

# **Pilgrimage Trail**

**Sheringham to Trimingham**

**From Brokenness  
to  
New Life**





# **Pilgrimage Walk Sheringham to Trimingham**

## *From Brokenness to New Life*

Did you know that the church in Trimingham was a place of pilgrimage in late medieval times? There was an alabaster head of John the Baptist within the church which was a copy of that in St Amiens in France, said to hold the relic. The head has since been destroyed, but the name of the church remains, one of only three in the country.

Inspired by this church and by the wonderful walks, scenery and fresh air in North Norfolk, fostering the wellbeing enjoyed by our visitors, this pilgrimage has been prepared so that everyone is able to derive the spiritual benefit of this journey.

The pilgrimage may be taken slowly over days in stages, or at a faster pace from start to finish in one day. It is possible on foot, using the Coasthopper bus to each of the villages and towns on the route, or by car at all except for Trimingham which has no car park, and so the last stage will need to be taken by foot or by bus.

The route meanders in and out of the Norfolk Coast Path / King Charles III Coast Path and other existing routes which are accessible on line. Given the rate of coastal erosion there will inevitably be revisions over time, but the described route is accurate at the time of printing and no internet connection is required.

Many thanks are extended to those members of the churches concerned who have generously given their time and assistance during the compilation of this pilgrimage.

While there is no charge for this pilgrimage, there is a suggested donation of £5. Please donate to St Peter's Church in Sheringham who have ownership of the copyright. Once you have completed your pilgrimage, please pass the booklet on to someone else who may be interested, asking them to make a donation to any of the churches on route if possible. Thank you.

If this pilgrimage inspires you to go on to further such walks, the website <https://trypilgrimage.org.uk> provides suggestions and links which you might find helpful.



Our pilgrimage begins in the church of St Peter in Sheringham.

It is a bright, welcoming church, an inclusive church of today.

We may notice how connected it is to the town, the land, the sea and the world in the bespoke altar cloth and the prayer stations; be inspired by the stories depicted in the stained glass windows; and find connections with our lives today in all that is on offer here.



We might pray for guidance and to be refreshed as we make our pilgrimage, this spiritual journey. We are not alone, but alongside pilgrims past, present and future as we take each step.

The first stage of our walk takes us to the ruins of the Priory of St Mary in the Meadow at Beeston Regis.

It is important to wear stout footwear and to be aware of uneven ground, mud, traffic on roads with no pavements, railway crossings, sand and shingle, and clifftop paths where there are no barriers as we take this pilgrimage, to keep ourselves and any companions, whether human or canine, safe from harm.



As we set off, we leave the church of St Peter and turn left into Church Street, pass the town clock, continue along the High Street and turn right into Wyndham Street, which runs into Beeston Road.

We keep walking until we reach Priory Road on the left. Immediately on the right hand side in Priory Road there is a footpath which runs alongside a beck. We walk alongside the beck until we reach Curtis Lane and turn right to walk along the road, under the bridge and immediately left to continue alongside the beck. We carry straight on when the path makes way for Brook Road and continue ahead until we can go no further. There we turn right along the track, to find the Priory ruins on our left.

We may notice on the way:

A blue plaque marking the place of a medieval chapel here;

Another plaque where the first bomb of WWI was dropped;

The flowers in season;

The sound of the rippling beck.





This was a medieval monastery church with ponds. We could spend time here to reflect upon any area of our lives where there is brokenness.

We may notice how plants grow on the walls of the ruins, how the skies and trees are framed by the gaps in the ruins, and how beautiful the ruins are despite their brokenness.

We might bring our brokenness in a prayer before continuing on our way to the church of All Saints in Beeston Regis.

We retrace our steps from the Priory ruins and turn right into Church Lane, a cul-de-sac leading to a footpath which runs alongside the railway line. We continue along this path passing the allotments until we reach a gate on the left hand side which crosses the line. We take great care to cross safely, then we turn immediately right to continue alongside the railway line until we reach the church of All Saints in Beeston Regis.

We may notice on the way:

That the path is so narrow for a while that we need to walk singly until it opens out and we can walk side by side with others again;

The crops in season as we pass by the allotments;

The sound of the rippling water of the brook which passes under our path as we come to the field and catch sight of the church.





