

THE SUDBURY BRANCH WALKS 1-4

SUDBURY BRANCH WALKS

From Sudbury to Marks Tey

"The gentle declivities, the luxuriant meadow flats sprinkled with flocks and herds ... the sound of water escaping from the mill dams, often rotten planks, slimy moss and brickwork"

John Constable RA

Whether you're a visitor to the area for your holiday, or a local looking for a special place for a day trip, the Stour Valley offers a wealth of different opportunities. The characteristic lowland English landscape made famous worldwide by artists such as Constable and Gainsborough is still recognisable today. The charm of the villages, fascinating local attractions and beauty of the surrounding countryside mean there's no shortage of places to go and things to see.

"Take the Landscape round here at Wormingford...some would find it pretty tame. There are no hills worth speaking of, yet there is a subtlety about this landscape which I feel and see, but which remains very difficult to define. I never look for more than reality, the farming, the trees, the river"

*John Nash in John Nash at Wormingford by
Ronald Blythe.*

The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley embraces one of our most cherished landscapes. Picturesque villages, rolling farmland, rivers, meadows, ancient woodlands and a wide variety of local wildlife combine to create what many describe as the quintessential traditional English lowland landscape. The area has a rich history and has been the inspiration to many writers and artists. The Dedham Vale was immortalised by John Constable in his paintings over 200 years ago

"The Vale stands apart from other lowland river valleys because of its intricate mixture of features: The River Stour, valley slopes, scattered woodland, water meadows, hedgerows, tributary valleys, sunken rural lanes and beautiful villages"

John Constable RA

Visitors can have an impact on the landscape, so to help you get the best out of your visit to Constable Country we suggest that you consider arriving in the area by train and enjoying some healthy walks around the area. When arriving at Manningtree, locations such as Flatford, Dedham and East Bergholt are all only a healthy half hour walk away.

When walking in the countryside it is very important to follow The Countryside Code. The five sections of the code are dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside:

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
Leave gates and property as you find them
Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
Keep dogs under close control
Consider other people



RAMBLE NUMBER 1

Chappel Station to Bures Station: 6-7 miles

This walk starts amid the traditional landscape of a pre-factory farmed age in East Anglia. Through winding country lanes and sleepy hamlets it progresses onto the high wheat plains of the Suffolk/Essex border, with panoramic views over the Stour.

Chappel station is the well kept home of the East Anglian Railway Museum. Go out of the station and walk down the driveway to the road. Turn right at the T junction by the signal post and walk uphill. At the T junction turn right onto the road signposted "Fordham" and cross the station throat via the bridge.

Just beyond the bridge, before the railway cottages, is a gap in the hedge on your left. Turn into this and follow the edge of the field along a well marked footpath paralleling the railway, towards a small wood.

Pass over a stream across the small meadow, keeping to its left hand side, and pass into the wood. Follow the board-walked path through the wood keeping the railway immediately to your left. Keep an eye open for deer and foxes. At the footpath T junction turn right and follow the track through the wood, onto a grassy track to the road and turn left onto the road. At the triangular junction, bear right sign-posted "Fordham". Carry straight on at another T junction, heading towards Mount Bures.

At the next bridleway sign on the right (it probably has a chain across the entrance), turn

