

In the saddle at Wellington Lodge



# MANE ATTRACTION

## John Bateman finds fine CLs around Thetford and Swaffham – some with a distinctly equine appeal

**NORFOLK'S FAMED** Broads and assorted coastal resorts have a good deal going for them as dependable holiday targets but the county's understated rural hinterland also offers much to tempt those of us touring with CLs in mind.

The area around Thetford and Swaffham offers far more than just the arboreal acres of Thetford Forest Park, welcoming and user-friendly though it is. For starters, these little market towns lie at the heart of a region boasting a rich history including tales of bloody conflicts and buried treasure.

Apparently Boudica used to romp about here in the first century, ruling her Iceni tribe and, if imaginative artists can be believed, towing her own wagon around to inspire her raggle-taggle army and keep a beady eye on the Romans.

She would have found few better spots to unhitch than Little Lodge Farm, Santon Downham (Thetford), set in riverside grasslands in the heart of the forest.

Certainly her horses would have loved it as this peaceful spot is a favourite with the equine community. Guests make use of log cabins and mobile homes while their piebald and chestnut pony pals enjoy the surrounding fields.

I am told by happy owners that this is as good as it gets if your name is Dobbin or Trigger. One reason for the smiles is that the sandy soil of the Brecks area means trails criss-crossing forest and field offer good going all year round.

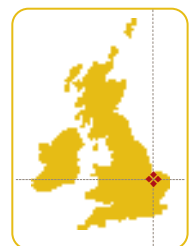
Behind this caravan and horsey heaven are Roy and Sally Hibbs, who 25 years ago established the 160-acre enterprise now run by son Jeff and his wife Hannah.

The CL itself is a spacious and slightly elevated meadow, part-sloping and backed by woodland. It offers views across grazing fields towards the Little Ouse river and water meadows ideal for anglers.

Yes, all right... I know some of you want electrics, so grab the fishing rod and come to Fields End Water, Doddington, which means a short cross-border raid into

Cambridgeshire. This is a caravan success story masterminded by Vicky and Duncan Boughton and now managed by son Charlie and his wife Michelle.

Fields End is a 600-acre family farm situated deep in gorgeous Fen country, and the CL's success led to the opening next door of a superb 33-pitch (all fully serviced) commercial site. Both concerns are close to the visual and sporting benefits of two fishing lakes. The >>



Ordnance Survey Landranger Maps 143, 144

### INFORMATION

#### SITES

Details of the CLs featured can be found on p303 and pp433-437 of the *Sites Directory & Handbook 2011/2012*



Fields End Water CL

#### TOURISM

- **Thetford Tourist Information Office** – call 01842 751975 or see [exploretHetford.co.uk](http://exploretHetford.co.uk)
- **Swaffham TIC** – call 01760 722255 or see [aroundswaffham.co.uk](http://aroundswaffham.co.uk)





### DID YOU KNOW?

There is a statue of Boudica near Westminster Pier in London

Go Ape and Head for the treetops in Thetford Forest

CL is situated on a grassed plateau, separate from the caravan park which is screened by high, dense hedging and woodland. It looks out towards one of the lakes, and hook-ups permit pitching around three boundaries.

A modern, wooden 'lodge' houses CL shower and toilet facilities. Meanwhile, there is a separate loo for anglers and facilities for disabled visitors. A barbecue, picnic area and access to pleasant walks further add to the appeal. The site has now become adults only because, says Charlie, most CL users rate "peace and quiet" as the highest priority. "Apart from the fishing, there is little here for children to do," he adds.

Fields End Water CL is a quality act and, although it has a March address, in the *Sites Directory & Handbook* it is listed under Chatteris, a market town with outdoor sports centre, play park and useful shops.

Wellington Lodge, Northwold (Mundford), 11 miles from Thetford, is another CL at which horses are never far away – but these belong to owners Bernard and Vanessa Leaver, who have a small family farm.

Forty of the Lodge's 65 acres are woodland, and the large, informal site is ideal for country lovers who enjoy walking and cycling, as well as keeping eyes and ears open for a variety of wildlife, including deer, woodpeckers and nightingales.

Pitches are in grassy glades enclosed by trees and shrubs, and hook-up positions allow a fair degree of positional choice, a situation which pleased Derbyshire members Sean and Amanda Lynch and their children.

"We like the relaxed, natural style of things here," says Sean, "and it's nice to enjoy the woodlands or walk and cycle in the forest without having to move the motor caravan."

Wildlife they may not be, but you may get a visit from a chicken or two, or possibly the owners' amiable dogs.

The pleasant Georgian town of Swaffham, with its fine parish church and spacious market square and rotunda, is well worth a visit, and seven miles out, at Oxborough, is Ferry Farm where Steve and Margaret Wilson, now aided by son Jim, have run their CL since 1976.

Here, in addition to a grassy, level site, woodland copses, reed-wrapped pond and a nature trail, you can also enjoy a spot of fishing or an aromatherapy or reflexology session with Margaret. A word of warning – sharp-eyed visitors pitched on the lower level may just catch a fleeting glimpse of the shy and rarely-sighted caravanning naturist flitting through the trees around the hide-away upper plateau.

So there you have it – a choice of yet more outstanding CLs in Norfolk that prove you need neither beach nor Broad for a great getaway. ■

## ATTRACTIONS

- **Thetford Forest Park** – great for cycling, walking, horse-riding etc. Call 01842 816010 or see [forestry.gov.uk/thetfordforestpark](http://forestry.gov.uk/thetfordforestpark). High Lodge Forest Centre (call 01842 815434) has a parking charge
- **Go Ape** – for days of tree-top adventure in Thetford Forest. Call 0845 643 9146 or see [goape.co.uk](http://goape.co.uk)
- **Imperial War Museum, Duxford** – call 01223 835000 or see [duxford.iwm.org.uk](http://duxford.iwm.org.uk)
- **Church of St Peter and St Paul, Swaffham** – beautiful 15th-century building. Open from 9am–3pm weekdays throughout the winter
- **Iceni Village, Cockley Clew** – take a trip through 2,000 years of history. Call 01760 724588 or see [icenvillage.com](http://icenvillage.com)
- **Ancient House Museum of Thetford Life** – call 01842 752599 or see [museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://museums.norfolk.gov.uk)
- **Gooderstone Water Gardens** – call 01603 712913 or see [gooderstonewatergardens.co.uk](http://gooderstonewatergardens.co.uk)

Swaffham marketplace

