

= Shepton Mallet =

Shepton Mallet is a town and civil parish in the Mendip district of Somerset in South West England . Situated approximately 18 miles ( 29 km ) south of Bristol and 5 miles ( 8 @. @ 0 km ) east of Wells , the town is estimated to have a population of 10 @, @ 369 . It contains the administrative headquarters of Mendip District Council .

The Mendip Hills lie to the north , and the River Sheppey runs through the town . Shepton Mallet lies on the route of the Fosse Way , the principal Roman road into the south west of England , and there is evidence of Roman settlement . The town contains a fine parish church and a considerable number of listed buildings . Shepton Mallet Prison was England 's oldest prison still in use until its closure in March 2013 .

In medieval times , the wool trade was important in the town 's economy , although this declined in the 18th century to be replaced by other industries such as brewing ; the town continues to be a major centre for the production of cider . Shepton Mallet is the closest town to the site of the Glastonbury Festival , the largest music festival in Europe . Also nearby is the Royal Bath and West of England Society showground which hosts the Royal Bath and West Show , and other major shows and festivals .

= = History = =

The name Shepton derives from the Old English scoep and tun , meaning ' sheep farm ' ; the Domesday Book of 1086 records a settlement known as Sceaptun . The current spelling is recorded at least as far back as 1496 , in a letter from Henry VII . The second part of the name derives from that of the Norman Malet family who took a lease from Glastonbury Abbey around 1100 . The second ' L ' appears to have been added in the 16th century .

= = = Prehistoric settlement = = =

Archaeological investigations have found evidence for prehistoric activity in the Shepton Mallet area , with substantial amounts of Neolithic flint being found , as well as some pottery fragments from the late Neolithic period . The two barrows on Barren Down , to the north of the town centre , have been found to contain cremation burials from the bronze age , and a further bronze age burial site contained a skeleton as well as some pottery . The remains of iron age roundhouses were found at Cannard 's Grave , in the vicinity of what would later become the Fosse Way , along with artefacts such as quernstones and beads , and a probable iron age farm settlement enclosure has been identified at Field Farm . In the countryside surrounding the town , there is evidence of iron age cave dwellings in Ham Woods , to the north @- @ west , and a number of burial mounds have been identified at Beacon Hill , a short distance north of the town .

= = = Roman occupation = = =

Shepton Mallet is situated approximately halfway between the Roman towns of Bath and Ilchester on the Fosse Way , and , although there are no visible remains ( apart from the line of the Roman road itself ) , there is archaeological evidence for both early military , and later civilian , settlement lasting into the 5th century . Domed pottery kilns , with pottery still in situ , were identified on the site of the Anglo @- @ Bavarian Brewery in the mid @- @ 19th century , suggesting military activity in the 1st and 2nd centuries . Several hoards of Roman coins ranging from the 1st to 4th centuries have also been found , as well as over 300 fibula brooches , potsherds and other artefacts . In addition , a few isolated burials near the route of the Fosse Way were found during the 19th century .

A lead coffin within a rock @- @ cut grave was discovered at a site adjacent to the Fosse Way in 1988 . This discovery , and the impending commercial development of the site by the landowner , Showerings , led archaeologists to undertake more extensive excavations in the 1990s . The grave was found to be part of a larger cemetery which contained 17 burials lying on a rough east @- @

west alignment , indicating probable Christian adherence . Two other , smaller , cemeteries contained graves aligned north @-@ south , possibly signifying pagan religious practices . One burial was within a substantial stone coffin which had been positioned beneath a mausoleum , the foundations of which remained .

A particularly notable find in the Fosse Way burials was a Chi @-@ Rho amulet , at the time thought to be from the 5th century , and so held to be among the earliest definite evidence of Christianity in England . A copy of the amulet was presented to the then Archbishop of Canterbury , George Carey , by the churches of the Diocese of Bath and Wells . Although the amulet now resides in the Museum of Somerset , analysis by Liverpool University in 2008 using inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy demonstrated that it was a hoax , as the silver within it dated to the 19th century or later .

As well as the cemeteries , the excavations in the 1990s confirmed the presence of a linear settlement , stretching along the Fosse Way for perhaps a kilometre , comprising cobbled streets , wooden and stone workshops and houses ( some with two storeys ) containing hearths and ovens , industrial areas , and a stone @-@ lined well . A great many artefacts were found , including both local and imported pottery ( such as samian ware ) , items of jewellery such as brooches , rings and bracelets , toilet items including tweezers , ear scoops and nail cleaners , bronze and iron tools , and a lead ingot which probably originated from the Romans ' lead mines on the Mendip Hills . Coins minted across the Roman empire were also found . The finds on the site indicate occupation from the late 1st , or early 2nd , century to the late 4th , or early 5th , century , although as no public buildings were found the settlement was probably not , technically , a town .

