Introduction

The routes in this guide are designed to make the most of the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Marriott’s Way, which follows two disused train lines between the medieval city of Norwich and the historic market town of Aylsham. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, they are a great way to delve deeper into this historically and naturally rich area. A wonderful array of habitats await, many of which are protected areas, home to rare wildlife. The railway heritage is not the only history you will come across, as there are a series of churches and old villages to discover.

With loops from one mile to twelve, there’s a distance for everyone here, whether you’ve never walked in the countryside before or you’re a seasoned rambler. The landscape is particularly flat, with gradients being kept to a minimum from when it was a railway, but this does not stop you feeling like you’ve had a challenge. All you need is a slight elevation above the neighboring fields to feel like you’re on top of the world.

The routes often pass pubs, cafés and local shops, offering a great opportunity to explore local cuisine and learn more about the area. Whatever the weather, the welcomes are always warm in Norfolk.

Once you’ve sampled all of these, why not try one of our long distance trails, or one of our other circular walks across the county. More information can be found on our website, www.norfolktrails.co.uk.

Getting Around

All of the towns and villages where these loops start and finish have public car parks, and most are served by public transport. Plan your car free journey using the Traveline website, www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk. Please respect the natural environment as you enjoy these walks: stay on the designated paths, and take any litter home with you. Some of these routes pass through sensitive conservation sites, and some through livestock grazing areas, so please ensure that dogs under control and leave gates as you find them.

Equipment

Even in dry weather, a good pair of walking boots or shoes is essential for the longer routes. Some of Marriott’s Way can be muddy so in some areas a road bike may not be suitable and appropriate footwear is advised. Norfolk’s climate is drier than much of the county but unfortunately we can’t guarantee sunshine, so packing a waterproof is always a good idea. If you are lucky enough to have the weather on your side, don’t forget sun cream and a hat.

Other considerations

The walks and cycle loops described in these pages are well signposted on the ground and detailed downloadable maps are available for each at www.norfolktrails.co.uk. However, best practice in the countryside is always to carry a map. All of the circulars in this guide are covered by OS Explorer Map 238. Many of the walks take in sections of road, and while these are generally quiet, they are still open to traffic, so please take care. If you intend to travel alone, remember to let someone know where you are going, when you plan to return, and always carry a charged mobile phone with you. Not all of the walks pass shops or pubs so don’t forget to take refreshments!

Help us to help you

We have lots of opportunities for volunteering on the Norfolk Trails network, so if you’d like to get involved, get in touch. If you have any questions or comments regarding any of these walks, please don’t hesitate to contact us with these too.

Email: information@norfolk.gov.uk
Telephone: 0344 800 8009

Details correct at the time of going to print. Please be aware that routes are shared with other users (vehicles, pedestrians, horse riders etc.). Users of these routes do so at their own risk. We do not accept any responsibility for loss, damage or injury, however caused, arising directly or indirectly from this leaflet. © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100019340.
# Marriott’s Way

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This five and a half mile walk soaks in railway heritage from the very start. The site of the old Hellesdon Station is at the south eastern point of the route and is brimming with history, from prehistoric flint artifacts, to railway ironwork and World War 2 anti-tank defenses.

On the surface, all that survives of the old Hellesdon Station is the remaining section of the platform, shown in the picture to the right. However, explore slightly further into the undergrowth, and you will find cattle pens, ornate ironwork, a second platform and evidence of the original ticket building.

Marriott’s Way follows the western bank and floodplain of the River Wensum for much of its southern end. This part of the River Wensum is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation and home to many interesting species, including otters, water voles, kingfishers and nightingales.

**Getting started**
This walk starts at Gunton Lane, NR5 0DQ.

**Getting there**
There are two car parks along Gunton Lane: one at Gunton Lane Recreation Ground, and one at the southern end of the road. The number 5 bus or the red line buses from Norwich will bring you to Costessey from Norwich.

**What to expect**
Off road tracks and roadside footpaths with some gradient.

**Facilities**
There are shops and newsagents near the route in Costessey, New Costessey and Hellesdon, as well as pubs directly on the route, and places of accommodation.
**Themelthorpe Loop**

The longest of the Marriott's Way circular walks joins the villages of Cawston, Reepham and Great Witchingham by following the 'Themelthorpe Curve'. Marriott's Way is made up of two former train lines: the Midland and Great Northern line (originally joining Norwich with Melton Constable), and the Great Eastern Railway line (linking Wroxham and County School).

In 1959, all passenger traffic stopped flowing through Norwich City Station, but the station was too important for goods to shut completely. So as to avoid a journey all the way to Cromer to get from one side of Norwich to the other, the Themelthorpe curve was installed to join these two lines which had been rivals before nationalization. The curve was the sharpest corner on any line in the UK, so tight that trains were limited to 10mph when going around.

