

Take the road beside Lloyds Bank and you come to Fords Hospital [12] a half timbered group of alms houses arranged around a square. Return the same way to Broadgate.

To the left side of Broadgate is the parish church Holy Trinity [13] where George Fox 'heckled' in 1646. Continue on the right side to the market cross [14]. (Well the rebuilt market cross, the original built in 1421 was destroyed in 1745 and this one made to the original design in the 1970's).

In front are the new [15] and old cathedrals [14]. For the payment of a small charge you can climb the spire.

To the right of the old cathedral is St Mary's Hall [17] a medieval hall used for city functions (it may be open). To the right of it is Castle Yard. It is here that it is believed some early Friends were imprisoned in the castle dungeons in 1649. The room below the hall is used by the Coventry Freemen. To be eligible you need to have served an apprenticeship within the city. Continue down Bailey Lane past the Draper's Hall [18] – one of the old city guilds. And turn left down Priory Road. At the bottom turn left at Pool Meadow [19] bus station the pool now filled in.

Continue to Millennium Place with its 'World Clock' and great wing artwork commemorating the work of Frank Whittle the inventor of the jet engine in front of the transport museum. To your right is the bricked up Hale Street gate [20] and proceed up Lady Herbert's Garden [21] beside the city wall. At the top is Cook Street Gate [22].

Opposite is Foleshill Road [23] which is the road to Fenny Drayton. From George Foxes journal it was 'as he was approaching Coventry' in the beginning of 1646 presumably along this road that he had the vision that there was 'something of God in every man'. Keeping within the ring road walk along Tower Street and Lamb Street. The city wall can be seen on the right and then further along behind the Salvation Army hall on the left. Continue across the road and that leads towards Hill Street and the Meeting House.

Notes: In a city with well over one thousand years of history there is a lot that has not been covered. For example; Coventry Blue cloth, its weaving and dyeing, the way that the technical and engineering expertise of the mill-wrights making and maintaining the looms which expanded into ribbon making and Jacquard loom use, watch-making and jewelry. All making Coventry the home of high volume car manufacturing. Some of these trades still continue J&J Cash is world famous for its woven labels and one of the founding brothers is buried in the Meeting House grounds.

Please visit the website for other walks in 1624 Country, the area where Quakerism was conceived.

Written by William Waddilove for the 1624 country project.

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1624 ORG UK
COUNTRY

A George Fox walk around Coventry



Vicar Lane Meeting House built 1698

A walk around the centre of Coventry visiting places of historic interest and with a special focus on George Fox and the early Quakers and buildings that he would have seen.

The walk can be done in any order but for simplicity the start is at the current Friends Meeting House in Hill Street. Feel free to be distracted along the way!

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This is a walk around the centre of Coventry visiting places of historic interest and with an especial interest in George Fox and the early Quakers.

The walk can be done in any order but for simplicity the start is at the current Friends Meeting house in Hill Street. [1]

