

Somersham | Offton | Willisham | Nettlestead

Lt. Blakenham | Flowton

Frances & Stanleys



TOP 10

Circular Walks

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Suffolk is a flat county, it's highest point is only 128m (420ft) above sea level. These circular walks around Somersham and the surrounding areas climb up to 72m (236ft) at points, offering some of Suffolks best views in my opinion!

I have loved exploring this beautiful landscape with my dog Stanley, and wanted to encourage more people to do the same . . . So I have turned my top 10 routes into a handy guide for you. So put on some comfy shoes, pack a lunch and head out for your own adventure!

COVER IMAGE - Photo by Frances Vincent | Red kite family flying near Offton Church

BACK COVER IMAGE - Photo by Lou Rawcliffe | The Duke of Marlborough Pub

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KEY

 Footpath
  Walk Route
  VIEWPOINT
  Info provided
  Bridle/byway

- ✓ All walks start and finish at the **SOMERSHAM VILLAGE SHOP**
 - ✓ Follow the Countryside code
 - ✓ Keep dogs under close control, especially near roads
 - ✓ Leave gates and property as you find them
 - ✓ Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
 - ✓ Dispose of dog mess responsibly
- ✓ I've left the red footpaths visible so you can take detours if desired

Somersham Shop Opening Hours

Please check online for changes before visiting

Mon: 10.00 - 13.00
 Tues: 10.00 - 16:00
 Wed: 10.00 - 13.00
 Thurs: 10.00 - 13.00
 Fri: 10.00 - 16:00
 Sat: 10.00 - 13.00
 Sun: CLOSED

Contact:

If you encounter a problem or need some guidance about a route please get in touch with me:



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Frances Vincent

POINTS OF INTEREST



Little Blakenham Chalk Pit

WALK 5

The chalk pit is a biological site of special scientific interest. It has an 127m long tunnel within the chalk which is used mainly by Daubenton's bats. It is one of the largest roosts in Britain with over 450 bats using it. The Chalk was mined & burned in the lime kilns to make the lime mortar used in many of the surrounding buildings (lime kilns likely a common feature in medieval times.)

The quarry is surrounded by chalk grassland.



Offton Castle & Moat (protected by English Heritage)

WALK 6

Reputed to have been built by King Offa, King of the Mercians in the year 776. Offton Castle is situated high above the village with an extensive 360° view over the countryside. This made it a prime site for such a building with the purpose of defending property around it. It is a square 50x50m moated mound and has the appearance of a ditched wooden fortification adapted later to a moated medieval stone built defence (1066-1534). The earthwork still visible is impressive, showing a plateau totally surrounded by a 15m moat. There is reference to stone being removed from the castle during a dispute between King Henry VIII & Lord Wentworth, the stone being used by Wentworth to build his own hall in Nettlestead. It was noted by a travel writer called Kirby in 1735 that ruins of the castle were still visible, and an illustration from 1806 showed a stone wall was still visible around the inner mound. An iron buckle found on the site can be seen in Ipswich Museum (Medieval circa 1066-1539).





Four St. Marys Churches

WALK 8

Nettlestead - Built in the 1300's. It houses one of Suffolks loveliest medieval fonts which has some serious cracks sustained in August 1940 when the church was gutted by a German bomb. The church and font were restored and reopened in 1950.

Willisham - Built in 1878 on the site of a previous medieval church, it retains the medieval font from the former church safely inside.

Offton - Built in the 1300's. It has one of Suffolks most unusual outdoor tombs...that of a weeping woman leading a horse while a body lays slumped on the ground before her. It has been referenced it depicts the final scene in the life of Sarah Wyard, who was thrown from her horse in 1867.

Somersham - Built in the early 1300's. The porch was cut in the late 1200's using a single piece of wood and is one of the oldest porches in Suffolk. Inside the Church in a glass case is a bomb dropped from a Zeppelin onto the parish in WW1.



Middle Woodland - Offton

WALK 9

Middle Wood is a medieval coppiced woodland with mainly oak trees and a large variety of woodland plants and flowers. It is a site of special scientific interest, encouraging a healthy abundance of wildlife.



Bonny Wood - Willisham

WALK 10

Bonny wood is a 48 acre ancient coppiced woodland that can be traced back to 1356. It supports many rare and threatened species, particularly dormice. Butterflies such as the silver washed fritillary and purple emperor have colonised the wood, and the spring wild flowers include many ancient woodland specialists such as sweet woodruff and orchids. It was bought by Elizabeth I from the bishop of Ely in 1561 and was sold on by James I in 1611. At present, the woodland is maintained by Suffolk Wildlife Trust with public footpaths, but parts of the wood are privately owned with no public access.

Nettlestead Church & Countryside Views

Distance: 2.4 miles (3.9 km)

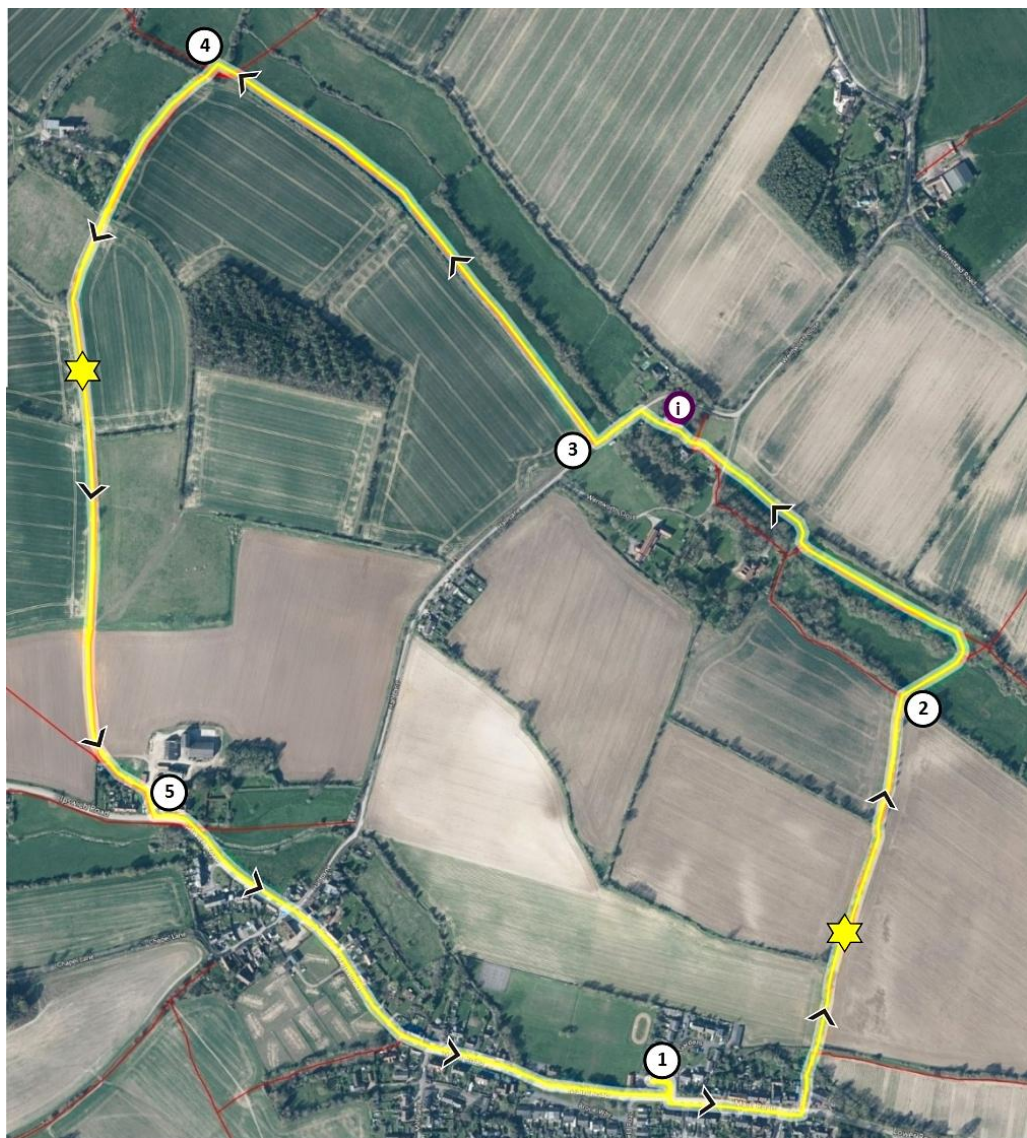
Ascent/gradient: 131ft (40m)

Walk outline: A charming walk taking you past Nettlestead Church and offering lovely views of the area.

Look out for: Buzzards, woodpeckers, deer, brimstone butterflies, cuckoo (April-July)

Landscape: Field boundaries, grassland, meadowland, stone track, paved footpath. 3 stiles

WALK 1



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn left. Continue on the paved footpath until you reach **Church Lane**. Cross the bottom of Church Lane and take the footpath on the opposite side of the road between the houses (signposted). Continue straight over **two bridges** and up a long hill. Keep right of the hedge (at the opening, cross to the left side) and continue all the way down to a **stile**.



