



King's Lynn u3a History Trails




Notable People Trail no 1

Notable People Part 1, The South Town


The site of the current town of King's Lynn is barely mentioned in the **Domesday Book of 1086** but the town developed over the centuries to become a vibrant international trading port. Over that time many notable people have lived, worked, traded, sailed from, and banked here. We look at some of these, both of national and local importance. You may wish to investigate our Hanse history for more information.

This is a circular walk in two parts, each one starting at Saturday Market. The route takes you across roads which may sometimes be busy – take care when crossing them. Look out for the **green information plaques** on many of the buildings.

The characters with a plaque are indicated by 

With the **Town Hall** and **Stories of Lynn** on your left, proceed down **Saturday Market Place** toward **St James Street**.

Stop at **Smiths the Bakers**, noting the **royal warrant** above the door, Smith's having baked the wedding cake for the then Princess Elizabeth and her husband, Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in 1947.

1.  This was formerly the site of a home built in **1450**, of the 15th century merchant **Walter Coney**, a member of the Holy Trinity Guild whose Guildhall (the Town Hall) is on the Market place.

He was Mayor of Lynn 4 times, and as a merchant of note he fulfilled a royal ambassadorial role when diplomacy was indicated.

Walter paid for the building of the Holy Trinity Chapel in St Margaret's and originally had a memorial brass in that church. Continue along St James Street and stop opposite the Bingo Hall to see the plaque to.....



2.  **Rr Admiral Robert Bloye** CBRN (1769-1847).

Robert Bloye entered the merchant navy at 14 and later served as midshipman at the victory of **the Glorious First** led by **Lord Howe in 1794**. He served with distinction at the **Peninsular campaign** off Northern Spain, with promotion to captain prior to his retirement in **1813**. He was made **Rear Admiral** in **1846** shortly before his death.

Across the road, the old **Theatre Royal** stood on the site of the **Ritz Bingo Hall**; here...

3. ● Charles Kemble, Mrs Dora Jordan, Joseph Grimaldi, Edmund Kean, William Charles Macready, and Mrs Beerbohm Tree all performed.

Turn right through the gate into **Greyfriars Gardens**, to see the **13th century Greyfriars Tower**.

Note the three short steel pillars representing the 3 pillars of the order, and the pavement plaque by the sculptor, **Andrew Schumann**.

Beside the arch, on the right buttress, in the original quire, is the plaque to.....

4. ● Fr Nicholas of Lynn.

Nicholas of Lynn, b. approx. **1330**, was a Franciscan friar in the house in Kings Lynn, believed to have discovered the coast of Greenland during his voyages which he described in his writings.

Walk under the arch and straight ahead to the left-hand gate....

On your left is the **1950's Police Station**, upgraded in the **2010's** and re-opened then by **HRH Prince Charles**.

Opposite, across **London Road** is the **Methodist Chapel** and behind , to its left look over the wall to the remains of the **C13th workhouse window** which is a remnant of the **Chapel of St James**.



5. In 1399 during the reign of Henry IV, a local priest at St Margaret's, **William Sawtry**, a follower of **John Wycliffe**, was accused and tried for heresy as he believed that the Bible should be written in English for all to read, as well as the more serious accusation of denying transubstantiation.

He recanted these beliefs at **St James Chapel** and moved to London but reconsidered his position and was accused again and subsequently burnt at Smithfield becoming the **first Lollard martyr in 1401**.

Turn right after **Greyfriars Gardens** and walk past the **Town Library**, a gift from.....

6. **Andrew Carnegie** (1835-1919) (born Dunfermline)

Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist, who emigrated to America with his parents at 12 years old. Through hard work and foresight he built up the Carnegie Steel Company in Pittsburgh which he sold in 1902 for over 3 billion dollars. This fortune he then used on philanthropic works with an emphasis on libraries, world peace, education, and scientific research. The library in King's Lynn was one of the few where Carnegie attended the opening in person. The town's coat of arms is displayed high above the door.

Follow the road round the corner to the right and walk down **Millfleet/Stonegate Street**.

Crossing the road you will see the small walled **Jewish Cemetery** of the **18th century** with its green plaque .

