Norfolk health, heritage and biodiversity walks

Walks in and around the Diss and Harleston area
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Sedge warbler, a summer migrant which breeds on Redgrave and Lopham Fen
Photograph by Terry Leonard
Introduction

**Contact with natural surroundings** offers a restorative environment which enables you to relax, unwind and recharge your batteries, helping to enhance your mood and reduce your stress levels.

Moderate physical activity such as regular walking in natural surroundings is a simple and enjoyable way of keeping fit. To gain maximum benefit, aim to walk at a pace where your heart beats a little faster, your breathing becomes a little heavier and you feel a little warmer.

Regular exercise can help to prevent major conditions, such as coronary heart disease, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, strokes, obesity, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, bowel cancer and back pain.

These circular walks have been designed to encourage exploration on foot of the local countryside enabling people to discover and enjoy the heritage of Norfolk, both natural and man made.

**South Norfolk and the Waveney Valley**

The Market towns of Diss and Harleston are close to the River Waveney, the boundary between the North Folk and the South Folk of East Anglia. The walks explore the Norfolk side of the Waveney Valley - an ancient landscape upon which modern agriculture has been imposed. You will see a complex network of irregular fields bounded by old hedgerows, remnants of ancient woods, winding lanes connecting villages and a scattered human population, hay meadows and pastures, deep man-made ditches, streams, rivers and wetlands all now set in modern arable land.

Anyone walking across a field in the rain will soon note the heavy soil sticking to your boots – don’t despair! Whilst thinking of the exercise benefits the extra effort provides ponder on the fact that this soil is the remains of a layer of heavy chalky clay soil deposited by glaciers following their retreat from the last ice age. The resulting deep fertile soil has been responsible for man’s long association with this area.

The pretty villages around this border area are full of historic buildings. The names of hamlets indicate that they originated around commons or greens, for example Brewers Green or Fair Green, where a community grew up around the edges of a common. Although these hamlets expanded from the late 18th century many of the fascinating and picturesque buildings are earlier in origin. There are also a large number of medieval moats, with many moated farmsteads proving to be ancient timber-framed buildings.

The first few walks start in Diss, a Cittaslow town, one of two county towns chosen for the Italian Cittaslow scheme where the local distinctiveness is acknowledged and maintained and quality of life is enhanced. A visit to the peaceful wildlife reserve and the source of the River Waveney at Redgrave and Lopham Fen sets the scene for the rest of the walks.

The routes take walkers along the beautiful Waveney Valley and nearby South Norfolk countryside passing many churches; Norfolk has the greatest concentration of medieval churches in the world and some of these internationally important buildings still contain superb examples of medieval craftsmanship and works of art. The churchyard habitat is also of importance to biodiversity in the county and many churches belong to the Churchyard Conservation Scheme run by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to help to consider the needs of wildlife in churchyards.

By repeatedly walking at different times of the year you will get to know the routes and appreciate the importance of agriculture in our modern rural landscape. You can enjoy the natural rhythm of the seasons, look forward to the first primrose or swallow, or enjoy an early morning frosty walk. Or you can appreciate and be inspired to find out more about the heritage of South Norfolk – and keep fit at the same time.
Walk information

Information about the walks include details such as the start point, distances, path surfaces, gradients and facilities available. The following symbols will help you to decide if the walk is suitable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start point</th>
<th>The start of the walk with Ordnance Survey grid references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Nearest parking; not always the same as the walk start point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Distance of the walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Gradient, condition underfoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable for buggies/wheelchairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle could be grazing in some meadows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The route could contain muddy/uneven sections and stout shoes or boots are recommended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets nearby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public house nearby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café nearby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have not exercised for a while, it is better to start with the shorter routes before moving on to the more challenging ones.

Getting around

Many of the walks start close to a bus stop, most served by the Anglian Coaches Beccles to Diss service 580 so why not leave the car behind?

For all local public transport details, contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or visit www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk.

Tread lightly and safely

Please respect natural habitats as you walk; stay on the public footpaths and take any litter home. Routes may pass through areas grazed by cattle, sheep or horses, close to free range hens or near pheasant release sites and wildlife areas sensitive to disturbance; please keep dogs on a lead and shut gates behind you. According to the season you may encounter wet and muddy conditions or long vegetation, so dress accordingly.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Diss and Harleston Town Councils and the local parish councils, South Norfolk District Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Upper Waveney Valley Project and also to Active Norfolk’s Fit Together walking scheme for their input and support in the development of these walks.

If you are inspired by the walks to find out more about the history of the area, why not visit the Diss or Harleston town museums or the Burston Strike School? To find out more online about the biodiversity of Norfolk visit www.norfolkbiodiversity.org and for local heritage information visit the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk or the Norfolk Online Access to Heritage website on www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk.

If you walk all the routes in this book you will have completed approximately 45 miles, why not go on to tackle a long distance footpath? Angles Way is a 77 mile long distance footpath from Knettishall Heath Country Park to Great Yarmouth following the River Waveney, for more information contact Norfolk County Council Countryside Team on 01603 222769. Or for more information on the 38 mile long Boudica’s Way from Diss to Norwich roughly parallel to the old Roman Pye road, contact South Norfolk District Council on 01508 533684.
Diss town  
starter walk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start point</th>
<th>The Pavilion in The Park, adjacent to Diss Mere Grid reference TM115797</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Pay &amp; display car park, Park Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>2.1 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Moderate gradient, 100% firm surface</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Walk instructions

From the pavilion; pass The Mere on your left and turn left into Mere Street to walk up to the town. Walk through the Market Place, keep left at the museum to walk up Market Hill and continue to the junction.