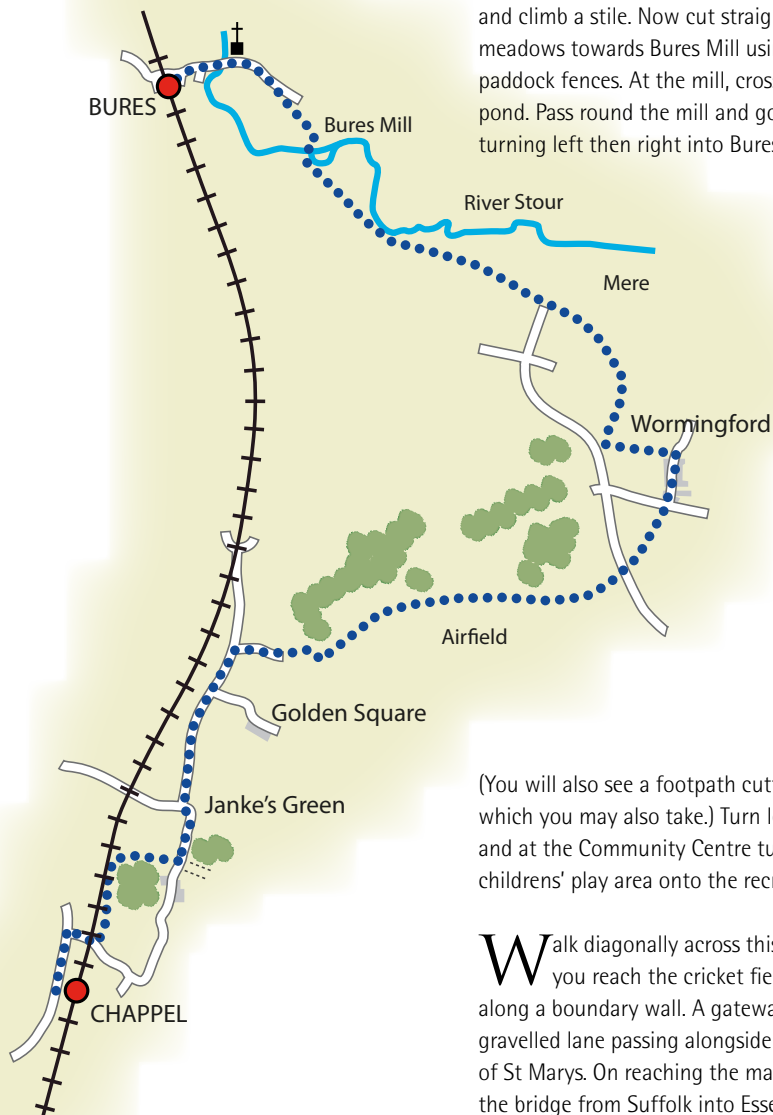
into the bridleway. Carry on past Sergeant's Orchard (an Essex Wildlife Trust reserve). The path leads to a concrete track, which you take until a T junction on the track. Turn left and follow this for about a mile, past the reservoir. You are now on the old Wormingford air-field which was originally a relief airfield in World War One, and used by the United States Air Force in World War Two. It is now used by the Essex and Suffolk Glider Club. Before you reach the glider club's clubhouse, a line of trees curves away to the left towards a boundary edge. Fork left along the side of these trees (trees will be on your right) and follow the trees to the road.

Turn left onto the road and immediately right before a group of houses. Follow the edge of one of the house's garden and at a gap in the hedge fork left towards the cluster of houses following a well trodden path to the main Colchester to Bures road. This is Wormingford. The Crown public house is just down the road to your left if you require refreshment. Otherwise cross the main road and go along Church Road. Past the final house turn left into a green lane which turns into a well marked field path.

Continue along this to the road, then turn sharp right inside the hedge and follow it downhill. Pass over a stile into a rolling meadow and turn right following the crest of a hill along the fence. Go through the gate at the corner of the meadow and cut across to the gate to the right of a clump of mainly pine trees on a bluff overlooking the Stour Valley. Pass left through the gate, down the hill and across the field towards the valley floor. Pass over a bridge across a farm track, and follow the path to cross the field into the valley bottom. Pass through the hedge at the field corner and proceed down along the left hand hedge to a farm track. Turn right down this onto a meadow land by the Stour and turn left by the power pole.



Where the meadow and field meet the trees, pass through the hedge by the signpost and follow the path along the hedge on your right. Follow the path straight on. Under a tree, cross a footbridge and climb a stile. Now cut straight across the water meadows towards Bures Mill using the stiles set into paddock fences. At the mill, cross the river by the mill pond. Pass round the mill and go down the driveway turning left then right into Bures.



(You will also see a footpath cutting off a field corner which you may also take.) Turn left into the village and at the Community Centre turn left through the childrens' play area onto the recreation ground.