The path now is home to the largest badger sett in Norfolk, mainly thanks to the imported materials used to build the railways being firm enough to support their extensive network of tunnels.

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**Getting started**
This walk starts at Whitwell and Reepham Station: don’t forget to pop in for a drink and a marvel at their trains!

**Getting there**
There are places to park in Reepham, Cawston, and a car park at Whitwell and Reepham Station.

**What to expect**
Mainly off-road, along tracks and quiet lanes. Marriott’s Way can be quite muddy in sections so wear suitable footwear.

**Facilities**
Reepham has many facilities including a pub, shop and cafe. Whitwell and Reepham Station serves food, drink and has toilets.
This beautiful five mile walk passes two excellently preserved and restored railway stations: the M&GN Whitwell and Reepham Station and the GER Reepham Station. Both now boast cafés, with W&R also offering a bar, station museum, shop, and occasional train rides. The site of Reepham Station is also home to a pine workshop.

The historic market town of Reepham is home to no fewer than 61 listed buildings, two churches, a weekly Wednesday morning market, and various pubs, cafés, and restaurants.

This walk can easily be shortened by cutting through Reepham, just in case you spend too long in the café at lunch!

Getting started
This walk starts at Whitwell and Reepham Station.

Getting there
There are places to park in Reepham, and a car park at Whitwell and Reepham Station. The 43 (via Aylsham) and 45A buses will get you to Reepham from Norwich.

What to expect
This route mainly uses the extensive network of public rights of way in this area as well as passing through the village of Reepham itself.

Facilities
Reepham has many facilities including pubs, shops, and cafés. Whitwell and Reepham Station serves food, drink and has toilets.
Starting in Reepham, this walk takes you east along Marriott’s Way through farmlands and valley meadows until you reach Cawston. Here, St Agnes’ Church, has a fine hammer beam roof, decorated with carved angels and a 15th century rood screen. Standing at almost 120 feet, this 14th century church stands out from the rest of the countryside and can be seen from miles around.

The return leg of this circular walk takes you along a public footpath through to the small village of Booton. Although Booton has a population of only around 200 people, its church is a sight to behold. St Michael the Archangel's Church, Booton, is in the 'eccentric French Gothic style', and is often known as the 'Cathedral of the Fields'.

Booton Common lies about a mile east of Reepham. It is a species-rich fen and wet heathland containing several rare plants. It is also home to a variety of breeding birds including snipe, woodcock, grasshopper warbler and lesser whitethroat.

Getting started
This walk starts on Marriott’s Way, Cawston Road.

Getting there
There is a car park at Kerri’s Pine, Cawston Road and on Station Road, just north of Attlebridge. The 43 (via Aylsham) and 45A buses will get you to Reepham from Norwich.

Maps and guides
Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238+.

What to expect
Mainly offroad route through picturesque villages.

Facilities
Reepham has many facilities including pubs, shops, and cafés and Cawston has a café, pub and village shop.
This may be one of the shortest of the Marriott’s Way circular walks, but it should by no means be ignored. This walk is a lovely simple stroll which still takes in the countryside, whilst not straying too far from the urban centre of Aylsham and the amenities it provides.

The route passes the site of the old Aylsham Workhouse to the eastern edge of the walk. The workhouse was designed by Donthorne and built in 1849, and is the only surviving urban workhouse by this Norfolk-born architect.

It started its life as Aylsham Union Workhouse and in 1930 became a Public Assistance Institution and finally St Michael’s Hospital until 2005 when it closed.

This walk has been created by two Norfolk County Council HLF Projects, the Marriott’s Way Heritage Trail and Voices from the Workhouse. The Voices from the Workhouse project has four other circular walks across Norfolk, at Great Yarmouth, Gressenhall, King’s Lynn and Pulham Market.

**Getting started**
This walk starts at the car park next to the play area on Mileham Drive.

**Getting there**
There is a car park on Mileham Drive and many buses to Aylsham from neighbouring towns.

**Maps and guides**
Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238.

**What to expect**
A mixture of urban and rural walking through Aylsham suburbs and surrounding countryside.

**Facilities**
There is a café near the north eastern corner of the route.
This mammoth seven mile circular walk takes in not only Marriott’s Way, but also a section of Weavers’ Way, another long distance linear route managed by Norfolk trails. This stretch of Weavers’ Way takes you past Aylsham’s M&GN station, the old rival station to what is now the Bure Valley Railway (GER) at the end of Marriott’s Way.

If you would like to make a day of this walk, why not walk a little further north west along Weavers’ Way and pay a visit to Blickling Hall? The 17th century stately home has been in the care of the National Trust since 1940 and has 450 acres of parkland to enjoy.

If you would like a shorter route, why not cut the walk in half and join it up along Marriott’s Way?

Getting started
This walk starts on in Aylsham.

