

Repton Cycle Trail

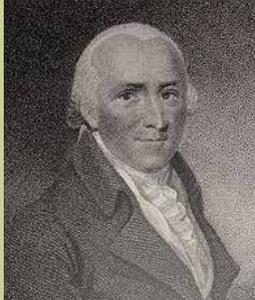
Approximately 50 miles



One of Britain's greatest landscape gardeners, Humphry Repton, has strong connections with Broadland – his first professional commission was Catton Park and he is buried in Aylsham Church.

This cycle trail will explore locations across the district that have links with Repton, and others that will be of interest to nature lovers and garden enthusiasts.

Please note some parts of this route may require you to dismount from your bicycle, and some parts do include busy roads.



Catton Park

START

Blickling Estate

Blickling Estate started out in the 15th century under the ownership of Sir John Fastolf of Caister, before going on to be the home of the Boleyn family. Today's Blickling Hall was built by Sir Henry Hobart and is now in the possession of the National Trust. This is a brilliant family-friendly attraction offering tours of the inside of Blickling Hall and vast acres of outdoor parklands. During April/May Blickling Estate is a great place to see beautiful carpets of Bluebells.

While Repton is thought to have consulted on Blickling Hall, it is not believed that his proposals were used. Blickling's Orangery is home to a seat designed by Repton's son, John Adey Repton.



Route



- Opposite St Andrew's Church and Blickling Hall you will find a path on the left hand side which leads to Aylsham.
- Follow the path around the back of some cottages, through a gate and over an old railway bridge.
- After the bridge, turn left down the slope on to Weaver's Way. Go through a gate and cross the road following the Weaver's Way signs.
- Pass through a gate and keep walking, passing under two bridges. You will then pass the Weaver's Way Viewing Platform which you can use to view wildlife from.
- When you get to a car park, exit left out of car park, and then follow downhill onto Drabblegate. Follow this road down onto Millgate, until you reach New Road.
- Turn right into New Road and where the road bends to the right, pass Ash House on the left and turn left into Abbott's Close.
- Take the next right turn into Town Lane, which emerges opposite the Methodist Hall.
- Here turn right and then left into Red Lion Street, signed 'Town Centre'. Turn right through the Market Place and its 17th and 18th Century buildings.



Aylsham Town & Church

Aylsham is picturesque market town thought to date back to 500 AD, which later became popular for trading in linens, specifically the Aylsham 'Webb' or 'cloth of Aylsham' which was supplied to English royalty. In the 14th century the town was granted a market by Henry VIII and the market is still today a thriving place of activity. Humphry Repton lived in Sustead and is now buried in Aylsham's St Michael and All Angels Church, near the front door.

Repton's sister, Dorothy, also lived in Aylsham and is buried in the church. His son, William, became a very successful solicitor in the area and lived in Aylsham Market Place for many years, on his death he was buried with his father. As well as his Market Place abode, it is believed that William had The Orchards, 20 Norwich Road in Aylsham built for him by architect brother, John Adey Repton. While this house still survives today, it is a private residence and not accessible to the public.

Route



- From the Market Place follow Hungate Street down towards a bridge, go right at the bridge and on the left hand side you will find steps below on to the Marriott's Way. On the Marriott's Way turn right towards Norwich.
- Follow this old railway route past Aylsham's Woodgate Nursery and Swannington's Romantic Garden Nursery and through key towns and villages including Reepham, and Lenwade until you eventually reach Taverham. This is marked by a marker for Taverham Garden Centre.
- Exit the Marriott's Way here onto the Fir Covert Road, and follow it past Taverham Garden Centre & Nurseries to its end, and then cross straight over into Beech Avenue.
- At the end of the road turn left onto Ringland Road. Follow this road straight until you come to a mini roundabout.
- Here you will find the entrance to Taverham Mill Fishery and Nature Reserve, opposite medieval St Edmund's Church.



Taverham Mill Fishery & Nature Reserve

Taverham Mill was best known for being a paper mill from around 1701. Taverham paper mill was very successful for a time and was used to manufacture the paper for the 1st revised edition of the Bible, the Oxford Dictionary, bank notes produced by the Bank of England and several daily newspapers, including The Times. When it eventually closed in 1899 it was the biggest paper mill in the county. It is now a fishery and nature reserve with some remains of the historic mill. There is also a visitor centre giving some information on the history of the mill, and self-catering accommodation.



Route



- On exiting the Taverham Mill, head straight up the hill onto Sandy Lane, and follow straight over the crossroad into Breck Farm Lane.
- At its end, re-join the Marriott's Way. Turn right on Marriott's Way towards Norwich and continue cycling until you reach Sloughbottom Park in Norwich.
- Here turn left through the park's cycle track and exit onto Parr Road. Head straight and over the crossroads onto Bignold Road.
- Keep straight until the end of the road, then turn right onto Appleyard Crescent, then left onto Rye Avenue.
- At the end of Rye Avenue turn right onto Boundary Road. Take care here as this is a busy road. Stay straight until you see wooden fencing on the left hand side, then turn left into Oak Lane. This is where you will find Catton Park.



