

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.

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 signaller 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.

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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

