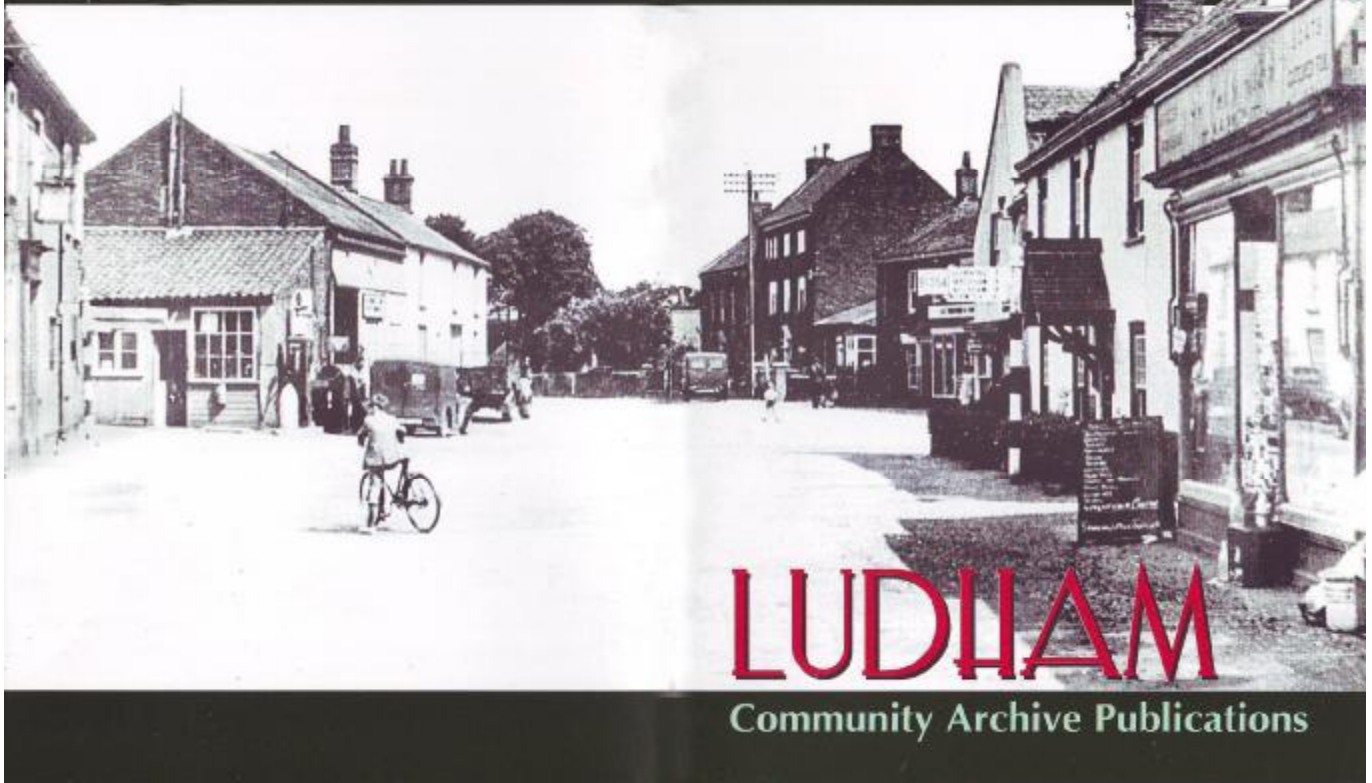


WATERSIDE WALKS  
AROUND LUDHAM  
BY NIGEL POPE



### The Ludham Community Archive Group

The group came together during the Jubilee year of 2002 to celebrate it through a community event in the village. The result was a textile triptych, which was completed with the collaboration of over 100 residents of the village. It is now on show in the Parish Church of St. Catherine's. We were supported in this enterprise by the Arts Officer of North Norfolk District Council, Brenda Seymore, and by our Art Tutor, Nicky Maule.

While the project was in progress we introduced local walks, led by knowledgeable villagers, to learn more about the community in which we live. Winter walks also evolved from this. We were also introduced to a method of recording the information that we were acquiring during this process and it was at this point that the archive aspect of the project really began.

