

## Norwich to Caistor Roman Town Walk



### Walk wildlife

Wildlife has been quick to colonise the quarry (map 2 site 6) **Sand Martins** nest in holes they dig themselves. During the summer they can be seen hawking over the quarry and surrounding fields. An escaped garden plant **Buddleia** is common here; its colourful clusters of flowers in late summer attract large numbers of **butterflies**.



**Teasels** line the fence at the edge of the quarry. They produce egg-shaped flowers, attracting seed eating **Goldfinches** in the autumn.

Alongside the footpath, growing amongst the hedge, (map 2, site 10) **Dog Rose** can be found, recognised in winter by its arched thorns and in summer by its pink flowers.

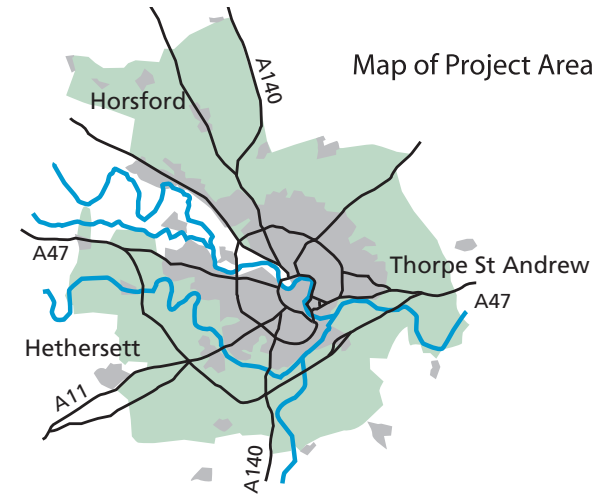


In summer these hedges are home to the **Whitethroat**, which sings in short bursts as it flies up from the hedge before diving quickly, back into cover.

### Norwich Fringe Project

This leaflet is one of a series of self-guided trails that will help you enjoy the Norwich Fringe countryside.

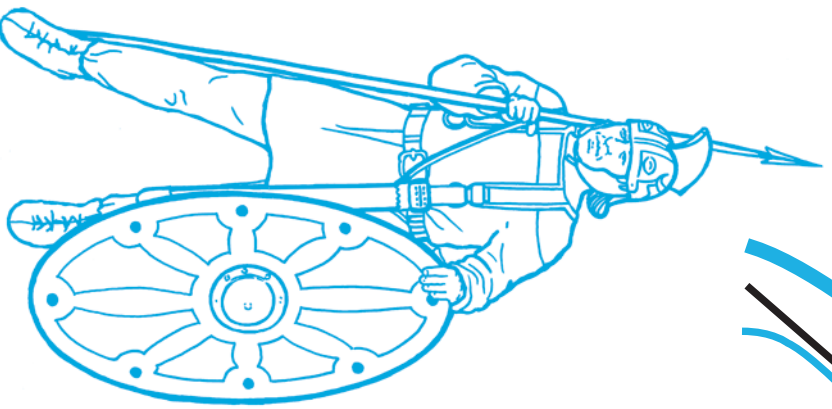
Norwich Fringe Project aims to promote informal recreational facilities in the countryside surrounding Norwich.



