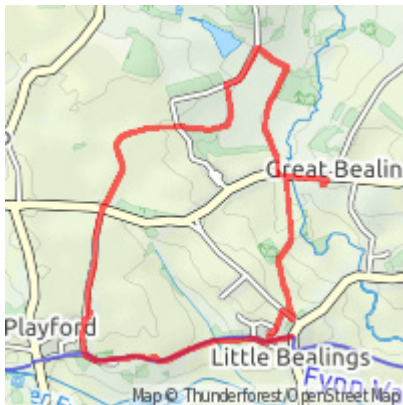




Route Summary

A walk of around 4 miles which takes us along the picturesque ancient bridleway known locally as 'Pigs Valley', before returning through the meadows alongside the River Lark in Great Bealings.

Route Overview



Category: Walking
Rating: Unrated
Surface: Moderate
Date Published: 5th November 2020
Difficulty: Easy
Length: 6.540 km / 4.09 mi
Last Modified: 8th November 2020

Description

A picturesque walk of around 4 miles, starting at Little Bealings Church, then taking us through Playford and Great Bealings before returning to Little Bealings. As we leave Playford the walk takes us along the ancient bridleway known locally as 'Pigs Valley', before returning through the meadows alongside the River Lark in Great Bealings. There are multiple interest points en-route including Playford Mere, St Mary's Playford with the monument to Thomas Clarkson (instrumental in the abolition of the slave trade), and St Mary's Great Bealings known for its fascinating pew end carvings.

To find photos for this route and other routes nearby, please visit our Facebook Group, Fynn Valley Walks Group and look in "Albums" under "Media". <https://www.facebook.com/groups/337873547528977>

Waypoints

Start Point- Little Bealings Church

(52.08521; 1.25226)

Locate the narrow path to the SW of the churchyard, leading past the school into the village, then take this path.

1 Grazing Pond

(52.08506; 1.24735)

The small field and pond to your north used to be common ground, where the village livestock would feed and water.

View across the Mere

(52.08397; 1.24158)

Perhaps stop by the gate to enjoy the pleasant view to the south towards the Playford Mere which has several interest points. The copse in front of you in middle of the field is a group of trees around a natural spring with a small waterfall. You can often see swans and herons in the distance in and around the mere. The sand cliffs in the distance were created deliberately to provide a home for Sandmartins. You may see Buzzards flying overhead in fine weather, who have wingspans up to 4.5 feet, or if you are lucky a Kestrel.

View across the Fynn Valley

(52.08403; 1.23666)

Just through the trees there is a beautiful view across lush pasture to the River Fynn and beyond to the hills and woods in front of Lux Farm. If you step down to the road to Hill Farm you will find a bench where you can stop and enjoy the view.

When you return from the viewpoint, notice the trees in the Copse, which are Elm. Although many think the Elm have died out in the UK, there are many Elm trees in the Fynn Valley, where they are the hedgerow of choice. Clusters of young Elm can often be found together, where this location is a good example. In summer and Autumn you can tell by the rough furry leaves. Once Elm grow to a certain size they are susceptible to disease as the beetle takes an interest in the bark- until then they can grow freely. You will therefore find mostly young Elm trees or see Elm as hedgerows, rather than the grand trees of many years ago.

Dog Bin

(52.08400; 1.23613)

Dog waste bin

Monument to Thomas Clarkson at Playford Church

(52.08654; 1.23551)

Thomas Clarkson lived at Playford Hall and is buried in the churchyard, behind the railed off grave space next to the church. Thomas was instrumental to the abolition of slavery.

Toilets

(52.08664; 1.23526)

(Closed during Covid-19 lock-down)

Squeech Path

(52.09238; 1.23699)

This is the path which leads the trail known as Pigs Valley. In early Spring you will find daffodils blooming around the

trees. Watch out for the Rabbits!

'Squeech Path' is probably a derivation of 'Queech' which is an old name for a thicket. In the Suffolk accent, it wasn't uncommon for Queech to change to Squeech on a map due to mis-hearing, for example.... 'Thaa's Queech Path'.

Interestingly Squeech Path leads up to a thicket at the top of the hill, at the old boundary between Playford, Culpho and Great Bealings, a sort of 'no mans land'. Places like these were often used to bury those unfortunates who were not allowed to be buried at church.

4 Pigs' Valley

(52.09553; 1.23786)

The path from here until you reach Grundisburgh Road is known as Pigs' Valley. Nobody is quite sure why, we can only guess!

5 Edge of the Field

(52.10046; 1.24994)

Although a path is marked diagonally across the field, it is much better to walk at the eastern edge of the field. To your left you will find a pleasant pond and also if there has been rain, the field to the east is often part water-logged providing quite a picturesque scene.

6 Don't go through the gate!

(52.09948; 1.25238)

Keep to the edge of the field going south. (The gate and path to the north lead into Grundisburgh)

7 Pheasants

(52.09898; 1.25205)

The woods to your left are full of Pheasants- bred here for sport.

8 Take the gate to your left

(52.09620; 1.25050)

The path deviates through a gate to your left into pasture that is used for cattle. Go through the gate and proceed through the gap in the hedge into the next field to the right. The gap in the hedge can be muddy after wet weather!

9 Great Bealings Church

(52.09375; 1.25230)

An optional short detour East to see Great Bealings church. St Mary's Great Bealings is renowned for amazing pew end carvings from both medieval and victorian times, look inside and you won't be dissappointed! When you are at the church, look for the grave with a story not far in front of the main door- of the poor lad who was a stand in cow herd for a day.

10 Gate/Style

(52.09367; 1.25314)

Take the gate or the style to your right just after the bridge. This keeps you off the road and lets you walk up the rustic grand entrance track to the old Great Bealings Hall, long since gone. The track is now mostly pasture however you will notice the grand line of trees both sides.

St Mary's Church Great Bealings

(52.09322; 1.25545)

Take time to enjoy the church and it's pew carvings and stop to say a prayer. Take a moment to walk around the back and enjoy the peace of the churchyard with it's lovely views.

11 River Lark

(52.09288; 1.25245)

The River Lark now looks little more than a generous brook, however in times past trading barges used to navigate the Lark as far as you are standing. Maybe the strange ditches to your left are remnants of the dock?

12 Optional Path

(52.08619; 1.25294)

At this point if you are parked at the community centre car park, you can just go left to get back to your car. However to see a little bit more of Little Bealings, follow this short additional section.

13 Very narrow path between bungalows!

(52.08536; 1.25094)

Very narrow path between bungalows! Turn left at the bottom.

End point- Little Bealings Church

(52.08527; 1.25278)

Here you will find a bench to sit and rest a while at the end of your journey- if you are lucky, the pop-up cafe inside our pretty village church may be open!

