



HM Government

UNCOVERING YARMOUTH GHOST SIGNS



Historic England



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ghost Sign Trail Great Yarmouth

Ghost signs are all around us in our towns and cities, tucked away down alleyways, up above us amongst chimney pots, or in among the signage of our modern high streets. Once on the look out for ghost signs, the curious urban explorer will discover that they are frequently hidden in plain sight.

But what is a ghost sign? While the name suggests something of the paranormal, ghost signs are in fact pieces of signage that have been preserved on buildings that have long since changed their identity.

These may be old advertisements, or signage for businesses that once occupied a building. Ghost signs are a snapshot in time, a historical artefact of social history, and a nostalgic window into the past.

This trail has been produced to show examples of some of the many ghost signs across Great Yarmouth, from the historical town centre preserved within the Great Yarmouth Heritage Action Zone, to the bustling quayside, and the vibrant seafront. This trail invites you to step back in time and re-imagine the Great Yarmouth streets of days gone by.



Great Yarmouth General Hospital Dene Side



Yarmouth General Hospital first opened in 1840. On Deneside, near the corner with St George's Park, the hospital was funded by voluntary public contributions, and vastly expanded the facilities previously available (a small hospital with accommodation for up to four in-patients had opened in a house in Queen Street in 1838).

The hospital was demolished and rebuilt in 1888, and became part of the new NHS in 1948. It operated until 1981, when it closed following the opening of the James Paget Hospital in the same year. The hospital was demolished in 1984.



Great Yarmouth, Deneside, the General Hospital in the 1890s. Image courtesy of www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk



Great Yarmouth, Deneside, General Hospital, 1887. Image courtesy of www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk



'Singers' 160 King Street

This painted sign, 'Singers', was discovered during building renovations work, and marks the site of the former Great Yarmouth branch of the Singer Manufacturing Company. Founded in America in 1850, Singer (which manufactured sewing machines) became a global success, dominating 80% of the worldwide market share by 1890. The first Singer factory outside of the USA opened in Glasgow, Scotland,

in 1867. The Great Yarmouth branch was listed at 160 King Street in the Kelly's Directory of Norfolk from 1892 to 1908, when it relocated to 163 King Street.



Time Tells The Story.

There is a big difference between the cost of making a first-class sewing machine, embodying the best of materials and workmanship, and one which is made in the cheapest manner. The buyer of the cheap machine soon pays the difference of price in the constant cost for repairs, to say nothing of its annoying inefficiency.

Singer Sewing-Machines do good work during a lifetime.

**Sold on instalments.
Old machines taken in exchange.**

The Singer Manufacturing Co.,
"Sewing-Machine Makers for the World."

Arnolds Department Store

179 King Street



Opened in 1869 as a drapery shop, the business grew into a prominent department store, becoming one of East Anglia's largest retail establishments. On the evening of February 3rd 1919, a huge fire devastated the building, destroying seven adjacent businesses, and leaving over 200 people unemployed.

Fire crews from Norwich and Yarmouth fought the blaze for many hours, with the assistance of soldiers, and the local Harbour Commission's steam float. The heat from the fire was so intense that it smashed windows in the buildings opposite, and the overall damage bill was estimated to cost £50,000.

February 4th Tuesday 1919

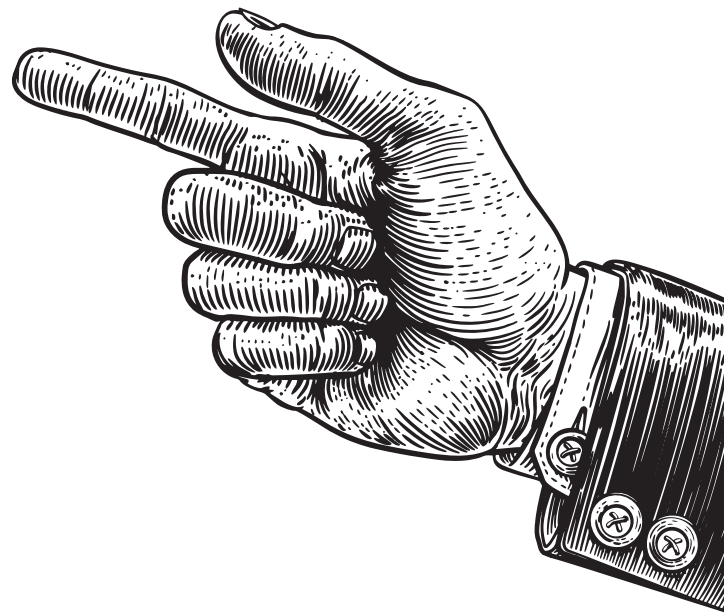
"Arnolds shop & others burnt down in Regent St GtYarmouth. This morning we heard and also saw in the paper that Arnolds shop was burned down last night! We went in to Yarmouth by the 8.30 to shop & then go to my music lesson. We went down Regent St and saw that Arnolds shop and their arcade as well as Salmon & Gluckstein tobacconist, another tobacconist, the umbrella shop, the Scotch wool shop and then an office, all burnt out! It was still alight when we saw it, up Kings Street the whole of Arnolds shop as far as the row which divides it from "Jarrols", I tried to take a photo of Arnolds corner but I do not think it will come out."