Stanley on Nettlestead bridge

2. Walk past the stile and bear slightly right over to another **bridge**, cross it and bear left. Continue straight until you reach the tractor track, then take a slight right and continue along the grass toward the **church**. Cross the track and pass the houses on your left, take a narrow gap emerging into the **graveyard** of St Marys Church. Walk through the churchyard and turn left onto the road.



Approaching Nettlestead Church

3. After **60m** on the road, turn right at the footpath sign, either climbing over the stile or through the gateway if its open. Continue along this **grassland** for 650m. Along this stretch look out for buzzards and woodpeckers, as well as many delightful bird species. When you go through a large gateway with a big oak on the left, bear left toward a **stile** (if you reach a track-way you've gone too far)

4. Once over the stile, follow the path forward past **Rookery Farm** all the way down the track. See if you can spot any deer in the fields while enjoying the views of the countryside on the walk down :) Keep walking all the way down toward the **buildings** at the bottom, bearing left and passing some house gardens on your right and **barns** on your left. The track then bends right down to the road.



Views walking down

5. Take the paved footpath on the left of the road. Walk past Watering Close and **The Duke of Marlborough pub**. Continue on the footpath, when the pathway ends continue but use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the bend at the bottom of **Mill Lane**. Continue along the main road back to **the shop**.

The Channel & Countryside Views

Distance: 3 miles (4.8 km)

Ascent/gradient: 131ft (40m)

Walk outline: This walk takes you parallel to the Channel for a short stretch, ascending approx 30m up a long hill with lovely views of the area on your descent.

Look out for: Wrens, buzzards, deer, jays, swallows (March-May)

Landscape: Village roads, farmland, cart track, field boundaries, paved footpath

WALK 2



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn right. Turn left onto **Springfield road** and follow the paved footpath along the length of Springfield Road, passing left of a **roundabout of houses**, continue then bear right past the grass patch up the hill. Turn right at the signposted Footpath and follow the **alleyway**. When you reach the right bend, take the fork left onto the fields up a slight hill, then bear right and continue straight into the field.

2. At the junction of intersecting footpaths, take a sharp right and continue along this footpath through the fields until you reach a bridge. Cross it and turn right. Walk 80m then turn left onto **Chapel Lane**. Continue along this track until the the bank on your left ends and the view opens up.

3. Continue on the track then take a diagonal right into the field between two **telephone poles**. Head for the bridge on the other side. Bear left in front of the bridge and continue with the Channel on your right. Cross **Elmsett Road** and continue. When you reach a reinforced **concrete bridge** on your right, walk over it and continue up to **Ipswich Road**.

4. Take care crossing Ipswich Road and walk up the concrete driveway of **Rook Hill Farm**.

Take the right bend (a large barn on your left) and opposite you will see some grass with an opening between two **ivy covered structures**. Walk through and bear left. You will see some old storage structures on your left which turns into the hedgerow. Walk up the hill and over the **bridge** at the end, then turn right. Continue with the hedge now on your right.

5. Go through the hedge over a **plank bridge** and enjoy the view as you carry on down, the hedge switching to your left after 100m. As you reach the bottom look left where you'll see a massive network of **rabbit warrens** living in the bank. When the hedge on your left stops, bear left and up a little slope, then continue until you reach a **bridge** on your right. Take it and follow the footpath across the field towards the buildings. Walk onto the **sandy track** passing house gardens on your right & barns on your left, bending right before the road.

6. Take the paved footpath on the left of the road. Walk past Watering Close and **The Duke of Marlborough pub**. Continue on the footpath, when it ends continue but use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the bend at the bottom of **Mill Lane**. Continue along the main road back to **the shop**.



Views towards Somersham

Somersham Park Woodland

Distance: 3.37 miles (5.42 km)

Ascent/gradient: 131ft (40m)

WALK 3

Walk outline: Walk to the ancient Somersham Park Woodland 60m above sea level and see what wildlife you can spot. Enjoy the lovely views over Somersham and beyond.

Look out for: Buzzards, kestrels, deer, hares, corn buntings, yellowhammers.

Landscape: Field boundaries, grassland, meadowland, woodland, farmland, paved footpath.



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn left. Walk along the pavement, when you reach **Church Lane** turn right onto it. Walk past the school and Flowton road, continue up and walk the bend around to the right. At the entrance to Redlands driveway, turn left and follow the **fenced walkway**, then take the right fork onto the field edge. Follow the hedgerow up the hill for approx 300m.



Countryside views

2. At the **tractor track** switch to the left of the hedgerow and continue for 170m until you see a footpath post on your right nestled in the hedge. Turn left here and cross the field toward the small **woodland**. Cross the bridge into the woods & follow the path straight. Exit the woods & continue straight for 200m. When you see a bridge on your left, **turn right** and cross the field (there should be a trodden path across). At the other side turn left and walk down the edge of the field you've just crossed with the hedge on your right. Walk past an opening on your right & continue down to the **field end**. Turn left for 20m then right over a grass **reinforced bridge**. Turn right & continue, you'll see a large pylon on your left.

3. Walk up the wide **grass track** up a slight hill. After 150m you'll see an opening in the hedgerow on your right, go through and walk diagonally left across the field toward the hedge corner opposite. Keep a look out for kestrels hunting. Once you reach the hedge, keep it on your left walking past a **grey tank** on stilts. Keep walking along the tractor track. At the end, continue straight into a **smaller hedged lane**,

Passing a large oak on the right of the entrance. When you reach a **stilted green tank** on your left, continue forward into the larger lane.

4. Keep right past a pile of rubble in front of a barn. Emerging onto a **gravel road**, walk straight past a black metal gate then a pond on your left. Once you reach the paved road continue for 40m then turn right through a gated gap in the hedge. You'll walk alongside a **horse paddock** on your left. When you reach the field, the wired path bends right then turns left along the hedgerow, follow it until it ends.

Somersham park woodland is now visible on your right. Continue straight on the tractor track until you see a footpath opening into the woods on your right (signposted). Take the path and follow along the length of the woods.

5. The path turns left out of the woodland over a bridge, as the hedgerow on your right ends carry on straight across the field towards a **manure heap** (historically there used to be a building called 'Monks Cottage' at this site). Cross **Flowton road** and into the field opposite, head toward a **copse of trees** in the middle. Walk behind the copse all the way around to the right and head towards the **pylon** in the centre of the field. Pass to the left of the pylon and walk directly towards the end of the hedgerow.

6. At the end of the hedgerow look for the **gap**, pass through it and keep the hedge on your right up a slight hill. Once the hedgerow finishes, continue on following the footpath **down the hill** toward the houses/rooftops. Once you reach a patch of grass, bear left down a little hill then left onto a paved footpath. Walk to the bottom of **Mill Lane** and turn right, continuing along the main road back to **the shop**.

Flowton ('Flocctun') Circular

Distance: **3.8 miles** (6.2 km)

Ascent/gradient: 131ft (40m)

WALK 4

Walk outline: This walk takes you through two ancient woodlands and a wildlife conservation area. Enjoy the rolling countryside and see what wildlife you can spot.

Look out for: Buzzards, kestrels, squirrels, deer, hares, corn buntings, dragonflies.

Landscape: Field boundaries, woodland, farmland, paved footpath, road. 1 stile.



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn right. Continue along the main road until you reach the bottom of **Mill Lane** where the road bends right. Use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the road a few metres then take the footpath left onto **Stocks Hill** (signposted). Walk past the allotments on your left. Continue until you emerge into the fields, at the end of the grass path turn right and head towards the **bridge**.

2. Cross the bridge and turn left. Continue along this track for 350m, bearing left you'll reach the entrance to a **woodland**. Walk up the woodland path, just before you reach the end turn right at the footpath sign and climb through the **metal bars** into a field (dogs on lead as this is a horse field). Keep left and continue, cross a stile half way and more metal bars at the end. When you reach **Blood Hill** road turn left and walk 100m until you reach a signposted gap in the hedge on your right (before reaching Bleak Hall).

3. Walk through the **gap** and keep to the edge of the field, follow it all the way down to a **bridge**. Cross it and turn left, continue along the hedgerow. After a small bend to the right, turn left onto a larger track and keep following it down until you see a bridge on your left entering a **wildlife conservation** area.

4. Pass through the wooded area then continue along the hedgerow. At the **PRIVATE** sign bear left through the opening and continue with the hedge on the right. At the next white sign walk diagonally left across the field toward the Ash tree and a **planked bridge**. Turn left. Follow the hedge up then pass through a gap into the next field, you will see a **row of large trees** lined at the opposite edge of the field, head for the leftmost tree in the row.

