



Horse and handler pose for Sir Alfred Munnings in the backyard of the Bush Inn.
Image copyright of the estate of Sir Alfred Munnings, Dedham, Essex.

The River Wensum meanders along the northern edge of Old Costessey, (or *Cossey*, as it is pronounced locally). The route crosses the pretty River Tud, a small tributary winding through swathes of water meadow, part of a designated Special Area of Conservation.

Species that can be spotted here at various times of year include newts, heron, water vole and kingfisher; water mint, yellow flag iris and dovesfoot cranesbill. Escapees such as roses and sweet peas can also be found, especially around the old station. These were once grown in the station's flower garden.

Buildings of note in Costessey include the medieval Church of St. Edmund's, the Victorian Catholic Church of Our Lady & Saint Walstan, and the old Bush Inn.

The current Bush Inn occupies the same site as its 200 year old counterpart, which once had a reputation as a haunt of travellers and gypsies. This regular cliental provided artistic inspiration for another patron in the early 20th Century; the famous artist and painter of horses, Sir Alfred Munnings.

Munnings lived in Swainsthorpe, but regularly journeyed to Costessey. In The Bush Inn gardens, he painted *Somewhere the sun is shining*, of a crowd enjoying a performance by strolling singers. Munnings recalled the occasion in his autobiography,

'The flow of ale, the sunlight, the balmy scent of honeysuckle so enhanced the sound of song and guitar, that the company - men, women, children, dogs, cats and fowls - seemed to fall into a gentle reverie as the hours slipped by.'

COSTESSEY



Square: the site of old Hellesdon Station. Circle: field scabious. © Evelyn Simak

This is a pleasant, middle-distance walk along good footpaths through villages, woodland, water meadows and along part of Marriott's Way. It passes the remains of the old platform of Hellesdon station and offers panoramic views across the Wensum Valley.



Good to Know: This walk can be started at Gunton Lane car park, NR5 0DQ. A regular bus service connects Costessey to central Norwich. Marriott's Way offers easy access from Norwich (3.1 miles) and Drayton (2.5 miles) on foot or cycle.

There are a number of pubs, including the Bush Inn, and various shops available in Costessey.