Ludham Archive is held on computer and continues to expand as further information comes to light. Photographic, pictorial and a variety of other images, supplemented by reminiscences form the basis of the archive. In addition, many people have been interviewed and the results recorded. All of this is seen as a beginning of what should become a continuing process to record the evolution of a changing community. Archive materials are open to access by villagers and can be seen at regular evening meetings. Dates of meetings can be found in the monthly parish newsletter.

The archive provides the source of material to make publications available as CD Rom and other visual media, as well as pamphlets and booklets.

## WATERSIDE WALKS AROUND LUDHAM BY NIGEL POPE

The Broadland Village of Ludham is surrounded by the rivers of the Norfolk Broads. To the west is the River Ant with its popular moorings at How Hill and Ludham Bridge. To the south is the Bure which has some informal moorings as well as the favoured spot near the ruins of St Benet's Abbey. To the east is the River Thurne with moorings at Coldharbour and then there is Womack Water, Ludham's own little broad, which brings the Broads system right into the heart of the village.

With so many places to access the village by boat, it is not surprising that the summer months bring lots of visitors to Ludham by water. Ludham has a lot to offer the visitor. There are shops, pubs, the ancient church of St Catherine, Toad Hole museum, the How Hill Estate and much more. It is a picturesque place with a thousand years of history all ready for the visitor to enjoy.



If this was not enough, Ludham also has some wonderful walks. This booklet, produced by the Ludham Community Archive Group, contains a collection of walks all of which start from convenient moorings in and around the village. The walks take you to Ludham's hidden places. You see wonderful countryside, nature reserves, wildlife and much more. The booklet explains the history and points out the places of interest along the way. It was written by local experts so you can make the most of your visit to Ludham. Let it be your guide.

## Walk 1: LUDHAM VILLAGE, HIGH MILL & FRITTON

Starts from: Womack Staithe, Womack Dyke  
Distance: 3 Miles. Can be muddy in places

This walk lets you explore Ludham Village with its church and shops. It also takes you on rural footpaths to the hamlet of Fritton and back via the Ludham Marshes Nature Reserve.

If you have moored in Womack Dyke, turn left and follow the bank path to Hunter's Yard (Wooden boat sheds to your left). Walk beside the shed and turn left into the road. Follow this road until you reach Womack Staithe with its pleasant green, boatyard and shops.

From Womack Staithe turn left into Horsefen Road. At the T-junction where you see the "Mardling Seat" ("mardle" is the local word for gossip) turn left and follow the footpath behind a hedge and past thatched cottages to the King's Arms pub.



This is the centre of Ludham Village; take a little time to explore.

Once Ludham had seven pubs. Now only the King's Arms remains in the centre of the village. Here you can get food and refreshments or maybe you could try the little tea room just round the corner opposite the Church. Alfresco Tea Room used to be Albert Knight's saddlers shop. He was well known for the tall tales he told to tourists, but that was a long time ago.

Thrower's shop has been in the Thrower family since 1902. It's a good place for supplies. The Church of St Catherine is well worth a visit. Look out for the painted rood screen and in particular St Apollonia (patron saint of dentists). See if you can find the rare woodwoses on the font or maybe tales of the Ludham dragon. Continue the walk by retracing your steps to the Mardling Seat. Go straight on along the main road and just after the houses and roads, turn partly right into a track leading ahead and uphill. Follow this track over the brow of the hill where there was once an unusual clockwise turning mill. Continue ahead to a road where you turn right. You are now on Fritton Lane. Follow the narrow road downhill until it ends at a wide track where you turn right. Follow the track to a junction where you turn left through a wooden gate. Walk 2 joins here. Follow this narrow lane between marshes towards the river Thurne.

Just before the house, turn right over a metal footbridge. Pass the brick pumping station and climb up onto the river bank. This is the site of Goodwin's Mill, another clockwise windmill which used to drain the water out of the marshes. Turn right and follow the river bank path.

The marshes on your right are a nature reserve. This is a good place to see barn owls and maybe deer. Follow the river bank path with the river on your left until you reach Toad Hall, a wooden bungalow. Follow the path round to the right and this will bring you back to the moorings in Womack Dyke. If you are moored at the Staithe, just follow the path past Hunter's Yard and turn left at the road. Womack Staithe is further along the road on your left.