Old Catton & Catton Park

Old Catton is a picturesque parish of Broadland and was for several centuries the home to many wealthy and high status individuals in Norwich, especially once Catton Hall was constructed in the 1770s by Charles Buckle, High Steward of Norwich. Armstrong is quoted as saying in 1780; "A very pleasant village, and the residence of many opulent manufacturers, who have retired from Norwich, and built elegant houses."

Jeremiah Ives who owned the Catton Hall estate which Catton Park belonged to, hired Humphry Repton to improve his historic 600 acre site in 1788. Following this, Catton Park became Repton's first commission as a professional landscape gardener.

It is believed that the main work Repton carried out was probably additional planting in the park and the associated landscape. Repton probably also had some input in the meadow which is now the Deer Park, lying to the east of the main park. It is likely that Repton removed trees to the south of the park to give a view of the spire of Norwich Cathedral. It is thought by some that as part of Repton's work he created a new entrance point to the estate off of Spixworth Road, and on Church St. This can still be seen today.

Route



- If you follow from Spixworth Road, left into Church road and onto Parkside Drive on the left, you will also find a small pond.
- This small garden is some of the last surviving remnants from Catton Hall's formal parterre gardens designed by Humphry Repton. This is now in the care of Old Catton Society.

Old Catton was also the home of George & John Lindley, father and son. George looked after the Catton Nursery in the late 18th century and drew up a plan for an Orchard in 1776. His son, John, born around 1799 in Old Catton, grew up to be a well-known botanist. He was an influential figure in the Royal Horticultural Society and like Repton; Lindley often used painting in his work.



St Peter's Church, Spixworth

The woods surrounding this historic church are a popular location for admiring Norfolk's many displays of bluebells. You will see these normally between April and May and the church often hosts walks and other events to celebrate the occasion.

Route



- Head back onto Spixworth Road and North onto Buxton Road. Eventually you will pass Spixworth and come to St Peter's Church on the right.
- Continue your route on Buxton Road and at the fork take the left on to Spixworth Road.
- Follow this for a mile and then continue straight onto Hall Road later becoming Dumbs Lane.
- At the end of the road, turn right onto Newton Road, and at its end turn right onto Waterloo Road, and immediately left onto Hainford Road. This will take you past the historic Hainford Chequers pub and restaurant.
- Follow this road to the end, then turn left onto Parish Road. Follow this small road and just before the end at the A140, take the road on the left.
- This will take you to Woodland View where the present Stratton Strawless Hall resides.

Stratton Strawless

Stratton Strawless is a small village in Broadland that has existed since at least the 11th century. For many centuries Stratton Strawless Hall was the home of the Marsham Family. Robert Marsham, born in 1707, became the world's first phenologist; regularly recording changes to the natural environment and so to the changing of the seasons.

Robert Marsham was also a great lover of trees in particular and planted many around Stratton Strawless, one that still survives today is now known as 'the Great Cedar' because of its impressive height, towering over surrounding trees. This is also now depicted on the Stratton Strawless Village sign. Part of the Stratton Strawless Hall land is now the Norfolk Bluebell Wood Burial Park, and is a beautiful setting for natural burials and wild flowers.

Repton was an admirer of Marsham's work and described the planting of trees there as "a gem made out of a common by Robert Marsham" and referred to Marsham himself as a "much valued friend". Much later William Repton, son of Humphry, came to have some ownership over some of these same lands.





Route



- On leaving Woodland View, head back up Parish Road and at its end turn left onto Church Road.
- Take a right onto Stratton Road and follow this for about a mile to its end. Turn left onto Norwich Road and continue straight onto Brook Street.
- Follow this for around two miles, across two crossroads and at the end of the road turn left onto Aylsham Road and then immediately right onto Lion Road. Follow this for a mile and a half, and cycle over a river bridge and Oxnead Hall is accessible on the first road on the right.

Oxnead Hall & Church

Oxnead is well known in Norfolk for having links to the medieval Paston family who were dominant figures in Norfolk's history. Sir Clement Paston had built Oxnead Hall and many of the memorials and tombs in the church are of members of the Paston family. It is thought that

Humphry Repton would have made visits to Oxnead as his brother John Repton was a farmer occupying some of the estate's land which had formerly been ruins of the hall.

John spent many years at Oxnead, it was where he raised his family and where he died in 1809. A memorial for John Repton still survives in Oxnead's parish church. Humphry Repton's son, John Adey Repton also did some work around Oxnead Hall. He drew up a design for the hall's reconstruction in 1809 for 'Mr Britton's Architectural Antiquities of England' and then gave more information on the hall in 1844 for 'The Gentleman's Magazine'. It is not clear, however, whether anything he drew was used in the reconstruction of parts of Oxnead Hall.