= = = Saxon and Norman periods = = =

There is a small amount of evidence of Saxon settlement in the town , including some Saxon stonework in the parish church of St Peter and St Paul . In addition , a charter of King Ine of Wessex , dating from 706 and witnessed by nine Bishops including the Archbishop of Canterbury , records the granting of the area in which Shepton Mallet is now situated to Abbot Berwald of Glastonbury Abbey . According to some legends Indract of Glastonbury was buried in Shepton . The town fell within the Whitstone Hundred , and the hundred courts were held at Cannard 's Grave , a short distance to the south of the town .

The Exeter Domesday Book records that , at the death of Edward the Confessor in 1066 , the site was held ( probably by lease from the Abbey ) by one Uluert , and by Roger de Corcella at the time of the survey in 1086 . When Roger de Corcella died , sometime before or around 1100 , the land passed to the Malets , a very prominent Norman family , who caused their name to be added to that of the settlement ( and also of another of their holdings , Curi ? now Curry Mallet ) .

= = = Middle Ages = = =

The Malet family retained the estate until the reign of King John , when on the death of William Malet ( fl . 1192 ? 1215 ) ( and on the payment by his sons @-@ in @-@ law of a fine of two thousand marks , due to William having participated in a rebellion against the King ) it passed through his daughter Mabel to her husband Hugh de Vivonne . Some generations later , the part of the estate containing Shepton Mallet was sold to a relative , Sir Thomas Gournay . His son , also called Thomas , participated in the murder of Edward II , and his estates were confiscated by Edward III in 1337 . However the family regained favour with the King some years later , and the lands were returned . When Mathew de Gournay died childless in 1406 , the estate again reverted to the Crown , before being granted out to Sir John de Tiptoft . It was once again confiscated from his son by Henry VI during the Wars of the Roses ( due to the family siding with Edward IV ) , but was restored to Sir John 's grandson , Edward Tiptoft , when Edward IV regained the throne . However , he died without issue , and there followed a succession of grants and reversions until Glastonbury Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII , and the Abbey 's lands , including Shepton Mallet , were granted to the Duchy of Cornwall in 1536 .

Charters for the holding of markets and fairs were granted in 1235 ( though this charter was swiftly revoked following objections by the Bishop of Wells to the competition it represented to the market in that city ) , 1260 and 1318 , and indicate that the town was developing and prospering in the 13th and early 14th centuries . However the Black Death struck the town in 1348 , reducing the population to about 300 . In the late 14th and early 15th centuries , the population and economy of the town were bolstered by the arrival of craftsmen and merchants from France and the Low Countries who came to England to escape wars and religious persecution in their home countries . They introduced cloth @-@ making which , together with the local wool trade , became a major industry in Shepton and other towns in Somerset and Wiltshire . Indeed , it appears that wool became such a source of riches for the town that when , in 1496 , Henry VII needed to raise money to fight the Scots , he called upon the wool @-@ merchants of Shepton to contribute £ 10 to the cause :

= = = Civil War and the Monmouth Rebellion = = =

In 1625 , a House of Correction was established in Shepton Mallet .

In the English Civil War the town supported the parliamentary side , although Shepton appears to have mostly escaped conflict apart from a bloodless confrontation between supporters of the King , led by Sir Ralph Hopton , and Parliament , led by Colonel William Strode , in the market place on 1 August 1642 . In 1645 Sir Thomas Fairfax led the New Model Army through the town on the way to capturing Bristol , and in 1646 the church organ was apparently destroyed by Cromwellian soldiers .

During the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685 , the Duke of Monmouth was welcomed when he passed through Shepton Mallet , staying in Longbridge House in Cowl Street on the night of 23 June , with his men quartered throughout the town , before setting out for Bristol the following day . Many Shepton men joined the cause , but Monmouth failed to take Bath or Bristol and had to return to Shepton on 30 June . Following the Battle of Sedgemoor , the Duke fled and spent the night of 6 July at Downside , a mile north of Shepton , before continuing his flight for two more days before his capture . Following the Bloody Assizes , twelve local supporters of Monmouth were hanged and quartered in the Market Place of the town .

In 1699 Edward Strode built almshouses , close to the rectory his family had built to house the town 's grammar school , which lasted until 1900 .

