

MARRIOTT'S WAY CIRCULAR ROUTE GUIDE

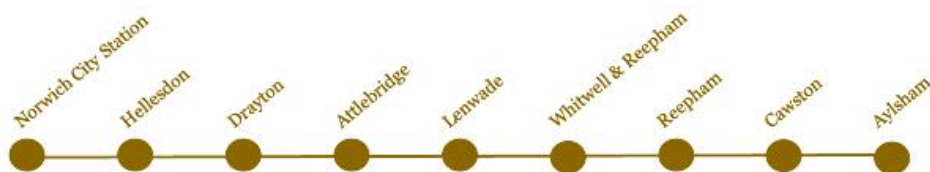


WELCOME TO MARRIOTT'S WAY

MARRIOTT'S WAY is a 26-mile linear trail for riders, walkers and cyclists. Opened in 1991, it follows part of the route of two former Victorian railway lines, The Midland and Great Northern (M&GN) and Great Eastern Railway (GER). It is named in honour of William Marriott, who was chief engineer and manager of the M&GN for 41 years between 1883 and 1924.

Both lines were established in the 1880s to transport passengers, livestock and industrial freight. The two routes were joined by the 'Themelthorpe Curve' in 1960, which became the sharpest bend on the entire British railway network.

Use of the lines reduced after the Second World War. Passenger traffic ceased in 1959, but the transport of concrete ensured that freight trains still used the lines until 1985.



The seven circular walks and two cycle loops in this guide encourage you to head off the main Marriott's Way route and explore the surrounding areas that the railway served. Whilst much has changed, there's an abundance of hidden history to be found. Many of the churches, pubs, farms and station buildings along these circular routes would still be familiar to the railway passengers of 100 years ago.

Marriott's Way is a County Wildlife Site and passes through many interesting landscapes rich in wonderful countryside, wildlife, sculpture and a wealth of local history.

The walks and cycle loops described in these pages are well signposted by fingerposts and Norfolk Trails' discs. You can find all the circular trails in this guide covered by OS Explorer Map 238. Many of the walks use well-trodden trails and road side paths. Short distances cross arable fields and common land. A few of the walks take in sections of road, and while these are generally quiet, they are still open to traffic, so please take care.

You can download the maps in this booklet from our website:

www.marriottsway.info

You can also discover more Norfolk walks and heritage paths by visiting:

www.norfolktrails.co.uk

If you have any questions or comments regarding any of these walks, you can contact us by email:

information@norfolk.gov.uk



Details within this booklet are deemed correct at the time of print. Please be aware that all routes are shared with other users (vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, etc.) and all users of these routes do so at their own risk.
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THE MAP



WOOD DALLING

SALLE

THEMELTHORPE

CAWSTON

AYLSHAM

REEPHAM

WHITWELL

LENWADE

ATTLEBRIDGE

DRAYTON

COSTESSEY

NORWICH

Booklet Key:



Suitable to walk



Suitable to cycle



Public transport close by



Car park



Refreshments close by



Signposted route



Historic church



Heritage station

Marriott's Way



Parking



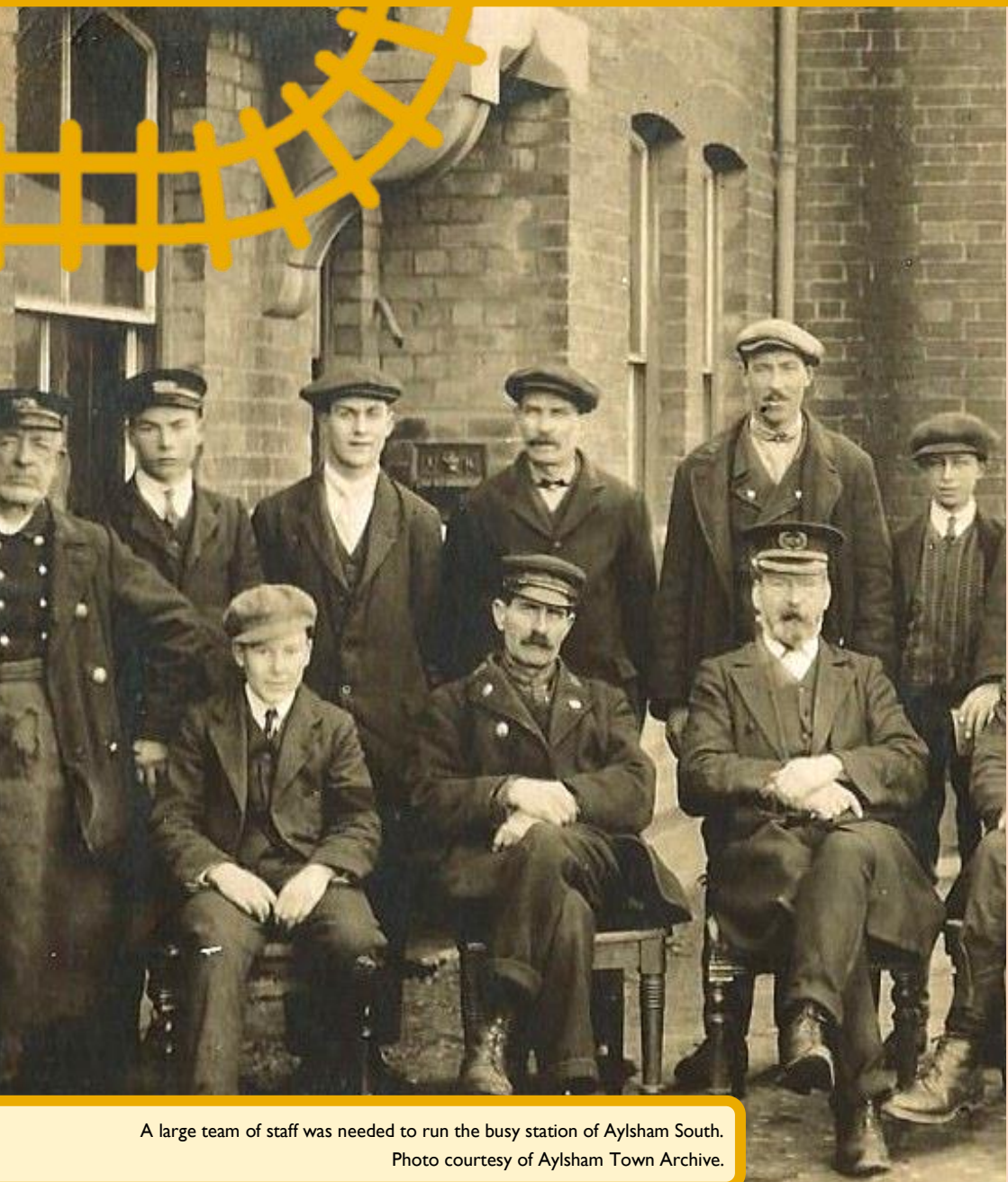
Picnic area

THE ROUTES

6	BURE VALLEY SHORT LOOP	1 mile
10	AYLSHAM WORKHOUSE	2 miles
14	CAWSTON	4.5 miles
18	TWO STATIONS	5miles
22	COSTESSEY	5.5 miles
26	AYLSHAM TOWN	7 miles
30	THEMELTHORPE LOOP	12.5 miles
34	SALLE CYCLE LOOP	7 miles
38	WOOD DALLING CYCLE LOOP	10 miles



BURE VALLEY SHORT LOOP



A large team of staff was needed to run the busy station of Aylsham South.

