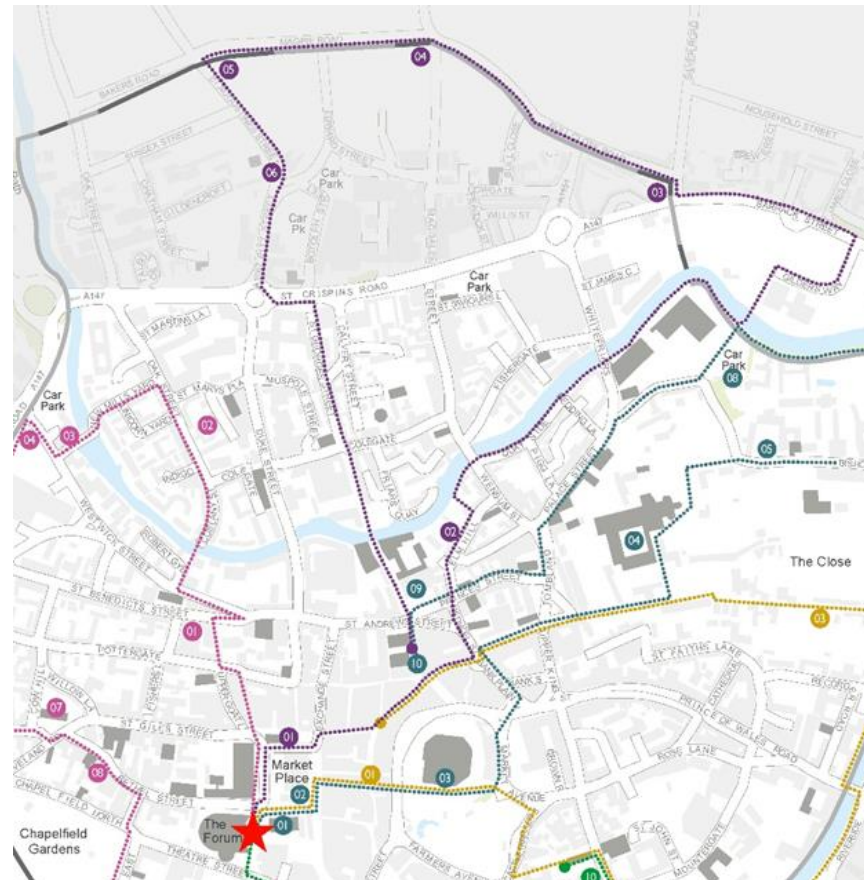


Glimpses of Medieval Norwich – Norwich Over the Water

This route takes you down the historic and much filmed Elm Hill, along the river to Norwich Over the Water, historically a centre for industry.

Walk: 2 hours

It is one of five trails to help you explore Norwich's medieval walls, and discover other medieval treasures along the way. 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 but, using these walking trails you will discover that much of Norwich's medieval past.



Route directions

Your walk starts at The Forum. Opposite is St Peter Mancroft Church

Turn left and pass in front of City Hall

Notable features along the way

The Forum was opened in 2001 and replaces the old Norwich Central Library and Record Office, which burned down in 1994.

St Peter Mancroft was built in 1430 on the site of an earlier church built by the Normans. It is one of the finest parish churches in the country and well worth a visit. It was the first place in the world to have rung a true peel of bells on 2nd May 1715.

Opened in 1938, City Hall boasts the longest balcony in England (at 111m long). It replaced the Guildhall (see below) which had become too small and was rat infested.



Continue along St Peters Street.

Turn right into Gaol Hill with the Guildhall on your left and the market on your right and head towards Jarrolds department store.

01

Keep straight on into London Street with Jarrolds on your left.

Carry on up London Street bearing left at 'Whittards' passing two junctions with trees with benches beneath.

At the end of London Street, cross the road at the level crossing and turn left and go down c.40m where Redwell Street forks to the right. (Redwell St is not marked at this end) Take this right fork (ignoring the main road which is St Andrews Street) which brings you to the top of Elm Hill.