Go over the pedestrian crossing beside the crossroads to Roydon Road. Pass Diss Auction Rooms and turn first right into Louie’s Lane.

Just before reaching the water towers turn right to walk along the pathway between the houses (opposite Orchard Grove). Continue on the path in the same direction until reaching Shelfanger Road, passing a play area on the right.

Turn left at Shelfanger Road and then right into Sunnyside.

At the end turn right onto Mount Street and walk down the hill using the raised pavement beside the road; cross the road at the seat (just after the raised pavement finishes) and continue down the hill.

Turn left to walk through the churchyard and then left at the end onto Church Street. Shortly after passing the library and job centre turn right into The Entry.

On reaching Rectory Meadow turn left to walk clockwise around three sides of the meadow. Exit the meadow via the gap in the hedge turning left again onto The Entry. At the end, turn right onto the main A1066 and shortly afterwards right again onto Mere Street. Turn left at The Mere and return to the start point.

- We are recommended to walk 10,000 steps every day; this walk of just over two miles takes approximately 4,400 steps – a daily walk such as this can help towards that goal!
- A visit to Diss on a Friday will find the town full of the hustle and bustle of a modern market day carrying on the tradition of street markets - there has been a market in the centre of Diss for well over 500 years. Look up to appreciate some of the many historic buildings surrounding the market place, for example the fine 16th century timber framed Dolphin House (above).

- The Mere is one of the deepest inland lakes in the country with the water level maintained by a number of underground springs. Hidden within the layers of mud are individual pollen grains dating back to the prehistoric period.
Get started with a short town walk through green spaces surrounded by historic streets and buildings.

- In 1848 a public park was created from an arable field which became known as Diss Arboretum, now called Park Field; 19th century maps show the park with paths running through mature trees. The park remained in private ownership until 1960 when it was transferred to the Town Council.
- The cricket ground known as Rectory Meadow was originally glebe land for the old rectory, now hidden by trees, and the adjacent school playing field was all part of the same meadow at one time. During World War Two Nissen huts were built on the south side where Italian prisoners of war were interned.
Diss via Brewers Green

Start point  The Pavilion in The Park, adjacent to Diss Mere
Grid reference TM115797

Parking  Pay & display car park, Park Road
Distance  3.7 miles
Details  Moderate gradient, 40% soft

Walk instructions

Cross The Park to leave via the top right exit and turn right onto Denmark Street. Cross at the zebra crossing then turn immediately left into Roydon Road.

Shortly after passing Cobbold Street (note the interesting link with Queen Elizabeth I) turn right into Brewers Green Lane as the road bends to the left. Pass Factory Lane and keep right at the next junction in Brewers Green.

Turn right onto a public footpath marked with a wooden fingerpost pointing along the concrete track towards the end of the green; walk under the height barrier, around the metal gate and follow the path along the track.

Turn right over the bank near the end to walk through a small area of woodland, taking the right fork in the woodland path. Cross a footbridge at the end and continue in the same direction initially crossing a field and then beside a hedge on the left. Climb the stile near the end and continue to the road.

Cross Louie’s Lane and Shelfanger Road onto another public footpath opposite. After passing the sports field on the left continue ahead along the edge of the field keeping the ditch on your right.

Cross The Heywood road and at the end continue ahead onto Burston Road. Walk along the right hand side of the road before turning right at the

junction onto a public footpath beside the wooden fingerpost and continue until reaching Walcot Road.

Turn right onto Walcot Road, then left at the T-junction onto Mount Street. Cross immediately to use the raised pavement to walk on the right hand side of the road down the hill.

Continue down the hill passing the church and museum, walking along The Market Place and Mere Street before turning right to walk around The Mere to the start point.

● When walking down Mount Street admire the raised walkway and imagine the genteel folk of Diss keeping their feet dry by walking above the horse or ox and cart – rush hour traffic of the day.
● For other historic walks in the town visit the Tourist Information Centre.
This walk has a good mixture of urban and country roads and footpaths showing the close link between farming and the town.

- **Lesser celandine**

- Look out for glimpses of the remains of medieval moats throughout the area – there is one in Brewers Green. Because of the heavy clay soil moats were relatively easy to construct and maintain in this area. They fulfilled a vital social function in proclaiming wealth and status; many local farmhouses are surrounded by a moat. These moats now often provide a home to rare great crested newts whilst unusual molluscs live in the undisturbed sediments at the bottom.

- Brewers Green is one of around 1,300 County Wildlife Sites in Norfolk. County Wildlife Sites support a wide range of biodiversity including many habitats and species identified by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Brewers Green common is divided into three sections by minor roads and consists of open grassland with a couple of ponds and areas of scrub.
Start point  The Pavilion in The Park, adjacent to Diss Mere
Grid reference TM115797
Parking  Pay & display car park, Park Road
Distance  3.6 miles
Details  Moderate gradient, 40% soft

Walk instructions

Cross The Park to exit via the top right corner. Turn left into Denmark Street, walk down the hill and cross the road. Cross the A1066 beside the roundabout and then into Denmark Street opposite.

Turn right at the Angel Cafe and walk to the far end of Fair Green, either on the green or the track beside it. At the end continue ahead along Tottington Lane.

