

## How well do you know your local landscape?

You have some amazing, very varied and often very beautiful countryside to explore in the Gaywood Valley: if you live or work here it is literally on your doorstep. The short length of the Gaywood River runs through some of the most diverse wildlife habitats in Norfolk, from wild, windy open heaths to sheltered and secluded ancient woodland; from historic urban park to farmland and rural village; from birch and pine-fringed lakes to ancient ruins. The wildlife is stunning too: mysterious nightjars that churr strangely at sunset, globally endangered species found in the heart of King's Lynn, spring flowers carpeting ancient woodland and ghost-like barn owls drifting on silent wings over riverside pastures.

Many of the most interesting parts of the valley are freely open for you to explore and enjoy: there are almost 50km of public footpaths in the Gaywood Valley, along with 12km of bridleways, 8.4km of cycleways and 7.4km of restricted byways (these allow access on foot, horseback, cycling or any other non-mechanised vehicle). A 3km section of the Peddars Way crosses the eastern end of the Gaywood Valley near Great and Little Massingham.

Norfolk is widely recognised as one of the best counties for wildlife in England. But how often do you get outside and explore your local landscape? Despite being surrounded by a landscape of fascinating history, varied habitats and rich and diverse wildlife, the amount of time most of us spend in the outdoors is decreasing.

It's no surprise therefore that many of us, and most of our children, can no longer recognise even very common wildflowers and trees, have never heard a skylark sing, and have never walked on a heath turned purple with heather in flower, or drifted through a carpet of bluebells in a local wood. We seem to be losing touch with nature. The aim of the **EXPLORE** section is to introduce you to just a few of the natural gems of the Gaywood Valley. They are all free to explore but enjoying nature and wild places does come with a health warning: getting to know and love your local landscape can be seriously addictive and may do long term good to your health and wellbeing. You have been warned! Now come with us and explore.

*In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.*

**John Muir**



### Developing your relationship with the natural world

This is about looking and listening and knowing: the knowing of being able to put names to the bird songs you hear in your garden and the wildflowers you walk past on your way to the local shop. It's not that the names matter; it's about those wild living beings becoming part of your world, part of your consciousness, part of your life. Once you know the call of a woodpecker, or the song of a skylark, suddenly woodpeckers and skylarks become, if not everyday highlights, at least more frequent ones. Once you know the song of the chiffchaff you will know the sound and one of the meanings of spring. Bird song, butterflies, wild flowers will suddenly colour your life and add meaning to your landscapes. It's not knowing the names, it's opening a door to making them part of your life: and a very joyful part too. As you look, listen and gain the knowledge first to notice then recognise the other species around you, life becomes richer and more meaningful. You become more connected, more part of nature, more aware of the changing seasons and the lives of wild creatures. And the landscape, whether rural or urban, becomes a Living Landscape.



### Using maps to explore the Gaywood Valley

You can buy Ordnance Survey maps for all parts of Norfolk. These come in two different scales. The Explorer maps provide the most detail, with a scale of 4cm to the kilometre or 2.5 inches to the mile.

There is also a Landranger series, with a scale of 2cm to the kilometre or 1.25 inches to the mile.

You can look at Ordnance Survey maps online at: [www.shop.ordnancesurveyleisure.co.uk](http://www.shop.ordnancesurveyleisure.co.uk)

Google Maps provides basic maps at: [www.google.co.uk/maps](http://www.google.co.uk/maps)

Google Earth can also be very useful as it allows you to get an aerial view of the land. You can download it from:

[www.google.com/earth](http://www.google.com/earth)

You can take a bird's-eye view tour of the Gaywood Valley by visiting the virtual fly-through at [www.uea.ac.uk/env/research/reshigh/gaywood](http://www.uea.ac.uk/env/research/reshigh/gaywood)

There is an excellent interactive map of public footpaths on Norfolk County Council's Countryside Access website: [www.countrysideaccessmap.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccessmap.norfolk.gov.uk)

## Staying safe and protecting the countryside

When going out in the countryside, it's very important to do so in a way which looks after your own safety, ensures the wellbeing of the wildlife and livestock around you, and respects the integrity of the landscape.

We suggest following the Countryside Code, the full text of which can be found on Natural England's website. The responsibilities of members of the public visiting the countryside are:

### 1. Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs

- Refer to up-to-date maps or guide books.
- Be prepared for changes in weather and other events.
- Check weather conditions before you leave, and don't be afraid to turn back.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Get to know the signs and symbols used in the countryside.

### 2. Leave gates and property as you find them

- Leave gates as you find them or follow instructions on signs.
- In fields where crops are growing, follow paths where possible.
- Use gates, stiles or gaps in field boundaries where provided.
- Be careful not to disturb historic sites.
- Leave machinery and livestock alone. Alert the farmer if you see an animal in distress but don't interfere.

### 3. Protect plants and animals and take your litter home

- Dropping litter is a criminal offence.
- Do not remove rocks or plants.
- Give wild animals and farm animals plenty of space.
- Be careful not to drop smouldering cigarettes or matches.

