

Watch Bench Lane

Today there is little evidence of a lane that in earlier times linked Creting Lane to modern day Rendalls Lane. It passed to the west of Stowupland Hall through land that would become park land for the Freeman family and where Stowupland Flower Show and Fete was held in the first half of the 20th century.

Neil Langridge has found references to its existence in 16th century documents, and it is shown on an early map. It forms a crossroad with Creting Lane.



An 1801 document held at The Hold, Suffolk refers to its 'extinguishment'. Its location can still be seen in this late 20th century aerial image showing Stowupland Hall in the lower right-hand corner. The

path of the lane can be clearly seen crossing the ploughed field.



It can also be seen in this modern Lidar image; the blue arrows indicate the location of the lane.



Whilst there is no mention of a Watch Bench Lane in the 1840s Tithe Apportionments there is a Watch Bench Pightle or Knowl where the lane emerged on to the track that became Rendall Lane. The lane bordered Minters meadow and possibly led to Barkers Meadow.

This area is one of the highest points in Stowupland, so during earlier periods was this a place where a watch was kept for signals or '*unwanted visitors*' or was this a corruption of Wash Bench Lane where animals were brought for slaughter and the excess blood and offal could be washed away. We may never know.

(Neil Langridge and Sandra Walker 2022)