(Continued)

Arnolds Department Store 179 King Street Continued

A customer visiting the Arnolds Department Store could ride in a large windowed cage lift with a visible counterweight (situated in the building that is now 181 King Street). The lift, which was operated by an attendant, carried customers to Arnolds Grand Restaurant, a top floor dining area where 1920s customers could enjoy table d'hôte luncheons, afternoon teas, and daily live music. For gentlemen, a smoking lounge was provided. In the 1950s, the

richly furnished restaurant remained, greeting customers with dark red patterned carpets, brocade curtains with valances, heavy oak tables and chairs, pillars, and starched white tablecloths. The waitresses dressed in uniforms fashioned on those worn by 'Nippies', who were serving staff at J. Lyons & Co. tea shops (London). The Arnolds restaurant was also host to off-season dinner dances.



Did you know?

During the Second World War, the basement of the department store was converted into an emergency hospital which operated while trading continued above.

Old Post Office

19-20 Regent Street



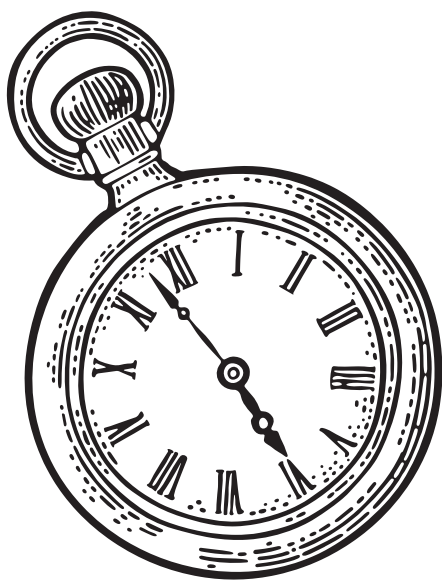
The General Post Office was built in the 1880s during the reign of King George V, and bears his initials over the entrance at the corner of Regent Street.

Mystery above the mail

On June 18th 1881 it was reported that a human skeleton and that of a small monkey, were found by two clerks exploring the roof. When removing some tiles from the roof to let light into the pitch dark space, the clerks discovered an iron bedstead enclosed at the sides, head and foot by wood. Upon it were the two skeletons, which fell to dust when touched. The premises, which had been acquired by the Government for use as a post office, had previously been the property of Dr Cox, however the skeletons remained a mystery. (Source: Rumbelows Diary, vol. 20, p.42)

In the 1950s, the wall behind the post office counter was decorated with a large painted mural, depicting scenes of a bustling trawl-fish market. However, despite Yarmouth's rich fishing history, the mural was in fact a depiction of Grimsby. Presented to the National General Post Office by the organisers of the 1951 Festival of Britain, it was discovered that the Yarmouth branch was the only GPO in an appropriate trawling port that was large enough to accommodate the width of the painted scene. (now preserved by the Time and Tide Museum).

Adjoining the GPO was the Great Yarmouth telephone exchange, built in 1936 (32 Hall Quay). Above the door, a carved face of the Roman god Mercury looks over the entrance. Mercury is identified with the Greek god Hermes, who was the mythological messenger for the Gods. In front of the GPO and telephone exchange on Hall Quay once stood a row of red telephone kiosks. During Great Yarmouth elections, poll results were announced from the balcony of the Town Hall, while journalists commandeered the phone boxes below ready to relay the results to their news rooms.



Old Fire Station 4 Greyfriars way



This building operated as the Great Yarmouth Fire Station from 1879 to 1972, when the service moved into a new station at Friars Lane.

In 1912 the building was remodelled by the renowned architect John. W. Cockrill. Cockrill was appointed Surveyor for Great Yarmouth Borough in 1882, and designed numerous prominent buildings in the area including the Municipal School of Art (Nelson Road).

During the active life of this building as a fire station, Great Yarmouth played witness to multiple notable fires. In under fifty years, the Britannia Pier caught fire four times (1909, 1914,

1932 and 1954). In the same period there were also major fires at Clarke's Flour Mill (1905 and 1928), Arnold's Department store (1919), and Jewsons Timber Yard (1928). The air raids of both the First and Second World Wars put great strain on the Yarmouth fire service, with bombing raids severely damaging residential properties as well as notable buildings including the Tolhouse, St Nicholas Church, and Lacons Brewery.





The Fire Service and the Suffragettes

In 1913 a fire at the Palgrave Brown timber yard engulfed Southtown Road in 'one of the biggest fires in living memory' (Yarmouth and Gorleston Times). The heat was so intense that river traffic was suspended. The origin of the fire was unknown, however anonymous postcards were received by the town clerk, police, and a local newspaper stating that suffragettes were responsible. A suffragette was a member of an activist women's organisation in the early 20th century who, under the banner "Votes for Women", fought for the right to vote in public elections. The following night, three Yarmouth golf courses were damaged, with various additional cards discovered which stated: "No vote, no sport, no peace, no property is safe. Give women the vote!"



