

THE MASHAM SWIFTS

Masham's swifts arrive at the beginning of May each year and leave in late August. They use holes and crevices in the town's buildings to breed before returning to sub-Saharan Africa.

They are astonishing creatures: on a fine day each pair of swifts may feed their young 20,000 insects! A swift has been recorded covering 3,100 miles from Africa to England in just five days.

They form 'screaming parties' when several swifts circle around the Market Place, uttering cries at two different pitches. The female sings higher and then her nesting partner answers. Slowed down, a swift's song resembles that of many other birds, but, like their legendary airspeed, they just do it faster!

Swifts avoid landing on the ground and cannot perch on branches or wires like swallows and martins. Their short legs, made for gripping vertical surfaces, are rarely visible, giving rise to their portrayal in heraldry as the legless martlet. They spend their whole lives in the air, except for a few weeks each year on the nest.

Like many other birds they have been adversely affected by the rise in the use of pesticides and it is known that, since the 1980s, the UK population has fallen by over 50%. However, with their characteristic swept wings, soaring flight and screaming song, they are still a heart-lifting sight on a Masham summer evening.

The Mashamshire Swift Conservation Community Project was set up in 2018 to encourage residents of Mashamshire to put up swift nest boxes to replace all the breeding sites lost due to renovation of old buildings. Now over 100 boxes are in place, including 18 in the tower of St. Mary's Church. If you would like to support the project, please email mashamswifts@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook and YouTube at [@mashamswifts](https://www.facebook.com/mashamswifts).

MASHAM



Masham is a beautiful ancient market town on the lower reaches of the River Ure in Wensleydale. The town has a long creative history: Turner visited here and nearby Hackfall and his fellow Royal Academicians

George Cuijt and Julius Caesar Ibbetson lived here as well as other writers, poets and musicians.

Today Masham has a very friendly welcoming creative community with three galleries, glassblowers, an active arts programme and many musicians, artists and craftspeople. Maybe it's the beer: in a town of just over a thousand souls we have two thriving breweries (Theakston's and Black Sheep) and four pubs.

Key highlights of the Masham year are the Steam Engine Rally in July and the Sheep Fair in September, and if you love art and craft don't miss our Crafted By Hand events. With great walks, and interesting places to shop, eat and relax we think you'll love it here.

Maps, walks and more suggestions for things to do in Masham are available from www.visitmasham.com and the Mashamshire Community Office in the Little Market Place

THE SWIFT ARTISTS



Adrian Wood (Sculptures 2 & 6)

A chance visit to a forge gave Adrian his first taste of blacksmithing. "From the first moment I hit the hot steel I knew what I wanted to do."

www.awartistblacksmiths.co.uk



Katherine Dereli (Sculptures 7 & 9)

Katherine sculpts and fires clay before casting into plaster or bronze and also works in carved stone.

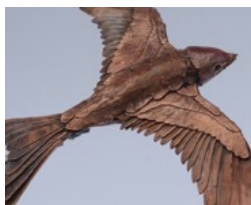
www.kdereli.net



Jennifer Tetlow (Sculptures 1, 3 & 4)

Jennifer is a stone sculptor based in Lastingham who began carving after an encounter with masons dressing wall-encourter.

www.jennifertetlow.co.uk



Michael Kusz (Sculptures 5, 8 & 10)

Michael is a Yorkshire based sculptor in recycled materials, mainly copper.

www.graculus.co.uk



Gaynor Pearson (Sculpture 6)

Gaynor is a stone carver based near Masham. Her first experience of chisel on stone was in Portland on holiday where she was captivated by the ancient process of hand carving stone.

www.gaynorpearson.co.uk



Mashamshire
Swift Conservation
Community Project

mashamswifts@gmail.com
[@mashamswifts](https://www.facebook.com/mashamswifts)



Find the MASHAM Swifts

Discover the Masham Swift Sculptures and swift nest boxes as you wander around this beautiful Yorkshire Dales market town



The Masham Swifts were commissioned as the legacy project of the Masham Arts Festival (2000-2013).

9. SILVER STREET



The Black Bull Hotel (now Corks & Cases) is the site of Theakston's first brewery. It is rumoured Theakston's Brewery won ownership of the earlier Lightfoot brewery in a card game!

Silver Street is built on a bridge. With access under the arches supporting the road it is possible to see the original ground floor of old house fronts abandoned since the 18th century.

1. LITTLE MARKET PLACE



At one time Masham's pig market, the Little Market Place is dominated by the Town Hall, built in 1912 on the site of a former abattoir. The Town Hall was the gift of inventor, industrialist and later 1st Baron Masham, Samuel Cunliffe-Lister.

The old Police House is now the Community Office, and number 9 is the former George and Dragon pub and coaching house. The footpath down to the river (Dixon Keld) is probably the earliest entrance to the town and passes through what was once a 7th century Anglo-Scandinavian Christian graveyard.

2. NORTH EAST OF MARKET PLACE



Look out for Masham Primary School which comprises the old Masham Grammar and National School Buildings in a medley of styles; Tudor, Palladian and Gothic. To the left of the porch is a symbolic carved acorn (part of the Oak Leaf Sculpture Trail that will lead you around the outskirts of town). To the right of the school is the old workhouse, the former fire station (once home to Masham's horse-drawn fire engine) and the nail-studded door of the prison.

8. CHURCH STREET & COLLEGE LANE



The building on Church Street with the long lintel is the former mill where l'Ansons animal feed business had its beginnings. In College Lane stands the 13th century College House, once home to the Old Peculier Court. As a Peculier, Masham was one of the few parishes in the country that could make and implement its own local laws.