Photo courtesy of Aylsham Town Archive.



1 mile

This short walk from the Bure Valley Railway follows an adjacent footpath and returns along Buxton Road. The original Aylsham South station, part of the East Norfolk Railway, opened in January 1880. A western extension followed, and it became a popular route for school children, rural commuters and summer holiday makers to use. Rural freight, particularly agricultural produce, was also carried.

As a busy station, the railway employed many local people. The 1911 Census records railway clerks, a porter and a signalman living on Buxton Road; just a stone's throw from the station.

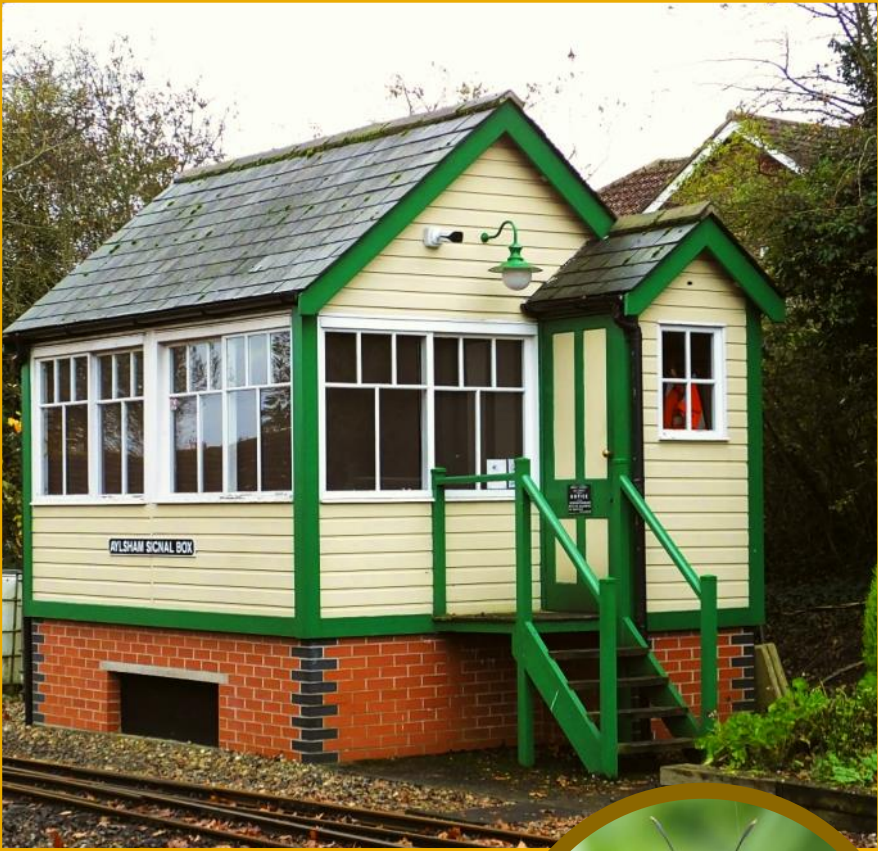
The terminus of the Bure Valley Railway was opened on the site of the old Aylsham South station in 1990. Like its full-size predecessor, the narrow-gauge railway connects Aylsham to Wroxham, and at 9 miles long is currently the longest narrow-gauge railway in Norfolk.

A short distance after leaving the station, trains enter a tunnel under the A140. Originally there was a level crossing here and you can still see the original crossing keeper's cottage on the road side. The tunnel, built for the Bure Valley Railway, is currently the only operational train tunnel in Norfolk.

During both World Wars the railway was used to transport servicemen and essential supplies. On either side of Norwich Road, in the undergrowth, you can spot two hexagonal Type 24 pill boxes. These formed part of the anti-invasion defences designed to intercept German units and defend transport infrastructure against potential enemy attacks during the Second World War.

BURE VALLEY SHORT LOOP

Square: signal box at the Bure Valley Railway. Circle: a woodland ringlet butterfly.



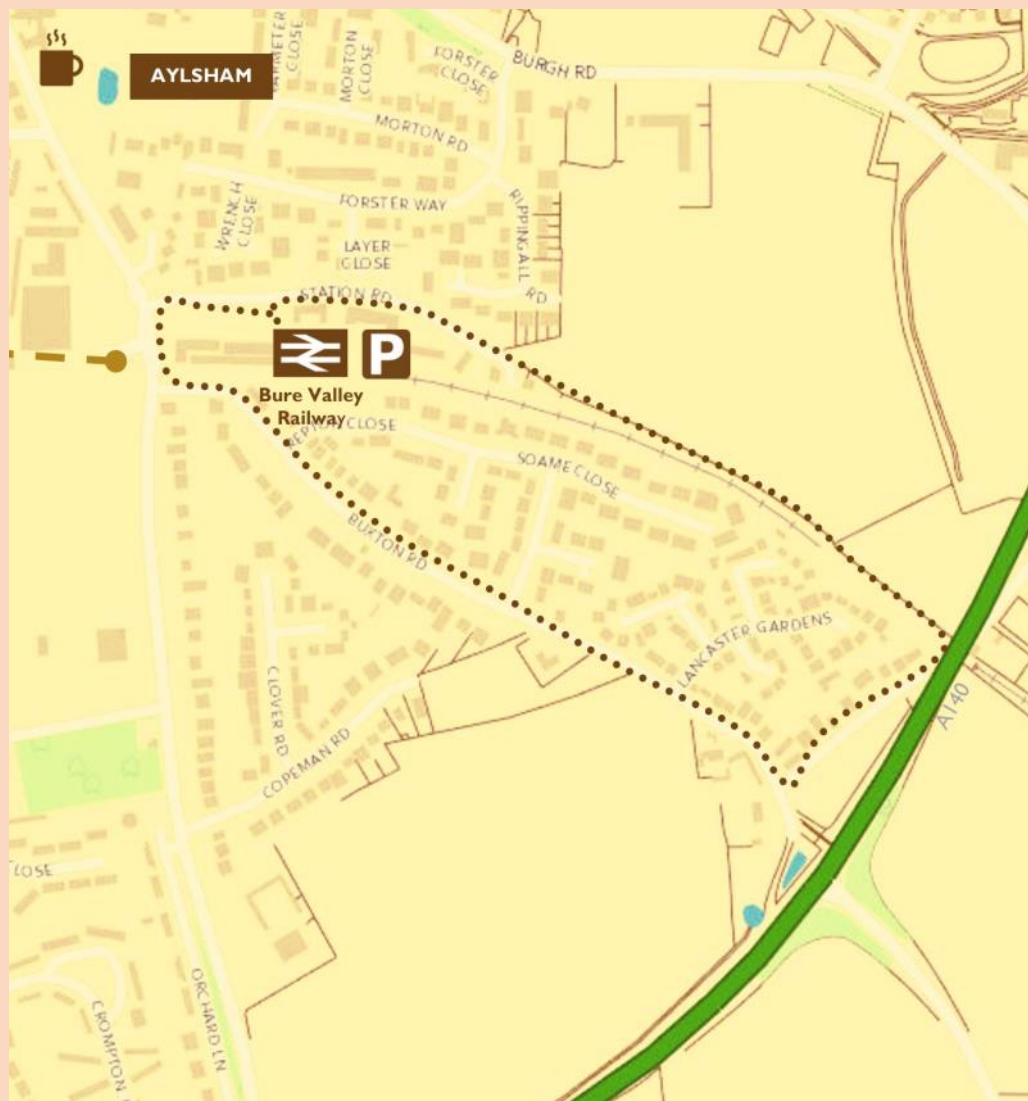
The original station buildings here were demolished in 1989. Since then staff and volunteers of the Bure Valley Railway have replaced the lost Victorian railway with a narrow gauge track. Look out for the tunnel, signal box and real steam trains.