## Walk 2: HORSEFEN MARSHES NATURE RESERVE

Starts from: Womack Staithe, Womack Dyke  
Distance: 2.5 Miles. Can be very muddy after rain

The pleasant walk takes you in a circle round the Horsefen Marshes Nature Reserve. Evenings are a good time for this walk and you will often see a Barn Owl swooping low over the marshes. In the past, the marsh was divided up into strips which were farmed by people from Ludham village. The ruins of the Ludham marshes windpump can be seen. This mill kept the water level down, but now the water table is carefully managed to encourage wildlife.

From Womack Staithe turn right along Horsefen Road and follow the road to Hunter's Yard. From Womack Dyke, turn left along the river bank until you reach Hunter's Yard, the home of the heritage fleet of vintage wooden sailing boats.

With Hunter's shed behind you, go down a slope towards the house, then turn right into a wide track with the house on your left. The track turns left round the back of the house with the nature reserve to the right.

Follow this track with fields and woods on your left and the marshes on your right until you come to a surfaced track which leads off to the right through a gate

You are now joining Walk 1. (See page 3)

Follow the instructions in Walk 1 past Goodwin's Mill and along the river bank until you find yourself back at Womack Dyke and Hunter's Yard.



## Walk 3: HOW HILL AND BUTTLE MARSH

Starts from: How Hill Staithe  
Distance: 2.5 Miles. Roads and good paths

How Hill House was built 100 years ago by the Norwich architect Edward Boardman as a holiday home. It is now a study centre. The former grounds of the house are now managed by the Broads Authority. There is a nature trail, preserved windmills, reed beds worked in the traditional manner and Toad Hole cottage, a museum, depicting the life of a marshman. It's a great place for walks and must have one of the most photographed views on The Broads.

By contrast, nearby Buttle Marsh is only a few years old. This artificial wetland was created to provide habitat for water birds and in particular the rare Bittern.

This circular walk will take you to both of these places and much more.

Start by the river near Toad Hole Cottage. Follow the riverbank with the river on your right. On the other side of the river is Reedham Marsh where reed and sedge are cut for thatching and Turf Fen Mill which is actually a pump formerly used to drain the marshes.

On the left are the gardens of How Hill Farm. The path curves left behind a reed bed. This is a good area to look out for otters.

The path now comes to a junction of paths and tracks. Go straight on down a slope and through a gate opposite. Follow a wide track with woods on your left and the new reed beds and scrapes of Buttle Marsh on your right.



The path ends at a gate. Turn left here through a wide gap in the hedge and go uphill towards a wood following a well defined path. As you pass the wood at the top of the hill, a view opens up over Buttle Marsh and beyond to the river Ant. This area is called the Clint. It is peaceful now and it is hard to imagine how it looked in the past when there was a railway line along the bottom. The bank was used for target practice during WWII using train mounted guns.



Go straight on following the track down between hedgerows until you reach a concrete farm yard.

Continue straight on through the metal gate opposite and into a road with a farmhouse on the left. There used to be a small hamlet here with cottages which have long since gone.

Go past the farmhouse and at the corner of its garden turn sharp left and up into a narrow public footpath between trees on your left and a fence on the right. Follow this path to the top of the hill and then go straight on over the hill and down the other side to reach a country lane.

Almost opposite is a house with a public footpath to it's right (Walk 5 joins here). Take this path and go through a small gate. The path now curves right then left round the edge of a small field. It then crosses a small footbridge and emerges through a hole in the hedge into another country lane. Turn left here and follow the lane.

The lane leads you past How Hill Farm and its interesting gardens. The farm specialises in holly for Christmas and many types of holly tree can be seen here. Just beyond the farm, turn left into the car park at How Hill House. Go through the car park and cross the lawn below the house. On the far side is your starting point by the river.

