

Four Wolds Churches

Start:	<i>Oselear's Lane (west of Maidenwell)</i>
Nearest Post Code:	<i>LN11 8PS</i>
Grid Ref	<i>TF308787</i>
what3words	<i>lushly.shurping.lunch</i>
Refreshments	<i>None</i>
Getting there:	<i>Oselear's Lane is an east-west road running between Burwell (A16) and Scamblesby (A153). A signed bridleway runs southeast to Farforth. Park on the grass verge, keeping well away from the field gate.</i>
Distance:	<i>10 miles / 16km</i>
Route Description:	<i>An undulating circuit of the Wolds giving great views. Some short stretches of road walking, but mostly farm tracks and a few footpaths. An alternative start point could be from Tetford, which would shorten the walk by a mile.</i>

The Walk

From your parking on the grass verge, go through the gate and follow a clearly-defined path downhill that becomes a track at the lower corner of the field. Continue to reach a bridleway on the right **[A]** and take this on a gentle descent, until a short climb through trees brings you to the hamlet of Oxcombe. Continue ahead to reach the church **[B]**.

Once a Parish in its own right, Oxcombe now consists of the Grade II listed house, built in 1845, outbuildings, and the first of our churches – All Saints, built in 1842. although the church still retains a 1637 bell and 15c font from the former building. The church was declared redundant in 1980 and is now in the care of the Lincolnshire Old Churches Trust and usually open to visitors.

To continue the walk, retrace your steps to the car-parking area, then turn left, passing the house on your left, and follow the road uphill with woodland on the left. Just before this ends, take a signed path left (easy to miss) and follow it to a stile and grassland beyond. Cross this, keeping to the high ground with good views to the east, and climb the stile on the far side to reach the Bluestone Heath Road, a route of great antiquity. Cross and walk left, turning right at the junction. Follow the road downhill for some distance (there is a permissive path beyond the hedge, but it is of little use except for horse riders), passing Glebe Farm Top Yard then Glebe Cottage on the left.

At the bottom of the hill, cross to the driveway of Glebe Farm Low Yard and follow it for a short distance, before going left on a bridleway that takes you on a wide diversion keeping you away from the farmyard and eventually crossing a wooden bridge over the infant River Lymm **[C]**. The track here is called Platts Lane, and is of Roman origin, which looks up to the ominous ruins of Glebe Farm, standing sentinel on the left.

The track ends at a bend in a road that you follow ahead to reach the village of Tetford. Bear left into North Road and continue to our second church and a convenient lunch stop at roughly mid-point of the walk **[D]**.

The Grade II listed St. Mary's is the largest of the four churches on our walk. This 14th Century church replaced an earlier church on the site – a church has stood here for over 900 years. The tower, added in the 15th Century, has battlements, crocketed finials and grotesque gargoyles. Inside is a memorial to Captain Edward Dymoke (the Dymoke family live at Scrivelsby), who was the champion of George II.*

The walk continues along Church Lane to its junction with Clay Lane. Turn right, then just beyond the cottage driveway on the left, take the (diverted) footpath skirting the field, going left at the corner and continuing to the top boundary, where you go left again. At the next corner, the path is clear – up the hill ahead of you, with good views at the top. Continue across the following field, almost to the far-right corner where you enter another field, walking for a few yards before dropping down to a track. Walk left for a short distance, then take the crossfield path on your right that leads you to the road **[E]**.

Turn right and walk along the grass verge, crossing when you reach the finger post opposite. Climb the stile by the field gate, then follow the driveway a short distance, before being directed over the grass, walking diagonally right to the far boundary, with farm buildings and Worlaby House down to your left. Cross the roadway running down to the farm, and go left, taking the alternative driveway that skirts the buildings. You follow this drive for almost a mile, initially losing height and passing lakes left and right before climbing gently to reach the road **[F]**.

Turn right and follow the grass verge as the road drops to cross a stream, then when safe to do so, move to the opposite side of the road – a wider verge and a safer route to negotiate the hairpin bend. Near the top of the climb, note the stepped footpath on the left by the entrance to the old Rectory (your onward route), then bear right onto a lane to reach the third church – St. Olave’s.

This Grade II listed Church is said to be the smallest in Lincolnshire and the only one dedicated to St. Olave, a Norwegian royal prince and the son of King Herald and Queen Aasta. The church on this site previously measured just 31ft long and 17ft wide but by 1880 it was evident that repairs were so urgently necessary that it was decided a complete rebuild was the only solution. The old church was completely demolished and the stones reused to erect the present church on the same foundations.

Rest awhile and enjoy the views, then retrace your steps to the road and cross with care, then climb the steps to reach the field-edge footpath. Follow this with woodland down to your left, eventually joining a track that you follow to reach the hamlet of Farforth – a couple of houses, a farm and our final church, St. Peter’s. Turn left at the junction to reach it [G].

The parish church of Saint Peter is a Grade II listed building, rebuilt in 1861 on the site of a Saxon church, using material from a previous medieval church. The font dates from the 15th century.

To finish the walk, go back along the road for a short distance, then take the signed bridleway left. Continue, passing a track on your left (your outward route). On reaching a field corner where the woodland ends on your right, continue across the field, climbing to the top corner, the road and your transport.