Pass all the houses and ignore all tracks until the road bends sharp right at a junction, shortly before reaching the A1066. At this point turn left off the road just before the Roydon Fen cul-de-sac sign to walk into the fen; there is an information panel at the entrance.

Dry walk avoiding the wet fen; after reading the information panel return to the Roydon Fen cul-de-sac sign and continue along the dirt track keeping the houses on your right. Just after house numbers 17/18 turn right onto the grassy footpath (there is a wooden fingerpost on the left).

Wet walk

Roydon Fen is wet year round but worth it in wellies!

To walk through the fen: go through the wooden barriers and follow the permissive path clockwise around the fen, initially on the long, narrow boardwalk through the fen. The path continues through wet woodland before reaching drier ground (just after the end of the boardwalk is a path to the right; this leads to a platform for more open fen views, pictured left). At the top corner of the wood bear right onto Angles Way and follow the well walked path through the wood (ignore the stile on your left at this point bringing walkers from Angles Way into the fen). At the end of the wood on emerging onto the track after passing Home Lea turn left onto a public footpath before the cottages.

For both walks: follow the path up the hill, over a short steep mound, beside a small strip of woodland and continue to the main road.

At the A1066 turn right and cross immediately. Turn left into Tudor Avenue and take the first right turn into Crick’s Walk. Follow this to the end, continuing along the pathway at the end which emerges into Brewers Green beside Manor Farm.

Pass a pond on the right and on reaching the road turn left then immediately right along the road through Brewers Green. Keep right at next junction along Brewers Green Lane signposted to Diss. Continue ahead at the T-junction onto Roydon Road.

Turn right at the next T-junction. Cross at the zebra crossing and walk down Denmark Street, returning through the gates to The Park and the start.
A lovely walk through Roydon showing the closeness of Roydon Fen to the town centre. The fen is a natural spring fed area which is wet year round.

- Roydon Fen is a County Wildlife Site managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The attractive valley fen is one of the few remaining quality examples of this sort of habitat in the Waveney Valley; it relies on a supply of pure spring water from the underlying chalk rock for its unique biodiversity. It is a mosaic of woodland and scrub with the fen area in the middle of the site dominated by great fen sedge.
- A fair has been held on Fair Green for 800 years; look for the inscribed stone pillar near the car park celebrating this. The green is surrounded by an attractive mix of timber framed, clay lump and brick-built houses dating from the 16th century through to the present day; a good example of how settlements evolved around a common green.
Frenze Beck is a small wetland on the edge of Diss. Until 2003 it was a degraded dried out grazing marsh, but the creation of a new reedbed now represents a superb habitat for some of South Norfolk’s most important species. As this site matures it will enhance the wildlife areas already available along the Waveney Valley. Mammals such as water voles, water shrews and even otters and birds such as the bearded tit (pictured left), Savi’s warbler and marsh harrier rely on reed beds and associated fens to survive. This site is managed by South Norfolk District Council.

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**Walk instructions**

**No map needed for this small wildlife reserve...**

Simply go through the gates and turn left onto the boardwalk, pausing at the bird hide screens to look out over the reedbed and beck, before returning the same way.

For an additional circular meadow walk, follow the left fork in the boardwalk, go through the gate and walk clockwise around the field which is sometimes grazed by horses; there is a pond dipping platform by the pond in the middle of the field allowing a closer look at pond life.

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The narrow belt of trees beyond the beck forms another County Wildlife Site, although this one has no public access. A walk around the meadow gives a chance for a closer look at the large mature alder trees hanging over the far side of the stream.

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Very short wheelchair accessible walk on a boardwalk overlooking the reedbeds of this recently improved wetland.

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- **Frenze Beck car park, Sawmills Road, Diss**
- Grid reference TM131792
- **Start point**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Boardwalk only</th>
<th>For meadow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Parking**

- Frenze Beck car park, Sawmills Road, Diss

**Distance**

- Boardwalk only .3 of a mile, circular walk .9 of a mile
Walk 5

Redgrave and Lopham Fen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start point</th>
<th>Suffolk Wildlife Trust visitor centre, Redgrave and Lopham Fen, Low Common Road, South Lopham Grid reference TM052802</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Free car park at visitor centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Flat, 100% soft (weekends and bank holidays only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit the source of the River Waveney for a beautiful fen walk in an oasis of calm and tranquillity just five miles from the hustle and bustle of Diss.

Walk instructions

No map needed for these waymarked trails... There are five waymarked trails to enjoy around this Suffolk Wildlife Trust owned fen; either download details from: www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk or pick up the trail leaflets from the trail guides leaflet dispenser at the fen.

The trails are:

1. Family trail – a short walk with an accompanying activity sheet.
2. Spider trail – another short route through Middle Fen past the fen raft spider pools and viewing platforms.
3. Woodland trail – a trail through the woodland of Redgrave Fen and alongside the River Waveney.
4. Great Fen woodland trail – a longer trail with panoramic views across Great Fen.
5. Waveney trail – River walk beside the Waveney.

Wheelchairs may be pushed in dry conditions over the grass path to a boardwalk to a fen viewing platform (250m from centre). The longer spider trail can be used by a powered wheelchair or scooter in summer.

Redgrave and Lopham Fen is the largest remaining river valley fen in England. Together with the adjoining land, its area extends to over 400 acres and as one of the most important wetlands in Europe it has international protection. The underlying acid and alkaline geology has resulted in characteristic wildlife including many species now rare in Britain. This unique landscape of spring-fed sedge beds, rush and grass meadows, wet and dry heath, woodland and aquatic pools provides a rich wildlife environment.