5. When you reach the road turn right. After the road bears right, pass the white metal barricade and 'Lt. Park Nursery' sign and take the next left onto a **bridleway**. As you reach a fork take the unpaved track right. At the signpost directing you left into the **woodland**, go through the gap and walk until you reach the next post. Turn right. Along this path notice the small **shelter** on your right built using branches with benches inside...a lovely spot for a rest! Follow the path over a bridge out of the woodland. Turn left and walk follow the hedgerow until you reach the end.

6. Walk across the field heading for the hedgerow opposite, as you approach the hedge, make sure you are on the right of the row. With the hedge now on your left hand side, follow it for approx **400m** until there is an opening and a tractor track crossing. Switch to the left hand side of the hedgerow and stop here to admire the **view over Somersham**.

7. Follow the hedgerow down the hill. At the narrow fenced walkway, walk until the fence opens on your right, then turn right into **Black Barn Close**. Follow the road which bends left and takes you down onto Church Lane. Head for the main road passing the school on your left. When you reach the main road turn left and follow it back to **the shop**.



Tree row and Somersham Park Woodland

Little Blakenham Chalk Pit

Distance: **3.8 miles** (6.2 km)

Ascent/gradient: 98ft (30m)

Walk outline: This walk takes you to the chalk pit and back with some lovely views of the countryside.

Look out for: Buzzards, kestrels, wrens, deer

Landscape: Field boundaries, woodland, farmland, paved footpath, road. 1 stile

WALK 5

TOP



BOTTOM

1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn left. Continue on the paved footpath until you reach **Church Lane**. Cross the bottom of Church Lane and take the footpath on the opposite side of the road between the houses (signposted). Cross the concrete bridge and turn right in front of the wooden bridge. Continue with the hedge on your left. When a gap opens bear left onto a double grass track and continue over a **concrete bridge** then through a copse of trees until you reach **Somersham road**.

2. Take a sharp right onto the road and continue, when the road turns right take a left onto a concreted walkway, passing trees on your left and the **sewage works** on your right. As the concreted path ends, carry on straight into a **sloping field** and walk across following the footpath. At the other side, cross a **planked bridge** and keep right along the grass following the field edge on your right. Look out for Green Woodpeckers here. Continue until you reach the tarmac road at the end.

3. Turn left, walk up to the main road then turn left again. After a few paces look right and take the footpath up some **steps** off the road (take care crossing). You'll emerge into a little bit of land surrounded by trees and bushes, bear left and continue. At the road, cross to the footpath directly opposite and walk along the **narrow fenced path** for approx 150m. Pass the child play area on your left and walk down to a **bridge**, cross and turn right. Walk along the back of the houses until you reach the road. The **chalk pit** is slightly left on the opposite side. If you have permission by the landowner you can walk the pit perimeter following the pathways. Or you can turn left and walk the road up for a birds eye view.

4. Retrace your steps back to the child play area, but turn right in front of it and follow the wide pathway along the field edge for approx 400m. At the end walk up a little bank onto the road edge. Cross the road (towards the gate of 9 Acre Farm) and immediately turn right through a gap in the hedge, walk up a hill towards a **white bench**. This is a nice spot for a break and a snack, with a wildlife area on your right if you are sitting.

5. Continue up the track as before, when the land opens up stay on the right following the track. At the end turn right. Continue for approx 250m then turn right. Follow the hedgerow until a large gap opens up, walk into it and stop to admire the view, then carry on along the track with the hedgerow on your left as before. Go down a **steep hill** but before you reach the road, turn left up a little bank and continue parallel to **Nettlestead Road** along the grass. Go up another bank then up the hill and continue.

6. When you reach a fork sloping down onto Nettlestead road, turn left into the footpath crossing the field (usually appearing as tractor tracks). Follow the track down the hill admiring the views on the way. When you meet the hedgerow, turn right and follow it until you get to a **stile**. Cross and bear left towards the **bridge**. Cross and bear right towards another stile which you can pass instead of climb.

7. After the stile keep left and follow the hedge up (the hedge switching to your right side after 150m). Follow it along and down a hill. At the bottom cross the **wooden bridge** through the hedge and follow the narrow path down back towards the main road. Cross the road and turn right, cross the bottom of Church Lane and follow the path back to **the shop**.

Offton Castle & Moat

Distance: **4.1 miles** (6.5 km)

Ascent/gradient: 154ft (47m)

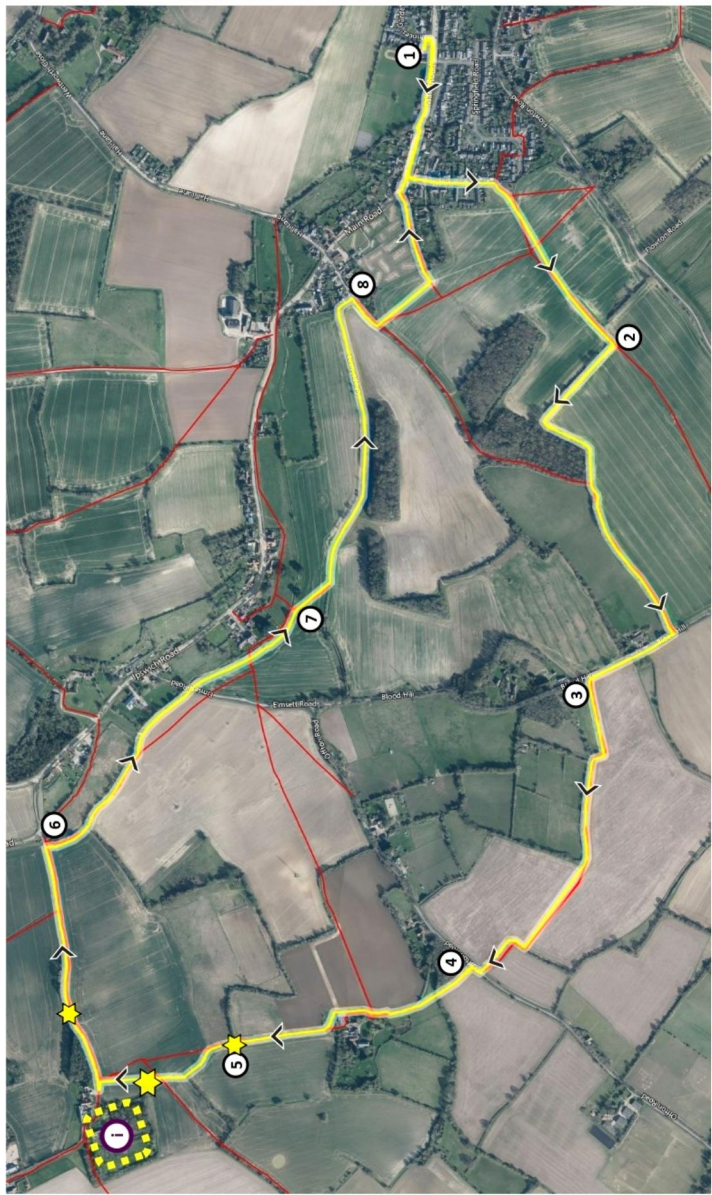
Walk outline: Walk to see the castle moat and enjoy some wonderful views of the surrounding area.

Look out for: Buzzards, kestrels, deer, wrens, yellowhammers, swallows (March-May).

Landscape: Field boundaries, farmland, grassland, paved footpath, road. 3 stiles.

WALK 6

TOP



BOTTOM

1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn right. Follow the main road (down **Brook Way** then back onto the path) for approx 300m. When you reach the bottom of **Mill Lane** turn left and walk up the hill 200m. At the top, fork right onto the fields up a grass hill, bear right and continue straight following the footpath into the field. At the junction of intersecting footpaths, continue up the hill towards a hedgerow. At the hedgerow walk to the right hand side and continue until you reach the **gap**.

2. Go through the gap and turn right. Walk along the field boundary with the hedge on your right. Continue along this field edge around a left turn, then a right turn. Before you reach a large **pylon** just right of the footpath, turn right through a gap in the hedge then immediately left at the footpath sign and climb through the **metal bars** into a field (dogs on lead as this is a horse field). Keep left and continue, cross a stile half way and more metal bars at the end. When you reach **Blood Hill** road turn right and continue for 200m. When you reach the **round posts** and footpath sign, turn left walking between the posts.

3. Continue along the grass track field edge. The track bends right (look left now into the field by the telephone pole...historically there used to be a building here called Mount Sorrowful) then bends left, continue on with the hedge on your right. When you reach the end of the hedgerow, walk straight across the field following the path directly past a **telephone pole**. At the other side turn right a few paces then left towards Offton Road. At the road turn right for a few paces then turn left through the hedge at the footpath sign over a **little bridge**.

4. Continue straight. Cross the **stile and bridge** at the other side then walk over the grass to meet the

driveway track, turn left and continue. Before you reach the gateway to Hill Farm, turn right through the gap in the hedge (signposted) and continue along the grassy field edge. After you pass the **grey barn**, turn left and bear diagonally right over to the **stile**. Cross it and continue with the hedge on your left.

