

8 Cross over the road and turn right up Church Street. On your left is the **Town Hall** and **Market Hall**.

At a meeting of the Local Board on 3rd June 1878 a proposal was made to acquire land to build a market hall and town hall. The plans of Charles Bell of London were selected. It was later decided to defer the building of a town hall indefinitely and provide accommodation in the new market hall for the town's officials. Mr. Bell was officially appointed architect and Mr. Hobson Haigh from Manchester clerk of works. The first problem to be solved was the River Darwen. It had to be diverted, while a brick-lined channel was built. The channel was roofed over and the river permitted to follow its original course, running beneath the main entrance to the Market Hall. The Marquis of Hartington, Liberal M.P. for North East Lancashire was invited to perform the opening ceremony on 21st June 1882, but had to attend a cabinet meeting, so the M.P. Frederick Grafton took his place. The clock was added to the tower by Dr. Ballantyne when he was Mayor in 1899. In the 1920s part of the market ground became a bus stand and in 1968 the old glass arcade was demolished to make way for a new fish annexe, opened in February 1969. In 1974 the new covered market was constructed. This was opened in June 1975 and housed sixty-six traders. From 1983 to 1992 the magistrates' court sat in the council chamber for which a prisoners' staircase was added in School Street. The fish market was rebuilt as an extension to the Town Hall in 1999.

9 Proceed up the hill, passing the blue plaque on the Co-op store that commemorates the Peel Baths erected in 1853, which accommodated the first public library and the Board of Health Offices. You come to the former **Public Halls**.

Erected in 1879 to the design of William Perry of Darwen. The ground floor was the Conservative Club with the hall at first floor level. It opened on 17th July 1880 and magic lantern shows were given. An extension onto Bank Street was built in 1919/20 when it became the Ritz Cinema, with the stage at the opposite end. It is now a bar, but there are plans to restore it to its former glory.

10 Up the hill is the former **Holy Trinity Church**.

Erected 1828/9, a clock was placed in the church tower in 1878, with a peal of six bells. On 1st April 1974 the church was renamed St Peter's on the closing of St George's, St John's and the incorporation of St Paul's, Hoddlesden.

11 Retrace your steps down the hill and as you turn right you pass **Holker House**.

Medical Officer of Health Dr Hindle had Holker House built in 1871 to the design of George Wightman of Darwen. He named it after Holker House, the family home of the Hindles in Hoddlesden which was built in 1591. Later it was owned by Doctor Ballantyne. Subsequently it became the Divisional Education Office for Darwen until 1974, when it became the Area Education Architects' Office. From 1985 until 2005 it was used by Blackburn College.