Historically local people dug peat for fuel, harvested reed and sedge for thatching and grazed the drier margins with cattle. With the demise of these activities, together with post-war drainage and water abstraction, the fen began to dry out and degrade. Suffolk Wildlife Trust’s restoration project has included the reinstatement of traditional management, grazing with a herd of resilient Polish konik ponies, cattle and sheep, peat scraping to expose fresh wet peat and the re-siting of a public water abstraction borehole. This has resulted in the re-wetting of the fen and the gradual return of its wonderful wildlife. The fen raft spider (pictured) might be seen from one of the spider pool viewing platforms.

• Yellow flag iris

• Fen raft spider

Photograph by Martin Smith
Walk

Scole to Diss via Angles Way

| Start point | Scole; Diss Road garage bus stop  
Grid reference TM148788 |
| Parking | Diss; Pay & display car park, Park Road  
Grid reference TM115796 |
| Please note | this is not a circular walk; catch a bus from  
Park Road Bus Station in Diss to Scole (the Diss Road garage bus stop). Anglian Coaches 580 or 584 service |
| Distance | 4.4 miles |
| Details | Minor gradient, 35% soft |

Walk instructions

From the bus stop outside the garage; walk into Scole turning left onto The Street. Pass Scole Inn, St Andrew’s Church and the school and continue up the hill on the pavement on the right hand side of the road.

Turn left onto Scole Common Road and cross the A140 Scole Bypass on the bridge – you are now on Angles Way.

Pass the ‘Quiet Lanes’ sign and as the road bears sharp right in Scole Common turn left at the Angles Way public footpath fingerpost.

Walk through a narrow belt of trees, cross the ditch on a bridge and then follow the field edge footpath – initially keeping the hedge on the right and then after a second ditch continue with the hedge on the left.

Turn right at the footpath junction onto Miller’s lane, a section of dismantled railway. Turn left at the road junction, pass Diss Business Centre and then turn right onto the lane to Frenze Hall.

Immediately after passing Frenze Hall on your left and St Andrew’s Church on your right, turn right at the ‘Restricted Byway Angles Way’ sign and then left onto a path between the trees to a stream. Cross the bridge and bear left and continue on the track to Sandy Lane.

Turn right at Sandy Lane, walk under the railway line and continue along Frenze Hall Lane to Diss.

Turn left at the Market Place and walk down the hill to Diss Mere.

Walk around the Mere and turn left at the end; cross the A1066 to the bus station.

- Have a close look at the hedges along the way, particularly for hazel. In early spring look for the male hazel catkins (pictured); pale yellow and up to 5cm long which pollinate the female buds (or stigma) via the wind. The hazel nuts are distributed by small rodents, squirrels and woodpeckers. Most of the nuts are eaten by these dispersers, but some of those which are hoarded for winter germinate and grow the following spring. A search on the ground around the base of hazels in the autumn should find the remains of shells. If the shell is split in two halves a squirrel has been trying to get the kernel inside, whereas wood mice will gnaw a hole through the shell.
- The walk takes you along Millers Lane, the route of the Scole Railway, built in 1850 but closed in 1885. It was the brainchild of William Betts, Lord of the Manor of Frenze and was built to allow him to take fresh farm produce direct to London.
There was a Roman settlement at Scole at the point where the road fords the River Waveney. This Roman road was the main road between Camulodunum (Colchester) and Venta Icenorum (Caistor St Edmund). This became the medieval ‘Pye Road’ and is now the modern A140. Scole continued to be an important junction situated halfway between Norwich and Ipswich and on the junction with the road between Bury St Edmunds and Great Yarmouth. The Scole Inn (pictured) was built in 1655 and occupied a prominent position on the region’s premier land transport routes.

St Andrew’s Church in Scole was subject to an arson attack in 1963; the restoration in 1964 provided the church with a beautiful stained glass east window by Patrick Reyntiens who also created the famous window at Coventry Cathedral. The delightful redundant St Andrew’s Church in Frenze is possibly the smallest church in Norfolk.
## Walk 7

### Billingford

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start point</th>
<th>Billingford Windmill, Billingford Grid reference TM165786</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Lay-by on the A143, adjacent to The Horseshoes Public House, Billingford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>3.8 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Moderate gradient, 45% soft</td>
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</table>

### Walk instructions

Start by walking to have a look at Billingford Mill on Low Road, behind the pub. From the mill, return to the A143, turn right and walk to the end of the pavement on the right hand side of the road.

Cross the road to the opposite tarmac track signposted to the church and walk up the hill towards St Leonard’s Church. Pass the church on your left and continue to the end of the track.

Turn right at the end opposite Billingford Hall Farm onto a restricted byway; you are now on Angles Way. At the end of this track turn left onto Kiln Lane (leaving Angles Way).

Turn left at the next junction into Upper Street. Pass Common Farm on your right and as the track bears sharp left continue ahead onto the public footpath following the direction of the wooden fingerpost.

Walk on the field edge path around the fields keeping the hedges and ditches on your left and follow the waymarker posts directing you towards Brick Kiln Farm. Just before the house turn left to cross the ditch on a narrow bridge; walk along the narrow field edge path keeping the garden hedge on your right. At the end of the hedge bear right to walk up to the road.