### Walk 4: LUDHAM BRIDGE AND HOW HILL

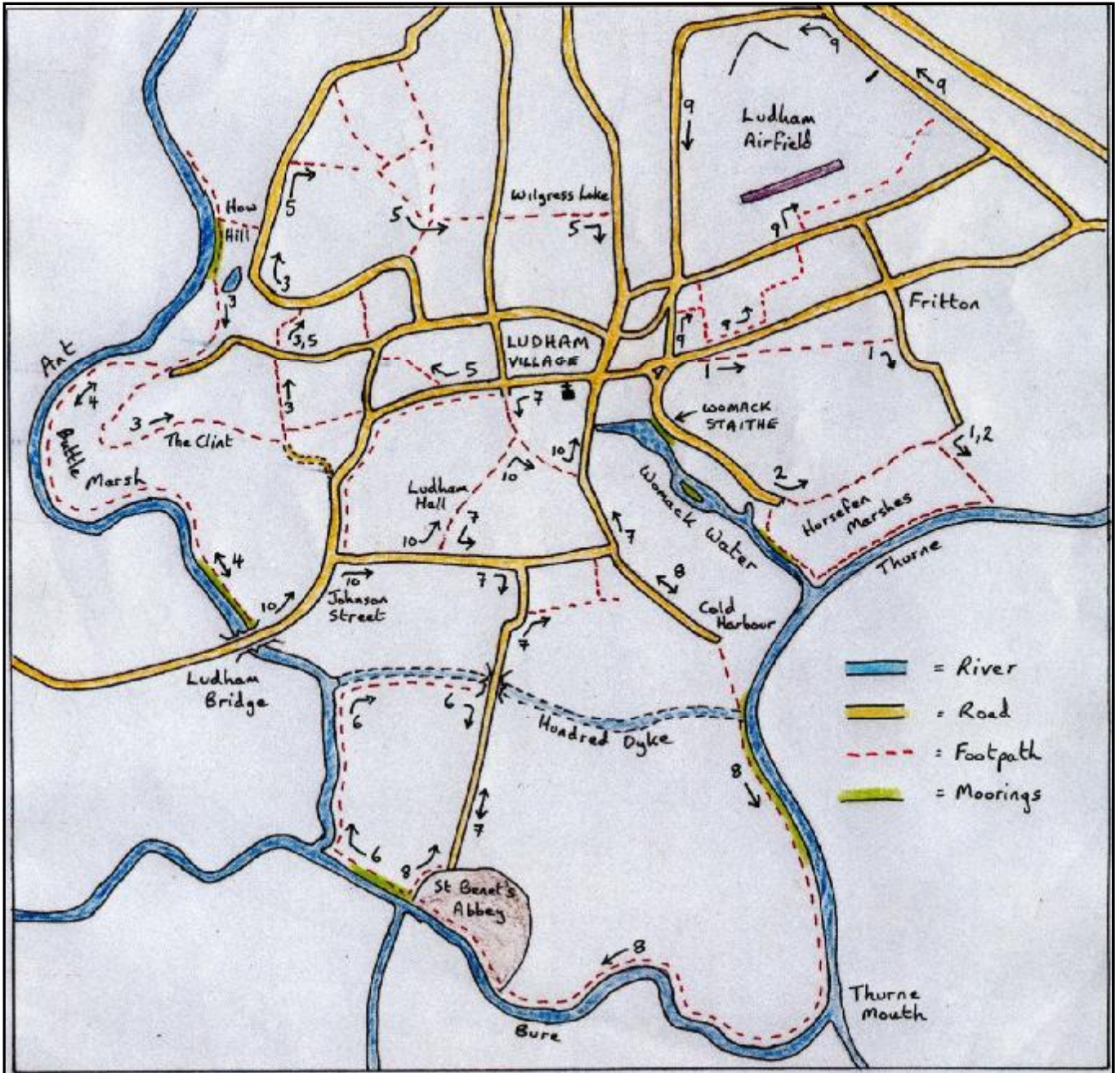
Starts from: Ludham Bridge or How Hill Staithe

Distance: 5 Miles (there and back). Can be muddy in places

The walk along the bank of the River Ant between Ludham Bridge and How Hill is a pleasant one. There are distant views of the How Hill estate and a chance to get up close to the wildlife on the newly created Buttle Marsh Habitat. (see Walk 3) There has been extensive work to the riverbank in the area in recent years as part of the Flood Alleviation project.

At Ludham Bridge, go down onto the public Staithe next to the shop and with your back to the bridge follow the right hand bank of the river northwards past the moorings. The ruined mill on your right once drained the marshes and was later converted to a pill box during World War II. Continue along the bank until you come to point where the path divides.

Go through the gate and follow the path with the river off to the left and Buttle Marsh to the right. Follow the path in the direction of How Hill looking out for wildlife on Buttle Marsh to your right. As the river curves right, How Hill House comes into view. This is one of the best known views on The Broads. Eventually, the path swing right. Go ahead until you come to a junction of paths and tracks some at a lower level on the right. Turn left here towards How Hill and follow the path with a reed bed on your left. Eventually, the path swings left and joins the riverbank again opposite Turf Fen Mill. Follow the bank with moorings on your left and the gardens of How Hill Farm on your right until you reach How Hill. To do the walk in reverse from How Hill, follow the directions in Walk 3 until you reach the junction of paths where you turn right and follow the riverbank path to Ludham Bridge.





