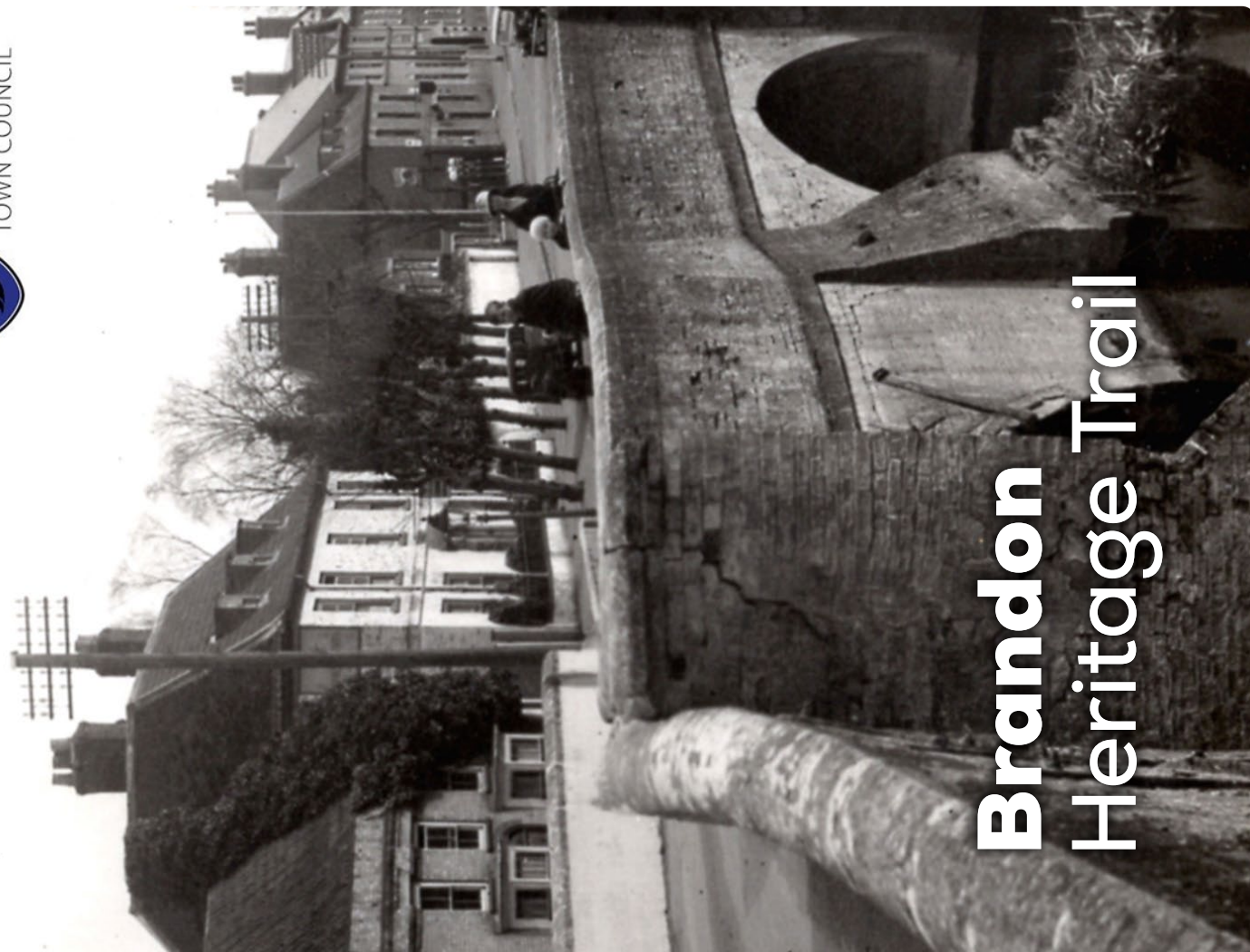
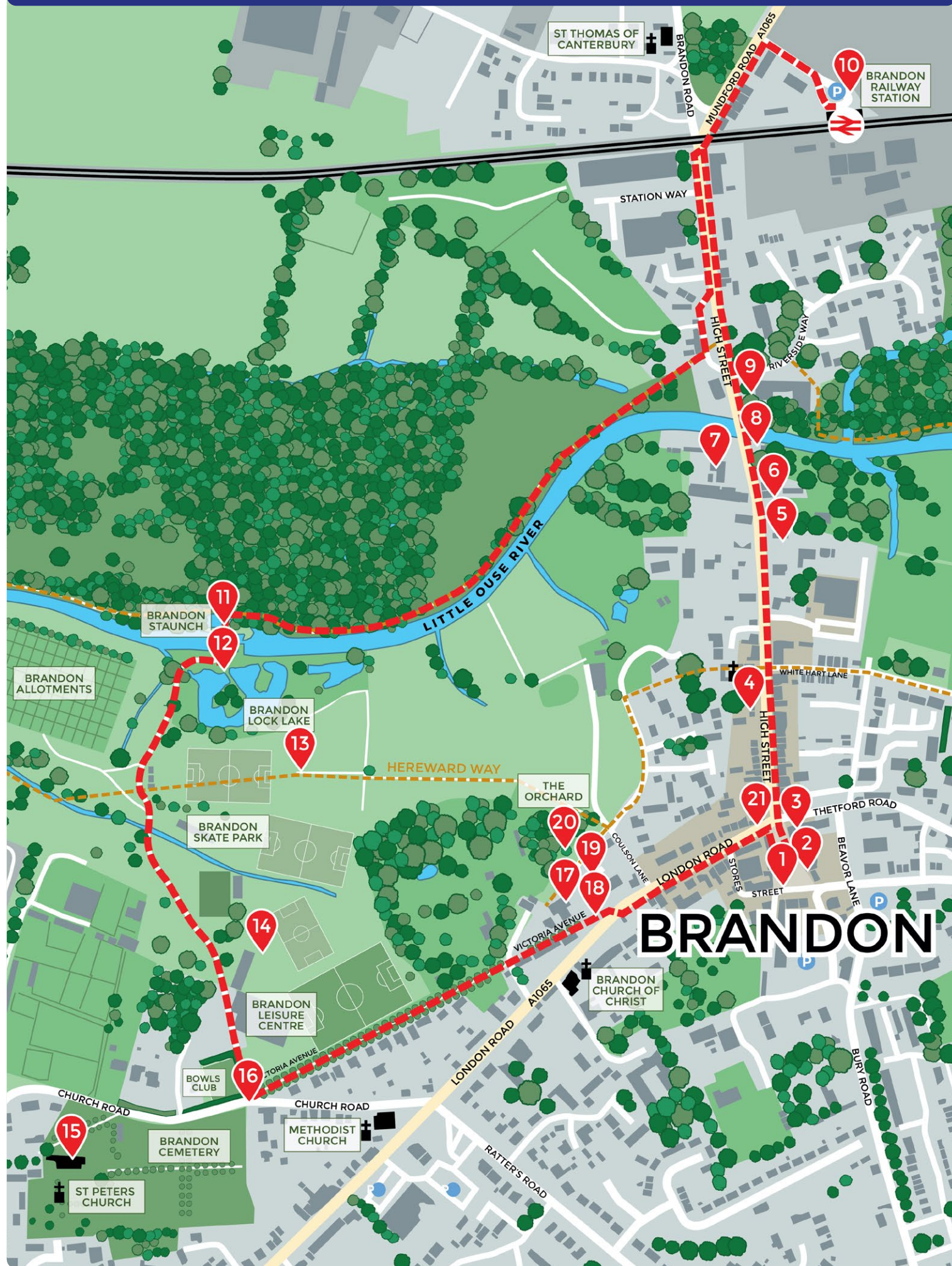