Turn left at the road opposite Brick Kiln Cottage then left again onto another field edge footpath (the opposite side of the same field). Pass Brick Yard Plantation on your left, walk down the hill on the field edge footpath, keep the hedge on your right, cross a footbridge and continue to the road.

Turn left at Norgate Lane.

To visit the remains of St Mary’s Church tower turn right at the second footpath sign (another section of Angles Way) and walk up to the remains for 500 metres. Return the same way.

At the end of Norgate Lane cross the A143 to the start point.

- The partially rendered flint walls of St Leonard’s Church and aged red tile roof give it an ancient charm; it is best seen in the height of summer when the surrounding corn fields contrast stunningly with the roof.
- Thorpe Parva Hall and the tower of St Mary’s Church are the only surviving buildings of Thorpe Parva, a settlement deserted by 1739. The church was demolished around 1540; part of the round tower of the church survives and can be seen from the path.
A pleasant farmland walk from Billingford Mill with fine views across the Waveney Valley.

- Billingford Mill is a five storey red brick tower corn mill built in 1860 on the site of an earlier postmill which was destroyed in a gale. It was the last mill in Norfolk to grind corn by wind power, closing in 1956. Following restoration by the Norfolk Windmills Trust it is operational once again. For details on opening times please ring the technical advisor to the Trust on 01603 222705.
- Billingford Common is another County Wildlife Site with public access. The common is largely unmanaged damp grassland with one of the key features being the presence of the large-flowered hemp-nettle which is scarce in Norfolk.
Walk instructions

Start with your back to the church, turn left and walk to the Market Place. Turn left at the end onto The Thoroughfare, cross the road and turn first right into Recreation Walk. Turn right in the recreation ground and leave via the steps in the corner (opposite the library).

Cross Swan Lane into Weavers Croft opposite and follow this to the T-junction at the end. Turn left, cross the road into Bunn’s Lane opposite.

At the end of Bunn’s Lane turn right and walk down the hill.

At the junction, if you wish to visit St Margaret’s Church continue ahead over the bridge and straight up the road to the church ahead via the lychgate; return the same way then turn second left into The Street.

If you don’t wish to visit the church turn first right into The Street.

At the end of the pavement turn right onto the public footpath just after passing The Rectory. Ignore the track on the left but keep right on the grass path up the steep hill, go around the corner and continue with the hedge on your right. Cross the dismantled railway line, then the bridge over the ditch and continue beside another field up the hill to Bunn’s Lane.

Turn left onto Bunn’s Lane and at the end cross the road into Weavers Croft. Pass Herolf Way and Pilgrim’s Way and bear left as the road bends to the right onto the tarmac pathway (between houses numbers 11 and 13). Follow this pathway to the end.

Turn right at the end onto Station Road and right again into Broad Street. Cross the road and return to the church start point.

Although it is possible that the name Harleston derives from the Old English name Heoruwulf, a local legend states the name is actually derived from Harold’s Stone, a roughly rectangular rock in a pedestrian walkway between The Thoroughfare and Church Street. It is said that this is the stone on which Harold stood in 1066 to billet his army. Three weeks later he was killed at the Battle of Hastings.

Harleston with Redenhall has a well preserved historic centre with over 130 listed buildings. For example, The Swan Hotel is a 16th or 17th century timber framed inn with a carriage arch through the middle, now disguised with an 18th century brick skin. Visit Harleston museum in King Georges Hall to find out more about the town.
Quiet rural walk out of the town; at one point no houses or roads are visible, just fields, hedges and lots of sky!

- Look out for house sparrows in Harleston; noisy, gregarious and cheerful opportunists. Sparrow populations have fluctuated greatly over the centuries, with a gradual decline in the last 100 years. One theory is that a change from horse drawn vehicles caused a major drop in the population in cities due to a removal of an important food source – the cereal fed to horses. In towns lack of food and nesting sites continue to cause decline and it is now listed as a species of high conservation concern.

Sparrow
Photograph by C Britcher
Walk instructions

With your back to the church, turn right along Broad Street. Keep right and walk along Redenhall Road, crossing to use the pavement on the left. Follow Redenhall Road out of Harleston towards Redenhall, pass the poplar trees and turn left down the hill into Lushbush.

Turn left at the T-junction, cross the bridge over the stream and turn right on the public footpath up the hill. Walk up this field edge path keeping the trees on your right.

Turn right on reaching the road and after a short distance turn left onto the public footpath just after and adjacent to the drive to a house.

Walk on this wide grass field margin towards and then beside Gawdyhall Wood. After a short distance turn right at the way marker post to cross the field over the hill down to the road, emerging opposite the junction.

Turn right at the road (Church Lane). Look out for the small wooden memorial to a World War One plane crash on the right just before Church Lane Cottages. Turn first right and follow the road over the hill, continuing ahead at the crossroads.

Bear left at the junction and walk up Station Hill and continue along Station Road.

Turn right at the end, cross where possible and return to the start point.

Dog roses scramble through the hedgerows

The walk passes close to Gawdyhall Big Wood, an undisturbed Site of Special Scientific Interest. Whilst there is no public access, the footpath is adjacent to it for a short distance and the large wood is visible from many country roads all around. Please keep dogs on leads to avoid disturbance to wildlife. Have a look on the Gawdyhall Estate website www.gawdyhallestates.co.uk, not just for the history of Gawdyhall, but also for interesting agricultural information - helpful in recognizing crops and for understanding modern farming practices.
This farmland walk is particularly enjoyable during the drier summer months.