12 Across the road next to the market service slope is **Fire Escape House**.

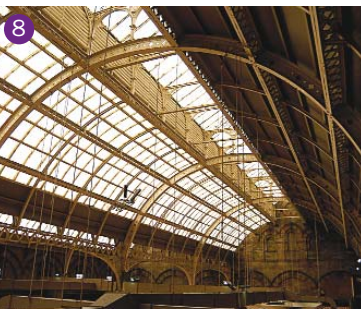
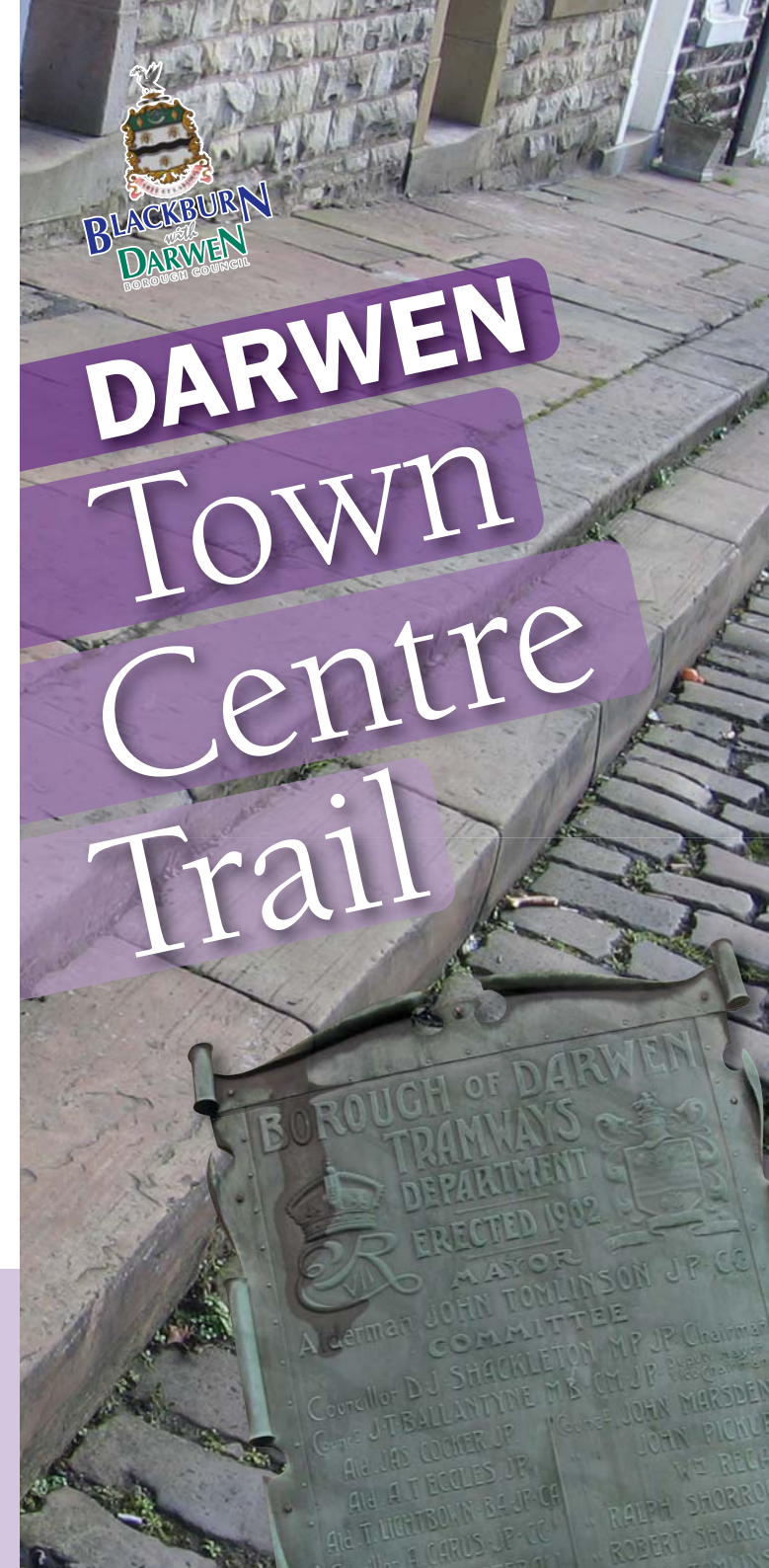
Built in 1888 for the Corporation by Seth Harwood, to house a Courtts Patent Sixty Foot Escape Ladder. This was used in the town centre until 1905. Subsequently the building has seen various uses.

13 At this point just look at the view up to the moors. That juxtaposition of moorland and town is what makes Darwen special. It's a prospect that must have captured the imaginations of the makers of the 1960 **Norman Wisdom** film, 'There Was a Crooked Man.' It was made on location here and the **Theatre Royal**, which stood where the taxi company is now, was cast as the 'McKillup Arms'.

14 The next building is the former **Wesleyan Methodist Chapel**.

John Wesley visited Darwen in 1759 and again in 1761, but it was the Rev William Grimshaw of Haworth who nurtured the flame of Wesleyan Methodism in the area. The first Wesleyan chapel was in Back Lane, opened in 1791. This site in Railway Road was chosen for the new chapel, but the cotton famine caused delays and it was 1866 before it opened. It fell into disuse and in 1969 was bought by the Huddersfield firm F and A E Lodge to become a supermarket, at which time a canopy was erected at the entrance. This was removed when A and M Bargains took over in 1997.

