

COUNTRYSIDE WALKS in the STOUR VALLEY



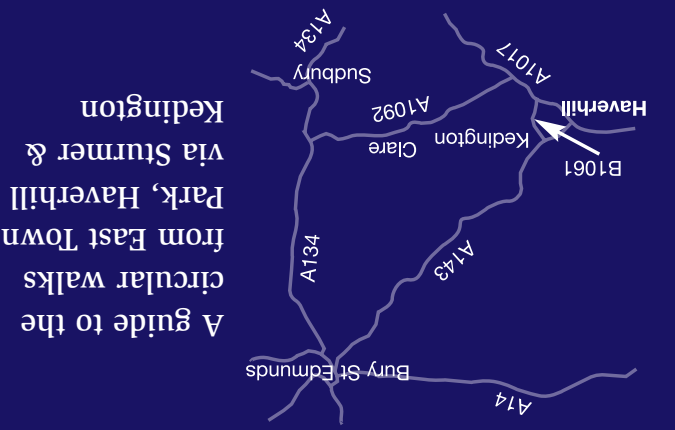
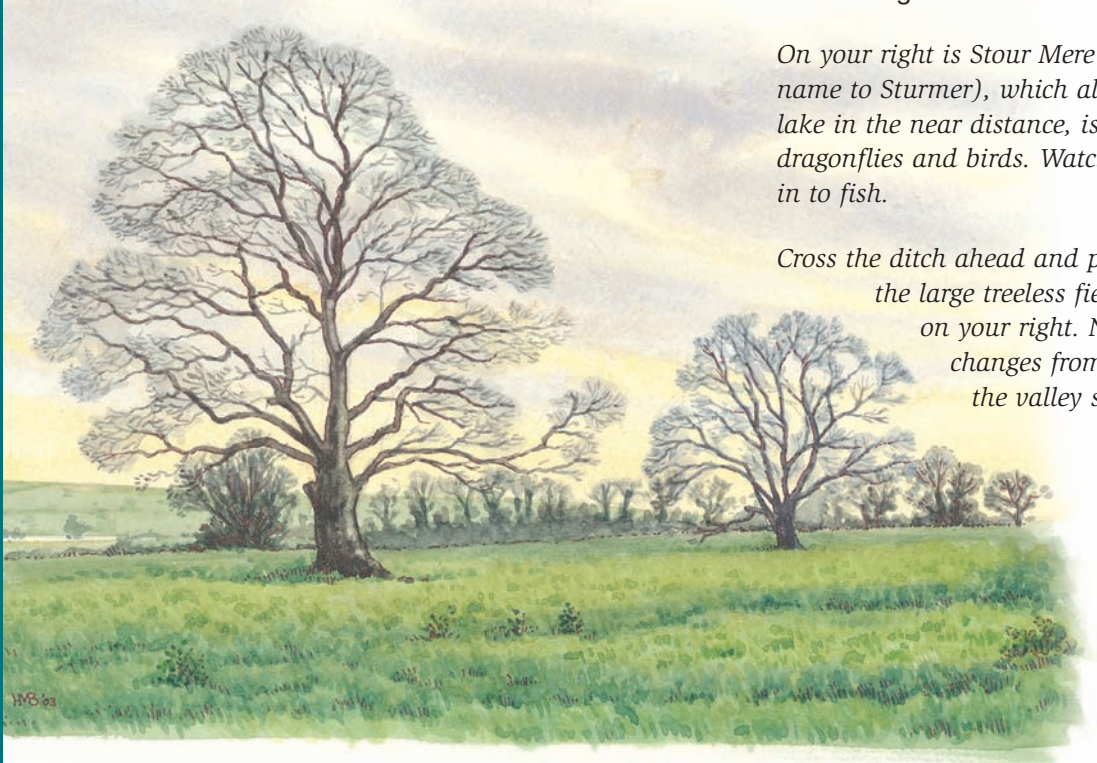
Haverhill

The walk can be done in either direction but is described anti-clockwise.

Head across East Town Park **1**, over the brook and up the steps onto the old railway embankment. Turn left and follow the line of the old Haverhill to Sudbury railway.

The trees along this embankment have mostly grown up since the railway's closure in 1967. This mix of woody scrub and rough grassland provides a haven for Slow Worms and Common Lizards.

Look out for derelict Osier-Willow beds on your right, which once supplied the supple shoots for Haverhill basket makers. The Borough Council has begun to re-cut the old stumps to rejuvenate them.



