

Bacton and Witton

This walk is a little further afield, beginning from Bacton Village Hall, Coast Road NR12 0ES. To quote a local source "the views around Bacton have to be seen to be believed. The open Norfolk skies enable a wide view of the sea, beach and surrounding area". Quiet lanes and open countryside; 4.5 miles taking in a square tower, a round tower, stunning glimpses of the gas terminal... what more could you want? Dog friendly. Opportunity to pick the Poachers Pocket afterwards.

TAKE CARE WHEN CROSSING OR WALKING ALONG ROADS!

Historic notes are from the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website

The Route

1. Begin at Bacton Village Hall, which is on the Coast Road opposite the now closed Duke public house. There is plenty of parking around the Village Hall.
2. Cross over the road and proceed straight on up Church Road. After 100yds two branches merge and carry on up the hill.

Bacton Manor and Manor Farm

The Manor house is originally a late 16th century farmhouse with later alterations and extensions. It is of flint, with brick dressings and a thatched roof. Interestingly, like some other buildings in the area, the house contains some reused dressing stone from Bromholm Priory. Manor Farm is the building adjoining the Manor house to form a V shape. It is also of flint and brick, and probably dates to the 17th century, although much altered. The two buildings were separate until joined in the 19th century.

3. Continue up the hill towards the church.
4. Follow the road round to the right and skirt the Vicarage until you reach the church drive and car park. The Vicarage dates from 1780, the oldest part being at the back of the house. It is now privately owned, so don't be tempted to walk up their driveway to the Church!
5. Enter the Churchyard through an iron gate. Have a look in the Church and search out the Montgomery memorial.

Montgomery Memorial, St Andrew's Churchyard

Memorial at the head of the Montgomery family plot in St Andrew's Churchyard is located at the Eastern corner of the Church. The headstone was erected in 1924 and is finely designed and carved in Art Nouveau style on white stone. It has two bas-relief angels in the form of herms at the sides of the headstone, one wing of each curving over to form an arch corresponding with the curved top of the stone. One hand rests on the chest of each woman and they appear to be dressed in chitons, Classical Greek tunics. However as they have 1920s bobbed hair they could be in simple contemporary dress. Behind are a pair of gates, one partly open as if leading to 'life eternal'. *Mors Janua Vitae*- death is the gateway to life- was a widely known Classical epigram. Inscriptions on the reverse to various members of the Montgomery family were added in 1954.

St Andrew's Church, Bacton

A rather isolated church, consisting of a west tower, nave, chancel and south porch. Construction is of flint, freestone and brick. The earliest visible part of the building is the stoup in the south nave doorway, which is of Norman date. The rest is mainly 14th century with a 15th century tower and a 15th or early 16th century south porch. There were also alterations and restorations in the 19th century.

Inside, there is a 14th century font and 16th century wall paintings. The churchyard has many interesting gravestones, including an Art Nouveau memorial dating to 1924.

6. Retrace your steps out of the graveyard and down the drive to the lane, turn right and continue along this road past a private house called Bacton Hall.

Barn at Church Farm

A mid 18th century brick and flint barn with a thatched roof set back from the road behind other houses. As a result of storm damage (following an extensive period of rain) a significant section of the two-storey barn roof collapsed and is now covered with a tarpaulin.

7. Follow the winding road. There are views across the fields to Edingthorpe Church, its octagonal tower and roof clearly visible (while off the main route of this walk, you may care to go and view the Church; your effort will be rewarded!)

All Saints' Church, Edingthorpe, Bacton

An isolated church, north of Edingthorpe village and standing on a low hill surrounded by trees, this building consists of a round west tower, nave, chancel and south porch; construction is of flint and brick with freestone dressing. The nave is thatched, the chancel pantiled. The earliest parts of the church are the north and west walls of the nave, which are probably late Saxon or early Norman in date. The west tower is 12th or 13th century, with a 14th century octagonal belfry. The chancel and most of the remainder of the church is 14th century with later alterations. Inside, there are a good number of medieval survivals. The 12th century door to the now blocked north door hangs on the west nave wall behind the decorated 14th century font. The rood screen is also 14th century, and the south door earlier than that. There are rare 14th century paintings on the north nave wall. The church has remained largely unchanged, a fact noted with approval by the Great War poet Siegfried Sassoon, who spent childhood holidays in Edingthorpe, and visited again in the 1930.

8. After about a mile opposite a row of houses there is a footpath sign across an arable field. Take this; it joins the hedge line halfway down the field and carries on until it reaches a road.
9. This road is busy- TAKE CARE! Cross the road and turn left. About 100yds along take a signed footpath through woods and down the side of a hedge towards Park Farm
10. At the bottom of the field beyond the farm buildings go over a stile on the left and cross a field to the South of the farm. Keep the large duck pond on your left.

Park Farmhouse and Barn

The main feature of Park Farm is the 45m long barn, which is dated to 1795. It is of brick and flint and has brick-edged doors and slit windows, with some herringbone brickwork. The original roof timbers are simple tie-beams, but the thatch was replaced by tiles 15 years ago. The farmhouse is of the same period, but has a massive wall inside the rear wing which may indicate some older building. The farm was apparently built soon after Witton Park in order to manage the lands.

11. At the end of the field, come out onto the lane and turn right to proceed up the hill.
12. Once you reach Witton Church turn into the footpath beyond the far wall of the Churchyard and proceed with the Church on your left across a field. There are fine views of the surrounding countryside and coast, with Happisburgh Church and lighthouse clearly visible ahead.

St Margaret's Church, Witton

The earliest surviving part of the building is a 12th century blocked doorway in the nave, which has largely 19th century windows. The chancel was rebuilt in 1857, and the whole church has been repeatedly modified so that an overall date is hard to give. Note that, when standing in the cancel looking at the alter the row of arches is tilted! The west tower has a lower 15th century stage and emerges at the roof-line as a polygonal bell-turret. Inside there is a 14th century octagonal font with multiple styles of tracery patterns, and a brass to Dame Juliana Anyell from around 1500, who was in the Order of the Vowesses.

13. Carry on down the hill until you reach a T-junction of paths, where you left
14. The path goes due North from here, crossing a permissive road (slight dog-leg left then right) and beside hedgerows until it reaches Pollard Street.
15. Beside houses at Pollard St enter a short narrow alleyway on the left of the houses to join a cul-de-sac, where you turn right
16. After a short distance the road opens up into a green with a bright yellow house ahead. Go up to the main road and cross over, entering Sandy Lane on the left of the Coastguard, which is located at this crossroads.
17. Sandy Lane goes down into a dip before rising to the junction you passed earlier, near Bacton Church.

18. Turn right and retrace your steps down to Coast Road, Bacton. Across the fields on your right you may catch glimpses of the remains of Broomholm Priory

Bromholm or Broomholm Priory

Site of a Cluniac Priory dedicated to St Andrew and founded 1113 by William de Glanville. Initially subordinate to the Cluniac House at Castle Acre (NHER 4096), it came under direct rule in about 1195 and was dissolved in 1536. Extant remains include the north transept, chapter house, part of the dormitory and two gatehouses. Cropmark evidence and fieldwork have provided detailed information about the extent of the site. World War Two remains at the priory site that were previously recorded under this NHER number have been moved to NHER 27255.

19. If you wish to take refreshment, the *Poachers Pocket* is a short drive away at Walcott Gap, or afternoon tea can be taken at *Sugar and Spice* near the Village Hall.