Good to Know: There's a free car park at the Bure Valley Railway, Norwich Road, NR11 6BW.

This short family-friendly route follows a fairly level footpath beside the Bure Valley Railway and pavements along Buxton Road. There is a café at the station and regular train services to and from Wroxham.

Visit: www.bvrw.co.uk



AYLSHAM WORKHOUSE



Hand hoeing the fields surrounding the workhouse at Aylsham.
Image courtesy of Mary Evans Picture Library.



2 miles

This walk follows a high-banked section of Marriott's Way through woodland, then drops down via a slope onto quiet cul de sacs and Green Lane to complete your circuit.

Emerging from behind mature beech, oak and chestnut trees, you'll pass a prominent building that would have piqued rail passenger's interest; Aylsham Workhouse. According to a British Medical Journal report from 1894-5, *'The workhouse belonging to this Union presents a palatial appearance; it is a modern red brick building, with two wings and a central block, standing in well-kept gardens, and, as seen from the railway, might easily be mistaken for the residence of a county magnate.'*

This grand, imposing building was designed by Norfolk-born architect William J. Donthorn. He also designed workhouses at Downham, Erpingham, Freebridge, Lynn and Swaffham, but the buildings at Aylsham are the only ones that survive.

The workhouse was built in 1849 to accommodate up to 600 people; although the report stated that the number of inmates never reached much higher than 130. The workhouse later became St. Michael's Hospital. This closed in 2005 allowing the buildings to be converted into luxurious homes.

Another prominent building that would have been visible from the railway was Aylsham Towermill. Used to produce flour, it was a victim of lightning storms; in the 1890s it was damaged and never repaired. The current jagged outline of the top of the tower was caused by an abandoned attempt to demolish it, but the building was far better built than expected.

AYLSHAM WORKHOUSE



Square: the frontage of the old Aylsham Workhouse. Circle: a goldfinch.

The green corridor of trees that now line the route of Marriott's Way today are a haven for wildlife. When it operated as a railway, however, passengers travelling along the elevated track from the west would have had uninterrupted views over the countryside to the south, and Aylsham to the north.



Good to Know: Start at the car park by Mileham Drive, NR11 6WE (access from B1145), or join from the east from the Bure Valley Railway, NR11 6BW (+1 mile). There are regular buses to Aylsham from Cromer and Norwich.

Aylsham has many eateries and independent shops to enjoy.

The route is suitable for all, including for those with pushchairs.



CAWSTON



A 1927 photo of carved angels from St. Agnes Church in Cawston. Image courtesy of Picture Norfolk, NCC.



4.5 miles

The communities of Cawston and Reepham made their fortunes from wool and weaving, particularly worsted cloth and flannel. Some of this wealth was invested in very grand churches. St. Agnes Church in Cawston, for example, was financed by Michael de la Pole, 1st Earl of Suffolk, son of a wool merchant.

At 37 metres tall, St. Agnes towers over the surrounding countryside. The church is open daily and well worth a visit. Its 15th century painted rood screen, stained glass and hammer beam roof decorated with large carved angels are counted among Norfolk's treasures.

When the railway line opened in the early 1880s, it enabled local farmers to take advantage of a novel method of transport which connected to a national network. It became possible for large quantities of bulky produce, such as sugar beet, to be transported many miles away. After the Second World War, roads became a far more flexible and convenient mode of transport to rail. Demand for train services reduced and the station at Cawston and Reepham closed having served their communities for around 70 years.

Cawston once had many more pubs. The old sign for The Plough pub was removed and is now displayed in the church. Although Cawston retains The Bell and the Ratcatchers, the area has a far sleepier feel than it must have had in its heyday.

Enjoy wandering down the quiet country lanes, abundant in seasonal wild flowers, butterflies and bees, where small cottages also nestle in hedgerows.

CAWSTON

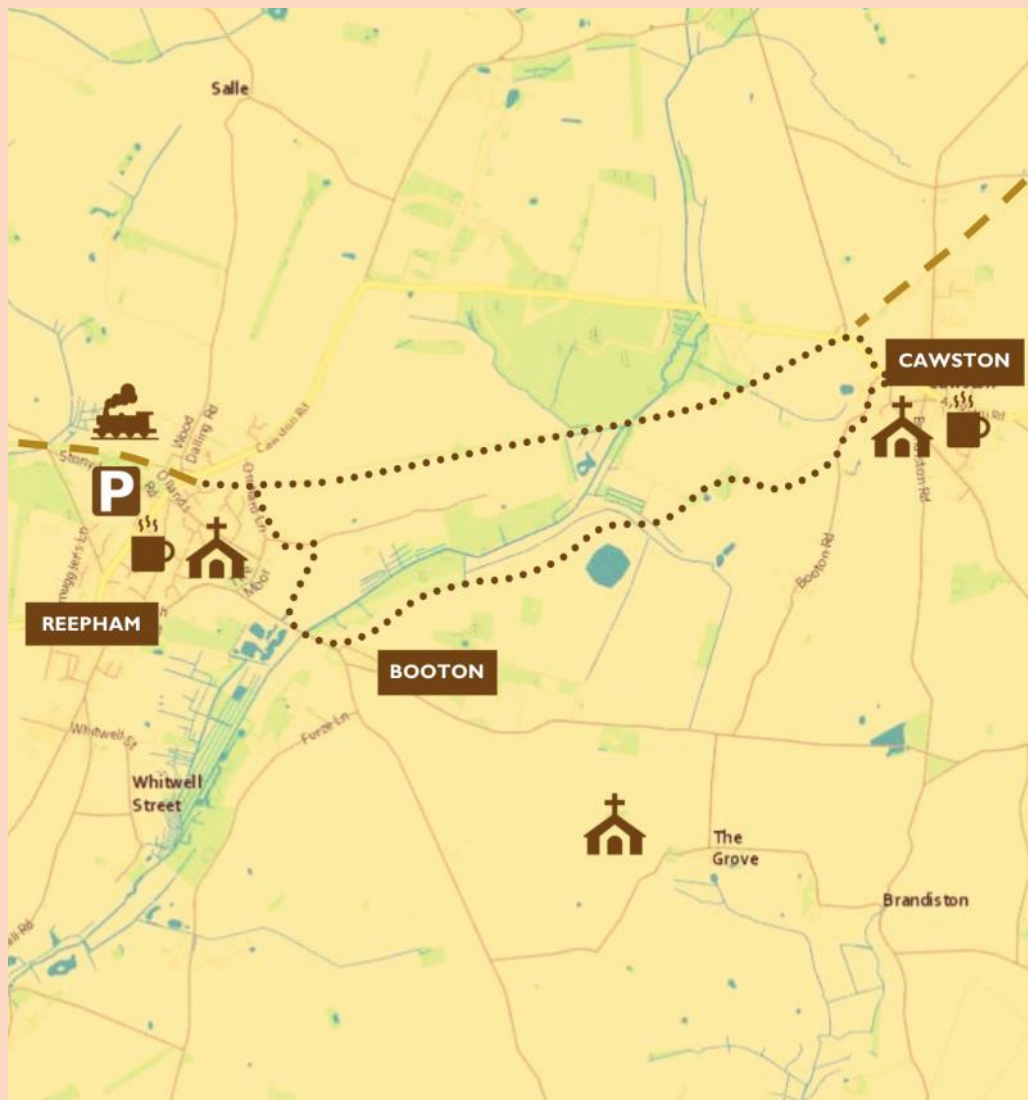
Square: ponies grazing on Booton Common. Circle: a woodcock in flight.



