indicate that the Roman roads to Welwyn, Braughing and Sandy had pre-Roman origins (Burleigh 1995a, 103). This has long been suspected, as all these places were of some importance in the Late Iron Age. Baldock at this period was 'an agglomeration of enclosed farmsteads separated by paddocks, vegetable plots and tracks' (Burleigh 1995a, 103). Material wealth and imported goods show that it was of higher status than such a layout would at first imply, and there also appears to be a series of major boundary dykes east of the settlement which may delimit the core territory of an oppidum (Burleigh 1995a, 107-8; Bryant & Niblett 1997, 278-9). An enclosure surrounded by ditches has been identified in Baldock itself, and this may be the high-status centre.

This community developed in the Roman period into a small town, covering at least 40 hectares at its maximum extent in the 2nd century AD (Fig. 3). During the later Roman period it shrank to about 30 hectares (Burleigh 1995b). The evidence comes from excavations in the Walls Field/Clothall Common area (Stead & Rigby 1986; Burleigh 1995b), casual finds and excavations east of the High Street (Applebaum 1932; Westell 1931, 1933, 1935; Westell & Applebaum 1933), geophysical surveys and cropmarks. Much of the recent work is unpublished, but several main elements are clear.

The long-distance highways were newly engineered in the Roman fashion, and traces of new tracks within the town itself imply some degree of planning in the layout. In Baker's Close, a surviving fragment of unploughed pasture, is the distinctive cropmark of a Romano-Celtic temple. Other features show that this Roman veneer was applied to what was still in essence the Late Iron Age settlement: the farmstead enclosures carried on, and circular as well as rectangular buildings continued to be erected. At this period Baldock appears to have been a medium-status settlement, serving as a local market and religious centre. This included its long-standing function as a place of burial, possibly for the population of a wider area than the town itself. As it has also 'produced a disproportionate amount of religious or ritual finds' (Niblett 1995, 54) Baldock may have been more important as a religious focus than as a market town.

The cemeteries, which by law had to be beyond the settlement, indicate the boundaries of the town everywhere except on the west. As fieldwork is undertaken within areas not previously examined the known limits have gradually extended. A robbed wall of a Roman building was found behind the Engine public house in 1992 (Richmond et al 1992); Roman features found south of Orchard Street in 1998 included a human skeleton in a well (Vaughan 2000a, 11). The western edge of the town has not certainly been established, and since much of the settlement consisted of farmsteads it may be that there was no place here where it could be said that the town ended and countryside began. Roman finds, but not burials, have been made in the Park Street-Mansfield Road area, west of the High Street. Two features of Roman date were found on the site of Walkers Court, west of the High Street (Ashworth & Wilson 1998, 6). Late Iron Age and Roman coins are recorded from the north-west end of Park Street, five Roman coins from a garden in Mansfield Road, and two late Roman coins from Brandles Close School playing field (Fenton 1996, 4-5). 'Roman occupation has also been demonstrated along the south-west edge of the High Street and the south-east edge of Hitchin Street, but this has been only in the form of occasional features and finds' (*ibid.*, 4). The finds at the south end of the High Street (Went 1994, 6, 7) include Late Iron Age and Roman features on the supermarket site, and may constitute ribbon development along the road south to Verulamium. Some ribbon development along the road to the north is also likely, and a farmstead lay at Blackhorse Farm between the river Ivel and the Roman road (North Road) to Biggleswade (Fenton 1994).

2.3 Saxon and Medieval

The Roman settlement gradually disappeared; it had been shrinking during the 4th century, so this was a process that began before the collapse of centralised government at the beginning of the 5th century (Niblett 1995, 55). 'Baldock' has no entry in Domesday Book, compiled in 1086. The medieval market town, from which the modern town developed, was laid out by the Knights Templar on land in the manor of Weston, granted by the earl of Pembroke, Gilbert de Clare, before his death in 1148.

It is usually inferred from this documentation that Baldock was an artificial creation on land that had been deserted for seven centuries. But the Roman roads, and the

Icknield Way, survived throughout, and this was certainly because they continued to be used. Excavation has shown that truncation, due to centuries of occupation and ploughing, has destroyed a good deal; local conditions (particularly the thin soils over the chalk) make it unlikely that post-Roman or Saxon timber buildings would leave surviving traces. The advantages of the spring line here for settlement had not diminished. A pagan mid-Saxon cemetery is known nearby (Moss-Eccardt 1970; SMR 1618), and there was settlement at Green Lane, Letchworth, from the 9th century onwards (Matthews & Burleigh 1988, ref. Fenton 1994). Clearly there was new settlement along the Icknield Way in the area, and north of the spring line near Blackhorse Farm (Fenton 1994) evaluation of an extensive area of cropmarks has identified an *early* Saxon structure (Fenton 1994, 18-19).

Rutherford Davis (1982) has pointed to the significance of the Domesday entry for the manor of Weston. The village of Weston has never been large, but the Domesday manor was. It had a population of 75 households, a huge number; they included two priests, a man-at-arms, and two 'Frenchmen', presumably Normans. The value of the property was extremely high, perhaps 10 times that of a comparable rural estate; and had been worth more before the Norman Conquest (Morris 1976). It had belonged to a thane of king Edward the Confessor. There is a plain inference here that there was a late Saxon settlement around the junction of the ancient highways. Its wealth indicates that it was more than a village; it was already serving some of the functions of a town. The immediate success of the Templars' foundation (below) supports this view. The presence of two priests in Weston in 1086 implies that there may already have been a church here (Andrews 1938), although not necessarily on the site of the medieval church overlooking the Templars' market-place. It also had a mill, at this date a watermill (see below).

It is not surprising that no archaeological trace of late Saxon/early Norman occupation has been recorded. No fieldwork has taken place in the centre around the church and crossroads, and the truncation of ground level in the medieval town, on the thin chalk soils, means that much will have been lost.

The Templars' market town

The 1850 tithe map, drawn up before the parish boundaries were extended in the later 19th century, clearly shows the boundaries of the land grant made from the manor of Weston in the 12th century. It is a triangular parcel of land cut out from an older estate; Baldock was closely confined by the parishes of Clothall, Weston, Willian, Norton and Bygrave. The boundary appears to have included one of the sources of the river Ivel, as a charter of 1007 implies one at the place where Norton (Church) Street meets Dead Lane on the Icknield Way, at the boundary with Norton parish (Andrews 1938). Norton Street was once *Wel strete* (Gover, Mawer & Stenton 1938, 121). It may have been here that the watermill stood in the 11th century, and the elongated shape of the 11th century manor of Weston is explained by the need to include one of the springs. The grant was bounded on the east side by the road through the centre of the Roman town, as the earl did not own land in Clothall. This explains why the Templars' planned town was laid out to one side of the Roman settlement. It appears to skirt the western edge, but finds have been made west of the High Street (above), and the impression of 'avoidance' is not as unequivocal as once appeared.

The new manor and parish of Baldock was delimited by roads and tracks, still visible on the 1850 tithe map. These roads give the appearance of skirting an obstacle, and it is possible that the Templars constructed a bank and ditch marking the boundary of their property. The east and south sides, Clothall Road, South Road (once Spital Lane), and Crabtree Lane (now a footpath), were features of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement (Went 1994, 6), and survived to become medieval routes and boundaries. The place-name, about which there has been much discussion, derives from the Old French for Baghdad, *Baldac* (Gover, Mawer & Stenton 1938, 120). Possibly it was given this exotic name by the Knights Templar in recognition of its being a place of ancient ruins.

