

## Horstead and Heggatt Heath

Relax on a beautiful Summer's day with this walk by a river in the beautiful Norfolk countryside. This walk begins outside the Coltishall Pharmacy. It is four miles on mainly paths, tracks and quiet roads, so suitable for dogs, and explores the village of Coltishall and its hinterland. There is evidence of past industry, you will learn how big a pig really is, discover some delightful and tucked-away flint cottages and climb a hill. There are opportunities to lose your shoes and paddle in a river. Indeed some may choose to take a dip....

1. The walk begins outside the distinctive Coltishall Pharmacy, once an Antiques emporium (A). Before moving from this spot it is worth looking at Coltishall High Street (B), ; many of the houses here date from the 1850's and it is easy to imagine what a busy Victorian High Street in Norfolk was like.
2. Follow the road South towards the petrol station on Coltishall Island, taking care when crossing the roads. Note the Blacksmiths Yard (C) on your left, just before you get to the Island.
3. Use the garage side of the road opposite Grove House (D) and head towards the road bridge (E) but, before you get there take a slight left over a grass area to a wooden footbridge. Follow the path round to the river.
4. Continue down the side of the river through an open grove until you reach a lock gate and bridge where you can cross the navigation onto a grassy triangle. Go towards the other apex of the triangle- any path will do!
5. Cross the river by the remains of Horstead Mill (F). Here you will often find "wild" swimmers in the river.
6. Join the road and turn left, heading up a steep hill. Horstead House can be seen on the left as you ascend.
7. Ignore the road on the right and carry on until you reach a broad rough track on your left between trees (the fingerpost is in the hedges somewhere!). Take this track.
8. Follow the track between fields usually full of pigs of various sizes. There is a sharp bend to left and right half way along.
9. After about a mile you reach a private road to Dove House Farm; take the track on the right through woods and then by the side of a field.
10. Continue for half a mile until you reach a track crossing the path; turn right and follow it across Heggatt Heath (see panel) and past some charming flint cottages that comprise Heggatt Street until you reach the road.
11. Opposite is Heggatt Hall (G). Turn right and follow the straight road back towards Horstead.
12. When you come to the track through pig fields that you took earlier continue straight on and take the left hand fork at the top of the hill.
13. About 100 yards down the road take the path through the woods steeply down hill to the river.
14. At the river find the riverside path before you get to the old mill and return to Coltishall on the Horstead side of the river. Cross the main road and turn right and over the bridge (there is a footbridge on the North side) to your starting point.

### **A. Antiques Emporium and adjoining house**

A mid 19th century red brick showroom and adjoining house with a large 19th century double-fronted projecting window.

### **B. Coltishall High Street.**

Comprises a contemporary collection of buildings, evocate of a mid-Victorian high street. Spot:

#### **Terrace of three early 19th century red brick cottages now in use as two houses and a shop.**

May 1984. Listed, Grade II. Three terraced cottages, now one house and house and shop. Early 19th century, built of red brick with pantiles.

#### **Mid 19th century house, with a Doric door with pilasters and a projecting cornice.**

Mid 19th century. Red brick, slate roof. 2 storeys 2 bays. Door to left with fanlight in Doric doorcase with pilasters and projecting cornice. Casement windows under flat arches. Timber eaves brackets. Central axial stack.

#### **An early 19th century red brick house with a pilastered doorcase.**

House, early 19th century, built of red brick with black pantiles. 2 storeys. One window. Entrance door at left, with 4 panel door. Timber doorcase with moulded pilasters, patera stows and cornice. Sash windows with glazing bars and segmental brick arch on ground floor. Bracketed timber eaves. Gable stack.

### **C. Blacksmith's Yard**

A late 17th century brick house that was extended in the 18th century. The house has a lobby-entrance plan and 18th century wrought iron windows.

### **D. Grove House**

A large red brick house that dates mainly to the 19th century but which is probably built around an earlier core. The house has a central two-storey porch and recessed brick panels containing stone coats-of-arms.

### **E. Coltishall Bridge**

A single arched stone bridge dated 1762. The bridge was rebuilt in the 19th century and again in the 1920s Bridge. Single arch. Originally of stone, abutment is dated 1762. Rebuilt in 19th century and again in concrete in 1920s.

## F. Site of Horstead Mill

A late 18th century watermill, which may have been built on the site of a 16th century mill. The mill burnt down in 1963. This stands on the site of an Elizabethan or earlier mill. The Lock Cut was made in 1775, but the Mill is dated 1790. Originally described as weatherboarded.

Now a picturesque overgrown ruin after fire, two or more ranges of parallel brick arches standing above the sluices; modern weir inserted.

## G. Heggat Hall and outbuildings

This knapped flint and red brick manor house was built in the 17th century in neo-Elizabethan style and was extended and rebuilt in 1841. The front of the building has a three storey porch. Inside is a panelled dining room with the arms of George Ward of Brooke of 1663 over the fireplace. The barn and stables date to the 18th century but were built around an earlier core. Outbuildings adjoining the hall are 17th century and have been converted into a flat and offices.

### The mill pond

Horstead Mill, probably dating from the 18th century but on a much earlier site, burned down in 1963. The mill pond is still there at TG267193, and on occasion is haunted by a ghostly figure. It's said to bear in its arms the body of a servant girl who drowned herself there after her lover abandoned her. Nowadays, the ghost would have to jostle for space considering all the canoeists, anglers, swimmers and tourists that congregate there.

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[http://www.broadland.gov.uk/leisure\\_and\\_toarism/1177.asp](http://www.broadland.gov.uk/leisure_and_toarism/1177.asp)

### THE THREE-THUMBED MILLER

Christopher Marlowe, in his travels about Norfolk in the early 20th century, came across a rather odd prophecy concerning a tree in the parish of Horstead. Leaving the "commonplace village church" behind, he took the road that leads south to Crostwick and Norwich: "Turning south over Heggatt Heath - a notorious highwayman's resort - I soon reached the great tree in the centre of the common (TG277184 area), where tradition relates that a miller with three thumbs shall hold three kings' horses during the progress of a great battle - in the course of this fight nearly every man in the county will be killed, but no date is given".<sup>1</sup> This oak was also once said to have seen the court of 'a Queen of England.'<sup>1</sup> According to an article in 'Norfolk Archaeology', one of the prophecies of Mother Shipton (c.1488-1561) was that the miller with three thumbs would be born in London, the battle would be on Stone Hill (TG277143 area, at Rackheath in Norfolk), and that the blood would be so clotted that ravens would carry it away.<sup>2</sup>

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Christopher Marlowe: 'People & Places in Marshland' (Cecil Palmer, 1927), p.237.