

Rectory Tales

Under the car park of a supermarket off Oak Street, Fakenham, lies one of the town's hidden historical treasures, a medieval Rectory.

This was built around the 13th century, indeed the first recorded Rector in the town was Wymerus in 1226 so he must have lived there. The building was situated within a ditch filled with water, it was built of wood on a flint and mortar base, it had a wooden floor which means that it was always wet in the Winter when the water level in the ditch was high and this would have been unpleasant and unhealthy! Excavations revealed a suggestion of a rebuild or possibly an extension, whatever the circumstances were, the building was abandoned around 1677. A map of 1650 shows a building close by with a weathervane on its roof, was this the new Rectory?

The splendid building that we see today was built circa 1800 and remained in use for over 150 years until it was taken over by the business next door.

During the second world war it narrowly escaped serious damage when the Salvation Army building on the opposite side of the street was destroyed by bombs, one fell in the Rectory Garden but did no damage. The gates at the top of the drive were damaged but the messenger boy who should have been standing there escaped death by being late for duty! At one time the rector was fined for showing a light from a window during the 'blackout'!

In recent years the rectory has moved other locations including a former Police Station!