

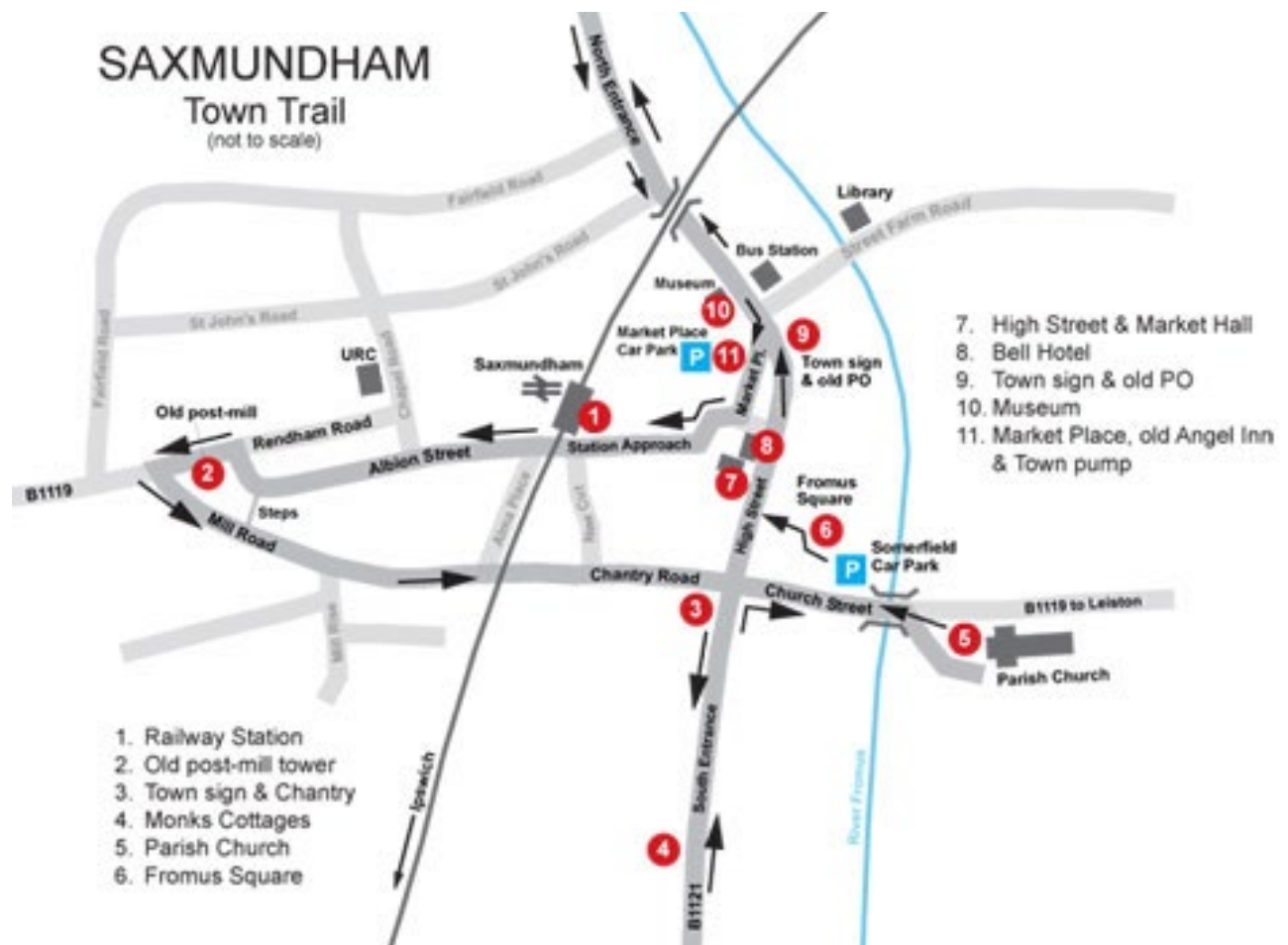
Saxmundham Town Trail

The historic buildings and features of most interest...

Saxmundham is an historic market town set in the valley of the river Fromus, a tributary of the Alde. The town name derives from the Saxon 'Seizmonds Home'. The earliest recorded mention of Saxmundham is in the Domesday Survey of 1086 which mentions three churches.