Modern Baldock has developed from the planned town laid out by the Knights Templar in the middle of the 12th century. This was a period when many such towns were founded and marketplaces laid out; some were sweeping changes made by powerful Norman landlords within old settlements. The typical plan of an elongated triangular space for the market is evident here; at Baldock there are two such triangles, at right angles to each other in the High Street and Whitehorse (formerly Broad) Street. These two main streets meet in the centre of the plan. With their continuations, Hitchin Street and Church Street, they have the appearance of deliberate quartering of the new town. The parish church stands overlooking the point where they meet, in a large churchyard. Smith (1992, 140, 141) points out that in Hertfordshire towns double marketplaces are not uncommon; they may have been intended for the sale of different kinds of goods. Burgage plots were laid out along the streets. A document of 1199 confirmed the grant of a market, which was already thriving. By 1185 Baldock had the trades of 'blacksmith, ironmonger, tailor, shoemaker, tanner, mason, cook, carpenter, mercer, weaver, saddler, goldsmith, merchant and vintner' (Munby 1977, 99). Many of the burgage plots survive in outline, although often truncated at the rear. Behind these were the back lanes giving rear access. In the two market places the areas set aside for stalls at the wide ends of the triangles gradually filled in with permanent buildings, and by the 15th century Sun Street had appeared. Two 'islands' survive; until 1778 there was a third, at the top of the High Street. Fairs were also granted at various dates (VCH 1912, 67-8).

The wealth of 13th and 14th century Hertfordshire came from wool, and Baldock prospered. 'William Persons of Watford and John Persons of Baldock were shipping wool to Antwerp in 1326' (Rook 1997, 48). The natural grassland on light chalky soil between Baldock and Therfield was ideal for sheep (Munby 1977, 26). The parish church in its existing form was built with wool money (below).

The Hospital of St Mary Magdalene was founded c1200 by Hugh de Clothall (Andrews 1908-9). Although it was referred to as *juxta Baldock*, near the town, it was in Clothall parish. Like other such foundations, made for the care of lepers, it was on 'the highway' but kept at arms length from centres of population. In 1274 it had a road frontage 588 ft long, with its chapel on the opposite side of the road. The Master was given permission to divert the highway and bring the chapel into one enclave with the rest of the hospital, on condition that this did not inconvenience the people of Baldock. Neither the original site, nor the new one on which it was rebuilt in 1307 after attacks by armed robbers, have been pinpointed although they may yet

be identified on the ground. The foundation owned a considerable amount of land in Clothall and Baldock, and names such as Spital Wood may refer to scattered parcels of such land rather than the position of the hospital. One of these parcels was along the south side of the Royston Road, where a rare plant used for the treatment of leprosy still grows (Mabey 1996, 152; Baldock LHS 1998b). Recent work on records by the Baldock Local History Society suggests that the original site may have been near Spital Hill on the road to Wallington (a continuation of Spital Lane, now South Road). By 1274 the foundation was no longer described as a leper hospital, and the new site was deliberately near plenty of 'neighbours' for its protection, in the 'Brade' (Andrews 1908-9, 87). The proposed position for the Hospital and chapel is on the south side of Royston Road, just beyond Whitehorse Street (formerly Broad or Brade Street) and the junction with Clothall Road. The 'free chapel' is presumed to have been suppressed in 1547 but the hospital appears to have survived, as in 1617 it and its lands were granted to the earls of Salisbury; in the 18th century the site was known as Hospital Close. The 15th century doors in the gateway at 24A High Street (below) are reputed to have come from the hospital.

The Templars' property in England, including the manor and parish of Baldock, was seized by the Crown in 1309 when the order was suppressed. It was granted to the Knights Hospitaller, and remained their property until the Dissolution. The manor was in the hands of a custodian for short periods, and leased out at other times. No record appears to have survived of the manorial site itself, but presumably there was a manor house and demesne land. This may be represented by the south-west quadrant of the parish, which survived as the largest unit of land until the 20th century and was the property of the lord of the manor in 1912 (VCH 1912, 66).

Surviving elements of medieval Baldock

St Mary's church (SMR 4062)

No excavation has taken place at the parish church. Despite the mention of a priest in 1086, it is not known if there was a Saxon church on the site. It may be, however, that the Templars built a new church here in the 12th century, as the font is transitional Norman (according to the church guide; '13th century' to Pevsner 1977, 82) and in the chancel 'the rubble work of the walls, particularly on the south side, contain fragments of wrought stonework which suggest that they came from a 12th century building' (church guide). Only the east end of the chancel, and a double piscina, survive from the 13th century. The remainder, of nave, aisles, north and south chapels, west tower, and south porch, is almost entirely 14th century. It is visibly a wealthy town church, large and reflecting the prosperity brought by the wool trade (Pevsner 1977, 81-2). In the 15th century, despite the Gild's petition to the Pope in 1462 pleading loss of population and revenue in Baldock, the church was modernised with a nave clerestory, new windows, elaborate screens, and a turret on the south porch. The north porch is said to have been added in 1836, although it was noted during repairs (Gray 1930-1) that the roof timbers were a good deal older than 1836 and implied the encasing of an earlier north porch. Such a porch is visible in earlier prints. The spire dates to 1816.

Church Cottage, 1 Church Street

This building, overlooking the churchyard, dates to the 15th century, and is a timber-framed gatehouse, with one storey above the gateway and three storeys on the south side. The ground floor of this south block is low-ceilinged and may have served as a storeroom. The room above has heavy exposed timbers; the second floor is jettied on three sides and has a crown-post roof. The chimney-stack was inserted later (Smith 1993, 21). ‘The cottage next to the churchyard in Church Street, with the building which formerly stood at the rear’, was the property of the Gild of Jesus, founded in 1459. The town had suffered a drop in population and prosperity after the Black Death in the mid 14th century and took a long time to recover. The gild was founded partly in response to this trouble. It was a powerful local body in the later 15th century, which helped maintain the church fabric, and organised all the town’s charities (Gray n.d., 45). Its property was confiscated by the Crown in 1547.

Nos.3-5 Sun Street

These were built in the 15th century as a single house; no.3 (now brick-fronted) was the open hall, and no.5 the cross-wing, a common late-medieval house form. This cross-wing has a crown-post roof and is jettied at both gable ends. The staircase has been replaced, lit by the mullioned window (Smith 1993, 22; 1992, 41, 149).

No.24A High Street

Smith (1993, 22) considers that the building, now a shop, incorporates a large late-medieval timber gateway, and has evidence of an open hall with smoke-blackened roof in the wing behind the street range. ‘This suggests that a fairly large house was arranged round a courtyard’. The staircase dates to the end of the 17th century; the Tudor-style stucco frontage was added in the 19th century. The large carved wooden gates in the carriageway are not original to the house; they are 15th century and are reputed to have come from the Hospital of St Mary Magdalene (above), at an unknown date.

Community Centre, High Street

Simpsons Brewery used as its Engine House a timber-framed building with a crown-post roof, dating to the late 14th century (Pevsner 1977, 84). This survived from the row of buildings replaced by the brewery in the mid 18th century. It further survived the demolition of the brewery, and in 1980 was incorporated into the structure of the new Community Centre as the front range facing the High Street.

2.4 Baldock in the 16th and 17th centuries

At the Dissolution the manor of Baldock (coterminous with the parish, and representing the original land grant) became the property of the Crown, and was granted to the incumbent leaseholder. It went on to be sold to a succession of people who generally lived elsewhere (VCH 1912, 68-9). They kept the property intact but had little influence on its subsequent development, and it was only in 1870 that it was bought by a leading citizen, Thomas Pryor the brewer. The religious and political upheavals of the 16th and 17th centuries meant that it was only during the 17th century that new directions for the town gradually emerged. Many of the buildings facing the main streets were built in the 17th century. Some buildings, however, are earlier, and

detailed study will probably reveal more. The layout and extent of the streets did not change; ribbon development along Church Street may date to this period, or earlier.

