

To explore Broadland's literary locations by foot or bicycle you can use two different routes...

15 mile walk or cycle ride along the River Bure – Blickling to Ranworth

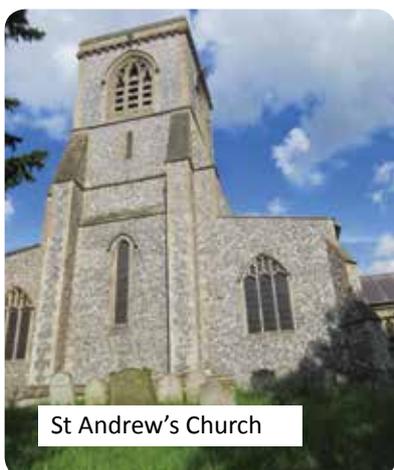
Start this journey at Blickling Hall which is our first literary point with the hall's extensive library. The library has between 12,500 and 14,000 volumes; many collected in the 18th century including three pre 1500s Latin bibles and first edition Jane Austen novels! Of all the National Trust's libraries Blickling has the biggest and most important of them all.



Blickling Hall

Opposite St Andrew's Church and Blickling Hall you will find a path on the left hand side which leads to Aylsham. Follow the path around the back of some cottages, through a gate and over an old railway bridge. After the bridge, turn left down the slope on to Weaver's Way. Go through a gate and cross the road following the Weaver's Way signs.

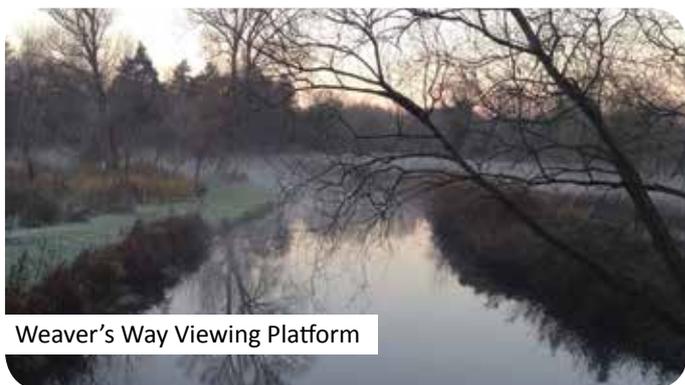
Pass through a gate and keep walking, passing under two bridges. You will then pass the Weaver's Way Viewing Platform which you can use to view wildlife from. When you get to a car park, exit left out of car park, and then follow



St Andrew's Church

downhill onto Drabblegate. Follow this road down onto Millgate, until you reach New Road.

Turn right into New Road and where the road bends to the right, pass Ash House on the left and turn left into Abbott's Close. Take the next right turn into Town Lane, which emerges opposite the Methodist Hall. Here turn right and then left into Red Lion Street, signed Town Centre. Turn right through the Market Place surrounded by 17th and 18th Century properties.



Weaver's Way Viewing Platform

You are now in the centre of Aylsham, which is the home to Michael Mackmin who started the well-known 'Rialto' poetry magazine in the town back in 1984 which has now become a highly respected journal. This town is also known for having John of Gaunt, first Duke of Lancaster, as its Lord of the Manor back in the 1300s, it is believed by some that he may also have founded St Michael's church in the town. John of Gaunt appears in Shakespeare's play 'Richard II' and the speech John gives on his death-bed is still regarded as one of the most well known in English theatre.

From Aylsham's Station Road take the Bure Valley Path which will bring you to several other literary points including Anna Sewell's burial site, RAF Coltishall, John Betjeman's inspiration for his Norfolk Poem, and the Norfolk Broads from Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons series... and much more. Alternatively, you can also take the Bure Valley Railway train between Aylsham and Wroxham!



Aylsham Market Place during Food Festival

First on the route you will find Brampton, this is a small parish with a strong Roman history. To reach the next literary point of Oxnead Hall and Church, walk straight out of the station area and straight on over the river. Next take the first road on the right which will lead you to Oxnead Hall & Oxnead's St Michael and All Angels church.