Brandon Heritage Trail

DISTANCE: 1.9 MILES / 3 KM

DURATION: 1 HOUR 10 MINUTES



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Funded by The Breckland Society
www.brecsoc.org.uk



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Start on Market Hill outside Brandon Town Council offices.



1. Old School House

Opened in 1878 by Rev William Foord Crocker of St Peter's Church, chairman of Brandon School Board. A house that had been a school since 1664 was demolished to make way for the new 'Board School'.

2. Five Bells Inn, now Tilly's Tearoom; Market Square

One of Brandon's many lost pubs, it only changed use in 2021. The square now hosts a weekly Thursday market and other events.

3. Flintknappers Arms

Built in 1933, replacing the Eagle, its name reflects Brandon's historic flint-knapping industry, which supplied the British Army during the Napoleonic Wars. A statue of a flintknapper stands nearby in a garden managed by Brandon in Bloom.



Cross the road at the lights and walk up the High Street.

The High Street contains many interesting and listed buildings with a rich history of shops, trades and town life.

4. Gentle's Shop

Once a butcher's shop run by three generations of the Gentle family, who were also councillors and landowners. Frederick Gentle is still held in high esteem, and his son Walter led the Brandon Auxiliary Unit in World War II.

Walk on up the High Street.



5. Site of Paget Hall

On your right, where a car showroom now stands, was this community hall, funded and opened in 1908 by Almeric Paget. It hosted dances, theatre, and social events, with a reading room upstairs.

6. The Limes/Riverside Lodge

An 18th-century listed residence. In the 1930s, a swimming club used its garden, and the stretch of river upstream of the bridge was known as the 'Bathing Pool'.



