

Trunch and Bradfield Common

This is a delightful walk around the gently rolling countryside of North Norfolk which begins in the flint village of Trunch. You will see one of the most exciting ecclesiastical treasures in Norfolk, search in vain for a pig in a hat, pass hats on sticks, take in a couple of Halls, see a gun emplacement, at least one shot Llama, a zebra and a yard of skulls. Short (for us) at 6km it is dog-friendly and can end in a pub, if you wish. Starting from the churchyard gate on the North Walsham Road take the narrow alleyway on the opposite side of the road. Follow it down to the end.

1. Begin outside St Botolph's porch and exit the churchyard through the Lynch gate onto the main road.
2. Cross the road and proceed straight ahead down a narrow footpath opposite.
3. As you emerge onto the road turn **sharp** left (Manor Farm Barns **(A)** are straight ahead a few yards to your right as you emerge) and follow the road down past Shepherds' huts until you reach a junction at Trunch Garage.
4. Before the garage turn right onto a grassy track and follow this straight ahead.
5. After a while you will reach a split in the track. Take the right-hand path over a watercourse, and continue on, bending gently left beside fields.
6. At a sharp right turn enter woods and follow the path until it emerges beside a house (Warren Farm) onto a road. Turn left and follow the road to a T junction.
7. At the T junction turn left towards Bradfield.
8. After half a mile pass Bradfield Hall **(B)** on the right, with its fine stable block, and Bradfield Cricket ground on the right. Continue on through Bradfield until you reach a junction by Bradfield Common where you turn left towards a first World War pillbox **(C)** (You may wish to deviate slightly by going up the slope to your right and visiting St Giles, Bradfield **(D)**. Simply return to the junction afterwards to continue on).
9. Continue on the road until you reach a path leading through woods on your left. This will lead you to the edge of a field which you follow. In Spring this area has many daffodils and primroses.
10. Stick to the edge of the field within the woods until you reach a kissing gate. Go through the gate and follow the same direction, now on a track beside the wood, until you come to a road. Turn left up the hill and follow this to Trunch Hall **(E)**. Ignore the lane immediately before Trunch Hall; continue straight on.
11. Soon after Trunch Hall you will reach a junction. Take the right-hand road that will lead you back into Trunch past Tudor Cottage **(F)** to St Botolph's church **(G)**. Be sure to go and look at the rare 16thC font cover, one of only four in the country. The Crown is also well worth a visit!

(A) Manor Farm Barns

Manor Farm Barns form part of the Manor Farm complex, a set of buildings associated with farm work and probably originating in the 16th century. One of the barns here has been dated to the late 16th century, and there is also a 20th century barn rebuilt from 19th century pieces.

Group of good quality barns including one dated 1590 or 1599. Also an unusual 19th century aisled barn. At least part of barns converted to housing before 1996.

Photographic and drawn record of the 20th century aisled barn (previously thought by E. Rose (NLA) to be 19th century). Although relatively modern, the barn was constructed using elements of earlier (19th century) buildings. These buildings form part of a former farm complex, known as Manor Farm, with probable late 16th century origins.

(B) Bradfield Hall Farm and associated buildings

Bradfield Hall Farm comprises a barn, stables and farmhouse. The house itself was badly damaged by fire in 2005, but the stables are of particular interest. They are of brick and pantile, and the horse boxes are defined by brick partitions and integral wooden partitions with queen strut truss. The house is thought to date to between 1800 and 1820, and the barn may date to 1784.

Stables. Brick and pantile building of great interest, horse boxes defined by brick partitions and wooden partition integral with queen strut truss. Occupying three bays; five bays to south with wooden partitioned corridor. No hayloft. Significant for number of horses, elaboration and bad design. Barn - dimensions only given. No information on hall itself but plan interestingly shows a separate range of servants' accommodation.

Plan dates barn as possibly 1784 but other buildings only as 'pre 1906'.

August 2005.

