



AllWays Traveller

North Norfolk, United Kingdom

www.allwaystraveller.com

Endlessly fascinating rural north Norfolk

Yearn after some fresh country air in your lungs? A whiff of ozone wafting from the sea?

Then head for endlessly fascinating rural Norfolk, where you can lose yourself in a web of lightly trafficked lanes, watch seals basking on the mud flats and admire seabirds wheeling above the marshes.

It's not quite as flat as you might have been led to believe. Hunstanton, on the North Norfolk Coast, has spectacular multi-coloured cliffs, overlooking the empty vastness of the Wash.

This was where the hapless King John – 'Lackland' as he was called – lost his baggage train and crown jewels to the rapidly advancing tide.

It's a treasure trove awaiting recovery to this day.

Ashley Gibbins

The International Travel Writers Alliance
www.itwalliance.com

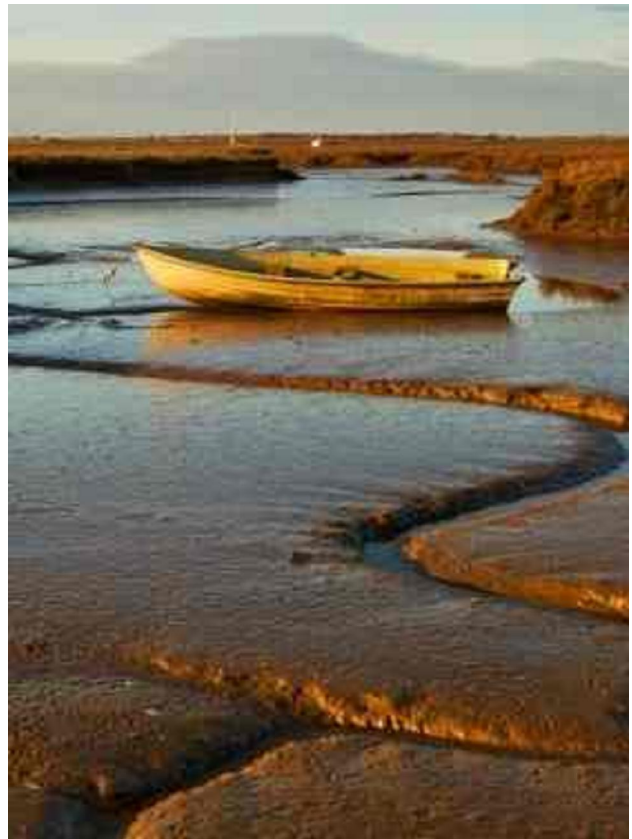
Alliance member Roger St Pierre takes you to North Norfolk

It is certainly bracing here.

Stand at the end of Cromer Pier and there's nothing between you and the North Pole but the vastness of the sea. But with the summer hordes gone, winter is a great time for visiting by those who have romance in their soul.

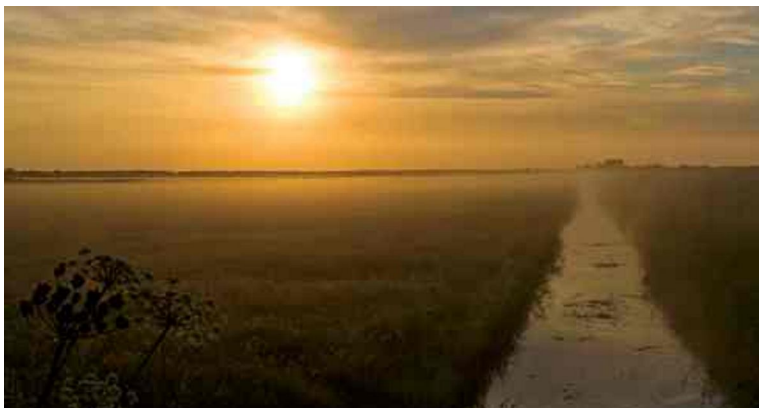
This is Nelson country, where Britain's great naval hero, the son of a country parson, learned his love for the sea.

You can take to the waters yourself – there are abundant sailing opportunities for novice and expert sailors alike or you might prefer beachcombing, exploring the marshes, binoculars in hand, or exploring the maze of rolling country lanes and the myriad little towns and villages they string together.



A personal view

An area of real natural beauty



by Roger St Pierre

The largest of the eastern counties, Norfolk has a long coastline, much of it designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Renowned for its big skies and quality of light, this county is the heartland of East Anglia, one of England's most lightly populated regions.

Yet it has a number of outstanding National Trust and English Heritage properties waiting to be visited.

A tour of the area

The North Norfolk Coast is renowned for the succession of delightful little towns that punctuate the coastline.



Holt

Located just a few miles inland, Holt is well sited as a base for exploring the beautiful North Norfolk Coast.

You can take in the Victorian resort of Hunstanton and the reed marsh sheltered fishing villages of Wells next the Sea, Cley next the Sea, sleepy Brancaster and Cromer.

There's also the chance to get to the delightful pilgrimage town of Walsingham, the bustling Sheringham and the stately Holkham Hall, home of the Earl of Leicester.