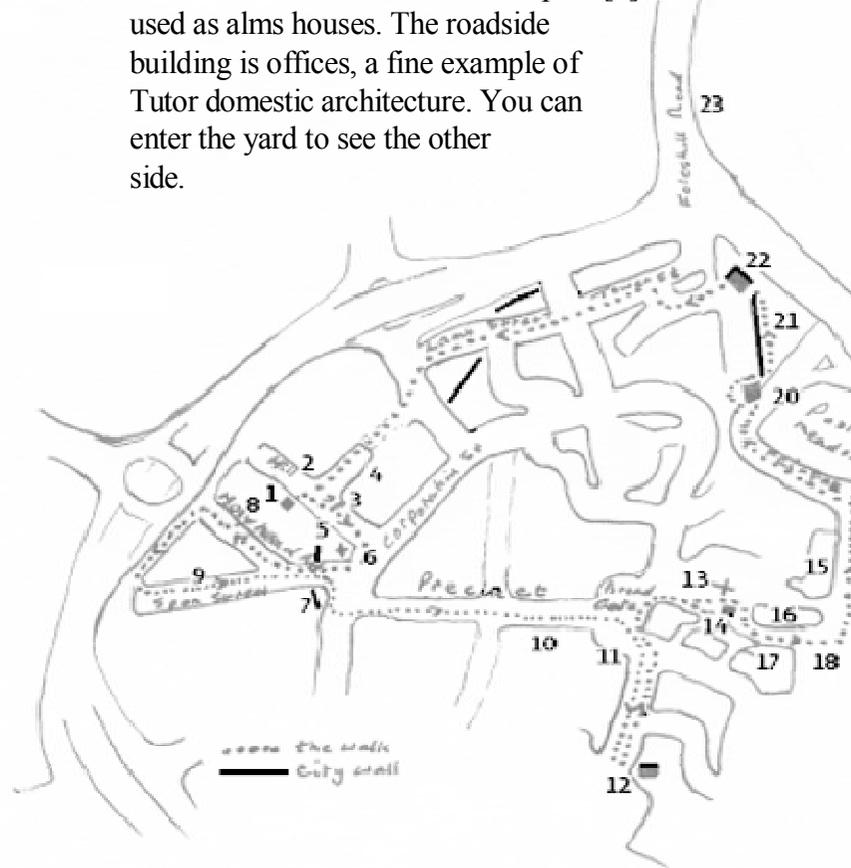
The aim is to show some of the city that George Fox would have known. This walk roughly follows the old city wall for much of its length.

The meeting house site was bought in 1668 as a burial ground, just outside the city wall, and on it was a barn which was used as a meeting house until the new one in Vicars Lane was built in 1704.

At the time of George Fox the founder of the Religious Society of Friends born in July 1624 (died 1691). Coventry was then a fine medieval city although the walls were pulled down by Oliver Cromwell's troops during the Civil War (1649-1660) to prevent it regaining a defensive role (when his troops were 'sent to Coventry'). Since then there have been many waves of development so much of that fine city has been destroyed this has even continued up to the present day so much of its industrial heritage has also gone.

Stand at the front of the meeting house and across the road are some 18 century restored houses [2]. They have one of the many black plaques giving their history. Hill Street was one of the main roads out of the city and as you will note on a hill. Uphill it is cut across by

the post war inner ring road. Going down the road Hill Street gate is marked by the cobbles [3] (Plaque adjacent) to the left is the town Wall Pub [4] and one of the oldest in the city and was in a road facing the inside of the Wall. Further down is Bonds Hospital [5]. Still used as almshouses. The roadside building is offices, a fine example of Tudor domestic architecture. You can enter the yard to see the other side.



Continue down and on the corner is St John's Church [6] (it may be open for visitors) which would have been almost as George Fox knew it. Continue round the right and beyond it is some of the original city wall as part of the building. Across the road are some restored half timbered shops [7] and in front a restored section of wall. (You will return to this point.)

Follow the right-hand kerb into Lower Holyhead Road. Part way up on the right is the old meeting house [8] built in 1898 and sold in 1939. It was built as a first day school and its rear boundary is common with the present meeting house. Just beyond on the opposite side are some of the 'top shops' where the top floors were used for watch-making or jewelry workshops. At the end turn left and follow the path by the ring-road to the top of Spon Street. Here is an information board about some of Coventry's restored buildings. Cross under the ring road where Spon Street is named Upper Spon Street and in 100 yards on a corner is Black Swan Terrace. These wooden framed houses were built in 1455 and one, the Weavers House, is restored to 16th Century condition. Return and under the road and walk down Spon Street [9] here are many interesting original and restored buildings many with explanatory plaques. At the bottom turn right in front of the restored wall and shops and cross the road into the lower precinct and walk straight up through shops to the central 'crossroads'. This whole area has been rebuilt and re-designed following the Wartime Blitz.

Just beyond the centre was the location of Vicars Lane [10] where the old meeting house was, see front cover (sold about 1895).

Continue straight up the Precinct into Broadgate where there is a statue of Lady Godiva the great heroine of Coventry. On the right is the Godiva Clock [11]. If you are there on the hour when it chimes you will see her parade on her horse and be observed by Peeping Tom.