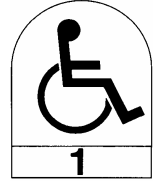




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English Tourism Council

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## *Neighbourhood Guide for Beautiful Burgh*

An ancient past and a tranquil present frequently combine in changing views of a unique British landscape, fully justifying the phrase “breath-takingly beautiful Burgh”.

Burgh Castle is at the northern end of the Lothingland peninsula, a gentle undulating farm landscape that takes its name from its early settlement by the East Saxons. It looks out to the north over Breydon Water, the largest inland tidal water in Britain, and to the west over the drained grazing marshes, below the level of the embanked courses of the Waveney and Yare rivers, dotted by the windmills which once pumped them dry. The huge skies and panoramic views are best seen from our holiday park, overlooking the marina, from the terrace and garden of our riverside pub and restaurant “The Fisherman’s” looking towards the restored windmill at Berney Arms, or by taking a short stroll along the river path to Castle Hill.

The latter is an (almost) hidden gem, much loved by photographers, artists and bird-watchers alike as it stands above the reed beds (harvested in winter for Norfolk reed thatch), which are being managed by the RSPB as an additional reserve. From here you can see the RSPB reserve on Berney marshes, and at the ends of the day in summer the heads of cattle often stick out above the ghostly mists that creep across the grazing levels.

On the hill itself, stands the Roman fort “Gariannonum” (afterwards there was a Norman castle here from which the village takes its name). Originally enclosing a five and a half acre site, the seaward facing wall has long since disappeared - most probably quarried for building and shipped from the creek at the foot of the hill, which long ago silted up and reverted to reed fen. But the other three sides remain standing - 380 yards of walls which are eleven feet thick at the base, and fifteen feet high in places - the largest standing Roman remains in Britain after Hadrian’s Wall. The round, bastion towers, which are set in the walls at intervals, were probably used by the Roman artillery for the “Ballistae” (a mechanical catapult) for use against attackers. This fort is easily the largest and best preserved of the “Forts of the Saxon Shore” built by the Romans in a line stretching from Brancaster in North Norfolk to Pevensey near Eastbourne in Sussex.

The whole of this marshland area in Roman times formed a huge estuary opening to the sea at Great Yarmouth, before the sand-spit on which the town now stands, was formed. At one time a cavalry unit from Stablesia (in modern day Yugoslavia) was stationed at the fort to help head off marauding Saxon pirates. It’s strange to think of these surrounds echoing to a local equivalent ‘of cowboys and Indians’. The land that stretches from the fort to our holiday park is now owned by English Heritage, and aerial photographs reveal remains of a native (Saxon) town outside the walls.

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Belton Fen ‘round the corner’ from our marina would have been the most likely sheltered anchorage for a naval squadron. There are long term plans for a visitor information centre at the fort site, and for the Trust’s leaflets to be sold at reception and at “The Fisherman’s”. Meantime, our own exhibition centre at Reception features displays on the Roman heritage and the surrounding conservation landscape, which we commissioned from Norfolk Museums Service.

Rejoining the footpath at the foot of Castle Hill leads to Burgh Castle Staithe, which until the present century was the village landing place for water borne supplies. A left turn brings the stroller to the Head of Breydon Water - a favourite observation point for bird-watchers especially of waders on the mud-flats, the shore path continuing all the way to Great Yarmouth as part of the Angles Way long distance footpath (see our “Jog, walk or cycle” leaflet). A right turn leads to the village church, an attractive, well restored building with a round Norman tower. To complete a circular walk it is possible to wander through the fields stretching from the Church past the fort to Butt Lane and Liffens Holiday Park and thence back to the Marina. For those arriving by car, there is very limited parking in Church Road.

Other places of interest, which can be reached on foot or by bicycle by moderately fit or athletic people are profiled below. They are of course equally accessible by car or public transport.