7. PARK STREET



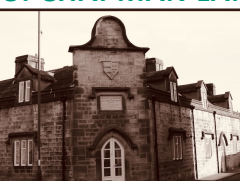
Park Street is the old road to Ripon. Park Square was probably Masham's first marketplace and Park House its first manor house. The building of the 1856 Mechanics' Institute was an enlightened attempt to introduce the working classes to reading and study.

6. METHODIST CHAPEL

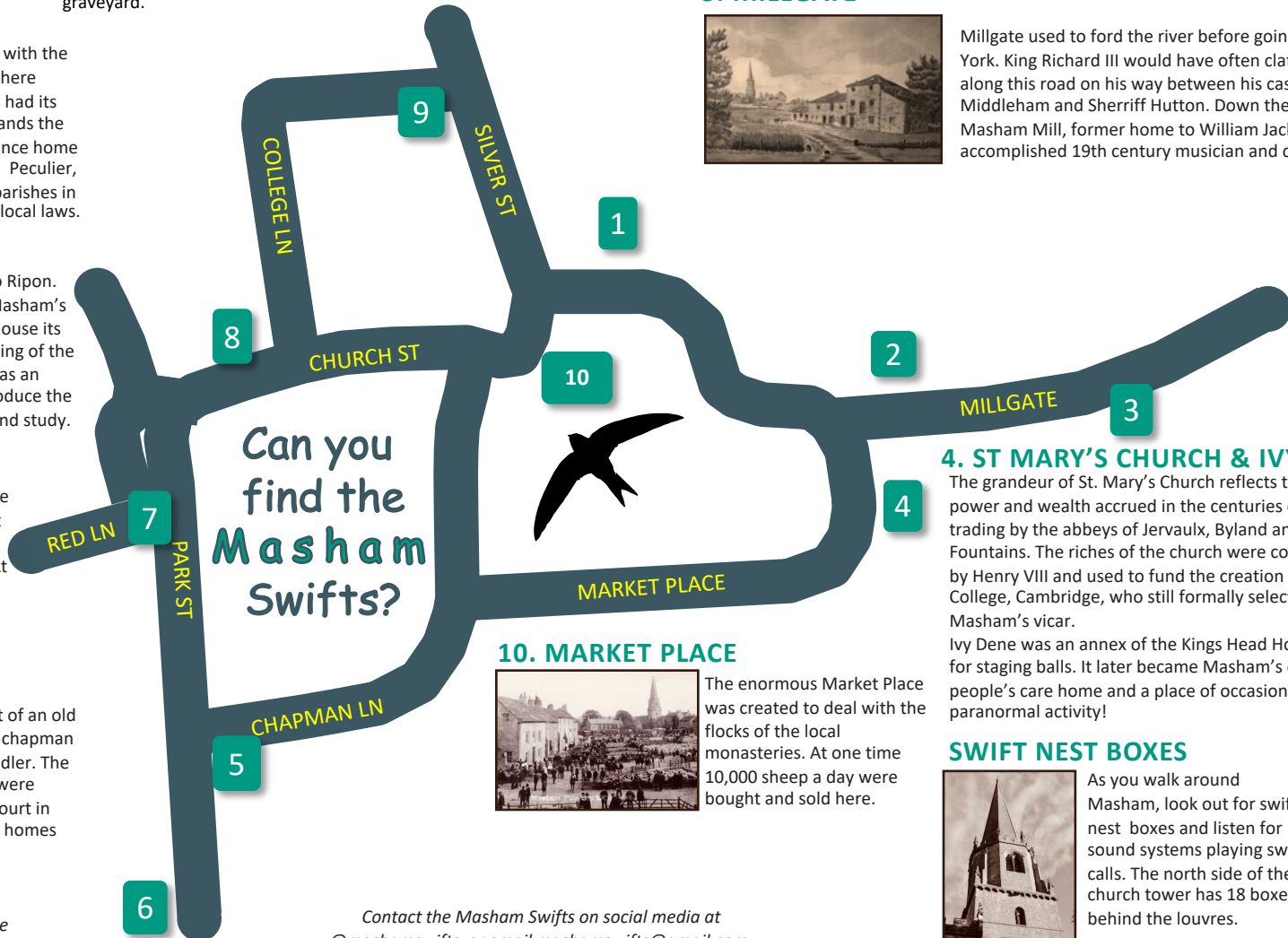


The Methodist Chapel was the third and grandest Methodist church built in Masham – a centre of non-conformism. At one time there was also a Quaker Meeting House and a Baptist Chapel in Masham.

5. CHAPMAN LANE



Chapman Lane is the first part of an old drover's road to Kettlewell. A chapman was a medieval travelling peddler. The Victorian Gothic almshouses were provided by Mrs. Danby-Harcourt in 1853 and continue to provide homes for Masham's elderly.



3. MILLGATE



Millgate used to ford the river before going on to York. King Richard III would have often clattered along this road on his way between his castles at Middleham and Sherriff Hutton. Down the lane is Masham Mill, former home to William Jackson, an accomplished 19th century musician and composer.

4. ST MARY'S CHURCH & IVY DENE

The grandeur of St. Mary's Church reflects the power and wealth accrued in the centuries of sheep trading by the abbeys of Jervaulx, Byland and Fountains. The riches of the church were confiscated by Henry VIII and used to fund the creation of Trinity College, Cambridge, who still formally select Masham's vicar.

Ivy Dene was an annex of the Kings Head Hotel, used for staging balls. It later became Masham's old people's care home and a place of occasional paranormal activity!

10. MARKET PLACE



The enormous Market Place was created to deal with the flocks of the local monasteries. At one time 10,000 sheep a day were bought and sold here.

SWIFT NEST BOXES



As you walk around Masham, look out for swift nest boxes and listen for sound systems playing swift calls. The north side of the church tower has 18 boxes behind the louvers.