Discovering an industrial past and natural future



Reepham Station along Marriott's Way

Volunteers will be the driving force behind a journey of discovery and conservation along a former railway line, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

Once a busy passenger and goods route between Norwich and Aylsham, Marriott’s Way is today a 26-mile traffic-free route used by thousands of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Remnants of its industrial past remain and the area is now a haven for a host of wildlife.

[quote=Councillor Martin Wilby, Norfolk County Council]“Our aim is help people to better understand the industrial past of the trail and encourage them to appreciate and explore the haven for nature and recreation on their doorsteps that it is today.”[/quote]

Now its industrial and natural heritage is set to be celebrated and protected as Norfolk County Council is awarded £455,000 for the Marriott’s Way Heritage Trail project.

Volunteers, conservation and augmented reality

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: “Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, Marriott’s Way is set to be transformed for people and wildlife. Volunteer power, technology and a range of community activities will preserve and bring to life the wonderful and diverse heritage that can be found along this historic route – from stories of industry to connecting with nature.”

The project will:

- Train 200 volunteers to carry out conservation work
- Record and preserve first-hand accounts of people who used the railway line
- Create an app to reveal the trail’s industrial and natural heritage, as well as places nearby to visit
- Use augmented reality to create a visual record of the trail
- Create new circular walking routes and organise a celebratory marathon

Journey through history

- The route follows two former railway lines – the Midland & Great Northern line and the Great Eastern line
- For nearly a century this section carried passengers and materials between Norwich and Aylsham
- The lines closed in 1959 and 1952 respectively
- After the busy goods yards and noisy steam engines fell silent it was reopened as Marriott’s Way in honour of William Marriott, who was the chief engineer and manager of the Midland & Great Northern Railway for 41 years

Councillor Martin Wilby, Norfolk County Council, said: "Overall our aim is help people to better understand the industrial past of the trail and encourage them to appreciate and explore the haven for nature and recreation on their doorsteps that it is today.”



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Warden pear growing at Shuttleworth College

Discovering the East of England's natural heritage