(Great Yarmouth Fire Station, crew and engines in the early 1920s. Image courtesy of www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk)

Hansell's Coal Office Row 75

Nestled down Row 75, this painted ghost sign once advertised G. H. & Co. Coal Merchants, who are referenced in the 1908, and 1916 Kelly's Directory of Norfolk as being located on Admiralty Road (South Denes), and in this 1924 newspaper advertisement at 1 Middlegate Street.

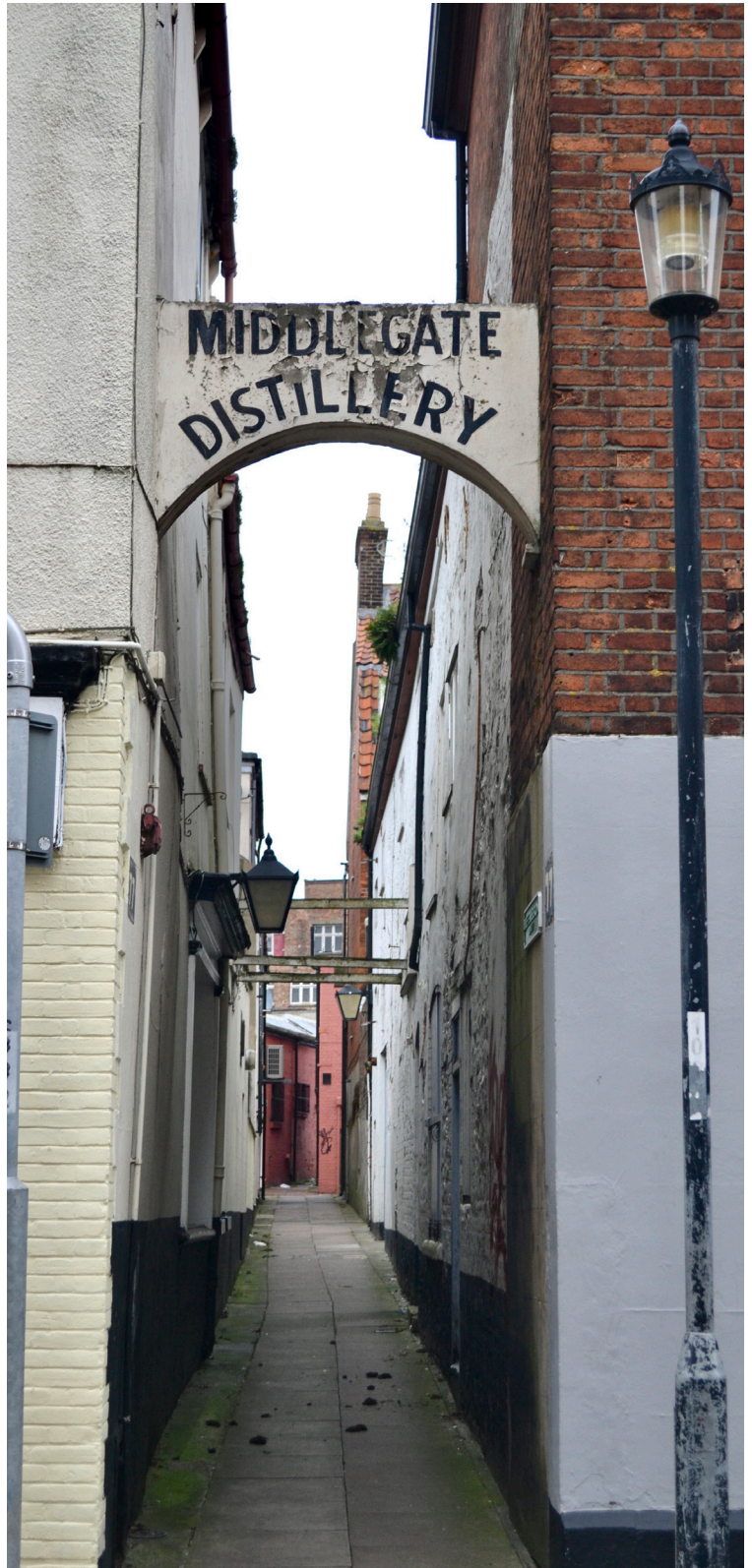
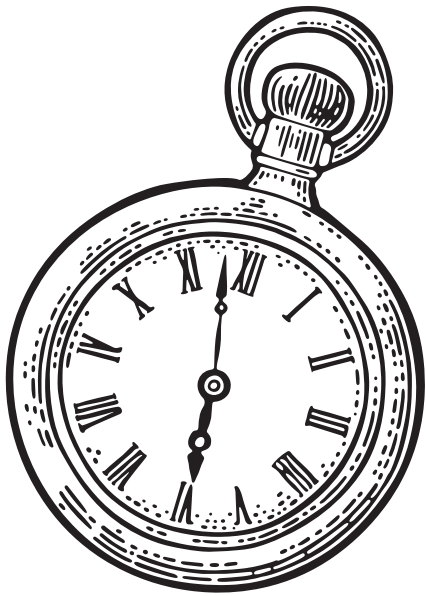
*A 'Cheerful Fire' advert in the Yarmouth Independent - Saturday 20 December 1924.
Newspaper image ©The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British
Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)*



Middlegate Distillery

Row 77, 2 Greyfriars Way

Previously the Norfolk Tavern, the Middlegate Distillery public house was located here until 1985 when it became officially renamed 'Allens'. The building has operated as a public house since it opened in 1903, by the licensee Samuel James Allen.



