

MAUTBY

The Pastons were one of Norfolk's most prominent families from about 1380 until about 1750. They rose from medieval peasants to become successful and prominent lawyers in Tudor England, eventually gaining lands and titles as members of the aristocracy. Today they are perhaps best known as the authors of the Paston Letters – the world's earliest family letter collection.

Margaret Paston was born into the ancient families of Mautby and Berney, who owned much of the good land nearby. Margaret, who was heiress to many of these estates, married John Paston in 1441. Together, John and Margaret defended their inheritance – John, a lawyer, often in London, with Margaret managing things in Norfolk. This state of affairs led Margaret to become the author of a great many of the famous Paston Letters.

John Paston worked for Sir John Fastolf of nearby Caister Castle and in 1459 controversially inherited Fastolf's castle and estates. Caister Castle had been built to the best of continental designs and was one of the first to be of brick, with the clay from the banks of the River Bure being fired in kilns nearby.

In 1469 the Duke of Norfolk laid siege with a large force and captured the Castle. The Pastons finally secured rightful ownership of the Castle and many of the estates on the Isle of Flegg – one of the most fertile areas of land in the country and close to the trading opportunities at Great Yarmouth. The other important local family were the Cleres of Ormesby and Stokesby. The Pastons and the Cleres were often bound by marriage and by mutual interests.

During Kett's rebellion in 1549, two cannons from Caister Castle were transported by river to help with the defence of Norwich. The Castle was sold in the mid 17th Century as the Paston family struggled to meet their debts.

The lands surrounding Mautby and Caister brought the Pastons much of their wealth and influence. Caister Castle provided the family with the symbol of social standing and power that they had sought with such determination. The Paston Letters provide a detailed and vivid insight into the family's fortunes at this time.

FOOTPRINTS

The Paston Footprints Project aims to provide a permanent legacy at the many sites across Norfolk that were important to the Paston story. The Project aims to encourage local people to become involved and celebrate the rich history of their own area, and allow them to further explore the stories associated with the Paston family and the times they lived through.



Philosophy – A series of walks providing a chance to learn something about the Paston family story, to take some exercise and explore the local landscape

Walk Focus – The birth place of Margaret Paston in Mautby and Caister Castle

Features – Fertile arable land, wide views.

Natural History – Wayside and churchyard wild flowers. Rooks, Hares, Willows, Marsh.

Route – Public Footpaths and Minor Roads

Terrain – Mostly even, some boggy.

Parking – Limited parking at Mautby Church.

Public Transport – Sanders No 6 Bus Great Yarmouth to North Walsham via the Kings Head Filby

Public Toilets – Caister Main Street and Mautby Church

Refreshments – Filby Bridge, Kings Head Filby, The Waterside Rollesby

Risks – Public highways - watch for traffic

Distance/Time – 5.2 Miles Around 10k steps and 2 hours

Disclaimer – Please be aware that routes are shared with other users (vehicles, pedestrians, horse riders, etc.). Users of these routes do so at their own risk. We do not accept responsibility for any loss, damage or injury, however caused, arising directly or indirectly from this leaflet.

Cover photo: Mautby church and fields.

Photographs: Matthew Champion.

THE MAP CAN ALSO BE ACCESSED FROM THE WEBSITE AS A PDF DOWNLOAD AND AS DIGITAL CONTENT

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PASTON
PATHWAYS

ROUTE
2

MAUTBY WALK

MARGARET & JOHN PASTON,
FASTOLF AND CAISTER CASTLE



Paston Pathways explores the historic landscapes of the Paston Family

A series of walks and rides aiming to provide a chance to suspend the daily routine, take some exercise, learn something about the Paston family story, and explore the local landscape.





Park at the **Church of St Peter and St Paul 1** which is of great interest and has information boards and a memorial plaque to Margaret Paston in the churchyard. Follow the road to the first bend and keep straight along the footpath. Follow the Circular Path to the finger post then to the next road and go straight on for 50 metres. At the next bend take the footpath straight on and follow this diagonally across the fields to Lower Wood Farm. Caister Castle can be seen in the distance between the trees to your left. Bear left along the road for a 100 metres and then take the marked footpath between the buildings. Follow across the meadow, crossing the Pickerill Holme dyke,

Pickerill Holme 2 was the waterway which supplied Caister Castle, first with the bricks needed for construction and later as the main route to the River Bure for Yarmouth, Norwich and Coltishall. The marshes would have been heavily grazed by the Paston and Clere sheep flocks.

Follow the path through some trees to emerge between a house and a paddock. Turn right and follow the road down to the marshes. At the end of the road take the bridleway to the left and follow along the base of the sandy bluff which marked the old boundary of the estuary. Great Yarmouth can be seen in the distance. In the 15th Century the marshes of Caister and

Mautby had the largest number of saltpans in Norfolk.

At the next road, turn left up **Clink Hill 3**. This was the old route linking Yarmouth and Norwich and one of the reasons why Caister Castle was built here.

At the crossroads at the top of the hill, turn left. **Caister Castle can be viewed from here 4**. The great tower was needed to provide a view towards Yarmouth and the possibility of attack by French ships. Sir John Fastolf was a leading knight in Henry V's wars with France. Fastolf was also an astute business man and had amassed over 80 estates in Norfolk and Suffolk. He also had a great house opposite the Tower of London with a staithe for his small fleet of ships.

The Pastons gained possession in 1459 but the Duke of Norfolk later seized the Castle, twice by legal means and once by force until the Pastons finally won their case from Edward IV for legal ownership. During the three week siege in 1469, John Paston the Younger defended the Castle with a small group of men but with the loss of John Daubeney to canon fire.

Continue for a further 600 metres and retrace your steps down the footpath on the right between the house and a paddock. Follow the path across the muddy area by the Pickerill Holme

and up between the buildings to the road. Turn left here and follow the road round to the left and then follow the track past a pond. The track becomes a footpath which will bring you up by a small warehouse and along a gravel drive to a road junction opposite Paston Farm. Bear right and then left at the crossroads and follow the road past Mautby Hall.

The original **Mautby Hall 5** is described in Margaret Paston's will. It had a chapel, a Great Chamber and a Chapel Chamber. The parlour included green wall hangings and a curtained bedstead. In a letter from John Paston the Younger to his older brother John, he explains that their mother would like John to remove some of his belongings from here into a place of his own.

Follow the road back up to Mautby Church passing Osier Farm on the left (Osier indicates Willows). This last stretch is slightly uphill and ideal for fitness walking.