This pretty walk passes through Booton Common, a natural treasure. This species-rich fen and wet heathland, now owned and managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, is home to grazing ponies, several rare plants and a variety of breeding birds including snipe, woodcock and lesser whitethroat.

Good to Know: It's easy to start this walk from Cawston, or the car park at Kerrie's Farmhouse Pine (NR10 4LJ). The walk uses roadside paths and well-used trails across fields and common ground, which can get a little muddy after rain. Refuel at Kerrie's Tearooms or The Bell in Cawston (NR10 4AE).

Visit: www.thebellinnawston.co.uk and
www.kerrispinefurniture.co.uk



TWO STATIONS



Cattle and children at Reepham market square. Image courtesy of Reepham Archive.



5 miles

Reepham is a quaint, characterful market town, which has no fewer than 61 listed buildings. It hosts a weekly morning market, and has various eateries and independent shops.

The 'Great Fire of Reepham' in 1543 caused extensive damage to the village. If you look closely, however, many of the Georgian and Victorian buildings around the Market Place retain aspects of the flint and brick of earlier times.

Reepham was served by two stations, each on a different line. Reepham Station, to the north, on the Great Eastern Railway; and, Whitwell & Reepham Station, to the south, on the Midland & Great Northern.

The hardworking labourers who built these railways in the 1880s were known as 'Navvies'. The Navvies worked long, hard hours, often far from home, constructing embankments and laying track. The lodgings of the teams that laid the line at Reepham neighboured a bakery. This allowed them to supplement their usually limited diet of bacon and vegetables, and occasional poached game, with freshly baked goods.

Eade's Mill stands over a tributary of the River Wensum. A waterwheel provided power until about 1948; the mill operated using electricity until the mid-1970s when milling stopped altogether.

The mill was in a ruinous state by the early 1990s. It was subsequently converted to residential use. In 2012 the entire building was almost lost in a major fire. It was saved only by the actions of 50 or so firefighters who attended from crews across the county.

TWO STATIONS



Square: the village sign at Reepham. Circle: wild strawberries.

Reepham has a curious case of three churches in one churchyard; All Saints (now ruined), St Michael's, and St Mary's. Look for the Reepham town sign on your walk; it depicts triplets of churches, villagers, cows and sheep, as well as three ladies, referring to the local myth that three sisters were responsible for building the churches.



Good to Know: Reepham has central parking. Patrons can use the facilities at Whitwell & Reepham Station (NR10 4GA) or Kerri's Farmhouse Pine (NR10 4LJ). An infrequent but reliable bus service connects Reepham with Norwich. Reepham has several pubs, shops and delicatessens.

Do take particular care along road-side stretches of this walk.

Visit: www.whitwellstation.com and www.kerrispinefurniture.co.uk



COSTESSEY



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.



5.5 miles

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



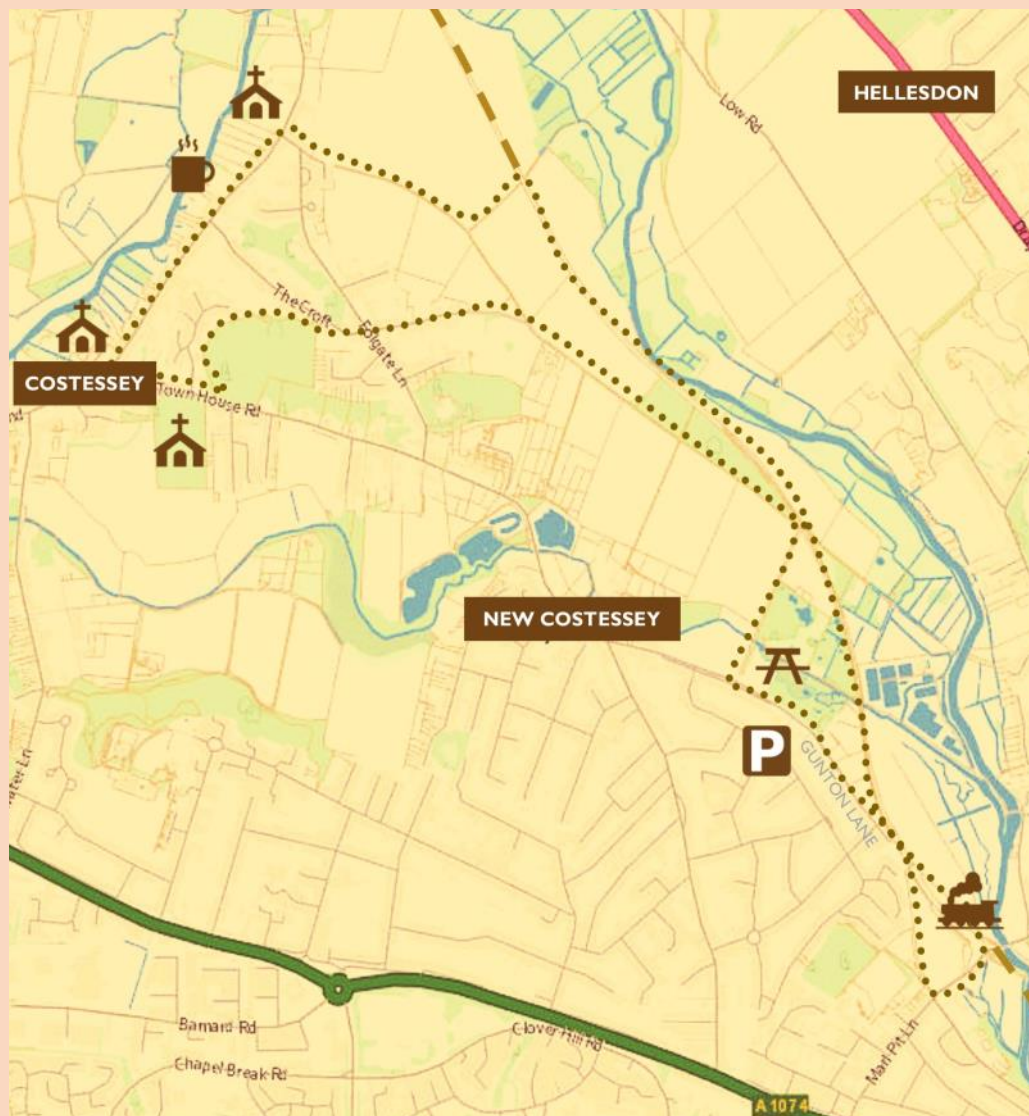
Square: the site of old Hellesdon Station. Circle: field scabious. © Evelyn Simak

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.



