

Hills and Holes

Fakenham Parish Church is built on a high plateau above the town and looks down on the lowlands and marshes of Hall Staithe once a western entrance to the town. It also looks down on the Market Place on a lower plateau which leads south down to the river Wensum.

Being on the edge of the Cromer Ridge, laid down in the last Ice Age, it has its share of hills. It also has a number of man-made excavations which supplied materials to the brickyards to repair the town after the fire of 1738 and then for the 19th century expansion.

A good case in point is Sandy Lane where there is a substantial sand pit, now built up. Highfield car park is constructed over a sandpit, in fact the land on which nearby Highfield House is built was called Sandpit Close. Close by at the junction of Queens Road with Highfield Road and Greenway Lane there is evidence of much excavation, in fact there was once a water-filled claypit there. As a result some of the roads were called Claypit Lane at various times.

There was an excavation in Holt Road, like Sandy Lane it now contains homes and gardens. There is also an excavation off Norwich Road on Fakenham Heath which may have had connections with the building of the Lynn & Fakenham railway towards Langor Bridge and beyond. Unusually this excavation continued across the highway which was later raised up.

There are more excavations but of little consequence, however, the 'Dell' by the cricket ground was once a school amphitheatre. It was originally dug as a Marl Pit providing marl to spread on the fields as fertilizer.

Outside the town on the southern edge of Hempton there are extensive excavations which provided materials to build the aerodromes at West Raynham, Massingham and Sculthorpe.