### 4. Keep dogs under close control

- Keep your dog on a lead where the law requires it, and always keep your dog under control.
- Take special care not to allow your dog to disturb wildlife or livestock.
- Clear up after your dog and make sure your dog is wormed regularly.

### 5. Consider other people

- Where possible, cycle, share lifts or use public transport.
- Don't block gateways with your vehicle.
- Be respectful of horses, walkers and livestock whether you're driving a car or riding a bicycle.
- Support the rural economy – for example by buying from local shops.





# Bawsey Country Park

## Find it

**Map reference:** TF 675196, OS Land Ranger 132, OS Explorer 250.

**Park at:** The car park may be found at TF 676198. Don't be put off by the rutted approach track and unwelcoming entrance signs. The car park itself is large and does not get muddy.

## Highlights and features

Wooded hillsides of birch and pine, lakeside walks and sandy beaches form a very distinctive landscape.

## Notes for walkers

- Walk distances: From 1km to 4km.
- Paths: Mainly sandy and steep in places. Even in wet weather paths remain dry.
- Facilities: None on site.

## What to look for

- Pause at: The lakeside. Admire the almost Scandinavian scenery of birch-covered hills above extensive lakes.
- Summer wildlife: Sand martin, swallow, swift, blackcap, garden warbler, chiffchaff, willow warbler, slow worm and common lizard. Bats include noctule, common pipistrelle and Daubenton's. In late summer and autumn this is a brilliant site for fungi: you will spot the distinctive white-spotted red caps of fly agaric. Don't pick fungi as many species are highly poisonous.
- Winter wildlife: Cormorant, teal, tufted duck, mallard, woodcock, fieldfare, redwing.
- Year-round wildlife: Barn owl, tawny owl, great spotted woodpecker, marsh tit, tree-creeper, pheasant, rabbit, Reeves' muntjac, roe deer, grey squirrel, stoat, weasel.

## History

The lakes here have been created by quarrying silica-rich sands for use in glass-making and ceramics.

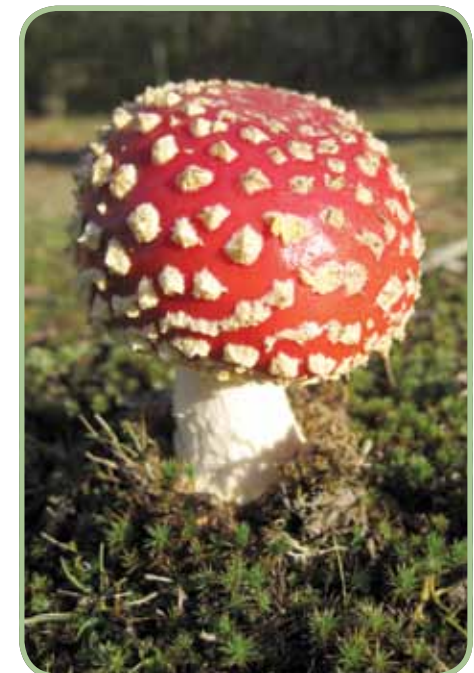
## Did you know?

Sands in the Leziate and Bawsey area have been exploited for centuries by the glass-making and foundry industries. The lakes and beaches at Bawsey Country Park are part of this industrial heritage and even today around 450,000 tonnes of silica sand are extracted from nearby working quarries each year. They provide more than 80% of the sands used in the UK for glass production. These silica-rich sands were deposited here in the Cretaceous period when this area was a shallow tropical sea in which ammonites and huge plesiosaurs swam.

## Find out more

Contact the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk for more information:

[www.west-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk)



fly agaric



# St James' Church (Bawsey Ruins)

## Find it

Leaving Gaywood on the B1145 towards Bawsey, take the first left towards Church Farm.

**Map reference:** TF 663207, OS Land Ranger 132, OS Explorer 250, Postcode PE32 1EU.

**Park at:** There's space to park just before the main farm buildings at Church Farm TF 663203.

## Highlights and features

The ruined church of St James, standing on a low hill above the Gaywood Valley, can be seen for miles around. It is a very atmospheric and intriguing ruin and an excellent viewpoint. The church was once the heart of a thriving fishing village situated above marshland on the edge of the Gaywood River estuary.

## Historic Bawsey

Bawsey has a rich and fascinating history covering many centuries. Finds of Iron Age artefacts to the north of Bawsey Ruins indicates that this area was an important location during the Iron Age (800 BC to 42 AD) and the evidence of finds continues into the Roman period (43 AD to 410 AD) when it is possible that there were settlements in the area.

The Saxons settled in the area and a large village was located here in the Middle and Late Saxon periods (650 AD to 1065 AD). In the region of the ruins there would have been a Saxon Church or possibly a minster, as indicated by the evidence of rare writing implements. Minsters are Royal or Episcopal foundations associated with substantial estates.

The current church was constructed around the 1130s. This is the Mediaeval period and the parish church is unusual in that it has a centrally-located tower. This position reflects the design

used in large abbey or Cathedral churches and indicates that this church was special.

