



Festive heritage trail

This self-guided walking trail will take you around some of Norwich's most iconic heritage buildings and picturesque streets, weaving in historical facts about the city and some quirky festive stories from years gone by.

If the trail is followed in its entirety it will take around 90 minutes. However there are options for shortening the walk and also for adding in visits to your choice of heritage attractions which are putting on special events this Christmas including concerts, markets, craft activities and tower tours (these are highlighted in colour). There are also plenty of venues along the way which offer hot drinks, food and a chance to put your feet up!

Walking trail

Start in front of **City Hall**, decorated with its beautiful Christmas trees and lights. Built in 1936-1938, it has been the centre of local government ever since and has long been the focus of the city's festive celebrations with its popular annual Christmas lights switch-on and carol singing on the steps.

City Hall faces **Norwich Market**, which has been on its current site for 900 years and is now the country's largest Monday-to-Saturday open market. During the Second World War, however, Christmas food was in short supply, with 'few oranges and no nuts' noted on Norwich Market in 1943 and no geese or turkeys to be had!

Cross over the road and head towards the **Guildhall** on Gaol Hill. The medieval Guildhall was effectively the town hall until the current City Hall was built. In the Middle Ages the Guild of St George, which had its base at the Guildhall, held a banquet here every Christmas. It was their second biggest festivity after St George's day, and everyone who was anyone in the city was involved. You can pop into the Guildhall on Mondays to Saturdays and watch a 20 minute free film in the lobby area on the history of this fascinating building.

Walk down Gaol Hill until you reach **Jarrold** department store which is full of festive cheer at Christmas. The release of their Christmas catalogue in early December was always eagerly awaited. In 1924 the Christmas grotto was 'Rhymeland', which featured Father Christmas and 'Mother Hubbard's Wonderful Cupboard'. The cupboard produced a surprise parcel for every child visitor, as well as a toy balloon or a Caley's cracker from Caley's local cracker factory.

Stroll down London Street with Jarrold's on your left. On the site where shops including Pilch's and Habitat are currently housed, Garlands department store used to stand.

Garlands used to have a Christmas show every year, like a panto of its own. Unfortunately the building burnt down in 1970.

Take a left past Habitat and walk down Swan Lane, crossing over Bedford Street and walking down Bridewell Alley. When you come to St Andrew's Street, if you want to pop into **Strangers' Hall** which was once the home of wealthy mayors and merchants, turn left and wander down the street. During December Strangers' Hall will be offering visitors the chance to experience a Victorian Christmas and meet Father Christmas.

If you are not visiting Strangers' Hall, or after your visit, cross over St Andrew's Street and head along with **The Halls – St Andrew's and Blackfriars'** on your left, up onto Princes Street. At Elm Hill Brasserie take a left and walk down **Elm Hill**, which is one of the most picturesque streets in the city and has the oldest streetscape in Norwich.

Take another left onto Wensum Street and then a right onto **Quay Side**. Quay Side is where the annual distribution of presents to 200 poor children by the Church Army took place during the 1920s and 1930s. Where Quay Side ends take a right onto Bedding Lane, which will lead you out onto Palace Plain. Cross over the road at the crossing outside St Martin's Church and with the church on your left, walk along Bishopgate. Follow the road round, pass the Adam and Eve pub and you will come to **the Great Hospital**.

The Great Hospital has been in continuous use as a caring institution since it was founded for the care of poor chaplains in the 13th century. The residents (or "inmates" as they used to be known) of the Great Hospital traditionally enjoy Christmas dinner in the Birkbeck Hall by a roaring fire. Until 1899 the usual Christmas meal was half a pound of boiled mutton, a pint of broth and a mince pie. The first known recording of mince pies made at the Great Hospital was in 1797 with the following ingredients: 1 ½ stons flour – costing 3s, butter – 15s 3d, brandy – 4s 6d, peel – 2s 6d. Some of the swans from the Great Hospital's Swan Pit used to be sent off to Sandringham at Christmas to be eaten by members of the Royal Family.

