

WALK 3 (allow 3.5 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. 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.)

DIRECTIONS

IF YOU WOULD PREFER NOT TO WALK ALONG THE ROAD OUTSIDE THE HOTEL

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. 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 park in the car park there and walk back towards the entrance then follow the directions as indicated.

IF YOU ARE WALKING DIRECTLY FROM THE HOTEL

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 this road for just over $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, crossing the road a couple of times where needed to continue to be able to walk on a path. Continue until you are opposite Chequers Road on your left. Cross the road 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. (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 what used to be an old railway track. Keep going straight ahead along the track for about 50 yards/46 metres and go through another gate on to another track. Turn immediately right, walking past a white house, which will be on your left. Follow this track for about 2 miles. (You will go through some woodland, crossing over a little stream, and then you will come out of the woodland and will then have heathland on each side of you. Grimston Warren is on your left, and Roydon Common is on your right. When the heathland finishes you will continue through some farmland.) You may see British White cattle or wild Dartmoor ponies grazing on either side of you as you walk this track. You will also see a couple of old WW2 artillery towers.

After walking the 2 miles, the track continues straight ahead into some woodland, and you will walk past a few houses which will be on your right, including Warren Farm. Continue down the track through some more woodland until you come to two semi-detached houses called Keepers Cottage/Pitlochry.

There is a track on your left opposite the house called Pitlochry. Take this left and head down the track, and keep going straight. You will pass a farm on your left, and you will hear the traffic on the A149 on your right.

In the distance you will see the ruins of St James/St Mary's church in front of you. [2] The church is where you are heading. Keep following the track, having passed the farm. It will soon bear left and then right after a short distance. Cross straight over the bridge in front of you and head up the hill to the ruins.

Once you have seen enough of the ruins and the views, return back down the track and over the bridge, and follow the same path back the way you have come; so carry on straight ahead onto the farm track and follow it, the track turns left after a short time, and then right and then straightens up again.



St James/St Marys church, otherwise known as 'Bawsey ruins'.

Walk past the farm again which will be on your right, and you will now have the A149 on your left. Continue to follow the track until you reach the two semi-detached cottages again, named Keepers Cottage/Pitlochry.

Turn right and follow the track again for approximately 2 miles, which passes Warren Farm and then continues again between Roydon Common on your left and Grimston Warren on your right. 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* with its unusual berries and bright orange seeds.



Warren Farm

Towards the end of the track you will enter the woodland again and pass the white house that you saw earlier. 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 you will see two tracks in front of you. The one on the right has a gate which you came through earlier, but instead take the left path, which will continue ahead along the old railway track path, which takes you through woodland. You may come across horses feeding along the track but they are usually quite friendly.

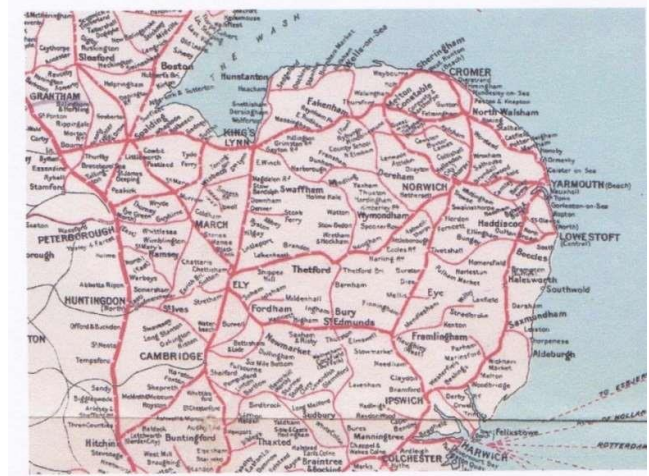


Horses on the old railway line

Continue for approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, then pass over a stile and past a large gate on your right. Shortly after that you will see a smaller gate on your right. Go through this gate, onto a path a few paces long taking you between Gorse bushes, turn left at the fencing and continue until you come to a gate, go through the gate and you will see Pott Row playing field on your right. If you drove to the playing field to start this walk then you will see your vehicle in the car park. If you walked from the hotel, then carefully cross over the road and keep walking straight ahead down the main road, crossing over a couple of times when needed to stick to the footpaths and 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*