

Walks Around Walsham – Wind In The Willows

The third walk starts in the car park beside the village hall. It covers three of the sites of windmills which no longer exist. Turn left out of the car park, turn left after the church, go down the hill, over the bridge and turn left into Grove Road. Enjoy the coolness of the shade of Grove Road before emerging into the sunshine again.

Although well within the residential area of the village, muntjac deer are common here along with jays, magpies, and green and lesser spotted woodpeckers.

Turn left into Palmer Street, pass Well Cottages on your left which have a well just in front of the houses. Turn right past the pond and left onto the track at the entrance to Jolly's Way. This track is the start of what was once Clay Street which stretched all the way to Cranmer Cottages on the Finningham Road. It was lined with cottages and a busy place in medieval times. Turn right just before Plantation Cottage and you are now on Mill Lane, once a wide green lane that was the main route to Westhorpe.

Today it is ploughed close to the edge. Continue up the hill with the hedge on your left and as you come near to the top of the hill you have a view all around the eastern end of Walsham. The footpath turns right across the fields about here. Then on your left the wheat seed trials are obvious with different colours and heights of different types of wheat. In medieval times there was a windmill situated in that field opposite Folly Hall and was on one of the highest points in the village. It had fallen out of use by 1577. Continue across the field, and along beside the hedge. At the end of the field go diagonally across to find the little footbridge and then follow the new fence to Crownland Road. Note the old water pump just inside the hedge beside the road. This part of Crownland Road was also lined with more houses in the past. Just a few farmhouses and Crownland Hall now survive. Most of the fields around here have had their hedges removed, the occasional tree tells you where old field boundaries once existed. Turn right along Crownland Road. In the field after Ashvale is an ordnance survey trig point marking the one of the highest positions (67m) in the village, so a good place for windmills. The next one was not far away. Pass Crownland Hall, a moated farmhouse and on towards the pond on your left beside which the second of the windmills was situated in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Carry on down to Four Ashes. The houses here are as varied and interesting as any in the village. Turn left along the Badwell Ash Road. This is not for the fainthearted, cars can whip along this road so take care along here. The verges here are wide and were once used for grazing. Now they are wooded and provide a rich habitat for wildlife. Turn right through the first gap in the hedge and you come face to face with modern grant supported, habitat enrichment farming practices. There is a wide (10-15m) field boundary sown with clover and all sorts of wild flowers to support bees and insects. The colours and the smells are powerful and in such contrast to the road that the two areas are like completely different worlds within a few metres of each other. Turn left

to the end of the field then right along the other side of the hedge. This path was previously known as Rottells Lane and Hoxens Lane. Many oak trees along the village hedgerows like this were felled and used to build the Martineau houses. On the left, in the field is a small, circular plantation. On the far side of the field is a bank of trees known as Long Plantation and it is at the northern end of this, close to a spring fed pond, where another medieval windmill once stood. There is no footpath to it, it's on private land. At the bottom of this field two dew ponds have been linked with a wildlife corridor.

Our walk continues to the Ixworth Road, across the road and into the wood. Turning right, walk beside the stream as far as the sharp corner. Cross the road here and into Gants Meadow. Follow the path and keep your dogs on leads if the sheep are about. Turn left into the Causeway and up towards the church and from there back to the car park.



View across the fields to the church