5. Go through the gap in the hedge ahead. Continue straight down a hill, the footpath is either straight ahead into the field or you will need to bear left up the hill and cross right into the field there. The fenced area protruding into this field ahead and left is where **Offton Castle** used to stand, it is still surrounded by the **ancient moat**. At the other side of the field you will reach a concrete road. If you have permission by the landowner you can turn left (keep left of the fencing) to explore the moat perimeter, then **retrace your steps** to the road and continue down the track.

6. When you reach the footpath sign at the bottom, turn right off the concrete track and continue with **The Channel** on your left, passing through a gap in the hedge. Continue until you reach **Elmsett road**. Cross the road and continue with the stream on your left, passing a bridge with houses behind it.

7. At the second bridge turn right & cross the field diagonally, aim for between two telegraph poles. Walk up the bank and turn left, following **Chapel lane** track all the way with a sharp bend right before you reach the paved road and a dog poo bin on your right.

8. Turn right for 80m then left over a **bridge**. Follow the footpath across the field, when you reach the grass path entering the field from the left, turn left onto it and walk down **Stocks Hill** past the allotments on your right. At the bottom turn right and use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the bend. Continue along the main road back to **the shop**.

Nature Avenue 'Mother McKenzies Lane'

Distance: **4.8 miles** (7.7 km)

Ascent/gradient: 170ft (52m)

WALK 7

Walk outline: Walk to an ancient lane lined with trees, once all roads were as magnificent as this!

Look out for: Buzzards, woodpeckers, deer, brimstone butterflies, wrens.

Landscape: Field boundaries, farmland, meadowland, cart lane, stone track, paved footpath. 3 stiles



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn left. Continue on the paved footpath until you reach **Church Lane**. Cross the bottom of Church Lane and take the footpath on the opposite side of the road between the houses (signposted). Continue straight over **two bridges** and up a long hill. Keep right of the hedge (at the opening, cross to the left side) and continue all the way down to a **stile**.

2. Walk past the stile and bear slightly right over to another **bridge**, cross it and bear left. Continue straight until you reach the tractor track, then take a slight right and continue along the grass toward the **church**. Cross the track and pass the houses on your left, take a narrow gap emerging into the **graveyard** of St Marys Church. Walk through the churchyard and turn left onto the road.

3. After 60m on the road, turn right at the footpath sign, either climbing over the stile or through the wide gateway if its open. Continue along this **grassland**, over a concreted gap and head towards a **single oak** ahead of you in the field. Walk past this lone tree then immediately turn right and head toward a **grass covered bridge** crossing over the stream. Cross and bear diagonally left towards the hedgerow.



Long stretch of meadow

4. Cross the **stile & bridge** through the hedge and walk up the hill with the hedge on your right (at the top turn around to see the lovely views), pass by the right hand side of **High Hall** then turn left at the road. Walk along the road for 450m until the road splits into two farm tracks, take the track bending left.

5. Walk past a farmhouse and cow shed on your right and continue down the track. When the farm track starts to bend left, continue straight into a tree lined lane...This is **Mother McKenzies Lane**, an old cart track that would have been regularly used by the locals. Follow the track down admiring the ambience and seeing what wildlife you can spot.



Mother McKenzies Lane

6. The lane ends after it bends left, then turn right and keep following the track. Skirt right of a large **pond** with houses behind it. When the track turns right up the hill, bear left and walk towards the grass path between a hedgerow on your left and the side of the **large barn**. Pass a bridge on your left and follow the hedgerow down to another wooden **bridge**, cross and continue with the hedge on your left down to Barking Road. Don't cross the road, take a **sharp left** and walk up the hill away from the road. At the top turn left a few paces then turn right up some steps hidden in the hedge. Continue straight along the field edge (turn around to see the views). Cross another **bridge** through the hedge then follow the footpath straight across the field towards the hedge opposite.

7. Turn right at the hedge. Follow the hedge around the bends all the way down the hill. At the bottom walk down the bank and bear right onto the concrete driveway, pass a large black barn on your right. Walk down to **Ipswich road**. Cross the road onto the grass opposite and bear left towards a **reinforced bridge**.

8. Cross and turn left. Continue until you reach **Elmsett road**. Cross the road and continue with the stream on your left, passing a bridge with houses behind it. At the second bridge turn right & cross the field diagonally aiming for between two telegraph poles. Walk up a bank and turn left, continue straight along **Chapel Lane**, bending sharp right before you reach the paved road and a dog poo bin on your right. Turn left and walk down to the **main road**.

9. With the **Duke of Malborough** on your right, cross the road and turn right. Follow the footpath. When it ends continue on but use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the bend at the bottom of **Mill Lane**. Continue along the main road back to **the shop**.

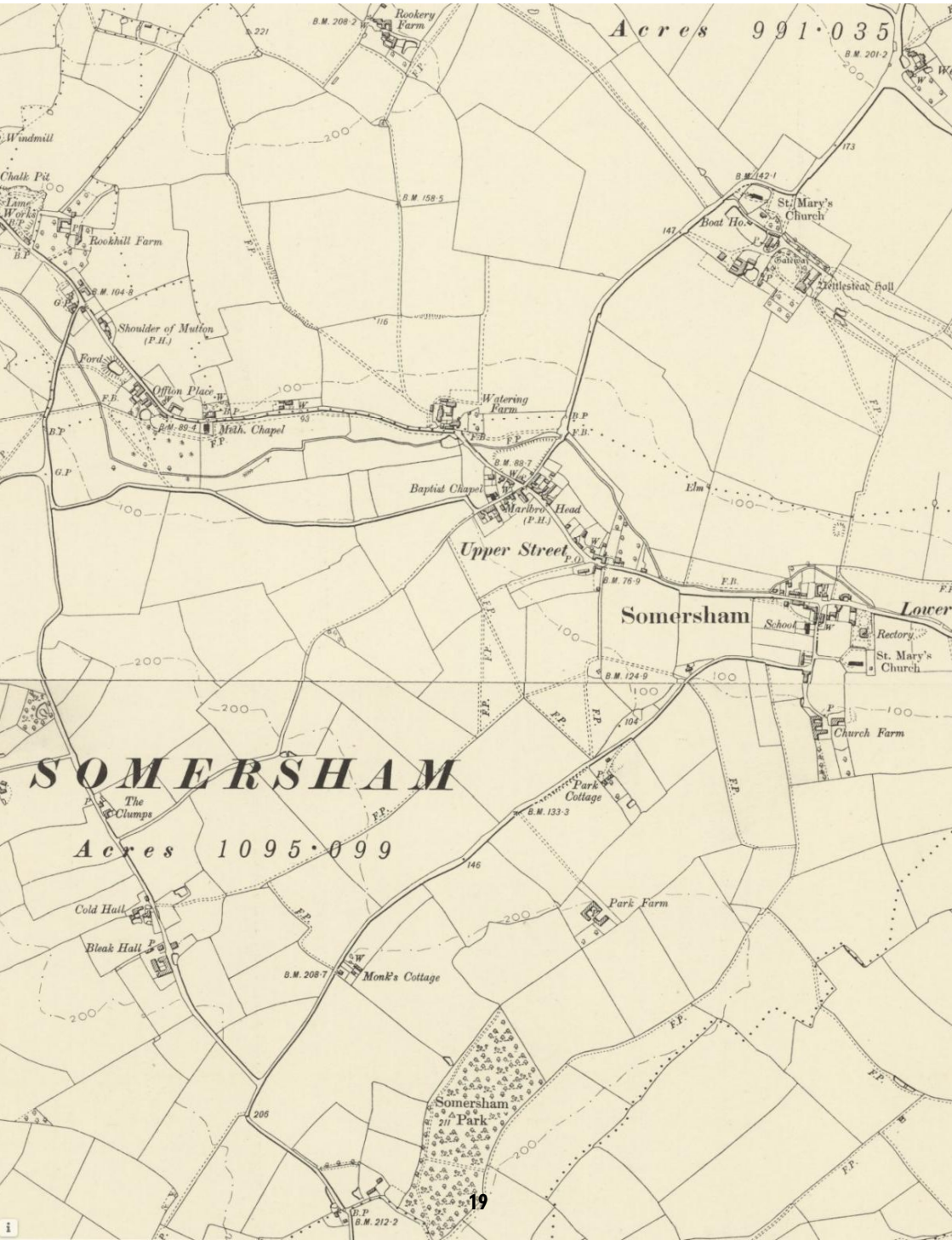


Walking along the Channel toward Chapel Lane



View over Willisham Church

1900's Historic Map - Somersham



Four Churches Grand Circular

Distance: **5.2 miles** (8.4 km)

