

WELCOME TO GREAT MISSENDEN

Great Missenden is in the Chiltern Hills, in the valley of the Misbourne River. The village has its origins in medieval times. It used to lie on a major route between the Midlands and London and boasted several coaching inns, one of which was on the site that the Museum now occupies.

Roald Dahl moved to Great Missenden in 1954 with his first wife, the Hollywood actress Patricia Neal. He lived in the village for 36 years until his death in 1990. In his garden Writing Hut, whose interior is preserved and displayed at the Museum, he wrote all of his much-loved children's books. Many of them are set in and around the village.

Great Missenden used to be much more rural than it is now. Roald Dahl would get his fruit and eggs from Town Farm (now the residential Old Town Farm), near the station. As he recounts in *Roald Dahl's Cookbook*, he was given the eggs ("the best you can get... In our house we eat no others"), in exchange for letting the farmer graze his young cattle in the orchard outside his Writing Hut.



Great Missenden High Street, circa 1950

This picture shows how the High Street would have looked when Roald Dahl moved here.

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Roald Dahl always wanted to write a **GHOST STORY** but never managed it. Instead he told **SPOOKY STORIES** to his children under the railway bridge in Whitefield Lane at night.

Roald Dahl had a **PET GOAT**, Alma. She once broke into his Writing Hut and left a 'present' on the floor.

Sometimes Roald Dahl would prop a ladder against the side of his house, **CLIMB UP** to the bedroom windows as his children were going to sleep and push a bamboo cane through their window, **PRETENDING TO BE THE BFG**.

Roald Dahl kept **HUNDREDS** of homing budgerigars which lived in an aviary in his garden.

Cover picture: This photograph, circa 1990, shows Roald Dahl and his dog Chopper outside the butcher's shop that used to be at 80 High Street.

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THE **ROALD DAHL**
MUSEUM AND
STORY CENTRE

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ROALD DAHL'S VILLAGE TRAIL

A SHORT LOCAL WALK



© Jan Baldwin

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GREAT MISSENDEN

Follow the trail around the village in number order and find out lots of fantabulous facts about Roald Dahl.

2. GREAT MISSENDEN LIBRARY

Built in 1970, the library was visited regularly by Matilda while her mum went off to Aylesbury to play bingo.



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3. GREAT MISSENDEN STATION

The station dates from 1892. Roald Dahl wrote a leaflet telling children how they could stay safe on and around railways. *Roald Dahl's Guide to Railway Safety* was illustrated by Quentin Blake and was given to school children in 1991, not long after Roald Dahl died.



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4. THE OLD POST OFFICE

The Post Office received hundreds of sacks of mail every year from Roald Dahl's fans all around the world when he was alive. The postman would deliver up to 4,000 letters a week to his house and even now they continue to arrive.

POST OFFICE GREAT MISSENDEN BUCKS.

"Dear children, far across the sea,
How good of you to write to me.
I love to read the things you say
When you are miles and miles away.
Young people, and I think I'm right,
Are nicer when they're out of sight."



Poem to school children (1986)

1. THE ROALD DAHL MUSEUM

The Museum is a Grade II listed building. Before it was a Museum, local residents remember the site as being a bank, a hairdresser's, a dance hall and a public inn. The Wonka gates were donated by Warner Brothers. They originally offered us the gates from the 2005 film of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, but they were too large so they made us our very own set.



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High Street

5. THE PETROL PUMPS



The petrol pumps at 64 High Street inspired the description of the garage in *Danny the Champion of the World*.

"It was a very small filling-station on a small country road, surrounded by fields and woody hills."

Danny the Champion of the World (1975)

Roald Dahl worked for Shell Oil after he left school. You can read about his adventures at this time in *Going Solo* (1986).

6. CROWN HOUSE

The timber-framed building at 70 High Street was Roald Dahl's inspiration for Sophie's 'norphanage' in *The BFG*. It is a private house – so please do not disturb the residents.

"From across the street, Sophie watched and held her breath..."

The BFG (1982)



8. CHURCH OF ST PETER AND PAUL

There is evidence that there has been a church on this site since 1133. To find it walk down Church Street and turn right onto Church Lane. This leads uphill and takes you over the A413 to the church.



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Church Lane

When Roald Dahl died in November 1990 he was buried here. Look for his grave near the memorial bench under the tree. Can you spot the BFG's footprints?

7. THE BUTCHER'S

80 High Street used to be a butcher's where Roald Dahl liked to shop. The photo on the front cover shows him and his beloved dog Chopper outside it, in 1990. Roald and Felicity Dahl wrote about Great Missenden and their love of food in *Roald Dahl's Cookbook* (1991).

You can explore this area further with our Countryside Trail leaflet.

WHITEFIELD LANE

At the top of Whitefield Lane is Hobbs Hill Wood. Roald Dahl used to love taking his children to the woods and telling them stories. These included the tale which later became known as *The Minpins*.

"Beware! Beware! The Forest of Sin! None come out, but many go in!"
The Minpins (1991)