Walk diagonally across this to your right until you reach the cricket field, then right again along a boundary wall. A gateway brings you into a gravelled lane passing alongside the village church of St Marys. On reaching the main road turn left over the bridge from Suffolk into Essex. Where the main road bears to your left, carry straight on past the Swan Inn to Bures station.

OS 1:50,000 SHEET 168
1:25,000 Explorers 195 & 196



RAMBLE NUMBER 2

Sudbury Station to Bures Station: 6-7 miles

This is the area which gave both Gainsborough and Constable their inspiration, but the history of the valley you traverse has its roots much deeper in history than this, as evinced by the Anglo-Saxon place names themselves: Sudbury – South Fort, Cornard – Corn Land, Lamarsh – Lambs Marsh, Alphamstone – Aelfhelms Farm, Bures – cottages.

Out of Sudbury station turn immediately to your left and then left again to follow a track running parallel to the railway line. Follow the pathway until you reach the level crossing and turn right into the track leading towards the meadow (Cornard Riverside Walk). Keep straight on alongside an arm of the river until you reach the Stour itself. Turn left over the concrete bridge, and follow the bank through the willow woods. Follow the main track left into the trees and head towards the houses.

Cross the railway by a gated crossing and climb a track by a nursing home into the main street of Cornard village. Turn right and after about three quarters of a mile, turn left into Head Lane immediately past the King's Head public house. By a school sign turn right onto a footpath running alongside number 38. Pass the school on your left to reach the recreation ground. On reaching the ground, turn right down a footpath, then left, heading for the floodlights of Cornard FC. On reaching the perimeter of the recreation ground, turn left and follow the boundary until you pass through a fence close to the basketball courts about two thirds of the way along

the bottom of the sports field, heading towards a red brick building (Cornard Dynamos FC). [Note that this is not a footpath, but it is evidently used as such, and you may need to take a slight detour if there is a football game in progress.] Pass the brick building and cross the adjacent car park into Backhouse Lane.

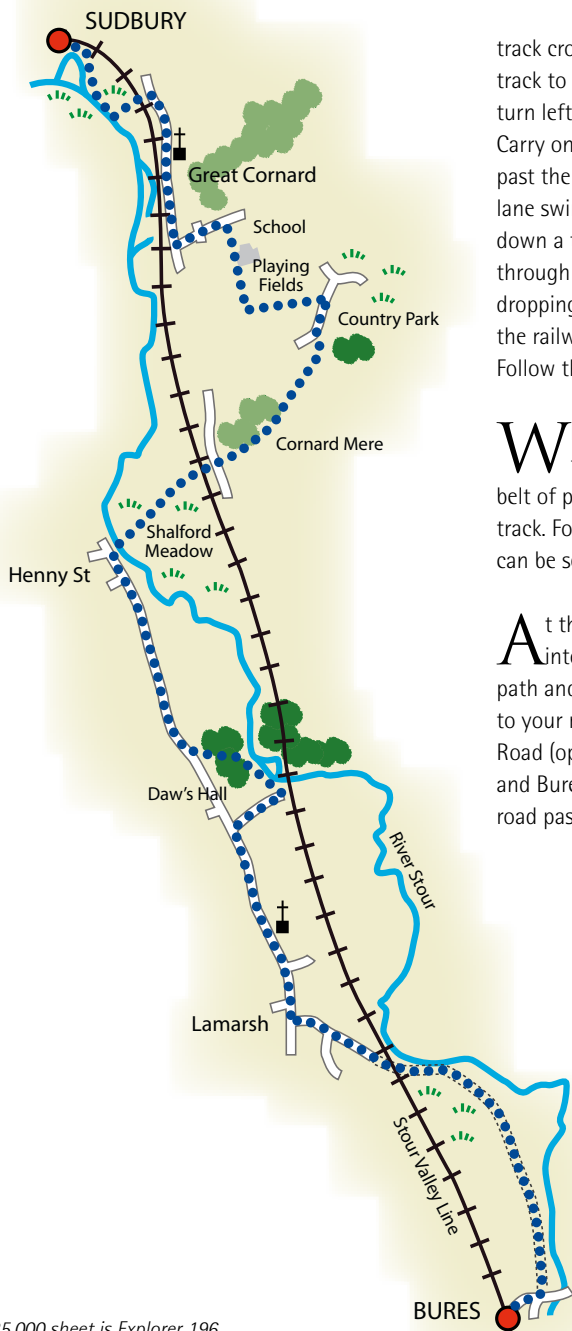
Turn right and follow the lane past the country park sign. Then on the bend, turn left following a way-marked path into the park. Where the path turns to the left, fork right over a wooden bridge, and proceed through the path on the field towards Cornard Mere. Follow the way-marked signs round the left of the mere to the main road. Cross over the road and pass under a small railway bridge directly ahead across a small meadow. Walk straight on down the right hand side of the sewage works perimeter fence and cross a bridge onto Shalfords meadows. Pass diagonally left across the meadows towards the village of Great Henny on the far side. Cross the River Stour by a footbridge.