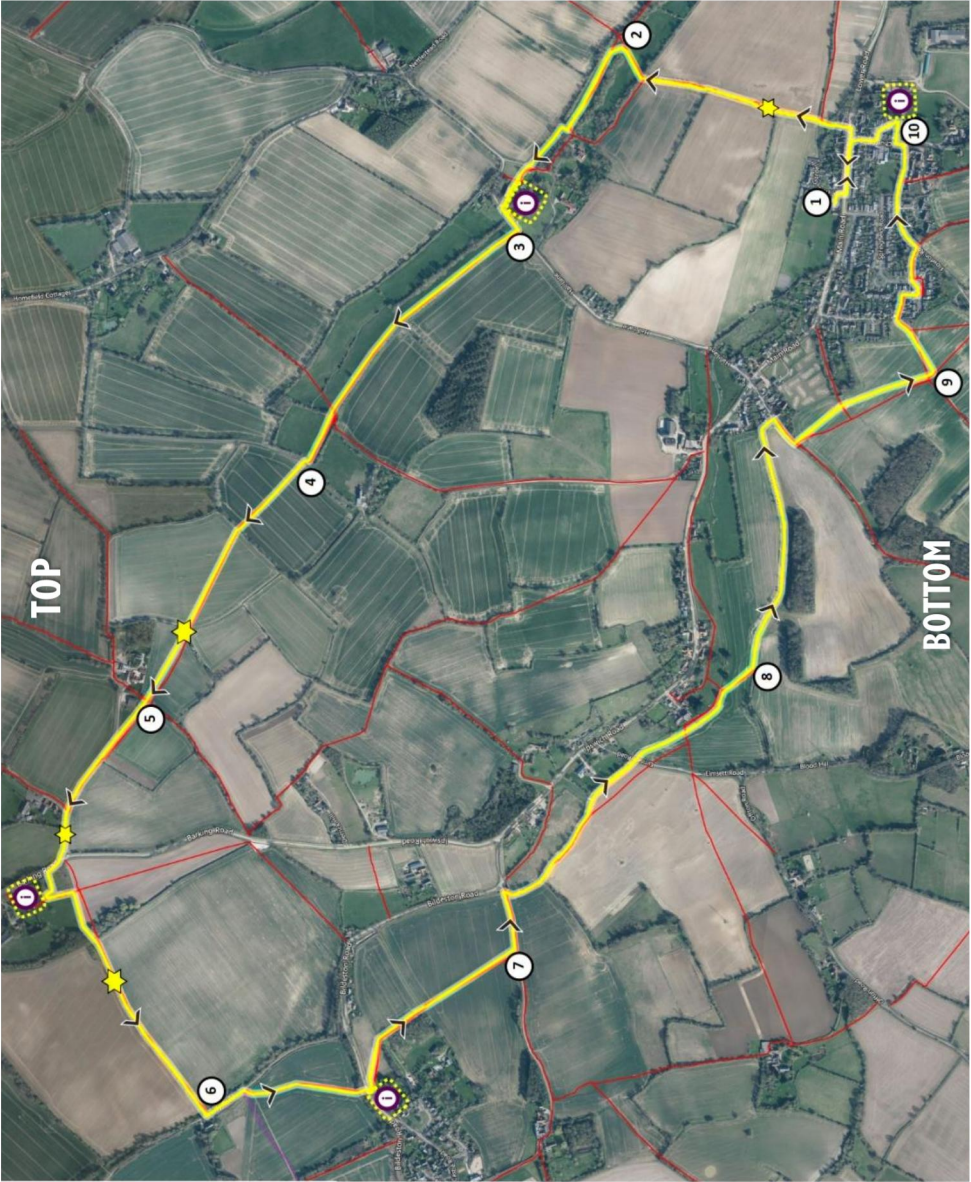
Ascent/gradient: 147ft (45m)

Walk outline: Explore each of the St Marys churches on this charming circular connecting us to our past.

Look out for: Buzzards, red Kites, woodpeckers, kestrels, wrens, deer.

Landscape: Field boundaries, meadowland, farmland, paved footpath, road. 1 stile.

WALK 8



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn left. Continue on the paved footpath until you reach **Church Lane**. Cross the bottom of Church Lane and take the footpath on the opposite side of the road between the houses (signposted). Continue straight over **two bridges** and up a long hill. Keep right of the hedge (at the opening, cross to the left side) and continue all the way down to a **stile**.

2. Walk past the stile and bear slightly right over to another **bridge**, cross it and bear left. Continue straight until you reach the tractor track, then take a slight right and continue along the grass toward the **church**. Cross the track and pass the houses on your left, take a narrow gap emerging into the **graveyard of Nettlestead Church**. Take some time to explore the grounds of this 14th century church. Walk through the churchyard and turn left onto the road.

3. After 60m on the road, turn right at the footpath sign, either climbing over the stile or through the wide gateway if its open. Continue along this **grassland** for approx 800m, look out for buzzards and woodpeckers here. At the end of the grassland you will reach a **tractor track**. Turn right onto it a few paces then turn left through the hedge into a field.

4. Cross the field following the footpath, passing a **telephone pole** in the middle. At the other side, turn right then left over a **bridge**. Continue forward following the trodden path across the field (possibly appearing as double tractor tracks). At the end, stop to admire the views over toward Offton. Walk down the bank and into the next field, following the path down the hill towards a **bridge**. Cross and walk forward onto the grass passing a **barn** on your right.

5. Walk up the **grass hill** and join the hard sandy track. Look left along this stretch for some lovely views. Pass some houses on your right and head toward **Barking road**. At the road, turn right toward **Willisham church** then turn left into the churchyard. Take some time to explore the grounds of this lovely church. Exit through a **gap** in the hedge at the bottom of the churchyard, turn right. Continue then walk over a **bridge**. Follow the track ahead with the hedge on your right down the hill.

6. At the bottom of the hill, cross a **plank bridge** then cross the grass and turn left on the road. Walk for approx 100m then bear right off the road. Walk left along the grass track/bank. When you reach the bridge, you'll see **Offton Church**. Cross the road and explore the grounds of this 14th century church. After, bear right up the hill and follow the path around. At the track, cross and continue straight across the field.



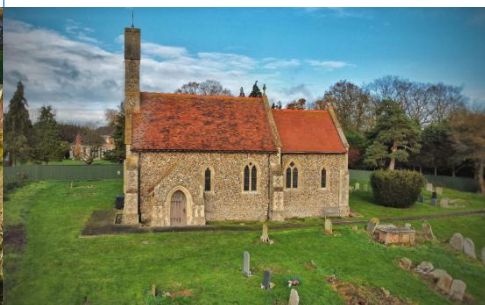
I was lucky to watch a family of red kites flying on this walk

7. At the concrete track, turn left. When you reach the footpath sign at the bottom, turn right and continue with **The Channel** on your left, passing through a gap in the hedge. Continue until you reach **Elmsett road**. Cross the road and continue with the stream on your left, passing a bridge with houses behind it. At the second bridge turn right & cross the field diagonally aiming for between two **telegraph poles**. Walk up the bank and turn left.

8. Continue straight along **Chapel Lane**, following it all the way with a sharp bend right before you reach the paved road and a dog poo bin on your right. Turn right for 80m then left over a **bridge**. Follow the footpath across the field, then continue along the footpath through the next field until you reach four **intersecting footpaths**.