Oxnead Hall was built in 1580 by Sir Clement Paston of the famous 'Paston Letters' which were found in 1735 and detail interesting tales of life in Norfolk during the years 1422 and 1509. These became Britain's oldest surviving record of private letters. The hall is now privately owned and offers wedding and event services. Oxnead's 13th century church is also worth a visit as it holds several memorials and tombs of the Paston family, including Sir Clement Paston.



St Michael and All Angel's church, Oxnead

Return to the Bure Valley Path and carry on your journey along this pathway until you reach Buxton. From here you will turn left and stay left as you head round past the church and left onto Mill Street. Follow Mill Street over the river and straight onto The Street.

This will bring you into Lamas and the Street, where Anna Sewell, author of children's book, Black Beauty was buried in the Quaker Chapel cemetery in 1878. Years after her burial, the cemetery was disrupted by unpermitted building and so to rectify this, a memorial plaque is now in place in a wall near where the chapel once stood. Anna was born in

Norfolk and her book continues to be celebrated around the world today.

Follow straight ahead on The Street into Badersfield and follow the signs and you will find part of RAF Coltishall, now renamed Scottow Enterprise Park. You can also see the other side of the site by returning to the Bure Valley Path and continuing your journey until you reach Coltishall. From here you can take Potspoon Hole road a long side the site.

RAF Coltishall was an airfield from 1938 until 2006 and is one of Norfolk's most important historic airfields. This site was the inspiration for Janet Mark's Thunder and Lightnings book, in which character Andrew moves to Norfolk and becomes captivated with the Lightning fighters which are based at the site. RAF Coltishall still has a keen group of local followers in the form of a group called the 'Spirit of Coltishall Association' who organises special events and heritage tours for those interested in visiting. Many of the aircrafts from Coltishall and other airfields locally can be visited at the City of Norwich Aviation Museum in Horsham St Faith.



Bus tour of RAF Coltishall during Heritage Open Days 2016 - Credit: Norfolk County Council

Return to the Bure Valley Path and follow on until you reach the crossing at Belaugh Breen. Here turn right onto Belaugh Green Lane and at the end of the road turn left onto Wroxham Road. Take care and use caution on this busy road. Take the first right onto Back Lane, and follow straight here, along the river, until you reach Belaugh Church.

14th century St Peter's church in Belaugh is thought to be the church referred to in Poet Laureate, Sir John Betjeman's poem 'Norfolk'. Sir John Betjemen who was a renowned writer during the 20th century, explains in his BBC programme 'A Passion for Churches' that this church was the place that sparked his enthusiasm for these historic buildings. After visiting the church, head back up towards the main Wroxham Road, and turn right carrying on this busy road on your journey towards Wroxham.

Once in Wroxham, you will see the many boats and canoes around this Norfolk Broad.

Wroxham is well known for being a centre for the Norfolk Broads area and is well written about in many poems. It is also referred to in Arthur Ransome's popular children book series of 'Swallows & Amazons', inspired from when Mr Ransome used to visit Wroxham in the 1930s. Wroxham is referred to in his book 'Coot Club' as having "boats everywhere, and boats of all kinds, from the big black wherry with her gaily painted mast, loading at the old granary by Wroxham bridge, and meant for nothing but hard work, to the punts of the boatmen going to and fro".



St Peter's church in Belaugh
Credit: Richard Woodham



Wroxham Broad

You can choose from here to travel to Ranworth by boat or by bicycle.

If you continue to travel by bike you should leave Wroxham towards Norwich and head left down the B1140/ Salhouse Road. Turn left onto Vicarage Road and stay straight on this road through the village of Woodbastwick, continuing onto the Woodbastwick road into Ranworth.

Ranworth Broad is a picturesque village which hosts a few simple amenities as well as the well-known St Helen's church or 'Cathedral of the Broads' and a scenic walk around the Broad to a floating wildlife centre. Not only is this the second location in Arthur Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazon' series, but it is also the setting for some of the plot of 'Wraiths and Changelings' by Gladys Mitchell. In this tale, main character, Dee organises an intriguing ghost tour which takes in not only beautiful Ranworth but also nearby Salhouse.

