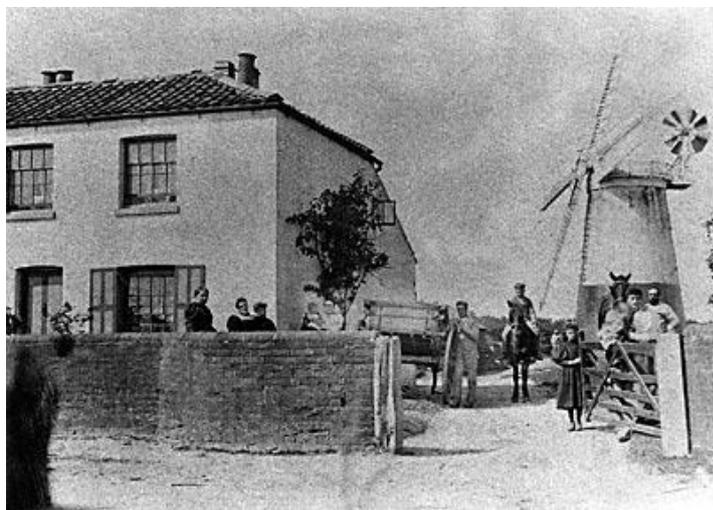


Westwick and Felmingham

1. Begin at the white fingerpost pointing towards “Footpath Only” and “Emily Cottage” located on the common at The Hill, Swanton Abbott.



In the 1860's two windmills would have been visible from here. Downhill from this site was a post mill last used in 1868 and demolished in August 1870. It is marked on 1st edition 1 inch Ordnance Survey 1836 but not on Faden 1797 so was presumably built between these dates.

A little further along the road up the hill at Mill House was the site of another mill, Swanton Abbott tower-mill. Swanton Abbott tower-mill is thought to have been built around 1845. (Millers first recorded in 1845, does not appear on any map pre 1885 so apparently built around 1845). Around 1888 a steam engine was

installed in an adjacent shed to provide power during calm periods. However, in 1901 the mill was struck by lightning and the sails damaged, and in 1914 the interior was destroyed by fire. By 1926 the tower was standing empty, and now all that remains are some foundations which are rapidly disappearing under grass.

2. From the fingerpost, proceed slightly downhill for 40 yds to a footpath sign pointing left; take this footpath into the woods

. The Heathland to your left is owned by the Swanton Abbott Poor's Land Trust, bequeathed to the village in 1732 by Ann Steward

3. In about 200yds you will encounter a five-bar gate; keep on the main track through the gate into the Westwick Estate (a path goes across a field to the right from here, but ignore it). Proceed on along the straight track.

Westwick Park was a large historic parkland, probably originally laid out in the 1760s.

To your left is Perch Lake, although this is hidden by trees. Near here on the 2 August 1941 a Manchester aircraft is known to have crashed.

4. On your left you will pass a derelict house known as Strawberry Hall. It is thought to once have been used as a gamekeeper's cottage. A number of photos exist of this from the early 1900's, and it was still occupied in 1963, although in a fairly poor state.

<https://www.northwalshamarchive.co.uk/strawberry-hall-to-the-primrose-woods>



5. After Strawberry Hall the track has woods on both sides. Once you emerge into open fields bear slightly left to cross the field. Ignore the track on the right.

The field where you emerge from the woods is the site of a Medieval battlefield. Here in 1381 the deciding battle of the Peasants Revolt was fought. Bishop Spencer crushed the rebels led by Litester, a cloth dyer from Felmingham.

<https://www.northwalshamheritage.org.uk/peasants-revolt-1381/>

6. At the end of the field there is a junction of paths. Turn left and follow the hedge which draws you slightly right to another fork. Turn off the main path left to follow the pylons along the side of a wood (Lord Anson's Wood). If you have done it correctly the water towers of North Walsham will be behind you! Follow the power lines to a road.

In the open field beside Lord Anson's Wood a piece of iron slag weighing about a ton is reported to have been ploughed up in 1968, indicating a possible iron working site.

During World War Two, two United States Army Air Force planes collided at Felmingham or North Walsham. A USAF Liberator crashed in Lord Anson's Wood, another on Bryant's Heath, which we will cross in a moment. Fragments can still be found in area.

7. Cross the main road and proceed straight on following the metalled road beside the wood towards a railway bridge. Go under the bridge and carry on until the road turns into a track through the woods.

Bryant's Heath is registered common (CL95) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, consisting of dry acidic heathland on glacial sands with sloping ground to the south and west. This site is unusual in that it encompasses within a relatively small area a mix of dry heath, wet heath and fen communities. Rich plant communities have developed in association with the flushed areas that occur where nutrient-poor sands meet underlying calcareous clays. These areas include several plants that are now uncommon in East Anglia due to the drainage of many similar sites. It is also the other Liberator crash site. According to the Norfolk Aviation Museum a substantial piece remains on the site.

8. Follow the track. In about 50 yds just after a temporary information board there is a path leading off the grassy track through woods. Follow this.

9. Soon you will emerge into an open heathland with a well defined path leading you to the left. Where the path splits, take the left-hand fork into gorse.

10. The path here is hard to follow as Bryant's Heath is criss-crossed by paths. Continue straight on ignoring paths until you reach a more well defined grass track. Here you turn right for a few yard, then take the path to the left again, through more gorse. Keep following the path again, going straight if in doubt until you reach another grassy well defined path, where you bear right and down

through woodland. If you get this bit correct you will soon pass a BMX course on your right, and then another interpretation sign. Follow the path out of the woods.

11. Just after you pass a house on your left take a footpath behind the house, to your left. Carry on round the house, down a slight incline, and then sharp right towards Felmingham church.

12. Near the church you emerge onto a busy road at a junction. **TAKE CARE! CARS COME FROM ALL DIRECTIONS!** Luckily you do not need to go on the road- keep to the left after emerging and enter Church Road, past the church.

St Andrew's Church, Felmingham: This church has medieval and post medieval elements. The tower is early 16th century and incorporates earlier material, including reused Norman stonework. The nave and chancel were rebuilt in 1742. In 1997 building work revealed part of the medieval nave or a former aisle; an Early Saxon spindle whorl and Late Saxon pottery were also discovered. The font is 13th century and there is a base from a medieval cross in the churchyard.

Tower dated by bequests to early 16th century, but incorporates older work, also reused Norman stones and a fossil. Nave and chancel 1742 incorporating 14th century door and windows. 13th century font and memorials from older church.

13. Proceed down Church Road. Just past "Meredith" on your right, take the small road and then down an alleyway where you may get Compulsory Cuddles. You emerge onto a field- take the left-hand pathway across the field.

14. Follow this path; at the road continue straight on (right then immediately left) towards a set of steps down to the disused railway, now the Weavers Way, that crosses here. Go straight across (former Felmingham Station is 200yds to your left) and up another set of steps. Proceed across another field until you meet a road, where you turn left and down. In the distance across the field you will see Felmingham Hall.

Felmingham Hall: This Grade II listed post medieval great house is now used as a hotel. Part of the hall dates to 1569, with alteration work carried out during the 17th and 18th centuries and large scale rebuilding in the 19th century. There are associated 18th or 19th century barns, along with a set of stables.

15. Follow the road downhill to the junction; turn right and then next left up Cross Road (**CARE-narrow road**).

16. Just after Primrose Farm (where in 1964 a Neolithic axehead was found) take the footpath on the right, across a field.

17. At the road, turn right, then immediately right onto a footpath that will lead you through a gap in the hedge and back to Swanton Hill.