For those requiring refreshment the Swan Inn is approximately 50 yards down the road to the right.

Turn left onto the road and keep straight on, passing through a particularly beautiful part of the Stour Valley dotted with isolated thatched cottages.

Pass under the power lines and just before the sign for Lamarsh, turn left into a signposted footpath. Keep to the left hand edge of the field by the ditch. Follow the path and power lines across a small meadow, keeping to the grassy track. Keep straight on, keeping the ditch to your left.

Head towards the railway bridge running over the Stour, and turn right along a trail paralleling the railway line through a wood. At the



track crossing the railway, turn right and head up the track to the end of it. When the track joins the road, turn left and follow the road past Lamarsh church. Carry on up the road, bearing left in Lamarsh, then past the Lamarsh Lion public house, and where the lane swings sharply right uphill, go straight ahead down a trail signposted 'private road'. Follow this through a farm whence it becomes a grassy track dropping to cross the railway line via stiles. Go over the railway and into a meadow bordering the Stour. Follow the hedge, keeping the Stour to your left.

When the hedge almost reaches the river bank, turn right over the stile and into a shelter belt of pine trees. Follow the path until it joins a track. Follow this straight ahead towards Bures which can be seen in the distance.

At the edge of the village the track swings right into a farm yard. Fork left here onto a small path and follow this, keeping the high red brick wall to your right into the village. Emerging onto Station Road (opposite The Swan public house), turn right and Bures station is located to the left just before the road passes under the railway bridge.



RAMBLE NUMBER 3

Chappel Circular: 4-5 miles

Alighting at Chappel station you may wish to spend a little while exploring the East Anglian Railway Museum which has done much to turn Chappel station back into a semblance of its former glories in the inter-war years.

Pass down the station approach and turn left towards the village. At the main road, pass across over the river Colne and past the Swan Inn. At the village green turn right down a track past St Barnabas church, pausing to admire the Georgian plaster decoration on the adjacent mansion. The track ends in a farmyard. Pass through over a stile by the barn. An impressive water mill stands to your right on the River Colne.

Turn left along the meadow to a gate, pass through it, and onto another small meadow. Follow a well trodden path to a stile at the far end. Cross into a long meadow and, keeping the hedge to your right, go through a gate at the far end and pass through an area of scrub into a meadow containing a lake.

Follow the path straight on along the hedgerow to the edge of a wood and then follow the path around the boundary fence. The lake will be on your right and a boggy area to your left (note: this section of the footpath can be very boggy, especially as you exit into the field). At the corner of the wood where footpaths meet, follow the well marked path slightly to your right, and head towards a modern farm house in the far distance to your right, set amongst trees.

100 yards to the left of the farm house, where a ranch style fence ends at a tall hedge, cross over into a brick lane and turn right. Bear left past the farm house onto a track skirting the gardens. Follow this green lane until you reach a kissing gate. Cross the small meadow beyond this keeping the hedge to your left and join a grassy track exiting from the other side.