02

On the right is Norwich market. There has been a market on this site since the Anglo-Saxon market was moved from Tombland by the Normans in 1071.

Built 1407-24, the Guildhall is the largest and most elaborate city hall ever built outside London. Henry IV's charter of 1404 gave the City the right to elect a Mayor and two Sheriffs, effectively making Norwich an independent, self-governing entity. From 1412 until 1597 the common gaol of the Norwich was in the cellars of the Guildhall.

London Street was the first street in England to be pedestrianised, in 1967.

Elm Hill represents a remarkable survivor from the city's past. During the medieval period it was the epicentre of society, with 16 mayors and sheriffs living there.

At the right at the top of Elm Hill is the Briton's Arms, an excellent cafe. This was built as a medieval beguinae, a home for a community of lay women who dedicated their lives to prayer and helping the poor.



About three quarters of the way down Elm Hill turn left down Roaches Court, 34 Elm Hill. Turn right when you get to the river and continue along the alley by The Ribs of Beef public house.

Turn left when you get to the main road - Wensum Street - and you will see Fye Bridge immediately in front of you.

Cross the road just before the bridge and turn down Quayside taking the Riverside Walk.

Roaches Court was originally the courtyard of two merchants' premises built in 1540. It now forms a passageway alley leading to the river.

The main north-south thoroughfare of Norwich was Fybriggate (now called Magdalene Street), taking its name from the first wooden causeway crossing of the river possibly as early as the 10th century. There are references to a bridge here in 1132 and 1283. The wooden bridge was replaced by a succession of stone bridges, the current one being built in 1934.

This wharf was the focus of port related activity for much of the City's history. The medieval warehouses have been lost but the first buildings that you come to contain remnants of C17th and C18th buildings incorporated into modern dwellings.



Follow the footpath along the river, crossing Whitefriars main road and continuing along the river.

On your left is St James's Mill. It was 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 had a short-lived and unsuccessful career as a centre of mechanised weaving before being used for other trades.



Just beyond St James's Mill is a fragment of wall obscured by a hoarding and the remains of the mural tower on the riverbank.



Continue round the bend of the river until you get to the modern Jarrold Bridge. Cross the bridge and walk straight on (Gilders Way), following the access road turning right then left until you get to the main road, Barrack Street.

From the bridge you get a good view of the Cathedral and the Adam and Eve pub, 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 C17th building constructed from brick and flint with later additions such as Dutch gables.



Turn left and walk down Barrack Street for 300m.

Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and turn into Silver Road.

03

**Walk round the tower and turn left into Bull Close Road.
Continue down Bull Close Road. You will see the line of the walls on your left marked in cobbles in front of a block of modern flats and set some way back from the road.**

You will see the line of wall at 90° to the footpath marked in cobbles. This is the continuation of the wall that you saw by St James's Mill.

The area between the river and the walls was an Anglo-Saxon settlement and major trading area. After the city walls were built in 1290, the area north of the river gradually became known as Norwich Over the Water, and this was its official name for many centuries.

Barrack Street was originally known as Pockthorpe Street after the hamlet of Pockthorpe, then Bargate after the City gate at the Silver Road junction. The street eventually became Barrack Street to commemorate the Nelson Cavalry Barracks which sat on your right from 1791 until the early 1970s. In 1791, 500 men and 340 horses were housed here.



Here you will see the remains of a tower and arcaded walls that protected Barre Gate, also known as Pockthorpe Gate. Built in 1338, it was heavily damaged during Kett's Rebellion and rebuilt in 1549. It was demolished in 1792.



Remains of the city wall can be seen running along the left hand side of the road. The road takes its name from the space where cattle grazed during the day outside the city walls.



Cross the road at the junction and continue down Bull Close Road until you get to the traffic lights at the main junction of Bull Close Road, Magdalene Street and Magpie Street.

04

Cross at the lights and continue your walk along Magpie Road.

Continue along Magpie Road. Cross over at Esdelle Street, where the site of wall marked in paving, and continue straight along Magpie Road.

