

Worstead and Sloley

This walk starts outside Worstead church on Church Plain. It is worth having a walk around Church Plain before you depart, as there are a lot of old houses and remnants of Worstead's weaving past to be savoured.

Once ready to depart:

1. Leave Church Plain to the south, taking either Front Street or Back Street that pass the round-fronted building in the middle of the street.
2. Follow the road around several bends and then straight up a gentle hill. Use the path in the field rather than the road. On your left is Worstead Park. The park still exists but the house is long gone.
3. Pass Hall Farm and riding stables on your right. In a little while look out for Broad Road, a straight road leading off to the right.
4. Proceed along this road until you reach a level crossing. Cross the track with care and then take the footpath on the left about 20 yards beyond the crossing.
5. The track starts down the side of a field but soon enters a wood. At the end of the track emerge onto the road and turn left.
6. Walk through Sloley. Just after the Methodist Chapel and before the road bends left, turn right onto a track which turns left and then into a track.
7. Take the track beside fields and then take the second of two footpaths between fields towards a large converted barn ahead.
8. At the road, turn left and follow it down to a junction with Mill Lane.
9. Take Mill Lane and follow the road for half a mile, taking in the views to left and right
10. The road bends left and down into a small valley to cross a stream. As you ascend the road turns right, but you take the gravelled drive to the left.
11. In 200 yds turn right to take a path alongside a wood. Do not go through the gate.
12. Follow the path along the edge of the wood until you reach a road. Cross it and continue along a well-marked track.
13. Shortly you will find a public footpath sign pointing left towards Worstead. Follow this path straight on towards the Church through woods and then across fields until you reach a road.
14. Ignore signs to left and right; continue straight towards the church
15. At the road, turn right to re-enter Church Plain.

St Mary's Church, Worstead

St Mary's is one of the dozen or so grandest of Norfolk's churches. The present building was begun in the early 14th century and remodelled in the late 14th century, but the majority of the building appears to be Perpendicular in style. The chancel alone stands out significantly, with a large five-light Decorated style east window. The money for this splendid and impressive building came from a number of donors and is the result of the thriving wool business that saw Norfolk reach the peak of its prosperity and influence. Cloth was produced in Worstead from at least the 13th century, but Flemish weavers in the 14th century expanded trade dramatically. Although the trade peaked in the 14th century, there was still revenue enough to support the raising of the clerestory and the installation of a hammerbeam roof in the 15th century. Inside the church is no less interesting, with a mix of Decorated and Perpendicular features along with a late medieval screen of particular

interest. This church is well worth a visit, particularly during the annual charity Worstead Festival when displays of traditional weaving and spinning can often be seen.

Early 14th century fragment of effigy in St Mary's churchyard

In 2012 a carved head of an effigy in bas relief was observed on a stone situated on the ground in shingle just to the west of the south porch of Worstead church. It was initially suggested that this effigy was carved into a piece of Purbeck limestone and probably dated to the early 14th century. It represents in bas relief and some incised features the helmet or hat, the eyes, part of the nose and an ear of a human head. The re-examination of this stone during a watching brief in 2015 has now led to the suggestion that it is in fact a rare example of Alwalton marble, which was largely used during the 13th century.

Church Cottage, Church Plain

This cottage dates to the earlier and later 18th century, and is of brick and flint with a thatch roof. The south front is of two storeys and the ground floor has some brick and flint chequerwork. The west gable wall is of brick and the north wall is of flint. The roof was raised in the 18th century, and there are three 19th century windows surviving on the ground floor.

New Inn, Front Street

This public house is dated 1825, and is of brick and flint with a pantile roof. It has a front of two storeys and five bays and is built on a flint plinth. There is a central doorcase with consoles, and further ranges behind of the same date.

White Cottage, Front Street

House of two periods, apparently around 1700 and around 1800. It contains a fireplace bressumer with the date 1617 which does not fit anything in the house and yet does not appear to be modern - possibly it dates to around 1700 imitating something that was on the site before. A large building of which nothing was known once was connected on the west and a brick vault led to it, suggesting an industrial purpose, but too late for weaving here. A mummified rat and a shoe are probably not apotropaic in this instance.