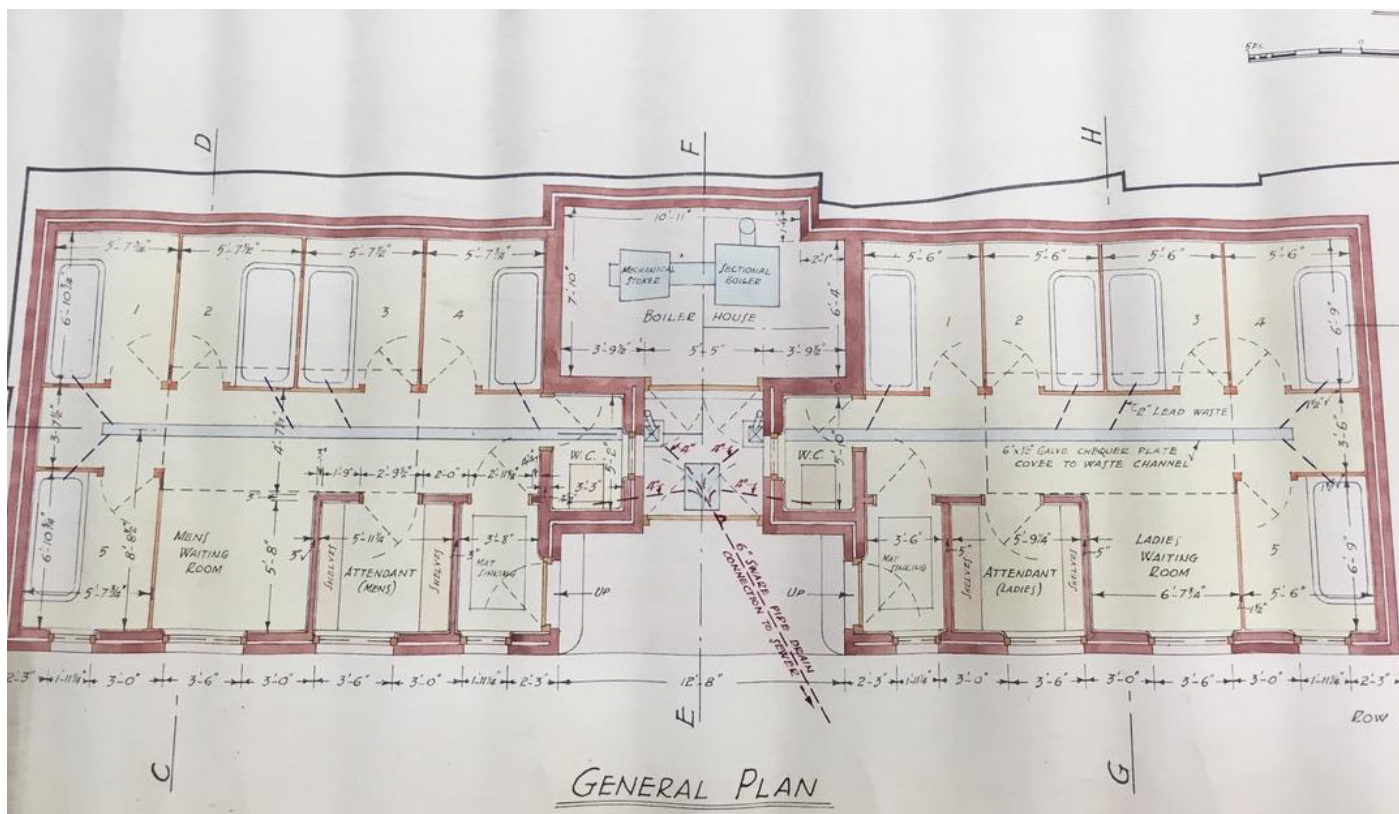
Slipper Baths Stonecutters Way



“Can I have more hot water please?”

At a time when the average home only had an outside toilet, hot water supply was rare and washing was often limited to a tin bath in front of the fireplace, the Slipper Baths was where the public could pay to have a hot bath. Separated into male and female sections, and partitioned into individual rooms, the Slipper Baths had 10 separate baths and were run by attendants who controlled the water supply. Bathing was limited to 20 minutes, and the attendants would not hesitate to bang on the door to announce that time was up. Bath towels could be rented and in the 1960s a Brylcreem vending machine was installed.





**Open 1 pm. to
7.30 pm daily**

“Baths taken in Men’s section: Adults, 820;
Children 24 Baths taken in the Women’s section:
Adults 411; Children 70. Bath towels used: 650
Wash and Brush Ups in public conveniences:
140” Figures for the month of February, 1960

Charges
Adults 1/-d.
Children 6d.
Towel 6.
Soap 2d.



