

## A brief history

### Clearly a good place to live

Ancient tribal Thelnetham was heavily forested, with a river running through. The local area provided timber for housing, forest vegetation, animals for food and a constant water supply to drink as well as an easy transport route. Roman coins found in Thelnetham's fields, tell us that the Romans, too, found this a good place to be.



### "Thelnetham" echoes down the centuries

The flat, wet land later provided an ideal site for a Saxon settlement; the name which the Saxons gave this place, now Thelnetham, derives from old English "elfetu", meaning swans, "thel" meaning a plank or bridge, and "ham" meaning meadowland, via various spellings over time. Today's pronunciation of Thel-nee-tham has also evolved over centuries. By the time of the Norman invasion, Thelnetham was important enough for inclusion in the Domesday Book of 1086.

### Historic treasures throughout the village

Medieval and early modern times saw the emerging of a village society, sustained by family life, religious and social events, farming and related industries. Testament to this is that such a small village has 29 "listed" properties, mainly domestic dwellings, large and small, but also including other unique preserved buildings, namely the church, the windmill and the village hall, formerly the village school. This Heritage Trail highlights the buildings of particular interest.

### Community spirit in Thelnetham

Depopulation and the decline of local rural industries since the 19th century have not halted the importance and vibrance of village life. Central to this, today, is the iconic Victorian Gothic village hall building, the people who support it and the associated activities which sustain them all.

### 21st century heritage care

The major restoration of the village hall in 2019, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, local organisations and individuals, has enabled the Thelnetham Village Hall Heritage Group to produce this Heritage Trail Guide, supported by the Trustees and Management Committee.

We hope that local people and visitors will find it interesting and useful, and that it will enhance appreciation and enjoyment of Thelnetham's heritage, present and future.

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Produced by Thelnetham Heritage Group with line drawings by Rhea Dawn Betts

# Thelnetham HERITAGE TRAIL



To live in or to visit Thelnetham is to be part of a truly rural heritage which spans millennia. The people of Thelnetham today are still making history, linking their rural heritage to a present and a future in which community cohesion and a sense of continuity are key.

Welcome to  
Thelnetham





### 1 Village Hall

Built as the village school in 1872, it became the village hall in the late 1950s. Recent renovations have retained its unique character.

### 2 The Church of St. Nicholas

Early 14th century, with 17th century addition, replacing an earlier church. The war memorial of 1921 is of Cornish granite. Delightful woodland walk through the churchyard.



### 3 St Mary's Well

The sacred site of a natural spring of lime-rich water believed to cure sore eyes. Roman coins found nearby suggest that it may have been a focal centre.



### 4 The Manor House

A fine early Victorian Rectory Manor House built in 1841, by Rev. E. H. Sawbridge, to replace an earlier smaller rectory. Now a private home which still enjoys views over the church and glebeland.



### 5 Thelnetham House

Built in 1699 and formerly Lodge Farm, this was the community farm of author and pacifist, John Middleton Murry, during and after World War II. Later, a commercial farm, and today a vineyard producing fine sparkling wine.



