Waveney Ramblers Lowestoft 6 Carlton Marsh

Track: TM 50891 91912 GPX for SatNav 4.5 Miles Updated: 2018

Start at Carlton Marshes (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) or the pay and display opposite St Mark's Church, Oulton Broad.

The walk starts at the car park (paid at all times of year) opposite St Mark's Church, Oulton Broad (walkers can also start from a free car park at Carlton Marsh Wildlife Centre; see below). However, with your back to the church, walk down the main path with Pet's Corner on your left at the bottom. The path swings to the right, but a few metres along, turn left through a gap in the low fence. Take the left fork at this point, cross the footbridge ahead and turn left again at a T-junction. Walk across a concreted area with boats moored to the right with good views across the Broad. Then take the narrow entrance to the footpath ahead. Carry on between hedges for about 300m until you reach the back entrance to Ivy Farm. Ignoring all paths to the left, take the right branch for about 2 km, marked for most of the way by wood-capped piles on the right. For a while the Wildlife Centre can be seen to the left.

Eventually the path comes to an abrupt end. Turn sharp left and descend to the track below. Turn right onto the track, leaving it as soon as practical to mount the flood defence embankment on the right. Follow the clear track along the top of the embankment and gain the river bank near a sign pointing right to 'River Crossing'. Instead, go left for about 250 m as far as the Share Mill remains. Leave the river bank immediately beyond the sluice, cross a wooden sleeper bridge and follow the straight wide track (often quite muddy) between dykes on either side.

Just over 1km the track turns sharp left and then right, to reach a crossroad of tracks. Turn left here or, if the path ahead is open, follow that round past the picturesque Spratt's Water, rejoining the left hand path 300 to 400m on. Take the right hand fork Immediately beyond a kissing gate, to arrive at the Wildlife Centre (see note below). Continue ahead via the lower end of the Centre's car park onto a well-defined path, turning sharp right and then left after about 300m. On reaching the drive to Ivy Farm, cross the stile and then the one opposite to continue in the same direction. Carry on directly ahead through an area of holiday bungalows, crossing 2 service roads, until reaching a lane on a right-angled bend. Go left and cross over a wide concrete bridge. Turn right here and follow the outward route back to the car park (if starting from the Wildlife Centre, to shorten the walk, turn left here instead, missing out the short 'out and back' section to St. Mark's Church).

Notes. The Wildlife Centre is said to be planning major improvements, including a cafe, so it may be a more attractive starting point. To reach the centre's car park, take the narrow signposted lane on the right of Beccles Road, 300m past the Esso petrol station travelling towards Beccles, (TM 50874 92034). Otherwise the 'out and back' section from opposite St. Marks Church can easily be turned into a small loop by carrying straight on, instead of left, at the lane bend immediately east of the holiday bungalows to emerge by Oulton Broad south railway station. Turn left along the main road with St Mark's church on the opposite side of the road, and left again to Pet's cornet as above.

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