Laburnum Cottage, Back Street

This small house was probably originally a single storey and attic structure and may have been built as early as the 17th century. It was raised in height around 1800 and given a rear outshut containing a reused medieval stone block.

Undercroft to St Andrew's Cottage

Under St Andrew's Cottage is a fine medieval brick undercroft. It is plastered and of three irregular rib vaulted bays with transverse arches. The third bay is a later, lower, addition. The brick vault is now entered from the road, though there is an added passage which lead to the house in the first bay.

The Thatched House, Church Plain

This house dates to the late 17th and 18th centuries, and is of brick and flint with a thatch roof. Inside the rear is a massive internal central chimneystack, with a rebuilt top. There are shaped gables from the later 17th century.

Norwich House, Market Place/No 2 Honing Row

This L-shaped house comprises a jettied building with a gable chimney stack and a building at the rear. The front house is now a shop, and is thought to date to the 18th century. The rear building may date to the 17th century, and has been suggested as a possible weavers cottage or shed. It was largely altered in the 19th century but is thought to have a store cellar and original divisions.

Manor House, north of church

Summary: This building was originally two houses, and was built in the early and late 16th century. Unusually it has an entrance and stair projection against the east wall. Many additions and alterations took place across the years, the last of which was in 1980 when a number of interior features, including an 18th century stair balustrade, were added.

Geoffrey the Dyer's House, Church Plain

Summary: This house dates to the 16th century and later, and is of brick and flint with a pantile roof. To the left of the door is a flint plinth with blocked brick arch for an external entrance to the cellar, which is now filled in. A number of 18th century square-headed sash windows survive, as do some 19th century ones. There is a 19th century shop window with 19th century casements. The ground-floor left room is double-sized and has a very high ceiling, built to accommodate looms.

Worstead Park

This parkland was laid out at the time of the construction of Worstead House (NHER 15440) in 1790s. It is surrounded by tree belts and has a large lake with small square islands, as well as an impressive avenue of trees along the drive from Hall Farm.

Main drive ran from Dilham Road east of Worstead village - this has now gone and boundary of Micklefield Plantation has extended to its course. Drive from Hall Farm to west now a concrete road, following an impressive avenue of trees. East of junction of two drives a gap was left as a clairvoyee in the east tree belt, known as Temple Bar.

Much of the park remains as pasture dotted with mature trees. Used for pheasant rearing.

Site of windmill.

Marked as post mill on map of arable lands in Worstead 1781.

Gothic Lodge, Sloley Road.

Lodge. Mid 19th century build. Brick; slate roof. Front of three bays, single storey. Central, projecting gabled porch with 19th century plank door under hood mould flanked by single light two centre arch windows under hood moulds. Stone inset panel to gable of porch with horse-shoes. One window to

each side of porch of three lights mullioned and transomed, the lower panels having Gothick glazing bars.

Frankfort Farm

Barn, stated in (S1), dated to around 1800 AD, but in fact not shown on (S2). Constructed of brick with a pantile roof. Cattle boxes and fodder store dated to around 1850 AD, constructed of red brick and weatherboarding, also a tool shed. There is a cottage to south, also dated to the mid 19th century.

The Old School

The school was originally built in 1841 and was reconstructed or rebuilt in 1874. The school was set for closure in 1953/4 and is now a private house.

Former chapel, northeast of Mill Farmhouse

Former chapel at Anchor Street.

Built around 1830, disused. Converted to barn around 1900. Shuttered clay on flint plinth. Pantiled roof. Rectangular plan. Former west entrance converted to barn door, now blocked. Two sixteen-pane casements; one eight-pane window to east return. Projecting eaves, hipped roof, formed of three king post trusses, centre with raised tie beam. Notable of survival of temporary chapel and rare building material.