House badly damaged by fire, see (S2). A detailed inspection was not possible in the circumstances. The main building is roughly Z-shaped, as also shown on (S3); different amorphous outline on (S4) may be inaccurate. The exterior is of yellow bricks with horizontal skintlings, the interior faces of the same walls are of red brick. The interior has very fine Regency decoration including a curving staircase with iron floral balusters; fire surrounds, dados, ceiling roses etc. Most of these seem original though some were stated to be later copies (but could they have been papier mache?). Some later 19th century iron fireplaces are present. The roof was totally destroyed but the building may be restorable. Its date is around 1800-1820.

To the north is a single storey block of similar brick with lunette windows and cupola, marked on (S1) as stable and gig house; the servants' quarters mentioned above runs from this at right angles and was not inspected at this time.

(C) World War One pillbox

A rare World War One pillbox, dating to between 1916 and 1918, was noted on this site. In 2014 it was cleared and restored. Still intact, in good condition though at base of gigantic ivy bush.

(D) St Giles' Church, Bradfield

St Giles' church sits in an elevated position above the village of Bradfield, and from the top of the late 15th century west tower no less than twelve other churches can be seen on a clear day.

The church itself is older than the tower, dating to the 14th century and with a particularly fine and large chancel in the Decorated style (1272 to 1350). The chancel looks a little big now, for it would originally have been in proportion with nave, which had aisles on either side. From the outside it is

possible to see where the arches were filled in when the aisles were pulled down in 1786, when the small south porch was built.

(E) Trunch Hall

Trunch Hall is a late 16th century house of flint and brick, with a roof of plain tiles at the front, and one of black glazed pantiles at the rear. This two storey house has an offcentre ridge chimneystack and an internal east gable chimneystack. To the rear there is a central 16th century gabled crosswing of one bay.

Late 16th century. Flint and brick. Roof of plain tiles to front and black glazed pantiles to rear. Two storeys and attic. Central two storey porch with four-centres entrance arch and offset at first floor; oval side lights first floor. Two bays right, one bay left with 19th century windows. Offcentre ridge chimneystack and internal east gable chimneystack. 19th century ground and attic gable windows. Rear with central 16th century gabled crosswing of one bay.

(F) Tudor Cottage, Front Street

Tudor Cottage is a late 17th century house of colourwashed flint with brick dressings and a thatched roof. This two storey building has a gabled roof and partially rebuilt gable end chimneystacks. This building is also known as Thatch cottage.

Central 20th century gabled porch and door. One three-light 20th century casement left and right under segmental arches. Moulded platband at first floor. Two three-light 20th century casements to first floor and two blocked square lights. Gabled roof, impinged upon to left by rise in façade wall. Gable end stacks partly rebuilt, that to east partly external. Gable heads on kneelers. Single storey gabled extension abuts east gable wall.

Plans are in place to repair extensive water damage at the southwest corner of the building.

This is a single cell house on the ground floor with two or three chambers and a fully floored attic. The projecting gable may have provided more single cell accomodation; the ground floor prehaps being used as a backhouse or a shop. Any evidence of access between the two has been lost through later structural repairs. The combination of the chamfer shops, common joints and the construction of the roof attic seem to indicate a mid-17th century date.

(G) St Botolph's Church, Trunch

(A). The Church of St Botolph is a large building of flints with stone details, and is one of the most interesting in the local area. Outside, the church is largely 15th century, built in the Perpendicular style, with a tower that starts off strong and diminishes in four stages to finish in a simple and understated bell stage. Unlike some parish churches, St Botolph retains its chancel, which also has a surprisingly large and elaborate priest's porch surrounding its outside door.

Inside, the church contains one of the most exciting ecclesiastical treasures in Norfolk. This of course is the stunning font canopy, constructed in the early 16th century, on the very eve of the Reformation. Only three of the canopies surviving across the country rival this one, and this one is particularly valuable as it gives us a glimpse of what English Catholic art was developing into at this time.

The canopy itself is made of oak, gone silvery with the years, carved into a tumbling confection of fruit, flowers, leopards and lions in six octagonal columns. At the top canopied niches are carved, large enough to contain multiple figures, and the whole retains some of its original colour.

The church is also blessed with a rich 15th century hammerbeam roof, as well as a screen that dates to 1502 and is richly ornamented and painted with the figures of the apostles and St Paul.

According to the Norfolk County Council Guide to the Paston Way, there are misericords in the chancel, also inkwells and holes from use as a school in 1700.