= = = 18th ? 20th centuries = = =

In the 17th and 18th centuries the wool and cloth industries continued to thrive , powered by the waters of the River Sheppey . There were reputed to be 50 mills in the town and surrounding area in the early 18th century , and a number of fine clothiers ' houses survive , particularly in Bowlish , a hamlet on the western edge of Shepton Mallet . Although these industries employed some 4 @, @ 000 people towards the end of the century , they were already beginning to decline by this time . Discontent at the mechanisation of the mills resulted in the deaths of two men in a riot in the town in 1775 , an event which apparently discouraged the mill @-@ owners from modernising further . The decision resulted in Shepton 's cloth trade losing out to the steam @-@ powered mills in the north of England in the early 19th century . The manufacture of silk and crepe revived the town 's fortunes somewhat , and Shepton 's mills manufactured the silk used in Queen Victoria 's wedding dress . However these industries also died out eventually .

While wool , cloth and silk were declining , other industries were growing , and in the 19th and 20th centuries brewing , in particular , became one of the town 's major industries . The Anglo @-@ Bavarian Brewery , built in 1864 and still a local landmark , was the first in England to brew lager . At its height , the brewery was exporting 1 @.@ 8 million bottles a year to Australia , New Zealand , India , South Africa , South America and the West Indies . It closed in 1921 . However the town , which is the home of Babycham , is still an important centre for cider production .

For a period during World War II , Shepton Mallet Prison was used to store important national records from the Public Record Office , including Magna Carta , the Domesday Book , the logbooks

of HMS Victory , dispatches from the Battle of Waterloo , and the " scrap of paper " signed by Hitler and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at the Munich Conference of September 1938 . The prison also became a US Army detention facility , and between 1943 and 1945 , 18 American servicemen were executed within the prison walls , having been convicted by US court @-@ martial of murder , rape or both .

The population of Shepton Mallet was fairly stable through the 19th century and the first part of the 20th : in 1801 , it was 5 @, @ 104 and in 1851 only slightly more at 5 @, @ 117 , although by 1901 it had swelled to 5 @, @ 446 , before falling back to 5 @, @ 260 in 1951 . By 2001 , it had increased significantly to 8 @, @ 981 .

= = Governance and public services = =

Shepton Mallet is in the Mendip local government district which is part of the county of Somerset . In the 80 years prior to 1974 , the town had lain within Shepton Mallet Urban District . The town elects one councillor to Somerset County Council ; at the last election in 2012 , a conservative was elected . Shepton Mallet has four councillors on Mendip District Council , two elected by each of the two wards that make up the town . After the elections in 2015 all were Conservatives .

The civil parish of Shepton Mallet has adopted the style of a town , and there is a Town Council of 16 members . Councillors are split equally between the two wards : Shepton East and Shepton West . The most recent elections were in May 2015 , following which the council is made up of five Conservatives , five Liberal Democrats , three members of the Labour Party and three independent councillors .

Shepton Mallet falls within the Wells parliamentary constituency . Since the general election on 7 May 2015 the MP is James Heapey of the Conservative Party . The town is within the South West England European Parliamentary constituency , which elects six MEPs . It is twinned with three European towns : Misburg in Germany , Oissel sur Seine in France , and Bollnäs in Sweden .

There are two doctors ' surgeries in Shepton Mallet , a National Health Service community hospital formerly operated by Somerset Primary Care Trust , and an independent sector treatment centre , which carries out a range of surgical procedures . The nearest general hospital is the Royal United Hospital in Bath . Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service have a retained fire station in the town , which is adjacent to the ambulance station operated by South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust . Avon and Somerset Constabulary closed the local police station in 2014 and the town falls within the Somerset East policing district .

= = Geography = =

Shepton Mallet lies in the southern foothills of the Mendip Hills . The area is geologically founded on Forest Marble , Blue Lias and Oolitic limestone .

= = = Nearby cave systems = = =

To the north of the town are several caves of the Mendip Hills , including Thrupe Lane Swallet which is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest ( SSSI ) , and the St. Dunstan 's Well Catchment which is an important cave system including a series of spectacularly @-@ decorated caves which in total extend to about 4 miles ( 6 @. @ 4 km ) of mapped passage . The caves at Fairy Cave Quarry were formed mainly by the erosive action of water flowing beneath the water @-@ table at considerable pressure ( so called ' phreatic ' development ) , but as the water table has fallen many of the caves now lie well above it and the system now contains a variety of cave formations ( stalagmites , stalactites and calcite curtains ) which in their extent and preservation are amongst the best in Britain . Shatter Cave and Withyhill Cave are generally considered to be amongst the finest decorated caves in Britain in terms of their sheer abundance of pure white and translucent calcite deposits . Small numbers of greater horseshoe bat ( *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* ) , lesser horseshoe bat ( *R. hipposideros* ) and Natterer 's bat ( *Myotis nattereri* ) hibernate in the

cave system . An area of nationally rare species @-@ rich unimproved calcareous grassland of the Sheep 's @-@ fescue @-@ Meadow Oat @-@ grass type occurs in the field to the east of Stoke Lane Quarry .

