

Justice in the District

“The village of Brundall is considered sufficiently honest (or small) not to need a Police Station. A solitary member of the local Police Force may occasionally be seen patrolling the village street but this is regarded by the villagers as a formality. The head-quarters of the police force in which Brundall is incorporated is at Blofield and all cases are worked from there. In the same way, Brundall is incorporated in the Blofield and Walsham Petty Sessions Division for all legal cases.”

Extract from: *Local Government Survey of the Parish of Brundall*
A school project written by Wanda Love aged 15 in 1946



The old police house in Yarmouth Road, Blofield now a private dwelling, 2020.
It stands next to the old courthouse.

The Court House was built in 1908 when Blofield was an important administrative centre for Blofield & Flegg Rural District Council. It opened following a change in the law that decreed that courts could no longer be held in licensed premises. Prior to this, *The Globe* public house in Blofield was the site of the Petty Sessions, held every alternate Monday (also known as Magistrate's Courts).

These periodic criminal courts were held around England and Wales until 1972 when, together with the Quarter Sessions (local county courts held four times a year), they were abolished by the Courts Act of 1971 and replaced by a single permanent Crown Court, like the one in Norwich.

Whereas Justices of the Peace had dealt summarily with minor offences in Petty Sessions the most serious cases were committed to the Assizes by the Quarter Sessions. The courthouse was sold in 1980 to Blofield Parish Council for use as a community centre.



The old courthouse, now a community centre, Yarmouth Road, Blofield. 2020.

The building has been grade II listed by Historic England.

“The courthouse is intact with all the rooms in their original positions and there have been virtually no alterations. The courtroom has high-quality panelling, and off it are 4 holding cells, which is unusual for a rural court house and not originally part of the design. They were however incorporated in the plan before construction began and unusually include separate sanitary facilities. Recent English Heritage research has shown that rural courthouses built separately from the more usual integral police station are rare and this is an intact survival. The dignified facade in Edwardian Baroque style is an important element in the street.”



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