

# Crooked Houses Trail Guide



## ANSWERS FOR THE GROWN-UPS!

**(Please note, there is a £10 deposit on the compass that is refunded when you return it)**

### Route details – The children have the compass co-ordinates on their trails

1. Start at the Guildhall front door and walk slightly right, across the Market Place to the market cross. Can you find out who built it, and when?

The Market Cross (originally for preaching) was built with money left in the will of William Jacob, one of Lavenham's richest cloth merchants, in 1501. In today's terms he would be considered a multi-millionaire!

2. Turn to your right and walk across to the wonky yellow building. What is it called? Find an unusual door knocker. What shape is it? Why don't you draw it?

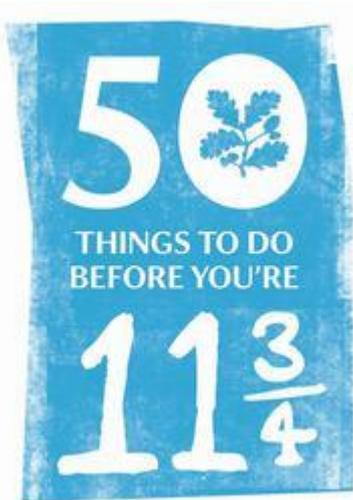
It's on the door to the right of Little Hall, and is in the shape of a clenched fist.

3. Continue walking down Barn Street until you come to a black-and-white timber building on your right, Molet House. Have a close look at the door to see if you can spot a five-pointed star in the doorway. Draw the doorway of this house. What famous nursery rhyme sings about a star? When you visit the Guildhall you can find out why this rhyme is very important to Lavenham.

The star is called a 'molet' and was the badge of the De Vere's, lords of the manor. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star was written by Jane Taylor who lived in Lavenham. You can learn all about her in the Guildhall.

4. Further down the hill is the Old Grammar School. This house has lots of decoration on its woodwork. Can you spot a funny 'pair' on the carving by the door? What are they?

It's a pair of naked legs and a bottom! Originally part of a religious frieze, it declared the family's allegiance to the Catholic faith. In its full glory it probably showed Adam & Eve.



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5. At the bottom of Barn Street, turn right into Water Street. Stand here for a minute and count how many different coloured houses you can see. Draw your favourite building and choose your favourite colour to paint it in.

Although there are now many different artificial colours that people use, in medieval times only natural lime (a dirty white) was available. In later centuries earth ochre pigments were added – browns, reds and yellows

6. Further up the street, on the other side, is De Vere House which has a very unusual doorway, with a tiny door inside a big one. What do you think the job of the two figures is? Draw your favourite figure and tell us what you think he is there for.

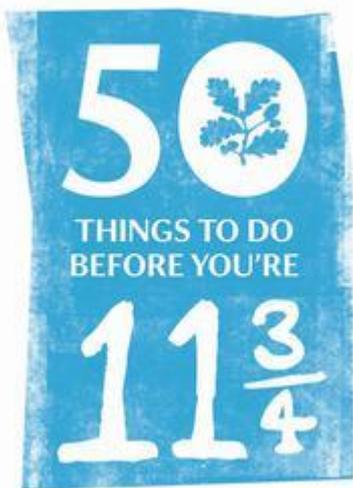
It is thought that the larger door was for pack animals carrying large loads, and the smaller for people. The figures are later additions to the doorway, and we think that they represent 'guards' of the De Vere family.

7. Further along there is a really good sweet shop – if you're lucky you might get to go inside! While you are outside, count how many different building materials you can see in the houses.

Look out for brick, timber, flint (stones), plaster, glass, clay tiles, slate tiles etc.

8. As you approach the corner look up at the shapes in the plasterwork. Draw what you can see. What do you think they are?

This is known as 'argetting', the art of making shapes in the plaster. These are the Fluer de Lys from the English Coat of Arms, and the Bishop's Mitre (hat) of Saint Blaize, who was the patron saint of Woolcombers due to the way he was killed for his Christianity by being torn to pieces with long sharp spikes - nasty! pub, the butcher's shop.....



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9. Turn right into the High Street. Above a shop window on a building across the road is a man – what do you think he's doing there? As you walk up High Street, look for all the signs that have animals on them – how many can you spot? Draw your favourite one.

The figure is thought to represent the place where the Horse Doctor lived – there are similar ones in other villages. Look out for the Wildlife Gallery, the Swan hotel, Hogg's china shop, the Greyhound pub, the butcher's shop.....

10. Also in the High Street is one of the wonkiest buildings in Lavenham – what is it called? Can you think of a nursery rhyme that might have been written about this house? Can you spot the 'Jaws of Hell' on the wonkiest building in Lavenham?

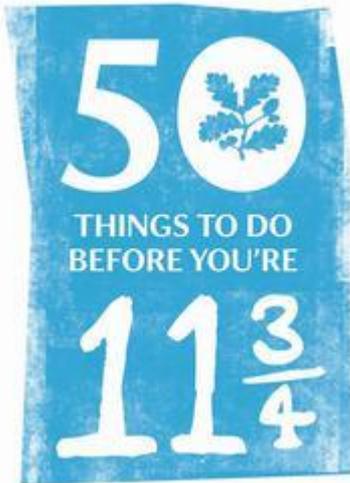
The Crooked House is one of Lavenham's most famous buildings, and brings to mind the rhyme 'There was a crooked man, who had a crooked house.....' The Jaws of Hell are on the letterbox.

11. Turn into Market Lane. Can you see the building on your left that looks as though it's going to fall down on you? Why not have your photograph taken holding the building up.

This house is called 'Cordwainers' which means leather worker. Like the Crooked House and many other Lavenham buildings, it has moved over the centuries but is now securely fixed with metal pins – it won't fall down on you!

12. Carry on heading back to The Guildhall and stop at the corner on the end. Look up to find the figure of a man and draw him – what do you think he is holding?

The man was once thought to be the Earl of Oxford, but we now think that he represents Hercules and holds a club to show his strength.



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13. What do you think the Market Place was used for? What shops that are still here might you have seen in the market place in the 16th century?

Lavenham market acquired its Royal charter in 1257. The only shop that might have been here is the bakers, although there would have been dozens of different stalls selling everything from pies, cloth, livestock, fish, pots and pans etc. Records of medieval markets show that they were dirty, noisy and very smelly places, with dung-heaps, animals being slaughtered, dogs chasing the animals, and people throwing nasty things like human excrement (poo!) out of windows. We're much nicer now, but watch out as you walk around!

**Why not collect a certificate from the Guildhall, and look around inside to find out lots more facts about Lavenham and its crooked houses. If you enjoy farming and trains, make sure you follow these exciting stories as well.**

- Trail: Walking, Grade: Easy, Distance: 1 mile (1.6 kms),
- Lavenham Guildhall Grid Ref.TL916493