

Legends Further Afield

Thetford Warren Lodge (B1107 from Thetford to Brandon)

This building used to be a medieval warreners' lodge. People have reported seeing a strange white rabbit with large flaming eyes, which is said to bring disaster to all who sees it.

Nearby Redcastle was once the area of a leper hospital and graveyard and is now said to be haunted by a gibbering figure with a terrifying two-dimensional face and burning eyes.

Thetford Forest

An unidentified big black cat with glowing red eyes was reported in the Forest in April 1985.

Snare Hill

Several witnesses reported seeing a bear along the A1066 at Snare Hill along the edge of the woods in June 1979.

Elveden

A stick-man, looking like a child's drawing, has been reported as being seen running across the A11 at Elveden, caught in the headlights of a car.

East Wretham

This village has been linked with witchcraft, hence the picture of a witch on the village sign. Not far from here are deserted villages now used as a training ground for the MOD. The story goes that a couple of paratroopers on exercise in the area came across a disused church where witches caught them and crucified them upside down on one of the church's doors. They were never seen or heard of again.

Wayland Wood, Griston

This is believed to have been the setting for the fairy tale, 'Babes in the Wood', in which a wicked uncle is given guardianship of his brother's children and he lures them into the wood where he leaves them to die. The wails of the children can still be heard on moonless nights, which has led to the area also being known as the 'Wailing Wood'.

St Peter's Church, Great Livermere

Fans of the famous fiction author, M R James, may like to see the memorial plaque that is dedicated to him here. Born in 1862 many people consider M R James to be the scariest writer of supernatural fiction that England has ever produced. He spent his boyhood in the Rectory at Livermere and many of his ghost stories were set around the area. His parents also have a memorial in the churchyard.



Haunted Heritage Trail

What Lies Beneath ... ?

At first glance, Thetford appears to be a pleasant Norfolk market town - but proceed cautiously, for sometimes all is not what it seems ... Scratch beneath the surface of this sunny riverside town and you will uncover a darker side ... tales of murder, mystery, ghosts and legends. Thetford has been hiding it all.

The town dates back to Saxon times and is full of history, old buildings and ancient sites. Beneath the town, on the north side of the river, there is a network of tunnels and galleries. Local folklore says these secret passages were used for clandestine meetings whilst others argue they are simply the result of mining for chalk and flint. Such tales give the town a sense of intrigue and, over the years, there have been many myths that have come and gone and beliefs have often changed ... yet some stories still remain the same, unchallenged but unproven, and even today sightings and strange apparitions are still being reported.

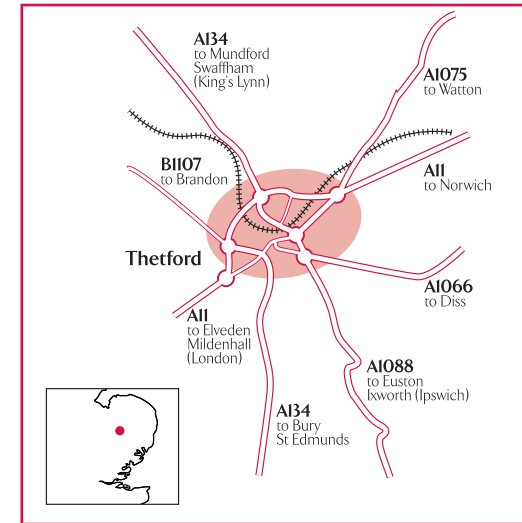
This trail brings together findings from TV documentaries, studies by clairvoyants, experiences from local people and stories from even the most cynical. The trail reveals the unexplained, the unexplored and the unidentified as well as exposing some of the secrets of ancient superstitions and past punishments.

Come with us to discover some of Thetford's darker heritage and try to untangle for yourself the truth from the phantasy ...

Detect more...

If you've got the nerve...

Haunted Heritage Trail



The trail does not end here...