Follow this track alongside the Colne through the woodland until you reach the Mill yard. Pass straight through the yard but when the track turns right to cross the river, carry straight on. Shortly, the path takes you into a field, which may contain cattle. Follow the foot path through the field to the gate. Turn left along the field edge towards the wood (Chalkney Wood). Where the field meets the wood, enter the wood over a stile and turn right immediately onto a well beaten track following the inside boundary of the wood.

Where the path is intersected by a forest road, cross to the far side by a Forestry Commission gate. At the gate take the footpath signed to your right and way-marked with yellow arrows. Follow this path keeping straight on to the wood's edge, exiting via a stile. Turn left and follow the hedge surrounding the fruit field to a lane. Turn left into the lane and almost immediately right into a field by a footpath sign. Go through the gate, turn left and follow the field boundary round. Then strike straight across the fruit field. At the far edge of the fruit field turn left and keep to the fruit field edge until reaching the hedge to your right. Turn right through this hedge onto a track alongside another fruit field.

Keep the ditch to your right, and at the corner of the fruit field cross into another field and down a well-trodden path keeping the hedge to your right. At the field corner, turn right onto a track, then left down this track towards a group of houses.



OS 1:25,000 should be Explorer 195

Where the track meets the lane, turn left down the lane. Bear right downhill at a triangular junction and follow this lane until reaching an isolated house to your right (Conservatory Cottage). Immediately before reaching the house, turn left downhill onto a well trodden path through the middle of a field. At the hedge bordering the bottom of this field, bear right and follow the hedge to the field corner. Turn left through a gate into a paddock. Turn right and follow the hedge towards the viaduct.

Cross a stile into the road, and turn left into the village. Follow the road through the village, past the Swan Inn and across the main road. Retrace your steps uphill to the station.



RAMBLE NUMBER 4

Marks Tey Station to Chappel Station: 5-6 miles

This Walk has an inauspicious start, but persevere! It improves considerably after Motts Lane. It follows a succession of green lanes and field paths into the Colne Valley with panoramic views over Chappel Viaduct, and finally diving under the viaduct itself for a close up view of the longest such structure in East Anglia.

Turn right out of the main exit to Marks Tey station (over the footbridge if arriving at platform 2 or 3), and walk to the roundabout. Turn right onto the A120 and continue along this, past the Indian restaurant and petrol station, until

Reaching the Red Lion public house. Turn right into Motts Lane. Follow Motts Lane to the bridleway at the end, and the converted barn at

Motts Barn, and turn right around the perimeter on a gravelled track. Follow this as it turns into a green track by Motts Farm and turn sharp left, following it across the fields.

