

# Discovering Broadland's Churches

## 12 mile route from South Walsham to Reedham

### South Walsham St Mary and St Lawrence

Here two churches nestle closely together. Beside St Mary's are the remains of a second church, St Lawrence. A fire in 1827 destroyed the nave, porch and half of the tower of this church. The remaining chancel was used as a Sunday school for some years after, but eventually became derelict. Restoration began in 1992 and four years later St. Lawrence's re-opened as a Centre for Training and the Arts, hosting concerts, exhibitions, classes and quiet days. It has also been rededicated as a Church and is used for worship. A re-created mediaeval herb garden occupies the site of the old nave and is also open to visitors. The reason for the very close proximity of the churches is probably that they were built on the firmest and highest ground of land belonging to two adjoining manors. There were two separate parishes, one for each church, until 1889 when they joined. The present buildings date from the 14th century, although there were previous places of worship here from the 12th century.

St Mary's continues to thrive as the Parish Church. Inside the church note the original 15th century pew ends, the octagonal carved font and the 15th century rood screen which has retained its original doors and handles. Across the screen's panels is an interesting inscription about John Galt, a serf who had a screen painted to commemorate gaining his freedom. On the floor near the Holy table is a large memorial slab, originally from the tomb of a 15th century Abbott, Richard De South Walsham of St Benet's Abbey. It was used as a doorstep in Norwich after the dismantling of the Abbey, before being restored to his birthplace in the 1940's. The 200 year old organ was presented to the church in 1972 by Lord Fairhaven.

The 19th and 20th century stained glass windows act as memorials to incumbents and local families, including glass from the William Morris workshop and some fine art nouveau and modern examples. This is



a lovely church with many items of interest and a welcoming atmosphere.

### North Burlingham St Andrew

In the Domesday Book, three churches are mentioned in North Burlingham. The present church was mainly rebuilt in the 15th century, with only a few parts remaining from the earlier churches. The tower is a good example of the 'perpendicular' style. The battlements feature carvings including the cross of St Andrew and the 'Sacred Heart of Jesus' - a crown of thorns surrounding a heart. The original hammer beam roof in the nave is supported by wooden carvings with amusing and grotesque faces. Note the angels with their original colouring, holding decorated shields and the Ten Commandments written on Victorian boards.

The church has two screens. The rood screen across the chancel arch is dated 1536. The mediaeval screen across the tower arch came from the now ruined St Peters church, at the end of the village, which was closed in 1935. Other items brought from St Peters are the memorial tablet to Gregory Mileham (d.1615), flanked by cherubs, and memorials to the Burroughs family, including one to James and Edward Burroughs, brothers who died from a fever within days of each other.

### Moulton St Mary

The church of St Mary's stands remote from the village in idyllic surroundings. The original church on this site would have been built as a chapel for the neighbouring Manor Hall. Although no longer used for regular worship, this consecrated building is in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust. The churchyard remains in use and is regularly maintained, in early spring it is carpeted with snowdrops, which are later followed by daffodils.



The small round tower is Norman. It is probable that its shape is a result of a shortage of suitable corner stone material at the time of building. The rest of the church dates from the early 13th century. It was renovated in the 16th century by the addition of a new roof, screen and porch. The chancel was rebuilt in the 18th century, with further repair in 1950. The roof was originally thatched but this was replaced by slate in 1842.

The most important features inside the church are the 14th century wall paintings. These consist of a 12 feet high painting of St Christopher, patron saint of travellers, on the north wall; and the 'Seven works of Mercy' on the south wall. Window insertions have destroyed some of the scenes, so only five remain; these include a figure of Christ blessing and burying the dead.

The octagonal font dates from the early

13th century and the oak pulpit is 17th century. After a visit to the church in 1593, a Bishop reported that there was no pulpit so the parish was ordered to provide one. It has a matching prayer desk dated 1619.

The remains of the rood stair in the south east corner of the church can still be seen, which would once have led to a loft. In addition, a double 13th century piscine, a basin used for washing communion vessels, is well preserved.

Over the tower arch hangs 'The Lords Prayer, Commandments and Creed Board' dating from the 17th century.

The beautiful stained glass window to the north wall always catches the light and gives this unique interesting church a welcoming feel.