The late medieval rectory, a hall house described in 1638 (VCH 1912, 71), stood in the north-west part of the churchyard. Until 1869 the only entrances to the churchyard were from Church Street, and along the footpath from the west known as the Slade, past the barn and yard belonging to the rectory (Gray n.d., 42-3). Flint and rubble foundations of another building of unknown date were seen during the building of the new church hall in 1985 (MacKonochie 1986, 49-50). It is not known whether this was a late medieval structure, common then in churchyards, or a much earlier building.

Its position on two major highways meant that Baldock became a coaching town, while its market continued to flourish. In 1712 Ralph Thoresby noted here a strong trade in products such as corn and cheese, brought from the Fens via the Great North Road (Tomkins 1998, 30).

The Great North Road

This emerged in the 16th century to provide a reasonable mail route from London to York and Edinburgh, but it was not a new road; it was pieced together using existing local roads, through Barnet, Hatfield, Welwyn, Stevenage, Baldock and Biggleswade, to its meeting north of Huntingdon with the Old North Road via Ware and Royston (Webster 1974). Between Stevenage and Baldock the route followed a surviving stretch of the Roman road, running into the High Street and thence on the Roman road to Biggleswade and Sandy. Baldock became well supplied with inns for the coaching trade along this long-distance route. The Icknield Way now served as the road between Oxford and Cambridge. By 1621 the road between Baldock and Biggleswade was so crowded with carriages, wagons, and drovers that the parishes along it petitioned Parliament for help, being unable to find the money or materials to keep it in repair (Albert 1972, 17). Drovers and wagons went south via Limekiln Lane, which led into their main route via Walkern to Ware (Havercroft 1997, 16; the route is visible on Warburton's 1749 map of Hertfordshire).

Surviving inns

Some of the inns are recorded from the end of the 16th century, but the dates of original foundation are in every case unknown. The established coaching inns were the White Horse, Rose & Crown, White Lion, and the George & Dragon. Houses not recorded before the 19th century are not included here. Some are still public houses.

The White Lion (46 High Street)

The property belonged to the trustees of the Wynne Almshouses Charity from at least 1633, and may at this period have been called the King's Head (Branch Johnson 1962). This would make it one of the three Baldock inns named in 1635: the George [& Dragon], the [White] Horse, and the King's Head (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 10). The present name does not appear until 1832. In the earlier 19th century the licensees, John and William Little, ran a carrier business to London twice a week. This was the first inn reached in Baldock from the south, and the daily London-Biggleswade coach service which stopped here was the last to continue running after the opening of the railway. The property was once much larger (Rider 1982, 8-9); the stables ran back

as far as Park Street, on the site of the later school buildings (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 10). The present early 19th century colour-washed brick frontage, and Welsh slate roof behind cornice and parapet, hides the earlier structure. The date of the alterations is probably 1832, when it was thoroughly repaired and the rent raised. There are three canted bay windows on the ground floor. To the building's left is a passageway, and to the right a recessed tiled wing. In 1868 it was sold to Joshua Richmond Page, maltster of Baldock.

The Cock (43 High Street)

Recorded as an inn in 1682, by 1750 it was in the hands of Robert Thurgood, brewer of Baldock (Branch Johnson 1962; Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 7). It is now a late 18th or early 19th century two-storey building with a red and grey brick front which has a pair of sash canted bay windows on the ground floor, and a cut bracketed doorhood. The tiled roof has a corbelled cornice.

The Boot (73 High Street)

A will of 1748 refers to the Boot, which was bought by Simpsons Brewery in 1865. The house has been rebuilt, probably in the 1920s (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 7).

The White Horse (Whitehorse Street/Station Road)

This coaching inn, with its principal entrance in Whitehorse Street, was for better class travellers and the Royal Mail coaches, and had stabling for up to 150 horses (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 10). Many of the long-distance coaches stopped here, every day or every other day, to and from Glasgow, Leeds, York, Lincoln, and Stamford (Rider 1982, 8). The earliest reference is in a deed dated 1635 (Armour & Hillelson 1998, 3), and by the late 17th century the inn had given its name to the former Broad Street. In 1730 a fire at the adjacent Falcon inn damaged the White Horse, which then had a bowling green adjacent, and a brewhouse. Excavation on part of the site indicates that in the earlier 18th century, perhaps after the 1730 fire, a building programme was undertaken to update the facade and amalgamate neighbouring properties, with new outbuildings, drains and other services (Armour & Hillelson 1998, 12). By the late 18th century the Falcon had become the tap of the White Horse. The inn declined after the opening of the railway in 1850; it finally closed in 1864 and became a school, but soon afterwards most of the building was burnt out. The surviving west wing is now 35 Whitehorse Street. The tap, which had once been the Falcon, became the Old White Horse public house.

The Rose & Crown (8 Whitehorse Street)

In 1672 William Seamer issued halfpenny tokens from the Rose & Crown (Branch Johnson 1962). As one of the regular coach stops in the town, it catered for coaches to Lincoln and Oundle, and other places (Rider 1982, 9). James Ind was brewing here from c1783 (see below), but it remained an alehouse until the beginning of the 20th century (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 9). In 1850 it was the Rose. The house has been rebuilt, and is not Listed.

The Checkers (28 Whitehorse Street)

Bought by John Pryor in 1778, this inn was probably already in existence in 1673 when it was owned by Edward Seamer or Seymour, maltster (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 7). The spelling appears to be authentic, although it was sometimes the Chequers.

The standing building dates to the early-mid 19th century, in red brick with Welsh slate roof, with carriage arch and canted bay window.

The George & Dragon (2 Hitchin Street)

First recorded in 1591; this is assumed to be the inn visited in 1655 by George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, as travelling Quakers continued to use it. In 1777 it was bought by John Pryor, the brewer. It was a busy coaching inn with extensive stabling, part of which was on land rented from the adjoining churchyard from 1692 (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 7). A large smithy stood opposite, on the island in the High Street market place, later the Town Hall. Despite its prime position it did not become the town's leading inn until after the closure of the old White Horse in 1864 (Branch Johnson 1962). The present building was 'new built in brick' in 1792; this is red brick with slightly projecting three-storey centre and two-storey wings. The hipped tiled roof is behind parapets. There is a dummy window in the centre of each floor. The further wing on the left is 20th century. After refurbishment by Greene King in 1998 it reopened in 1999.

The White Hart (21 Hitchin Street)

This was a beerhouse, first mentioned in 1714. In the 1780s the landlord was Nathaniel Herbert, whose obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1787 described him as 'formerly master of a company of comedians' (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 10). Is there a link with the theatre in Pond Lane which was converted into the Independent Chapel? By 1887 the beerhouse was owned by Simpsons Brewery. The building is not Listed.

The Eight Bells (22-24 Church Street)

Apparently originally the Six Bells, sold in 1727 by William Conquest, brewer of Hitchin, to Isaac Anderson, victualler of Baldock, except for one room which was used as a bakehouse. In 1746 it was bought by Robert Thurgood, the Baldock brewer (Branch Johnson 1962). The house has two storeys, with a red brick front wall which is 18th or early 19th century; weatherboarded south gable, beneath a tiled roof. It has a large cellar. After being empty since 1969 the building was sold by Greene King in 1977 as a private house (*Baldock News* 9 (Oct 1976), 4; 11 (May 1977), 16).

