

A riverside trail from Carrow Bridge to New Mills

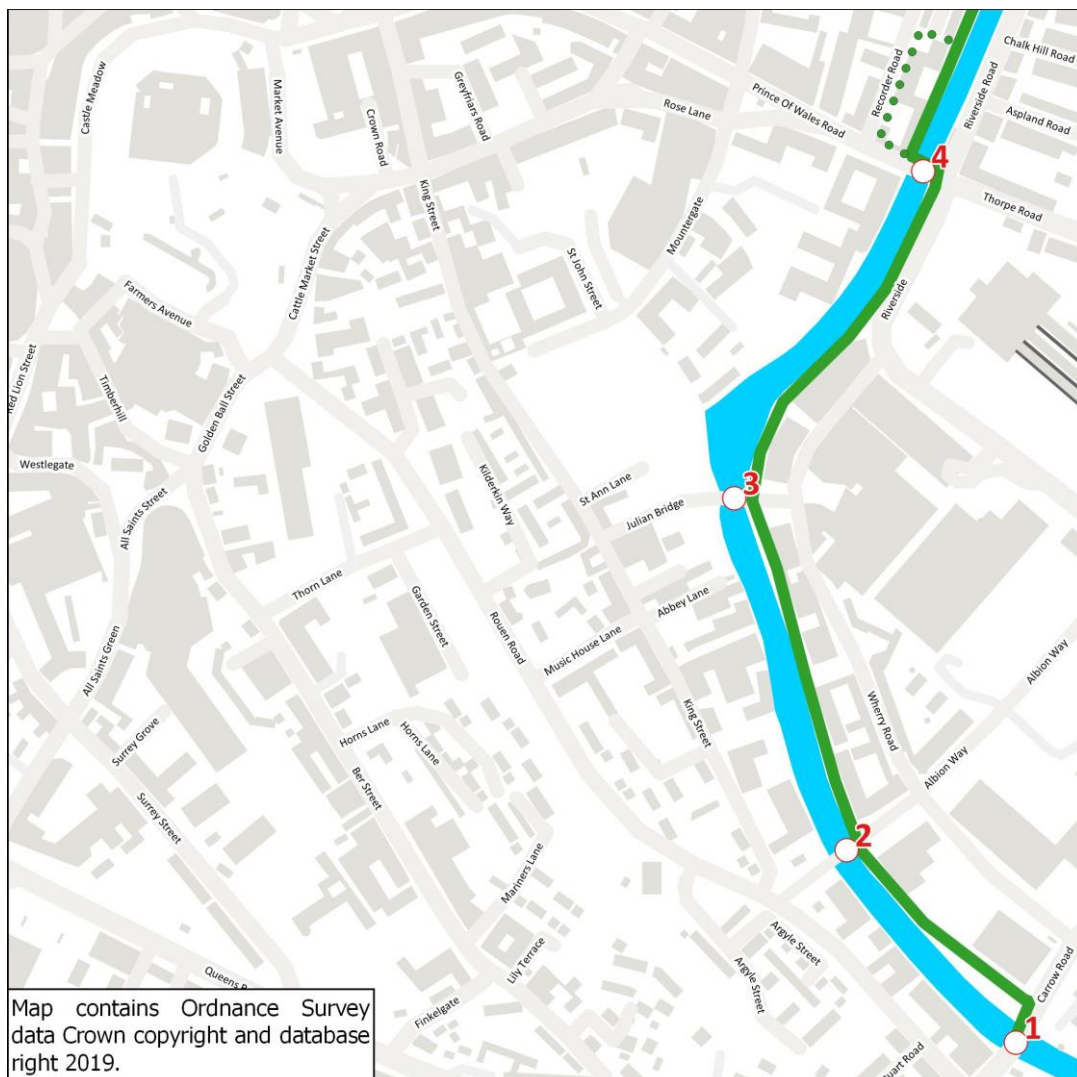
The city of Norwich was founded in the protecting curve of the Wensum, which formed part of its defences even when the walls were built in the 14th century. The river is tidal and navigable from New Mills.

Evidence of the river's historical use as a means of transport for goods and trade from the continent is still visible: mills, quays and industrial remnants can be found near the station and along King Street, and a slipway at Pulls Ferry marks the start of a canal originally used in the 12th Century to transport stone from Caen in Normandy to build Norwich Cathedral.

This trails takes you along the river and its bridges, pointing out places of interest along the way. There is not an uninterrupted path along the river so this guide will take you on a couple of minor deviations.

Time: About 2 hours. There are plenty of places of refreshment along the way and there are public toilets in the Railway Station.

Access: Alternatives are indicated where there are steps along the route. There are uneven surfaces at times.