In the early mediaeval period the site would have been an island that was possibly connected by a causeway which may have been cut off in periods of flood. Locations such as this have often been the focus of rituals and the evidence on the site from the Bronze Age onwards would seem to show that there was a focus of such activity here before it later became a monastic site.

The settlement was cleared in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century when the landowner moved the tenants, removing their houses in order to create pasture for sheep farming. Although the church was not demolished its condition gradually declined. Records of baptisms and burials show that the church was still in use until the 1770s. There is also evidence of burials at the church continuing until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Notes for walkers

- Walk distances: The walk from Church Farm to Bawsey ruins and back is less than 1km. However longer walks exploring the valley are possible from here.
- Paths: The farm track can be muddy and the short climb up to the ruins is steep and over rough grassland.
- Facilities: None on site.

## What to look for

- Pause at: The ruins. Look down across farmland to the River Gaywood and the nature reserve at Grimston Warren beyond. Can you spot the distinctive red poll cattle that graze the riverside fields at Church Farm? This land was once arable but has been converted back to pasture.
- Summer wildlife: Skylark, swallow, cinnabar moth, butterflies, wildflowers.
- Winter wildlife: Curlew, lapwing, fieldfare, redwing.
- Year-round wildlife: Brown hare, kestrel, buzzard, green woodpecker.



## History

The ruins of St James' Church date from the 1100s and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Only sections of the tower, nave and chancel survive. The village here was destroyed in the 16th century by the landowner, Thomas Thoresby, who wanted the land for sheep pasture. See Historic Bawsey on page 44 for more information.

## Did you know?

Excavations on the hillside around the church revealed a skeleton whose skull had sustained a powerful blow from a swordsman. These ruins may well be on the site of a much earlier settlement that pre-dated the Normans, and one that was raided by Viking Norsemen.

## Find out more

There is an English Heritage panel near the ruin:  
[www.heritage-explorer.co.uk](http://www.heritage-explorer.co.uk)



skylark



orange-tip





# NWT Grimston Warren

## Find it

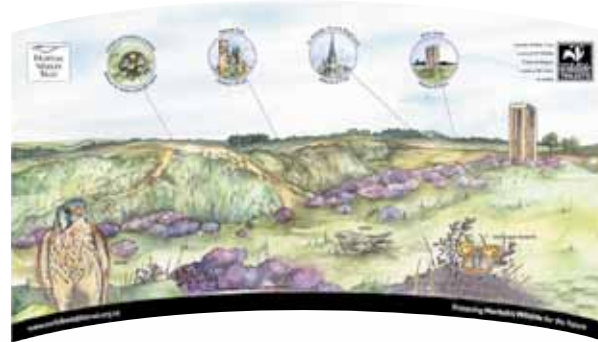
NWT Grimston Warren is east of King's Lynn. Leave King's Lynn on the A149 to Fakenham and take the A148 to Fakenham at the Rising Lodge (Knights Hill Hotel) roundabout. After 300 metres turn right, signposted Roydon. To explore NWT Grimston Warren park at the Roydon Common west car park, which is on your right after 1km. Access to Grimston Warren is on foot, following the waymarked pathway across Roydon Common.

**Map Reference:** TF 679216, OS Land Ranger 132, OS Explorer 250.

**Park at:** Roydon Common west car park TF 680229.

## Highlights and features

One of the best viewpoints is the military observation tower. From here you have spectacular views over the Gaywood Valley to Bawsey ruins and west to King's Lynn. A viewpoint panel points out features to look for.



## NWT Grimston Warren: the story of a heath reborn

Restoring lost heathland is expensive and difficult. At Grimston Warren first a huge conifer plantation had to be felled then the tree stumps were ground up and removed along with the accumulated leaf litter. This work has transformed the landscape and opened up views not seen for decades. Nightjars and wood larks now nest among heathers which germinated from long dormant seeds once the conifers were removed and light let in.



woodlark

The work to restore, recreate and reconnect heathland in the Gaywood Valley is part of a national programme of Living Landscape projects aimed at benefiting wildlife and people. Grimston Warren provides an excellent example with new access for local people created and populations of rare wildlife enhanced. Many species have benefited including endangered natterjack toads which have been introduced here. Look for the hardy Dartmoor ponies which NWT is using to graze Grimston Warren. The ponies are a vital part of managing and maintaining this developing heathland.

## Notes for walkers

- Walk distances: To walk to the military observation tower and back to the Roydon Common car park is roughly 4km. You can of course explore Grimston Warren further and there are several kms of pathways to enjoy.
- Paths: Paths are mainly sandy but there are some wetter areas on Grimston Warren so walking boots are recommended. Not suitable for wheelchair access.
- Facilities: None on site. Nearest refreshments and toilets at Knights Hill Hotel at Rising Lodge roundabout.