7. Riverside Inns

Near the bridge are buildings that once served travellers crossing the river on the route between King's Lynn and London and pilgrims to Walsingham.

Connaught House (on your left, just before the bridge): formerly the Chequers pub, recorded as serving stagecoaches in 1780.



Ouse Hotel (viewed just downstream from the bridge): a former Temperance hotel that offered boat hire, teas and ice creams, and held regattas.



Bridge Hotel: once a private house, now continues the tradition of summer boat hire.

Ram Hotel: dating to at least the 16th century, originally beside the earlier river course before it was diverted when a bridge was built in the 17th century.

Brandon House Hotel: once an 18th-century private house; until 1895 the Norfolk-Suffolk boundary ran through this building and the Ram opposite.

8. Brandon Bridge

The town developed around this important crossing point, which evolved from a ford to a ferry (giving the town the name 'Brandon Ferry'), then to successive bridges. A wooden bridge was replaced in the 17th century by stone, and in 1953 by the current structure after deterioration and wartime addition of a temporary Bailey Bridge.

9. The Maltings/Site of old maltings

Upstream are the Maltings retirement apartments, built where industrial maltings once stood before the new bridge was built in 1953. From the 17th to 19th centuries this was a busy industrial area, with lighters carrying coal, corn, malt and other goods.



If going to the station, continue along High Street, cross the railway line and follow Mundford Road, crossing it to reach the station.

10. Brandon Station

Built between 1844 and 1845 and later extended, it features a Welsh slate roof, flint walls, and gault brick detailing. The signal box at the crossing was demolished in 2022.

Return along the High Street, pass the Ram, then turn right onto a riverside path for about one-third of a mile (half a kilometre) to a bridge over the weir.

11. Brandon Stauch

The 40-foot lock was built in 1995. A fish pass and canoe slide were added in 2021 as part of a heritage landscape scheme.

The River Little Ouse was navigable for centuries, carrying materials such as coal, corn, and building supplies in shallow-draft barges called lighters, often horse-drawn. Earlier river control used simple flash locks or staunches, where a gate was opened to allow boats through.

These heavy gates were lifted by chain using a large spoked wheel, operated by the boatman.



12. Brandon Lock Lake

The lake ahead marks the river's former course before the bridge replaced the staunch in the 1950s. It is now used for fishing.

Follow around the lake, through the car park and along the track.

13. Stauch Meadow

Archaeological excavations in the 1980s revealed an extensive Middle Saxon settlement dating from the 7th to 9th centuries. Discoveries included at least thirty-five timber buildings, a causeway, bridge, cemeteries, churches, and evidence of waterfront industries. Thousands of items were recovered, including coins, gold, silver, inscriptions and glass, indicating literacy and trade.

Pass the Social Club and Brandon Leisure Hub on your left, then continue up the access road to Church Road.

14. Brandon Remembrance Playing Fields

Land given to the town for sports and leisure and to honour those who served in World War II in 1948 by the Gentle and Green families. Since extended, it includes sports and social facilities, a bowling green, and allotments on what was once a cricket pitch.

15. St Peter's Church

The parish church, rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries, contains Arts and Crafts stained glass. The churchyard includes war memorials, including one recognising the important contribution of the Polish community.

Turn left along a tree-lined path.

16. The Avenue

Originally known as the 'Walks', this path was central to Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1887. It was extended and renamed Victoria Avenue ten years later.

Decorations and lanterns marked Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and the King's Coronation in 2023.



When the path forks just after a crossroads, our route takes the right hand fork, and continues up the older route of the Avenue until it reaches London Road.

17. Church Institute

Opened in 1909 for community use, it also served as reception centre for evacuees and an emergency centre during World War II. It continues to support the local community.

18. Flower Pot Inn

Now a private house, this former pub closed in the late 1990s and briefly became a youth centre.

19. The Avenue Cinema

The site of an early wooden cinema built in 1917 and replaced in 1935 by a modern Art Deco building with its name on a neon sign. Once highly popular, it later became a bingo hall before being demolished and replaced by flats.

20. The Orchard

A short walk off our route down Coulson Lane brings you to this wildlife area, managed by Brandon Town Council. The land was donated to the town by Margaret Gentle Harwood CBE around 2004.

Continue along London Road (along the end of the Avenue originally called 'White Walks') to the junction with the High Street.

21. British Workman and Workman's Hall

Opened in 1874 as a Temperance establishment providing affordable refreshments and reading materials, with a large hall upstairs for lectures and events.

Cross the road at the lights and return to Market Hill.

The top image on the back cover is:
From the Collection of the late Alan H. Faulkner.