Turn left at the roundabout after the block of flats. Look ahead to the interpretation board on the wall. Beyond it is a jettied timber frame building, called.....

7. **Greenland Fishery**. It was the base of the towns whaling industry in the 18-19th century. Built in **1605** by merchant **John Atkin**. Nearby were sheds for boiling down the whale blubber for the valuable oil and separating the bones and baleen for other uses.

Edward Milligen Beloe junior (1871-1932) . Local solicitor and antiquary, founded a museum here in **1912**, until WW2 bomb damage to the building made it unsafe and the collection was moved to the current **Town Museum**. Beloe himself wrote often about the workings of the law court around King's Lynn which are now mostly in the Bradfer-Lawrence collection held in the Yorkshire Archaeological Society Archives.

Turning back on yourself, go straight ahead to **Ladybridge** crossing the **Millfleet**.

Turn left onto **Nelson Street**.....

Note the 1953 flood markers either side on the right-hand corner, just before
Lath Mansion. (15 Nelson St)This became the home to a dynasty of merchants called.....

8. Samuel Browne. The house came into the possession of the first Samuel Brown through marriage and stayed with the family through 4 generations. The 3rd Samuel re-fronted the house as seen today though he did not see it completed. His son Samuel (1729-1784) became one of the most successful merchants of his day, marrying Hester, the daughter of the wealthy and influential attorney Philip Case. This Samuel was Treasurer of **the Greenland Whaling Company**, together with close neighbours **Thomas Bagge and Edward Everard**, He also traded in coal, corn, fish, wine, and was also a partner in a local shipyard. Samuel had no surviving son and his fortune passed to his 2 daughters.

9. **number 9 Nelson Street** was the home of **Thomas Bagge (1740-1807)** and his wife Pleasance, another daughter of Philip Case, and they inherited the majority of her father's immense fortune. The Bagge family were established brewers in the town, but it was Thomas and his brother William (1734-1801) who expanded the business, developing a merchant fleet of 16 ships trading mostly in coal from Newcastle but also wine and other goods, running a shipyard on the River Nar and fitting out and provisioning the ships of the Greenland Company. Like other merchants they had several properties around the town, including tied houses to the brewery on King Street. The family remained in the forefront of the town until in **1929**, they sold the brewery, 75 tied houses, and other Lynn properties to Steward and Patterson of Norwich and moved into the country.

10. Next door is **Hampton Court**, where the **Amfles Family's** merchant mark is carved into the right-hand corner of the entrance door frame



In the C15th **William Amfles**, a brewer and freeman of the town, passed the property, and freeman status, to his son Richard, a merchant, who was likely the one who built the west wing as a warehouse which had direct access to the river at that time. The south C14 wing was the original hall house, built by the merchant **Robert Atte Lath**.

On the corner opposite Hampton Court is the jettied building known as the **Valiant Sailor**...

11. This was the final home of **Walter Dexter RBA, (1876-1958)**

Walter, taught by Norfolk artist **Henry Baines**, attended, and excelled at the Birmingham School of Art. After travelling for a time he returned to Lynn in his early 20's and lived on a converted fishing boat on the River Nar. He met and married Helen Chadwick in **1915**. Walter then worked as a commercial artist, noted for railway advertising, and also wrote for the Norfolk press, generally on Norfolk and its beauty. He taught at a local school from **1941**. Returning to Lynn after his wife's death in **1948** he lived in this house until his death in **1958**.

On the opposite corner stands the.....

Hanse House, built in **1475**, by the German merchants of the **Hanseatic League**.

This is the last surviving Hanse house in England. Here the German merchants had lodgings, warehouses, offices, and shops. The League was a confederation of German merchant towns who were a trading powerhouse throughout the **medieval times** up to the **16th century**. A plaque is sited further along the wall.

12. The front of the Hanse house is the Georgian mansion that the merchant

Edward Everard built over the earlier wing, after his purchase of the property in **1751**. The **Everards** had connections to Lynn from **1696** after acquiring property through marriage. Over the generations they became active in mercantile life, participating in the whaling industry and running a bank in the town.