The Stag (49 Church Street)

In 1723 no.49 was described as a cottage, but in 1732 a mortgage on it was secured by a Hitchin brewer and this was taken over by Robert Pryor, brewer of Baldock, in 1776, when the building was occupied by Thomas Day and described as 'lately rebuilt' (Branch Johnson 1962). It is no longer a public house and is not Listed.

The Bull's Head (50 Church Street)

This is a 16th or 17th century timber-framed building, of two storeys and attics and with a steeply pitched tiled roof. The first floor oversails the ground floor on brackets with exposed timbers. The two dormers are 20th century. The name is recorded from 1758. Robert Thurgood, brewer of Baldock, had in 1743 become part owner and later bought the whole property (Branch Johnson 1962).

The Victoria, formerly The Sun (11 Sun Street)

It was possibly at the time of the 1887 Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria that the alehouse's name was changed. It was called The Sun by 1806 but was first recorded as an alehouse in 1736, when it was owned by William Noy, brewer of Baldock, with brewhouse and malthouse attached (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 9-10). This brewhouse became the Oliver's or Baldock Brewery in the 19th century (below), surrounding the inn. The present building apparently dates to c1930.

The Compasses lay to the north of the town on the Great North Road, just before the Blackhorse Mill (Rider 1982, 10). The west block, a single storey with attics, colour-washed plaster and thatched roof, is 17th century or earlier. The east wing, two storeys with a tiled roof, was added in the 18th century. It closed after 1937 and is now a private house. At the mill a hostelry called the *Black Horse* had operated since at least the early 18th century, when a ballad referred to it (Gerish 1912) until the road was regraded in the early 19th century; either the licence lapsed or was passed to the Compasses.

The George IV, south of the town on the Great North Road, was in the parish of Weston and is documented (as the *George*) from 1797. John Izard Pryor, the Baldock brewer, bought the house in 1804. It was then no more than a cottage beerhouse. It was rebuilt c1850 and modernized in 1967 (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 9).

Other surviving buildings

Wynne's Almshouses (32-42 High Street)

were erected on the west side of the High Street in 1621, under the will of John Wynne, a London mercer, for six tenants (Rider 1982, 34). The building is of red brick with stone dressings, of one storey with attics. The steep tiled roof has six gabled dormers, and the frontage has six arched doorways in gabled porches. The dormer gables, the porches, and the three tall chimneys are all Victorian, although the original narrow bricks remain in the chimney-stack footings. The stone tablet on the frontage records its foundation. The low red brick wall and central raised gateway, which has its own inscription, also date to 1621. One of the chimneys fell in a gale in 1989 and the building was badly vandalised. It was restored in 1996, and reopened as four one-bedroom houses, serving its original purpose. At the rear another pair of almshouses was built by H O Roe in 1838 for two married couples over the age of 50 (Rider 1982, 34); these have also been restored. Walkers Court was built in 1993 on land belonging to the trust. Outside was a large pond at the lowest point of the High Street, for watering livestock. This was filled in during the 1840s.

Quaker Meeting House

Despite raids and arrests of Baldock Quakers in 1660, Pepys, writing in the 1670s, recorded the presence of many Quakers in the town. The Meeting House in Meeting House Lane off Church Street survives, in commercial use. It dates to the late 17th or early 18th century, and so may have been built soon after the Toleration Act of 1689. It is single storey, with timber frame under a tiled roof, and has colour-washed plaster and pargetting. A burial ground lay adjacent, the oldest date on the gravestones being recorded as 1816 (Rider 1982, 21).

Surviving 16th and 17th century domestic Listed Buildings

High Street

No.16, 16th or 17th century, has a timber-framed south-east wing with a carriageway on the left, and a north-west wing that appears to be slightly later. The frontage is plastered. The building has been altered and enlarged; the upstairs windows are 19th century and the shop front is modern.

No.48 has a 17th-century timber-framed wing aligned at right angles to the street, and probably originally had another wing facing the street, with a gateway. In the early Victorian period a new range in red and grey brick replaced the front block and gateway, of one build with the Lion Maltings on the north side (below); the original shop window of the new range survives. The 17th-century portion has a large internal chimney-stack (Smith 1993, 22).

No.19 is also 16th or 17th century with a 19th century front, in chequered red and grey brick. The original timber frame is exposed in the carriageway on the left, but the 19th century alterations include the parapet and the shop front.

Nos.41, 41A and 41B all have stucco frontages and have been altered, but are 17th century or earlier (no.41 possibly 18th century). 41A & B both have suspected timber framing and old tiled roofs. 41A is of two storeys with projecting central block, and a tall carriage arch at the left. 41B ('The Little House': Moss 1980, 4) is one storey with attics and gabled dormers, with an arched passage at the left and a taller back wing. No.41 is two storeys with a low back wing, Georgian style shop windows and a passageway on the right. Behind no.41 is the 18th-century malting owned by Edith Fossey in 1850 (see below).

No.83 is also 17th century, two storeys, timber-framed behind a stucco frontage and 19th century gabled doorhead. This house was at the limit of housing in the High Street; only Heath Farm, on the corner of South Road, lay beyond it.

Church Street

Nos.3-5: a two-storey house with plastered front and steep-pitched tiled roof with dormers. It has stone steps up to the front door, which has pilasters and entablature and a fanlight. It is of 17th century origin, but its appearance dates largely to 20th century renovations (Smith 1993, 21).

Nos.7-9: a 17th century house built of red brick, two storeys beneath a steeply pitched tiled roof, in an L plan; the lower wing facing the street has been altered. The taller back wing has mullioned and transomed casement windows.

Nos.11-13: another 17th or 18th century building, altered in the 19th century; two storeys with carriageway at the left. The pargetting is 20th century.

Hitchin Street

No.6: 16th century, given new doorcase and windows in the 18th century; two storeys, steep-pitched old tiled roof, wooden eaves cornice, and a long back wing; carriageway on the right.

Nos. 1-5: a range of houses probably of 16th-century date, jettied towards both Hitchin Street and Bell Row. They are only partly refronted in brick, with remains of channelled pargetting and exposed corbels. There are two large 17th century chimney-stacks (restored). The shop fronts are 19th and 20th century, although the corner shop has a dragon-beam (Smith 1993, 22).

No.7: a two-storey house dating to c1500 (Smith 1993, 22), originally jettied and of three bays with a crown-post roof. The west chimney-stack and jettied south wing are probably early 17th century. In the early 18th century another chimney-stack and a staircase were inserted. The plastered front, which underbuilds the jetty, and pedimented doorcase, may have been added then or a century later again, when the large bay windows on the ground floor were added. Moss (1980, 5) says this was at one time the town 'police station, complete with gaol'.

No.17-19: a 16th or 17th-century structure with two back wings on either side of a yard entered through a tall carriageway in the two-storey front block. This frontage is plastered, beneath a steep-pitched tiled roof. The carriageway cuts into the upper storey which rests on a moulded beam, and oversails the shop bay window on the left side of the carriageway.

No.23: 16th or 17th century, but with 18th century red brick fronting the ground floor; the upper frontage is plaster over the timber frame, which is exposed at the side on the right.

No.25: this dates to the first half of the 17th century, although like its neighbours it has been altered with later frontage, door and windows. The ground floor is colour-washed brick, with steps up to the door and a pair of bay windows; the upper floor is plastered and oversails the ground floor.

No.27 is also 17th century with a plaster-faced upper floor oversailing colour-washed brick ground floor; both floors have a pair of canted bay windows. The old tiled roof has gables over oriel bay windows; a carriageway opens on the right.