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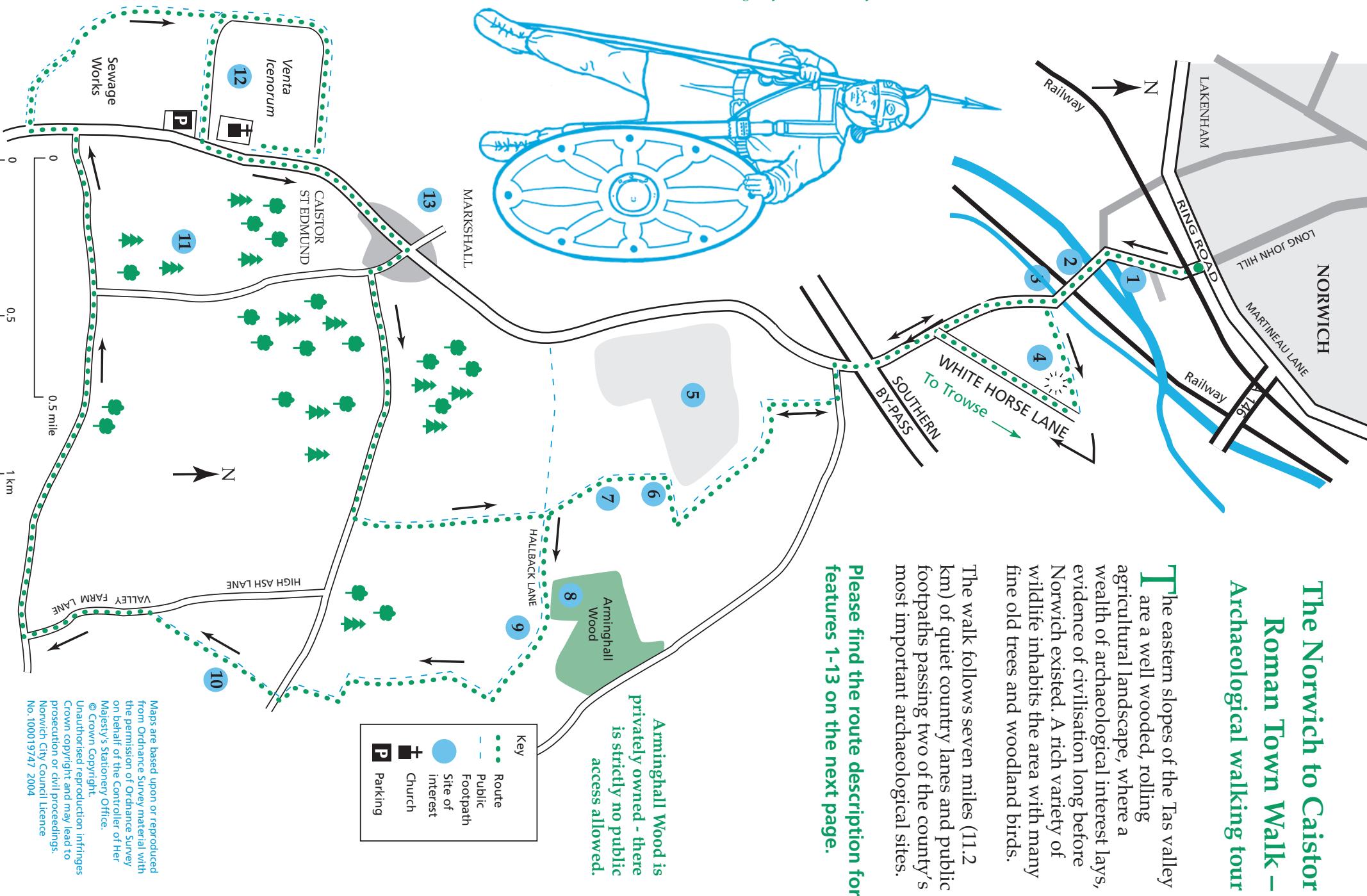


# The Norwich to Caistor Roman Town Walk – Archaeological walking tour

The eastern slopes of the Tas valley are a well wooded, rolling agricultural landscape, where a wealth of archaeological interest lays, evidence of civilisation long before Norwich existed. A rich variety of wildlife inhabits the area with many fine old trees and woodland birds.

The walk follows seven miles (11.2 km) of quiet country lanes and public footpaths passing two of the county's most important archaeological sites.

**Please find the route description for features 1-13 on the next page.**



**Arminghall Wood is privately owned - there is strictly no public access allowed.**

**Key**

- Route
- Public Footpath
- Site of interest
- Church
- Parking

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## Norwich to Caistor Roman Town Walk The walk is approximately 7 miles (11.2 kms)

1. The **Cock Public House** is an 18th Century building which originally had a thatched roof, replaced by tiles when it was badly damaged by sparks from a fire at the nearby mill.