AYLSHAM TOWN



A Norfolk Wherry moored at the water mill at Aylsham Staithe. Image courtesy of Picture Norfolk, NCC.



Aylsham is full of historic interest. The bustling market town bristles with charming features, including the John Soame Memorial Pump and The Black Boys coaching Inn, welcoming visitors today as it has for centuries.

Humphry Repton (1752-1818), the famous landscape gardener, chose Aylsham as his final resting place. Sheringham Park, which Repton described as his '*most favourite work*', is managed by The National Trust who are, coincidentally, Lords of the Manor of Aylsham and own Aylsham Market Place.

You'll pass Aylsham Staithe; opened in 1779 it was once the main artery to Aylsham's agricultural industry. At its peak it carried over 1000 boats annually; mainly Norfolk wherries. The junction of river and roads, plus later railways, are crucial to the situation and importance of the town.

Aylsham North, a Great Eastern Railway station, opened in 1883 only a short distance from the staithe. It quickly out-competed wherries for transporting freight. Devastating floods in 1912 destroyed bridges and locks, causing Aylsham Staithe's final demise. The flood caused problems on the railway too. Over 200 people were stranded overnight after a train from Great Yarmouth was trapped at Aylsham North following multiple bridge collapses.

Spa Lane, to the south of Aylsham, is named after the spa that existed there in the early 1700s. The mineral rich waters were considered good for health. Spa Lane can become muddy in winter. The alternative route shown, using another section along Marriott's Way, offers a shorter, but drier, walk.

AYLSHAM TOWN

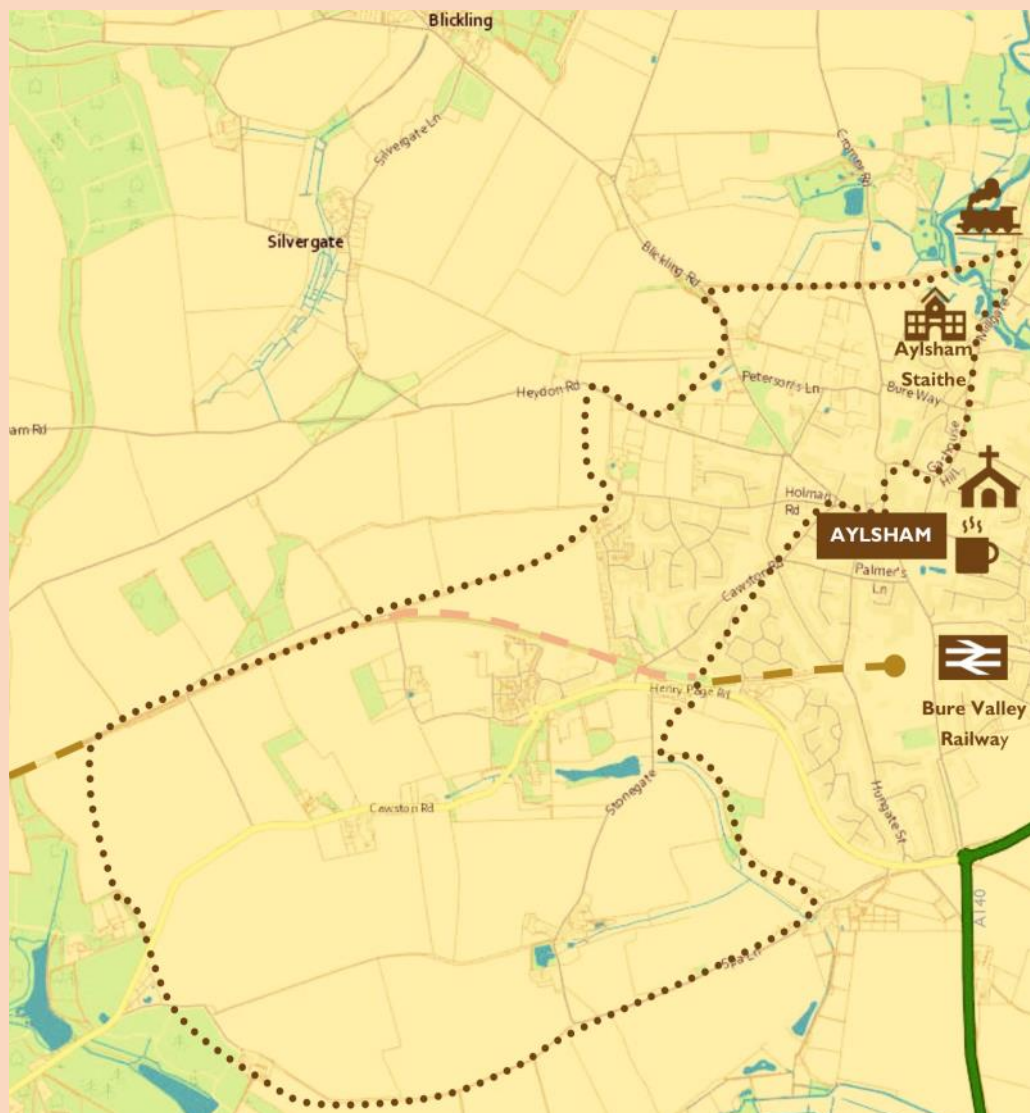
Square: a view of the former Anchor Inn, Millgate, Aylsham. Circle: acorns.



Occupied since prehistoric times, with Roman and Saxon archaeology, Aylsham boomed in the Middle Ages thanks to the wool trade. It remains a thriving market town with a handsome Georgian centre and many amenities. Numerous historic buildings line the route from the Market Place to Aylsham Staithe.

Good to Know: This walk starts in central Aylsham, at the Market Square and Penfold Street (NR11 6HT). Aylsham has plenty of parking and is served by regular buses from neighbouring towns. With varied walking surfaces, expect some muddy sections at Spa Lane following rain. An alternative route along the Marriott's Way, bypassing Spa Lane, is highlighted on the map.

Aylsham has many eateries and independent shops to enjoy.



THEMELTHORPE LOOP



The bridge of the M&GN crossing the GER line near Themelthorpe, circa 1950. Image courtesy of Stuart McPherson.



12.5 miles

The Themelthorpe Curve linked two lines previously owned by rival networks. Midland & Great Northern (M&GN) trains ran north-south, Great Eastern Railway (GER) trains ran east-west. Until 1960 the trains belonging to the M&GN crossed over those of its competitor, the GER, on an iron girder bridge.

The Themelthorpe Curve's construction under British Rail halved the journey time for industrial freight across Norfolk. It was the sharpest bend on the UK network; so tight that trains were limited to 10 mph to avoid derailment!