Above:
General Plan for the Slipper Baths, 1937. Source: Norfolk Record
Office: Y/BE 2/L149/1-2

Right: County Borough of Great Yarmouth Proposed Public Baths,
1937 plans and elevations. Source: Norfolk Record Office. Y/BE 2/
L149/1-2

Lacons Brewery Stores North Quay



Lacons Brewery Stores. Source: breweryhistory.com/wiki

This sign is a tribute to the stores of Lacons Brewery, which formerly occupied the site. The brewery stores were used as the main barrel store and distribution depot for Lacons, serviced by the North Quay railway. Built in 1895, the foundation stone was laid on 14th June at an event attended by Mrs E. de M. Lacon. Following the closure of the brewery in 1968, the brewery

store was the last surviving Lacons building, finally demolished in 1997. The supermarket which occupies the premises is built in a replica style to the brewery stores building. The ghost sign, however, has not always been an accurate tribute. When the lettering was originally reinstalled in the supermarket car-park, the sign read 'Brewers Storey', but was later corrected.

So what is the story of Lacons?

Founded in 1640 by Jeffrey Ward, the brewery was transferred to the name of Lacon through marriage, becoming known as Lacons from 1760. The brewery was located on Church Plain, a site which became known as the Falcon Brewery due to the falcon on the company emblem. Lacon was an influential family in Great Yarmouth.

In 1797, Sir Edmund Knowles Lacon, who was Mayor and MP for Yarmouth, had the honour of escorting Horatio Nelson during a visit to Yarmouth.

In the 1850s more than 50 public houses in London were controlled by Lacons, and in 1868 a railway siding was built at the brewery to give faster access to the capital, allowing beer to be transported quicker than by sea.

At its height, Lacons shipped 50,000 casks of ale a week to London pubs. In the 1930s, Lacons owned 180 pubs in Great Yarmouth, and 37 in surrounding villages.

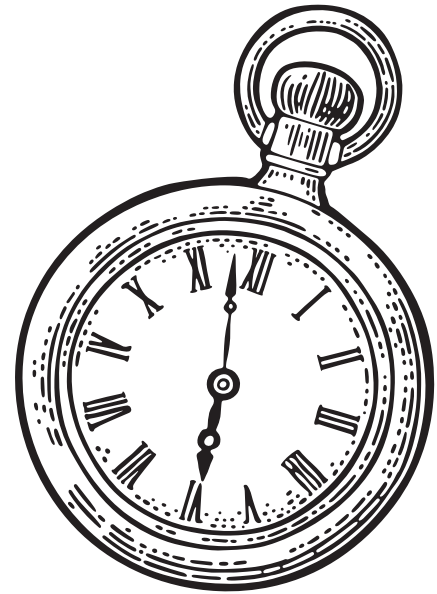
Beer was delivered by horse drawn carts and drays throughout the town, while steam wagons delivered to the villages. During the Second World War, the Falcon Brewery and nearby St Nicholas Church were heavily damaged 24th June 1942. The stretched fire service had to decide which building to save. The church was reconsecrated in 1961.

In 1965 the brewery was bought by Whitbread, however it closed three years later on February 28th 1968.