No.31 appears to be late 18th century, from its red brick front, but the original house is 16th or 17th century. The gates of the carriageway on the east side have the date 1632, and the initials of the contemporary owner and his wife, D & E S. The very narrow wing incorporating this carriageway has exposed timber framing, the upper floor oversailing and with plaster infill, under a steeply pitched old tiled roof with carved cornice. The main block also has a steep-pitched tiled roof, behind parapet and cornice; two storeys, with slight central projection, and pilasters and pediment surrounding the main door. The shop windows are modern.

Whitehorse Street

No.21: altered, but 17th century, single storey with attics under steep-pitched old tiled roof with two gabled half-dormers. The frontage is whitewashed brick, but the side elevation has pargetting.

Nos.27-9: this building is Listed as 17th century, but has been much altered. The tiled roof is behind the parapet of the red brick front; two storeys, the ground floor shop windows being 20th century. This was the front range of the Fitzjohn Malting (below).

No.16: 17th century timber framed, with old tiled roof and stucco facing; two storeys. It has been altered, given ground floor canted bay windows and a 20th century central shop window.

Nos.18-20: 17th century and possibly timber-framed, two storeys and attics under old tiled roofs, with gabled dormers, and tall carriageways on the right and left. The brick fronts in this case are 19th century, with red stretchers and grey headers, corbelled brick cornice and parapet; the windows and shop fronts are also 19th century.

Nos.22-22A (Oak Cottage): there are three parts to this L-shaped property. From the street it appears to be an early 18th century two-storey house of chequered blue and red brick dressed with red, angle pilasters, and a tiled roof behind a parapet. Three stone steps lead up to the front door. The shop front on the right is 19th century. At the rear is an early 16th century building at right-angles to the street, with some appearance of a Wealden structure. Closer to the street is a late 16th-century block roofed east-west, possibly a parlour with chamber over, a house standing back from the street frontage. In the early 18th century the new block with two new principal ground-floor rooms was added in front of the older house (Smith 1992, 157; 1993, 22-3). Oak Cottage, once called Oak House, has had its shopfront taken out and the ground floor restored with matching 18th century bricks from a barn in Bracknell (*Baldock Mail* 14 (Feb 1980), 7).

Other surviving buildings of the period include *nos.1-6 Royston Road*, at the crossroads. This was a group of seven cottages restored by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1960, and was revealed to be a large early 17th century timber-framed courtyard house, with a main range along Royston Road and a lower wing along Station Road, both jettied (Pevsner 1977, 85). The yard was entered through a tall carriageway with a projecting porch above. *Templars Cross* in North Road is timber-framed, 17th century or earlier with a modern rear addition. These houses have not been disguised with later brick fronts. This may be because neither of them face onto the centre streets of the town. Another building with a 17th century roof stands in Butler's Yard, off Orchard Road, and was part of the property converted into the parish workhouse in 1759 (below) (Prosser 1999, 6).

Other buildings on the main streets with 18th or early 19th century brick fronts conceal 'earlier' but as yet undated structures. These include nos.4, 6, 13 (see the Baldock Brewery, below), and 35 Whitehorse Street; 11, 25, 37 and 37B, 6 and 6A, and 24 High Street; and no.8 Hitchin Street.

2.5 Baldock in the 18th century

Baldock continued to flourish throughout the 18th century. Several five-bay brick town houses were built for those prospering in trade and the professions, not for gentry. They are smart but none were truly grand, and the houses themselves are not as well-appointed as their outward appearance suggests. Many of the older buildings lining the main streets (above) were also made to look new, with brick fronts and up-to-date doors and windows. It is probable that some of the buildings described below are also older than their frontages. The overall appearance is 18th century, but this is misleading.

One new house was on a different scale. This was an eleven-bay brick house called The Place, built at the south end of the High Street by a wealthy lawyer. It appears to have stood more or less where the lodge to The Elms still stands. In the early 19th century it was demolished by Isaac Hindley, another lawyer, and replaced on a slightly different site by The Elms (inf. Baldock Museum).

To Daniel Defoe in 1725 the Great North Road from Baldock to Biggleswade was still 'this terrible road'; in 1720 it had been taken into the care of the Stevenage-Biggleswade Trust, and turnpiked (Albert 1972, 33). Improvements were gradually made. A milestone (19thC?) survived near the George IV public house on the road south of the town (Branch Johnson 1970, 186); the next stood outside the brewery in the High Street until World War II, and survives in storage. In 1778 the Trust removed Butchers Row, one of the three islands of buildings occupying the broad end of the market place. These took up so much space that only narrow roadways allowed passage either side: Bell Row and Sun Street remain. The Icknield Way was turnpiked by the Icknield Trust. On the Biggleswade road, Blackhorse Farm was Blackhorse Mill from the early 18th century (Gerish 1912; Rider 1982, 10) until the 20th century, but its earlier name was Bygrave Mill as it was in the parish of Bygrave. It is likely to be on the site of a late Saxon watermill recorded in Domesday. The farmhouse is an 18th century building in red and grey brick, the upper floor now roughcast and colour-washed, under a hipped tile roof.

Parish amenities

In 1787 the churchwardens and the Overseers of the Poor built a parish cage or lock-up, on a piece of land bought for the purpose in 'Middle Row'. The cage measured 8ft 9in by 9ft (*Herts Countryside* 12, no.46 (1957), 76). In 1847 the land was sold to a victualler, William Dear. Its position was presumably on the island between Whitehorse Street and Sun Street, as this was where Dear's property lay in 1850 (tithe apportionment).

The *parish workhouse* was opened in 1759, in an adapted older building in Womack's Yard behind 25-7 Whitehorse Street (Rider 1982, 15). This property has been identified as Butler's Yard off Orchard Street, and a 17th-century building still stands there (Prosser 1999a, 6-7). It is a two-storey timber-framed structure with brick-cased ground floor and a steep pitched roof. The ground-floor brickwork is 18th or 19th century, but the well-preserved roof timbers plainly date to the early-mid 17th century. The eastern end was removed and extended in the 20th century. All the windows are recent, and its original function is uncertain. It may have been an outbuilding to one of the properties in Whitehorse Street. The land was leased by the workhouse trustees

from 1759, but it is not clear that this building was the main workhouse. The 1850 tithe map shows more than one building on the property. The workhouse closed in 1836, by which date Union Workhouses at Hitchin and Royston were open.

A pesthouse, for smallpox sufferers and others, was built in 1736 in Tavern Lane, which became known as Pesthouse Lane. The pesthouse itself was closed in 1788 (Rider 1982, 2). Its site appears not to have been recorded, although it was in Clothall parish.

Malting and brewing

Baldock's prosperity in the 18th century largely derived from these two related trades. Four major breweries developed, taking over smaller brewhouses.

Breweries

Simpson's Brewery, which until 1968 dominated the east side of the High Street, was run by the Thurgood family from 1730, until John Pryor leased it in 1775 and took it over in 1799. It was still called Thurgood's Brewery until at least 1829. The fine brick buildings, demolished in 1968, were put up c1780 for John Pryor, partly replacing a row of timber-framed buildings (of which a single late medieval structure was kept as the Engine House). The brewery was extended in 1811 and was bought from the Pryors by J & J G Simpson in 1854. The library and community centre, and an access road to new housing, occupy the site (Branch Johnson 1970, 35 (photo), 44). The brewer's house survives (Clare House, 23 High Street, below).

James Ind, whose descendants founded Ind Coope, was brewing at the Rose & Crown in Whitehorse Street from c1783, and built a brewhouse at his maltings near the corner with Clothall Road. The family lived in the house next door (*Baldock Mail* 119 (Aug-Sept 1997), 16). By 1799 he had control of 20 public houses (Allied Breweries 1988, 4). In 1815 John Pryor bought the Ind brewery, and brewing was concentrated at the High Street premises.

