



A Market For Our Times



A History of Norwich Provision Market
by Norwich Heritage Projects





Norwich Market Place, by Robert Dighton, 1799

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A History of Norwich Provision Market



The Market Place, Norwich, by David Hodgson, 1842



A Market For Our Times is written and published by Norwich Heritage Projects, a voluntary organisation which receives no funding and makes no profit. We aim to bring to life the rich heritage of this unique City of Norwich for our readers and visitors to our website at www.norwich-heritage.co.uk

A Market for Our Times

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Norwich Heritage Projects is a small group of enthusiasts who combine local historical resource and expertise with modern technology to take a fresh look at the rich and varied heritage of Norwich.

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The Market Place, Norwich, Lithograph by H Ninham from a drawing by J S Cotman, 1809

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Introduction

In 2009 we were asked by Gary Standley at BBC Voices if we could make use of recordings made in 2005 of the Market's stallholders. This was the catalyst for us to begin our research on Norwich Market.

Our first step was to contact LSI Architects who, with Michael Innes, were responsible for the 2005 renovation. Their material has enabled us to bring the story of the Market into the 21st century.

Over the last year we have pulled together a diverse range of information from numerous sources. Most of this was already in the public domain, however, we are especially pleased that we have been able to include people's personal recollections. We have also had access to many pictures and photographs which have brought the story of the Market alive. Indeed we are very grateful for all of the help that we have received from our many contributors.

Our aim has been to illustrate the important role that the Market has played in our City's history. We hope that we have done this in an entertaining as well as an informative manner.

Foreword

Michael Innes has had a 40-year career as a Norwich architect. His local landmark design work has included Castle Mall, South Norfolk House, the BUPA Hospital, the St George's Plain redevelopment of the old Colegate shoe factories and the refurbishment of Norwich Market.



Be in no doubt about the significance of Norwich Provisions Market, few of us who know and love Norwich are. These days because the cattle and other markets no longer feature in the City, two words for the title are usually enough.

It was back in 2004 when a radical overhaul was being planned for the Market that I was first moved to pen a rare letter to the press. In that letter I regretted the threatened loss of an image that was enjoyed not only by me but also by citizens, painters and many a visitor. Having made public my regret, I was really staggered by the Pandora's Box that I had opened. Letters sharing my sentiment came from all over the world including Canada, Australia, France and Germany. However, what was most significant to me, as a user of the Market, was the support the letter received from the market traders themselves.

I felt that early proposals to ease congestion risked losing the sense of fun, but most worrying of all was the loss of cover for the aisles. I believed that a daily market, that functioned in all weathers and traded every week of the year, needed covered aisles. Quite simply,

too much uncovered separation was not only impractical but would destroy intimacy. It was important not to build a Norwich Market for sentimental reasons but one that really could work.

At the same time as the Market refurbishment was being discussed, Jarrolds was carrying out its excellent renewal to stem shops migrating from the true centre to the newly opened Chapelfield on the edge. A healthy market would help retain vigour in the centre in the never quiet turf wars for City centre trade.

Well, of course all of that is now history and the reinvigorated market continues to trade on ... but now with hi-tech canopies that can be opened and shut, proper drains and no loss of colour!

When I was given the job of bringing the Market up to date, I read around a bit of the history. I am now forced to confess with a lack of thoroughness as revealed by reading this enjoyable, well researched and copiously illustrated account.

Michael Innes

A Market For The Future

It is almost one thousand years since the Normans established Norwich Market on the site it still occupies today. It has survived through the ages because it has constantly changed to meet the needs of those it serves.

Since the Norman Market was first established the world has changed dramatically. Against all the odds Norwich Market has survived plague, revolts, fires, wars, supermarkets and internet shopping! It is embedded as part of the Norwich culture and holds pride of place in what is for many one of the most impressive cityscapes in Britain.

The traders offer their customers a unique shopping experience. With its rapidly diversifying range of goods occupying over 200 stalls the Market can provide quality and choice beyond the range of the mass-market outlets.

The 2005 revamp has given the Market hygienic secure stalls with all modern amenities installed. How the traders make use of these facilities will, as always, vary as the Market continues to reinvent itself to ensure it continues to flourish in these new and challenging times, continuing its role as Hereward Cooke's "beating heart of Norwich City centre".

"I love the Market. It's a different world on the Market. I mean people come to Norwich to go to the Market. All the other shops they have in their own towns but they haven't got Norwich Market."

Brian Pickering 2010

Norwich Market at night, 2010



Acknowledgements

We are very grateful for all of the assistance we have received in gathering information for this book, which could not have been produced without the help received from the people and organisations listed below.

Firstly thanks must be given to the market traders, in particular : Mike Read, Malcolm Snelling, Anita Adcock, Brian Pickering, Joe Silvester and Alex Pond. Also thanks to Roy Bradford for recalling his time as Market Manager and Norwich City Council for their help.

Michael Innes, Rupert Kitchen and LSI Architects very kindly gave us access to the work they did on the 2005 renovation and we are grateful to Philip Martin and his colleagues at RG Carter Ltd who gave information on the Memorial Gardens.

As a result of both personal approaches and an appeal in the Eastern Evening News the following have very kindly supplied us with photographs and other memories: Susan Bacon, Ruby Baker, John Curson, Pauline Mallett, Robert Holmes, Doris Aspland, Bert Kirby, Vera Parr, Tony Denim and Philip Armes.

The book owes much to the images we have been able to reproduce. In this respect we must especially thank : Jonathan Plunkett for his permission to reproduce his father's photographs, The Norfolk Library and Information Service, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery), Robert Maguire, Norwich City Council and the Eastern Evening News (Archant). Details of all contributors can be found at the front of the book.

We have made much use of printed works, especially "The Great Market" by Ursula Priestley and "Medieval Norwich" by Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson. A list of publications can be found in the Bibliography.

A special thank you to Penny Clarke for her advice and guidance in preparing this book.

The book is part of a larger project on the Market where we have received much support from BBC Voices.

For more information see our website: www.norwich-market.org.uk

Finally we apologise if we have inadvertently failed to acknowledge any of our sources. Anyone who has not been contacted is invited to write to the publisher so that a proper acknowledgement can be included in subsequent editions of this book.

Bibliography

*Formal thanks are given to those whose publications we have used.
Although a number are out of print most can be accessed via the Norfolk
Library and Information Service.*

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www.middle-ages.org.uk Contains useful background information on the period.

www.georgeplunkett.co.uk A superb collection of 20th century photographs.

www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk View thousands of images of Norfolk's history.

www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk Contains the collections from Cultural Services operated by Norfolk County Council.

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Norwich Heritage Projects



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www.norwich-heritage.co.uk
www.norwich-market.org.uk
www.norwich-yards.co.uk

www.norfolkstainedglass.co.uk
www.norwich-churches.org

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The Lumber Market with Fish Market behind, c1900



A Market For Our Times tells the fascinating story of Norwich's Provision Market which despite all the odds trades today on the same site it occupied in the 11th century. Beautiful contemporary drawings, paintings and photographs clearly show the important role that the Market Place has played in the history of Norwich and the developments which have led to it lying at the centre of a magnificent historical "cityscape".

The book incorporates personal stories and intriguing facts to bring the Market to life not only for those who know it well but for others who wish they did.



A Market For Our Times is published by Norwich Heritage Projects which is a totally independent non-profit making organisation with the simple aim of encouraging an appreciation of the delights of our beautiful City of Norwich.

