

ATTLEBOROUGH PUB WALK

Introduction



Attleborough is a small market town situated in south Norfolk, 15 miles south west of Norwich and 14 miles north east of Thetford.

Attleborough was settled, probably in the 5th century by Germanic invaders, and became a part of the kingdom of East Anglia. The Domesday Book (1086) records its name as Atleburc, translated as the stronghold of the family called Aelta (i.e. name + beorg).

Attleborough survived troublesome times of tribal warfare, Viking invasions and Norman occupation to thrive in medieval times when Norfolk was one of the most densely populated regions of England, and the woollen industry its most important asset. A great fire in 1559, which started in the stables of The Griffin Hotel, destroyed most of the town.

In the 18th century, stagecoaches & Royal Mail coaches changed horses on the turnpike road running from Norwich to London. This activity declined after 1845 with the building of a railway connection between Norwich to Brandon thus linking the town with train services from Norwich to London via Cambridge.

The market established in 1226, became famous in the 19th century as a centre for the sale of turkeys, (some while before Bernard Matthews came onto the scene!). This lasted well into the 20th century and in 1935 it is recorded that 7,000 birds were sold at Michaelmass.

In the 1850s it was a small town relying mainly on agriculture for its economy, and had a population of 2,300, which only rose, to just over 3,000 by the mid 1960s. The last three decades however has seen rapid development with its present population rising to over 7,500. It is now largely a 'dormitory' town being well situated close to Norwich and there are good road and rail connections with Cambridge. A new industrial estate, providing some local employment has grown up on the southeast side of town where the famous Gaymers cider factory stood between 1896 until it shut in 1995. The Wolf Brewery, established in 1996, one of Norfolk's best known independent breweries is situated along with many other commercial outlets on part of the old Gaymers site



Getting There

Attleborough, by Norfolk standards, is well served by road and rail. There are two railway services that pass through Attleborough. Central Trains service between Norwich to Ely, Peterborough the Midlands and the North passes through Attleborough, as does Anglia 'One' service between Norwich and Cambridge. Bus services between Norwich and Watton (X3) and Norwich to Bury St Edmunds (X4) pass through Attleborough town centre and there are a number of local services linking the town with nearby villages. Being just off the A11 trunk road between Norwich and London, Attleborough is easy to get to by road and there are plenty of car parks around the town.



The Walk

The walk starts at the Railway Station on Station Road. If arriving by train from the Norwich direction, when leaving the platform turn left proceed over the level crossing and follow the road towards the town centre. If arriving from the Thetford or parking in the station car park turn right into station Road and proceed towards the town centre.

Walk on the right hand side along the wide Station Road. This was once the posh district with grand Victorian and Edwardian detached houses and landscaped gardens of trees and shrubs. Then you will come to the one-way road traffic system. On the corner is **The Mulberry Tree**, the first pub of the walk.

This building that was built in the late 19th century has an exterior design that is astonishingly ornate, typical of buildings built in this period. This pub was originally known as The New Inn but later renamed The Royal Hotel in 1888, a name, which it retained until the 1990s when it became The Mulberry Tree. Today the ground floor interior comprises of a large restaurant with a bar, to one side. It sells real ales from the local Wolf Brewery. As well as other national brews.

Opposite The Mulberry Tree is a small traffic island with an obelisk bearing the word "Peace," 1856 and the names of four battles of the Crimean War-Alma, Sebastopol, Balaclava and Inkerman. The plinth at the base of the monument lists the mileages of 24 nearby towns and villages. If not unique this monument is most odd.



Cross the road to the left and walk along Connaught Road passing more Victorian buildings, and a large lovely thatched cottage. The road joins the ancient main street at High Street.

Bear left along the High Street and cross at the pedestrian lights. Pass the unsightly Sainsburys Garage and you will arrive at the second pub of the route, **The Cock Inn**.

The Cock Inn, an old building dates back to at least to the 18th century, possibly earlier. In the 18th and early 19th centuries it was a staging post being conveniently situated on the old London road (the route of the Norwich to London turnpike), with stabling facilities for 70 horses. It has old sash windows and a Georgian doorway. It was previously a Bullards, Steward & Patteson's and then a Watneys pub. We are still reminded that it was once a Watneys pub by a lantern at the doorway advertising "The Norwich Brewing Company". Today it is a cosy town pub consisting of two bars. Beers on sale here include Adnams and Woodforde's



On leaving The Cock Inn, retrace your steps into the town centre along Exchange Street with its narrow pavements. Exchange Street has a low profile with long terraced rows of two storey buildings that are now mainly shops that originate as far back as the 17th century. On the right side and as part of a long terrace is **The Bear**, the next pub on the route.

The Bear is an old building; the first recorded license goes back to 1789, which has recently undergone some refurbishment. The interior consists of one main bar with stone floors, exposed beams and an inglenook fireplace, plus a small snug with carpets and comfortable armchairs at the rear of the pub. There is a fair choice of real ales available supplied by a range of different brewers.



After departing The Bear, continue along Exchange Street. As you emerge from Exchange Street you will enter Church Street. Note a large Victorian edifice that was originally the town Corn Exchange and reading room. At this point the character of the town alters and becomes a wide square with an attractive Green. At the far end of the Green is the Town Hall, an attractive Georgian house but as seems normal in Attleborough, part of a terrace. The Green has an attractive signboard, (complete with turkeys). There is also a war memorial. The plinth lists some 101 names of men who were killed in the First World War along with 24 names from the Second World War. The 101 casualties of the 1st World War is a significant number considering that the population at that time was only just over 2,000!