Oliver's or Baldock Brewery

On the north side of Whitehorse Street was another brewery which at one time occupied much of Sun Street, and as far as the brewer's house, no.13 Whitehorse Street. This is a smart house with an 18th or early 19th century brick front concealing an earlier structure. The brewery was in existence by the 1730s (when William Noy had a brewhouse and malthouse attached to the Sun Inn). It was extensively rebuilt from the 1840s by George Oliver (expanding to include the grounds of no.13 which was still a farm on the 1850 tithe map). From 1875 until its closure in 1881 it was known as the *Baldock Brewery*. The site was occupied by builders until bought in 1973 by the UDC. The 1840s brewhouse was the last remaining part, demolished in 1997 after recording by Letchworth Museum (Baldock LHS 1998a; see also Vaughan 2000, 9, 11).

The Steed Brewery, which was not opened until 1823 (by John Steed), lay west of Church Street. New buildings were put up in the 1840s (Branch Johnson 1970, 158). The brewery was bought and closed in 1904, part being used as a depot until 1912. Everything has been demolished and housing built over the site. On the corner of Pond Lane at 25 Church Street was the Star public house, which had served as the

brewery tap possibly since 1823 (Branch Johnson 1962). It closed in 1980 on the retirement of the landlord, and was sold as a private house (*Baldock Mail* 14 (Feb 1980), 3). At the end of Church Street was the Old Black Eagle, on the Ickniel Way corner. This was also a public house of the earlier 19th century, when it was owned by Joshua Richmond Page, maltster of Baldock (Branch Johnson 1962). It was sold to John Steed in 1850.

Maltings

There were many maltings in the town, with the characteristic long double range of buildings around a central yard, fitting into the long narrow burgage plots. Most of those described here apparently have 18th century origins; others were built in the 19th century (below). This is unlikely to be a comprehensive list.

16B Hitchin Street, now a private house, was a malting attached to Cambridge House (below; in 1850 these were Joshua Page's house and malting). It was a red brick seven-bay structure on two floors with slate roof, and with the kiln at the north end which now has a modern extension. It remained in use until the later 19th century (Branch Johnson 1970, 158).

42 Church Street

Another is depicted on the 1850 tithe map here, running along Meeting House Lane; it was then a house, malting and yard in the occupation of William Logsdon. It is shown intact on the 1898 OS 25 inch plan. This property had been known as Waterloo Farm, presumably at the beginning of the 19th century. The house is timber-framed and of 16th or 17th century origin, with an 18th century brick front. The framing is visible on the south side wall alongside the arched carriageway which led into the yard. The surviving timber building in the yard was a barn. In the 1960s the house on the Church Street frontage served as the rectory and has since been modernised; in 1976 the barn was converted into offices (*Baldock News* 9, Oct 1976, 13).

Musgrove Maltings, 33 Hitchin Street

Two maltings stood side by side here, one surviving in commercial use. In 1850 one of them was operated by Joshua Page. The timber frame of the survivor is possibly 18th century, weatherboarded on a brick base, with three floors supported by large oak beams and early 19th century iron columns. The kiln operated until 1938 (Branch Johnson 1970, 158).

Lion Maltings, High Street/Mansfield Road

The maltings themselves, running back from the High Street, have been converted into private dwellings. The building is L-shaped in plan, 18th century, in red and blue brick, and with three floors. The upper part of the short arm is weatherboarded over a timber frame. At the junction of the two arms were two kilns, which operated until 1965 (Branch Johnson 1970, 158). The building on the High Street frontage was apparently the barley store, and of one build (early Victorian) with the front range of 48 High Street. It is now in commercial use.

44 Whitehorse Street

Two late 18th century maltings around a yard, on the corner of Clothall Road (see also James Ind's brewery, above); brick and plaster, with later additions and alterations. Originally there were three malting floors. The range facing White Horse Street has been much altered; the Clothall Road range is of 8 bays. The two kilns were of brick, one square and one round with old hair plaster lining. The dome on the square kiln has been removed, but the round one survives. They operated until c1955, since when the buildings have been in other commercial use (Branch Johnson 1970, 158).

Fitzjohns Malting, Tranters Yard

This belonged to the Fitzjohn family of Grove House, on the north side of Whitehorse Street. The Fitzjohns had been maltsters in Baldock since the 16th century, and had owned the Grove House property since at least 1710, so the malting was older in origin than the earliest record of it in 1771 (Havercroft 1998). After the death of Anne Herbert, the last Fitzjohn, in 1860 the malting was rented to Joshua Page. The malting range on the Whitehorse Street frontage is now a shop (29 Whitehorse Street) and the Tranters Yard buildings are commercial premises.

41 High Street

A malting behind no.41 survives as private dwellings. Branch Johnson (1970, 158) recorded that the malt store, weatherboarded on a brick base, and a few patches of brickwork, suggested an 18th century or earlier origin. In 1850 Edith Fossey was the owner and occupier, and the Fossey family still owned it in 1898. In 1928 Randolph Brett bought it, demolished the kiln and converted the brick malting floors into a house.

Seven Roes Maltings, Park Street

The last remnant of the maltings was recorded before demolition in 1999. Two parallel maltings joined by storehouses occupied a large site behind the High Street; the north malting was demolished c1956 and the other ceased working in 1965 (Branch Johnson 1970, 158). Most of the structures were early 19th century but replaced earlier buildings (Prosser 1999b). Houses now stand on the site.

18th-century domestic Listed Buildings

High Street

No.1: a late 18th century red brick house, three storeys, with a two-storey wing, and a corner canted towards Whitehorse Street. The Welsh slate roof is concealed behind a parapet. The doorcase has engaged fluted Doric columns supporting a cornice hood, and the sash windows are set in shallow reveals under flat arches. The shop front is 20th century.

No.7: like no.1, a three-storey brick house, the old tiled roof behind a parapet; the bricks have been whitewashed. The shop front is 19th century; there is a carriageway on the right.

No.9, Holford House: 'the most ambitious house in Baldock' (Pevsner 1977, 83), a three-storey five-bay house built c1720-30 in deep red brick dressed with lighter red. Smith (1993, 21) points out, however, that only the front was brick, the other walls being timber-framed. 'The rooms fail to meet the expectations raised by the exterior'

(Smith 1992, 167). The slightly recessed wing on the north side dates about a century later. Stone steps lead up to the front door on the main, middle, floor. The doorcase has a fanlight, Doric pilasters and pediment, and the whole frontage has similar classical detailing, with a parapet concealing the roof. Additions and alterations were made c1936, and in 1971 it was converted into offices.

No.15: three storeys, with chequered front wall in red and grey brick, and stucco side walls, under Welsh slate roof, and with a canted sash oriel window at the centre of the first floor. The shop window is 20th century.

No.21, Manor House: another fashionable house, of three storeys over seven bays, and set back from the street by a forecourt. Like Holford House it is early 18th century, of deep red brick dressed with lighter red. The roof is behind a parapet. The centre three bays form a pedimented slight central projection, and have a Doric porch around the central door. There is also a two-storey service wing of c1830 on the east side, in red brick with tiled roof (Smith 1993, 21).

Nos.23-23A (Clare House): this was Brewery House, belonging to the High Street brewery; it is mid 18th century. It has three storeys, in chequered red and grey brick dressed with red, and with later two-storey wings, all with parapets (Smith 1993, 21-2). The main block has a central first floor Venetian window above a doorcase with Roman Ionic columns and pediment. Behind the frontage the house was not particularly large, being what Smith (1992, 168, 169) says might be described as one and a half rooms deep. Further additions were made on the north and south sides.