White Horse

White Horse Plain

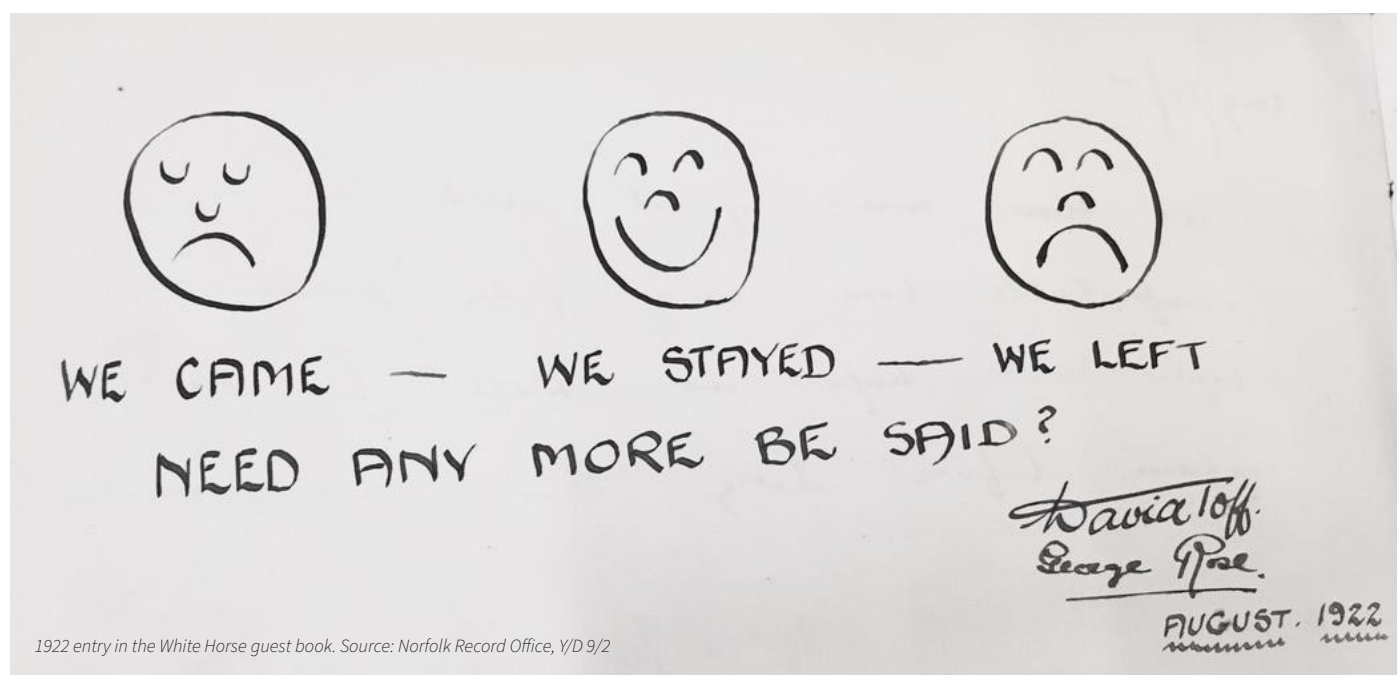


First opened as a public house in the 1700s (under the name The Golden Keys), this building occupied the White Horse Public House and Inn from 1883. George Henry Hammond was born in 1871, and inherited the White Horse from his parents in 1905. He and his wife Laura married at the nearby St Nicholas Church (31st July 1898), and the couple lived on the pub premises. In the 1911 census ; in the 1911 census, George Henry Hammond (aged 40) is listed as a 'Licensed Victualler', along with his wife, Laura Hammond, and three employees (one barmaid and two hotel servants).

The Hammonds were popular proprietors, their kindness and hospitality reflected in a visitors' book in which guests logged their experiences between 1905-1939 (now held by Norfolk Record Office, Y/D 9/2). Guests praised the Hammonds ("In language of the moment, Absolutely "Top Hole"!", 1921), from their large portions of food ("If you don't get enough to eat at home, come to Hammond's White Horse Inn"), to Mrs Hammond's motherly nature ("Here's to her of White Horse Hotel fame. She treats you like a mother, and you'll never find another Mrs Hammond the same. Criticism;-poetry-very weak- sentiments good. A big thank you to Mrs Hammond").

George Henry Hammond adapted his business to reflect the changing culture. In the Kelly's Norfolk Directory, The White Horse is listed in 1912 as: 'White Horse inn & Commercial hotel; livery & bait stables ; established 40 years, 13 Northgate Street (opposite St. Nicholas church)'. By 1916, the listing changed to include the additional amenities of 'garage' and 'petrol'.

"A way we are going and far from the sea. Leaving the White Horse but not with much glee. Best food and attention we've had without doubt. East, north south and west Hammonds praises ring out. Right happy we've been in this house near the sea. Think sometimes of the kiddies, the missus and me. Albert Steward August 1909 By one who knows."

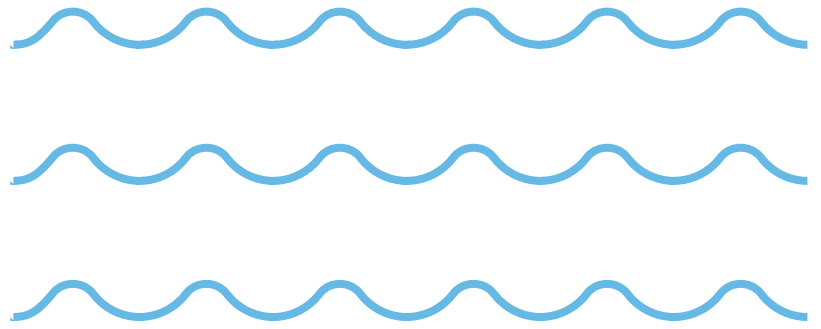
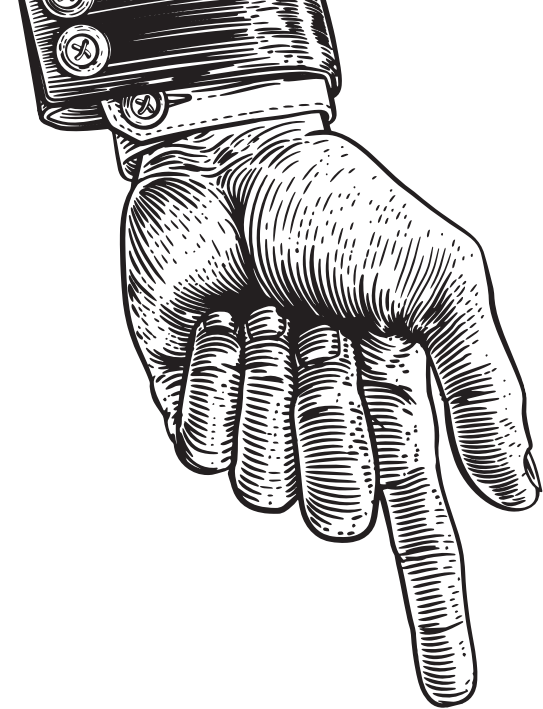


Municipal School of Art Nelson Road



This building was constructed in 1912 as a new purpose built premises for the Municipal School of Art. Designed by architect John W. Cockrill (who also designed the Old Fire Station on Greyfriars Way), it sits within the area of a former ropewalk (a long straight narrow lane, or a covered pathway, where long strands of material are laid before being twisted into rope).

