

WALKING

CROME'S NORWICH

A self-guided trail
of Crome's city



About the Walk

John Crome lived and worked in Norwich all his life. From humble beginnings he became a drawing master and was one of the principal founders of the Norwich Society of Artists. He remains one of the country's great Romantic painters, rooting his work in the local landscape.

During the first lockdown of 2020, local photographer Nick Stone followed in Crome's footsteps, walking the deserted city streets exploring Crome's Norwich and pinpointing the painter's locations and capturing them with a fresh eye. This walk takes you to places Crome would have known and visits some of the locations he painted.

About John Crome

John Crome was born in 1768 in The Griffin pub close to Norwich Cathedral. The son of a weaver, born at a time when the city was at the centre of an important international trade in textiles. In the 1780s over thirty different trades associated with textiles were located in the noisy and colourful area known as 'Norwich Over the Water', north of the River Wensum. The river formed the artery for the textile industry, and the warehouses, dyers' premises and quays were well known to Crome and featured frequently in his works.

Norwich at the time was known for radical politics, and inns and taverns in the city were home to societies and clubs where ideas were shared, and debates were held. The Rifleman pub hosted 'The Dirty Shirt Club' where men could go in working clothes, to drink, smoke and socialise.

Crome was not a prolific artist. He earned his living primarily as a drawing master, following an apprenticeship as a coach and sign painter. He taught at what is now Norwich School in the grounds of the Cathedral and gave private lessons to some notable Norwich families. These included the influential Gurney family, founders of Gurney's bank which eventually became Barclays.

Crome died two centuries ago in 1821. His grave and memorial are in St Georges Church in Colegate. The Crome ward covering the Heartsease area of the city is named after him, as is Crome's Broad just north of Horning.

John Crome and his friend, and fellow painter, Robert Ladbrooke founded the Norwich Society of Artists in 1803. It is not known from whom the idea came, but their increased involvement with local patrons of the arts, artists and their families led to the inevitable formation of a society akin to many that were flourishing in Norwich at the time.

The group had an open-door policy, and none were turned away who had an interest in or inclination towards art. The only criteria to join were submitting an artwork, and securing a place via a ballot of existing members. By 1805, the Society had enough pieces of art to present their first exhibition, hosted at Sir Benjamin Wrench's Court which was also to become the home of the Society.

John Crome assumed the presidency of the Society several times and was incumbent upon his death in 1821. The Society continued until it was officially closed by John Sell Cotman in 1834. Following the conclusion of the Society, many former members and their pupils continued to paint and exhibit. The influence from the Norwich Society was apparent in their works and so the term 'Norwich School' was coined.

The Norwich School's style reflected British landscape art moving away from European (especially Italian) influences. The previously favoured hot, burnt brown palettes were replaced with the verdant greens actually seen in the Norfolk countryside. John Crome and the Society advocated painting by 'looking only to nature', a statement that was announced in the catalogues of the Society's exhibitions.

About the walk and accessibility

This walk is approximately 31/2 miles or 5.5 kms. There are no steep slopes or steps but there are some busy roads. One section has an alternative route for those who wish to walk a green path through Train Wood – this has some challenging terrain and may be overgrown. This small section is not suitable for people with mobility or sensory issues.

The route

Starting at The Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell, head to the top of the alley. Turn left and walk up London Street towards Bank Plain, cross the road and continue along Queen Street until you reach Tombland.

1. The site of The Griffin public house

Across the road on the corner of Tombland and Upper King Street is **the site of The Griffin public house**. John Crome was born here in 1768, on what was then called Conisford Street in the quarter known as Castle Ditches. Records show that the building dated back to at least 1603. It was demolished when Prince of Wales Road was constructed in 1860.

Cross the road and continue through St Ethelreda's Gate into Cathedral Close, continue walking until you reach the green, then turn left and walk until you see a small car park on your left next to the refectory.

2. Cathedral's Monastic Infirmary

This is the site of the **Cathedral's Monastic Infirmary**. Crome drew the building being demolished in 1804. Six piers which were part of the south face of the Infirmary Hall are still visible to the side of the car park. These appear in his work. Crome would have sat on the green to sketch out this scene.

Cross the car park to the corner and continue down a short alley, turn right, walk towards St Ethelreda's Gate, turn right before you reach it and walk along the path until you reach the Erpingham Gate.

3. The Norwich School.

Crome was the drawing master here for many years, teaching other notable artists such as James Stark and Edward Thomas Daniell.