For more trails and general information on things to see and do contact:

Thetford Tourism and Heritage Partnership

King's House, King Street, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2AP

01842 820795

info@thetfordtourism.co.uk www.explorethetford.co.uk

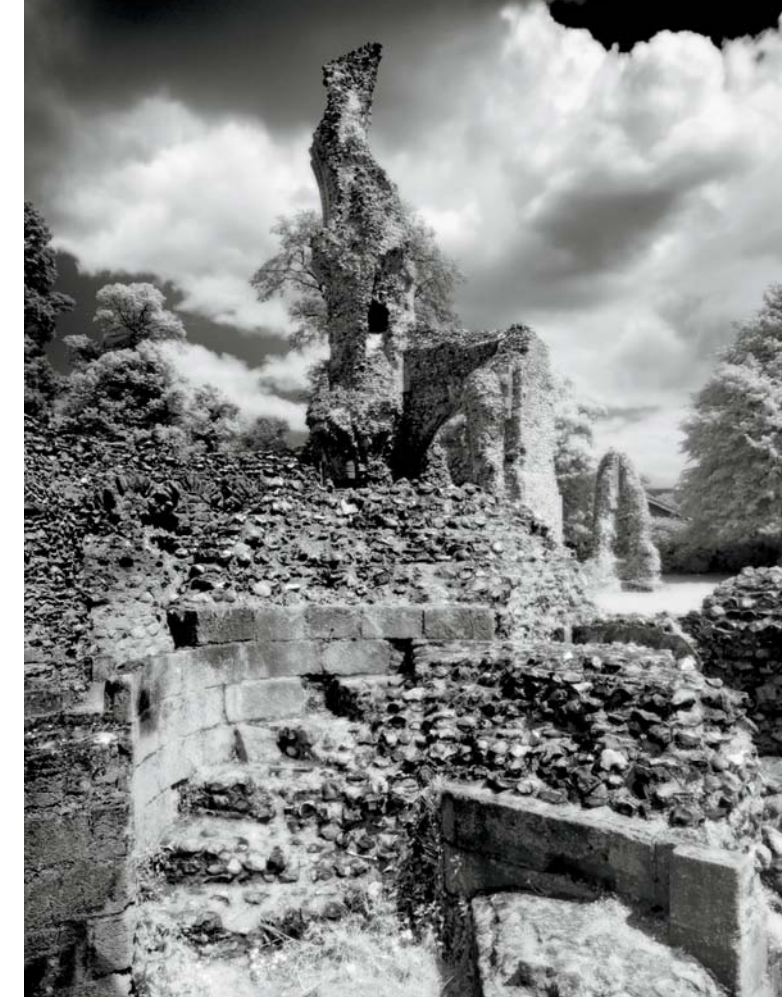


PROJECT PART-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Norfolk County Council



Designed and Produced by www.shorthouse-russell.co.uk Location images by Rod Edwards



...Thetford, Norfolk

Past Punishments

Woe betides those who broke the law in olden days! Punishments over the centuries were often much harsher than they are today:

Hanging and Execution

Criminals were tried and sentenced at the Thetford Assizes (courts) in the Guildhall on Market Place. Men were sentenced to death – execution or hanging - for what today would be seen as relatively minor crimes.

The Stocks

Beggars, drunks, louts and prostitutes were commonly put in the stocks with their legs locked between two planks of wood, on show for all to see and jeer at.

Whipping

From the 16th century, whipping became an official punishment for breaking the law and offenders were stripped and whipped in a public place until their bodies bled.

The Scold's Bridle

Nagging wives and village gossips beware, for in medieval times you would have been made to wear a scold's bridle, which was a kind of metal cage worn over the head with a flat metal plate that would stick into your mouth to hold your tongue down!

Branding Irons

Branding irons were used from Anglo Saxon times to the 19th century. A red-hot branding iron was applied to the offender's hand or face to burn a letter onto the skin and mark them a criminal.

The Drunkard's Cloak

Back in the 17th and 18th centuries lager louts soon got their comeuppance by being forced to wear a wooden barrel around their body with their head and arms poking out from holes in the top and sides.