## What to look for

- Pause at: The site of the tramline which once took sand from a quarry here. The sand was used for glassmaking.
- Summer wildlife: Skylark, meadow pipit, green woodpecker, nightjar, adder.
- Winter wildlife: Hen harrier, merlin, fieldfare, redwing.
- Year-round wildlife: Brown hare, roe deer, Reeves' muntjac, grey partridge.



adder



green woodpecker



brown hare

## History

Archaeological finds have revealed that this landscape has been used from the prehistoric period onwards. The landscape is likely to have been managed since the Bronze Age (2500 BC to 800 BC) and round barrows show that the area was used for burials. The southern boundary of Grimston Warren is marked by a mediaeval (1066 AD to 1539 AD) field boundary that is still visible and shows how the landscape was divided in this period. The name Grimston Warren almost certainly indicates that rabbit-warrening was practised here in mediaeval times. Perhaps the most obvious historic features date from the Second World War: the pair of artillery observation towers, one of which is accessible on the NWT nature reserve.

## Did you know?

Most of this area was planted with conifers in the 1960s but today you can explore one of the largest heathland restoration projects in England. See text box for further details.

## Find out more

To learn more about Grimston Warren visit: [www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/grimston](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/grimston)



# NWT Roydon Common

## Find it

NWT Roydon Common is east of King's Lynn. Leave King's Lynn on the A149 to Fakenham and take the A148 to Fakenham at the Rising Lodge (Knights Hill Hotel) roundabout. After 300 metres turn right, signposted Roydon. The west car park is on your right 1km from the A148, the east car park is at 2.7km.

**Map Reference:** TF 685225, OS Land Ranger 132, OS Explorer 250

**Park at:** West car park TF 680229, east car park TF 698229

## Highlights and features

Amazing open heathland landscape with a wilderness atmosphere. Heather flowers in August and September turning the landscape purple. Look out for the Dartmoor ponies which graze this nature reserve. Stunning views.



honey bee on heather

## NWT Roydon Common National Nature Reserve

### Rare and special wildlife:

The sweeping views across open heather-clad heath and primeval looking bogs can at first seem largely devoid of wildlife. However the rich mix of wet and dry habitats hides an astonishing diversity of birds, plants and animals, including many which are nationally rare. Uncommon plants include black bog-rush, marsh fern, cranberry, bog asphodel, common cotton-grass, carpets of sphagnum moss and

all three species of sundew. Look out for the rare black darter dragonfly only known at a handful of sites in East Anglia. It may be seen on the wing between July and October and frequents the wettest areas of heath where bog asphodel grows. Rare breeding birds include nightjar and woodlark. Small pools are home to the very rare raft spider. This nature reserve also supports many less obvious groups of wildlife such as bees, dragonflies, beetles, reptiles, amphibians, moths and butterflies. The reserve is a stronghold for adders, common lizards and minotaur beetles to name just a few heathland 'specials'.



sundew



minotaur beetle

## Notes for walkers

- There are interpretation panels with trail maps at both car parks. This is an exposed site so it is often windy. Stick to pathways to avoid disturbing wildlife and to avoid hidden wet boggy areas.
- Walk distances: There are several trails. A shorter more sheltered route leads partly through birch woodland from the east car park (1km to 2km) and longer trails lead to Grimston Warren from the west car park (2km to 4km).
- Paths: Uneven terrain, often sandy, some wetter areas. Not accessible for wheelchairs.
- Facilities: None on site. Nearest refreshments and toilets at Knights Hill Hotel at Rising Lodge roundabout.

## What to look for

- Pause at: Viewpoints over the heath.
- Summer wildlife: Heathers in flower, butterflies, dragonflies, woodlark, nightjar, adder, slow worm, common lizard.
- Winter wildlife: Hen harrier, merlin, fieldfare, redwing.
- Year-round wildlife: Rare mosses and lichens, skylark, green woodpecker, yellowhammer, kestrel, buzzard, stonechat, wren.



stonechat



common lizard

## History

Heathland is ancient. It's possible that West Norfolk heaths, such as Roydon Common, have their origins with the first farmers who in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages cleared woodlands and grazed livestock creating the conditions for heathland to develop. In medieval times many heathlands in Norfolk were valued as commons. At Roydon common land was used by local communities for grazing horses and livestock, gathering heather and bracken for fuel and animal bedding, digging peat for fuel from the wet areas, excavating sand, trapping rabbits and foraging for wild foods. In 1808 in Norfolk there were 143,346 acres of commons (the medieval acreage was even greater). Today there remain around 8,000 acres of common. Fortunately Roydon Common is one which survived both the 19th century enclosures and the twentieth century conversion of heathland to forestry or agriculture.

## Did you know?

Roydon Common is not only one of the finest heaths in Norfolk. Its wet peaty mire is one of the rarest habitats in the UK and Roydon's is probably the best example of this habitat in England.

## Find out more

Further details and a downloadable reserve leaflet may be found at:

[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/roydon](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/roydon)



# Reffley Wood

## Find it

From the Knights Hill Hotel (Rising Lodge) roundabout head towards King's Lynn along Grimston Road. Take a left turning onto Sandy Lane and the entrance to Reffley Wood is clearly signed on your right after about 200 metres.