The extraordinary St. Michael the Archangel's Church at Booton was constructed between 1876 and 1900. It was designed by the Rev. Whitwell Elwin. He had no specialist training but possessed a vivid imagination.

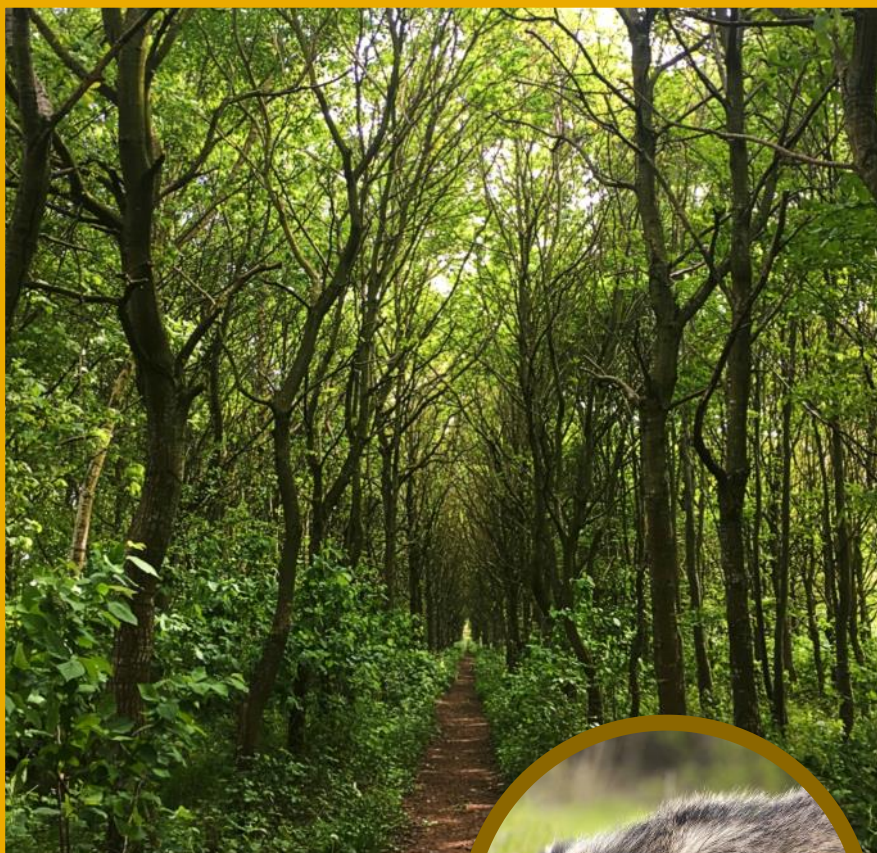
Elwin toured England with two ladies, Miss Holley and Miss Roberts, to seek inspiration from other religious buildings. During this period, Elwin's wife lived quietly in the rectory, which had been constructed using funds from her dowry. The house remained undecorated, with no curtains, carpets or heating; apparently to her own evangelical liking. The church, in contrast had ornate fittings and spectacular stained glass, which is supposed to feature the portraits of his favourite associates.

The famous architect Sir Edwin Lutyens remarked that Booton church was, *'very naughty but built in the right spirit'*.

The church was declared redundant in 1961 and is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. It can still be enjoyed as an eccentric location for champing parties (church-camping).

THEMELTHORPE LOOP

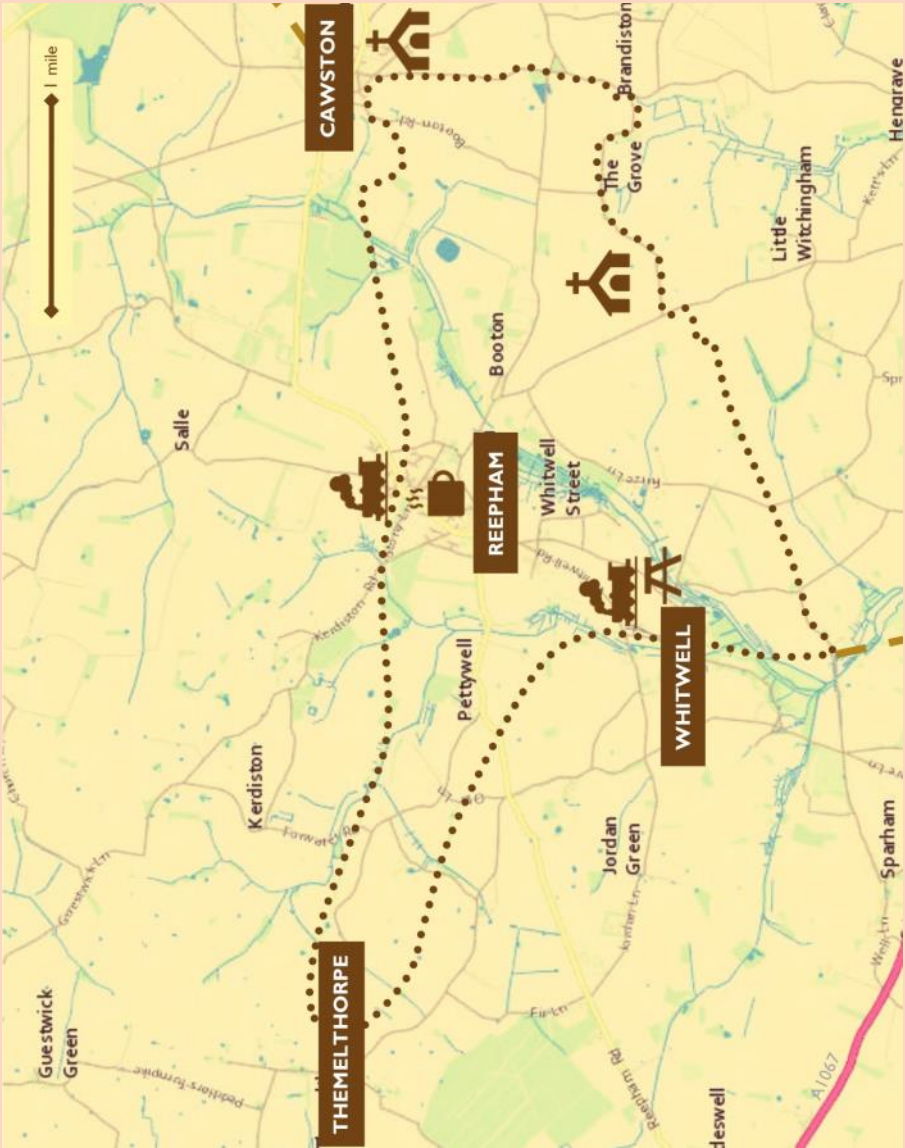
Square : young woodlands along the route. Circle: badgers live close by.



Once a railway, Marriott's Way has been reclaimed by nature. Railway bridges with girders or brick arches remain, however grassy verges and young hardwood trees now provide rich habitats for flora and fauna. Along this walk you'll discover the scrapes and tunnel entrances of the largest badger sett in Norfolk.