This is the site of Magdalen Gate which was the main entrance into the city from the north and, along with the gateways at St Stephens and Ber Street, it was one of the three principal gates. It takes its name from the Magdalen Hospital that was outside the gate to the north but it was also known in the Middle Ages as Fibrigge Gate, and as the Leper Gate (a leper hospital was situated outside the gate in the Middle Ages). Built in the mid-14th century, it was demolished in 1808.



There are two stretches of wall remaining between Magdalen and St Augustine's Gates. Both sections retain arcading on the city side supporting the wall walk and outer parapet, suggesting that this entire length was probably arched.

At the Magdalen Street end of Magpie Street 17m of wall remains adjacent to the site of the gate.



By 1885 terraced houses had been built along the full length of Magpie Road over the line of the ditch which had been between 17m and 20m wide.

The old Magpie Pub is the location of the 'weigh' station used to assess wagons before their entry through the gates into the city. The station was located in front of the inn, presumably why it is set back from road.



Just before the main junction with St Augustine's Street you come to a gravelled area and length of wall.

Continue to the junction and the site of St Augustine's Gate (pavement markings indicate site of walls and gate).

05

Cross the road and go down to the pleasant calm of Bakers Road. You can view both sides of the wall here and it is worth exploring.

The section near St Augustine's Gate, which includes the only remaining tower, has recently been partially restored following the demolition of Magpie Printers, which had abutted this piece of wall.



First mention of a gate on this site, the Porte St Augustine, is in a deed during the time of Henry III (died in 1272). It was also known as St Austin's Gate. Sometime between 1338 and 1343 the gate was improved under Richard Spynk. Repairs to the gate were recorded as late as 1676, though houses had been built against the gate by the 1620's. The gate was demolished in 1794.



The main section of wall is 19m long and, at some points, 4.4m high. There are the remains of two arches and start of third which supported the wall walk. Both arches have an open loop for use of guns or cross bows. This section also contains the possible site of the building identified as a Poor House.



Follow line of the wall marked in cobbles in grassed area and through the little car park to the site of St Martins Gate.

Cross the road and go down the lane straight ahead next to the small Old Dun Cow sign, 167 Oak Street.

The next section of wall, towards St Martin's Gate, extends for 45m and up to a height of 2m. The line of the walls to St Martins Gate is marked in cobbles (but not to full width which would have been 1.9m). Overall distance between Gates about 205 metres and a C14th Customs Book indicates there were 69 battlements on this section and two towers.

First recorded in 1275 and referred to as 'Porte de Coslayn' (Coslany Gate) and was first referred to as St Martin's Gate in the C17th. It was rebuilt c.1340 under Richard Spynke, with further works of rebuilding in 1760. However it was then demolished in 1808, one of the last three gates suffering this fate that year. It is recorded that 3 soldiers were kept on guard at the gate in 1460.

The Dun Cow was a public house since the early C19th. It was said that Norwich had a church for every week in the year and a pub for every day. The Dun Cow closed in 1971



Turn left down the lane passing the site of an old tower base.

If you continue down the lane you come to a small grassed area and a pleasant view of the river.

Retrace your steps back to St Augustine's Street along the inside of the wall through St Martin at Oak Wall Lane.

Turn right into St Augustine's Street and continue for c. 150m.

Just beyond St Augustine's Church on the right is Gildencroft.

06

Return to St Augustine's Street and cross over at the pedestrian crossing. On your right facing St Augustine's Gate you will see Rose Yard through a large black, wooden archway.

Turn left out of Rose Yard. Cross at the traffic lights and turn right and walk on until you get to the main road, St Crispin's Road, a large, busy roundabout.

Nos 2 to 12 Gildencroft is a row of Tudor cottages, somewhat altered in the C17th-C20th.

The original Gildencroft was called Justingacre and it is probable that jousting tournaments took place here. Edward the Black Prince reputedly attended a great tournament here in 1350.

