As you join Lambeth Street there are Almshouses (14) on your left and opposite is the fire station (15). The latter is on the site of the old reading room where the old boys used to go to read their papers. On your right is a small tributary of the River Dove and this is known as the “Rett’ry” (16). This is where flax was retted. The plants were soaked until they were soft enough to turn into linen. Bearing left, you pass by Tacon Close (17) on the site of the old Tacon brewery. A railway line serving the brewery used to run to the mainline at Mellis. Some parts of the old railway station can be spotted between the buildings in the factory yard of Sovereign Chicken (18) (station building and station-master’s house). Until the early 1960’s there was one train a day which brought in coal to the gas works and took sugar beet out. Up until 1929 the line also took passengers. It was axed during the 60’s when Dr. Beeching made radical cuts to the railway network. Other buildings associated with the railway can be made out, across the road in Magdalen Street.

Buildings of Interest:

Parish Church.

Guildhall (next to Church) – Antiquarian Bookshop open Fridays and Saturdays only.

Castle Mound (undergoing archaeological investigation and restoration).

Victorian Town Hall.

Chemist’s Shop (lovely Old Tudor building).

White Lion (converted Coaching Inn).

Alms Houses (Lambeth Street).

There is a tearoom next to Beard’s Shop in Church Street.

On the corner of Castle Street nearest the town centre, Talents Shop serves tea and coffee. Every Wednesday morning, a W. I. Market, selling home produce, is held in the Town Hall.

Public Lavatories: – turn opposite Barclays Bank in the town centre and first right into Cross Street.

Wherever you go follow the Country Code

Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work

Guard against all risk of fire

Fasten all gates

Keep your dogs under close control

Keep to public paths across farmland

Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls

Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone

Take your litter home

Help to keep all water clean

Protect wildlife, plants and trees

Take special care on country roads

Make no unnecessary noise.

Distance 3½ miles
Time About 1½ hours
Parking Buckshorn lane car park or Town Moor (off Magdalen Street).
Terrain Level. Can be muddy.

This leaflet and Walk has been prepared by the Eye Local Access Group, with assistance from:

Mid Suffolk District Council
Upper Waveney Valley Project
Suffolk County Council Highways Dept: Countryside Access Project.

100% Recycled Paper
Eye Town Walk

Follow Waymarks (blue arrow on yellow disk).

In times past, the Town Moors (1) were rough grazing pasture for the use of Freemen of the Borough. Where the tennis courts are now, there used to be a huge pond which was full of frogs, toads and newts. When it was levelled and the Pond filled in, the frogs came up Magdalen Street! The route passes through a former plantation of Poplar trees (2) originally destined for matchwood. This has been gradually reclaimed as a wildlife and recreation area. After the Great Storm of October 1987, the damaged trees were left as a memorial and an imaginative replanting scheme has created a new landscape. The Towns Moors Project and Storm Memorial deserve a special visit.

Just before you turn right onto Moorhall Causeway (The Cancy), there used to be a butt (3) on the right in the now-arable field. This is where menfolk learnt archery and practised shooting in bygone days.

Park Lane (4) (originally leading to Eye deer park) is raised above the level of the fields as they were once below water. This isolated the town and its castle on an island, hence the name "Eye", meaning island. Ludgate Causeway and the Hoxne road still flood when the river is high. The River Dove rises in Mendlesham and joins the River Waveney at Hoxne. The last house on your left of Ludgate Causeway (5) was the Old Cherry Tree pub.

On the left of Abbey Farm drive (6) used to be the milkstand to which milk churns were brought by pony and trap. Thirty years ago many farms in the area had herds of Red Poll cattle. At the top of the drive, on your right, is the Abbey Farmhouse (7) built in 1381. It was not really an abbey but a priory founded in the 11th Century. Several large pieces of masonry remain and at the back of the house the walls are three feet thick! The large barn (8) on the left is known by various names and there are many theories as to its original purpose. It is commonly called the "Rest House" and was presumably where guests of the priory (travellers) stayed. Partly hidden by the trees on the right are the priory fishponds (9) where the monks must have caught their Friday and fast day fish. All these features are private and special arrangements have to be made to see them.

In front of you there is a modern house (10) which until c.1969 was the site of a very large aisled barn (probably a tithe barn) — a colossal timber building. Looking left as you cross the River Dove again over Bolser Bridge (11) there is a very good view of the parish church. Beside it is the castle mound dating from Norman times with a nineteenth century folly ruin. Through the gate and stile ahead there used to be a large stack yard (12) on either side of the track, until the days of combine harvesters, wheat and corn were stacked here until threshing tackle came along in the winter.

Up the hill the route then veers left through the gate (13). Looking right from here, the footpath across the field is known as the trespasser's footpath. A short cut! On your left is a vista of the town — old and new. Church, Castle and the Town Hall clock tower. From this angle, in front of the Town Hall, a pink cottage is visible with a sloping roof. This was the old "Fest House" in times past. This was well outside the town and people were taken there when they had infectious diseases. In 1989 there was a lady still living in Eye who as a child, went to the pest house with her brother, when they had scarlet fever.