1 Carrow Bridge 1923

In the 1830s the City Council had plans to promote Norwich as a port for sea-going ships to reduce its dependence on Great Yarmouth. The original fixed bridge was replaced with a double bascule lifting bridge to allow ships to pass. After WW1 a new bridge was needed and work started in 1920 as part of an unemployment scheme. There was much commercial traffic until the 1950s, but now the impressive riverside warehouses have been converted to other uses.



From the bridge you can see the remains of the

Boom Towers which fulfilled the same function on the river as the main gates through the walls; they provided control over the movement of goods in and out of the city where they could be taxed. Vessels were prevented from entering Norwich by two great chains of Spanish iron wound by a windlass until the tax was paid; 4d (or about £9 today) for a 'ship of bulk' and 2d for others.



Start walking along the riverside path between the river and the Riverside Leisure Centre.

On your left across the river are the remnants of 19th century industrial buildings, including Reads Flour Mills, now converted into flats.



2 Novi Sad Bridge 2001

This footbridge across the river commemorates the twinning arrangement between Norwich and Novi Sad, in Serbia.



3 Lady Julian Bridge 2009

This bridge is named after the medieval mystic “Mother Julian” of Norwich who was born in 1342 and lived in a cell attached to St. Julian’s Church in King Street. She wrote “Revelations Of Divine Love” which documented the visions she experienced, and it is believed to have been the first book written in the UK by a woman.

Having passed under the bridge on the opposite side of the river you can see

Dragon Hall, a unique survival of an early 15th century merchant trading hall. The undercroft dates from 1330 with 14th and 15th century additions. It is now occupied by the National Centre for Writing, which offers occasional tours.



4 Foundry Bridge 1884

There has been a bridge on this site since 1811. With the coming of the railway station and increasing industrial and residential development, a more sturdy bridge was required.

Railway Station 1886

At one time there were three railway stations in Norwich, but this one became the main station in 1916. The original 1844 terminus stood to the south of the present building, which dates to 1886.

There is a public toilet in the station concourse.

*With the Rail Station on your right, cross Foundry Bridge. Turn left and then immediately right through the terrace of the **Compleat Angler** public house (don’t worry, this is part of the riverside access) and down the steps to the continuation of the riverside walk.*

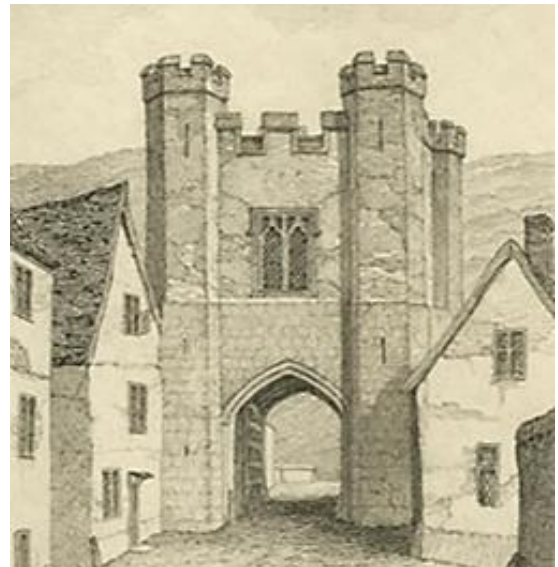


5 Bishop Bridge 1341

Norwich does not have a complete circle of defensive walls. Along this stretch citizens relied on the river and occasional towers for defence. Bishop Bridge is one element of the city medieval defences that maintains its original purpose, still providing pedestrian access to the centre of the city. The surviving stone bridge is said to date from about 1340 replacing an earlier stone and timber structure. In 1923 the bridge was threatened when the City wanted to widen the road. This stimulated a group of concerned citizens to establish the Norwich Society and campaign for the bridge to be saved.



Bishop Bridge originally had a fortified gatehouse which formed part of the walled city's defences. The gate was one of the earliest demolished in 1791, when it was found to be damaging the structure of the bridge. At the city end of the bridge some of the gate's stonework can still be seen on the right hand side of the bridge.



Opposite Bishop Bridge on the other side of the river is

Lollards Pit pub

The building began life as a house, built in the 15th century, although it has had extensive remodelling. It is built adjacent to a medieval execution site after which it is now named. Lollards believed that the Bible should be available for all to read in English and, in consequence, were persecuted by the established church. Many Lollards were burned to death in the 15th and 16th centuries.



Look further across the river to the left to the rising ground behind the riverside buildings.

This is the site of Kett's Rebellion where Robert Kett set up his headquarters in 1549. Kett's rebellion began in July 1549 in the small market town of Wymondham as a protest against the enclosure of common land. The rebels moved on to Norwich and set up camp on Mousehold Heath, where they had a vantage point overlooking Norwich. Kett set up his headquarters in St Michael's Chapel in what is now known as Kett's Heights. The rebels were eventually routed and about 3,000 are thought to have been killed at Dussindale. Kett was captured, tried for treason and hanged from the walls of Norwich Castle on 7 December 1549.