It is worth popping in to see an example of a typical Norwich Yard. These were groups of dwellings squeezed in behind older buildings and accessible through an arch or passageway. They were built from the C16th onwards in order to provide accommodation for the increasing numbers of workers without encroaching on Norwich's green spaces. These yards were crowded, insanitary with shared facilities, and unhealthy due to the lack of ventilation and dismal light. Most were demolished during the early 20th century slum clearances.



Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and follow signposts to St George's Street (no street sign unfortunately) between Cavell House and the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

After about 30m on your left is an example of a weaver's cottage, 63 St Georges Street, dated 1670 with later additions. One of the last survivors of the single-cell weaver's cottages in Norwich, note the full height dormer windows designed to give maximum light to the hand loom being operated in the attic floor.



On your right you will pass 80-82 St George's Street, an early 16th century building with a flint rubble ground floor and a timber framed first floor.



Continue to the junction with Colegate.

On your left is Bacon's House, built by Henry Bacon, a worstead (particular type of woollen cloth named after the Norfolk village where it originated) merchant, Sheriff of Norwich 1548, and Mayor in 1557 and 1566.

On the right is St George's Colegate. Built between 1459 and 1513 the magnificent nave clerestory and interiors reflect the wealth of its parishioners, many of whom were rich cloth merchants.



Continue straight on until you get to the river and Blackfriars Bridge, built in 1784 to a design by Sir John Soane who designed the Bank of England.

Once you have crossed the river via St Georges Bridge you will pass various buildings of Norwich University of the Arts, originally the Norwich School and Art & design founded in 1845.

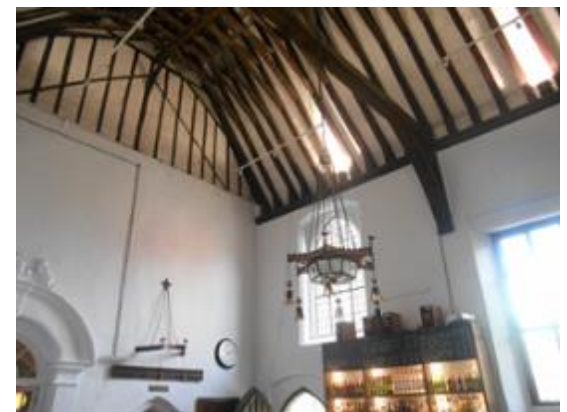
Retrace your steps back to St George's Street. Turn left and continue to the end of the road. On your left is St Andrew's and Blackfriars' Halls.

Immediately opposite is Cinema City.

NUA occupies part of the medieval Blackfriars complex. Walk through the arch to your left after passing the main entrance to the old Norwich Technical Institute building and you will find yourself in the East and West Garth, now partially ruined (garth - an open space surrounded by cloisters).

This is the most complete medieval friary complex to survive in England. Built between 1307 and 1470. At the east end of the Blackfriars Hall there is a seven-light window dating from the middle of the 14th century. The crypt, the oldest part, was built around 1258 probably as the friars' dormitory and the brick vaulted ceiling is one of the earliest in the country.

Originally a C15th medieval merchant house. After a chequered history the suite of buildings was converted into a thriving arts cinema. The cinema's café is housed in the medieval great hall and is well worth a visit, especially as you are nearing the end of your walk and probably need some refreshment.



Between St Andrews Hall and Cinema City is Garsett House.

Built as a house in 1589 with C18th additions this building is now an office.



Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing, bear left up St Andrew's Hill then turn right by Bishop's restaurant. You will see the side wall of the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell.

The Museum of Norwich is housed in an early merchant's house built in 1370. It has had a varied history as a Bridewell, or prison for women and beggars, from the C16th to C19th until the new city gaol was built, and then a shoe factory. The wall you are looking at is the best example of precision flintwork in Norfolk. The building is now a fascinating museum of local history and well worth a visit.



Continue to the end of the alley and turn left into Bridewell Alley (not marked) passing the front of the Bridewell Museum on your left. At the top turn right into Bedford Street. Continue to the end of the street and then turn left into Exchange Street with Jarrolds on your left. Keep going and you will be back in the market place.

If you want to know more about medieval Norwich visit Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell, and Strangers Hall.

