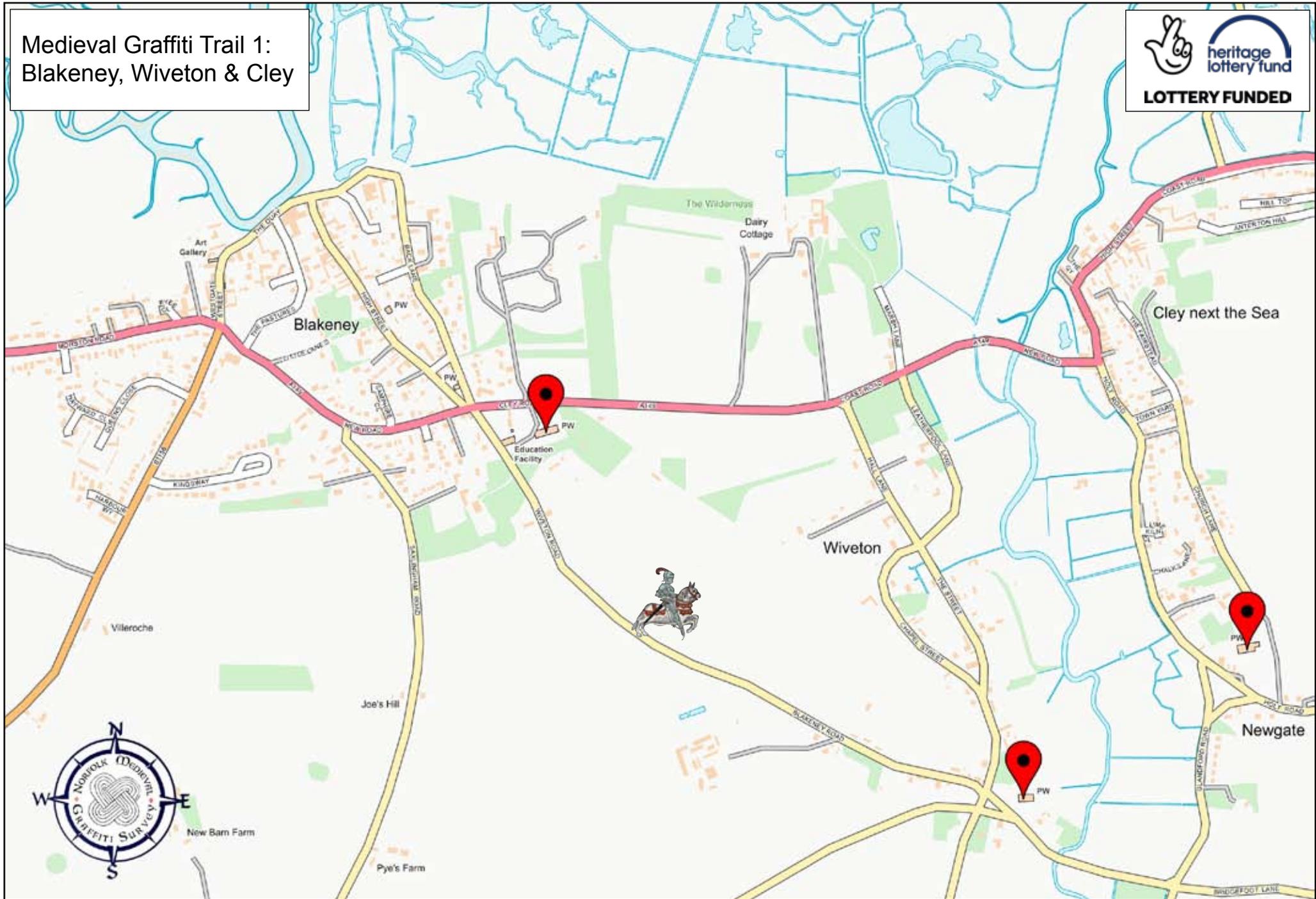
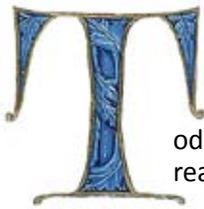


Medieval Graffiti Trail 1:
Blakeney, Wiveton & Cley





oday graffiti is mainly thought of as being anti-social vandalism, and certainly not something we would want to encourage on our ancient building. However, that really is a very modern attitude. Prior to about 1850 carving inscriptions into old buildings was seen as totally acceptable - by both visitors and locals alike.

Although a great many of these inscriptions are very like modern graffiti, being collections of names and dates, the further you back in history the more different they become. Many of the medieval and Tudor inscriptions found in these churches were created as acts of devotion. Quite literally prayers made solid in stone.

This ancient graffiti most usually takes the form of images, and early text is actually relatively rare. However, the inscriptions are a unique record of peoples beliefs - their hopes and fears - and represent a revealing insight into the spiritual lives of those people who long ago stood where you are standing today.



BLAKENEY

St Nicholas' church in Blakeney has a fine collection of graffiti inscriptions stretching right the way back into the Middle Ages. There are inscriptions all over the church, including medieval text and merchant's marks, the church is known today for its fine collection of medieval ship graffiti.

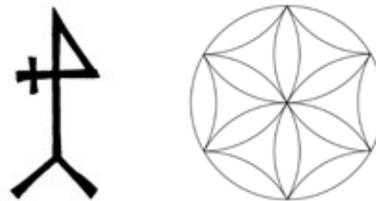
All the ship graffiti is located on the pillars of the south arcade, with the majority clustered on the most easterly pillar, which sits adjacent to the side altar.



WIVETON

An architectural gem, Wiveton church also contains a number of high quality graffiti inscriptions. On the chancel arch is a very fine example of post-medieval ship graffiti, whilst the pillar nearest the north door displays an intriguing text inscription - written in Greek!

In other parts of the church you can find deeply cut merchants marks, ancient Ritual Protection Marks (Witch Marks), and much more besides.



CLEY

St Margaret's church has one of the finest and most diverse collections of early graffiti found anywhere in North Norfolk. Here you can find 19th century builders accounts inscribed into the stones, alongside beautiful medieval ships, markings to ward off evil - and one of the earliest mappa mundi (map of the world) in England.

The ship graffiti mostly dates back to the late medieval period, when Cley was a busy port.



Equipment - to see all these early inscriptions you will need to take along a torch. All these churches are normally open to the public daily.

To learn more about medieval graffiti please visit our website - www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk - or follow us on twitter - @medievalg