Walk along **St Margaret's Place**, to the **Vicarage**

13. **Sir Edward Guy Dawber (1861-1963)** born in King's Lynn, was an

architect working in the Arts and Crafts style around the country, especially around the Cotswolds. In **1926** he played a prominent part in the establishment of the CPRE (Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England) and acted as the first President of the society and knighted in **1936**; he was buried in London.

14. **Fanny Burney (1752-1840)** a famous author and diarist in her day, observed the social life of Lynn from a house on this spot.

Born in King's Lynn to Esther and **Charles Burney**, a famous musicologist, who provided her with no formal education and discouraged her literary leanings. It was the success of the anonymously published first novel "**Eveline**" that altered her father's opinion and led to her second novel "**Cecilia**".



She proved to be influential in the writing of Jane Austen. She fell out with her family in **1793**, when she married Alexander d'Arbley, a French officer with whom she had a son, and moved to Paris till **1812** when she returned to visit her ailing father who died in **1814**. Her husband died in **1818** and her son also died before her in **1837**. She spent some of her later years editing her father's papers for publication until her death in **1840** and she is buried in Bath.

Go into **the Minster, the Church of St Margaret** of Antioch, St Mary Magdalene and all the Virgin Saints, founded in **1101** by.

15. Bishop Herbert de Losinga.

Herbert, invited by William Rufus, came from France to become the Prior of Ramsey Abbey. He later bought the position of Bishop of Thetford as it was then and moved his centre of power to Norwich. He travelled to see the Pope as, by buying the position, he had committed the sin of simony, and as a penance he was charged to build religious houses at his own expense. He founded Norwich cathedral, where he is buried, and priory churches of Great Yarmouth and Lynn.

16. This ancient building was partly renovated by the famous architect **Sir George Gilbert Scott, (1811-1878)** who, in **1875**, renovated the interior of the church in the then fashionable Gothic revival style, altering the floor levels and removing much of the Georgian interior that had replaced the medieval nave, previously lost when the spire above the South tower fell during a storm in **1741**.

17. ● In the eastern end of the south aisle there are funeral brasses to **Adam de Walsoken, (d 1349)** and **Robert Braunche, (d 1364)**, and their wives. Both were mayors of the town, Walsoken in 1334 and 1342, whilst Braunche was mayor in 1349 (the plague year) and 1359. It was believed that his brass shows a peacock feast that he presented to **King Edward III** and **Queen Philippa** on their visit to the town in **1349**. The size of the brasses shows the wealth that these men acquired through their working lives.

18. Cross through the sanctuary noting the east window, given by the Cresswell family, in celebration of the safe return of **Samuel Gurney Cresswell in 1853** who, after 3 years ice-bound in the arctic whilst searching for the Northwest passage, was pronounced the first naval officer to cross it. (mentioned in trail 2)

Near **the organ** in the north aisle there is a stone memorial on the wall to

19. ● **Sir William Hoste (1710-1824)** a protegee of Nelson, who served in the Napoleonic wars, becoming acting captain after the Battle of the Nile at the age of 18. He was connected to the Walpole family, marrying Harriet, the second daughter of Horatio Walpole, the 2nd Earl of Orford. His memorial is in St Paul's in London.



20. The organ was built by **John Snetzler (1710-1785)**, installed at the

instigation of ● **Dr Charles Burney** (mentioned in Trail 2) in **1754**, at a cost of £700 (which would equate to over £8600 in 2017 value). Snetzler was born in Switzerland but moved his business to London. The organ at St Margaret's was one of the first he made in England and helped to establish his reputation.

Going back to the west door note the display to

21. ● **Margery Kempe (1373-1438)**, the daughter of John Brunham, a wealthy merchant of Lynn who was mayor and MP. Margery married John Kempe and had 14 pregnancies despite suffering for 8 months after her first child, tormented with visions of devils, though eased by visions of Christ. Following this she became more demonstratively religious, weeping and crying at times. She took pilgrimages to Jerusalem, travelling to Rome and Santiago de Compostela. She also visited religious sites and churchmen throughout England. During this time she narrowly avoided being condemned as a Lollard and was instead seen as a mystic.

When her husband fell ill, she returned to Lynn to nurse him till his death in 1431, the same year her eldest son John also died, which led her to her last journey, taking her German daughter-in-law back to her family in Danzig, (modern Gdansk).