A guide to the circular walks from East Town Park, Haverhill via Sturmer & Kedington



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The leaflet and walk were produced by combined efforts of the following:
The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Countryside Project. HAVAC Walkers, Haverhill Town Council, Kedington Parish Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Sturmer Parish Council.
Additional information supplied by David Steel and the late Dennis Hutchings.

This leaflet can be used in conjunction with OS Explorer series map 210: "Newmarket and Haverhill" (1:25,000 scale)

Map

Sturdy waterproof footwear is recommended.

Footwear

The Visitor Centre in East Town park, the Barnadiston Arms and White Horse Pub in Kedington or the Red Lion pub in Sturmer.

Refreshments

Continue under the bridge **2**, behind a line of houses and the Red Lion Pub (which can be reached by turning right at the four-way footpath sign) and along the railway to the road at Sturmer.

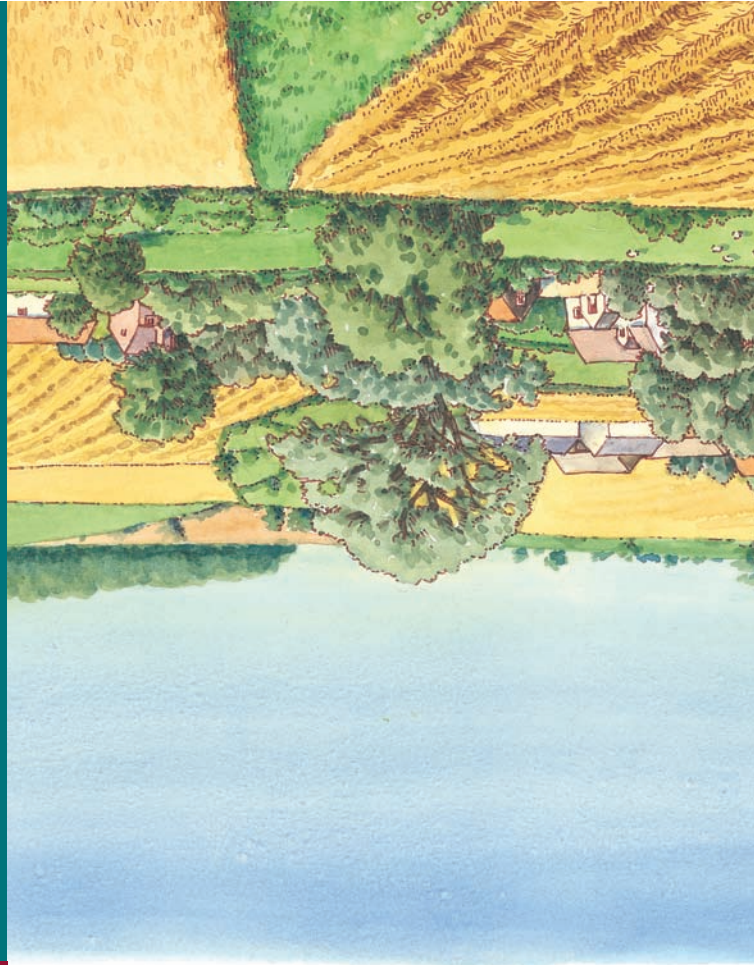
Sturmer is famous for the Sturmer Pippin apple, recorded in 1831 by local nurseryman Ezekiel Dillistone, whose descendants took it to New Zealand and Australia from where large numbers are now exported.

Turn left at the road, then right up the concrete driveway past Challices Barn. **3** Keep to the right on the rough track to reach an open field. After 100m descend onto a sunken lane which leads you towards the floodplain of the River Stour **4**.

*The walk now follows part of the Stour Valley Path, a regional route from Newmarket to the Suffolk Coast. On reaching the five-way footpath sign, head across the field in a 10 o'clock direction to a gap in a thin hedge **5**.*

On your right is Stour Mere wetland (which gave its name to Sturmer), which along with the old fishing lake in the near distance, is an important site for dragonflies and birds. Watch out for Heron coming in to fish.

Cross the ditch ahead and proceed along the side of the large treeless field passing a small wood on your right. Note how the landscape changes from the river flood-plain to the valley sides.



please contact:

Buses run to and from Cambridge and Sudbury to Haverhill and Kedington. For more information

Public Transport

In lay-bys opposite the church and the old garage. (Free), at the sports centre or bus station (pay and display) . In Kedington there is very limited parking

Parking



Cross another ditch on a bridge and continue beside an old hedge suffering from Dutch Elm Disease. At the footpath finger post **6** you can go straight on to Kedington, or alternatively turn left up the hill using the Calford Green Link Route back to Haverhill. *The fields on your right have been entered into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, helping to fund the restoration of hedges and riverside trees.*

Follow the track into Kedington, emerging beside the Barnadiston Arms **7**. This was named after a once prominent family who were Lords of the Manor.