- In 1813 Mary Turrel was buried in Lushbush having poisoned herself during investigations into the murder of an infant found in a pond. It is said that ‘A vast concourse of people assembled to watch the stake being driven through her heart’, and that this stake then grew into Lush’s Bush, which gives the area its name (Lushbush pictured above).

- When walking along Church Lane look out for a small wooden memorial just before Church Lane Cottages marking the site of a World War One plane crash. On the 20th of July 1917 J. Philips, a Canadian pilot, was killed here.
Harleston via Redenhall

Start point  St John the Baptist, Church Street, Harleston
Grid reference TM246833

Parking  Car park behind church
Distance  4 miles
Details  Steep gradients, 25% soft

Walk instructions

From the church; turn right and walk along Broad Street then Redenhall Road and continue to the roundabout for approximately one mile.

Cross the roundabout and walk up to Redenhall Church. After visiting the church and looking at the wildlife in the churchyard, return to the road and continue over the brow of the hill.

Turn right into Cook’s Lane. Continue along Cook’s Lane turning left at the junction to walk down Cuckoo Lane, a very steep hill. Turn right at the T-junction onto Low Road.

Turn right at the public footpath fingerpost just after Freston Farm and Freston House and walk up the steep hill (part of Angles Way).

At the junction of footpaths at the brow of the hill continue ahead (by turning right then immediately left at the second waymarker post) and keep the ditch on your left. Just before a small wood on your left, turn right to walk down to the road.

Turn left into Green Lane, cross the A143 at the crossing point and continue as Green Lane becomes Jay’s Green.

As the road bears sharp right, continue ahead onto Straight Lane, turning left at the end to return to the start point at the church.

The imposing church in Redenhall is St Mary’s Church and is the original parish church of Redenhall with Harleston. It has been suggested that a Saxon minster stood on the site of the present church. St Mary’s was begun in the 1460s and largely paid for by one of the richest families in East Anglia, the De la Poles. Unusually the main body of the church lies across the parish boundary with Wortwell, with only part of the tower actually situated in Redenhall parish.

Many older churchyards are remnants of ancient meadows that were used for hay or grazing animals long before the church was built and are an important relic of ancient grassland habitats. The variety of stone used in church walls and gravestones also represents a valuable habitat, often supporting a rich lichen, moss and fern flora - particularly important for the survival of some species in Norfolk where stone walls and natural stone outcrops are relatively scarce. Churchyards can provide a valuable, largely undisturbed habitat for species such as butterflies, slow worms, lizards and bats. Other habitats of value include veteran trees, hedges and their associated ‘woodland edge’ flora.
Another pleasant hilly walk with fine views over the Waveney Valley.

Speckled wood butterfly in a pool of sunlight in the shady churchyard.
Burston
(long option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start point</th>
<th>Burston Strike School, Church Green, Diss Road, Burston Grid reference TM136831</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Burston Strike School car park (small car park beside school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Minor gradients, 35% soft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Walk instructions

From the school museum, turn left onto Diss Road and then first left into Mill Road (beware of lorries passing on this short section).

Turn left and climb the stile onto a public footpath opposite the 30mph sign. Walk down the hill on the wide grassy path between the orchard and vineyard and go through the gate at the bottom. Turn right, then left at the waymark at the next corner of the field, ignoring any paths leading off to the right into another orchard. Please keep dogs on leads when walking beside the orchards.

Climb another stile and turn left into a track (Green Lane). After a short distance, turn right into a field. Keep the hedge on your right and when this finishes continue in the same direction up to the fingerpost on the road (the line of the public footpath through this field is slightly to the left after the hedge finishes).

Turn right at the road and walk along Back Lane to the end. Turn right at the T-junction onto Hall Road; this busier road is signposted to Burston and Dickleburgh.

At the next junction pass Long Lane and turn immediately left into Mill Green, note the sign on the left stating that “The Higdon’s lived here until Tom died in 1939”. This is Bridge Road; the road sign is not at the junction but further along the road.

Turn right just before Grove Farm to enter a field via a wide track between wooden railings and follow the public footpath across the field. At the junction of footpaths just after the halfway point in the field, turn left to walk to the edge of the field. Go through the gap in the hedge beside the waymarker post and continue in the same direction across the meadow to Gissing Road.

Alternatively; it is easier in the winter to follow the public footpath around the edge of the field; to do this, pass the first entrance to the field and instead turn right just before the 40mph sign at the wooden fingerpost. Cross a footbridge and walk along a field edge footpath keeping the hedge on your left. At the waymark post turn left to go through the gap in the hedge and cross the meadow to Gissing Road.

Turn right and follow Gissing Road to the end, turn right at the T-junction and return to the start.

- Look out for the Roadside Nature Reserve on Back Lane; this grass verge is part of a scheme run by Norfolk County Council. In the past local people would use the verges for grazing and to crop hay to feed their animals. These practices produced a rich and biodiverse grassland that still exists on these verges.

- The Quiet Lanes initiative is based on a network of minor roads linking towns and villages with connections to footpaths and bridleways. Primroses (pictured) thrive in the grass verges.
Walk 11 (yellow route) First of two options in Burston, this longer route uses the network of ‘quiet lanes’.

Walk 12 (white route) Enjoy a shorter route through orchards and summer grazed meadows.