Sinister Superstitions and Old Wives Tales

Before the days of modern medicine, people relied on local witchdoctors, superstition and folklore to cure their ailments. Some of these ideas seem very strange to us today but before you mock them, remember that even in the 21st century people still read the tea-leaves, touch wood, and salute magpies ... !

Warts

To get rid of warts rub them with a copper coin or steal a piece of raw beef, rub it on the warts and then bury it and the warts will disappear as the meat decays.

Epilepsy

Take the blood of a live mole on a lump of sugar.

Cramp

Wear a ring made from gold coffin handles or keep a basin of spring water under the bed.

Persistent Bleeding

Lay a thick black cobweb over the cut or insert a puff-ball into the wound.

Infertility

Brush a hanged man's hand against your body before his flesh was cold to let the 'healing hands' cure your problems.

Rheumatism

Carry a potato in your pocket.

Whooping Cough

Eat fried or baked mice or take a walk around the gasworks!

But beware, for if a dog howls beneath the window of a sick room the ill person will die or at least remain poorly for a long time and if a cock crows before sunset and dawn it is a sign of death in the family.

These stories were passed on from members of the public and have been printed in good faith. However all information has been provided only as hearsay, for interest only, and Thetford Tourism cannot verify any of the details as being factual. Thanks to all who were involved.

Attractions in and around Thetford

Ancient House Museum 01842 752599

15th century timber framed house with fine carved ceiling. Please note the museum will be closed for a major refurbishment from October 2004

Charles Burrell Museum

Former paint and finishing shop of Charles Burrell and Sons traction engine company with recreated workshops, steam engines and agricultural machinery, photographs, letters and documents. Small charge.

Grimes Graves 01842 810656

7 miles north-west of Thetford, off A134. 4,000 year old Neolithic flint mines. Visitors may view the exhibition then don a hard hat and descend one of the pits! Small charge.

High Lodge Forest Centre 01842 815434

There is something for everyone at High Lodge located in Britain's largest lowland pine forest. Walks, cycle hire, Go Ape high wire assault course, adventure playground, maze, and forest shop and tea room. Special events, Picnic areas.

King's House Gardens 01842 754247

Escape the hustle and bustle of King Street and ramble through the beautiful gardens located behind King's House. Free admission. Also tennis courts and bowling green. Book through the Town Council.

Nunnery Lakes Nature Reserve

Interesting mixture of semi-natural habitats including woodland, Breck heath, fen and open water. Two kilometres of permissive footpaths with interpretation boards and observation hide. Free admission.

Thetford Art Gallery and Coffee Shop 01842 766599

Browse through works by local artists and craftspeople or discover your own artistic talents in an art class. Hours: Tues, Thurs, Fri, and Sat 10am – 4pm. Free admission.

Thetford's Forgotten Garden

Thetford's very own secret garden lay abandoned and overgrown for 30 years until a local community group revived it to its former beauty. Situated in the grounds of Ford Place it is open to the public Thursday to Sunday, 10am-6pm.

Thetford Priory

Established in 1104, the Cluniac Priory was once an important religious centre for pilgrims from around the world. Today the extensive ruins remain to explore. Free admission.

Thetford Warren Lodge

Ruins of a two-storeyed medieval warreners' lodge, just 2 miles west of Thetford, off B1107. Built c. 1400 for the Prior of Thetford's warreners. Can only be viewed from outside.

Waterworld 01842 753110

Fun leisure pool featuring waves, rapids, water cannons, and flume; competition size main pool for serious swimming and teaching pool for parents with under 5s. Fitness centre, saunas, steam rooms, sports hall, racket sports facilities and bar/cafeteria. Admission charge.

