

Looking across the lane you will see that the grass field in front of you is far from flat. The humps and bumps mark the site of a medieval water-mill with its associated ponds, channels leats and dam. The field is known as St Thomas's meadow after a small chapel that also stood there in medieval times. This went out of use in the 16th century, and its sole trace is a short stretch of stone wall footings.



Medieval water-mill

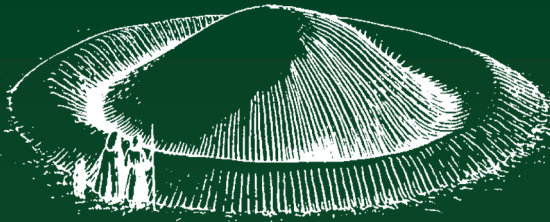
If you wish to shorten your walk, turn left into the lane, walk up and take the left hand track, keeping the drive way up to Snettisham House on your left. You will arrive back at point no 2.

9 If you are still feeling fit, cross the lane to the opening in the hedge opposite, but please watch out for traffic! From here, to your top left, you will see Lime Kiln Wood which has grown up around a chalk extraction pit and kiln that supplied lime for mortar and plaster in the 17th-19th centuries. Now turn to your right and follow the path around the edge of the field up to the wood.

10 Where the track turns to the left you will see a field opening to the right. Now look up towards the double electricity poles. On the brow of the hill aerial photography has recorded a ditched enclosure about 50 yards square. To the east several hoards of Bronze Age metalwork, dating to 800-600 BC have been found. Although only later pottery fragments of the Iron Age have been picked up near the enclosure, it is likely, in comparison with other sites that have been excavated, to have been constructed in the Bronze Age. It could have been a stock enclosure or perhaps have surrounded a small farm.



Bronze Age Axe



11 Another fine view of Snettisham church is visible to the right over the fields as you walk down the track. As you look at the church from point no 11, it is difficult to imagine a circular burial mound which once lay about 100 yards out in the field. Its encircling ditch has been photographed as a mark in the crop from the air. It was built in the later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age in the centuries around 2000 BC, and might well have flattened by ploughing as early as the Roman period. Continue along the track, cross St Thomas's Lane, into the field ahead and then turn right.

12 As you're coming back to the starting point you are crossing the site of a Middle Saxon settlement (7th-9th centuries AD). Again this was evidenced by a concentration of pottery fragments and may perhaps have been founded by the last of the Anglo-Saxons who had lived near point No. 7. Why they moved we do not know, but the end of this site in the 9th century could have been caused by the Viking invasion. The shifting patterns of a human settlement over the centuries form part of the excitement of Archaeology.

We hope you enjoyed your walk through this lovely part of North West Norfolk!

**Please follow the country code:**

- 🌿 Guard against all fire risks
- 🌿 Fasten all gates
- 🌿 Keep dogs under control and on a lead at all times
- 🌿 Keep to Trails, use gates and stiles to cross fences
- 🌿 Leave no litter
- 🌿 Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- 🌿 Take special care on country roads

[www.snettishampark.co.uk](http://www.snettishampark.co.uk)

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## Archaeology Trail

for archaeologists, walkers, bird watchers  
and lovers of the countryside!



Drawing showing how Roman villa may have looked



# Archaeology Trail

 2.5 Mile

Follow yellow numbers



The Archaeology trail will take you through a landscape occupied and modified by our ancestors over the last 5000 years. Please follow the track and look out for the Yellow Numbers which correspond with those on the map below.

You are standing close to the western edge of the 70-80 million year old chalk escarpment, and are within 2.5 miles of the Wash. This fertile land has been exploited by farmers since the Neolithic period, and traces of past human activity have been recorded during several small-scale archaeological digs carried out in the 1930s and 1950s, and more recently by systematic ground air survey.



*Flint scraper, half size; cleaning a hide*

**1** The field to the left has produced many finds ranging in date from 3000 BC to the 17th century AD. Worked flints are the most common relics of the earliest period. Neolithic farmers utilised natural flint which occurs throughout the chalky soil to make axes, arrowheads and scrapers which were used for cleaning the flesh from animal hides.

**2** The area in front of the trees contained a small farm of the pre Roman Iron Age. The buildings would all have been of timber, and most of them circular. A dense surface concentration of pottery fragments shows that the site was first occupied in about 500 BC and probably lasted until the Romans arrived in the 1st century AD. The Snettisham area was very rich and important in the Iron Age, a power base of the Iceni tribe, and the huge hoards of gold and silver torcs or neck-rings were found less than a mile to the north of here.

**3** The wooded rise behind the fence marks the site of a Roman villa occupied in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD and partly excavated in the 1930s. Villas were large houses at the centre of agricultural estates. This one had plastered walls of chalk and carrstone, and a mosaic floor. It was one of a string of similar houses along the Icknield Way in West Norfolk. A reconstruction drawing which shows how the villa may have looked in its heyday is on the front of the leaflet.

**4** As you walk across the open field look back at the beautiful 175 feet high 14th century spire of Snettisham church. Spires are very rare in Norfolk where building stone is scarce. In front, on the far side of the River Ingol, you can see the medieval parish church of Ingoldisthorpe. At the peak of medieval prosperity in the 13th century Norfolk had over 900 churches.

**5 6** Follow the trail through a kissing gate and along the bank of the river. Air survey has revealed numerous buried ditches forming very small enclosures in the field to your left. Their date is uncertain but the field was certainly arable in the Middle Ages as has been shown by a thin surface scatter of pottery fragments accidentally spread by medieval farmers with the farmyard and household manure .... just like the milk-bottle tops and teaspoons that find their way into the compost bin these days!

**7** Here excavations in the 1950s found traces of an Early Saxon settlement of the 5th and 6th centuries AD. Germanic speaking settlers, Angles and Saxons, made hazardous voyages across the North Sea from Denmark and northern Germany to set up farming communities in the once prosperous and now abandoned Roman province of Britannia. Their life-style with wooden buildings and a mixed farming economy was little different from that of the Iron Age Britons who had lived in the area before the Roman invasion. These pagan farmers may well have had a leader called Snaet, the settlement area was a ham; thus the present village name.



*Early Saxon Settlement*

**8** Leaving the wood, walk to the next information point, and look below to the right. You will see St Thomas's Lane, part of the Icknield Way, the equivalent of a prehistoric motorway that ran along the chalk ridge from the north-west corner of Norfolk right down into Wessex.