Route



- Head back out of Oxnead Hall and at the road turn right. Follow this road to its end and at the junction turn left onto The Street. Keep straight ahead on this road and it will take you through Burgh, cross straight over at the main road, and follow straight back to Aylsham, where so much of Humphry Repton's history is discoverable.

Care and consideration when in the countryside:

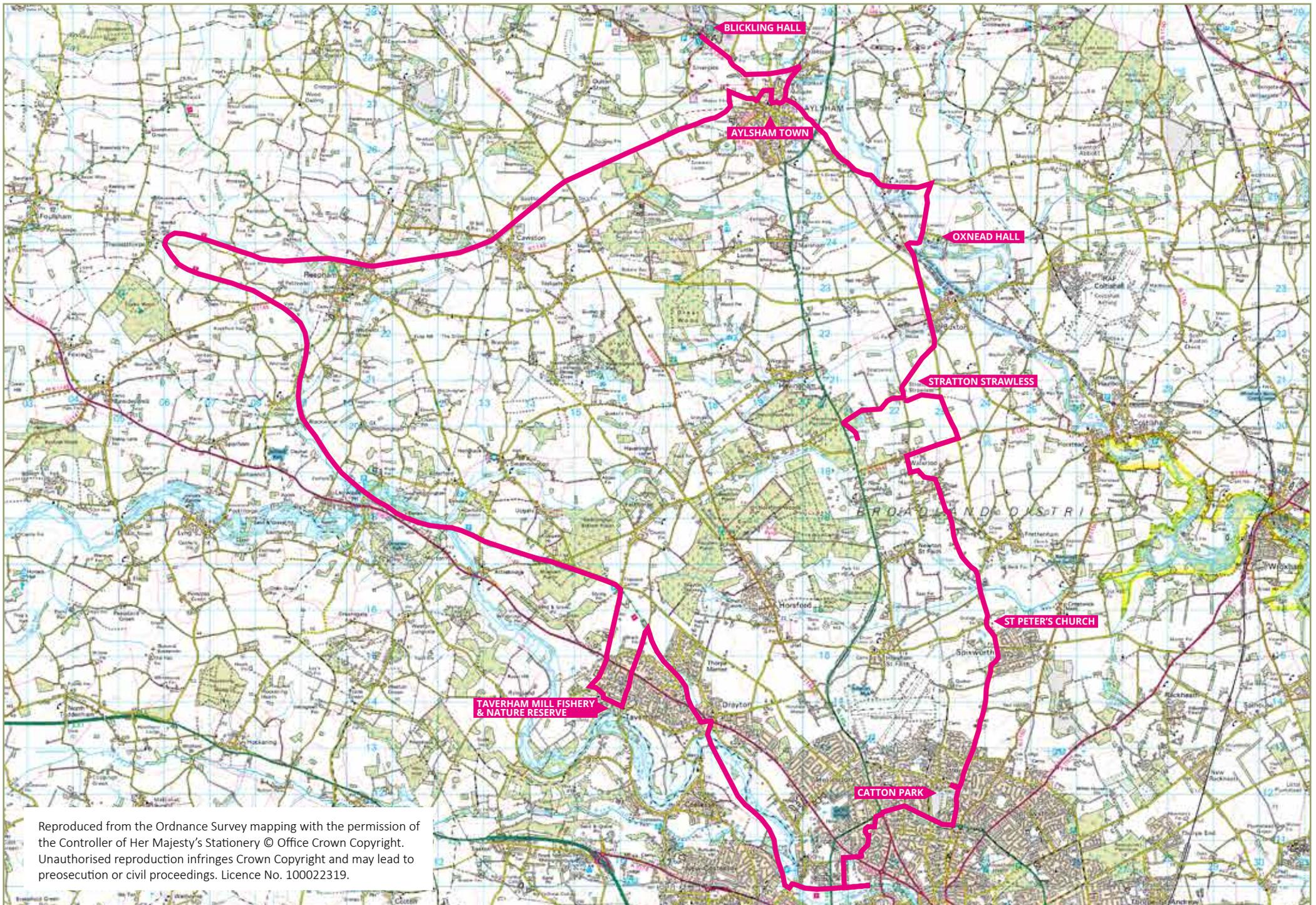
- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Fasten all gates
- Keep dogs under close control
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take special care on country roads
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Make no unnecessary noise

Other nearby gardens & outdoor gems in Broadland

- Mannington Hall Gardens
- Fairhaven Woodland & Water Garden
- RSPB Strumpshaw Fen
- Burlingham Woodland & Sundial Trail
- NWT Ranworth Broad

Local Garden Centres nearby

- Woodgate Nursery
- Aylsham Garden Centre
- Swannington's Romantic Garden Nursery
- Taverham Nursery & Garden Centre
- Felthorpe Forest Nursery



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