Margery started dictating her life story to a local priest in 1436, completed it in 1438. The "Boke of Margery Kempe" is known as the first spiritual autobiography in English. In 1521 Henry Pepwell reprinted extracts in of her book in an anthology of mystical writings; the rediscovery of her manuscript in the 20th century is a tale of mystery, intrigue and power, revealing the story of a lay married woman, a housewife and mother of 14 children. This is no conventional book on spirituality but a woman's story of 'her felyns and revelayons and the forme of her levyng'.

Up the oak steps to your right, on the west wall is a memorial to

22. ● **Florence Ada Coxon, (1862- 1951)** whose portrait hangs in the Town Hall. She was the first of only 12 female mayors, among the almost 300 mayors of King's Lynn. Ada's husband was very distinguished locally, being Mayor two years before Ada, with Ada his mayoress.

The female vote was granted in 1918; in 1923 Ada formed the Women's Conservative Club in King's Lynn. After her retirement she was awarded the OBE. Ada then took up the law and at age 70 was called to the bench. Her motto was 'Age is no obstacle.'

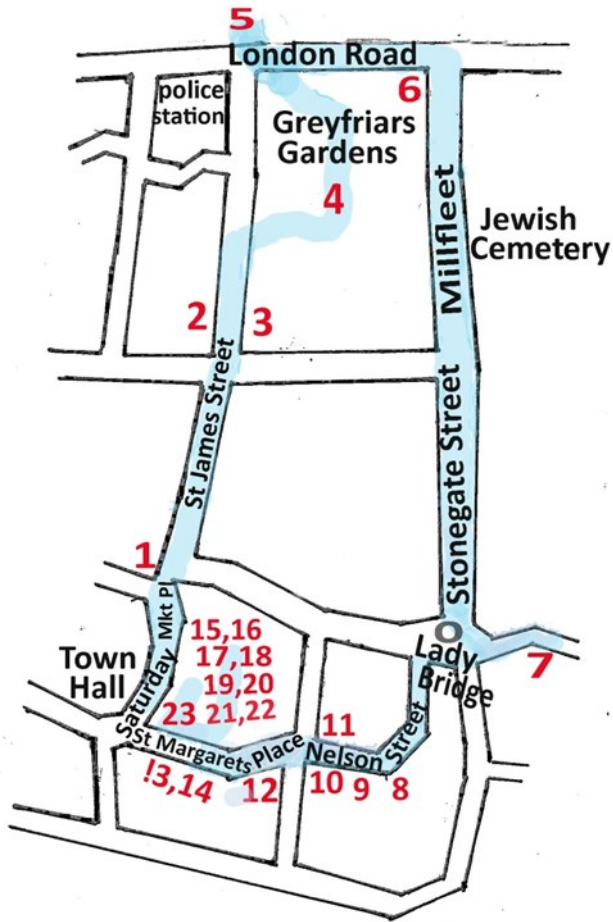
See also the rotating stone column sitting on roller bearings made by Coopers of Kings Lynn, recording the many clergymen connected to this Minster Church.

Metal discs in the pavement outside the church, on the SW side, mark the shape of the medieval charnel house, above which was the early **Boys' Grammar School**.

23. In **1758 Eugene Aram** (1704 – 1759) was teaching in this school. He was born in the West Riding of Yorkshire and in **1734** was working as a schoolteacher in Knaresborough. 10 years later a friend of his, Daniel Clark, went missing owing money and goods and Eugene was suspected of being involved but nothing was proved. He moved around until starting work in Lynn, and it was here that officers from Yorkshire came to arrest him and return him to York where he was charged with the murder of Clark, following the discovery in Knaresborough of a skeleton. He was executed for the crime in August 1759 and his skull is kept in storage in the Lynn Museum.

As you are now at the starting point this ends the walk of the Southern part of the town.

Map of Notable People Trail 1



The distance is about 1 mile and takes 1 to 1.5 hours

We hope you enjoyed this u3a Town Trail.
This and other trails are available on the King's
Lynn u3a website: www.kingslynnu3a.org.uk
Then select 'Town Trails' from the menu.
Or just scan the QR Code.

