

APPLETREE COTTAGE, THE STREET, THAKEHAM.



Although it has been extended and modified over the years, the oldest part of Appletree Cottage is a mediaeval timber framed single-storey open hall believed to date from the 15th century. Some of the original wattle and daub infill was discovered during the fitting of a replacement window where a draughty mullion window would have once been. The walls were at some point faced with brick, rendered on the outside and tile-hung. The roof, probably once thatched, now has reclaimed handmade clay pin tiles.

More usual in Welsh cottages, there is the remains of a crog loft, which would have been reached by a ladder and used for sleeping. Below there is a trapdoor which leads down via brick steps to a small cellar. In common with other old properties in The Street such as Cootes, there is an intriguing blocked-in arched doorway on the internal sandstone wall, which was reputedly the entrance of a system of tunnels which, it has been said, were used for smuggling. It has been suggested, but never proved, that this one leads to the White Lion's beer cellar next door. Unblocking it might perhaps be a worthwhile project for the future to find out if it's true!

At the far end of the cottage is a large inglenook fireplace with a massive oak bressummer beam and the remains of a bread oven and other niches. This probably dates from some time during the 17th century.

In the garden, near the old well which is now filled in, stands a gnarled, centuries-old mulberry tree, still intermittently bearing fruit.

Terry Eldridge
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Appletree Cottage is numbered **300** on the **1842 Tithe Map** below:

