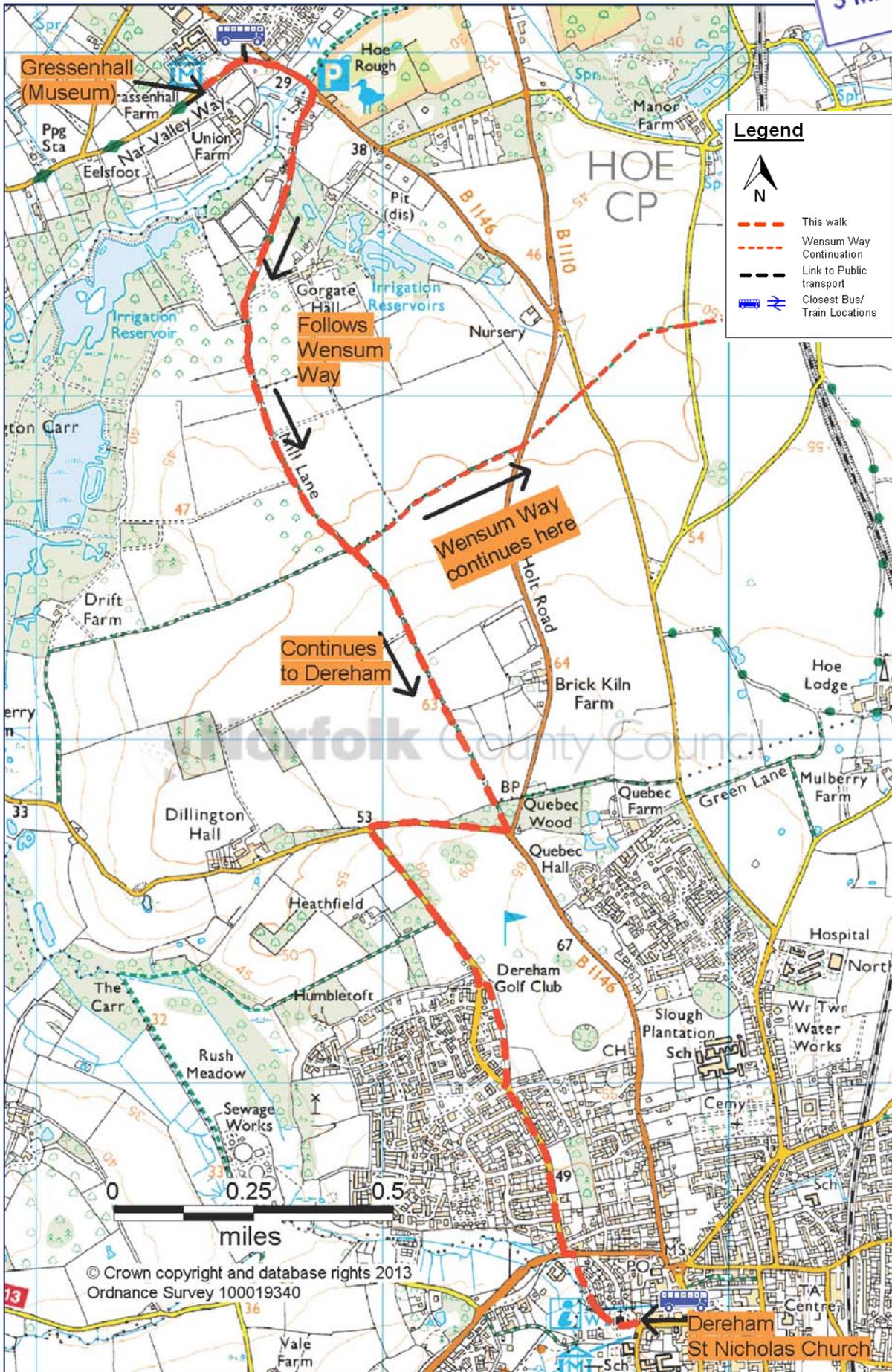


Wensum Way and Nar Valley Way: Gressenhall to Dereham Link

Length:
3 Miles



Along the way

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum is a former workhouse that now serves as a museum depicting workhouse life and Norfolk's rich social history. The farm here once used to grow food for the workhouse inmates. Now it is farmed using traditional techniques and uses Suffolk Punch horses to plant, harvest and plough.

Leaving Gressenhall, at the edge of the adjacent village of Beetley, the route passes the entrance to Hoe Rough, a 12 hectare SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) nature reserve and County Wildlife Site managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The wet unimproved grassland here has interesting flora that includes green-winged orchid and bird's foot trefoil. Otters, water vole and great crested newt are found along the river and in the ponds, and 25 species of butterfly and 24 different types of dragonfly have been recorded.

After a mile, the link departs from the route of the Wensum Way at the crossroads on Mill lane, where, instead of heading east towards Swanton Morley, the route continues south to Dereham.

Dereham is a market town in the heart of Norfolk that dates back to the 7th century when it is believed that Withburga, youngest daughter of Anna, King of East Angles, founded a nunnery here. Withburga later became a saint and the Holy Well named after her next to St Nicholas Church is reputed to be the spot where her tomb stood in the churchyard before being stolen and moved to Ely Cathedral on the orders of the Abbot of Ely.

Bishop Bonner's Cottage next to the church, constructed in early 17th century, is now a museum celebrating the history of Dereham. The town's name is said to come from the Old English for 'enclosure for deer' and it is thought that a deer park used to exist here.

Just southwest of the centre is Scarning Fen, an area of dry alkaline fen that is a County Wildlife Site managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Although small, several unusual and rare species are found here, including the nationally rare liverwort, several mosses and plant species like butterwort, marsh orchid and marsh helleborine. Potters Fen is another County Wildlife Site and SSSI on the southern outskirts of the town.

Walk summary

A 3 mile walk that links Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum, where the Nar Valley Way ends and Wensum Way starts, with the market town of Dereham.

Getting started

This section starts at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum (farm crossing) at TF975169 and finishes at St Nicholas Church in Dereham town centre (TF987133).

Getting there

Bus service: Konectbus 21, various Dereham
 Bus stops: Beetley, opp Beech Road (for museum), Dereham, Market Place (south-bound)
 Traveline enquiries: 0871 200 22 33
www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk

Maps and guides

Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238, Dereham & Aylsham, available from Ordnance Survey shop
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite

What to expect

Rural lanes, tracks and town streets

Facilities

Parking and café at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum (opening hours only), shop with post office, B&B accommodation in Gressenhall village
 Pubs, cafes, restaurants, accommodation, shops, post office, tourist information and parking in Dereham