= = = Surrounding countryside = = =

The countryside surrounding the town is mostly given over to farming , although there are a few areas of nearby woodland . Approximately 1 @. @ 8 mi ( 2 @. @ 9 km ) to the north @-@ east of the town centre is Beacon Hill Wood ( owned by the Woodland Trust ) , which is at the junction of the Fosse Way and another Roman road that runs along the top of the Mendip Hills , and which contains a number of tumuli . To the northwest of the town are Ham Woods , within which are the Windsor Hill railway tunnels and a viaduct , remnants of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway . The East Mendip Way long @-@ distance path passes around the northern edge of Shepton Mallet and through Ham Woods .

South @-@ west of the town is the Friar 's Oven SSSI which is the site of herb @-@ rich calcareous grassland classified as the Upright Brome ( *Bromus erectus* ) type , and north @-@ east is the Windsor Hill Quarry geological SSSI , and also the Windsor Hill Marsh biological SSSI , a marshy silted pond with adjacent damp , slightly acidic grassland of interest for its diverse flora , in large part down to the varied habitats present within the small area . Two species are present which are rare in Somerset : Flat @-@ sedge ( *Blysmus compressus* ) and Slender Spike @-@ rush ( *Eleocharis uniglumis* ) . Other marshland plants found there include Purple Loosestrife , Yellow Flag ( *Iris pseudacorus* ) , Hard Rush ( *Juncus inflexus* ) , Soft Rush ( *J. effusus* ) , Flowering Rush ( *Butomus umbellatus* ) , Devil 's @-@ bit Scabious ( *Succisa pratensis* ) , three species of Horsetail *Equisetum* spp. and seven sedges *Carex* spp .

= = = River Sheppey = = =

The centre and oldest parts of Shepton Mallet are adjacent to the River Sheppey , and thus at the bottom of a valley , approximately 115 m ( 377 ft ) above sea level . The edges of the town lie about 45 m ( 148 ft ) higher up . The river has cut a narrow valley , and between Shepton Mallet and the village of Croscombe , to the west , it is bounded by steeply @-@ sloping fields and woodland . However the river flows through much of Shepton Mallet itself in underground culverts . The river occasionally floods after heavy rain , such as on 20 October 2006 , and again on 29 May 2008 , when rainfall was so heavy that the culverts were unable to cope with the volume of water , resulting in the flooding of some of the lower @-@ lying parts of the town . Some houses around Leg Square , Lower Lane and Draycott Road were submerged to a depth of 1 metre ( 3 ft 3 in ) . A study by the Environment Agency identified that the current standard of flood protection in those parts of the town was insufficient , as it was of a 5 ? 10 @-@ year event standard , whereas current guidelines require protection of a 50 ? 200 @-@ year standard . In the summer of 2010 , the Agency began construction of a flood alleviation scheme at a cost of about £ 1 @. @ 3 million .

= = = Areas of the town = = =

Within Shepton Mallet there are several distinct areas which originated as separate communities around the central point of the church and Market Place . The town centre is small , basically consisting of two streets : High Street , which runs south from the Market Place towards the Townsend Retail Park , and the pedestrianised Town Street which runs north from the Market Place to Waterloo Bridge . To the east , separated from the Market Place by the Academy complex , is the parish church of St Peter and St Paul . Lower Lane , which runs under Waterloo Bridge along the bottom of the river valley to the north of the town centre , is one of the few parts of the town where the River Sheppey runs above ground . At the eastern end is Leg Square , which is surrounded by three large houses originally built by owners of some of the town 's mills . Very close by is Cornhill , on which the former prison stands .

Moving roughly eastwards , Garston Street , also in the valley @-@ bottom , consists of a long row of weavers ' and other artisans ' cottages dating from the 17th century . The eastern end of this area , adjacent to Kilver Street , is now occupied by the cider breweries . Across Kilver Street ( the A37 ) is Kilver Court , which over the course of the 20th century has been a factory , the headquarters of the Showerings brewing business , and then the headquarters of a leather @-@ goods manufacturer , Mulberry . Behind are the Kilver Court Gardens , originally built by Showerings for the recreation of their staff and set against the backdrop of part of the Charlton Viaduct . The gardens are now open to the public . On the eastern edge of the town is Charlton where there are former breweries and mills , now converted into a trading estate , and right on the edge of the town is to be found Charlton House , a luxury hotel and spa .