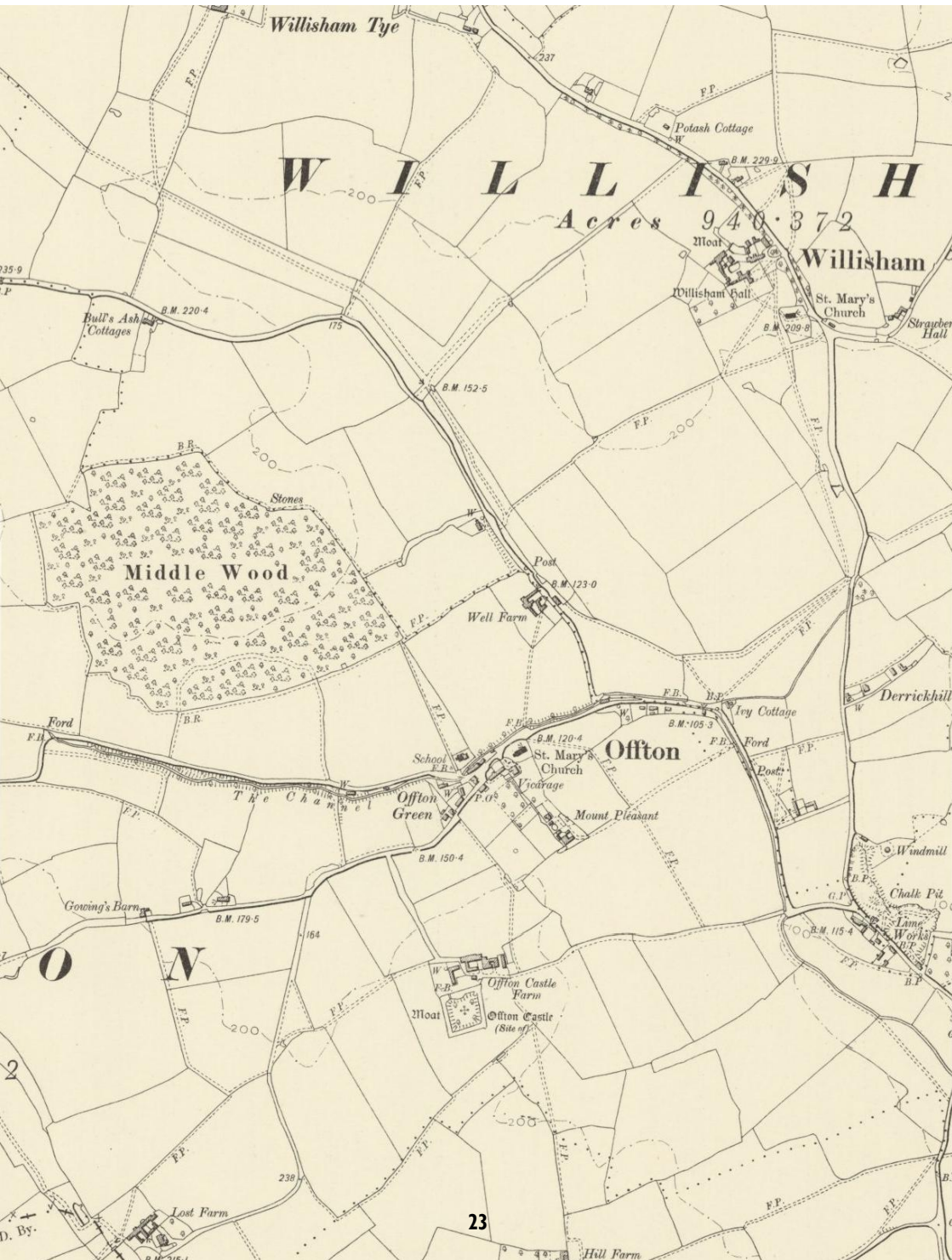
9. Turn left towards the **houses/rooftops**. At the grass, bear left down the hill and turn right into the **alley**. Follow the alley until you reach the road then turn left. Walk the footpath down past a patch of grass on your right, at the bottom bear right and cross the road into another alley (signposted). Cross the **bridge** and up a hill. At the road, turn left and follow until the end then turn left again. Continue then turn right into a lane following the white sign 'to the church'. Go through the gate and explore the 14th century **Somersham Church** (and older porch)

10. Exiting the churchyard through the same gate, turn right between **two garages** and follow the road back to Church Lane road. Turn right and walk down to the main road. When you reach the main road turn left and follow it back to **the shop**.



Nettlestead, Willisham, Offton & Somersham Churches. Aerial photos by Adam Cotterell

1900's Historic Map - Offton & Willisham



Magical Middle Woodland (Offton)

Distance: 6 miles (9.6 km)

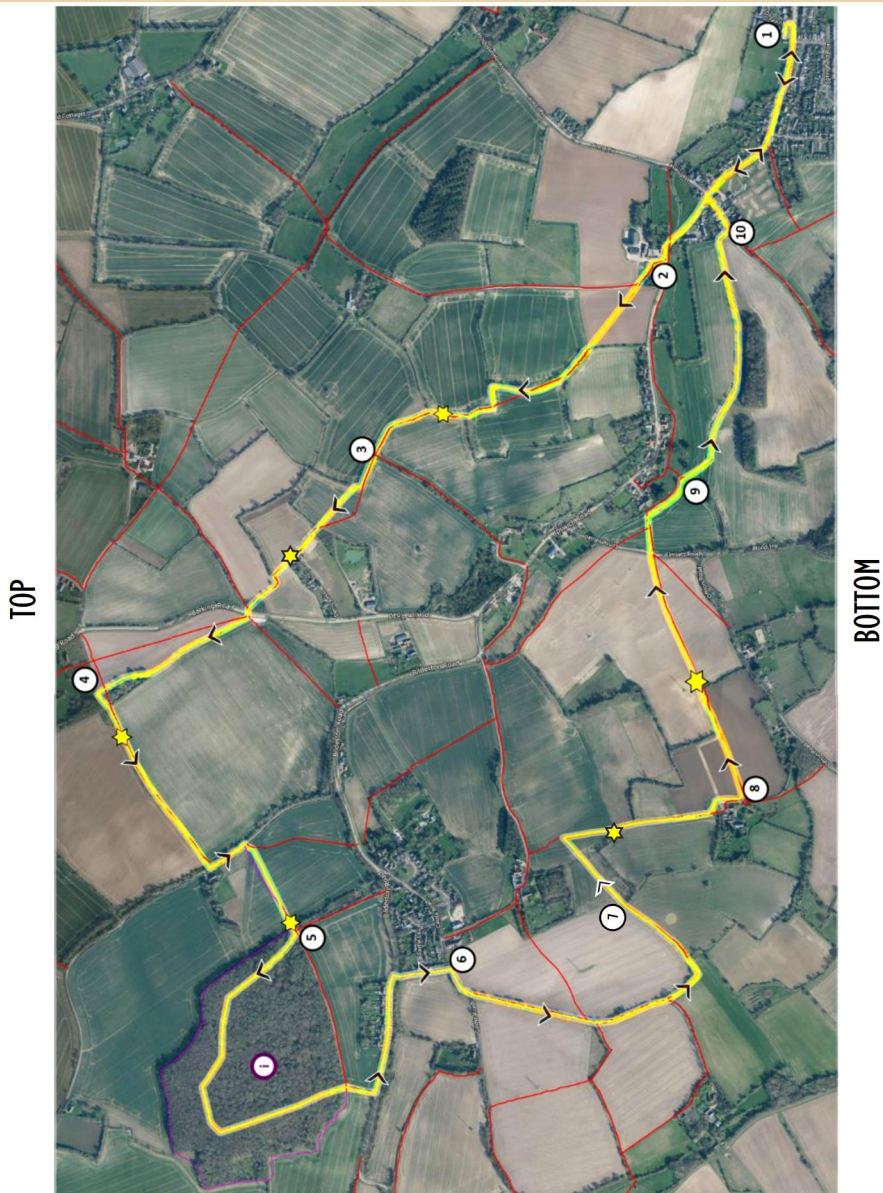
Ascent/gradient: 170ft (52m)

Walk outline: A walk through the ancient Middle Woodland feels like you are stepping into a land of magic.

Look out for: Buzzards, woodpeckers, kestrels, deer, wrens, voles.

Landscape: Field boundaries, woodland, meadowland, farmland, grassland, paved footpath, road. 1 stile.

WALK 9



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn right. Follow the main road (walk along **Brook Way** then back onto the footpath). When you reach the bottom of Mill Lane, using **EXTREME CAUTION** walk the bend on the road and cross to the footpath on the right side of the road. Continue on the footpath past **The Duke of Malborough** pub and Watering Close. After you pass Tudor Grange, turn right onto a **sandy gravel** track.

2. Bear left up the track past some barns on your right. When the track bends right, continue straight into the field crossing it diagonally toward a **bridge**. Cross the bridge and bear left. Continue along the path, down a bank & turn right. With the hedgerow on your right, follow it up (the hedge switching to your left side as you enter the next field up). Walk through a hedge over a plank bridge then continue along the hedgerow around and down a hill.

3. Walk past a bridge on your left and continue up a hill, turn right for a few paces then immediately left through the hedge over a **plank bridge**. Continue directly into the field opposite following the footpath to the other side. Go down a **bridge** through the hedge and continue along the field edge down the hill admiring the views on the way down. Go down some **steps** through the hedge and turn left. Follow the bend right and walk down to **Barking road**. Cross the road bearing left towards the concrete lay-by, then turn right (signposted) & follow the grass path up the hill with the hedgerow on your left.

4. When you reach the top, turn left and cross a **bridge**. Continue down the hill with the hedgerow on your right. At the bottom of the hill, cross a plank bridge then cross the grass and turn left on the road.

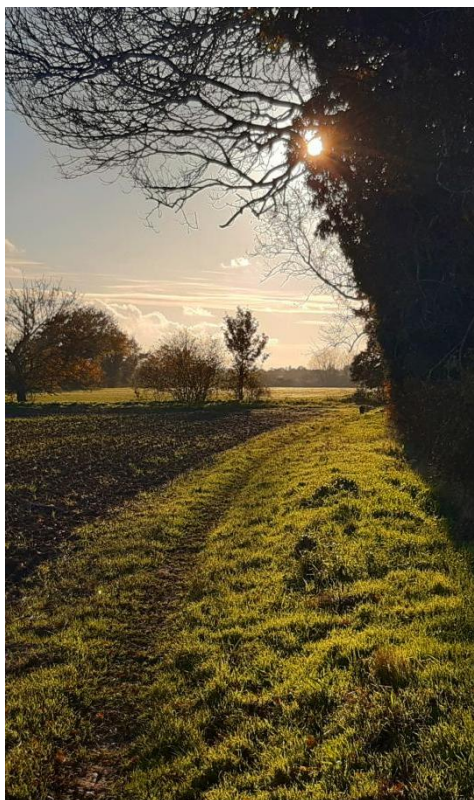
Walk for approx 100m then turn right off the road. Take the right hand track through the field and walk up the hill towards **Middle Woodland**. When you reach the top turn around to admire the views!