You can download the Norwich Society self-guided tour that takes you from Norwich Castle to Kett's Heights <https://www.thenorwichsociety.org.uk/explore-norwich/shardlakes-norwich>
For more information on Kett's Heights and to download a self-guided tour of the site go to www.kettsheights.co.uk

On your left is Bishopgate which contains the

Great Hospital

Founded in 1249 by Bishop Walter de Suffield to provide care for poor aged priests, poor scholars, and sick and hungry paupers. Thirty beds were earmarked in the west end of the church for the sick poor, and thirteen paupers were to be fed at the hospital gates each day. Over the centuries the Great Hospital has expanded into a large sheltered housing complex.



Cross over Bishopgate and follow the signs next to the Red Lion pub to the Cow Tower. Continue along the riverside path until you get to the

Cow Tower

Built originally as a toll house and prison by the prior of the cathedral some time after 1249. It was given to the city authorities in 1378 and was then reconstructed and refaced in brick as a free standing artillery tower c.1398/9 as part of the city defences.



6 Jarrold Bridge 2012

This is a unique, curved, double cantilever structure. The sweeping curve of the bridge is defined by the site and clearances imposed on the structure. The use of propped cantilevers from both abutments achieves a stunning bridge that appears to 'float' over the water.



Adam and Eve pub

On your left is the Adam and Eve, widely claimed to be the oldest pub in the city. A reference in 1249 tells of a brewhouse owned by Benedictine monks at the nearby Great Hospital and used by workmen building the nearby cathedral. The pub seen today is a 17th century building constructed from brick and flint with later additions, such as Dutch gables.

On the right on the opposite bank you can see fragments of the



Medieval City Walls

This is where the walls as defences took over from the river. Work started on the walls in 1294 and they were completed in the mid-14th century. When completed they formed the longest circuit of urban defences in Britain, eclipsing even those of London. Today only fragments remain.

The Norwich Society has produced a set of walks that take you round all the city walls

<https://www.thenorwichsociety.org.uk/explore-norwich/the-city-walls-walks>



Further on your right is

St James's Mill built in 1836-39 in response to the crisis in the weaving trade. Norwich was a centre of weaving as early as 1174. By the 1670s, 50% of freemen were connected with the textile trade. However, in the 19th century mechanised weaving in Yorkshire dominated the market and Norwich hand weavers went out of business. St James's Mill was the first steam powered factory in Norwich. It had a short-lived and unsuccessful career as a centre of mechanised weaving before being used for other trades.



7 Whitefriars Bridge 1925

This is the site of the earliest recorded bridge in Norwich, dating from 1106. During Kett's Rebellion in 1549 it was destroyed by the Earl of Warwick to try and prevent the rebels from entering Norwich. Following river widening in 1924 to alleviate flood risk, the current bridge was built in 1925 as part of a scheme to alleviate unemployment. You can see rectangular or lozenge shaped flood markers adjacent to most of the bridges.



Quayside

This wharf was the focus of port related activity for much of the City's history. The medieval warehouses have been lost but many buildings contain remnants of 17th and 18th century structures incorporated into modern dwellings, such as the Merchant's House.



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8 Fye Bridge 1934

This was a timber bridge until the early 15th century when it was replaced by a stone structure. It was traditionally the place where scolding women were placed in the ducking stool, and is reputedly the place where witches were drowned. It was reconstructed in the 1930s, again to provide work for the unemployed. The new bridge doubled the width of the river from one arch to two, as a flood prevention measure.



*The road crossing the bridge is **Fye Bridge Street** leading to an area called **Norwich Over the Water***

This area, situated between the river and the medieval walls, was originally an Anglo-Saxon settlement and became a major trading area. Fye Bridge Street and its continuation, Magdalen Street, was the most important thoroughfare in Norwich Over the Water. In medieval times, the Strangers and other migrants and refugees settled here.



The Riverside Walk continues down the left hand side of the Ribs of Beef pub. The riverside gardens are at the back of

Elm Hill

This is a remarkable survivor from the city's past. A major fire destroyed most of the buildings in 1507, but these were quickly replaced with prestigious new ones. During the medieval period it was the epicentre of society, with 16 mayors and sheriffs living here.



At the end of the carpark the Riverside Walk winds through the remains of

East and West Garth

Now part of the campus of **Norwich University of the Arts** this was part of a medieval friary originally constructed by the Friars Penitential in the 13th century but largely rebuilt by the Dominicans in the 14th and 15th centuries.