Opposite the Green is **The London Tavern**, the next pub of the route.

The London Tavern is a pub with a modern façade fronting what must be an older building. The interior consists of a large long one-room bar with stone floors and a pool table at one end. There is also a function room upstairs that is used as a disco at weekends. Real ales sold here come from the local Wolf Brewery



Just a short distance further along Church Street is **The Griffin Hotel** the last pub on your route.

The Griffin Hotel was a former coaching inn with parts of the building dating back to the 16th century, although substantial extensions were made during the 17th century. In fact the main turnpike (established 1695) from Norwich through to Thetford, Newmarket and then on to London passed through Attleborough, making Attleborough one of the major staging posts on route for changing horses and for passengers refreshments. The Griffin Hotel was the focus of most of this activity, but. The present pub consists of a main bar plus a smaller bar and dining area at the rear. Real ales are supplied from a number of brewers, with local ones being most prominent and there are always Wolf Beers available.



The Griffin Hotel is our last call and is next to St Mary's Church, which is largely Norman, built c1100 on the foundations of an earlier Saxon church. This is an absolute gem. The 15th century screen has been described as "one of the most precious possessions of our English Churches", with a richly covered rood loft and 24 painted shields depicting the English Bishoprics of the day. There are also painted figures and wall paintings. Breathtaking, and worth a visit before returning home!

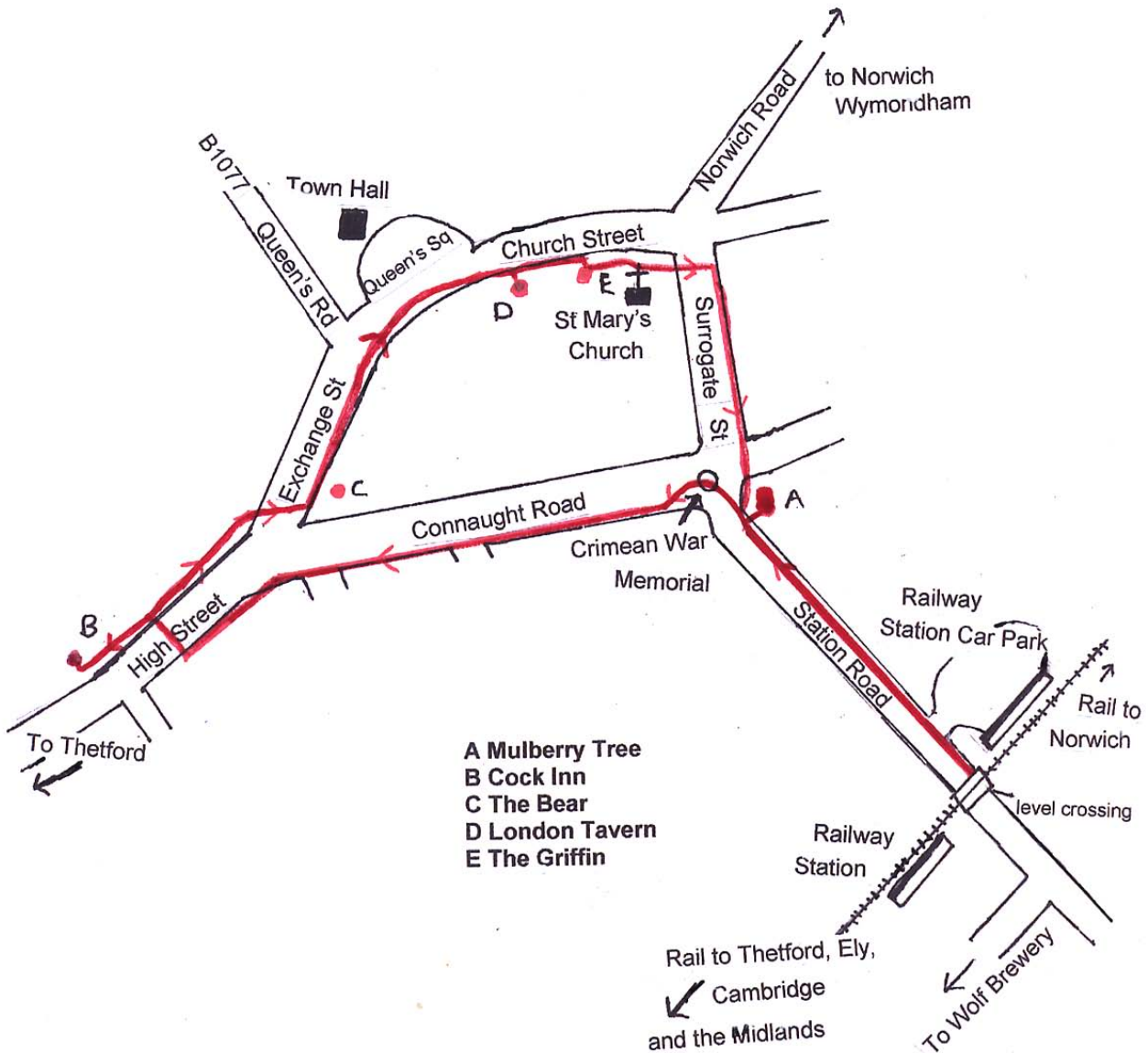


St Mary's Church Interior



St Mary's Church

To return to your starting point, turn right down Surrogate Street, passing the Crimean War Memorial and down Station Road.



The Pub Walk Route