**Map Reference:** TF 655218, OS Landranger 132, OS Explorer 250, Postcode PE30 3NY

**Park at:** There's free car parking for two cars outside the entrance to the wood. Please do not park on Sandy Lane.

## Highlights and features

One of King's Lynn's hidden gems. Look for magnificent veteran oaks which once marked the parish boundary in the north east corner of the wood. Discover bluebells and ancient woodland flowers such as primrose and wild garlic in spring.

## Notes for walkers

- Walk distances: You can walk a circular trail of about 1km or explore further along woodland pathways stretching 3kms.
- Paths: Generally a flat site. Some paths stay dry throughout the year while others can become wet and muddy in winter. There are sections of boardwalk. Parts of the wood may be closed for management work on occasions.
- Facilities: None on site. The nearest refreshments and toilets are at Knights Hill Hotel, in King's Lynn town centre, or at the Asda supermarket and local café off Grimston Road.

## What to look for

- Pause at: Ancient oak trees, remnants of the ancient wood.
- Summer wildlife: Woodland flowers in spring including bluebell, wild garlic and primrose. Migratory birds which breed include blackcap, garden warbler, chiffchaff and willow warbler.
- Winter wildlife: Foraging parties of small birds include blue tit, great tit, long-tailed tit and goldcrest. Woodcock are difficult to spot but visit the wetter parts of the wood.
- Year-round wildlife: Great spotted woodpecker, long-tailed tit, nuthatch, treecreeper, jay. Tree and shrub species include hawthorn, hazel, oak, ash and guelder rose.

## History

This 130 acre (52ha) ancient wood suffered damage in the 1950s and 1960s when native trees were felled and conifers (Scots pine, Corsican pine and Douglas fir) were planted in their place. Today the wood is owned by the Woodland Trust and is gradually returning to its ancient roots as broadleaved woodland. This wood appears on old maps and is known to have been here for more than 400 years.

## Did you know?

You can help the Woodland Trust manage Reffley Wood by joining their volunteer team or you can attend their family events.

## Find out more

To learn more about Reffley Wood visit the Woodland Trust website:

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

See also our case study of Reffley Wood volunteers on page 74.



primrose



# The Walks, King's Lynn

## Find it

The Walks is situated in the centre of the town of King's Lynn, close to the police station and library. There are access points from Tennyson Road and St. James' Road.

**Map Reference:** TF 625198, OS Land Ranger 132, OS Explorer 250.

**Park at:** There are several entrances to The Walks, with nearby parking in King's Lynn.

## Highlights and features

The Walks is the only surviving 18th century town walk in Norfolk. This 17 hectare green space in the heart of King's Lynn has been restored with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Gaywood River flows through this attractive, wildlife-filled urban park.

## Notes for walkers

- Walk distances: A circular walk around The Walks is around 1km. The total area is 17 hectares, nearly all of which is easily accessible.
- Paths: Generally flat, plenty of hard-surfaced paths which are fully accessible for wheelchair users.
- Facilities: A café and toilet are to be found on the north side of The Walks near the well-equipped children's play area. The park rangers also run a programme of family events from here.

## What to look for

- Pause at: Red Mount Chapel; this unusual building was a 15th century wayside chapel, a stopping point for pilgrims on their way to Walsingham.
- Summer wildlife: Blackcap, swift, moorhen and mallard chicks, purple loosestrife, dandelion, red deadnettle.
- Winter wildlife: Mistletoe is more abundant here than at any other site in Norfolk: look up at the tree canopy to see numerous clumps.
- Year-round wildlife: Grey squirrel, great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, mistle thrush, collared dove, pied wagtail.

## History

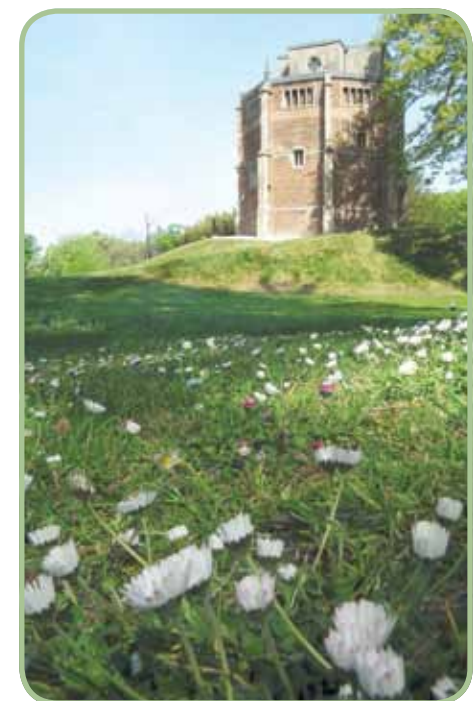
The Walks was created as a promenade for the populace of King's Lynn, away from the noise, grime and bustle of the town centre. The highest point of The Walks is the Red Mount. In the late 15th Century Red Mount Chapel acted as a wayside stop for pilgrims on their way to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Grade One Listed Building, the chapel is open to visitors from April to September. It offers excellent views of the surrounding landscape. The area also used to form part of the King's Lynn town defences. The historic earthworks in the centre of the park are described by experts as part of one of the most complete systems of earthwork town defences in Eastern England.