Accommodation

Hotels

The Anchor Hotel 16 rooms
Bridge Street, Thetford IP24 3AE 01842 763925

The Bell Hotel 47 rooms
King Street, Thetford IP24 2AZ 01842 754455
AA ★★★ ETC ★★★ Hotel

The Historical Thomas Paine Hotel 13 rooms
33 White Hart Street, Thetford IP24 IAA 01842 755631
AA ★★ ETC ★★ Hotel

Wereham House Hotel 8 rooms
White Hart Street, Thetford IP24 IAD 01842 761956
ETC ♦♦♦ Guest Accommodation

Bed & Breakfast

The Old Rectory 3 rooms
30 Raymond Street, Thetford IP24 2EA 01842 765419

The Pink Cottage 3 rooms
43 Magdalen Street, Thetford IP24 2BP 01842 764564

The White House 6 rooms
4 Raymond Street, Thetford IP24 2EA 01842 754546

Campsites

The Dower House Touring Park Campsite and Bar,
West Harling, Thetford NR16 2SE 160 pitches - Tourers/Tents
ETC ★★★★★ Silver David Bellamy Award 01953 717314

Poppyfields Basic Touring Site, 134 pitches
Thetford Rd, Santon Downham, Brandon IP27 OTU 01842 751042

Puddledock Farm Campsite Touring site – 30 pitches
Great Hockham, Thetford IP24 IPA Toilets/Shower. No electric
01953 498455

Thorpe Woodlands Campsite Basic Touring Site, 134 pitches
Shadwell, Thetford IP24 2RX 01842 751042

General Information

Market Days Tuesday and Saturday - Market Place

Early Closing Wednesday (not all shops close)

