

Carry on down the winding Street and just after **Moor Farm** with its fountains and ponds, turn right up a farm track to admire the amazing *moated site* of **Foxley Manor**. Please keep to the edge of the field as this is private land farmed by *Albanwise Ltd*, an Italian-owned company based at Barton Bendish. THE MOATS mark the site of a Manor House and farmstead dating back to between 1100 and 1500. Foxley Manor is recorded as being granted by Henry II (1154 - 89) to Sir William de Munchensey.

Bawdeswell and Sparham were part of the Manor. Imagine the Medieval House and take in the fine panoramic view.

Returning to The Street, turn right and walk along the Themelthorpe Road towards **FOXLEY WOOD**. At the start of the wood turn right along a farm track before the Warden's cottage. There is a map on a board there indicating a Permissive Pathway around and across the wood. Follow the edge of the wood and cross into it and out of it over provided footbridges. In April and May the bluebells can be quite spectacular over on the far side. One of the best views is from the Permissive Pathway, on the outside looking in. Otherwise follow the circular dotted route in the map alongside.

This is the largest remaining block of ancient woodland in Norfolk. The Domesday Book of 1086 noted that it was a large enough area for 300 swine. That is said to be a way of measuring it. It is quite possible it was a hunting ground of kings.

It supports a tremendous variety of flowers including St John's wort, orchids, stitchworts and bugle. The bluebells are outstanding.

Sparrowhawks and tawny owls breed in good numbers and all three species of woodpecker are present. Young coppice supports garden warbler, black cap and whitethroat. Good numbers of bank vole and wood mouse keep the resident weasels, stoats and foxes well supplied. Roe, red and muntjac deer visit the wood. Evidence of wild boar has been found.

(Possibly escaped from Great Wicthingham Wildlife Park.)