- St Mary’s Church was recorded as having a round tower with an octagonal top in the 18th century, but the tower fell in 1753 and the rest of the church was restored with no tower in 1853. The church contains a rare painted coat of arms of King James I.
- Burston is the unlikely location for the longest strike in history, where a 25 year long strike started in 1914 when teachers were dismissed by the education authorities. Burston Strike School was built in 1917 by public subscription allowing the teachers to continue to teach local children. Visit the school, now a museum, to find out about this fascinating story and to see the front wall composed of stones with subscribers’ names inscribed on them including that of Leo Tolstoy. Visitors are welcome to join in the annual rally held on the first Sunday in September.
Walk 12

Burston (short option)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start point</th>
<th>As for Walk 11</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>As for Walk 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Details</td>
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</table>

Walk instructions

From the museum, turn right onto Diss Road and then left into Market Lane. Shortly after the tarmac lane becomes a rough dirt track continue straight ahead at the public footpath finger post, leaving the track as it bends to the right. Walk on the grass path between two fields.

Turn left on reaching the hedge. Keep the hedge on your left and after a few metres turn right at the waymark post to walk downhill, again with a hedge on your left. Cross the footbridge over a ditch, walk adjacent to woodland on your right and cross a second footbridge.

Turn left and keeping the hedge on your left continue to Rectory Road (ignoring another field footpath going off to the right). Turn left at Rectory Road then immediately right onto another public footpath.

Turn left at the end of the lane to walk along the narrow path. Climb the stile into the meadow. Keep the hedge on your right and exit at the corner. Bear left through the second field; keeping the pond on your right walk to the gate in the far corner close to the overhead cables.

Note; these fields may be grazed during the summer with young cows; if you prefer to avoid these, return to the village via Rectory Road.

Climb the stile and turn immediately left to cross the plank bridge into the playing field. Please note that dogs are not allowed in the playing field; if accompanied by a dog stay on the adjacent track, turning left at the end. Cross the playing field and turn left in Crown Green then first right into Mill Road.

Shortly after passing the last house turn left onto the public footpath, climbing another stile (opposite the 30mph). Walk down the hill on the wide grassy track between the orchard and vineyard and go through the gate at the bottom. Turn right, then left at the waymark at the next corner of the field, ignoring any paths which lead off to the right. Climb a final stile into a track called Green Lane. Please keep dogs on leads when walking beside the orchards.

Turn left in Green Lane and then left again on reaching Diss Road to return to the start point.

- Orchards have been part of the Norfolk landscape since at least medieval times as everyone from the lord of the manor to the humble cottager found space for apple trees. A valuable natural resource, they provided fruit for eating and cooking, fruit for storing and using over the winter months, fruits for cider-making and surplus fruit for sale in the markets.

- Today many of the county’s old orchards have disappeared and they are included in the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan. Orchard trees are relatively short-lived and as a consequence produce decaying wood more quickly than most native hardwoods, making them important refuges for invertebrates, hole-nesting and insectivorous birds. The fruit trees are valuable hosts for mistletoe and lichens. Orchards are particularly valuable for bryophytes (mosses and liverworts).
Pulham Market

Start point | The Green, Pulham Market  
Grid reference TM197862

Parking | Car park, Falcon Road (opposite The Falcon public house)

Distance | 3.3 miles

Details | Moderate gradients, 50% soft

Walk instructions

Start on The Green with the Crown public house on your right, turn left and walk between Pulham Memorial Hall and the Falcon public house on the narrow alleyway between the houses through two sets of white railings.

Turn right onto Barnes’ Road and follow the road, pass Street Farm on the left and continue for one mile to a T-junction at the top of the hill. Turn left at this T-junction onto Duck’s Foot Road. Keep left at the next junction and continue down the hill on the road.

At the bottom of the hill, turn left onto a field edge public footpath; please keep dogs on leads from here to prevent them entering neighbouring fields with free range hens and cows. Ignore the footbridge on the right and keeping the poplar trees on your right continue back towards Pulham Market following Boudica’s Way waymarkers as follows; walk anticlockwise around this large field still keeping the trees on your right. Just before the far corner turn right into the wood at the waymarker post and walk under a tunnel of trees crossing a footbridge at the end.

Turn left onto another field edge path, this time keeping the trees and ditch on your left. Continue in the same direction across the field at the waymarker post in the corner.

Cross a second much wider footbridge and walk on another field edge footpath around the left hand side of this second field.

Walk over a third footbridge into the wood, turn left at the end to walk around the edge of the third field. Continue around the edge of the field, passing another wood on the left. Bear left into a fourth field at the corner.

Again, turn left at the next corner into the final field and walk towards Pulham Market, crossing a final footbridge before walking along a narrow path which becomes a gravel track after passing the Pulham Market Bowls Club.

Cross the road to the alleyway opposite, turn right at the end and return to the start point.

The open arable fields provide a good chance of a glimpse of a brown hare or to listen to skylarks. Both species are in decline and are included in the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan. For more information visit www.norfolkbiodiversity.org
Good chance for a leg stretch on quiet country lanes for the first half of the walk, slowing down to enjoy the return around field edges on Boudica’s Way.

