

# In the Footsteps of Tennyson



Two circular walks of 2 and 5¼ miles through the countryside surrounding Bag Enderby and Somersby; the inspiration for the early works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.



## INTRODUCTION

Starting from the quiet hamlet of Bag Enderby, the walks explore different aspects of the Wolds landscape, with both passing through Somersby, Tennyson's birthplace and home for the first twenty-eight years of his life.

No more evidence is needed that the Wolds landscape inspired the young Poet Laureate than the opening verse of *The Lady of Shallott* (1832).



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*On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
To many-tower'd Camelot;*

The most diverse collection of Tennyson's books, papers and belongings is at the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire Archives, Lincoln - [tennyson@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:tennyson@lincolnshire.gov.uk)  
Somersby, the Birthplace of Tennyson Group was set up to raise awareness of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's early life and to help raise funds for St Margaret's. With thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding and other sponsors, the church has been restored and its existence for future generations secured - [www.tennysonsbirthplace.co.uk](http://www.tennysonsbirthplace.co.uk)

## POINTS OF INTEREST

### BAG ENDERBY:

St Margaret's Church has nailed to its door a Danish shield boss found long ago in a nearby field. The church contains medieval glass, a rood screen and an ancient font, with depictions of Danish mythology carved upon it. George Clayton Tennyson, Alfred's father was rector of Bag Enderby and Somersby. Near the 18th century thatched Ivy House Farm stands the former dairy barns and the quarry, which supplied the stone for the church.

The hollow tree stump at the top of the village is known as 'The Poets Tree'; the Tennyson children allegedly played on its long, low branch.

### SOMERSBY:

Somersby House, the cream-coloured building in the centre of the hamlet was home to the Tennyson family from 1808 to 1837. Alfred was born here on August 6th, 1809, and spent his childhood exploring the countryside along with his 10 siblings. It is now a private home and only opens to the public on special occasions. The castellated Grange next door was home to the landowners of the time. During restoration work carried out in 2015, a graffito was uncovered in the belfry of St. Margaret's. Carved into stone, it simply says 'AT 1837', the year the Tennysons left.

A postcard image circa 1900 of The Poets Tree before removal of branches





# THE ROUTE

## Route One

**A** Leave the churchyard past the notice board and the former rectory, Ferndale Manor, on your left. Follow the path alongside the thatched Ivy House Farm on your left, with the old dairy and quarry on your right.

**B** Follow the footpath through the fields to Somersby, passing over 4 sets of stiles. As you cross these fields and pastures enjoy views of the rear of both Somersby Grange and Somersby House.

**C** Continue on the footpath through the farmyard and onto the lane where you turn left. St. Margaret's on your right is a 15th century church, with plenty of information on Alfred inside. Almost opposite the church is the castellated Somersby Grange and to its right the cream-coloured Somersby House, Tennyson's birthplace.

**D** Carry on down Bridge Road to the bridge over the brook. Turn around and view old redbrick Gamekeepers Cottage built next to the ancient Holywell Wood before you head on back up the hill, the way you came. Cross the stile on your left opposite Candleshoe Cottage, viewing Holywell Wood as you walk along to the farm cottages on Tetford Road. Holywell Wood is not accessible now but the Tennyson children played here.

**E** Emerge onto Tetford Road and turn right, passing Somersby House Farm and left at the grassed triangle in Somersby, continuing along the leafy lane to Bag Enderby.

**F** At Bag Enderby turn right by The Poets Tree, passing various farm cottages before returning to the church.



**Horsetails** - A group of primitive native plants are all that remain of a much larger family that grew 300 million years ago during the Carboniferous period. Horsetails thrive in damp areas and reproduce by spores in the spring, and grow throughout the summer until the first frosts.

Researched and produced by the community of Somersby and Bag Enderby. Photography by Debbie Jenner

The villagers and volunteers of Somersby and Bag Enderby are grateful to the Lincolnshire Wolds Sustainable Development Fund in helping to fund this leaflet.

## Route Two

**1** Leave the churchyard through the yew tree tunnel and turn left onto Church Lane to Bridge Road, passing the old blacksmiths and White Cottage as you go.

**2** Cross the road and follow Brinkhill Lane for approx. 1 mile then take the bridleway on the left and continue along the field edge with the hedge on your right.

**3** Follow the path through the gap, with Snake Holt on your left, then continue uphill. Take the bridleway to the left, following the track to the left at Fox Covert, an example of ancient woodland.

**4** Follow the sign to the right and walk through the yard of Wardenhill Farm, along the track and descend to join Tetford Road at Somersby House Farm.

**5** Turn left and walk carefully along the lane, then turn right onto Bridge Road (alternatively, to return to Bag Enderby, turn left and continue to the village, turning right at the Poets Tree, back to the church). On your right is St. Margaret's church and on the left the castellated Somersby Grange and the cream-coloured Somersby House.

**6** Leave the village along Bridge Road, dropping downhill to cross the brook. Take the next road left, continue along and take the next left to Stainsby.

The bridge over the brook, the River Lymn, was built in 1827, the year Alfred started at Cambridge. The river runs through the meadow beyond Somersby House garden before flowing through Bag Enderby to Wainfleet and out to sea at Gibraltar Point. It is widely believed that the poem, *The Brook* was inspired by the River Lymn, the river that ran through Tennyson's childhood ....

*I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever.*



**7** Pass through Stainsby House farmyard, following the waymarkers downhill, with woodland on your right, over farmland and cross the bridge over the brook once again.

**8** Pass through Paradise Holt and continue uphill, passing the thatched Ivy House Farm on your left, and following the road back to the church.



## ROUTE INFORMATION

<b>Distance:</b>	2 miles, 3 km; 5 ¼ miles, 8 ½ km
<b>Time:</b>	Approx. 1 hour at a leisurely pace for route 1 Approx. 3 hours at a leisurely pace for route 2
<b>Maps:</b>	OS Explorer Map 273
<b>Parking:</b>	Parking on the grass in front of Bag Enderby church.
<b>Terrain:</b>	A mixture of footpaths, bridleways and quiet lanes – may be muddy in places.
<b>Stiles:</b>	Stiles on route 1, none on route 2
<b>Refreshments &amp; Toilets:</b>	White Hart Inn, Tetford (2.5 miles) with its Tennyson settle, or The George & Dragon and two tearooms at Hagworthingham (3 miles).
<b>Public Transport:</b>	For bus services to Tetford or Hagworthingham (3 miles) contact: Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or <a href="http://www.traveline.info">www.traveline.info</a>

Tourist information - Tel: 01507 601111  
Email: [tourism@e-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@e-lindsey.gov.uk)  
Websites: [www.visitlincolnshire.com](http://www.visitlincolnshire.com)  
[www.lovelincolnshirewolds.com](http://www.lovelincolnshirewolds.com)



## THE LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS

The Lincolnshire Wolds is a nationally important and cherished landscape. Most of it was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1973. Covering an area of 558 square kilometres or 216 square miles, the AONB contains the highest ground in eastern England between Yorkshire and Kent, rising to over 150m along its western edge. Rolling chalk hills and areas of sandstone and clay underlie this attractive landscape.

The Lincolnshire Wolds has been inhabited since prehistoric times and the appearance of the countryside today has been greatly influenced by past and present agricultural practices.

A Countryside Service helps to protect and enhance the landscape through partnership projects with local landowners, farmers, parish councils, businesses and residents of the Wolds.



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Working in Partnership

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