**Fritton:**

A pleasant country village, part of the Somerleyton Estate, is three and a half miles from Burgh Castle Marina (see our “walk, jog or cycle” leaflet for an attractive off-road route to this village). Within this area are golf, walks, falconry displays and angling, just a small selection of things to be done. Fritton Lake is a very popular spot with beautiful Riverside gardens and the opportunity to fish or boat on the treelined two miles long lake. There is a tea-shop, where you can purchase refreshments. Also of interest is the church which has some very attractive features including a semi-circular Norman chancel, medieval paintings on the entrance arch and a Jacobean three-decker pulpit. It is a thatched building with a round tower, one of many which can be seen in the Broadland area.

**St Olave’s:**

A half mile further on is St Olave’s - a popular mooring spot for boat owners or hire craft on the Waveney, at which to while away an hour or two watching the river traffic and spotting the wildfowl in the area. It also boasts the ruins of a 13<sup>th</sup>. century Augustinian Priory. To visit this site it is a short walk, or drive, down a small track marked ‘Priory Farm’ (signposted on the main road). These ruins give a good example of the early use of brickwork in the surviving arches. The remains also include a 14<sup>th</sup>. century undercroft.

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**Great Yarmouth:**

Five miles north of Burgh Castle Marina is Great Yarmouth, once the base of a thriving herring industry. Great Yarmouth lies on a spit of sand between the North Sea and the River Yare. Look beyond the seafront attractions and you will find many places of interest, such as the 'rows', medieval alleys, which run eastwards from the South Quay. Because of Great Yarmouth's unusual site, the town was built on a herringbone pattern like some old Saxon towns in North Germany with one main thoroughfare - King St - forming the backbone opening into the market and the rows running down off it (and are thus ventilated by sea breezes). Many were badly damaged during wartime but the remaining ones still have many interesting features.

On the South Quay itself, still a bustling port, are the Elizabethan Museum and The Old Merchants House. Great Yarmouth holds a market twice a week during winter and three times during summer. Look for the stone, which marks the site of the market cross. At the north-east corner of the market place is St. Nicholas Church, the largest parish church in England, built from the profits of the wool trade, which is well worth a visit. A fine collection of Georgian Houses can also be found in the same area. The home of Anna Sewall, author of "Black Beauty" the famous children's book, is tucked in between the church and the picturesque 18<sup>th</sup>. century Almshouses known as the Fisherman's Hospital. Charles Dickens found inspiration here for writing "David Copperfield" while staying at the Royal Hotel in 1843. David Copperfield came from Blundeston in Lothingland.

**Caister on Sea:**

Lying eight miles from Burgh Castle Marina is Caister on Sea, a small seaside resort with a few fishing boats. The Romans had a harbour town here and parts of the remains are now open to the public. Caister also boasts a very fine castle dating back to 1549. The castle, which was built by Sir John Fastolf, (who features in Shakespeare's "Henry VI"), has curtain walls, a tall tower and a moat complete with wildfowl: quite a romantic setting. On the far side of the car park is housed a collection of early motor vehicles. Well worth visiting.

**The Broads:**

The whole of our area forms part of Broadland - Britain's latest National Park. The Broads are seen at their best as part of a series of cruising holidays, in your own boat, or in a hired boat, but they are also accessible at many points by road and several centres offer short pleasure cruises. The tourist newspaper "The Broadcaster" (available free from Reception) provides an excellent introduction, as do the numerous information leaflets about the individual attractions to visit.

For those seeking a more comprehensive introduction to Broadland life and ecology the Visitor Information and Display Centre at Ranworth Broad is a good first port of call.

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The whole of the Broadland region and the fine City of Norwich with its imposing castle housing an excellent museum, lovely cathedral, medieval halls, large open air market and pedestrianised shopping centre are within a half hour to one hour driving radius of our Holiday Park.

**The Coast:**

From Lowestoft in the South to Winterton in the North are miles of fine sandy beaches, sheltered in places by low cliffs. In the 1950's and 60's, when most people did not travel by car these were the main focus of summer holidaymakers and crowds were the norm. Today it is easy enough to find quiet picnic spots and our local waters have received high EC ratings for bathing quality. Two of the best are Gorleston on Sea (the nearest beach and Blue flag rated along with Great Yarmouth) and Winterton dunes. Parking is easy and there are public toilets and places to get a cup of tea.