We could spend time both inside and outside of the church, to look at every aspect of our past lives: our homes, schools, work, interests over the years, and our relationships with family members, friends and colleagues.

We may notice the window of the crucifixion, where Jesus blesses the continuing relationship of his mother Mary with John his closest friend at the time when he has to leave them to live without him; and wonder whether God was suffering alongside us in the painful times, while celebrating with us in the good times.

We might bring all of those who have been close to us in the past in a prayer before continuing on our way to the church of the Holy Trinity in West Runton.

On leaving the church we return to the path, continuing alongside the railway line until we reach West Runton. We take great care as we cross the road to walk along the pavement until we reach Holy Trinity church on our left, where we need to cross once again.

We may notice on the way:

A rosemary bush growing against the wall as we leave, and another as we arrive;

The variety of wild plants along the sides of the path, many of which are herbs which were introduced long ago for their healing properties;

Graffiti which confronts us on the walls alongside the line;

Delightful cultivated flowers in the gardens we pass.





We could spend time in the church beginning to think about all aspects of our lives in the present day.

We may find the carved words 'Watch and Pray' and spend time in silence, simply listening to whatever is being revealed to us; notice both the window and the statue of St Francis who was able to come close to God through every living creature and the beauty of nature, and wonder whether we are able to do so too.

We might bring the present moment in a prayer before continuing on our way to the church of St Andrew in East Runton.

On leaving the church we turn left to walk along the narrow pavement to the Village Inn, and then turn left into Water Lane. The pavement peters out as the road bends to the right, and we walk along the road until we see a direction sign for the Coast Path on our right where there is a large elephant.

There are public conveniences and a café nearby if we require them before we continue on our way. We take the coast path and follow it until we go through a camp site and reach the road at East Runton, where we turn left and walk along the pavement. We cross the road, pass a former Methodist Church, and take the right turn where there is a short stretch of pavement on the far side before we need to cross the road to take a track through the common, walking toward a viaduct. The Church of St Andrew is situated to our right before we reach the viaduct.

We may notice on the way:

That we are walking where the skeleton of a steppe mammoth was found, as well as the bones of rhinos, hyenas, wolves and bears;

Skylarks singing, sand martins circling, and gulls effortlessly enjoying the air currents;

The sound of the sea and the delightful way the sun plays on it, as it changes colour like a chameleon;

The artwork of the skyscape.

We could sit silently for a while in this simple church, and know the peace of this deeply spiritual place, steeped in prayer, as we wonder whether there is any clutter we need to clear from our lives today.





We may notice the names of those in the village who gave their lives in two world wars, and reflect upon the importance of loving relationship.

We might pray for peace to remain with us as we make our way to the church of St Peter and St Paul in Cromer.

We leave the church and cross the road, to walk along Mill Lane. This runs into a track which leads us to Cromer. We do not take any turns to the right, and continue to bear left when reaching a bollard with a path ahead.

The path comes out onto Howard's Hill. We can see the church ahead of us, which dominates the town, but we cross the road and walk along Shipden Avenue to the main road, crossing it and the field to pick up the coast path and walk toward the town. We enjoy the walkway with views of the sea and pier before we bear right with the road, pass the garage, turn left into Church Street and make our way to the Church of St Peter and St Paul.

We may notice on the way:

The birdsong;

The old mill which is now a residence, perhaps giving us to reflect upon the stories of those people past and present who have been involved with the building in its lifetime, within a part of theirs;

How the road peters out into a single track path with sandy soil while the cultivated plants we pass make way for wild herbs and grasses;

The glimpses of the sea until we reach it and enjoy the sight and sound, noticing how it is constantly changing.

We will find this church at the very centre of the town. The tower can be seen from all directions. It is a magnet for people: whether locals sheltering from the rain, holidaymakers from home or abroad, children of all ages learning more, bird watchers hoping to see peregrine chicks, or visitors looking for a chat or to simply sit, this is a vibrant lively place.



We may look for the wonderful window of the Ascension, which can cast a rainbow into the church when the sun shines through it, and reflect upon how much light we receive in our lives from those who are willing to be with us, to give us their time and attention.

Are we willing to do the same for other people too? This is surely what love is.