On the southern side of the town , on a triangle of land bounded on the east by the A37 , on the north by the line of the former East Somerset Railway , and on the west by Cannard 's Grave Road , is Tadley Acres , a modern housing development built on land partly belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall . The development has been praised for the quality of its design and the use of locally sourced natural building materials . North of the former railway line is Collett Park . Across Cannard 's Grave Road from Tadley Acres is the Mid @-@ Somerset Showground . Immediately to the south @-@ west of the town centre , on a site which at the start of the 20th century had been the grounds of the former Summerleaze House and then a shoe @-@ factory , is the Townsend Retail Park , built in 2006 ? 7 .

West Shepton , which forms the south @-@ west corner of the town , is dominated by the former Shepton Mallet Union Workhouse , a Grade II listed building originally constructed in 1848 . It later became the Norah Fry mental hospital and is now a housing development . Nearby , on the western edge of the town , is the modern community hospital . Moving northwards , back down into the river valley , are two hamlets : Darshill , once the site of a number of mills , and Bowlish , which contains several grand clothiers ' houses . The steeply @-@ sloping fields adjoining the river between Bowlish and the rest of the Shepton Mallet are known locally as The Meadows . To their east is Hillmead , a council housing estate built in the 1960s .

#### == Climate ==

Along with the rest of South West England , Shepton Mallet has a temperate climate that is generally wetter and milder than the rest of England . The annual mean temperature is about 10 ° C ( 50 ° F ) with seasonal and diurnal variations , but due to the modifying effect of the sea , the range is less than in most other parts of the United Kingdom . January is the coldest month with mean minimum temperatures between 1 ° C ( 34 ° F ) and 2 ° C ( 36 ° F ) . July and August are the warmest months in the region , with mean daily maxima around 21 ° C ( 70 ° F ) . In general , December is the dullest month and June the sunniest . South @-@ west England enjoys a favoured location , particularly in summer , when the Azores High extends its influence north @-@ eastwards towards the UK .

Cloud often forms inland , especially near hills , and reduces exposure to sunshine . The average annual sunshine totals around 1600 hours . Rainfall tends to be associated with Atlantic depressions or with convection . In summer , convection caused by solar surface heating sometimes forms shower clouds and a large proportion of the annual precipitation falls from showers and thunderstorms at this time of year . Average rainfall is around 800 ? 900 mm ( 31 ? 35 in ) . About 8 ? 15 days of snowfall is typical . November to March have the highest mean wind speeds , with June to August having the lightest . The predominant wind direction is from the south @-@ west .

#### == Demography ==

In the 2001 census , the population was 8 @, 981 , comprising 4 @, 482 ( 49 @. 9 % ) males and 4 @, 499 ( 50 @. 1 % ) females ; 1 @, 976 ( 22 % ) residents were aged 16 or below , 5 @, 781 ( 64 @. 4 % ) between 16 and 65 , and 1 @, 224 ( 13 @. 6 % ) aged 65 or over .

Of the population aged between 16 and 74 , 4 @, @ 200 ( 66 % ) were in employment , with only 224 ( 3 @. @ 5 % ) unemployed , with the remainder being economically inactive . About 69 % of those in employment were in service industries , with the remainder in manufacturing , while 1 @, @ 459 people were employed in managerial or professional occupations , 522 were self @- @ employed , and 1 @, @ 888 worked in routine and semi @- @ routine occupations .

A total of 3 @, @ 714 households were recorded in the town , of which 2 @, @ 621 ( 70 @. @ 6 % ) were owner @- @ occupied , 515 ( 13 @. @ 9 % ) rented from private landlords , and 578 ( 15 @. @ 6 % ) rented from the local authority or other social landlord ; 3 @, @ 688 ( 99 @. @ 3 % ) heads of households were white .

In late 2008 , Mendip District Council 's estimate of the town 's population was 9 @, @ 700 .

= = Economy = =

There is a local perception that Shepton Mallet has been in economic decline for some time . Some 350 manufacturing jobs were lost in the late 1990s and early years of the 21st century . However , the District Council asserts that , despite the loss of the manufacturing jobs on which Shepton Mallet has been historically dependent , more jobs in distribution , business services and public administration , health , education , quarrying , construction and hi @- @ tech services ( from companies such as the ISP Easynet ) have been created , thereby creating a more balanced economy . In 2001 , there were slightly more jobs in the town than economically active people , resulting in a small in @- @ flow of workers .

