

11 Flood Markers

The white signs on the building show how high the sea reached during exceptional storms in 1897, 1953, 1978 and 2013. A northerly gale force wind coupled with low atmospheric pressure can 'tunnel' the sea down the east coast onto this area with catastrophic effects. This is called a 'storm surge'. The highest flooding was in January 1953 when 300 lives were lost along the east coast of England. This dramatic photo from 2013 shows boats were lifted ashore here by a more recent storm surge.



12 Blakeney Hotel

The gradual transformation of Blakeney from commercial port to tourist resort began with the increasing popularity of sailing in the 1860s. The first regatta was held in 1863. In the years leading up the First World War visitor numbers increased and a nine hole golf course was set up on land north of the Duck Pond (8). The Blakeney Hotel was built in 1923. All inclusive rates were between 6 and 8 guineas a week (£6.30 - £8.40) and guests could have a fire in their room all day for an extra 3 shillings and 6 pence (18p).



13 Village Sign

The colourful village sign features a sailing boat at its centre, reminder of Blakeney's past as a prosperous commercial port. Blakeney was known to have smugglers in former times and there was believed to be a network of tunnels under the streets. One story is that a fiddler and his dog, shown on the sign, volunteered to explore a tunnel reputed to run from the Guildhall to Binham Priory. The fiddler played his fiddle so villagers could hear his progress but suddenly the music stopped and neither dog nor man were ever seen again....

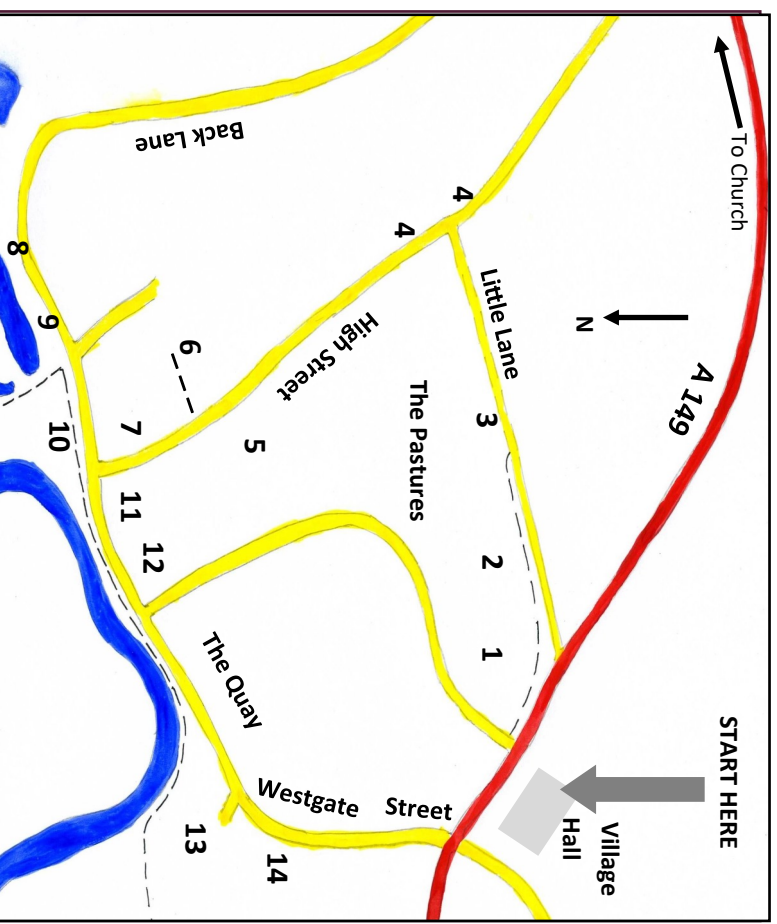


14 The Kings Arms

This building, now a public house, was originally three fishermen's cottages. The date on the roof is 1760 and it is known to have been an inn since at least the 1770s. In the early 1800s it had its own brew house for ale making, a pump with excellent water and stabling for 24 horses.



Trail created by The Arts Society Glaven Valley 2022
www.theartsocietyglavenvalley.org.uk
Assisted by the Blakeney Area Historical Society.