The Municipal School of Art had previously been housed within the Government School of Art, Navigation, and Science at Paget's House (59 South Quay) which opened in 1863. During the Second World War, this Nelson Road premises was used as Great Yarmouth's Civil Defence Report Centre. The school re-opened in 1948. It became the Great Yarmouth College of Art and Design, and in 1989 merged with the Norwich School of Art.



The original art-deco style sign which remains today had been lost for many years, having been whitewashed. The sign was rediscovered when the building, which had fallen into disrepair after the closure of the College of Art in 1996, was refurbished into social housing (2011).



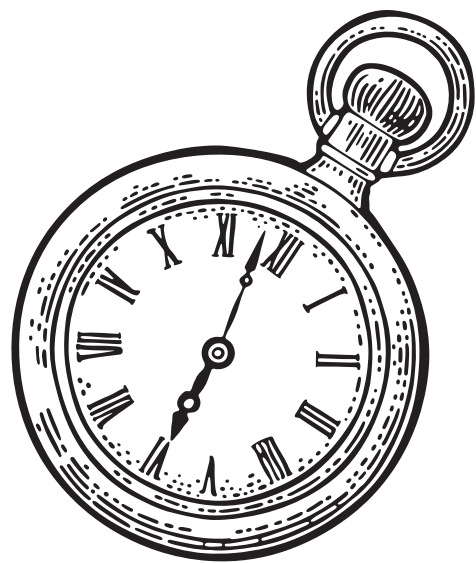
Criterion Hotel Dining Rooms

90 Regent Road



High up near the chimney tops overlooking the street below, a faded painted advertisement for 'Dining Rooms' can be seen on the side of 90 Regent Road. This was once the site of the Criterion Hotel and Dining Rooms', which operated under the proprietor Mr Thomas Rogers from 1896 until 1901.

The business was previously on Church Plain, where it is listed in the Kelly's Norfolk Directory between 1879 to 1892 as 'Criterion hotel, temperance commercial & boarding house & restaurant', under the ownership of Henry Foulsham.



Regent Theatre

Regent Road



The Regent Theatre opened on the 26th of December 1914 as a Cine-variety theatre, a popular form of entertainment between the 1900s and 1930s which offered a mixture of variety acts performed in between the showings of films. The building was designed by architect Francis Burdett Ward, and featured an ornamental exterior Ironwork canopy which provided decoration, and shelter for customers queuing outside. The building also contained

a striking restaurant with wood panelling and decorative plasterwork, which had its own separate street level entrance. In 1929 the Regent Theatre was taken over by Associated British Cinemas (ABC). Many residents of Great Yarmouth may have happy memories of attending the children's Saturday matinee screenings called the 'ABC Minors', showing serials such as Batman, Flash Gordon, or comedy such as Old Mother Riley.

“We are the boys and girls well known as the minors of the ABC. And every Saturday all line up to see the films we like and shout aloud with glee” (From the ABC Minors song)

The Regent Cinema closed in September 1982. The last film shown was Blade Runner starring Harrison Ford. Despite subsequent incarnations including becoming a bingo hall (Mecca Bingo), the original ornate Louis XVI style auditorium remained, including decorative theatre boxes. The building was listed 'at risk by the Theatres Trust in February 2022.

Metropolitan Boarding House Marine Parade



Built in the 19th century, the Metropolitan Boarding House was run by Frank Hill. Born in Great Yarmouth in 1854, Frank Hill was raised on South Market Road. In 1875 he married Mary Powell at St Nicholas Church, and together they had seven children.

Frank worked as a brewer's clerk and later as a brewer's traveller, before moving into hospitality. The proprietor of the 'Marine View' boarding house (19-20 Euston Road), Frank lived there with his family and employees until his death in 1929. He also ran the Metropolitan Boarding House on Marine Parade Central

Advertisement from 1901 tourism guide, 'Pictures of East Coast Health Resorts', by Arthur Peaton

Marine View Boarding Establishment.



THIS HOUSE now contains **60** Bedrooms, with Public Drawing, Smoke, and Dining Rooms, and undoubtedly occupies one of the finest positions on the Yarmouth Front, from which an unrivalled view can be obtained of the panorama of the Yarmouth Roadstead.

ELECTRICALLY LIGHTED THROUGHOUT. ESSENTIALLY A HOME FROM HOME.

Tariff on Application.
Telephone 0182. **MR. & MRS. FRANK HILL, Proprietors.**

Also Under Same Management—
METROPOLITAN BOARDING HOUSE,
Marine Parade, Central, GT. YARMOUTH.



YARMOUTH BEACH.

Hi!