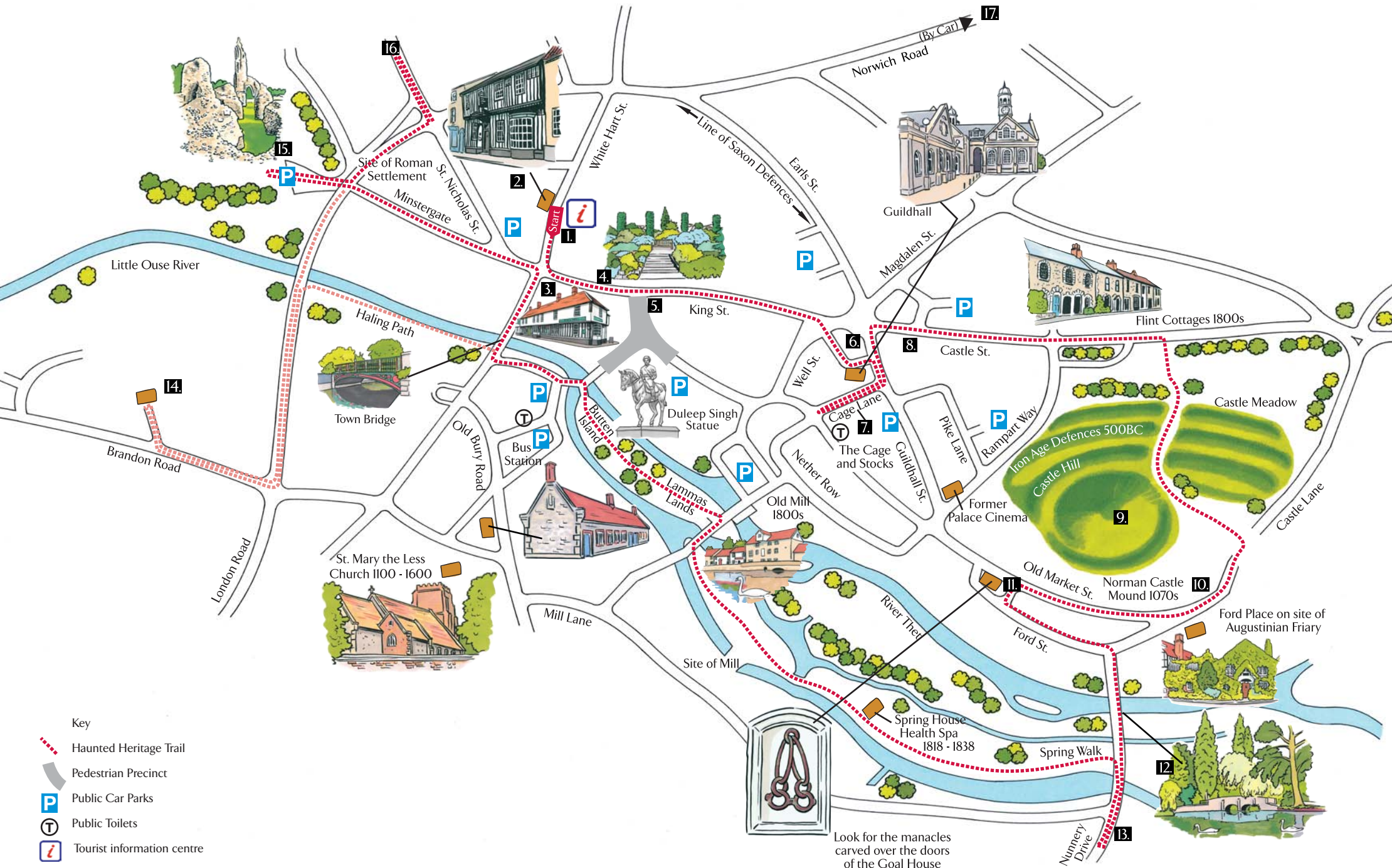
National Bus Enquiries 0870 608 2608

National Rail Enquiries 0845 748 4950

Thetford Post Office Market Place, Thetford

Tourist Information Centre, 4 White Hart Street
For further information on any of the attractions or accommodation in and around Thetford, please call 01842 820689.





Witches Brew

- 4 cups of cranberry juice
- 4 cups of apple juice
- 1 teaspoon of ground ginger
- 3 oranges and apples cut into pieces. (You can peel the rest from the oranges and cut them into worm shapes)
- 2 large bottles of lemonade

Stir all the ingredients together until well blended. Chill for approx one hour. Then serve cold or, serve warm - after chilling, bring mixture to a boil, then simmer for 10 minutes.

Bone Biscuits

- 4 egg whites
- 1 tsp grated orange peel
- 400g/14oz sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 400g/14oz cups flour
- 343g/12oz cups almonds

Beat egg whites, sugar, orange peel and baking powder until blended. Add nuts and flour and beat until mixture is thoroughly blended. Cover and cool until firm enough to handle. Lightly flour your hands and take off a three-tablespoon size piece of dough. On a floured board, evenly roll a 7-inch long rope. Cut rope in half; roll each half out again to 7 inches. Fold an inch of each end back onto rope and pinch ends to make bone shapes. Repeat to shape all the dough. Place bones on greased baking sheets. Bake in a 170C/325F/Gas 3 oven for around 20mins.

Pumpkin Pie

- 285g/10oz shortcrust pastry
- 400g/14oz pumpkin puree, cooled
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- 115g/4oz brown sugar
- 4 tbsp golden syrup
- 225ml/8fl oz double cream

Roll pastry and line a 10" flan tin. Fork base and place baking foil on pastry. Bake for 10mins in a preheated oven 200C/400F/Gas 6, then remove foil and bake for a further 5 minutes. Reduce oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Mix pumpkin puree with ginger and cinnamon, golden syrup and sugar. Beat the eggs and add to puree with the cream. Mix until a smooth consistency. Add mixture to pastry in tin and bake for an hour. Cool and serve.





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Begin your trail at the Thetford Tourist Information Centre

>>> 1. Tourist Information Centre

This building used to be The White Hart Inn and ghostly footsteps were regularly heard in the passageway during the night. Now this building

is home to the Tourist Information Centre but people are still experiencing some strange goings on - doors have been opening by themselves, lights flickering, and things getting moved or lost.

>>> 2. Ancient House Museum

Explore the Ancient House and discover some strange superstitious marks on the 500 year old timbers. See the 'viva' sign by the door carved to ward off evil spirits from entering. You can also see 'viva' inscribed on the pagan Roman silver spoons of the 'Thetford Treasure'. Candle burn marks here and upstairs are 'blessing' marks to protect the house and may represent a prayer sent to heaven.