## Did you know?

The River Gaywood flows through The Walks and the area is designed to hold water should the river flood, thereby preventing damaging flooding to more built-up areas. The Walks is a Grade Two Historic Park.

## Find out more

Click on the link to Leisure and Public Space at [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk)





# Harding's Pits

## Find it

You can walk to Harding's Pits from South Quay along the riverbank path overlooking the Great Ouse. There are several points of access to Harding's Pits with the residential areas of Hillington Square to the north, the Friars to the east, and South Lynn to the south, and the western edge bounded by the river bank.

**Map Reference:** TF 618192, OS Land Ranger 132, OS Explorer 250.

**Park at:** South Quay or Boal Quay car parks.

## Highlights and features

Good views over the river Great Ouse. A small site (2.2 hectares) but a wonderful, wild bit of green space, well used by local people and wildlife. The Great Whale sculpture, nearly 20 feet high and weighing 3.5 tonnes makes a distinctive landmark. The area is both a green lung for local people and a habitat for many plants, insects, birds and mammals.

## Notes for walkers

- Walk distances: A circular walk around the whole site is less than 1km.
- Paths: Good, hard paths crisscross the site.
- Facilities: None on site. Refreshments and toilets may be found at The Green Quay on the historic South Quay.

## What to look for

- Pause at: The whale statue, which includes a seating area.
- Summer wildlife: Gather blackberries in late summer. Look for butterflies including red admiral, peacock, small tortoiseshell and common blue. Breeding birds include linnet and whitethroat. Wildflowers in the re-seeded meadow include ladies' bedstraw, greater knapweed and meadow cranesbill. Common seals from the Wash may often be seen in the river.
- Winter wildlife: Redwing, fieldfare.
- Year-round wildlife: Fox, stoat, song thrush, wren, robin, blackbird, kestrel, black-headed gull.

## History

In the 12th to 14th centuries this area was part of Whitefriars, land belonging to the Carmelite Monks whose monastery gate can still be seen close to the boundary of Harding's Pits. In the 16th century the site formed part of the defences of the walled town. During the 16th to 19th centuries the area known as Blubber Creek was home to the Lynn whaling industry. In more recent times the area was used for industries ranging from brick kilns to timber yards and market gardens. During the First World War horses requisitioned by the army from Norfolk farms were grazed here before being taken by rail from Lynn for use pulling artillery guns on the Western Front. For a while in the 20th century it was used as a rubbish dump. On falling into disuse it became a wild area valued by locals for blackberries, sunsets and quiet open space. Local opposition prevented it being developed to build a supermarket in the mid 1990s.

## Did you know?

Harding's Pits has been designated a Doorstep Green to provide open space for wildlife and a place for quiet recreation for local communities. The Green was developed over a three-year period from 2004 and is now managed by the Harding's Pits Community Association.

## Find out more

To learn more visit the Harding's Pits Community Association website at

[www.hardings-pits.org.uk](http://www.hardings-pits.org.uk)



common blue



# Additional green gems of the Gaywood Valley

## Reffley Spring Wood

This small area of semi-natural woodland may be found off Reffley Lane, opposite the community centre. It has a network of informal footpaths and a rich and varied plantlife. The scarce fine-leaved water-dropwort has been found in a pond on the site. Reffley Spring Wood is so named because of the mineral spring which used to rise in it, producing water rich in iron.

A group known as the Reffley Society, dating from 1650, was originally a royalist organisation and was founded to oppose Cromwell. They met at Reffley Spring and erected an obelisk and a small temple nearby. A bigger temple was built in 1789 and enlarged further in 1851. Unfortunately it was extensively vandalised in the 1970s and demolished in 1982.



## Mill House Wood

This large area of woodland (90.2ha), lies mainly to the north of the Gaywood Valley. Bog pondweed, a scarce plant, is found in some of the drainage ditches here. Entrance to the wood is off an unnamed road linking the A148 and A149 near Castle Rising. Please keep to public footpaths.

## Congham Heath Woods

This large wood (77.9ha) consists mainly of conifers, grown commercially. It is owned by a forestry company but there are several rides waymarked for public access. The area used to be heathland and some heath vegetation still remains, particularly along the rides. Lily of the valley may be seen along a ride in the southwest of the site. The woods may be entered from a track off Congham Road in Grimston.



## Churchyards

Churchyards offer important pockets of habitat to wildlife, often in otherwise built-up areas. Many have not been treated with fertiliser or other chemicals and are therefore home to a wonderful variety of plants. They are also an oasis for birds and invertebrates and represent a crucial green space for people in the built environment. There are fifteen churchyards in the Gaywood Valley, covering an area of almost four hectares.



## Ponds

Ponds are often overlooked but are vital habitat for many species including rarities such as the beautiful great crested newt. 149 ponds and other standing water bodies have been identified in the Gaywood Valley.



