

WALK 3 (allow 3 hours)

This is a wonderful and easy walk using well defined tracks and paths. It takes you through woods, along a stream and over open common with some great views.

Advice: Please respect the countryside and shut any gates that you pass through as although you may not see them there may be animals which could escape if gates are left open. If you are taking dogs with you please keep them under control at all times. Also can you make sure you have 'poo bags' with you. Should you have forgotten them 'Reception' can help.

Please wear suitable walking boots or shoes and clothes appropriate for the weather conditions, even in summer there may be muddy areas to walk through. If it is hot please take some water with you as there is nowhere to obtain any on the walk. Please take care when part of the walk takes you along a road. They are narrow country roads and some drivers do not take as much care as they should. **(It is for this reason that you are directed to cross roads onto proper footpaths, when available, rather than direct you to walk along the road.)**

Finally we hope that you enjoy this walk and if you have any problems following the directions please can you inform the hotel so that they can be amended.

IF YOU WOULD PREFER NOT TO WALK ALONG ROADS

If you would prefer not to walk along roads then you can start from Pott Row playing field car park. To get there turn right out of Congham Hall and drive along Lynn Road for just over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile/0.8 kilometres. At Roydon cross-roads turn left towards Pott Row. You will see a playing field on your right the entrance is opposite Chequers Road. Drive into the playing field and you will see a gravel track going to your right which leads to a parking area. Park there and walk back towards the entrance then follow the directions as indicated.

IF YOU ARE WALKING FROM THE HOTEL

DIRECTIONS

Walk down the drive from the hotel and carefully cross the road to the footpath on the opposite side of the road. Turn right and walk along the footpath until it ends then cross back over the road to the footpath on the Congham Hall side of the road. Turn left and continue along the footpath until you are opposite Chequers Road on your left. Cross Lynn Road again and walk down Chequers Road until you come to a junction with Chapel Road.

You will see a public footpath sign on the opposite side of the road next to playing fields. Cross the road and follow the track that the footpath sign is indicating. **(If you have driven to Pott Row playing field then follow the directions from here).**

In spring and summer you will hear a lot of bird song as you walk along this track. In late summer and autumn look out for the Honeysuckle and the bracket fungi growing on the Birch trees.

Continue along this track for almost 1 mile/1.6 kilometres. You will come to a gate, go through the gate and you will be on the old railway track. [1] Turn left walk along the track for about 50 yards/46 metres and go through a gate and on to another track. You will have a white house immediately on your right, turn left and then immediately turn right back onto the old dismantled railway line.

Follow this track for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, you will have a wood and stream on your right and hedge and fields on your left. (Even in summer this track can be very muddy with deep wheel ruts caused by agricultural machinery. However it is possible to negotiate your way around these obstacle's quite easily) After $\frac{3}{4}$ mile the track turns right over the stream, through the wood crossing over the old railway line running through the middle of the wood. Once through the wood the track bears left, follow this track for just over 1 mile/1.6 km. The track passes below power lines with a wide drain on your left. In the middle distance you will see the ruins of St James/St Mary's church and a modern wind turbine. [2] The church is where you are heading. When close to the ruins turn left over the bridge and follow the track up to the ruined church.



The ruin of St James/St Mary's church

Once you have seen enough of the ruins and the views return back down the track and over the bridge. Once over the bridge bear left onto a farm track and follow it, after approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ mile/0.5 kilometres the track turns left. As you walk along the track you will hear and see traffic ahead of you on the A149. The track then takes a turn to the right and you will now have the A149 on your left and the cottages and buildings of Spot Farm over to your right. Continue to follow the track until you come to a junction. Here the track goes right to Spot Farm and beyond, however you need to carry straight on until you reach another junction opposite semi-detached cottages named Keepers Cottage/Pitlochry.

Turn right and follow the track for approximately $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles/2.8 kilometres which passes Warren Farm and then continues between Roydon Common [3] on your left and Grimston Warren [4] on your right. You may see British white cattle and/or Dartmoor ponies grazing on the common and the warren. If you are doing this walk in August or September then the heather on the common will be in full bloom. Also in late summer and autumn look out for the Spindle Tree *Euonymus europaeus* [5] with its unusual berries and bright orange seeds.



Warren Farm

Towards the end of the track you will pass the white house named Railway Gatehouse that you saw at the start of your walk. Just past the white house, go through the gate on your left back on to the old railway line that you walked earlier. After about 50 yards/46 metres you will see a gate to your right which gives access to the track that you walked at the start of this walk. However do not go through the gate but continue along the old railway track which takes you through woodland. You may come across horses feeding along the track but they are usually quite friendly.

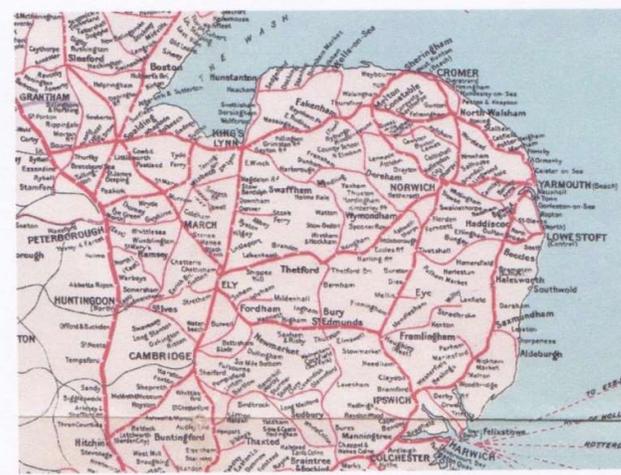


Horses feeding on the old railway track

Continue through the woods for approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile/0.8 km passing over a stile until you see a gate on your right. Go through this gate onto a path between Gorse bushes and follow it until you come to Pott Row playing field. If you have driven to the playing field to start this walk then you will see your vehicle over to your right. If you walked from the hotel then carefully cross the road and follow the footpath back to the Grimston Road and using the footpaths make your way back to Congham Hall Hotel.