Cross Bishopgate and follow the pedestrian route signs which will lead you to **Norwich Cathedral**, the most complete Norman Cathedral in the UK. The Cathedral is always a stunning place to visit and if you are following the trail on 11th-13th December, why not pop in to the Historic Christmas Fayre? Stalls will be selling historical items and replica artefacts from the last 2,000 years, mulled wine, a hog roast and period entertainment.

Continue out of the Cathedral Close area onto **Tombland** through the Ethelbert or Erpingham Gate. During the later Middle Ages, the Craft Guilds used to process through the city including Tombland, behind the Mayor on Christmas Day. Carry on walking to the left along Tombland and Upper King Street. Cross over Prince of Wales Road and carry onto King Street. Just past St Anne's Lane you will reach **Dragon Hall**, a medieval trading hall. As a heritage attraction Dragon Hall is well worth a visit. Going back to its roots, Dragon Hall is also hosting a Medieval Christmas Market on 6th and 7th December where you can discover costumed traders selling hand-crafted, historical and original gifts and enjoy seasonal food and refreshments.

Cross over King Street and walk up Julian's Alley until you come to a junction where you take a right onto Rouen Road. Follow the road up to **Prospect House**, Archant's HQ, where journalists from the Norwich Evening News and Eastern Daily Press work. During the Second World War, the Ministry of War 'Food Facts' adverts appeared weekly in the EDP telling people how to make the most of their rations. This included a double allowance of dried egg for four weeks around Christmas to allow for cakes, trifles and other festive items! On your right is the **Cattle Market** which was home to a funfair every Christmas until the 1980s.

Walk along Farmers' Avenue with The Mall shopping centre and Vue cinema on your left. Follow the road round to the right as it becomes Castle Meadow, with **Norwich Castle** on your right. Norwich Castle is one of the finest surviving secular Norman buildings in Europe and is now a museum. During December the Castle is offering two-for-one on admission.

Cross over the road and head down Arcade Street and into the **Royal Arcade**, a beautiful Victorian shopping arcade. Once through the arcade you end up on Gentlemen's Walk. Go diagonally across the Walk, to the left hand edge of the Market and take the steps up towards **Millennium Plain** and **The Forum**, with **St Peter Mancroft** church on your right.

The Forum is the landmark millennium project for the East of England and a popular venue for a range of entertainment and activities all year round. It will be hosting a range of festive events over the Christmas period.

If you cross over Theatre Street you'll come to **the Assembly House** – one of the most glorious examples of Georgian assembly rooms architecture in the country and frequently the location of entertainment and assemblies for the local gentry. Following a period of mourning after Lord Nelson's death in October 1805 it was decided that 'Nelson's glorious victory off Cape Trafalgar' should be celebrated in his home county. On 21st December 1805 there was a grand celebration at the Assembly House with dancing and a banquet for 450 ladies and gentlemen from the city and county. If you wish to get back to your starting point at City Hall, simply cross over the road towards The Forum, pass St Peter Mancroft Church and there you are.

If you want to go a little further, **St John's Roman Catholic Cathedral** is worth the trip and a spectacular end to your walking tour. Come out of the Assembly House and turn left to walk along Theatre Street, past the Theatre Royal. As you come to Chapelfield Gardens, take a right onto Little Bethel Street. At the junction take a left onto Bethel Street and walk along the road, past Churchman House on your left and St Giles church on your right. You will end up on Upper St Giles Street, with a stylish and cosmopolitan mix of independent shops.

Cross over the Inner Ring Road (Grapes Hill) by the footbridge and you'll approach Norwich's Roman Catholic Cathedral, a fine example of 19th-century Gothic revival architecture. The Cathedral welcomes visitors daily.

This trail has been put together by Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust – www.heritagecity.org. For more on Norwich's 12 most iconic heritage buildings please visit www.norwich12.co.uk.