Leave the Cathedral grounds via the Erpingham Gate into Tombland. Turn right and cross the road towards the Maids Head Hotel and continue along Wensum Street and then across Fye Bridge. On your left is the Church of St Clement Colgate. Cross the road to St Clements Alley, where there is a flint building on the left.

4. St Clements Alley

In 1796 **John Crome taught sketching here to Master Sparshall**, the son of the Quaker wine merchant. The house was previously the residence of Alexander Thurston, 17th century Mayor and MP.

Walk along the alley to the rear of the churchyard and turn right, and when you reach the road turn left into Colegate. Walk west and then turn right into Calvert Street. Continue along Calvert street until you reach the junction with Cross Lane. Across the road is a building with a blue plaque on the front.

5. The Rifleman Pub

John Crome drank here as a member of the 'Dirty Shirt Club'. They smoked pipes and discussed the matters of the day. The name originates in the textiles industry – workers would meet in pubs to collect their pay.

Continue along Calvert Street until you reach the Ring Road and turn left and walk to the head of St Georges Street.

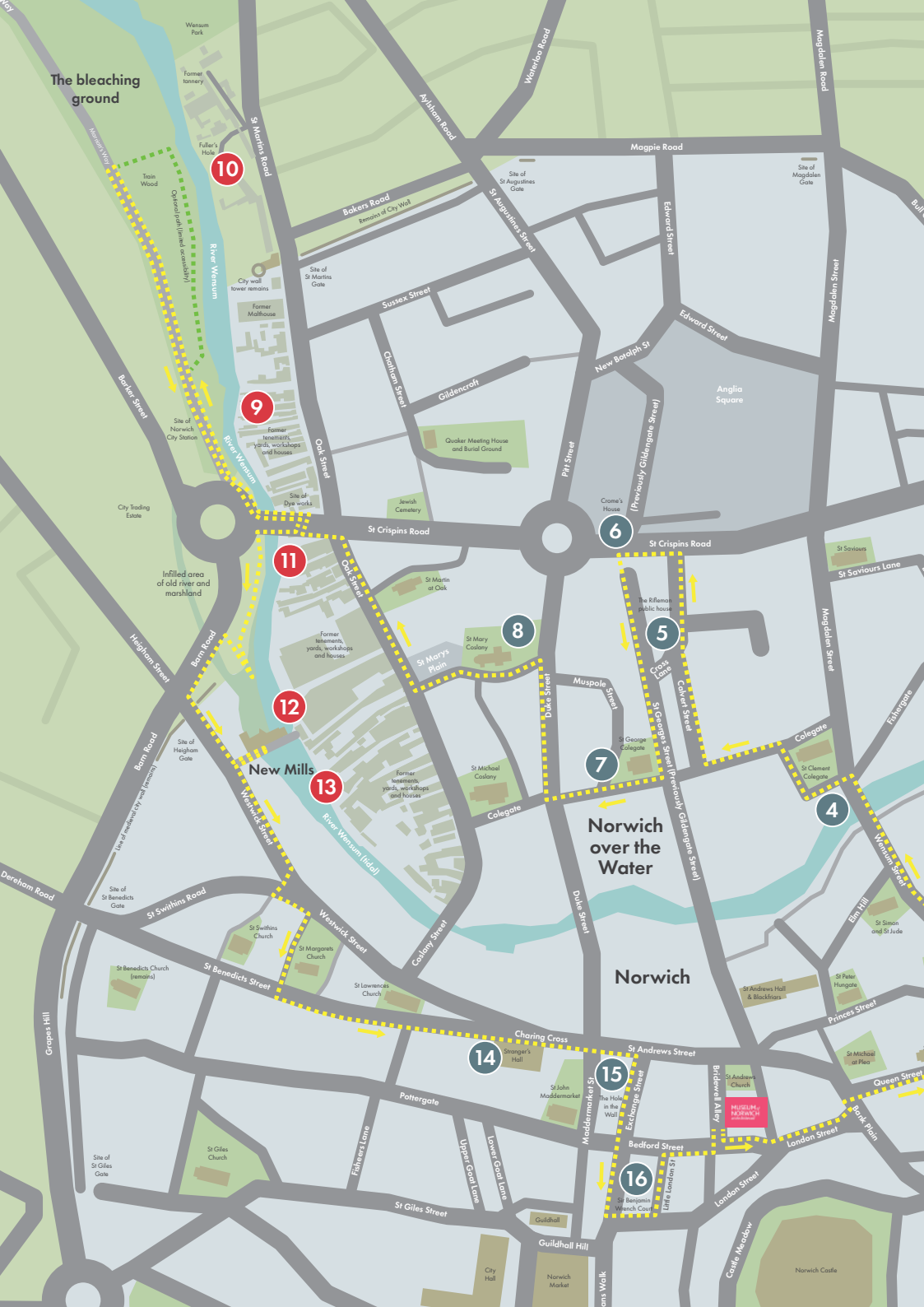
6. Site of John Crome's House

In 1800, this was the site of **John Crome's house** on what was then Gildengate Street in a terrace. Gildengate Street originally ran from Botolph Street to St Andrews. It was eventually renamed St Georges Street and was bisected by the ring-road in the 1960s. His house was demolished at the end of the 19th century and replaced by a new terrace which was pulled down in 1962. A plaque was recovered bearing the words 'John Crome - Old Crome, 1768-1821, Founder of the Norwich School of Painters, Lived in a House on this Site'. This is now in the possession of the Museum of Norwich.

Turn left into St Georges Street and walk back up towards Colegate.



The bleaching ground



10

Wensum Park
Former tannery
Fisher's Hole
River Wensum
Former Millhouse
City wall lower remains
Site of St Martin's Gate
Site of Dye works

9

Former tenements, yards, workshops and houses
Site of Norwich City Station
City Trading Estate

11

Former tenements, yards, workshops and houses
St Martin of Oak
St Mary's Priory

12

Former tenements, yards, workshops and houses
St Michael's Colnary
Colegate

13

Former tenements, yards, workshops and houses
St Lawrence's Church
St Margarets Church
St Swithins Church

8

St George's Street (Previously Gildergate Street)
The Rifana public house
Cross Street

6

St Crispins Road
Crown's House
New Borough St
Previously Gildergate Street

7

Muspole Street
St George's Colnary
Colegate

Norwich over the Water

4

St Peter Hungate