The trail starts at the Railway Station (1), but if you are parked in the Waitrose car park you can start the trail at the Church (5) or in Fromus Square (6).

The town trail takes about 1 – 2 hours to complete.



**The Railway Station
(before the 2018 fire)**

The trail starts at the **Railway Station (1)**: The Railway reached Saxmundham in 1859, and boasted not only a thriving goods yard but was also the junction for the branch line serving industrial Leiston, and the holiday resorts of Thorpeness and Aldeburgh. The Railway public house nearby was built as a refreshment room for rail passengers, hence its nickname 'The Fresh'. The nearby Police Station was built on the site of the old town gas works which closed in the late 1960s.

Across the railway line in Albion Street is a row of cottages built to house railway employees. The old Victorian Police Station opposite, now a private dwelling, still has its old nick. Continue to the top of Albion Street noting the flint cottages on the right.

On reaching the top of Albion Street, bear right and then turn left into Rendham Road. There you will see in front of you the grey brick roundhouse of the old **Post-mill** (2) which worked until 1907 and now converted into a private house. The earliest map showing a mill on this site is dated 1824 but there was probably a mill on this site long before then. The Post-mill was the most common type in Suffolk, and originally built entirely of timber. It was heightened to 51ft to the roof ridge when surrounding buildings obstructed the wind, making it one of the tallest in Suffolk.



The old post-mill tower, now a private house

At this stage you can either carry along Rendham Road and turn left into the top of Mill Road (recommended for those in a wheelchair or with a pushchair), or go back to the top of Albion Street and go down the steps leading down to Mill Road, thought to have been constructed as an access to the water pump which stood at the bottom on the right. There is another interesting flint cottage at the bottom of the steps.

Turn left along Mill Road and over the railway line into Chantry Road. Chantry Cottages on the right are early 18th century timber framed cottages. The adjoining **Chantry House** was built in 1850 on the site of a much older house. The Chantry is reputed to have been connected with the Wingfield and De Pole families. On the other corner note the unusual gable end of No. 1 High Street, the ornate gables, some of Dutch style, some with crow steps, and S-shaped roof plates which are common in Suffolk - look for more in the Market Place.

Turn right at the crossroads into South Entrance. In front of the Chantry is the **Town sign** (3) erected in 2003 depicting Suffolk sheep and cattle, the parish church, market hall and on top a crown to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee (look out for the other town sign in North Entrance). Further along South Entrance notice the unusual frontage of the off-licence (a wine shop for over 100 years), and opposite the driveway to Hurts Hall, home of the Long family until 1957, and patrons to the town since 1716 (the hall is best viewed from the main road leading south out of the town). Further along on the right is an impressive three story house built in Suffolk yellow brick in the early 19th century with Greek Doric portico.

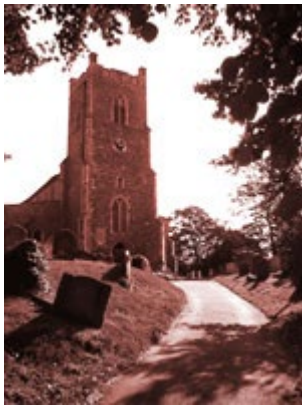


The town sign in South Entrance



Monks Cottages

The three story house nearby is much older being 17th century timber framed and plaster, it was probably refronted when the larger house was built. Further out of town on the right are **Monks Cottages** (4) which are undoubtedly some of the oldest dwellings in Saxmundham. Note the panelled pargetting in a checker pattern, a reproduction probably of the original 17th century pargetting. Close by can be found the Victorian mail box and Park Cottage, where in 1858 the artist **Henry Bright** (1810-1873) and his family lived.



The Parish Church

Return to the crossroads. Turn right into Church Street - carry on over the river Fromus to the **Parish Church** (5) of St John the Baptist. The Church is said to be built on the site of an earlier Saxon Church and has portions dating from 1250 (a short guide is available [here](#)). Wander round the churchyard and on the Eastern boundary note the row of thatched cottages. These were built by the Long family, as a single storey church school in 1836. Forty years later a second floor was added as a library and reading room. The buildings were later converted into four "tied" cottages for estate workers. Retrace your steps around the tower. Situated south-west of the tower is a unique headstone with a sundial incorporated, in memory of John and Mary Noller (1725 and 1724). Also search for the large stone tomb of the Thurlow family (on the left as you leave the churchyard) including **Thomas Thurlow** (1813–1899) the sculptor.