>>> 3. The Bell Hotel

The Bell is believed to be one of the most haunted buildings in Thetford and has a number of ghostly tales to tell. The most common sighting is of Betty Radcliffe who was the landlady back during the 19th century. She fell in love with her husband's stableman. He wanted to end the affair but she didn't so he pushed her through a window and she fell to her death. Her ghost has frequently been sighted around the building over the years. Anglia TV arranged for a medium to visit the hotel who also contacted Betty and spoke at length about the old landlady even though she had known nothing about her prior to the visit. The medium also picked up the spirit of a dog and the hotel manager confirmed that guests had reported hearing a dog barking even though there was no dog in the building.

>>> 4. King's House

This building dates back to Elizabethan times and was a favourite hunting lodge of King James I. Staff working in the building often hear strange noises and sounds of doors opening and closing when there's no one around and they believe it may be the ghost of a serving girl called Annie who once lived in one of the upstairs rooms. Others recall a popular legend from the 1920s about the skeleton of a murdered man that still sits at a desk with an old document in front of him. The story goes that the door and windows of the room were walled up and have never been entered again.

>>> 5. New Look (formally King's Arms)

An old tenant still talks of when he lived in this pub as a child. One day he was sitting with his grandmother when a lady dressed in black appeared in the corner of the room. He tapped his grandmother who said, "It's alright I can see the lady." She asked the ghost, "What can I do for you my dear?" and the lady turned to them and replied, "I just wanted to see people enjoying themselves. I'll go now." And with that she disappeared.

>>> 6. Market Place

The current Chinese restaurant on Market Place was once a café owned by several generations of the same family. In the cellar there is still an underground chapel with ancient archways. The last owners of the café, Ron and Sue, had several paranormal experiences, which strangely always happened on the 25th of the month.

Ron recalls that once they were talking to some customers about the hauntings when suddenly a picture fell off the wall. Another time the electronic till began opening by itself. Later a waitress saw a long haired man sitting in the back room after it had been closed for the day, even though a chair had been put in front of the door to stop customers from entering. When she told the owner and they went back to check, the man had disappeared.

Some time later, when building work was taking place, a number of interesting items were unearthed from the roof including a 17th century old grocer's document, a playing card, old tokens and a mysterious skeletal hand.

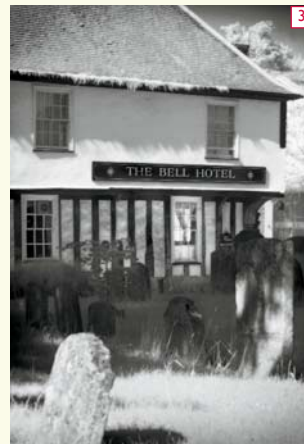
>>> 7. Town Cage and Stocks

The original cage was built in 1581 and, along with the stocks, was used to humiliate minor offenders until the middle of the 19th century.

>>> 8. No. 5 Castle Street – Tudor House

Tudor House was once two dwellings, 3 and 5 Castle Street, and these are now the oldest inhabited buildings in Thetford. Tudor House is thought to be haunted by a little girl. Although she has never directly been seen, people are aware of her presence and often feel they catch sight of her in the corner of their eye. She is said to be a friendly spirit and if you sleep in the top bedroom in the house, which is believed to have been her room, you are guaranteed to sleep peacefully for hours and hours!

When Mrs Lancaster's family bought the house they decided to restore its original features. During the restoration they found a hoard of Elizabethan gold and silver coins in one of the walls, a Roman culvert (drain) under the back yard, a mummified cat buried under the front doorstep and the skeleton of a baby in another of the walls.



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>>> 9. Castle Hill

Castle Hill was built after the Norman Conquest and is England's tallest earthwork. It is believed that a wooden castle once sat on top of the mound but many myths about the site still exist.

One story says that the hill was created by the Devil scraping his boots after finishing Devil's Ditch near Garboldisham and if you walk around the hill seven times at midnight you'll get to meet him. Another legend says that a mansion lies buried beneath the hill filled with treasure beyond your wildest dreams and yet



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another talks of five golden or silver bells being buried there.