Take the next road on the left to return to the **Library**.



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As far as possible use marked crossings; allow about one hour.

1 Start at Darwen Library.

Darwen has always been an innovator in the library world: the first local board to adopt the Public Library Acts, the first library in the north to have open-access, one of the first to appoint a female head librarian, Betsy Bannister, in 1890. Originally housed within the Peel Baths building in 1871, it was taken over by the Borough in 1890 and in 1895 moved to the new Technical School. The present building, designed by Almond and Harrison of Accrington, was opened on 27th May 1908 by Andrew Carnegie. The original lecture hall below became a dual purpose theatre and hall in the 1960s. The present theatre opened on 24th January 2000.

2 On the left down Knott Street is the former Technical School.

Designed by Mr. J. Lane Fox, the school opened in 1894. The foundation stone had been laid in July 1893 by the Liberal MP C.P. Huntington. The library moved here in 1895. Its first pupils were from the Borough School in William Street and the top forms of the elementary schools. Among the early pupils was James Hargreaves Morton, the artist killed in the First World War. The wooden gymnasium was added in 1928. It was the Grammar School until 1939. On 1st September 1945 it reopened as the Secondary Technical School, obtaining college status in the 1950s. Moorland Lower School was here from July 1972 until July 1995. In 2000 work started on renovation and conversion, likely to become apartments.

3 Continue along Union Street. Pause here at Union Street bridge, rebuilt and widened in 1881, and have a look at the River Darwen. In ancient times the river was forded here. Cross the main road to the New Inn.

The building pre-dates the new road of 1797, and what is now the front was once the back. From 1829 it was the venue for the Manor Court and auctions were held there. It was owned by Lawrence Yates Smalley, then his wife Mary, and known as 'Smalley's Hotel'. By 1881 it was owned by Job Gregg and became 'Gregg's Hotel'. The building was substantially rebuilt in 1961, when it was reduced from three to two stories with a new façade to Duckworth Street.

4 Proceed up the cobbles of Wellington Fold and turn left for the Manor House Site.

The building on the left, now a nightclub, was erected in 1864 as a private house by J. Walmsley. It became a beer house in 1867. It may have been built on the foundations of Darwen's manor house in Walsh Fold. It was later the National United Services Club, 'Old Vets,' until 10th September 1985, when it was converted to its present use.

5 Cross the main road to the Green and the White Lion Hotel.

Erected before 1799, possibly as a loom house, it is one of the oldest public houses in Darwen.

The **Green Trail** starts here and the energetic, intending to combine the two, should consult that leaflet.

6 To continue with the Town Centre Trail, cross the road to Bank Bottom and go past Holy Trinity Primary school to the former Belgrave Congregational Chapel, opened on 21st October 1847 by Dr. Raffles to replace the 1822 chapel. There were extensive alterations in the 1950s with a new roof structure, resulting in only the main porch remaining unaltered. This is now Grade II* listed. The chapel closed in 1976 and was used as a warehouse until recent conversion to apartments, when permission to demolish was refused.



7 Next to the Chapel is Belgrave Square and the former Tramway Waiting Rooms.

The Local Board leased the square from James Greenway for 999 years from 2nd December 1867. It became the boarding point for the steam tramway which commenced in 1881; this was then the widest part of the road in the town centre to take double not single track. The Tramway Company was requested to build waiting rooms, and did in fact produce plans. When the Corporation took over they built waiting rooms and underground toilets, designed by the Borough Engineer, R.W. Smith-Saville, which opened in January 1903. The ladies' waiting room had an internal entrance to the toilets, whilst the

gentlemen had an external entrance. At the rear of the gentlemen's waiting room was a parcels' office for the tramway. The office closed in 1939, the toilets in 1988.

The Boer War Memorial, which was included in the scheme, had its lion stolen in 1988. A replacement was donated by the Darwen Rotary Club in 1992.

