

# EXPLORE THE UPPER STOUR

Walk Length: 11.5 miles (18.5 km)  
Please use OS Explorer Map number 210



DEDHAM VALE  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
& STOUR VALLEY PROJECT

## An Introduction to the Upper Stour Walk

The Upper Stour circular walk uses a 4 mile stretch of the Stour Valley Path along the valley floor then heads up out of the river valley onto the arable plateau of a rolling Suffolk landscape. The walk exchanges water meadows, mills and cricket bat willow plantations for the trees, hedgerows and the wide open vistas of the exposed clay lands. It is near where the spring fed watershed gives rise to the embryonic river Stour as it starts its journey down to the sea. Haverhill is a good place to start and end this walk and has good transport links. The walk includes the villages of Kedington, Great and Little Thurlow and Withersfield.

### Points of interest

Between **Withersfield** and 'the Thurlows' the land rises to 400 feet above sea level and this rich boulder-clay soil supports cereal, sugar-beet and oil seed rape production. Close scrutiny of an Ordnance Survey map will provide evidence of past occupation, with many moated farm houses and the hint of history in names such as Temple End Stream. The source of the River Stour is about two miles north west of Withersfield.



Great Thurlow

**Great and Little Thurlow** sit comfortably in the sheltered Stour Valley. The Soane family dynasty, founded in the 1500's, included Sir Stephen Soane (1540-1619) who re-glazed and restored the great North Window in St Paul's

Cathedral. Great Thurlow Hall was the childhood home of the founder of the Sue Ryder charity. The iron bridge beside the ford at Great Thurlow was cast by R Garrett and Son at their Leiston works in 1851. A view of All Saints Church was painted by Sir Alfred Munnings and the painting is held in The Munnings Collection at The Sir Alfred Munnings Art Museum at Castle House, Dedham.

At **Kedington** the Church Walk is lined with horse chestnut and lime trees, and was used by the rector to drive his carriage from the old rectory in Rectory Road to the church. If you go into the churchyard you can see some iron crosses that mark the graves of villagers who died in the Risbridge workhouse in Kedington. You will notice the clock on the church tower has only one hand: it has not fallen off but was made like this. The interior has been described as "a village Westminster Abbey".