The route through Kedington heads straight on and over the bridge. Watervole and Kingfisher frequent this stretch of the River Stour.

Go past the village shop and fork left up Church Walk (a pedestrian avenue of lime and horse chestnut trees) **8**, emerging opposite the church **9**. The route turns left here but it is worth detouring to visit this fascinating church, one of the oldest in Suffolk. It is manned by volunteers from 2 til 4pm, and a notice in the porch provides information on how to obtain a key outside these times.



The poet John Betjamen once described Kedington Church as 'a village Westminster Abbey.'

Look out for a Saxon cross, found in the grounds and now placed above the altar, suggesting the site was a place of worship long before the current 13th

century church. Roman relics and even Neolithic evidence have been found within the grounds. The close links with the Barnadiston family are evident throughout, with elaborate alabaster memorials and the vault underneath the church that holds the coffins of no less than 56 family members!

A number of uncommon plants flower in the churchyard, including Meadow Saxifrage and Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem and the church tower provides a bat roosting site.

Look out for Woodpeckers, Spotted Fly-Catchers and also Tawny Owls in the evening.

The Stour Valley Path turns right alongside the church, but you need to stay on the road out of Kedington, crossing the Stour at the old water mill. Continue to the T-junction and follow the track opposite between the houses, going straight up the hill between large arable fields **10**.



As you gain height, good views open up in all directions. The many hill-top woods are a feature of the Upper Stour Valley. Continue straight on towards a large Oak. The hedge to your left **11** contains 11 woody shrubs including Thorns, Field Maple, Wayfaring tree, Dogwood and Wild Rose. Such variety suggests it is very old and makes it of high wildlife value.

Proceed to Great Wilsey Farm, turn left down a track past several old barns and continue downhill with another diverse hedge on your right. Cross the brook and follow the track uphill until it forks **12**. Head right for Haverhill, or turn left to return to Kedington using the Calford Green Link Route.

Follow the track uphill and turn right at Chalkstone Way. Proceed to the subway **13**, go under and down an open grassed valley between houses, passing under a further road to reach the old railway line. Climb the steps, turn left and follow the old railway **14**.

The site of Haverhill is thought to date to pre-Roman times, and is documented as a market town in the Domesday Book. It's puritan tradition set emigration to America in motion, founding Haverhill Massachusetts in the 17th Century. Haverhill's 19th century old Independent Church was built when the Gurteen family ran a thriving textile industry making smocks for rural workers. In the 1950's fears about a declining population led to Haverhill being designated an 'Expansion Town' and the population rose from 4,000 to over 22,000 today.



After crossing two roads, continue up the bank and over a stile to rejoin the old railway.

East Town Park is a relatively new park and is being developed by the Borough Council into a wildlife refuge and recreation area, along with the visitor centre, which is worth a visit. You can descend into the park in several places from the old railway line to head back to the car park.

The Calford Green Link Route

This route can be used to make alternative circuits whether you start from Haverhill, Sturmer or Kedington. It is described here in a west to east direction, beginning at point 12 on the map.

Take the loose surfaced track between the new plantation and a hedge at the back of the housing estate. Pine, Cherry and Ash trees were planted and among them grow self-sown shrubs and wild roses. Look out for numerous butterflies dancing along the grassy edges in summer.

At the playing fields turn left continue on a downhill track, cross a brook and take a track to the right through another small plantation. Look out for Long-Tailed Tits in the tree-tops in late summer. As you emerge from the wood, work your way around the right-hand side of the arable field. Turn left when confronted by a ditch and follow it uphill. Ditches are important corridors for animals to move along, especially when the banks are left uncut.

At the top of the slope cross a small bridge **15** on your right and follow the top left-hand side of a field. The stony soil here contains flints that were eroded from the underlying chalk by ice-sheets during the last two ice-ages. Follow the wide grass track past the houses out to and across the main road at Calford Green. Go down the driveway opposite, taking the left hand track and emerging onto open fields. Continue straight on and the Stour Valley opens up in front of you. At the bottom of the hill you rejoin the main circuit 6. Turn left for Kedington, or right for Sturmer.

