

Broads Walks: How Hill to St Benet's Abbey

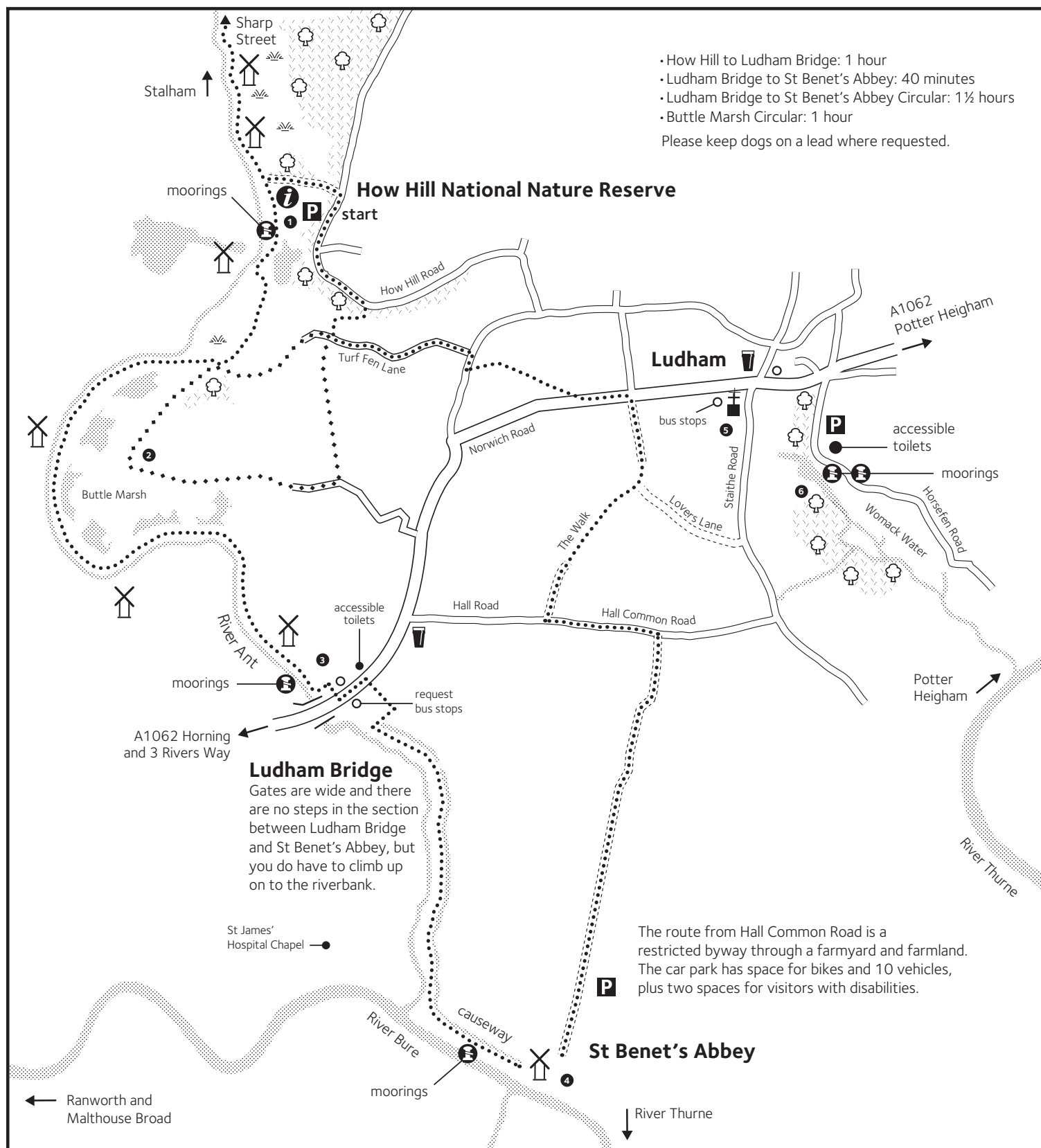
This is a circular walk, or you can do shorter stretches of it going there and back the same way. You'll find it helpful to have an Ordnance Survey map if you plan to do the whole walk. Distances and times are approximate. See reverse for more information.

Start and parking: How Hill, NR29 5PG
OS grid ref TG 372 189

7¼ miles (11.7km) 3½ hours



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How Hill to St Benet's Abbey

1) How Hill National Nature Reserve

10 Things to explore at How Hill:

- Toad Hole Cottage, once the home of an eel catcher
- Electric Eel boat trip
- Wildlife Walking Trail
- Boardman's Mill and Clayrack Mill, and see Turf Fen Mill across the River Ant
- Sailing wherry Hathor is often moored at the staithe in summer wherryyachtcharter.org
- Buttle Marsh
- Secret Gardens
- How Hill house gardens are sometimes open too
- Natural Rise – delicious snacks and drinks in the cottage garden
- For Broads National Park events go to broads-authority.eventbrite.com and for How Hill Trust events go to howhilltrust.org.uk

2) Buttle Marsh

Raising water levels on this marsh will restore peat forming conditions. The marsh will then fulfil its natural function as a carbon sink, helping to combat the effects of climate change. It will also be a more valuable fen habitat, making it as attractive as possible for wildlife. Work has to be carried out carefully, including surveying and protecting the existing wildlife in the marsh, such as substantial populations of water voles and grass snakes. The funding for the Buttle Marsh project comes from the Government's Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme and Anglian Water's Get River Positive commitment. The restoration works will be completed by spring 2026. broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects

3) Ludham Bridge

There were two earlier bridges here over the River Ant. The first was probably built in 1587 and lasted until it was damaged by the severe floods of 1912. When that first bridge was built, St Benet's Abbey was already hundreds of years old and in ruins, while How Hill was just a hill of glacial sand and gravel. Ludham Bridge is famous in How Hill history. Edward and Florence Boardman had

booked a wherry holiday but the wherry never arrived. If it had, they wouldn't have been able to pass under the old Ludham Bridge. Instead, they took a smaller wherry, John Henry, and were able to explore the River Ant and happen upon the perfect site to build their holiday home – How Hill, begun in 1903. ludhamarchive.org.uk

4) St Benet's Abbey

Religious hermits may have lived at the abbey site as early as the ninth century and it's thought that the abbey was founded in 1019. King Cnut was an important benefactor and it may have been a royal estate. The abbey was the only one in England never to be formally dissolved and the Bishop of Norwich is still the Abbot of St Benet's. An annual open-air service takes place at the abbey on the last Sunday in July and everyone is very welcome to attend. The bishop arrives for it on board a wherry. norfarchtrust.org.uk

5) Ludham

Ludham is a well-preserved village with three distinct areas: the centre around the church, Staithe Road and Horsefen Road, plus Ludham Bridge, which is about 1½ miles from the village. The historic centre remains almost completely intact and the medieval St Catherine's Church is the oldest building. Pubs, shops and boat hire are available. The village is bounded by the Rivers Ant, Bure and Thurne, with its own small broad, Womack Water.

6) Womack Water

The base for wherries Albion and Maud is on Horsefen Road, so look out for any signs of them from the land or water. More historic boats, this time from the 1930s and belonging to Hunter's Yard on Horsefen Road, can also often be seen in the area. You can explore Ludham and Potter Heigham Marshes National Nature Reserve from the end of Horsefen Road. wherryalbion.com wherrymaudtrust.org huntersyard.co.uk

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