The town centre is fairly small with a high proportion of empty premises in Market Place and the north end of High Street adjacent to Market Place . However , the pedestrianised Town Street which runs north from the Market Place to Waterloo Bridge has had significant investment in its heritage in the last five years and now enjoys almost full occupancy of its shops . Since 2010 an ' artisan quarter ' of independent shops is starting to emerge in Town Street and Market Place .

Since 2004 , Shepton Mallet 's town centre buildings have benefited from two conservation schemes , the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme and the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme , which provided grants for the repair of buildings , reinstatement of architectural features and enhancement of public spaces , as well as community involvement , education and training . As the body which made the bid for the funding , Mendip District Council has administrated both schemes , but all decisions are made by a steering group comprising the main stakeholders in the town .

For centuries there has been a general market held each Friday in the Market Place . The market has been in decline for some years and in 2010 attempts were made to revitalise it . However , after initial interest , the number of stallholders slowly decreased . In recent months a number of suitcase traders have been supporting the market on a regular basis and this has attracted local interest .

The furniture store Haskins , which originated in Shepton Mallet in 1938 , has its principal showroom in the High Street within Haskins Retail Centre , which also includes a number of others shops including Aldi supermarket , Edinburgh Woollen Mill , Ponden Home , Pavers Shoes and an outlet clothing store . Retail jobs in the town increased in number in 2006 ? 7 when a new shopping development , including a large Tesco supermarket , a clothes store and other retailers , was constructed on a site just south of the town centre , which had once been a factory making Clarks shoes and later Doc Martens boots . This development attracted national media attention when protesters occupied the site to try to prevent the felling of an avenue of trees dating back to the 19th century . It has also divided opinion in the town , between those who hoped it would help to revitalise the town , and others who feared that local traders would be unable to compete , leading to a further decline of Shepton Mallet 's High Street . There is also the Mulberry Factory Shop located on Kilver Street , near to the former Mulberry headquarters .

Shepton Mallet is home to three international alcoholic drinks producers . The Gaymer Cider Company , a subsidiary of C & C Group , produces Blackthorn and Gaymer 's Olde English cider . Constellation Brands , former owners of Gaymers , produces Babycham . Family @- @ run Brothers Drinks produces Brothers Cider and runs a contract bottling operation for many other drinks

companies .

As well as the annual Royal Bath and West Show and other agricultural shows , the Royal Bath & West Showground near Evercreech , 2 @. @ 5 mi ( 4 @. @ 0 km ) south @- @ east of the town , hosts events such as the New Wine and Soul Survivor Christian festivals and the National Adventure Sports Show , fairs and markets including the Shepton Mallet International Antiques & Collectors ' Fair , and exhibitions and trade shows such as the National Amateur Gardening Show .

= = Transport = =

The A37 road runs north and south through Shepton Mallet , along the line of the Fosse Way between the south of the town and Ilchester . The A361 from Frome skirts the eastern edge of Shepton Mallet on its way to Glastonbury , and the A371 from Castle Cary passes through the town on its way west to Wells ; for some distance , both routes follow the line of the A37 .

Shepton Mallet had railway stations on two lines , both now closed . The first station , called Shepton Mallet ( High Street ) in British Railways days , was on the East Somerset Railway branch line from Witham and opened in 1859 . The line was extended to Wells in 1862 and later connected to the Cheddar Valley line branch of the Bristol and Exeter Railway from Yatton to Wells via Cheddar . Through services between Yatton and Witham started in 1870 . The line was absorbed into the Great Western Railway in the 1870s .

A second station , later called Shepton Mallet ( Charlton Road ) , opened in 1874 with the building of the Bath extension of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway . This station was some distance east of the centre of the town and was approached on the Charlton Viaduct .

Both stations closed in the 1960s as part of the Beeching Axe . Shepton Mallet ( High Street ) closed with the withdrawal of passenger services on the Yatton to Witham line in 1963 , though part of the former East Somerset line remains open for freight and as a heritage railway . Shepton Mallet ( Charlton Road ) closed in 1966 with the closure of the Somerset and Dorset line . Nowadays , the nearest Network Rail station is Castle Cary , some eight miles south of Shepton Mallet . However , the nearest station on the East Somerset Railway is Mendip Vale , which is a mile and a half away .

A bus service to the town is provided by First Somerset & Avon .

= = Landmarks = =

There are 218 listed buildings in Shepton Mallet and the town is in receipt of funding for the restoration of chosen town @- @ centre historic buildings from the English Heritage Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme and the National Lottery Townscape Heritage Initiative . The town centre , and the Bowlish , Darshill and Charlton areas , form a conservation area .

