

Reepham

Distance - 13km (8 miles) **Ascent** - Negligible **Map:** Ordnance Survey Explorer 238 Aylsham etc., 1:25,000

Walk 17

Reepham is a pleasing little town, with a fair range of shops and other commercial premises, clustered tightly around its former Market Square. Many date from the 18th century, some with a rather Flemish appearance. Very unusual is the presence of three churches in one churchyard. One is nothing more than scant ruins, but the other two, with adjoining chancels, are still in use.

The walking route recommended below uses lengths of two disused railway lines, connected by lanes and foot-paths to make a circuit, basically level and good under-foot. Much of the route is part of the 'Marriott's Way', named after William Marriott who was Chief Engineer of the comparatively small Midland and Great Northern Railway Company for no less than 41 years. The hub of that system was at Melton Constable, an otherwise totally unremarkable village just a few miles away from Reepham. The Great Eastern Railway branch line which connected County School, near North Elmham, with Aylsham and Wroxham forms the return part of the present route. For many years the two lines crossed at Themelthorpe, the tight connecting curve between the two being constructed as late as 1959 to enable specific commercial traffic to reach Norwich. In such sparsely populated countryside it was inevitable that these lines would have very little traffic in the motor age, final closure was in 1985. As is usual when railway lines are closed, a range of wildlife has colonised the former trackbeds, a variety of trees, wild flowers and birds such as jays, magpies and goldfinches being abundant.

Note: It would be a great help to future walkers if you could record any inaccuracies you come across during this walk and report them to reception so that appropriate amendments can be made. Thank you for your help.

Happy walking!

Start/car parking - Large area by the former Reepham railway station, [grid reference 101236](#) (note that the gates at the entrance to this area are locked when the adjacent large shop closes at the end of the afternoon - roadside parking in Stony Lane could provide an alternative). From Reepham centre the station is found approximately half a mile to the north along the B1145 (Aylsham) road, a not very obvious left turn into the station area being immediately after passing Stony Lane.

Refreshments - Tea shop at the rear of the former Reepham station, a choice of inn or tea shop in nearby Reepham.

WALK

From the station car park back along the old station approach to the public road. Turn right, then right again at once to follow Stony Lane. After a few modern houses this becomes a real lane, with tarmac surface.

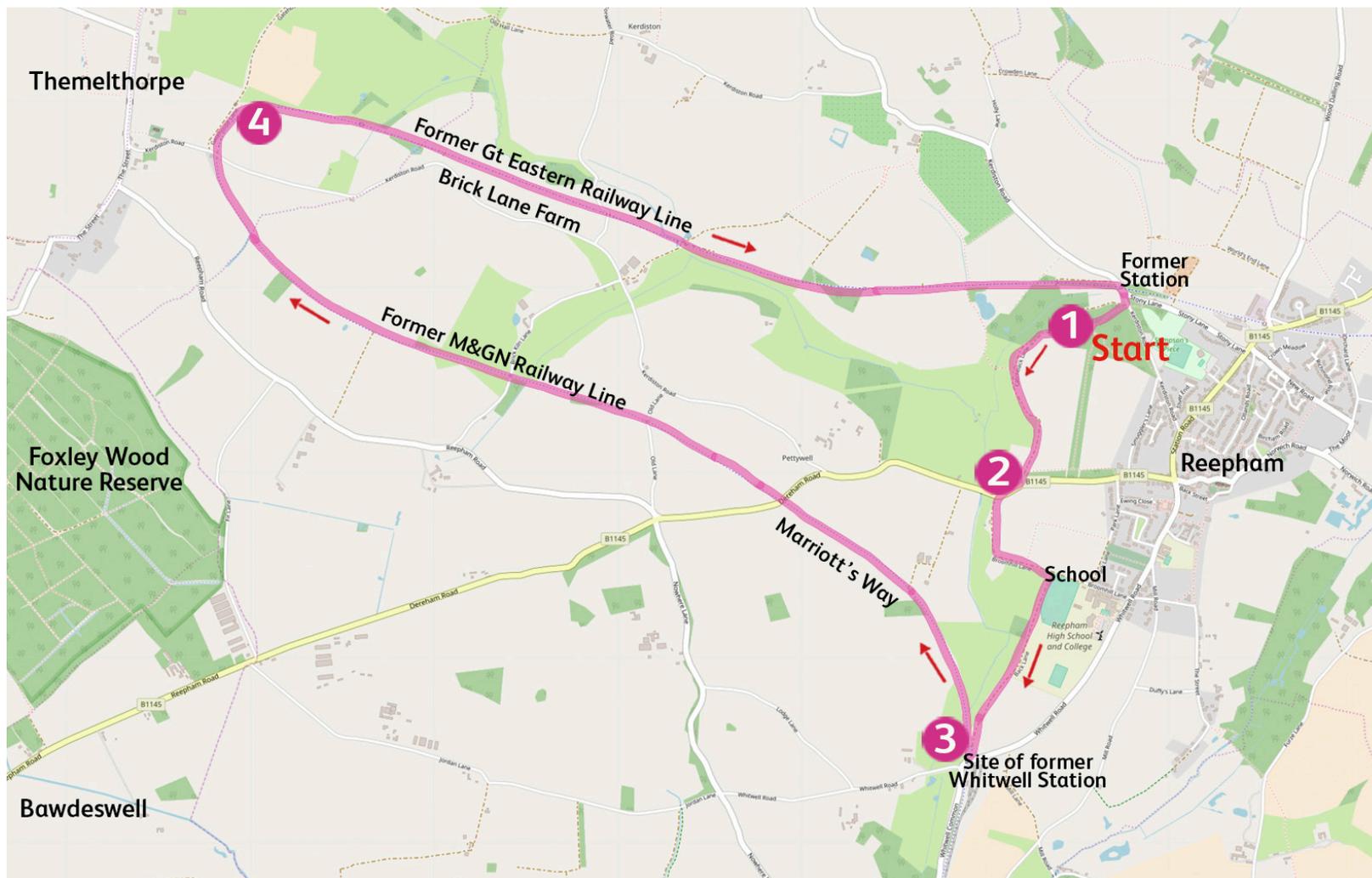
1. Reach a minor road, with the former railway line on a high bridge to the right. Turn left for 40m. Turn right to take a bridleway with a 'Marriott's Way' waymark. There may be a few muddy patches, but the route is never in doubt, following the edge of trees. On reaching a main road (Reepham to Dereham road) turn right for a little more than 100m.
2. Turn left just after a rather dangerous bend, this is a cul de sac road, with a waymark on the cul de sac sign. Turn left in front of a modern house, turn right at a waymarked junction of paths, go along the edge of a cultivated field, with a school playing field behind the hedge. On the right are some very old oak trees, including one of enormous girth.
3. Less than 100m. before reaching a minor road, close to the site of the former Whitwell station, turn right, passing a modern gate with 'Marriott's Way' signs and rising gently to the track bed of the former M&GN Railway line. Turn right to walk along this fine trail, signposted 'Themelthorpe 2½ miles'. For some distance the line is on a low embankment, obviously climbing as it bends to the left. Cross the B1145 and then two

minor roads on bridges. Brick Kiln Farm is down to the right. The line bends continuously to the right as Themelthorpe is approached. Just short of the hamlet a very minor road, with gates on each side and a crossing keeper's cottage, is crossed. From this point, before the construction of the linking curve, the M&GN carried on towards Melton Constable.

4. Bear right to follow the curve, passing useful information boards. As the curve eases we have joined the former Great Eastern line. Follow this line back to Reepham station, looking out for squirrels, rabbits and a range of wild flowers.

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Disclaimer:

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