## Springlines

An important springline has developed at Grimston, where water filtering down through the chalk aquifer meets an impermeable layer of clay. Water emerges in low-lying areas as chalk springs, for example Sowshead which forms the headwater of the Gaywood River. You can take a springline walk between Grimston and Gayton, passing Sowshead Spring and Well Hall.



## Gaywood Plantation

This small woodland adjacent to residential areas lies between Gaywood Park and Fairstead and is managed by the Woodland Trust. An active local volunteers group helps to look after the wood and runs regular public events. The range of woodland flowers under the trees indicates that Plantation Wood is probably a remnant fragment of ancient woodland, though the wood today contains a mix of native trees, including mature oaks with a hazel understorey and some exotic planted species such as Turkey oak. There are two small ponds in the wood and close by the area known as the Rookery is a plantation of even-aged oaks over grass.



## Lynnsport

Lynnsport is owned and managed by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. Associated with the Leisure Centre are 70 acres of parkland including athletics tracks and bowling greens. Though much of the area is short, mown grassland there are also ornamental trees including some fine willows. At the eastern edge of the grounds enjoy a very pleasant walk alongside the Gaywood river. Look for pied wagtails, moorhens and even kingfishers or simply enjoy sitting on the riverbank and the sounds of wind, water and bird song.





# Wild walks in the Gaywood Valley

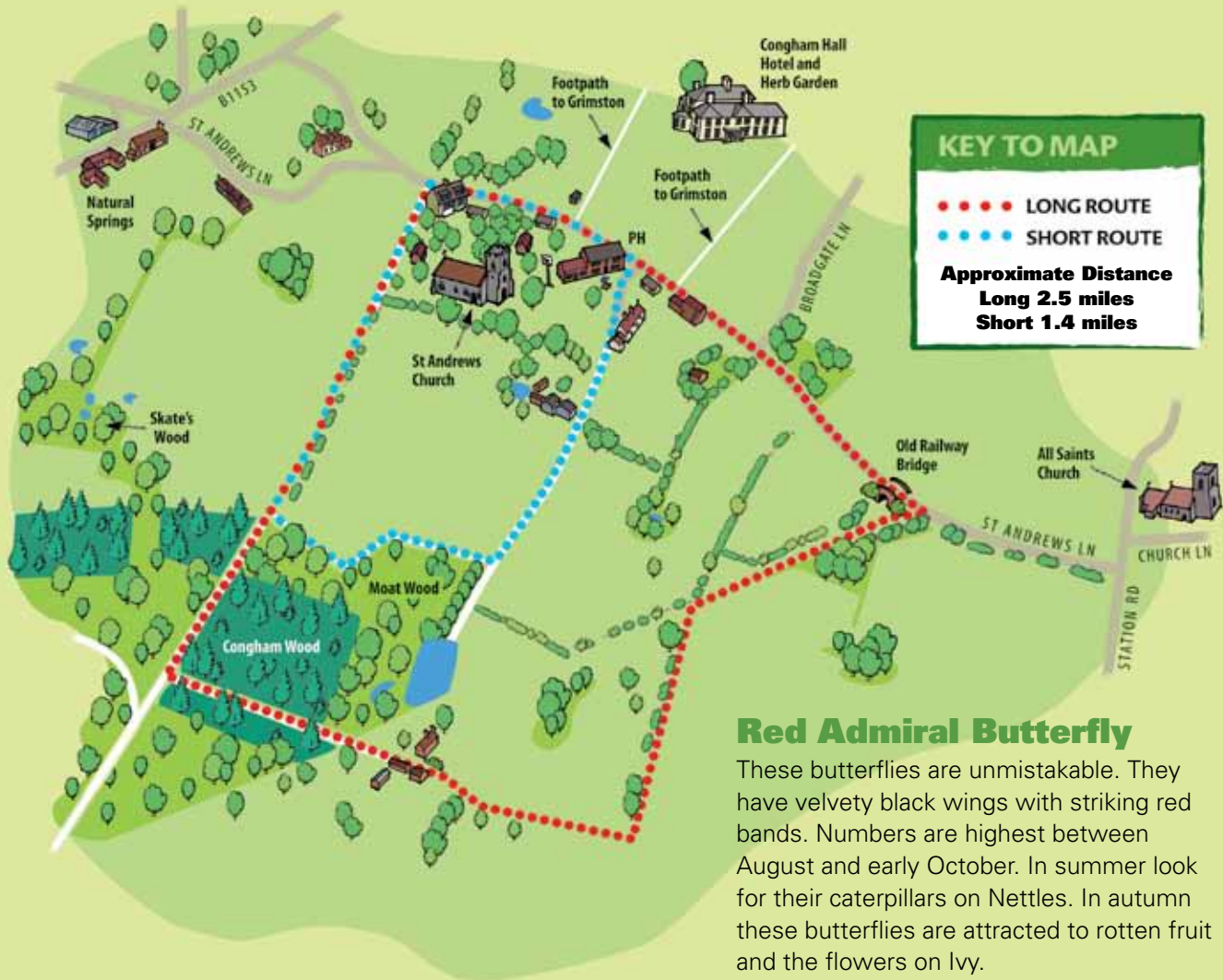
There are countless corners of the Gaywood Valley to explore, each of which offers a different landscape and a different range of wild creatures to see. To get you started on your journey through your local landscape, here are four easy walks through some of the real gems of the Gaywood Valley. We hope you enjoy them. Remember: stay safe and keep your eyes peeled for local wildlife.

