

Briggate: Rails and Gates

1. Begin at Church Plain, Worstead. There is ample parking outside the church, unless there is a service on! Turn right at Geoffrey the Dyers House and carry on down the street with buildings on both sides.
2. At the junction, go through the gate and follow the path across the field.
3. At the barn, turn left over a concrete apron and continue straight on until you get to a minor road.
4. Keep straight on and then bear right on the road at Lyngate House. Watch out for a game of cat and mouse.
5. Join another road coming in from the left, then cross over a main road and take a path to the right of the house opposite, across a field.
6. At White Horse Lane, by a barn, turn left and follow the road down. You will find a family of owls hereabouts.
7. At the High Street next to the Old White Horse pub turn right and follow the road over a bridge. Note the "type 24" pill box next to a waterfall. here was an old lock on the North Walsham and Dilham Canal)
8. At the old Briggate Railway Station follow the Weavers Way. This was the course of the Great Yarmouth to Sutton Bridge railway. Trains last stopped here in 1959.
9. Cross the "B" road and continue on the Weavers Way until you get to Bengate.
10. At the junction with the A road follow signs the "The White Lady" and go under the road.
11. Follow the track and then take a left turn between houses (a well marked track) that leads you to a path across and open field.
12. 12 follow this path towards Worstead. At the road turn right and follow it round past the school and into Worstead village centre. The White Lady is just beyond the Church.

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.

Pillbox (White Horse Lane)

Summary: A World War Two Type 24 pillbox survives as an extant structure 200m to the south of Briggate Bridge. It is visible on aerial photographs and is also depicted by modern Ordnance Survey mapping. It would have formed part of the line of defences established along the River Ant during World War Two. It appears to have been positioned to protect the approach to Briggate from the south, along White Horse Lane.

Name: Site of Worstead Old Mill

Summary: This is the site of a post medieval tower mill, demolished in 1812.

Pillbox (by bridge)

A World War Two Type 22 pillbox survives as an extant structure at a former railway crossing near Briggate Bridge. It is visible on aerial photographs and is also depicted by modern Ordnance Survey mapping. It would have formed part of the line of defences established along the River Ant during World War Two. It is one of a number of defences in the vicinity, overlooking the road and rail crossings over the Ant to the east which were regarded as important strategic locations.

Worstead Mill, 19th century brick tower mill

Summary: This four storey brick tower mill was built around 1850 and is now converted to form part of a house. The boat-shaped cap remains, and there is a fantail cradle and brakewheel shaft, but no sails. It was last used in 1922, but was described as 'working' in 1926.

Briggate Watermill

The burnt-out remains of an 19th century three storey brick watermill on the North Walsham and Dilham canal, probably on the site of an earlier mill. Two steam engines were later housed in a separate corrugated iron building, and the mill was eventually powered by electricity. Closed down in the late 1960s, the mill was gutted by fire in 1975 and has not been restored or redeveloped.

North Walsham and Dilham Canal

This important artificial waterway linked North Walsham to the River Ant at Dilham. The idea to build it seems to have originated as a means of avoiding the fairly high cost of transporting goods on the newly opened toll road between North Walsham and Norwich. It was also seen as an opportunity to improve turnover at a number of mills along the River Ant. Although the idea to build a canal was decided on, mainly by local landowners, in 1811, and an Act of Parliament authorizing its construction was passed in 1812, the canal was only completed in mid-1826 at a cost of £32,000. Once completed, the system allowed goods to travel from Antingham, via the River Bure, to Great Yarmouth (and of course back). The canal was ten miles long, dug by hand by a labour force of about a hundred men, and lined with clay. A special cut ('Tyler's Cut') was made in Dilham to access a brickworks there (NHER 15890).

However, the canal itself was narrow, only able to take boats up to twelve tons, and it soon became clear that the volume of trade was too small to be profitable. Even if the volume had been higher, the water supply (from the upper reaches of the River Ant) would not have been sufficient to replace the water let through the locks. Also the advent of the railway and improved roads meant that, in a short period of time, cheaper and more efficient transport systems were available.

After various changes in ownership, the canal fell into disuse in the 1920s. Of the five mills along its course, Antingham (NHER 15854), Bacton Wood (NHER 11572), Ebridge (NHER 11730) Briggate (NHER 8206) and Dilham (NHER 15892) only Ebridge continued to trade (by road, not using the canal) and now even this has pretty much closed down.

Name: Route of Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway (Great Yarmouth to Sutton Bridge)

The Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway link between Great Yarmouth and Sutton Bridge was opened in sections. The section between King's Lynn and Sutton Bridge had stations at South Lynn, Clenchwarton and Terrington and Walpole, and was opened by the Lynn & Sutton Bridge Railway in 1864. The section between King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth had twenty-two intermediate stations and opened under the Yarmouth & North Norfolk Railway from 1877 to 1881, the Lynn & Fakenham Railway between 1879 and 1882, and by the Eastern & Midlands in 1883. The whole system was closed on 2 March 1959, although some sections survive as paths. A number of stations, signal boxes, goods sheds and concrete mileposts remain.

Site of Honing Railway Station

This is the site of Honing Railway Station, which served the Midland and Great Northern Railway (NHER 13581) between Melton Constable and Great Yarmouth from 1882 to 1959.

The buildings and the remains of two platforms are in ruins, and for some buildings only footings remain. The foundations of a signal box are still visible near the road, but the box itself is now on display at the Barton House Railway Museum in Wroxham.

A milestone near the subway under the main road marking 3 miles to North Walsham and 22 miles to Yarmouth

Bronze Age stone axe-hammer

In 1976 a Bronze Age stone axe-hammer was dragged up by a tractor-drawn hoe on this site.

Worstead Church of England Primary School

The school was built in 1852 with several later 19th century additions and inserted windows.