### Reedham St John the Baptist

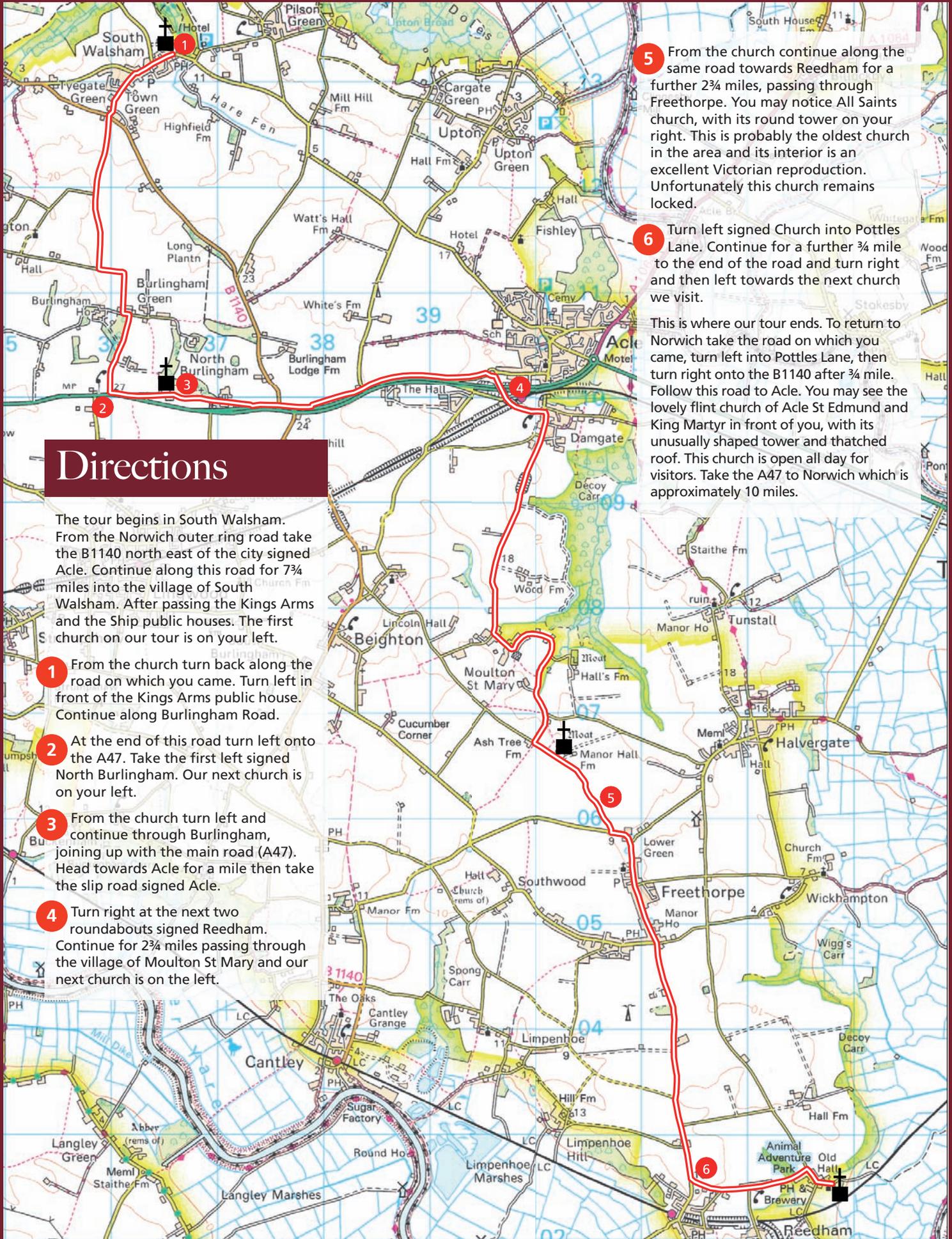
Surrounded by marshland rich in bird and animal life, the church stands to the north east of the village. Reedham is one of the oldest recorded religious establishments in Norfolk – records show that a church has stood on this site since the 7th century. It was built by Bishop Felix of Dunwich. The north wall of the present building is thought to be part of this ancient church, having been built in 1020AD. Part of the wall is exposed and is thought to have once been part of the Roman lighthouse.

The church has been enlarged, probably in the 13th century. It has an unusual interior as there are two large arches side by side under one roof. The tower was built in 1447 after Thomas Berney left a legacy for this purpose. Today the south chancel aisle is known as the Berney Chapel, but was previously a private chapel for the de Redham family. There are two small carvings outside the chapel window of King Edmund, King of East Angles 841 to 870 AD, and his Queen. Edmund was murdered by the Danes, in Suffolk because of his Christian faith. Note also the mermaid carving on the outside of the chapel door.

More recently, in March 1981 a fire swept through the building, destroying most of the relics and memorials, and only leaving the tower and walls intact. The villagers of Reedham rebuilt the church in less than two years. The altar tomb of Henry and Alice Berney, (1584) survived the fire and can be seen in the chapel, showing the couple as kneeling figures with their five sons and four daughters. As you look around the church take time to consider that people have worshipped here for over 1300 years.



# South Walsham to Reedham



## Directions

The tour begins in South Walsham. From the Norwich outer ring road take the B1140 north east of the city signed Acle. Continue along this road for 7¾ miles into the village of South Walsham. After passing the Kings Arms and the Ship public houses. The first church on our tour is on your left.

- 1 From the church turn back along the road on which you came. Turn left in front of the Kings Arms public house. Continue along Burlingham Road.
- 2 At the end of this road turn left onto the A47. Take the first left signed North Burlingham. Our next church is on your left.
- 3 From the church turn left and continue through Burlingham, joining up with the main road (A47). Head towards Acle for a mile then take the slip road signed Acle.
- 4 Turn right at the next two roundabouts signed Reedham. Continue for 2¾ miles passing through the village of Moulton St Mary and our next church is on the left.

5 From the church continue along the same road towards Reedham for a further 2¾ miles, passing through Freethorpe. You may notice All Saints church, with its round tower on your right. This is probably the oldest church in the area and its interior is an excellent Victorian reproduction. Unfortunately this church remains locked.

6 Turn left signed Church into Pottles Lane. Continue for a further ¾ mile to the end of the road and turn right and then left towards the next church we visit.

This is where our tour ends. To return to Norwich take the road on which you came, turn left into Pottles Lane, then turn right onto the B1140 after ¾ mile. Follow this road to Acle. You may see the lovely flint church of Acle St Edmund and King Martyr in front of you, with its unusually shaped tower and thatched roof. This church is open all day for visitors. Take the A47 to Norwich which is approximately 10 miles.