## Walk 5: HOW HILL, WILGRESS LOKE AND LUDHAM

Starts from: How Hill Staithe  
Distance: 3.5 Miles (there and back). Can be muddy in places

A quiet walk through fields and along public footpaths from How Hill to Ludham Village.

From Toad Hole Cottage on How Hill Staithe, cross the lawn below How Hill House to the car park. Cross the car park and go through the gate to a lane. Turn left and go up the hill. Follow the lane over the brow of the hill and down again until you reach a public footpath on your right opposite the house with the balcony. Take this footpath and follow it. The wide path leads uphill with a hedge on your right. Follow it round a left hand bend and a little further along ignore a footpath which leads off to your left. Continue straight on with a view of Catfield Water Tower ahead until you reach a T junction in the paths. Turn right here and follow a path between fields with trees on your right. You soon get a view of St Catherine's Church tower ahead and slightly left. Go straight on where the first hedge crosses and power lines join your route. At the next hedgerow take the broad footpath on your left following the line of the hedge. This is Wilgress Loke. Continue along the loke. When you reach a lane cross and continue straight on along the footpath. When the path reaches a road turn right along the road and follow it into the centre of Ludham Village (see Walk 1 for information about the village). For a shorter, alternative route back, follow Norwich Road out of Ludham with the church on your left. Continue along this road between houses and fields until you come to the Village Hall on your left. Just before the Village Hall, a footpath on the opposite side of the road leads across a field towards houses. Take this path and when you reach the houses follow it left between houses until you reach a road. Turn right and then almost immediately left into Turf Fen Lane. Walk along this road and continue with the instructions in Walk 3 (Page 4).

## Walk 6: ST BENET'S AND THE HUNDRED STREAM

Starts from: St Benet's Abbey  
Distance: 2 Miles. Can be muddy in places

St Benet's Abbey was the only one to escape the dissolution although it fell into disuse anyway. It stood on Cow Holme, an area of higher ground in the marshes. There was a defensive wall round it and this can still be traced on the ground. The largest ruin you see was part of the gatehouse and has got a 17th century windmill built into it. The remains of the abbey church can also be clearly seen and a cross of Sandringham oak stands where the high altar once was. This circular walk takes you along the banks of the Rivers Bure and Ant. You also follow the Hundred stream which is the former course of the River Ant (more of a dry ditch these days).



From the Abbey follow the path with the river and dyke on your left. This straight section of the River Bure is artificial and was dug to create a short cut. Eventually, the path leads you to the junction of the Bure and Ant. Turn right and follow the Ant. Follow the path until you see a footpath sign and stile below and on your right. Take this path along the bank of the Hundred stream. (Note, the path along the bank of the Ant to Ludham Bridge is not a right of way. Please do not walk through the boat yard). Follow the Hundred stream until you reach a concrete road. Turn right and follow the road back to St Benet's.

## Walk 7: ST. BENET'S AND LUDHAM

Starts from: St Benet's Abbey  
Distance: 4 Miles (there and back). Good roads and paths

A pleasant walk through fields to Ludham Village

From St Benet's Abbey, cross the car park and follow the road away from the river. The road quickly becomes concrete as you pass barns on your right. Follow the concrete road over the Hundred stream (former course of the river Ant) and then uphill towards barns. As the road curves right by the barns take a public footpath which leads off on the right. Follow this path until you find another path leading off to the left. Take this path and follow it to a road near allotments and a newly planted wood (The Millennium Wood). Turn right. Follow this road to a junction and turn left. You are now in Staithe Road. Follow this road into Ludham Village. Look out for the Dutch architecture on the houses on your right. For an alternative route back, leave Ludham on Norwich Road with the church on your left. Follow this road between fields and houses until you reach Lover's Lane on your left. Follow Lover's Lane which becomes a track at the end. Continue along the track curving left until you find a footpath leading off uphill to the right. Follow this path over the hill and through the farm gate to reach a road.

This farm is Ludham Hall, in earlier times the seat of the bishop of Norwich. The large barn attached to the farmhouse was a former chapel. Turn left at the road and then take the next right. This road will lead you back to St Benet's.