NOTES FOR WALK 3

[1] The old railway line was the Midland and Great Northern line from Kings Lynn to Norwich via Fakenham and Melton Constable. It was opened in 1880 and closed in 1959. It was one of many branch lines which criss- crossed East Anglia. Almost all these branch lines no longer exist.



1930's map of the East Anglian railway branch lines

[2] The church was built in the 11th century and became unused in the middle of the 18th century and so became the ruin you see today. There is uncertainty as to who it was dedicated to whether it was St Mary or St James. On ordnance survey maps it is marked as St Mary's church whilst in other publications it is referred to as St James. Although you are only 50 feet above sea level on a clear day you will be able to see for up to 10 miles.

The modern wind turbine that you can see was built in 2010 and is used to provide electricity for the Queen Elizabeth II hospital at Kings Lynn. It produces approximately 1.2 million units per year.

[3] Roydon Common is owned by the 'Norfolk Wildlife Trust' and is one of the last pieces of heathland in Norfolk. The 'Trust' was formed in 1926 and since then has acquired various pieces of land within Norfolk where it carries out nature conservation

A good example of its work is 'Grimston Warren' which is adjacent to 'Roydon Common'. One hundred acres of 'Grimston Warren' were bought by the 'Trust' with a donation given by Muriel Hallet in memory of her late husband, Tony, who had been a keen bird watcher. The area had been planted with conifers in the 1960's destroying the heathland.

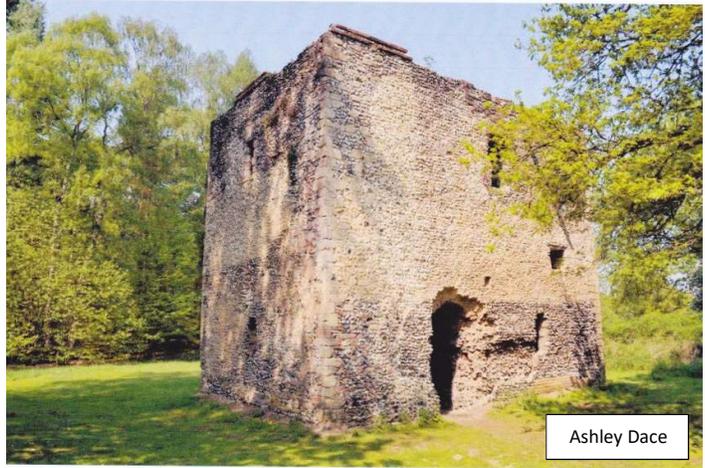


Roydon Common with grazing British White cattle

The trust started by clearing the pine trees and the accumulated litter. Very quickly dormant seeds of heathland plants germinated on the cleared ground and heathland birds such as Nightjars and Woodlarks returned. Today 'Roydon Common', Grimston Warren and other adjacent pieces of land bought more recently provide a habitat for plants, insects, animals and birds. It is managed by the 'Trust' with the help of volunteers, Dartmoor ponies and British white cattle.

[4] Warrens provided a source of meat and fur for large estates. In earlier centuries rabbit meat was a luxury food for the rich man's table. The fur was used to trim and line clothes and was very fashionable.

Today the rabbit can be seen almost everywhere and is considered a pest by farmers and gardeners. However when it was first introduced by the 'Normans', in the 11th century, the rabbit did not like our damp cold climate as it originated from Mediterranean region. It had to be carefully looked after by 'Warreners' on Warrens.



Thetford Warren Lodge

The warrens were large area of ground if possible sited on well drained sites so that the burrows were not damp and cold. They were usually surrounded by banks topped with Gorse. The 'Warrener' lived in a 'Warren Lodge' which was a substantially built two storey building. The 'Warrener' lived on the upper storey and the lower one was where he kept the nets, traps and the harvested Rabbits. Poaching was also a problem sometimes by organised gangs which was another reason why the lodge needed to be well built and could be defended.

As the rabbits became acclimatised to our weather some of them escaped and colonised areas outside the warrens. By the 19th century huge quantities of rabbits were being supplied to the London markets from some of the Norfolk warrens. One of them, Thetford Warren, culled 28,000 rabbits per year.

It was a good source of income for the owners of the warrens. In 'Whites 1845 Directory of Norfolk' in the entry for Grimston he states that, "The Marquis Cholmondeley is lord of the *manor*, and owner of about 600 acres, and has a rabbit warren on the heath".

In the 19th and 20th centuries local factories within Norfolk processed the rabbit fur into felt for the hat trade. It was the deliberate introduction of the disease Myxomatosis in the 1950's that devastated the rabbit population. Myxomatosis is still in the rabbit population but they are becoming more and more immune to it. You should be able to see lots of rabbits in the evenings whilst you stay at Congham Hall Hotel.

[5] The Spindle Tree so called because its' hard wood was used to make spindles for spinning and holding wool. Some of its' other uses were to make skewers, pegs, knitting needles and high quality charcoal for artists.

All parts of the tree are poisonous to humans and animals. However the berries and seeds are harmless to birds and Blackbirds in particular enjoy them. The leaves also provide food for the caterpillars of various moths.



The berries of the Spindle tree *Euonymus europaeus*