5. Enter the **woodland** at the corner where you see an opening. It's like stepping into the magical land of a midsummer nights dream . . . take your time to explore the woodland following the trodden pathway around, making sure you emerge the same side of the woodland that you entered but at the other end. When you exit, walk down the track towards **Bildeston road**. Turn left on the road and walk for approx 300m, passing some houses on your left. When those houses end, on the right hand side look for a gap in the rails and a footpath sign. Walk down some steep **steps** then over a **bridge** and up a short steep incline. Continue along the field edge emerging onto **Castle Road**.

6. Turn right & walk along the road, when you reach the fork, bear left leading to '**Lost Farm**'. Walk up the track and when it bends right, walk left through the hedge emerging into an open field. Keep to the left and follow the hedge around a left bend then continue. Go through the hedge then follow the path. Then go through another hedge over the **plank**.

7. Continue into the field ahead following the tracks, then when the tracks end in the centre of the field, turn right and head toward the patch of meadow on a hill. Walk up the hill toward a **gap** in the hedge at the top (turn to admire the views) and continue with the hedgerow on your right until you reach a **stile**. Cross the stile and bear left diagonally over the grass toward the corner of the **grey barn**. At the barn, turn right and follow the grass path.

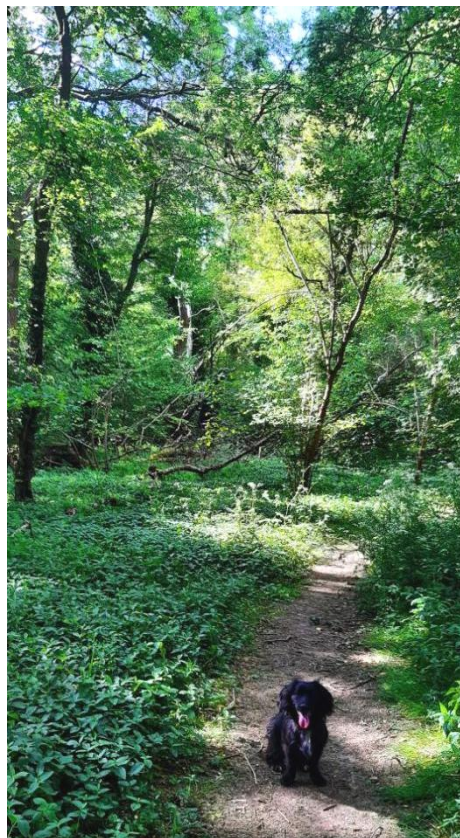
8. When the path starts to bend right slightly (you'll see a metal garden gate on your right) turn left into the field and walk directly past two **telephone poles**. Continue forward down a slope and bear left through a gap onto the grass track. Take a look around at the lovely views! Follow the track down and walk straight into the field ahead toward the row of **telephone poles**. Pass by each pole on your way down. At the bottom go down the bank, cross **Elmsett road** and over the bank on the other side into the field (signposted) follow the path across the field, at the other side turn right. Pass a bridge with houses behind it and continue with the stream on your left.



Beautiful sun setting in the distance

9. At the second bridge turn right & cross the field diagonally aiming for between two **telegraph poles**. Walk up a bank and turn left, continue straight along the length of **Chapel Lane**, bending sharp right before you reach the paved road and a dog poo bin on your right.

10. Turn left and walk down to the main road. With the **Duke of Malborough** on your right, cross the road and turn right. Follow the footpath. When it ends continue on but use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the bend at the bottom of Mill Lane. Continue along following the main road back to **the shop**.

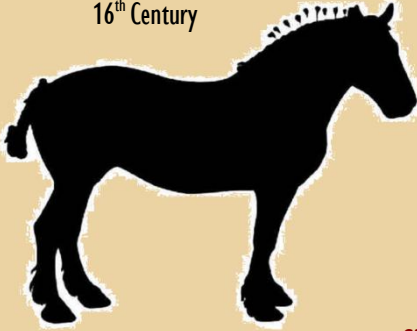


Inside Middle Woodland

10 INTERESTING FACTS About Suffolk

The gentle giant...

Suffolk is proud to offer its own unique, exclusive breed of horse called the Suffolk Punch, and it's thought to have been trotting around the landscape since the early 16th Century



A lot to offer...

4 Seaside Piers, 7 National Trust Attractions & 2 Heritage Castles

Working Tide Mill

The Woodbridge Tide Mill on the river Deben is one of just two working tide mills left in Britain (the other in Eling, Hampshire). A tide mill has existed on this site since 1170, meaning man has been harnessing the power of the waves there for 851 years. Today the mill is a museum with a working waterwheel that is used to mill flour in live demonstrations during the summer

Silk Trade

Suffolk provides much of the UK's silk. It's thanks to Sudbury that the area is able to produce a colossal amount of Chinese silk on an annual basis. It's likely the area will produce over 100 tonnes of silk across the nation. That's all from only four mills working, too!

It's true...folks!

Norfolk and Suffolk get their names from the 'North folk' and 'South folk' of the Kingdom of East Anglia, formed in the fifth century



Proud heritage

Suffolk is home to some of the oldest towns in England. Ipswich, in fact, might rank as one of the oldest. It's thought to have been part of the landscape heading back to Viking times

Put away the brollies!

Suffolk is one of the driest counties in the UK.
Verified by the Met Office

Suffolk is the furthest east you can go in the UK

Travel as far east as you can within mainland Britain and you'll reach Ness Point in Lowestoft. This quiet place is the first place in the country to see the sunrise, and is also home to the tallest wind turbine in the UK

Twinkle...

Jane Taylor, a young poet, wrote perennial bedtime favourite "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" at her residence in Shilling Street, in Lavenham in 1806



Ponds!

Suffolk and Cheshire have the highest densities of ponds in the UK



Bonny Woodland 'A Bonny Day Out'

Distance: 7.85 miles (12.6 km)

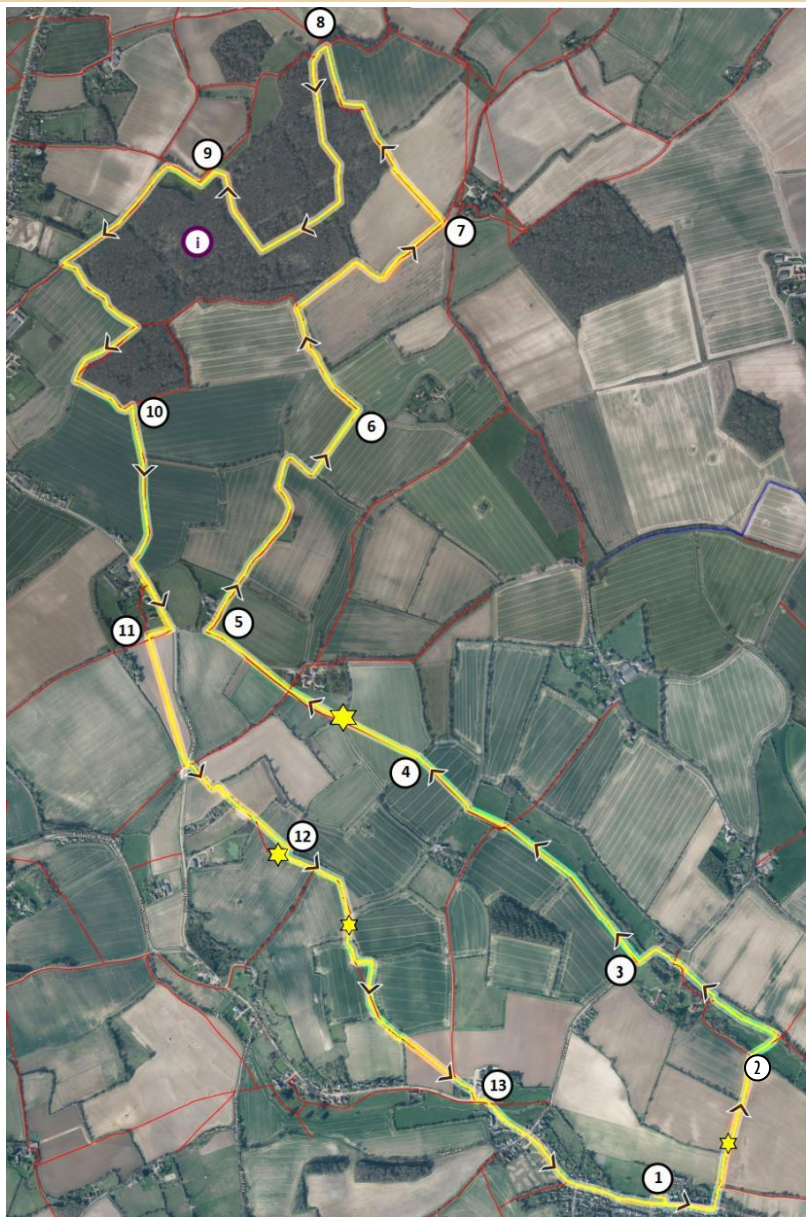
Ascent/gradient: 167ft (51m)

WALK 10

Walk outline: Walk to Bonny Wood for an abundance of wildlife (the woods are often muddy so be prepared).