Please use this map to navigate your way around Great Yarmouth's Ghost Signs. Remember to look up and enjoy the historical architecture and the beautiful signs left by generations before us.

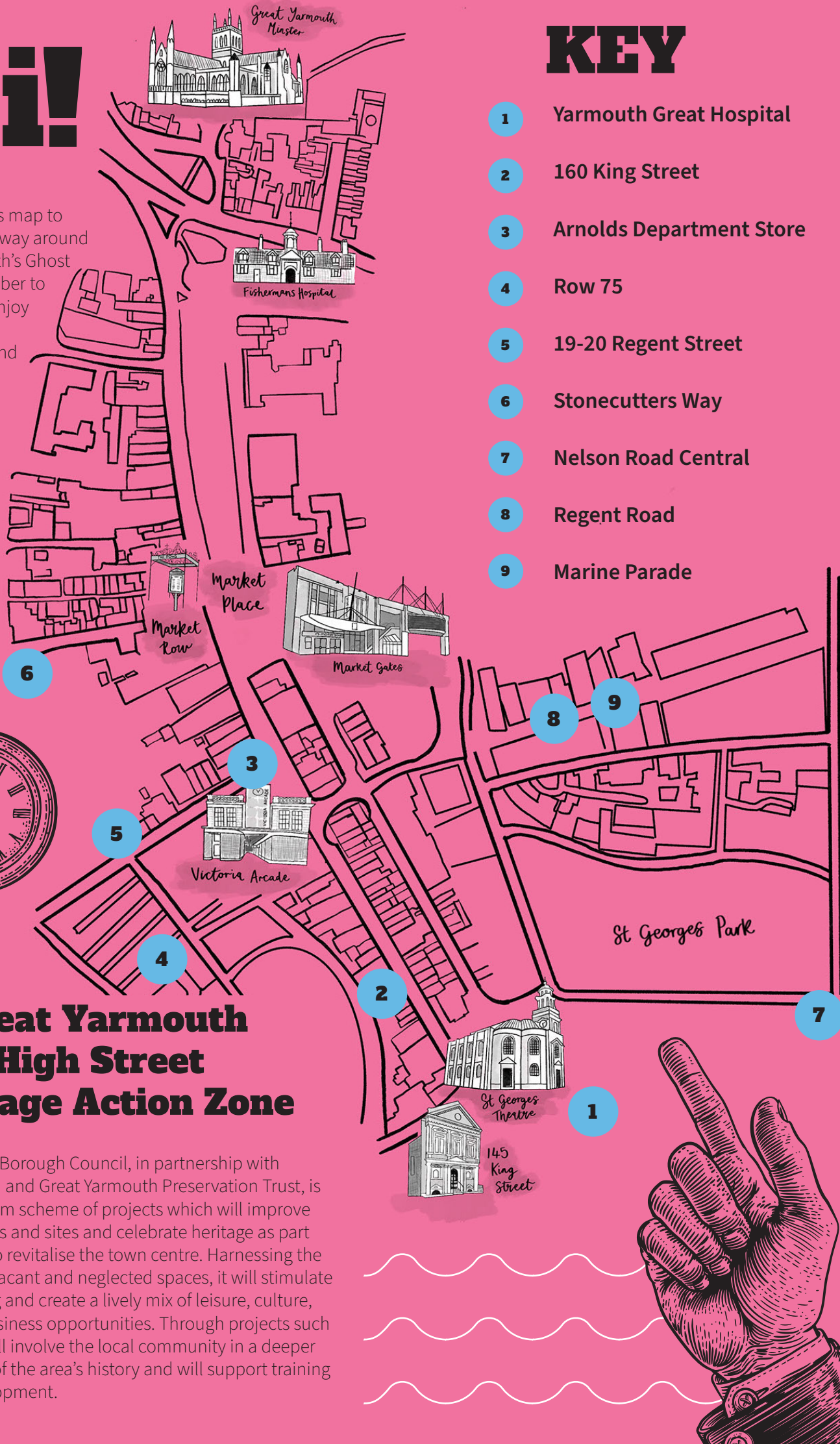


Great Yarmouth High Street Heritage Action Zone

Great Yarmouth Borough Council, in partnership with Historic England and Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, is delivering a £2.3m scheme of projects which will improve historic buildings and sites and celebrate heritage as part of wider plans to revitalise the town centre. Harnessing the creative use of vacant and neglected spaces, it will stimulate residential living and create a lively mix of leisure, culture, heritage and business opportunities. Through projects such as this trail, it will involve the local community in a deeper understanding of the area's history and will support training and skills development.

KEY

- 1 Yarmouth Great Hospital
- 2 160 King Street
- 3 Arnolds Department Store
- 4 Row 75
- 5 19-20 Regent Street
- 6 Stonecutters Way
- 7 Nelson Road Central
- 8 Regent Road
- 9 Marine Parade



[illegible]

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If you know of other “ghost signs” or historic decorative features in the borough of Great Yarmouth, please get in touch with the Conservation Team at GYBC: Conservation@great-yarmouth.gov.uk and include photograph and locations if possible.



With Thanks to...