Many of the pretty whitewashed thatched houses grouped around the green in Pulham Market are listed buildings. Overlooking the green is the medieval church of St Mary Magdalene. There is a lovely east window of stained glass dating to 1838 and depicting three scenes from Mary Magdalene’s life with Christ, as well as a vast mural over the chancel arch depicting the Ascension. For more information on the history of Pulham Market and indeed all the villages mentioned visit www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk
Alburgh

Start point
Homersfield Bridge over River Waveney, B1062, Wortwell • Grid reference TM282857 (or Bus Stop opposite Waveney Farm Shop, High Street, Wortwell)

Parking
Car park adjacent to Homersfield Bridge, Wortwell

Distance
4.8 miles

Details
Steep gradient, 60% soft

Walk instructions

With your back to the bridge turn left out of the entrance to the car park and using the pavements walk up to the junction with the A143, passing the bus stop and the Waveney Farm Shop. Cross at the crossing point opposite The Dove.

Pass The Dove and turn left signposted to Alburgh to walk up Station Road. After approximately quarter of a mile and before reaching the brow of the hill turn left at the wooden public footpath fingerpost and follow the footpath beside three sheep fields. Cross the narrow plank bridge over the ditch and continue to the road on the grassy field edge footpath.

Cross Tunbeck Road and continue along on the track opposite, this is Stony Lane. Stay on Stony Lane to the end, ignore all footpaths and lanes leading off it and at the bottom of the hill use the footbridge to cross the ford before continuing up the track to Low Ditch Road.

Note; in wet weather a short section on the other side of the ford becomes difficult to pass. If it is too wet to walk, return to Tunbeck Road, turn left and walk up the hill. Turn right into School Road and follow the instructions from there.

Turn left onto the public footpath almost opposite Alburgh and Denton Primary School (the entrance to the path is fairly well hidden). Follow the woodland path through three wooden gates before emerging into Church Road.

Turn left at Church Road and after passing the church take the first right turn into Paynes Hill. After 400 metres, immediately before the road bends sharp right turn right onto the public footpath at the gap in the hedge.

This next section of footpath takes you through a series of small uncultivated meadows. Keeping the hedge on your right walk through four meadows ignoring all cross paths and maintaining the same direction. Leave the fourth meadow via a wooden plank bridge in the far left corner; continue in the same direction through a fifth meadow now walking close to the hedge on the left.

Turn right at the end onto a tree lined track and walk to the road. Cross Denton Road onto the public bridleway opposite.

Pass the cottages and continue up the hill on the grass path keeping the hedge on your right. At the three fingerpost junction continue ahead with the hedge now on the left. Go over a plank bridge and continue with the hedge on your right again.

Just before reaching the corner, go through the hedge at the way marker post and continue down the steep hill around the edge of the field. Walk down the steps on the left and turn right at the road.

Cross the A143 at the crossing point opposite The Dove and return to the start.
This final walk takes you through a beautiful series of small buttercup and clover filled meadows surrounded by mature high hedges.

- The small uncultivated meadows are superb for wildlife; a visit in spring will be rewarded by splashes of bright yellow buttercups amongst the muted colours of pink and white clover. The surrounding mature high hedges are full of shrubs such as hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and hazel providing shelter for birds, mammal and insects.
- Homersfield Bridge crosses the River Waveney and spans the boundaries of Wortwell and Alburgh in Norfolk and Homersfield in Suffolk. At the start or finish of the walk take time to cross the bridge to read the information panel about this grade II listed bridge and about ‘the bloody hand’ and the time “when the manslaughter of a young servant was socially frowned upon”.

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**Key**

- Walk 14
- Parking P
- Church ✽

0 ½km

¼mile
Useful contacts

Norfolk County Council
www.norfolk.gov.uk
Norfolk Heritage Explorer
www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk
Norfolk Online
Access to Heritage
www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk
Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership
www.norfolkbiodiversity.org
South Norfolk District Council
www.south-norfolk.gov.uk
Diss Town Council
www.diss.gov.uk
Diss Cittaslow
www.cittaslow.diss.co.uk
Harleston Town Council
www.harleston-norfolk.org.uk
Upper Waveney Valley Project
www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

Museums: opening details displayed on premises, or contact...
Diss Museum
01379 650618
Harleston Museum
01379 854423
Burston Strike School
01379 677211
Billingford Mill
01603 222705

Other walking ideas:
Norfolk County Council
Countryside Access
www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk
Days Out in Norfolk
www.norfolk.gov.uk/
daysoutbybusandtrain
Defra permissive path walks
www.countrywalks.defra.gov.uk

For information on led walks in the area with the Fit Together scheme:
Active Norfolk
01603 423377
www.activenorfolk.org/fittogether

Public transport:
Traveline 0871 200 2233
www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk

Norfolk Churches Trust
www.norfolkchurches.co.uk
Norfolk Churchyards Conservation Scheme
Norfolk Wildlife Trust
www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
Redgrave and Lopham Fen
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk
Contact us…
If you have any comments regarding these walks, whether good or not so good – tell us what you think!

Write to: Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 2SG
Email: environment@norfolk.gov.uk
Phone: 01603 222769

This book forms part of a series of 150 walks across the county based around market towns. To download copies of walks booklets for other areas, visit: www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk

• All information correct at time of going to press (September 2009)
• Printed on recycled paper using vegetable based inks
Going for a walk in natural surroundings is one of the easiest and most enjoyable ways to maintain good health, to relax, unwind and re-charge your batteries. This book has 14 walks of varying lengths, ideal to fit in with daily life. The locations have been chosen to help you enjoy and appreciate our Norfolk heritage, both natural and man-made, linking history to nature and health.

Enjoy the walks!