We could be inspired by any one of the pictures portrayed within the lovely stained glass windows, or by one or more of the characters.

We might pray to be energised as we make our way to the church of the Head of John the Baptist in Trimingham.

Upon leaving the church we turn right and head for the sea, checking to ensure that we avoid high tides in terms of both time and sea height. If we need to spend some time here waiting for the tide, there are shops and cafés in Cromer, and public conveniences in the main car parks.

Passing the pier, we continue along the promenade and beach until we reach Overstrand. The beach consists of sand and shingle, with the sand providing easier walking once the tide has ebbed away, while it is necessary to walk on the shingle at times.

As we walk along the beach and hear the constant sound of the waves we may notice on the way:

How the water has made patterns and rivulets in the sand, and made smooth some of the pebbles - are we being sculpted too, by life?



Footprints made by others in the sand, knowing that we are not alone;

No footprints in the sand at times, with nobody else around;

The difference between walking on wet sand and doing so on shingle, which may remind us that some parts of our lives have been easier than others, while perhaps we have become stronger through rough terrain;

That the vibrant life represented by the pier in Cromer becomes more and more distant as we make our way to this last stretch of our pilgrimage;

Barriers on the beach which we must navigate around, and steps which we must climb along the way, culminating in a steep ramp as we ascend to Overstrand.



On reaching Overstrand promenade we continue past the first very steep path leading to the village, as there is another a little further on. When we reach the top we can see The Pleasaunce and the car park and public conveniences straight ahead, with the Clifftop Café across the road.



As there are no facilities in Trimingham, we need to be prepared before we undertake the last stage of our pilgrimage. We cross to the café and walk along Cliff Road to the end, where we turn left, pass the Sea Marge hotel and follow the road around to the right, Carr Lane. When we reach the end we turn left and walk alongside the main road toward Sidestrand until we reach Tower Lane on our left. This will take us all the way to Trimingham along the coast path.

If we want to take a detour to the church of St Martin in Overstrand, we need to turn right at the main road and continue to the church, then retrace our steps to walk toward Sidestrand until we reach Tower Lane on our left.

Pilgrims passed this way toward Trimingham in the 14th and 15th centuries. There are stoups for holy water and a bread oven in the walls of the church of St Martin, and niches which might have been stoups in the walls inside the private house which is now called 'Monk's Barn', that we can see on our left as we head toward Sidestrand. We are alongside those who came before us.

As we reach the clifftop path we are once again given fabulous views of the sea and skies, which can be very uplifting to the spirit. We may recall the window of St Francis which we noticed in West Runton along the way, and the peace of the church in East Runton.

The Church of St Michael and All Angels at Sidestrand was moved inland stone by stone in 1880 due to coastal erosion, something which constantly affects the path we are taking on our pilgrimage. This and the crops in the fields we are passing could remind us that nothing stays the same. Like the church, we sometimes need to move to another place for our own wellbeing.

There is a sidetrack to the right shortly after passing the school grounds, with a treeline to the right, which leads to the round-towered Church at Sidestrand if we would like to go there, to return the same way in order to pick up the coastal path again toward Trimingham.

We may reflect as we walk upon what has been of the greatest importance in our lives, and what has been distracting or sidetracking us.

Is there anything we want to do or say as we return to the everyday? What do we want to focus on and find time for? How might we do so?

As we near to Trimingham the path takes us through two small copses and we could be tempted to go off track, but the coast path takes us directly to Loop Road which is opposite the church, and we can see it to our right.



When we have reached our destination we may find something among the many wonders in this church which speaks to us in new ways, giving us something to take away: whether its history as a pilgrim destination, the story of John the Baptist or any one of the saints portrayed by the rood screen, the fantastic carvings, a window, the building, the inspirational poem, or the boat.

We might spend time in prayer asking for peace, energy and wellbeing to remain with us, giving thanks and asking for blessings upon future pilgrims as we depart, refreshed, stepping into the new life which emerges from brokenness.

Bus stops are nearby for return to Cromer on the Coasthopper, from which buses and trains are available to Sheringham and to Norwich.

Thank you for walking alongside us on the pilgrim trail from Sheringham to Trimingham. We pray that you will be richly blessed as you go on your way.