St Peter and St Paul's

View from Kedington



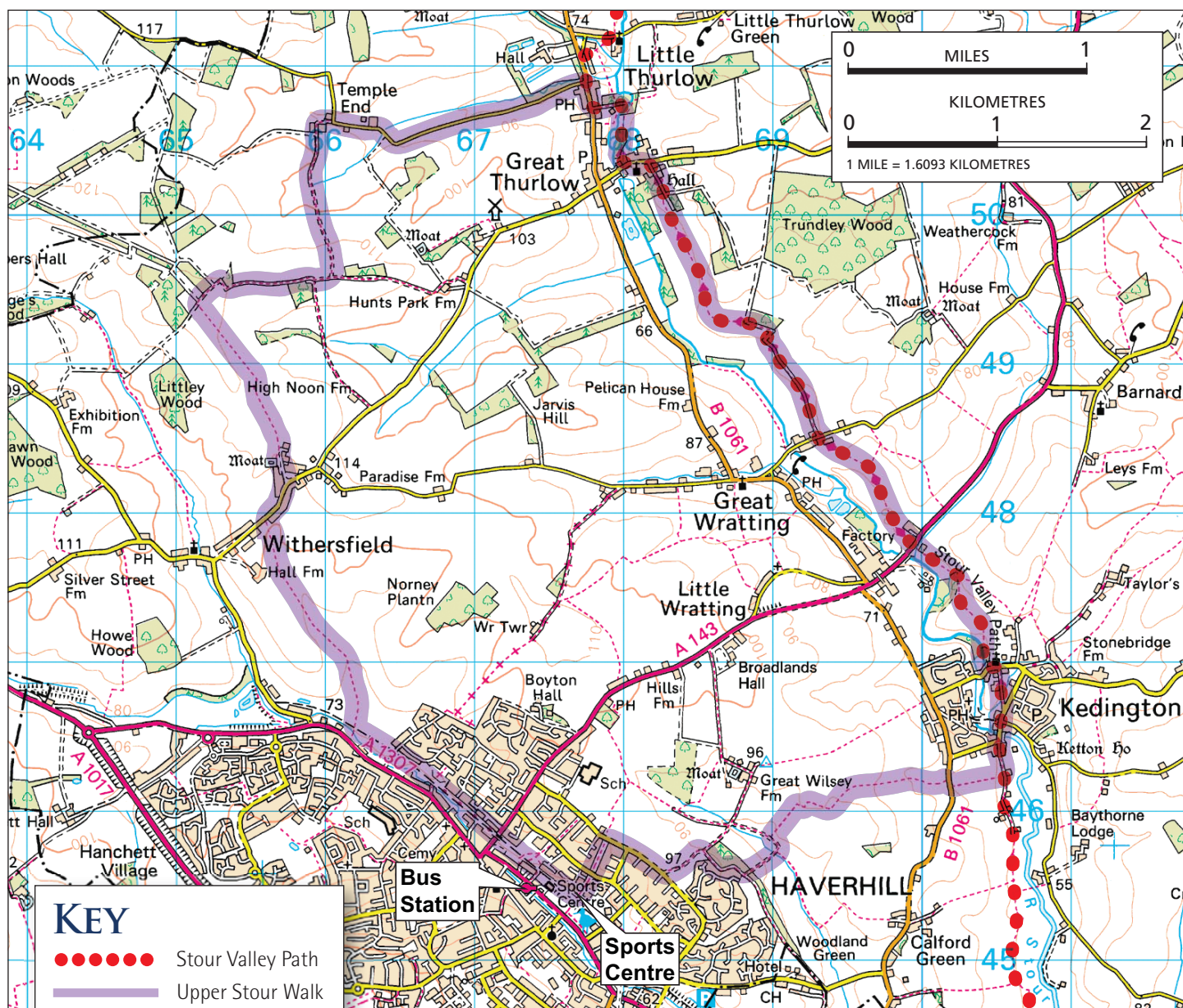
As you approach Haverhill you pass a green area where there used to be a windmill with a very distinctive circular sail. It was so recognisable that during the Second World War it was thought that the German air force would use the mill as a navigation aid and the mill was dismantled.

At **Haverhill** the old railway track is now a well-used path and wildlife corridor – the line used to run between Sudbury and Cambridge but was closed in 1967. Through the trees you catch glimpses of Victorian Haverhill, most notably the spire of the Old Independent Church and the old Town Hall now made into an Arts Centre. This building was built by the Gurteen family for the benefit of the town. Gurteen's was established in 1784 producing men's clothing and is still manufacturing today.



STOUR VALLEY PATH





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**Terrain:** This walk is on footpaths, tracks and minor roads. Underfoot it is generally 'good' although seasonal growth may need to be allowed for and some sections under trees often remain wet.



This leaflet was produced  
November 2012

### Refreshments

Along the route there are refreshments, especially at Haverhill. There are pubs at Kedington and Great Thurlow, and a village store at Kedington.

### Car Parking

Various car parks can be found in Haverhill, including at the Bus Station and Sports Centre. Alternatively park at one of the villages along the route.

### Transport

[www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk](http://www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk)

**Train:** The nearest stations are Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds.

**Bus:** There is a regular Cambridge-Haverhill bus. The Bury St Edmunds-Haverhill bus also stops at Great Wratting and Kedington.

An on-demand bus service operates in the area.

Advance booking must be made.

[www.suffolkonboard.com/suffolk\\_links\\_demand\\_responsive\\_transport](http://www.suffolkonboard.com/suffolk_links_demand_responsive_transport)

### Please follow the Countryside Code

- Be a responsible dog owner
- Protect plants and animals, prevent fires and take your litter home
- Leave things as you find them and follow any signs

