The Nar Valley Way starts at King’s Lynn, a historic town with many places of interest to visit. Close to the beginning of the route on South Quay is the Customs House built by Sir John Turner in 1685, an iconic landmark that now houses the town’s Tourist Information Office.

The route continues south running along the riverbank, passing the site of a 13th century Carmelite friary, known as Whitefriars. All that remains today is the friary’s northern gate.

Beyond Whitefriars, the route continues south alongside the river. King’s Lynn was once an important port for the whaling industry and blubber and bones used to processed at Blubber House Creek, which this route passes after crossing the River Nar. Whalebone and oil were once economically important products for the town and even King’s Lynn’s largest church, St Margaret’s, was illuminated by using whale oil until 1839.

The River Nar is known for its biodiversity and the stretch close to King’s Lynn possesses several species of flora not found in the upper river. Breeding birds include snipe, lapwing, redshank, sedge and grasshopper warblers. Look out, too for dragonflies, as at least 12 different species have been identified along the River Nar, an impressive number for a British river.

The river curves east just before Setchey Bridge and the walk continues along the banks of the River Nar through open fenland, passing near the gatehouse of Pentney Abbey, all that remains of a 14th century Augustinian abbey.

Approaching Narborough, the route passes the former site of the Narborough Bone Mill, which used to grind bones from local slaughterhouses, whalebones brought upriver from King’s Lynn, and even human bones transported from Hamburg cemeteries, into agricultural fertilizer. The mill became redundant in the late 19th century but its cast iron water wheel remains as a prominent feature on the bank opposite the path.

At the end of the section the route crosses the old King’s Lynn to Dereham railway line. The brick supports of the now dismantled railway bridge can still be seen in place across the river just before arriving in Narborough.

Further Information on this walk is available in four short sections including more detailed maps. See Short Sections S1; King’s Lynn to Saddlebow, S2; Saddlebow to Setchey, S3; Setchey to Pentney and S4; Pentney to Narborough available at www.norfolk.gov.uk/narvalleyway

www.norfolk.gov.uk/trails