Nos.33, 35, 35A: originally one structure, two storeys with a steep pitched tiled roof, so possibly earlier than the red brick front. The shop bay windows are 19th century.

No.12 was in the past three separate houses, nos.10, 10A and 12, all of red and grey brick, but each with differing details. The largest is the original no.12, three storeys with parapet, and stone steps up to the front door on the first floor. No.10 is two storeys with old tiled roof; no.10A is similar but with attics and a gabled dormer.

No.14 is of plum-coloured brick, two storeys with attics and dormers, and old tiled roof.

No.14A (Goldcrest Hotel): dated 1728 with initials MMM on a rainwater head at the side. Built of red brick, with vertical bands of grey-blue brick, three storeys and six bays. The steep-pitched tiled roof is behind a parapet, and within the structure is a timber-framed rear wing which is probably 16th century (Smith 1993, 21). The 18th century main house had only one large and one smaller room on the ground and first floor. 'Such smaller front rooms [as also at Holford House, above] were probably intended as offices for the professional men - mainly doctors, surveyors and lawyers - whose numbers increased so markedly in the first half of the 18th century' (Smith 1992, 168). In the late 19th century the staircase and panelling were replaced with reproductions, and the central bay window and porch are of the same date. The house was for a time the offices of Baldock UDC, and for some years has been the Goldcrest Hotel.

Church Street

Nos.6-10: put up as one structure in the late 18th or early 19th century, in chequered red and grey brick, two storeys and attics with dormers. *No.1 Sun Street* is part of the same range, but the brick has been roughcast and colour-washed. *Nos.4-16 Church Street* were 'a late-Georgian terrace of two-storeyed brick cottages, derelict' (Pevsner 1977, 84). Like nos.6-10, nos.14-16 have attics and dormers; these two originally one house, altered, and the front plastered.

No.26: red brick, with dormers in old tiled roof, and with 19th century shop front. In 1984 renovation work revealed a small door-frame dated to c1480, embedded in the wall, and thought to be possibly the entrance to the building next door, long since demolished (*Baldock Mail* 43, Dec 1984, 11-12). The door-frame was left on view. The actual date of no.26 is unclear.

Nos.32-4: a pair of houses built in the late 18th century, two storeys and attics.

Hitchin Street

No.16 (Cambridge House): a mid-18th century three-storey house in red brick with stone dressings, and parapet concealing old tiled roof. The ground floor is the main floor here, with canted bay windows either side of a door with fanlight and elaborate pedimented and pilastered surround. This was a maltster's property, with the malting next door (no.16B, above); in 1850 it belonged to Joshua Page. The ground floor bay windows and a large south-west wing were added c1840-50 (Smith 1993, 22).

No.33/33a (The Bury): this was attached to one of the maltings on the south side of Hitchin Street. It is a five-bay house built c1700, in chequered red and grey brick, two storeys and attics with dormers in the tiled roof. The door has a fanlight under a semi-circular hood on brackets. The original house was of six bays, and had a rear staircase turret, and a kitchen wing on the west. The east wing was added in the mid 19th century in grey brick, and is now a separate house. The older house was given new windows and other alterations at the same date (Smith 1993, 22). In 1850 the whole property was 'dwellings and malting yard and garden', owned by Joshua Page.

No.35: two storeys and attic, in red brick with tiled roof and a single dormer.

Nos.43-53 (The Wilderness): built (a plaque has the date 1735) as a house with wings but now divided into several properties. The main block is five bays wide and three storeys high, of red brick with pale grey brick quoins and a central porch with fluted Doric pillars. The wings are of two storeys, with attics in the west wing. In the 19th century members of the Pryor family lived here; like other Baldock houses, it had gardens across the street. The property also included ground to the west, adorned with an avenue of chestnut trees which continued the line of Hitchin Street. This field became Avenue Park, although the trees have gone.

No.55: two storeys in red brick with tiled roof, altered.

No.57: this building was originally the stables of The Wilderness, but since much altered. It is on an L plan, single storey, in red brick with tiled roof and a timber-framed south gable.

Whitehorse Street

No.2: two storeys, with stucco facing and tiled roof.

Nos.40-42: two storeys, now colour-washed roughcast finish under old tiled roof. The shop front is 20th century.

No.31 (Grove House): a two-storey five-bay red brick house with parapet, and steps up to the front door which has fanlight and fluted Doric pilastered surround. The house was built c1730-50 by George Fitzjohn, replacing an earlier house where his family had lived from at least 1710 (Havercroft 1998). Fitzjohns had been maltsters in Baldock for many years before this date and owned several maltings in the town as well as that in Tranters Yard next door. Older buildings survived behind the house. The Fitzjohns bought up an extensive area of ground behind the properties on the north side of Whitehorse Street, and another piece of land on the south side which was landscaped as a garden or 'pleasure ground'. When Anne Herbert, last of the family, died in 1860 the house went to a Mrs Tranter who opened it as a private school. Grove House School closed in 1951.

No.33: a two-storey house with chequered red and blue-grey brick ground floor and plaster-faced upper floor, under steep-pitched tiled roof.

2.6 The 19th century

The Royston & Hitchin Railway arrived in 1850, an east-west branch line of the Great Northern extended to Cambridge in 1852 (Rider 1982, 22). The line still operates, the growth of Letchworth having ensured its survival. The original yellow brick station building also survives, with a modern ticket hall in matching style added in front in 1987. The stationmaster's house has more recently gone and new housing occupies its garden. Changes were made to the road layout as a result. The northern half of Church Street was Norton Street; in 1850 the railway line interrupted it and a track to the west was widened into a new Norton Road.

The opening of the railway brought an end to the coaching trade, but barley-growing, malting, brewing, the production of lime, and straw plait making remained. The large new *Bygrave or Page's* maltings were built on the north side of Royston Road in 1884-98 (Branch Johnson 1970, 158). They burnt down in 1992 (Baldock Mail 88, June 1992) and the Ashville Industrial Estate built on the site. A triple-range malting is shown immediately south of *New Farm* on the 1884 OS 6" map, opposite the west end of Mansfield Road. This was presumably built after the Pryor family, the prominent brewers, bought The Elms in 1859. The site is the front approach to Brandles School.

Watercress growing

The course of the river Ivel to the north of the town runs in artificial channels for at least 500m towards Blackhorse Farm, and some additional earthworks remain. These

are 'old watercress beds' on the 1925 OS 6" map, and are recorded from at least 1881. The 19th century watercress trade was considerable on Hertfordshire chalk streams. Cresses were harvested once a month and sent by rail in huge quantities to London and elsewhere. These watercress beds near Ivel Springs have been obscured by extensive dumping of refuse (*Baldock Mail* 99 (April-May 1994), 19).

Lime burning

Limekiln Lane in the southern part of the town is a relic of an extensive lime-burning industry which developed on the edge of the Weston Hills. The chalk here was quarried and burned in kilns to produce the lime. The most productive period was apparently in the mid 19th century when the demand for concentrated lime as a soil improver was increasing, and the product could be distributed by rail. A plan dated 1820 shows a chalk pit on the south side of Limekiln Lane already in existence, and the industry may have originated in the 18th century (Went 1994). Several large quarry holes have been recorded around the junction of South Road and London Road, as well as extraction tunnels excavated into the hillside in the same area. Tunnels were seen on the site of the new Catholic church in 1976 (Westaway 1976), in what had been the fields behind the Anchor public house. A lime kiln within a chalk pit still existed in 1925 at the end of Limekiln Lane, on the site since occupied by the caravan park in Penfold Close (OS 1925 6" map). Pits close to South Lodge were sealed in the 1940s.