St Michael at Placc
St Simon and St Jude
Wensum Street
Bishop Hill

14

St Andrew's Church
The Hall is the Wall
Maddermarket St
St John's Maddermarket

15

St Andrew's Church
The Hall is the Wall
Maddermarket St
St John's Maddermarket

16

St Benjamin's Church
Wench Court
London Street
St Andrew's Church

Norwich

Norwich Castle



2 Demolition of Norwich Cathedral Infirmary

John Crome, c1804.

NWHCM : 1922.135.886



9 Norwich River Afternoon

John Crome, c1819.

NWHCM 1994.1.89



11 The River Wensum

John Crome, c1814.

©Yale Center for British Art,
Paul Mellon Collection



10 St Martin's Gate

John Crome, c1812.

NWHCM 1955.170.



12 Back of New Mills

John Crome, c.1814–1817.

NWHCM 1899.4.2.



13 New Mills Men Wading

John Crome, c.1812.

NWHCM : 1970.531.



Key to the Map



Location of point of interest



Location of painting or drawing



Main route



Side route with poor accessibility

CROME'S NORWICH 1821 2021

MUSEUM of
NORWICH
at the Bridewell

The exhibitions

A Passion for Landscape: Rediscovering John Crome

17 May - 5 September 2021

Norwich Castle

Celebrating one of Britain's great Romantic artists. The first major exhibition dedicated to John Crome since 1968, it provides a long-overdue opportunity to rediscover this important artist, reinstating Crome's national reputation by re-evaluating his role in the history of British landscape painting.

The exhibition features approximately 90 paintings, watercolours, drawings and etchings. Alongside Norwich Castle's pre-eminent collection of works by John Crome, the exhibition will present loans from private and public collections, including Tate, the V&A and Fitzwilliam Museum.

Somewhere Unexpected: Norwich Castle Open Art Show

17 May – 12 September 2021

Timothy Gurney Gallery, Norwich Castle

Contemporary artists based in East Anglia to respond to our new relationship with landscape forged over the past twelve months. From an open call, work by 38 artists was selected.

Crome's Norwich – 1821 & 2021

22 May – 18 September 2021

Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell



Crome's Norwich – 1821 & 2021 at Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell takes a closer look at Crome's Norwich, then and now. Local photographer Nick Stone has walked in the footsteps of John Crome, along riverbanks and city paths to revisit the locations which inspired him. The result is a collection of stunning images, which blend Crome's works with contemporary photography, bringing the story of Crome's Norwich up to date.

**For further information on opening times
and how to book tickets please visit
www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk**



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