## CONGHAM

This walk takes you through Congham Wood and along an old, dismantled railway line. South of this walk is Congham Hall, a Georgian country house built in the 1780s. Congham Hall is now a hotel set in beautiful gardens and parkland.

**What will I see?**

While enjoying this walk you can discover the wildlife of the Gaywood Valley, a Living Landscape. Some animals and plants you may see include: skylark, red admiral butterfly, common frog, common toad and harebell.



**Skylark**

Skylarks are small, streaky, brown birds, larger than sparrows but smaller than starlings. Listen out for the wonderful song of the male. He will sing constantly for two or three minutes while flying at a height of 50 to 100 metres.



## GRIMSTON

Enjoy this walk around Grimston and discover some of its history and wildlife. The village has a rich history dating back to prehistoric times! There is also lots of evidence from the Roman, Saxon, Tudor and Georgian periods. A Roman villa was discovered a hundred years ago near St. Botolphs Church. The walk will also take you past Congham Hall Hotel, a Georgian country house built in the 1780s.

**What will I see?**

While enjoying this walk you can discover the wildlife of the Gaywood Valley, a Living Landscape. Some animals and plants you may see include: brown hare, skylark, common frog, grey partridge, common toad and harebell.

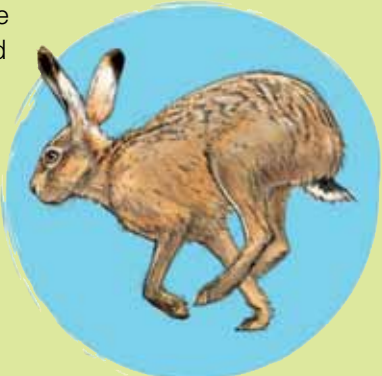


**Common Toad**

Common toads breed in ponds in Spring, but for the rest of the year will wander well away from water. Their tadpoles are black and the toadlets emerge in huge numbers in summer, after heavy rain. They can live for 40 years! Look for them at night.

**Brown Hare**

Hares are much larger than rabbits with longer, black-tipped ears and more powerful legs. Can you spot one running across the fields? Brown hares live on farmland and heathland. They do not burrow into the ground like rabbits, but make shallow depressions in the ground called 'forms'.





# POTT ROW

Enjoy this walk around Roydon Common and Pott Row and discover the wildlife of an amazing nature reserve: part of the Gaywood Valley, a Living Landscape. In Britain many areas of heathland have been lost due to the growth of towns and cities and changes in farming. Roydon Common is one of Norfolk's largest remaining heaths.

## What will I see?

Keep your eyes and ears open as this walk will provide an opportunity to see the animals and plants that live on the heath. Wildlife you may see includes: green woodpecker, hedgehog, common frog, common toad, barn owl, yellowhammer and bullfinch.



## Green Woodpecker

Easily identified with a green back, yellow rump and red crown. They like to live in old trees, which they drill into with their powerful beaks.

Can you see any possible woodpecker holes in the trees? You may also spot these woodpeckers on the ground searching for ants, one of their favourite foods.

**KEY TO MAP**  
 ..... ROUTE  
 P CAR PARKING  
**Approximate Distance**  
**4.3 miles**



## Hedgehog

Britain's only spiny mammal, hedgehogs have up to seven thousand spines on their backs. They have probably been on Earth for around 15 million years! To protect themselves from predators they can curl up into a spiny ball. Look for hedgehogs at night, they can be very noisy and eat beetles, larvae, slugs and snails.



# ROYDON COMMON

Enjoy this walk around Roydon Common and discover the wildlife of an amazing nature reserve: part of the Gaywood Valley, a Living Landscape. In Britain many areas of heathland have been lost due to the growth of towns and cities and changes in farming. Roydon Common is one of Norfolk's largest remaining heaths.

## What will I see?

Keep your eyes and ears open as this walk will provide an opportunity to see the animals and plants that live on the heath. Some animals you may see include: water voles, barn owls, glow worms, adders, slow worms, bullfinches and yellowhammers.



**KEY TO MAP**  
 ..... ROUTE  
 P CAR PARKING  
**Approximate Distance**  
**4.3 miles**



## Barn Owl

Barn Owls are easy to identify due to their size, white feathers and heartshaped face. They hunt during the day and at night, feeding on small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. Listen for their screeching calls – barn owls don't hoot! Dawn and dusk are good times to spot them.



## Slow Worm

Slow worms are in fact lizards. They differs from snakes in having eyelids and being able to drop their tails to escape from predators. Look for them on sunny spring and summer days.