Good to Know: Start this walk at Whitwell & Reepham Station (NR10 4GA) or Kerri’s Farmhouse Pine (NR10 4LJ); where you can pop in for refreshments. There are places to park in Reepham, Cawston and at both old stations.

A reliable but infrequent bus service connects Reepham with Norwich.



SALLE CYCLE LOOP



View down The Street toward the church of St. Peter & St. Paul's. Image courtesy of Reepham Archive.



7 miles

Salle (pronounced, more-or-less, 'Saul') has shrunk from the importance it once had. This parish has some fantastic archaeology, from Neolithic flint tools, to considerable Bronze Age activity, including the deposition of at least two metalwork hoards.

There are fewer finds from the Iron Age and Roman Periods, but from Anglo-Saxon times the village named for '*the Sallow Wood*' developed into another prosperous Norfolk wool estate with a fine large church. Treasures inside St. Peter & St. Paul's include a set of nine decorative roof bosses in the chancel representing events from the life of Christ, from the Annunciation to the Ascension.

The Black Death and end of the wool boom hit Norfolk hard. Salle has lost enclosures, trackways and ditches, now visible only as earthworks, which demonstrate that the medieval settlement layout was more extensive than it now is. A whole second village, Stinton, described at Domesday, has completely disappeared. Three medieval moated sites show how wealthy the parish once was.

Salle Park House, built in 1761 by Edward Hase, is the surviving 'big house'. A three storey Palladian brick house, it is set in a classic mid 18th century landscape park, and 'estate' fences and cottages are features of the parish.

While cycling you'll be able to enjoy the gentle gradient as you skirt the patchwork of surrounding fields and cottages with flint knapping or Dutch gables. Goldfinches and long-tailed tits gather in numbers around these lanes and you may spot rooks, hare or red-legged partridge in the surrounding fields.

SALLE CYCLE LOOP

Square: St Peter & St Paul's church at Salle. Circle: a hovering kestrel.



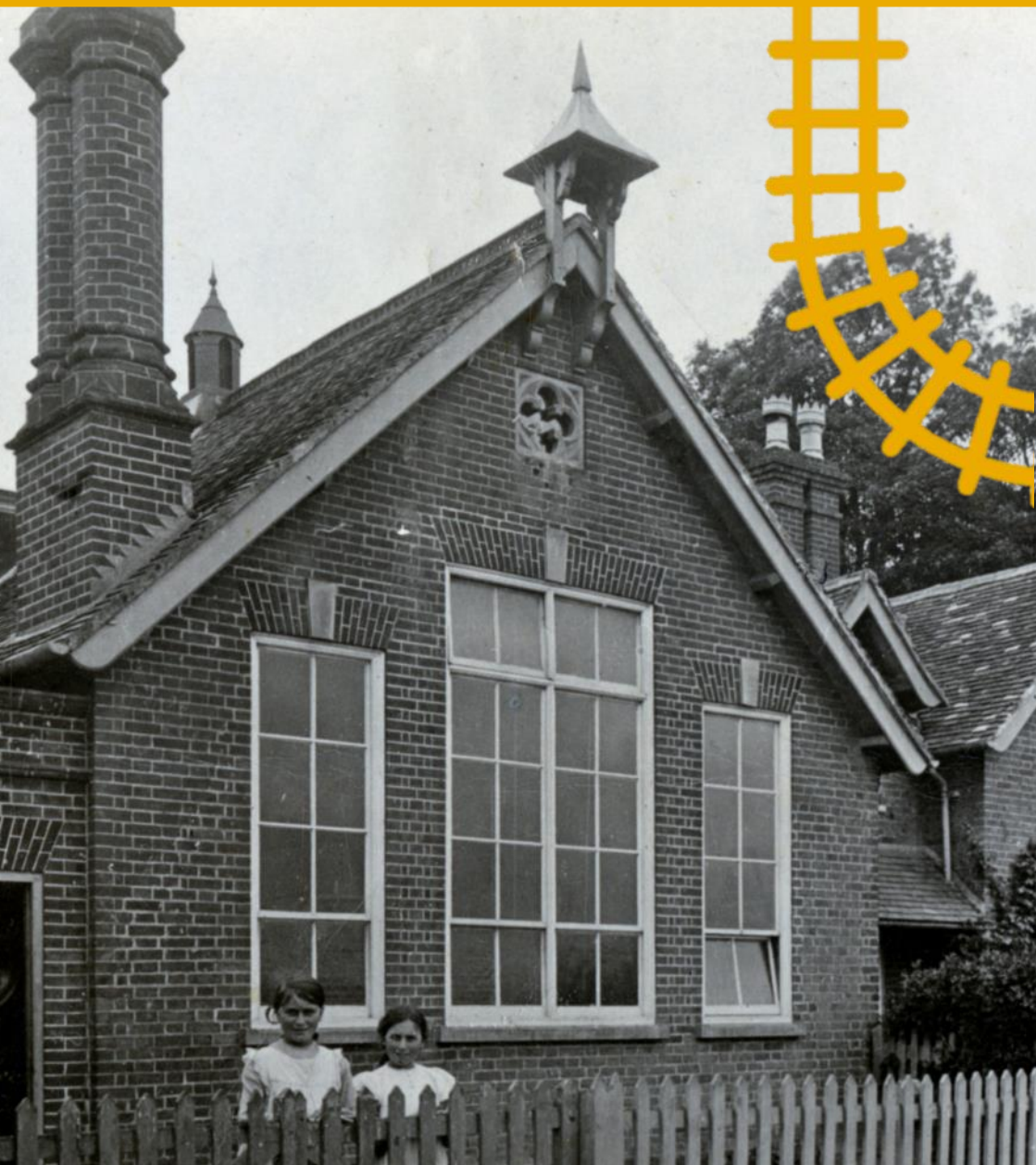
The Salle Cycle Loop follows quiet roads for its entire length. The jewel in the crown is undoubtedly The Street, Salle, with St. Peter & St. Paul's Church opposite the large cricket ground. The route can be extended by joining with the Wood Dalling route at the end of Reepham Road.

Good to Know: Pick up this cycle loop at Kerri's Farmhouse Pine (NR10 4LJ). There is plenty of parking here and delicious refreshments are available too. The entire route follows quiet rural roads and there is also a cycle workshop at the old station.

Visit: www.kerrispinefurniture.co.uk and
www.reephamcycleworkshop.co.uk



WOOD DALLING CYCLE LOOP



The school house and two pupils at Wood Dalling. Image courtesy of Picture Norfolk, NCC.



10 miles

A series of events that began at Wood Dalling School culminated in the longest strike in British history.

Annie and Tom Higdon started work at the school in 1902. Annie was determined that her pupils should receive a good education. She believed regular attendance was key.

Wood Dalling was typical of many rural communities. Most people relied on agricultural activities for income. Annie despaired that pupils were often absent from school having been employed as cheap labour on local farms. Pupils were often reported '*crow-keeping*', '*cattle-driving*' and '*hay-making*'.

One pupil, Albert Cottrell, was spotted working for Mr. Gamble in a field behind the school. When Tom challenged the farmer the two came to blows. Mr. Higdon was subsequently found guilty of assault. In a manoeuvre by the Governors, Mr. Gamble was later appointed a manager of the school.