None of this encouraged much growth in the town, which on the 1850 tithe map still retained most of the elements of the 12th century plan, with additional small properties encroaching onto the highway at the south end of the High Street and in Park Street. The tithe award did, however, record that two arable fields off Pesthouse Lane, close to Heath Farm, were the property of the Freehold Land Society. By 1852 Pembroke Road had appeared here and the first new housing plots laid out. The death of Mrs Herbert at Grove House in 1860 led to the sale of its extensive grounds, as a result of which the British Land Company laid out Orchard Road in 1862 (Baldock LHS 1998a). The plots were not all built on for many years. The medieval parish boundary was not extended until 1882, and when Baldock became an Urban District in 1894 it was still a small town relying on traditional trades. In 1883-4 there was a short-lived attempt to revive the market, which had lapsed (Rider 1982, 5). Much of the land was owned by the Pryor family, and private grounds belonging to the larger properties accounted for more. Only a small amount of expansion had occurred by 1900. The 'Station Estate' along the road to Bygrave was sold for housing in 1893, the first expansion outside the ancient boundary (Rider 1982, 32) apart from a row of workers' housing by the Gas Works. The entire southwest corner of the town was taken up by the house and grounds of The Elms, owned by the Pryors as their own house from 1859. New Farm in Weston Way was a model farm belonging to the estate; most of the buildings, in decorative yellow and red brick, survive.

The Rectory (Butterfield House, 4 Hitchin Street)

In 1869 the barnyard belonging to the old rectory was added to the churchyard. Shortly afterwards the site of a coach house attached to the George & Dragon was acquired and a new entrance made into the churchyard from Hitchin Street (Gray n.d.). A new rectory was built in 1870-73 adjacent to the new entrance. It is named after its architect, William Butterfield. The building is in his distinctive style, in red

brick with bands and diapers of black brick, and a timber-framed gable. In the 1960s the house became an annexe to the George & Dragon and has since been in commercial occupation.

Schools and chapels

National School

This school, sponsored by the Church of England, opened in 1834 on a piece of ground enclosed from Park Street. It catered for 100 boys, 100 girls, and 130 infants in a separate building. The original school closed in the 1970s and the premises developed as housing and business accommodation (Rider 1982, 15).

British School

A rival school for 170 children of nonconformist families opened in 1839 next to the Independent Chapel in Pond Lane; in 1847 it was listed (Burg 1995) as the British School for Boys with an average attendance of 30. This foundation became the Knights Templar School in the 20th century. As the National and British Schools between them catered adequately for the town no additional Board School was built.

Independent Chapel

Attempts to form a dissenting meeting were made in 1799 and in 1819, and finally established in 1826, in what was called the New Chapel. This was a plain brick structure apparently built c1790 in Pond Lane, and described in 1819 as having been used as a theatre (Rider 1981; 1982, 18). The chapel, with its burial ground in front, was used until 1904 when the new Congregational church was built in Whitehorse Street (in Mrs Herbert's garden, which was partly preserved around it). The original building became a warehouse and, in a ruinous state, was finally demolished in 1982 when new housing was put up on its site. The burial ground of the 19th century chapel became the garden area.

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel

A house in Park Street was the original chapel, opened in 1795 (Burg 1995, 136). A Sunday School was started in 1819. In 1853 the much larger church opened in Whitehorse Street and was extended in 1864 to accommodate the Sunday School. This is a striking building in red brick dressed with stucco in Tudor style, and has a gabled front with an octagonal turret at each end, capped with small cupolas. There was no burial ground at either chapel (Rider 1982, 18).

Primitive Methodist Chapel

Two cottages in 'Norton Street' (Church Street) were converted into a Primitive Methodist chapel in 1847 (Burg 1995, 136). The chapel was sold in 1916; there was no burial ground (Rider 1982, 21).

The 1851 ecclesiastical census (Burg 1995, 137) recorded the presence of the old Society of Friends' Meeting House in Church Street (above); by this date attendance was very low. The Pryor family, the most prominent Quakers in 18th century Baldock, were by now all Church of England.

Urban facilities

The Baldock Bank

In 1807 a private bank was founded in Baldock by John Williamson, maltster, with Samuel Wells, a brewer of Biggleswade (Parker 1986, 16). In 1810 John Izard Pryor was briefly also a partner. In 1830, on Williamson's death, the Baldock Bank amalgamated with the Biggleswade Bank. It remained private until 1894, the partners all being brewers. In 1894 it was taken over by the Capital & Counties Bank Ltd. and is shown on the 1898 OS 25 " plan. Lloyds Bank is in the same position today. An early savings bank was also started in the town, in 1816 (*ibid.*, 54).

Police, Fire

The 1850 tithe map shows the 'station house' occupied by the police, next to the Rose & Crown in Whitehorse Street. The fire equipment was kept in a single-storey engine shed with a bell on the top, next to the White Horse, from c1860 until 1897 (Madden 1994, 15, 22-3). When the new UDC Town Hall was built on the island at the north end of the High Street in 1897 accommodation for the fire engine was included within it (Pevsner 1977, 83). The old fire engine shed was used as St Mary's church hall until the 1980s, and was demolished in 1983 (*Baldock Mail* 30, Oct 1982).

Gas, Water

A gasworks was set up in 1837 just outside the parish boundary at the north-west corner of the town, and by 1866 belonged to the Gas Light & Coke Company. In 1878 it was reported that 'the town is partially paved, lighted by gas' (Rider 1982, 44). The gasworks was demolished in 1987. Water came from wells in the chalk; a piped water supply was not put in until c1902 (Rider 1982, 30), although a small sewage works is shown on the 1884 OS 6" map just on the other side of the railway from the gasworks. This plant is now larger but on its original site.

2.7 Change in the 20th century

The new Garden City at Letchworth was founded in 1903, and its immediate effect on Baldock was to provide many opportunities for work nearby but not within the ancient town itself. Baldock made itself useful to the inhabitants of Letchworth, as no public houses were provided for the Garden City until the 1950s.

The southern end of the town had been dominated by the estate of The Elms (or Elmwood Manor) since at least the earlier 19th century, but in 1916 the house burned down. It remained ruinous for some years. In 1924-5 a huge and striking building went up in its place for Kosmos, a photographic materials manufacturer of Letchworth. The project ran out of money before its completion (Rider 1986). The Fully Fashioned Hosiery Company (Kayser-Bondor from 1936) opened the building in 1928, as a factory making silk stockings. In one sense this was a continuation of the silk mill industry in Hertfordshire (Branch Johnson 1970, 70). It was the first industry on any scale in Baldock, apart from malting and brewing. Skilled workers were brought from Nottinghamshire and given new housing in New Road, renamed Mansfield Road in recognition (*Baldock Mail* 32 (Feb 1983), 11). The factory closed in 1983 and in 1986 the building became a supermarket, retaining the original facade. This is 150m long and is covered in striking Romano-Greek motifs; designed by P H S Burditt, it is an accomplished design also 'notable for its extensive use of concrete'. The concrete was made largely on the site, using crushed brick from the original

house which gives it its dusty pink colour (Brown 1985). Part of the 19th century garden survives opposite the Lodge at the north corner of the grounds.

The southern grounds of the Elms estate were occupied for 27 years after World War II by SERL, the Services Electronics Research Laboratory. In 1984 this became Elm Park industrial estate. Baldock has remained a small town which displays a high proportion of its historic character.

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