Look out for: Buzzards, kestrels, wrens, deer, dormice (May-Oct), woodpeckers, butterflies.

Landscape: Field boundaries, woodland, meadowland, farmland, grassland, paved footpath, road. 1 stile.



1. Leaving the shop car park turn right, cross the road and turn left. Continue on the paved footpath until you reach **Church Lane**. Cross the bottom of Church Lane and take the footpath on the opposite side of the road between the houses (signposted). Continue straight over **two bridges** and up a long hill. Keep right of the hedge (at the opening, cross to the left side) and continue all the way down to a **stile**.

2. Walk past the stile and bear slightly right over to another **bridge**, cross it and bear left. Continue straight until you reach the tractor track, then take a slight right and continue along the grass toward the **church**. Cross the track and pass the houses on your left, take a narrow gap emerging into the **graveyard of Nettlestead Church**. Walk through the churchyard and turn left onto the road.

3. After 60m on the road, turn right at the footpath sign, either climbing over the stile or through the wide gateway if it's open. Continue along this **grassland** for approx 800m, look out for buzzards and woodpeckers here. At the end of the grassland you will reach a **tractor track**. Turn right onto it a few paces then turn left through the hedge into a field. Cross the field following the footpath, passing a **telephone pole** in the middle. At the other side, turn right then left over a **bridge**



Views towards Offton

4. Continue forward following the trodden path across the field (possibly appearing as double tractor tracks). At the other side, walk down the bank and into the next field, following the path down the hill towards a **bridge**. Cross and bear slightly right onto the grass passing a **barn** on your right. Walk up the **grass hill** to join the hard sandy track and continue up. Look left along this stretch for some lovely views. Once you reach the houses and a garden hedge on your right, turn sharp right & walk the tarmac road heading towards **Strawberry Hall**. When it turns into a grass track, continue forward into the hedged lane.

5. Continue along this track for 500m. When the land opens up on your right, continue bearing left with the hedge still on your left. At the junction between fields, bear right and cross to the left hand side of the hedgerow and continue to the bottom. Cross a **narrow bridge**, turn right and walk the bend. When you become level with the **telephone poles** in the field on your left, turn left and head towards them. Look left to see Bonny Wood in the distance. At the other end of the field turn left.



Stanley Smelling the Daffodils

6. With the hedge on your right, keep walking until about **30m before** you reach the woodland, then turn right over a **bridge** and continue along the edge of the wood. At the end (you'll see a private gate into the woods on your left) turn right and follow the public footpath around a left bend. Continue on this track, after approx 300m go over a **bridge through the hedge** on your left (if you make it to a farm you've missed the bridge and gone too far).

7. Follow the path across the field (passing a **pylon** on your left) heading for the corner of the woodland. Keep the woodland on your left and follow the path down and through a little hedged ditch. (Look out for fritillary butterflies along this stretch). Continue along the woodland edge following the bends until you see a **footpath post marker**.

8. At the post marker, turn sharp left into **Bonny Wood** following the wide double track. At the information sign, turn left into the woodland through a **kissing gate**. IT IS OFTEN VERY MUDDY/BOGGY ON THE WOODLAND TRAILS SO BE PREPARED! When you reach a **green arrow marker post**, you can either turn left for a longer route or continue straight on taking you to a right bend out of the woods.

Longer route- turning left at the green marker post, continue along the path into the dense woodland. When you emerge onto a wider more open track, turn right. You'll pass a **yellow arrow marker post directing you to continue along the track. When you reach the **private woodland** sign where the track ahead is fenced off, turn right and walk toward the woodland exit * When you exit the woodland into the long stretch of **grassland**, walk straight over to the track then turn left.*

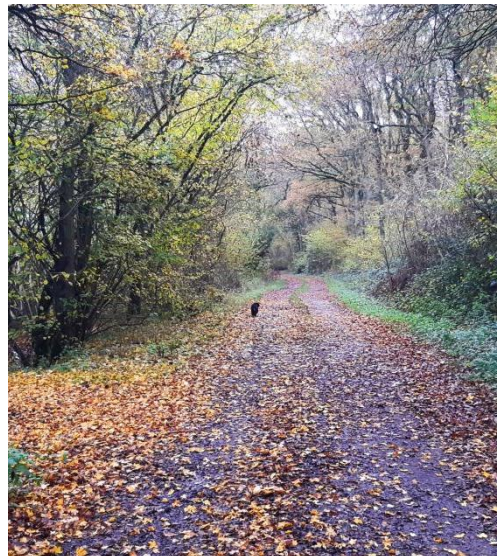
9. Follow the bends around, keeping the hedge on your right. Enter the wide track lined with trees and continue. When you reach the **open crop field**, turn sharp left and keep following the woodland edge. When you see the footpath marker post ahead, don't go into the woods but follow the track around the right bend and continue along the woodland edge. At the private land sign, turn left over a grass covered **bridge** and continue. When you reach the small triangle patch of grass, bear left and walk through a little cut through to the other side of the **ditch** then turn right.



Inside Bonny Wood Nature Reserve

11. As you reach the end of the churchyard, turn left into the field and walk down its centre towards the **concrete lay-by** and Barking road. Turn left at the bottom and cross the road slightly left. Follow the footpath sign right up the hill. At the top turn left a few paces then right up some **steps** hidden in the hedge. Continue straight along the field edge (turn around to see the views). Cross another **bridge** through the hedge then follow the footpath straight across the field towards the hedge opposite.

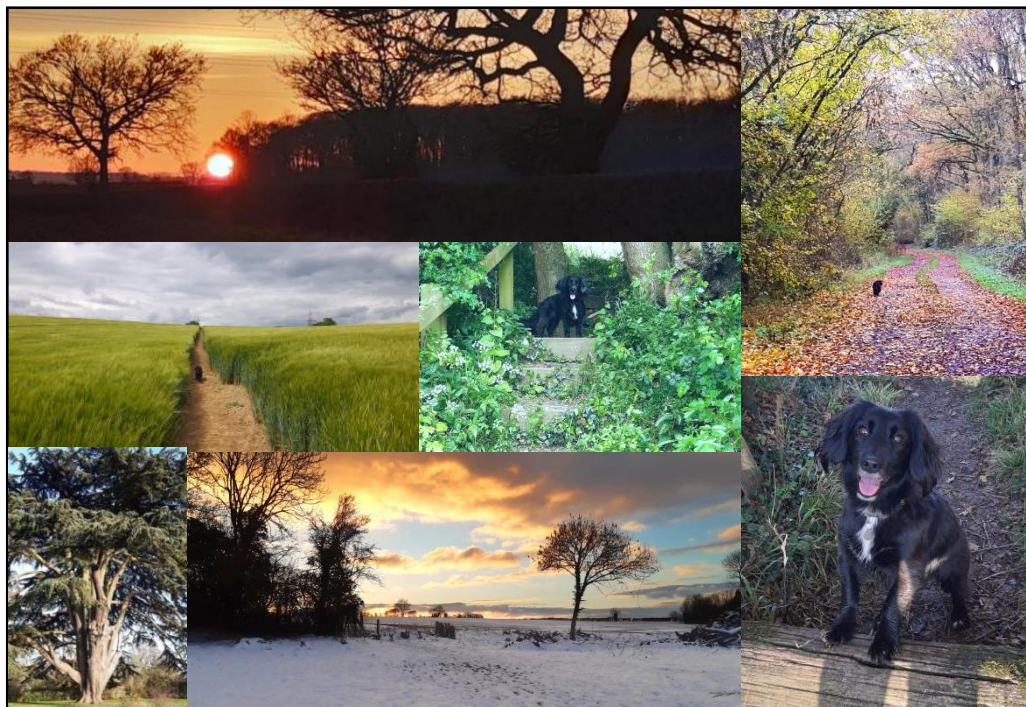
13. Take the paved footpath left of the road. Walk past Watering Close and **The Duke of Marlborough pub**. Continue on the footpath, when it ends continue but use **EXTREME CAUTION** walking the bend at the bottom of **Mill Lane**. Continue along the main road back to **the shop**.



Autumn colours around the woods

Thank you to everyone who encouraged me to write this guide.

I hope you enjoy these walks as much as i do!



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All information correct at time of printing - 2022



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