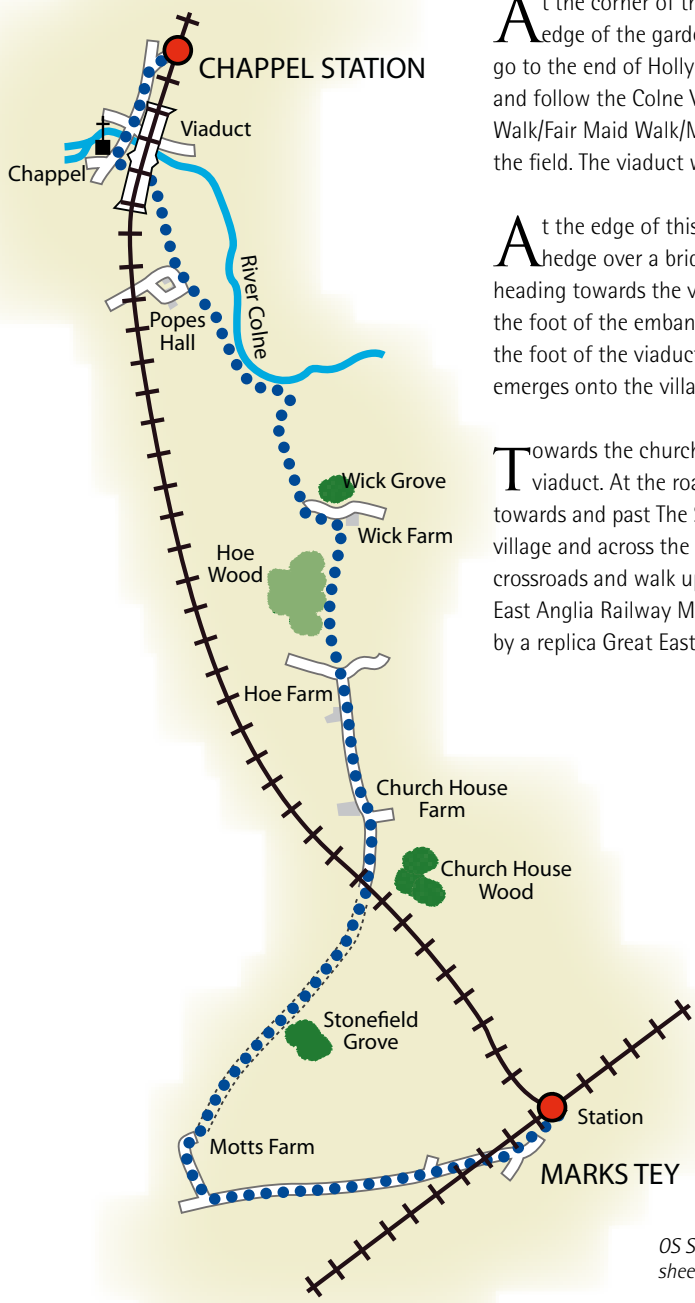
Head towards Stonefield Grove, an ancient reminder of the old wildwood that once stretched unbroken from London to the Fens. Carry straight on towards the wood ahead of you (Church House Wood), ignoring footpath signs to right and left. Follow the track along the side of the wood. Ahead lies a crossing cottage on the Sudbury-Marks Tey branch line.

Head uphill to this cottage and the level crossing by it, and cross the railway onto a gravel track. Follow this to the road and go up the road past Church House Farm.

At a T junction just past Hoe Farm Barn, cross straight over onto a signposted field path. Head towards Hoe Wood ahead of you. At the entrance to the wood turn to follow its right hand edge. [However, you may instead enter this Woodland Trust wood to explore it, or to follow its right hand side to pick up the path again further on.]

Where the field ends, pass through a gap in the hedge and carry straight on. Good brief views of Chappel viaduct are obtained at this point. Follow the track downhill towards Wick Grove, keeping the hedge to your right. At farm buildings (Wick Grove Farm), turn sharp left along the edge of the wood on another grassy track. At the edge of the wood pass on through the dip in the fields along the grassy track coming out onto the crest of a ridge offering views across the Colne Valley. Follow this track to the right keeping the hedge to your left as it skirts the fields and heads downhill towards the river Colne. At the river turn left over the wooden footbridge, through the hedge and a gate. Follow the river through a meadow towards a brick bridge (but don't cross it!).

Go through the gate to the left of the pillbox and walk down the edge of the meadow towards Pope's Hall. You are now following the Colne Valley Path. Go through another gate into a field and, keeping the hedge to your right, walk on towards the viaduct (note: field(s) may well be ploughed and a bit muddy). Where the field boundary turns right towards the river, press straight ahead across the field towards the right of Pope's Hall and Holly Cottage.



At the corner of the field turn left around the edge of the gardens into a narrow lane and go to the end of Holly Cottage property. Turn right and follow the Colne Valley Path/Margery Allingham Walk/Fair Maid Walk/Miller's Drift Walk signs across the field. The viaduct will be slightly to your right.

At the edge of this field turn sharp left into the hedge over a bridge, then turn right once more heading towards the viaduct, down a leafy path at the foot of the embankment. This brings you out at the foot of the viaduct. Under the viaduct the path emerges onto the village green at Chappel. Head

Towards the church spire by going left under the viaduct. At the road turn right into the village, towards and past The Swan pub. Go through the village and across the Colne, pass straight over the crossroads and walk uphill to Chappel station and the East Anglia Railway Museum. The entrance is marked by a replica Great Eastern Railway signal.

OS Sheet 168 is correct, but 1:25,000 sheets are Explorer 184 and 195