The hexagonal market cross in the town centre , 50 ft ( 15 m ) tall , dates back to a bequest of £ 20 by Walter Buckland in 1520 , and was rebuilt in 1841 . Also in the market place is The Shambles , a medieval market stall , although it has been much restored . Former HM Prison Shepton Mallet sometimes known as Cornhill , was built in 1610 , is located close to the town centre , adjacent to the parish church . On 10 January 2013 , Justice Secretary Chris Grayling announced that it was one of seven prisons in England to close . On 24 December 2014 it was announced that the prison had been sold to Town & Country and public consultations are taking place to seek agreement on its future use .

There are a number of fine houses in the older parts of the town around Lower Lane and Leg Square , as well as in the outlying suburbs such as Charlton and Bowlish . Old Bowlish House , which now houses a contemporary art gallery , dates from the first half of the 17th century and was remodelled in about 1720 in the Palladian style . Bowlish House , also in the Palladian style and now a hotel and restaurant , was built in 1732 by a prosperous local clothier ; a spring is reported to rise in the cellar . Park House in Forum Lane dates to about 1700 and was modified about 1750 . Others among the 19 grade II listed buildings in Bowlish include Coombe House , which was built c . 1820 ; 14 , 15 and 16 Combe Lane , which were built around 1700 with 18th @- @ century alterations ; 26 to 29 Combe Lane , which is a former mill built around 1700 and enlarged in 1850 ; and 30 and 31



Combe Lane , which are two weaver 's cottages dating to about 1850 . What is now a stained glass studio in Ham Lane was formerly a coal store attached to a stable which belonged to the public house next door , The Butcher 's Arms , which ceased trading in 1860 . The studio has provided stained glass for , among others , the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Ghost , Midsomer Norton . As a consequence of its historic nature , Bowlish is included within Shepton Mallet 's conservation area and is a site of special archaeological interest .

In the hamlet of Darshill , on the road from Shepton Mallet to Wells , there is a silk drying shed , known locally as a handle house , three walls of which are full of holes to allow the passage of air to aid in the process of drying teasle heads , which were used to raise the nap on cloth in the textile process .

The Anglo @-@ Bavarian Brewery was built in the 1860s and still dominates the western parts of Shepton Mallet ; fairly nearby is a former workhouse and then hospital , the Norah Fry Hospital , which was built in 1848 and has now been converted into housing . Two now @-@ disused railway viaducts are to be found in the town , including the Charlton Viaduct which has 27 arches , each spanning 28 feet ( 8 @.@ 5 m ) . It is on a curve of 30 chains radius falling at 1 in 55 from each end to the midpoint .

The market cross , the prison and prison wall , The Merchants House ( 8 Market Place ) , Anglo @-@ Bavarian Brewery , Charlton Viaduct , the former St Michael 's Roman Catholic Church at Townsend , and Bowlish House , Old Bowlish House and Park House in Bowlish are the town 's nine grade II \* listed buildings .

The town centre was extensively remodelled in the 1970s , a scheme financed by the Showerings family who owned the town 's cider manufactories . The scheme included a new library ( in a faithful copy of a former inn , The Bunch of Grapes , which had been demolished ) , and a new entertainment complex called The Centre , entirely in concrete , on the eastern side of the market square . When the allegedly Roman Chi Rho amulet was found in the Fosse Lane excavations in the 1990s , the complex was renamed The Amulet in honour of the find . It has recently been renamed again as The Academy .

Shepton benefits from a sizeable park , a gift of land from a local man , John Kyte Collett . As a boy he was thrown out of the grounds of local estates for trespass so in later life he purchased and gave land to the town to provide a public space ; this park , which opened in 1906 , is called Collett Park in his honour .

#### = = Religious sites = =

The Grade I listed parish church of St Peter and St Paul dates from the 12th century , but the current building is largely from the 15th century , with further rebuilding in 1836 . The oak wagon roof , made up of 350 panels of different designs , separated by 396 carved foliage bosses ( supposedly every one different ) and with 36 carved angels along the sides , was described by British historian Nikolaus Pevsner as " the finest 15th century carved oak wagon @-@ roof in England " . It was restored , at a cost of £ 5 @,@ 000 , in 1953 ? 54 .

The former St Michael 's Roman Catholic Church , which was built in 1804 , is now a warehouse . A modern Catholic Church , built in 1966 , is located in Park Road . There was also , between 1810 and 1831 , a convent of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary ( also known as the Salesian Sisters ) based in a mansion in Draycott Road . The building , which is now known as Sales House , was subsequently used as a Lodge by Shepton Mallet 's freemasons , and is now used as social housing .