2. **Lakenham Mill** was built in the first half of the 19th Century. In 1908 it was destroyed by fire but was rebuilt and finally closed in 1947. It has been used as a woollen, corn and saw mill and a toy factory.

3. From its source at Carleton Rode, the **River Tas** flows fourteen miles until it merges with the River Yare at Lakenham. It flows through a well wooded landscape with valley bottom pastures and arable land on higher ground.

4. A 'ring' shaped bump in the middle of a grazing pasture is all that remains of one of Norfolk's most important monuments! Constructed in prehistoric times, consisting of a horseshoe of eight massive wooden posts, **Arminghall Henge** would have resembled a wooden equivalent of Stonehenge. The construction of such a religious monument suggests this was a very important area.

5. The site of **Caistor chalk pit** was once a hill whose summit was slightly higher than the point at which the footpath overlooks the quarry. Originally sand and gravel were extracted for building materials. When they became exhausted, extraction of the under-lying chalk began, which is processed on site into agricultural lime. A by-product is flint, which is used in the restoration of old buildings.

6. Wildlife has been quick to colonise the quarry. Sand Martins nest in holes they dig themselves. During the summer they can be seen hawking over the quarry and surrounding fields. An escaped garden plant *Buddleia* is common here; its colourful clusters of flowers in late summer attract large numbers of butterflies. Teasels line the fence at the edge of the quarry. They produce egg-shaped flowers, attracting seed eating Goldfinches in the autumn.

7. This area was planted up with trees by the Norwich Fringe Project to replace Elms lost to Dutch Elm disease.

8. **Arminghall Wood** is a classic example of ancient woodland, dating from before 1600. It is recognised for its wildlife value and has County Wildlife Site status. Medieval woods were important places providing fuel, timber, grazing, bedding and thatching materials. There were also a wide variety of food resources gathered such as nuts, berries and the honey of wild bees.

**The wood is privately owned - there is strictly no public access allowed.**

9. A pollarded Hornbeam is one of the many mature trees lining Hallback Lane. Recognised by its smooth grey bark with dark fissures and the dead leaves it retains through the winter. Hornbeam is a very hard wood, once used for construction of precision parts such as pulleys, cogs, and wood screws; it also produces fine charcoal, gunpowder and slow burning timber. Commonly it is coppiced or pollarded to produce firewood. There are also several mature hollow oaks lining Hallback Lane.

10. Alongside the footpath, growing amongst the hedge, Dog Rose can be found, recognised in winter by its arched thorns and in summer by its pink flowers. In summer these hedges are home to the Whitethroat, which sings in short bursts as it flies up from the hedge before diving quickly, back into cover.

11. Hidden amongst a plantation of Scots Pine, overlooking Chandler Lane and the Roman Town is a 6th Century **Saxon cemetery**. The Saxons had begun to settle in the area around AD440 and may have been employed by the people of *Venta Icenorum* (Caistor Roman Town) as mercenaries to guard the town.

12. *Venta Icenorum*. The Roman Town at Caistor St Edmund was constructed as an administrative centre from around AD70, and it remained a regional centre for another three hundred years. The full significance of the site was first appreciated during a drought in the summer of 1929. Patterns were noticed in the growing corn from an aircraft that revealed the street patterns, buildings and excavations of the Roman Town.

13. In the valley bottom there are still rough grazing meadows, an important wildlife habitat, nationally these areas are threatened as their drainage and use of fertilisers has become more widespread. Rough grazing is particularly good for wading birds, and land grazed by cattle is beneficial as they leave tussocks providing cover for nests and chicks. Many wildflowers are unable to grow where there is strong competition from vigorous grasses. They have therefore adapted to grow where there is low soil fertility, so simply adding fertilisers can drastically reduce the number of wildflowers.



**Norwich  
Fringe  
Project**

While every effort has been made to include accurate and up-to-date information, the Norwich Fringe Project does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. If you find any inaccuracies we would be very pleased to hear about them.