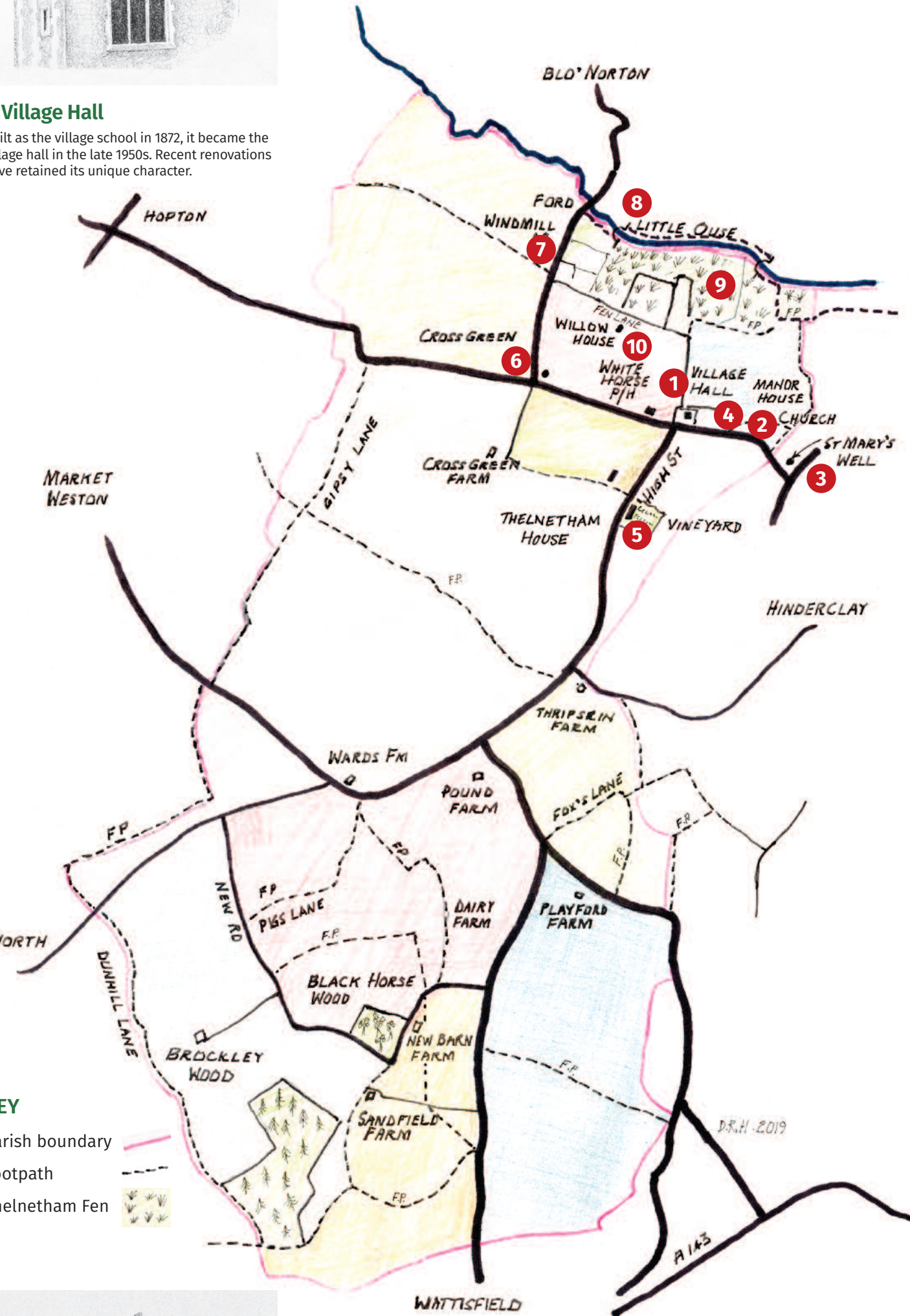
### 6 Cross Green

References to a medieval cross, given to the village in 1527 by John Cole, a Thelnetham landowner, are still found in the names of Trappetes Cross Cottages and Cross Green today. The cross was later moved to the area now known as Cross Green, then a popular meeting place. There is a wooden bench to sit awhile to enjoy Cross Green today.



### 7 Thelnetham Windmill

An iconic landmark built in 1819. Restored in the 1980s and since. One of the oldest in Suffolk and one of the few in East Anglia in full working order. Open days in summer, other times by arrangement.



### 10 Willow House

Of 15th century origin, this beautiful timber-framed thatched house is believed to be the oldest surviving house in the village. Later additions retain the character of this private property.

### 9 Thelnetham Fen Nature Reserve

A designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, this 20 acre remnant of valley fen includes a circular walk over rare, floating fens. Stunning all year, with many rare species, including breath-taking orchids, wetland wildflowers, migrant and resident birds and a variety of other wildlife.

It now links up with other parcels of protected land, together recreating the original Thelnetham Fen shown on early 20th Century Ordnance Survey maps.



### 8 The Little Ouse River

Wider in the past, linking Thelnetham to the sea, the river is believed to have been key to the siting of Thelnetham as a Saxon settlement. Today rare parcels of valley fenland along the river are managed by The Little Ouse Headwaters Project and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, accessible by a series of paths, including the Angles Way.