

TUTTINGTON THROUGH THE AGES

Below is a series of sketches giving an idea of how Tuttington might have looked in times past. The present road system is in red (the Google view from which these roads were taken is given at the very end). There is a map of the centre of North Walsham dated 1814; it is almost the same as a present-day map. My belief is that Tuttington has been even more resistant to change and we can still find the early stuff.



Pre-Roman. Three enclosed settlements, each with a pond and external burial site (in brown). The land was wooded. Crop mark evidence exists for two sites, their burial areas remain and there are depressions where once there were ponds. The central settlement is my guesswork, based on a conjecture about the origin of the present church (the earliest records show something here) and the need for a settlement uniquely connected with Tuttington (although it could have been north of the burial ground, not as I have shown). Whichever, the Romans destroyed it. Probable connecting paths are shown in black.



Roman. The Romans changed everything. They felled the trees and cleared the land (the transition is shown at the top). Behind, they excavated for clay. Clay and wood fuelled the kilns at Brampton (over 140 kilns have been found there; they were used for making pots). Brampton was connected to the sea via the Bure and so exporting was possible. The Romans dug King's Beck for drainage and constructed a wide road to Brampton (in black). They used oxen and panniers to carry stuff, not carts (their carts could not go round bends). The excavated areas became agricultural land (shown at the bottom). Settlements were upset and people began to live around the present Aylsham Road, an area with almost no clay (although, to this day, some exists in small deposits). When the clay ran out, so too did the Romans (although they were probably around here for something like a couple of hundred years).



Saxon. The Saxons followed the Romans. They built a church (dedicated to St. Botolph) on, essentially, the same site as the present church. There was a water mill (on the site of Lower Farm) and a flood plain to feed it. To this day you can see the channels by which the discharged water went to King's Beck (look on either side of Beck Lane). Beck Lane still curves around the loading area of the mill. There is evidence for the paths shown in black, one perhaps ending at what is now Tuttington Hall. In later years the village had two commons. Whether they existed in Saxon times is unknown but since they tended to shrink with time I've assumed they did and shown them at the top. There is evidence for housing to the south of Beck Lane (which then had a different route, it ended beside the church).



Post Norman. The watermill was replaced by a windmill (top left) on relatively high ground. It was very early and so probably had a horizontal sail (the return half covered). This mill was later replaced by a series of (now) conventional windmills, with vertical sails and gearing inside. One can still see the mounds on which they were built - and the Aylsham road still goes around the loading area of one of them. The mill flood plain was drained but the water filling it by drainage from the rest of the village had to be held back. A dam was built, under what is now the road in front of the church, to give a big pond. An island left by the Romans in the middle of the pond (because it had no clay) became the site of the village brewery/pub and was accessed by a series of causeways. What better name for it than 'The Ship'? One can still see its layout on Google Earth. St. Botolph moved to Banningham and was eventually replaced by the present church. There was a path from the present Tuttington Hall to the windmill, presumably passing around the end of the pond.



The present Tuttington and the roads used in the earlier drawings.

For those interested in the evidence on which these drawings are based, I have written a couple of accounts. The longer (currently about 40 pages) is 'A (Roman?) Village called Tuttington' and a shorter (6 pages) is 'The Story of Beck Lane'. I can provide hard copies, although sending them as an attachment to an email is easier (sfak@talktalk.net). Much is speculation and guesswork, extrapolations of limited data, so criticism, help and suggestions would be welcome.

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