Directions

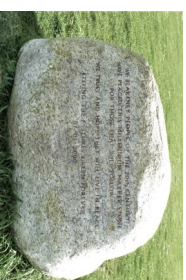
Start at the Village Hall where there is parking & bus stops. Cross the A149, turn right and enter The Pastures. Follow the footpath to the right which leads round the hedge to Little Lane, stopping first at 1. A visit to St Nicholas' Church is also recommended—see map.

Introduction

Blakeney was an important fishing centre in mediaeval times, hosting an annual fair and supplying the Royal Household. Around the North Sea and in Icelandic waters Blakeney sailors had to contend with piracy and warfare as well as the natural hazards of the sea. In Tudor times there was a thriving trade with London, the North East and the Low Countries. Coal, salt and a wide range of goods came in, corn and saltfish went out. Since then the harbour and creeks have silted up and with the First World War coastal trade came to an end. In its place come holidaymakers, birdwatchers and artists.

1 The Pastures

The Pastures is the largest green space within the village and is a valued open area for recreation. The Millennial Stone at the entrance to The Pastures commemorates the start of the new millennium (1,000 years) and expresses the hope that the area will always be kept as a green, open space.



2 The Snitterley Stone

The stone shows the entry in the Domesday Book of 1086 for the village of Blakeney. Most of the village was held by Bishop William of Thetford, with 2 villagers, or villains, 25 smallholders, 1 serf and 4 free men, with ploughs, meadows, watermill and church valued at £4.



3 Little Lane

The walls of Little Lane are made of flint which occurs naturally in chalk and is commonly washed out of cliffs along the Norfolk Coast. The flint may have been sponges living in warm waters 145 to 66 million years ago - a time when dinosaurs were around. Many houses and walls incorporate flint in Blakeney as it was a convenient, free source of building material.



4 House Plaques: Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society

The plaques on houses to the left and right as you exit Little Lane on to High Street show they are owned by the Housing Society. Hard to believe now but in the 1930s local people were living in poor housing, some without running water or indoor toilets. In 1946 a remarkable woman, Norah Clogstoun, was instrumental in forming the Housing Society to buy and repair cottages for local people. Today it owns forty three.



5 White Horse Inn

There has been an inn here from the late 1700s. In the 1870s, when longer journeys were made by coach or on horseback, there was stabling for nine horses here as well as accommodation for travellers. Horses and coaches would have entered through the double doors on the High Street. A 'smugglers' tunnel' was found in 1978 passing under the Inn's car park down to the Blakeney Hotel and perhaps also up to the British Legion. The Inn's sign is a horse shoe. Horse shoes have long been considered lucky.



Turn right just before The Moorings restaurant up the foot path

6 Mariners' Hill

The hill is thought to be man-made both as a vantage point and for defence. Excavations have revealed cannon balls. From the top there is a good view of the channel and maybe this assisted the piracy and plundering of wrecks so prevalent between the 12th and 15th centuries.



Descend the hill by the steps at the left by the Guildhall

7 The Guildhall

Owned by English Heritage, this building dates from the 14th century and was originally two-storied and possibly crenelated. Now only the undercroft remains. It is thought to have been a merchant's house but by the 16th century it was used by fish merchants. It has since been used to store grain and as a mortuary for bodies washed ashore during the first World War.



8 The Duck Pond

Originally a drinking pool for horses this pond is now a conservation project, set up to mark the late Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 by the local 'Wildfowlers' Association. The pond, which is fed by a spring, was nearly destroyed by the tidal surge in December 2013 and many ducks were lost. Some were recovered from as far away as Cley and were looked after locally until they could be returned to the restored pond.



9 Signpost

This marks the popular Norfolk Coast Path, enjoyed by thousands of long-distance walkers, ramblers and casual visitors all year round. The path from the West Quay runs westward on the flood bank to Morston and eventually Hunstanton. From the east end of the harbour the path goes north then along the flood bank to Cley and eventually Great Yarmouth.



10 The Quay

The harbour and Quay have played an important part in the history of Blakeney which was one of the three Glaven Ports, the others being Cley and Wiveton. From mediaeval times ships and goods came and went from here and as late as the 1900s a line of ships could be seen along the Quay busily loading and unloading cargoes. Growing competition from the railways and larger ports coupled with the silting up of the harbour channel eventually lead to its demise.