The Salvation Army has meeting rooms in the town , whilst the local Methodists , who previously worshipped in their own Chapel in Paul Street ( built in 1810 ; it is now a community centre ) , have an agreement to share the parish church with the Anglican congregation . The Baptist Chapel in Commercial Road was built in 1801 as a Congregational Church . There were previously a number of other non @-@ conformist chapels in Shepton , the most notable of which is the Unitarian Chapel on Cowl Street which was built in 1692 and enlarged in 1758 ; it is now a private dwelling .

## == Education ==

There are three primary schools within Shepton Mallet . Shepton Mallet Infants School on Waterloo Road was rated as good by Ofsted in 2013 . St Paul 's Junior School on Commercial Road was assessed as good in 2008 , as was Bowlish Primary School when it was last inspected in 2007 .

Education for 11- to 16 @-@ year @-@ olds is provided by Whitstone School , which is a Technology College . In 2013 , it was assessed by Ofsted as good . For post @-@ 16 education , students travel to colleges in other local towns , for example Frome Community College , Strode College in Street or Norton Radstock College in Midsomer Norton .

## == Culture ==

During the summer of 2010 , the television production company Wall to Wall filmed a series for BBC One in the town centre which was broadcast from 2 November 2010 . Called Turn Back Time ? The High Street , the series features a number of families running traditional bakers , butchers , grocers , and dressmakers shops , as well as a tea room , as they would have been during the Victorian and Edwardian eras , during World War II , and in the 1960s and 1970s .

A town fete called Collett Day is held in June in the town 's Collett Park . A free one @-@ day agricultural show , the Mid @-@ Somerset Show , is held on fields on Shepton Mallet 's southern edge in August .

The Glastonbury Festival , the largest music festival in Europe , is held slightly west of the village of Pilton , approximately 3 @.@ 5 miles ( 5 @.@ 6 km ) south @-@ west of Shepton . The Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music was held at Shepton Mallet in 1970 . The town also hosts the annual Shepton Mallet Digital Arts Festival which was founded in 2009 .

In 2007 , The Amulet complex in the town centre became the base for the Bristol Academy of Performing Arts ( BAPA ) , and the complex was renamed The Academy . In 2009 , BAPA went into administration and was briefly replaced by the Musical Theatre School , before that also failed . The complex 's auditorium has the only suspended seating system in the United Kingdom .

The town 's weekly newspaper , part of the Mid Somerset Series , is called the Shepton Mallet Journal . The town is also covered by the Fosse Way Magazine and Mendip Times .

In 2007 , Shepton Mallet came to international attention when Westcountry Farmhouse Cheesemakers broadcast the maturation of a round of Cheddar cheese called Wedginald , an event that attracted more than 1 @.@ 5 million viewers .

## == Sport and leisure ==

Shepton Mallet has a Non @-@ League football club Shepton Mallet F.C. who play at The Playing Fields .

Shepton Mallet has a hockey club who play at the leisure centre

## == Notable people ==

Edmund Adams ( 1915 ? 2005 ) , cricketer , was born in Shepton Mallet .

Simon Browne ( 1680 ? 1732 ) , a dissenting preacher and theologian , born in Shepton Mallet . He preached at Old Jewry in London and in Portsmouth .

Christopher Cazenove ( 1945 ? 2010 ) , cinema , television and stage actor , lived at Ham Manor in Bowlish , near Shepton Mallet , as a child .

William Henry Coombes ( 1767 ? 1850 ) , Catholic theologian , was a priest in Shepton Mallet from 1810 to 1849 and then retired to nearby Downside Abbey .

Herbert Foxwell ( 1849 ? 1936 ) , economist , was born in Shepton Mallet on 17 June 1849 .

Sir Ronald Gould ( 1904 ? 1986 ) , general secretary of the National Union of Teachers from 1947 to 1970 , was educated at Shepton Mallet Grammar School .

Racey Helps ( 1913 ? 1970 ) , children 's writer and illustrator , lived in the town in the 1940s .

Hugh Inge or Ynge ( died 1528 ) , Archbishop of Dublin and Lord Chancellor of Ireland , was a native of Shepton Mallet .

John Lewis ( 1836 ? 1928 ) , founder of the British department store John Lewis , was born in Town Street in Shepton Mallet on 24 February 1836 .

Frank Tuohy ( 1925 ? 1999 ) , novelist and short @-@ story writer , lived in Shepton Mallet following his retirement , and died in the town 's hospital on 11 April 1999 .

= = Twin towns = =

Shepton Mallet is twinned with : Misburg in Germany ; Bollnäs in Gävleborg County , Sweden ; and Oissel sur Seine in Haute @-@ Normandie , France .