## Walk 8: COLDHARBOUR, LUDHAM AND ST. BENET'S

Starts from: Coldharbour moorings, River Thurne  
Distance: 6 Miles (full circle walk). Can be muddy near St. Benet's.

Good road all the way to Ludham

From Coldharbour, a good path follows the riverbank all the way to St Benet's. With the river on your left, follow the bank of the River Thurne. The large mill on your side of the river is St Benet's Level Drainage Mill, now the property of the Crown Estates. It once drained these marshes. The white mill opposite stands at the entrance to Thurne Dyke, a popular mooring spot. The path takes you to Thurne



Mouth where the Thurne joins the Bure. An annual regatta held here as well as other sailing races, and it is a good place for watching boats. Continue along the riverside path to St Benet's Abbey where you can link with Walks 6 or 7.

There is a lane leading into Ludham Village from Coldharbour (Staithe Road). Walk down off the bank and go right towards the farm house. The track quickly becomes a lane which leads into Ludham.

You can make a circular walk from Coldharbour by walking to St Benet's, then following Walk 7 to Ludham and returning along Staithe Road from the village.



## Walk 9: RAF LUDHAM

Starts from: Womack Staithe, Womack Dyke  
Distance: 3 Miles. Can be muddy in places



During World War II, the sleepy village of Ludham became host to an army camp and to an RAF airfield. The airfield can still be traced on the ground and one of the runways is still in use for light aircraft. Some buildings and other features remain and are easily spotted if you know what you are looking for. This circular walk takes you round the perimeter of the old

airfield pointing out the various features along the way.

From Womack Staithe, turn left and walk up Horsefen Road past the grounds of Ludham Manor on your left until you reach a T junction. Cross the main road and turn right, then turn left into Latchmore Lane. Follow this lane past houses and take a footpath on the right just before the bend in the road. Follow this path between a field and horse stables to a T junction of paths.

Turn right here and follow the boundary of a field. The boundary turns left alongside a road and then left again, before turning right and finally left again to bring you to a lane. Turn right here.

This lane marks the southern boundary of RAF Ludham. Turn left along a concrete drive in the direction of the airfield. Now turn right and follow a wide concrete road. This road was once a taxiway of the war time airfield. The remaining runway and hangar can be seen on your left. This airfield is in private ownership and is still in use. Do not go anywhere near the runway.

The concrete path becomes narrower and reaches a lane. Turn left here still following the perimeter of the old airfield.

On the left, there used to be a large wall, heavily overgrown. This was a firing range used to test the guns on the spitfires and other aircraft once based here. The wall was removed in 2012.

Pass the drive leading to the works on your left and then take the next lane on the left which will take you along the northern perimeter.

Just beyond the track on your left, look left at the field boundaries. They have a distinct V shape. This is because RAF Ludham had 3 runways in a triangle shape and you are standing near the apex of the triangle. The concrete runways are gone, but the fields still reflect their shape.

Continue along the lane which turns left at farm buildings. On your left, you will now see the former control tower which is still well preserved. It once housed a museum, but is now in private ownership.

Continue along the lane until you reach a crossroads by houses. The buildings on your left were once part of the airfield complex.

Go straight on at the crossroads following the road round to the right. At the fork, go left back into Latchmore Lane. At the main road, turn right and then left into Horsefen Road which leads you back to Womack Staithe.



## Walk 10: LUDHAM BRIDGE AND LUDHAM VILLAGE

Starts from: Ludham Bridge  
Distance: 1.5 Miles. Good roads and paths

If you moor at Ludham Bridge and want to visit Ludham Village, there is no need to walk along the main road at all.

From the Bridge with the Stores on your left walk along the main road footpath. Just beyond the Dog Inn turn right into Hall Road. This road with its wide verges was once common land where villagers could graze animals. When you reach the entrance to Ludham Hall Farm on your left, turn left through the gates and go up the hill through the farmyard. Go over the brow of the hill and down to a junction of footpaths. Turn right here and follow the path to Staithe Road. Turn left and follow the road into Ludham Village.

### WHERE CAN I FIND?

Toilets: Ludham Bridge, Womack Staithe  
Food Shops: The Village, Ludham Bridge, Womack Staithe  
Pubs: The Village, Ludham Bridge  
Places to eat: The Village, Ludham Bridge, the pubs  
Museum: How Hill  
Boatyards: Ludham Bridge, Womack Staithe  
Churches: The Village

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