On leaving the Church cross the river Fromus. On your right is the Waitrose car park, the site of the old livestock market which was closed in 1987. Saxmundham's first market charter was granted in 1272 by King Edward I to John De Ramsey, Lord of the Manor. Cross the Somerfield [now Waitrose] car park and cut through (around the side of the supermarket) into **Fromus Square** (6). Opened in 2004, the square is a pleasant resting place and site of the new War Memorial.

Exit Fromus Square by the 17th century White Hart pub (with tall 19th century octagonal chimney stacks) and turn right into the High Street. The whole of the High Street is a conservation area, having many Tudor buildings with Victorian facades. Note the following in the High Street: Jackey L the jewellers shop, formerly Kerseys established in 1769 by Jerome Bright (the wooden shutters are still used for security at closing times); H G Crisp the stationery and booksellers est 1834; the **Market Hall** (7), built as a Corn Exchange in 1846, given to the town by the Long family (the family coat of arms is above the door and reads 'God and my Country'); the **Bell Hotel** (8) rebuilt in 1842 on the site which has been occupied by an inn for centuries, which was a regular stop for the stage and mail coaches that ran from London to Yarmouth; and Flick and Son, estate agents est 1833, occupying Ashford House.



Market Hall



The Bell Hotel

Carry on up the High Street, past Wells the ironmongers est c1830, and beyond this is the former **GPO Telephone Exchange** (9) completed in 1954 by T F Winterburn, now used solely as a Royal Mail sorting office and by other local businesses. The Town sign here was erected in 2000 and has the same design as the one in South Entrance, except that on top there is a 'dove of peace' to commemorate 50 years since the ending of WWII. Pass under the railway bridge into North Entrance. Several interesting architectural features can be seen here. Lynwood House has a Gothic fanlight; The Beeches, a parapet, stone coping and an attractive door surround; 17th century Varley House, carved doorway. Further on the right is The Doctors Surgery which occupies the site of the former Lamb Sale and Hiring Fairs. Brook Cottage (with ornate barge boarding) is believed to have been a school run by Owen Haxell and attended by artist Henry Bright and the sculptor Thomas Thurlow.

About a quarter of a mile beyond Brook Farm Road is the entrance to Carlton Hall, the family home of **Richard Garrett III** of the Leiston Works. An interesting detour can be taken by entering Carlton Park Sports field & Caravan Park, proceeding across the playing fields to the right

of the tennis courts and onto the remote parish church of St Peter, where Richard Garrett and members of his family are buried. Carlton Hall can be seen across the fields: it stood derelict for many years after WWII, but has now been restored as several private dwellings.

Return back along North Entrance and under the railway bridge. On your right is **The Museum** (10) which is well worth a visit. Opened in 2004, it contains many interesting local artefacts and exhibits including a 19th century Printers shop, small cinema, period dress shop and original bakery. The Museum is open 10am – 4pm every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday during the summer months. More details [here](#).



Market Place and Town Pump reinstated in 2003

Continue back along the High Street and bear right into the **Market Place** (11), a venue for traders for centuries. The oldest building is the former 16th century Angel Inn, which has a timber frame and a medieval window under the eaves. In the entrance to the Market Place car park can be seen the old **Town pump**, cast by Garretts of Leiston and given to the town by the Long family in 1838. At the other end of Market Place is **Old Bank House**, Saxmundham's first bank which was built by Gurneys in the early 19th century. Behind this Wingfield House, thought to be as old as the Angel Inn and desperately in need of renovation [recently renovated 2020]. Proceed up Station Approach

back to the Railway Station.

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On the following pages are some more recent photos of the numbered buildings / sites.

1. Railway station (before fire of February 2018)



2. The Post Mill



3. The Town Sign



4. Monks Cottages, South Entrance



5. St John's Parish Church



6. Fromus Square



7. Market Hall



8. Bell Hotel



9. GPO Telephone Exchange



10. Saxmundham Museum



11. Market Place (with former Angel inn sign) and Town Pump