The National Trust also has properties including Mannington Hall, Felbrigg Hall and the gloriously ornate 17th Century Blickling Hall.

The facts

Getting to North Norfolk



By road

From London take the M11/A11 north to Norwich. Head north from Norwich, via the city bypass, on the B1149 to reach Holt.

By rail

The National Express Bittern Line is part of the national rail network. It connects with mainline services to London Liverpool Street and other destinations via Norwich.

When boarding the Poppy Line at Sheringham, present your National Express ticket to get a 10% discount.

By air

There are services to Norwich's busy little airport from Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Exeter, Geneva, Guernsey, Ibiza, Jersey, Malta, Manchester and other European departure points.

The principal operator using the airport currently is Flybe.

A bed for the night



Good country house style hotels abound in these parts.

One of the best is Broom Hall, at Saham Toney, near Watton, whose welcoming restaurant specialises in game and other local produce.

www.broomhallhotel.co.uk

Cromer



Cromer is sadly a little run-down these days but does have a pleasure pier and an ancient lighthouse as well as some fine Edwardian buildings.

Sheringham



It's local rival, Sheringham, has some elegant Victorian and Edwardian houses, a bustling high street and a fine links golf course.

This town has a lifeboat museum that reminds us these North Sea waters can be treacherous, heaving with fearsome gales.

Blakeney



Blakeney boasts cobbled streets, a pretty harbour and the seal reserve on Blakeney Point, which is reached by boat – with several operators to choose from.

Burnham Market



Tiny Burnham Market has been nicknamed 'Chelsea on Sea' thanks to its designer shops and cosmopolitan feel.

It is home to the award-winning The Hoste Arms pub, voted one of the top five places in England for food.

Cley next the Sea



Cley next the Sea is renowned for the white sailed 18th Century windmill that dominates its skyline. There's an art gallery showcasing local talent.

Brancaster

Brancaster has an outstanding harbour and two fine pubs.

Other interesting facts

A bracing walk or two



The Peddars Way and the North Norfolk Coastal Walk are among the nation's most outstanding waymarked pedestrian trails.

Wear stout boots.

Wells next the Sea



Much photographed Wells next the Sea has a handsome quayside and lonely, wildlife filled marshes.

Admiral Lord Nelson was born in Burnham Thorpe. Have lunch at the Lord Nelson pub and try Nelson's Blood for a drink with a kick to it.



Make a pig of yourself

A word of good advice: go to North Norfolk with a hearty appetite.

Call for good hearty food and you'll find that aplenty at the most appropriately named The Pigs to be found in the rolling countryside at Edgefield, just 10 minutes' drive south from the pretty little market town of Holt.

A worthy and consistently busy gastro-pub tucked away

Star of the show here is the head chef Tim Abbott's mouth-watering Three Pigs Platter – slow-cooked pork belly, black pudding and crackling, accompanied by smoky bacon beans and apple chutney.

And if you don't like, or can't eat pork there's plenty of options, like eight-hour slow-roasted lamb shoulder, dressed Cromer crab and a hearty vegetable and cider casserole – all of it of local provenance.

More good food awaits in Holt itself at Byfords rated one of England's best B&B establishments in the England for Excellence awards.

This gem is run by the affable and multi-talented Iain Wilson, who also happens to be one of the partners at The Pigs.

The venerable building – which was formerly a hardware shop and ironmonger's for more than 100 years – is traditional East Anglian red brick and flint in construction.

www.thepigs.org.uk
www.byfords.org.uk

More information : www.visitnorthnorfolk.com

Train of thought



While operating all year round, the North Norfolk Railway has more services in summertime, with just weekend operation in winter.

During the busiest months, though, there's a steam service every 45 minutes between 9.45 am and 3.45 pm while the last diesel trains leave from opposite ends of the line at around 6 pm.

A wee dram, English style



Strange but true: Norfolk is now producing haggis, some 80 per cent of which is exported up to Scotland.

And now joining Robert Burns's beloved "Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race" is the first English whisky to be produced in 100 years.

If passion for what you are doing is the most important factor in business success then the Nelstrop family's venture is set fair.

Farmers of barley and other crops for generations, they enjoyed whisky so much that they eventually decided that England should join the 80 plus countries presently producing the hard stuff, and made the wise decision that they should do so at the top end of the market.

Based at Roudham, near East Harling, their English Whisky Company has just released its first product and at the launch even a hard-nosed contingent of Scottish journalists had to admit it is a match for a quality single malt from north of the border.

www.englishwhisky.co.uk

The International Travel Writers Alliance



AllWays

AllWays is the consumer travel service from the International Travel Writers Alliance.

The International Travel Writers Alliance

The International Travel Writers Alliance represents travel writers, editors, broadcasters and photographers worldwide

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Roger St Pierre is one of Britain's most widely travelled writers.

He has visited 125 countries, all but one of the US states and every French metropolitan departement.

But he still relishes the delights of his home islands and has been to every UK and Irish settlement of more than 2,000 population.