The inevitable conflict between school management and the Higdons culminated in the couple being forced to relocate. In 1911 they started work at Burston School, almost 40 miles away.

The Higdons soon faced familiar problems at their new school. Annie was sacked for being discourteous to the management. The next day pupils refused to return to their classrooms. The Burston School Strike continued from 1914 to 1939, ending only with the death of Tom Higdon. During the strike the couple continued to teach pupils, first in makeshift classrooms, and later in a specially built schoolhouse, now preserved as a museum.

WOOD DALLING CYCLE LOOP

Square: St Andrew's church. Circle: a red admiral butterfly.



Wood Dalling Cycle Loop follows quiet country roads surrounded by open farmland framed by large oak trees and plantations of pine. It passes through the village of Guestwick, and between Themelthorpe and Reephram using a section of Marriott's Way.



Good to Know: You can start this cycle from Church Lane, Wood Dalling (NR11 6SN), or at Kerdiston Road (NR10 4FP), 300m west of Kerri's Farmhouse Pine (NR10 4LJ). There is also parking in Reepham centre.

The route follows quiet rural roads long its entire length. In drier months, and confident off-roaders, an alternative unmade track route is indicated by dashed lines.



HERITAGE TRAIL PROJECT

Offering 26 miles of traffic free path, Marriott's Way attracts over 100,000 cyclists, walkers and horse riders every year. The Marriott's Way Heritage Trail Project was conceived in 2017 to better research, conserve, and share the railway heritage of the route, and the plants and wildlife that colonised it once the trains had stopped running.

Over the course of the two-and-a-half-year project, a host of activities, walks,



educational events, and conservation of heritage and habitats took place.

The project was extensively funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with match funding coming from developers through planning obligations and the rest made up from Norfolk County Council, as well as the generosity of fundraisers, stake-holders and the work of volunteers.

The trail is one of the finest outdoor resources in Norfolk due to its wide, flat paths and numerous amenities to be found along the route. Marriott's Way and its circular routes are available for use all year round and has many useful links to the public rights of way network.



The trail and its circular routes are also available from **GoJauntly**; a free community-based walking app. Maps and photo guides help you navigate, as well as highlighting heritage hotspots and local amenities. Go to your mobile device's app store and download **GoJauntly** free to try it out for yourself.

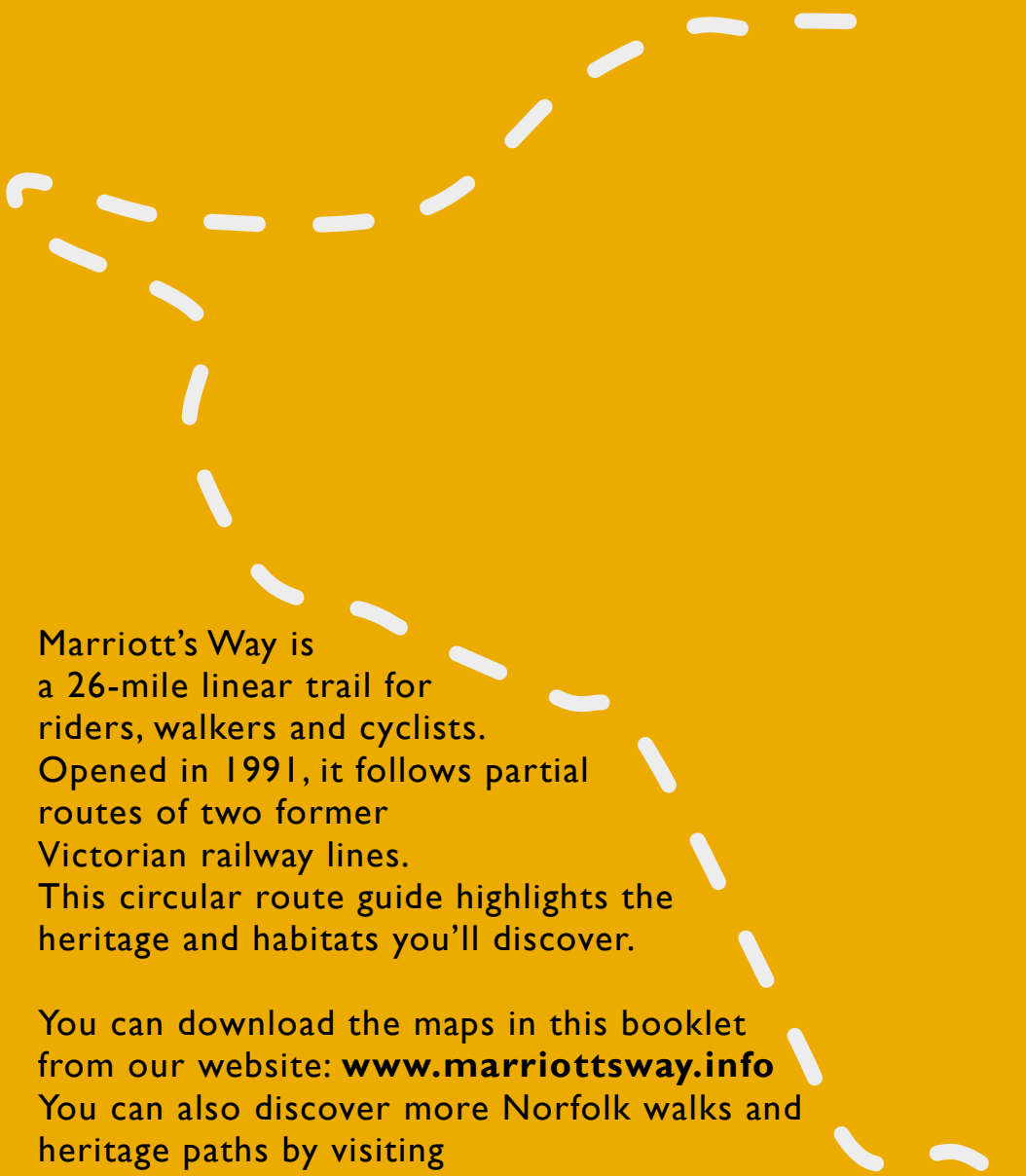
The Norfolk Trails network is a series of long-distance footpaths across the county, varying in length from the shortest, the Little Ouse Path (10 miles), to the mammoth 84 mile Norfolk Coast Path which stretches from Hunstanton, right round to Hopton-on-Sea on the Suffolk border.

The maps in this guide are intended only as an overview. You may wish to navigate your way using an **Ordnance Survey map (Explorer 238)**.



Accessible Routes

The team of Marriott's Way Heritage Trail project have access tested the most popular stretches of the trail. Supported by Norfolk Trails and a group of trails users with disabilities, we've create a series of resources for everyone to use. The detailed access tested route information can be found at **www.norfolktrails.co.uk**



Marriott's Way is
a 26-mile linear trail for
riders, walkers and cyclists.
Opened in 1991, it follows partial
routes of two former
Victorian railway lines.
This circular route guide highlights the
heritage and habitats you'll discover.

You can download the maps in this booklet
from our website: **www.marriottsway.info**
You can also discover more Norfolk walks and
heritage paths by visiting
www.norfolktrails.co.uk