Getting there
There are public car parks in Aylsham, along with multiple bus routes from neighbouring towns.

Maps and guides
Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238.

What to expect
Some urban walking through Aylsham centre with a lot of rural walking. Expect some muddy sections around Spa Lane.

Facilities
Aylsham centre has lots of amenities including pubs, cafés and shops.
This one mile loop is a perfect starter walk to get your legs moving. It can be completed on foot or on your bike, as the full length is either traffic free or on quiet roads. The stretch of the route along the Bure Valley Path is usually in good condition, although can get muddy in the winter.

The loop takes in a section of the Bure Valley Path, running along the heritage railway line, Bure Valley Railway. The Bure Valley Railway is the longest railway in the UK of less than standard gauge, running nine miles from Aylsham to Wroxham. If you're lucky, you might even see a live steam train! This line used to be connected to the Great Eastern Railway line from Hoveton to Themelthorpe, which now makes up the Aylsham to Themelthorpe section of Marriott’s Way.

**Getting started**
This walk starts at the Bure Valley Railway Station.

**Getting there**
There is a car park at the Bure Valley Railway Station.

**Maps and guides**
Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238.

**What to expect**
Most of the route follows roadside footpaths, with a stretch taking in the Bure Valley Path.

**Facilities**
The Bure Valley Railway has a café and a shop, along with minimum gauge heritage railway trains running throughout the year.
Salle Cycle Loop

Getting started
This loop starts at the edge of Reepham, near to Kerri’s Farmhouse Pine.

Getting there
There is a car park at Kerri’s Farmhouse Pine.

Maps and guides
Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238.

What to expect
The entire route follows roads. There is an occasional cycle service and repair workshop that visits Kerri’s Farmhouse Pine - take a look at their website for more information.

Facilities
Reepham centre has lots of amenities including pubs, cafés and shops.

Salle Cycle Route is one of our three brand new cycle loops branching off from Marriott’s Way. It follows quiet roads north out of Reepham until you reach the small village of Salle. The route reaches right into the village itself running past the church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul and heading north along Heydon Road.

The church of St. Peter and St. Paul is a grand 15th century church with a striking tower reaching 126 feet, and can be seen for miles above the flat farm fields that surround it.

This route follows quiet roads for its entire length, so you’re able to use whatever bike you fancy.
Wood Dalling Cycle Loop

Getting started
This loop starts on Marriott’s Way at Kerdistion Road, 300m west of Kerri’s Farmhouse Pine.

Getting there
There is a car park in Reepham centre and at Kerri’s Farmhouse Pine.

Maps and guides
Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 238.

What to expect
The route is split between on and off-road riding. It can get very muddy along the Themelthorpe Curve, especially in winter.

Facilities
Aylsham centre has lots of amenities including pubs, cafés and shops.

This is the longest signed circular cycle route on Marriott’s Way. It is fully cycleable, taking you along a 2.5 mile section of Marriott’s Way before running along a further 7.5 miles of quiet Norfolk country roads and off-road tracks. Some areas of the Themelthorpe loop can get muddy, so it might be worth using bike that would be up for the challenge.

Wood Dalling is home to the church of St Andrew, large and from the 14th/15th century. The village pond reflects the great tower, and the lovely village sits quietly about the church, surrounded by high-hedged fields.

This loop can be made even longer by connecting it to the neighbouring Salle Cycle Loop, or travelling further along Marriott’s Way. Whatever route you take, make sure you’ve enough water and that someone else knows where you’re going.
The Norfolk Trails network is a series of long distance footpaths across the county, varying in length from the shortest, the Little Ouse Path, through to the mammoth 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, and are not suitable for navigation. We recommend that trail users use the appropriate Ordnance Survey map (Explorer 238) as well as downloading a detailed route map from our website, www.norfolktrails.co.uk or marriottsway.info

To find out more about the Marriott's Way Heritage Trail project, including events we are running, training we offer, educational sessions we lead or volunteering opportunities, please go to www.marriottsway.info
As part of the Marriott’s Way project we have access tested the whole of the route. Supported by staff, this was undertaken by a group of trails users with disabilities who have helped us to create a series of resources for everyone to use.

The detailed access tested route information can be found at www.norfolktrails.co.uk.

The Marriott’s Way Heritage Trail Project is a project to better research, conserve, interpret, and educate people about 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 there will be a host of activities, events, and work taking place. These will document and preserve the industrial heritage of the former railway line and encourage more people to use the much loved, traffic free, 26 mile route which already attracts over 100,000 cyclists, walkers and horse riders every year.

The majority of the funding for the £667,906 project has come from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£455,000), with £167,399 coming from developers through planning obligations and the rest made up from Norfolk County Council, fundraising, donations and volunteer time.

The detailed access tested route information can be found at www.norfolktrails.co.uk.