>>> 10. The Dolphin Inn

There were several reports of poltergeist activity here in the late 1980s/early 1990s. The cleaning lady would often find items such as beer towels had been moved after she had laid them out and the landlady at the

time experienced interference with electrical items such as the radio suddenly being turned off even though there was no one else in the building.

In December 2003 a customer said that he had seen a lady going up a staircase in the corner of the room but when the pub had been renovated a few years earlier the staircase had been ripped down and was no longer there.

>>> 11. Old Gaol House

The Thetford Gaol House was built in 1796 and later enlarged. In 1820 a description mentioned 17 people in a dungeon 18 feet by 9 feet with a stench so great that the gaoler ran away after opening the door.

>>> 12. Nuns' Bridges

Little Lord Dacre is said to haunt this area, riding on a headless rocking horse. According to legend he had been staying with his guardian, Sir Richard Fulmerston, when one day he fell from his favourite wooden horse and shattered his head against a wall. The story goes that Sir Richard had deliberately caused the accident to kill the little boy but in reality he died himself before Lord Dacre. Despite this there were reports in the 18th century of bloodstains found on the wall that remained there for 100 years despite all efforts to remove them.

>>> 13. Nunnery Drive

Keep your eye out for the phantom horse that has been reported jumping through the ruins ...

Decision time! Either follow the Lammas, Button Island and then Haling path to 14. the Canons of the Holly Sepulchre or head over the town bridge and turn left into Minstergate for 15. Thetford Priory.

>>> 14. Priory of the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre

In 1937 a ghostly choir of monks was heard singing in Latin in the ruins of the building, followed by a single reading from an unknown text. In the 1950s local residents again heard mysterious chanting coming from the ruins. A music teacher scribbled down the chant and spent the next two years trying to research what it meant. She eventually traced it back to the 11th century but no explanation has ever come forward about why - or how - it was heard that afternoon.

>>> 15. Thetford Priory

The ruins of Thetford Priory, founded over 900 years ago, have been the setting for many sightings of ghostly monks. A number of people have reported seeing a monk wearing a habit with the hood up so they were unable to see his face. People tell of trying to speak to the figure, often thinking it was a person dressed up for a joke, but the monk always vanishes into thin air. This is what happened to Margaret and her daughter who live in the town. It had been a beautiful summer's day and she and her daughter were sitting on a bench by the ruins when they saw a monk with his head bent and his arms tucked into his habit. He was gliding slowly along by the old kitchen and seemed oblivious to their presence. Margaret thought it was someone trying to frighten them so got up and ran round to confront him but there was no one there. She still refuses to go back to the site on a late summer's afternoon ...



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C J Romer, a scientifically qualified parapsychologist who has worked on TV programmes such as 'Most Haunted' and 'Ghosthunters', had a similar experience here back in 1987. With four other friends he witnessed a monk-like figure descending a staircase in the Prior's Lodge section of the ruins. He and another friend ran at the apparition thinking it was a joker playing around, only to fall through the staircase which had no real existence. The experience changed his whole life and was later the subject of one of the 'Ghosthunters' documentaries frequently shown on the Discovery Channel.

>>> 16. Rose and Crown

Several spooky goings on have been mentioned in connection with this old pub. It is said that a friendly spirit used to have fun and get into mischief by playing around in the bar, although the ghost itself was never seen. The old landlord used to come down in the morning and find that pictures had been turned upside down in their frames or he would be in bed upstairs and hear someone playing pool although the bar was empty ... and even though he always put the balls away at night he sometimes found them out on the table again by the morning ...

>>> 17. Joe Blunt's Lane, Thetford (by car)

It is said that over a hundred years ago, a man hung himself from the railway bridge because his young girlfriend's mother accused him of

attacking her daughter. Some years ago local people were using an Ouija board and a spirit came through and spelt out: "My name is Joe Baylunt from Thetford and I am innocent" and then the glass flew off the table and smashed ...



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