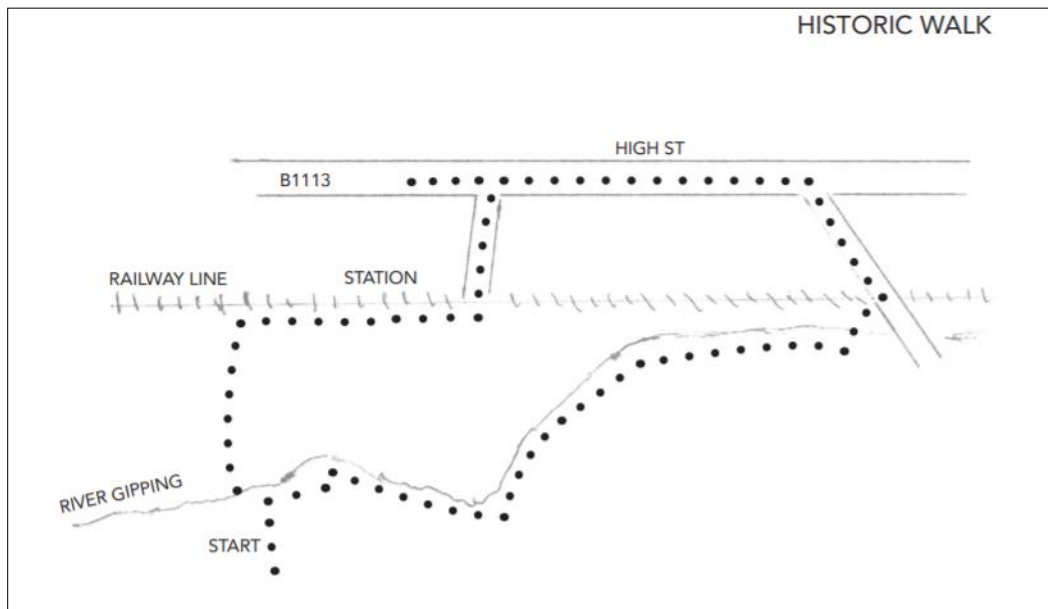


## Needham Market Historical Walk - 2 Miles by Derek Magnall



From Needham Lake information Centre, cross over the footbridge towards the lake and turn left. Keep the lake on your right and the railway line on your left. Turn left through the Cattle Tunnel (bow your head) and turn left again to reach Station yard. Consider the **Victorian Railway Station**, designed in 1849. Built on land bought from the Theobald Foundation for £275, it originally had curved Dutch gables and resembled a miniature Blickling Hall in Norfolk.

Continue towards the High Street and find **Theobalds Grammar School** on your left. It was established in the seventeenth century and used as a school until the early part of the twentieth century. Facing you, across the road is **Chainhouse Farm**. From 1663-5 Needham Market was isolated due to the plague and a chain was erected at both ends of the town, hence the names still in use, 'Chainhouse' at the south end and 'Chainbridge' at the north. The chains would not have been an effective physical barrier, but acted as a psychological deterrent. The plague marked the decline of the wool trade in the town.



Needham Market Victorian Station

Turn right along the High Street to number 12, formerly the **Waggon and Horses Public House**. Built in 1591 as **New Hall** it is now a private dwelling called **The Waggon**.

Continue to **Christchurch**, previously the United Reformed Church, which, in its present building dates from 1837. The scientist, Joseph Priestly, who was minister here from 1755 to 1758, discovered oxygen and whilst working on the nature of gases, invented soda water.

On the left is the **Town Hall**, opened in 1866 and designed by Frederick Barnes.

Across The Causeway are the **Almshouses** which housed two medieval carvings, probably survivals of earlier buildings on this site, and are now situated in **St John the Baptist Church** porchway. Further up the High Street on the right is **The Pightle**.

The '**Kings Head**' public house, now 62 High Street, opened in 1716 and finally closed in 1931. The present Post Office, on the left, was the **Quakers Meeting House** and Graveyard. The building dates from 1772 and was an important centre for the Friends for several generations. Many Quaker families are buried in the graveyard including the Alexanders.

On the right the **Bull Inn** has a finely carved **Angel Corner Post**. **The Limes Hotel** on the left is where the Guilds met. It was a calling house for pilgrims on their way to Bury St Edmunds and believed to have been named Boule House. The Georgian facade masks Tudor carvings and oak beams. **Tudor House**, also on the left, is a fine timbered house typical of many fifteenth and sixteenth century houses which lie behind the brick facades in the High Street. Once the home of George Ewart Evans, who has written many books based on the oral reminiscences of Suffolk people.

**St John the Baptist Church**, on the right, dates mainly from the mid fifteenth century. Inside is a magnificent roof which is, "the culminating achievement of the English carpenter" Munro Cautley.

Barclays Bank used to stand on the corner of Barrats Lane but closed in September 2014. Previously **Alexander's Bank**, founded by the Quaker family as one of the earliest private banks in England, and moved to its present site in 1756. Turn right down Hawks Mill Street to **Hawks Mill**, passing the **Ancient House**, which was built in 1480 and has been much restored. The garden wall still bears a plaque stating that the Suffolk Agricultural Show was held in the town in 1893.



There has been a mill on the **Hawks Mill** site since Domesday times. The present building dates from 1887 and is now converted to residential use.

There are many other very old and interesting buildings in the town, many of them hiding behind modern facades. The whole High Street is designated a Conservation Area and most of the buildings are Grade II listed.

Continue along the road and cross the road bridge over the River Gipping. Turn right immediately down the steps, the River Gipping on your right. Continue along the path keeping the river on your right until you return to the Information Centre.