When you emerge through an arch onto St George's Street turn right.



You are now in the heart of the NUA campus. The Norwich School of Design was founded in 1845 by the artists and followers of the Norwich School of Painters, to provide high quality designers for local industry. It has evolved into Norwich University of the Arts, which aims to be the best specialist university for arts, design, architecture and media study in Europe. It occupies a number of historic buildings in the centre of Norwich.



The main building was built as the **City of Norwich Technical Institute** in 1899.

Opposite is

Gunton's Building

Built in 1914 for Gunton's builders' and plumbers' merchants.



9 St George's Bridge 1784

Designed by Sir John Soane, the architect of the Bank of England. In 1930 the City wanted to widen the street and the bridge was threatened, but was saved after a campaign by the Norwich Society.



Walk over the bridge and down to the junction with Colegate. On the corner is

Bacon's House

Built by Henry Bacon, a worsted (particular type of woollen cloth named after the Norfolk village where it originated) merchant, Sheriff of Norwich 1548, and Mayor in 1557 and 1566.



Turn left and walk up Colegate. On the left is the

Howlett & White Ltd (Norvic) shoe factory

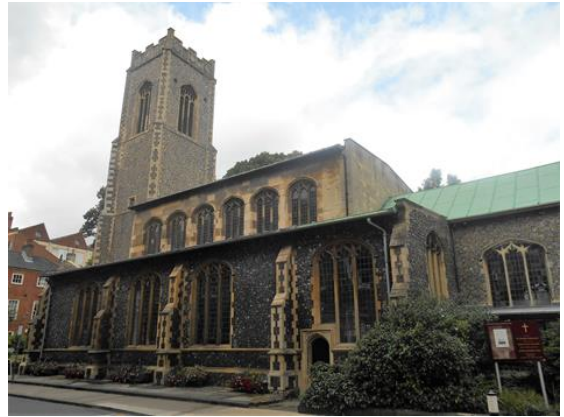
Designed by Edward Boardman in 1876. The original building was extended in 1894. Part of it now houses the Jane Austen College.



On your right is

St George's Church

Built between 1459 and 1513 the magnificent nave clerestory and interiors reflect the wealth of its parishioners, many of whom were rich cloth merchants.



When you get to Duke Street cross the road and turn left. On your right is the old

Norwich Board School

Built in 1888 in the Queen Anne Revival style. Now the lecture theatre and library for Norwich University of the Arts.



10 Duke's Palace Bridge 1972

So called because it is near the site of the Duke of Norfolk's palace built in the 16th century. This, however, is one of the more modern river crossings. There was a bridge in 1822 but, when Duke Street was widened, the bridge was replaced with the current concrete structure.



The 19th century iron bridge was scrapped but it can still be seen. The Norwich Society stepped in and bought it. After storing it for several years it was presented to Castle Mall and re-erected in 1992 on Farmers' Avenue at one of the entrances to the underground car park.



Just before the bridge the Riverside Walk continues down the narrow stepped path between Mary Chapman Court and the river.

NB This site is due for redevelopment so the only access might be the alternative level access.

Alternative level access bypassing the steps

Continue down Colegate until you get to Coslany Street/Oak St, just past St Michael Coslany, then turn left.

11 St Miles Coslany Bridge 1804

In the Middle Ages, this area of the city was known for industries: mills and dyers' yards, and river traffic transporting goods into and out of Norwich.

Coslany (St Miles) Bridge is the site of two 13th century bridges crossing islands in the centre of the river along the line of what had been a Roman road. The current iron bridge dates from 1804 and is the earliest iron bridge in the city.



At the end of the bridge look over at

Bullards Brewery building

Beer was the drink of the masses during the medieval period as the brewing process killed bacteria in the water. Norwich developed many local breweries and this is the site of Bullard & Sons Anchor Brewery. For over a hundred years Bullards was one of the major brewers in Norwich and supplied public houses across Norfolk. It was said that Norwich had a church for every week of the year and a pub for every day.



Cross Coslany Street and go straight ahead along the continuation of the Riverside Walk.

12 New Mills Sewage Pumping Station 1898

Before the Norman Conquest this was the site of a mill used for grinding corn and fulling (cleaning cloth). Later it was used to pump drinking water from the river to Market Cross. Inadequate management of sewage contributed to the spread of disease in medieval England. It was not until the industrial age of the 19th century that a proper solution was found and the sewage pumping station was built in 1898. It is believed to be one of only two surviving examples of this type of machinery (the other being in the Houses of Parliament).



With your back to New Mills you can see the City Hall clock tower which is your guide back to the city centre.

For more information about the Norwich Society and Norwich see our website
www.thenorwichsociety.org.uk

Our strength is in our membership so do join us and help keep Norwich special