10 miles walk or cycle ride via Marriott's Way - Guestwick to Weston Longville

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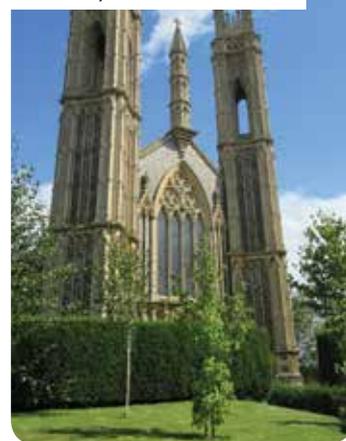
Start from Guestwick's St Peter's church, where John Godwin, grandfather of Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein, was once the minister of an early Congregational Chapel that was built here. The remains of the chapel built in 1652 can be found in the North of the church.

From the church, head onto Reepham Road and carry on straight onto Guestwick Lane followed by Kerdiston Road passing Kerri's Farmhouse Pine which sells gifts and food. Eventually this will lead you to the market town of Reepham.

You can explore this market town and grab some food, as well as venturing out of Norwich road to nearby Booton and its church, nicknamed 'Cathedral of the fields'.

Booton's St Michael the Archangel, is definitely worth a mention as not only a beautiful example of unique architecture but also because it was built by Reverend Whitwell Elwin who was a descendant of the Native American heroine, Pocahontas. He was also known in literary circles himself for being an editor for the Quarterly Review publication from 1853-1860 and being close friends with Dickens, Thackeray, Sir Walter Scott and John Murray. Booton is also the village that writer and TV star, Stephen Fry grew up in.

St Michael the Archangel Church, Booton



Next from Reepham town head onto Whitwell Road where Whitwell & Reepham Station resides. This is a great attraction with a museum, café and regular events. From here bicycle hire is available and you can also join the Marriott's Way path.

The Marriott's Way path is a 26 mile footpath which follows the route of two disused railway lines, which were in place between 1882 and 1982. You will see many sculptures and mile markers during the walk.

Whitwell & Reepham Station



Follow the Marriott's Way Path towards Norwich until reaching Lenwade. Turn right here onto Porter's Lane and continue straight. When you reach a junction with Fakenham Road go straight over onto Weston Hall road and follow this until you reach a t junction with a post box on the corner. Turn left onto Morton Lane and continue straight past Weston Equestrian Centre until you arrive in Weston Longville.

Weston Longville's All Saints church is the burial place of Parson James Woodforde, who was the priest of the church from 1776. Parson Woodforde has become well known for keeping a diary throughout his life which has now been published and is a recognised record of rural life in the 18th century. The diary entitled 'Diary of a Country Parson' is still available to buy and the original manuscript is held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.



All Saints church, Weston Longville

A few literary locations outside the trails still worth a visit . . .

Reedham village – Reedham is another scenic Norfolk Broad which is a great place to stop as it is a great place to see classic Norfolk scenes and wildlife and was the inspiration for the poem Reedham Marshes by Edwin Brock. This describes Edwin's experiences out in the water here.

Anna Sewell House, Spixworth Road, Old Catton – As well as Broadland being the burial place for Anna Sewell, author of Black Beauty, Old Catton was also the village where she lived. She wrote her now world famous novel in her house on Spixworth Road, now named the Anna Sewell House. Many believe that the novel was inspired by her love of riding in the Norfolk countryside despite her having a disability.



Reedham

Useful telephone numbers

Broadland District Council (Tourism) 01603 430496
Norfolk County Council 0344 800 8020

Useful websites

www.sustrans.org.uk
www.cyclinguk.org/
www.norfolkbroadsbicycling.co.uk/
www.maps.norfolk.gov.uk/trails/
www.visitnorfolk.co.uk/
www.literarynorfolk.co.uk/
www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/
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