

# FAMILY ACTIVITIES in The Stour Valley

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- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Stour Valley and surrounding Wool Towns
- Stour Valley Path
- Wool Towns
- Visitor Information
- Place to stay - Camping and glamping

## 3 FOXEARTH MEADOWS NATURE RESERVE

Foxearth, Sudbury CO10 7HZ  
A haven for wildlife where families can get closer to nature and follow a quiz trail.  
[arocho.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/foxeath-meadows](http://arocho.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/foxeath-meadows)  
Reserve Manager 07548 209652

**SVEN**

## 2 CLARE CASTLE COUNTRY PARK

Malting Lane, Clare CO10 8NW  
35 acres for relaxation: River Stour, ponds, castle ruins, railway heritage, nature, cafe, play areas.  
[clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk](http://clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk)  
01787 277902

**SVEN**

## 1 EAST TOWN PARK

Coups Road, Haverhill CB9 7UR  
50 acres of wildlife haven for all the family to explore, picnic and play.  
[westsuffolk.gov.uk/leisure/Parks/easttownpark.cfm](http://westsuffolk.gov.uk/leisure/Parks/easttownpark.cfm)  
01440 710745

**SVEN**

## The Ultimate Family Camping Experience

The Stour Valley offers a great range of family-friendly places to stay, from 'off-grid' wild camping and glamping adventures to traditional campsites with more home comforts. Use your campsite as a base to explore the surrounding area and let your adventure begin!

## 1. SUFFOLK RETREATS

Hundon CO10 8DR  
Luxury yurts, handcrafted in traditional Mongolian style, with authentic lanterns and candles.  
[suffolkretreats.co.uk](http://suffolkretreats.co.uk)

## 2. RUM BRIDGE FISHERY AND GLAMPING COMPLEX

Clare CO10 8HG  
Tents, bell tents, pods and lodges - camping and glamping retreat, fishing lakes and tackle shop.  
[rumbridge.co.uk](http://rumbridge.co.uk)

## 3. CLOCKHOUSE FARM CARAVAN PARK

Glemsford CO10 7PZ  
Caravan and camping site with separate area for tents so children can play safely.  
[clockhousefarmcaravanpark.co.uk](http://clockhousefarmcaravanpark.co.uk)

## 4. WILLOWMERE CAMPING & CARAVAN PARK

Little Cornard CO10 0NN  
Caravan and camping site close to the River Stour, surrounded by lakes and meres.  
[willowmerecaravanpark.com](http://willowmerecaravanpark.com)

## 5. LITTLE ROPERS WOODLAND CAMPING

Bures C08 5JX  
A 'wild' camping experience, a small parcel of woodland in a tranquil rural setting.  
[littleroperswoodlandcamping.co.uk](http://littleroperswoodlandcamping.co.uk)

## 6. RUSHBANKS FARM CARAVAN & CAMPING SITE

Wissington CO6 4NA

On the banks of the River Stour - camping, glamping, campfires, canoe hire.  
[rushbankscampsite.co.uk](http://rushbankscampsite.co.uk)

## 7. LOWER DAIRY FARM SHOP

Nayland CO6 4JS  
Nearly Wild Camping - get off grid and back to nature at this secluded campsite beside the River Stour.  
[lowerdairyfarm.co.uk](http://lowerdairyfarm.co.uk)

## 8. EDWARDSTONE WHITE HORSE

Edwardstone CO10 5PX  
A pub and microbrewery, with self-catering cottages, camping and caravan site.  
[edwardstonewhitehorse.co.uk](http://edwardstonewhitehorse.co.uk)

## 9. POLSTEAD CAMPING & CARAVANNING CLUB SITE

Polstead CO6 5BZ  
Caravan/camping pitches with children's play area.  
[polsteadtouring.com](http://polsteadtouring.com)  
[campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/campsites/uk/suffolk/polstead/polstead-camping-and-caravanning-club-site](http://campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/campsites/uk/suffolk/polstead/polstead-camping-and-caravanning-club-site)



## 5 KENTWELL HALL

Long Melford, Sudbury CO10 9BA  
Kentwell Hall runs family events throughout the year including Children's Weekends and Historical Re-creations.  
[kentwell.co.uk](http://kentwell.co.uk)  
01787 310207

## 4 MELFORD COUNTRY PARK

Borley Road, Long Melford CO10 9HH  
Walk, cycle, picnic and enjoy exploring 8 hectares of open space, woodland and riverbank.  
[facebook.com/LongMelfordCountryPark](http://facebook.com/LongMelfordCountryPark)  
01787 378084

## 11 AMY'S ACORN'S FOREST SCHOOL & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Old School Wood, Gt Walsingham CO10 0TJ  
Forest School toddler sessions, family events, kids only days and birthday parties in the woods.  
[facebook.com/Amy-Acorns-Forest-School-Outdoor-Activities-326345227999203](http://facebook.com/Amy-Acorns-Forest-School-Outdoor-Activities-326345227999203)

## 12 DYEHOUSE FIELD WOOD AND THE LAVENHAM WALK

Bury Road, Lavenham CO10 9QG  
Self-guided family orienteering at this beautiful woodland, and a walk along a disused railway line.  
01787 247728

## 6 SUDBURY WATER MEADOWS

Melford Road, Sudbury CO10 1JT  
Beautiful scenery and riverside trails. The tranquil landscape includes the River Stour, wildlife, mill cottages and a weir.  
[sudburycommonlandscharity.org](http://sudburycommonlandscharity.org)  
07971 665870

## 7 STOUR VALLEY ADVENTURE CENTRE

Riverside Restaurant, 43 Cross Street, Sudbury CO10 2DL  
Guided or self-guided canoe, kayak, paddleboard, bicycle, foot and camping adventures.  
[stourvalleyadventurecentre.com](http://stourvalleyadventurecentre.com)  
01206 700707

## 8 SUDBURY RIVER TRIPS - RIVER STOUR TRUST

The Granary, Quay Lane, Sudbury CO10 2AN  
Scheduled and chartered boat trips and family events on this section of the River Stour.  
[riverstourtrust.org/river-trips](http://riverstourtrust.org/river-trips)  
01787 313199

## 9 DAWS HALL NATURE RESERVE

Henny Road, Lamarsh CO8 5EX  
A wildlife haven dedicated to environmental education. Families are invited to enjoy set open days.  
[dawshallnature.co.uk](http://dawshallnature.co.uk)  
01787 269766

## 10 WHITE DRAGON ARCHERY

Colne Rd, Bures CO8 5DJ  
An archery experience - offering have-a-go activity sessions, coaching and hands-on history.  
[whitedragonarchery.com](http://whitedragonarchery.com)  
07724 912334

## 14 THE KITCHEN@BOATHOUSE

Mill Lane, Dedham CO7 6DH  
Cafe/Bistro with traditional rowing boat hire on the beautiful River Stour.  
[dedhamboathouse.com](http://dedhamboathouse.com)  
01206 323253

## 15 CANOEING ON THE RIVER STOUR - ANGLIA ADVENTURES

Flatford & Dedham area  
Family canoeing adventures - book a Mini-Canoe Expedition  
[angliaadventures.co.uk](http://angliaadventures.co.uk)  
07594 304400

## 16 DEDHAM VALE RIVER TRIPS - RIVER STOUR TRUST

Opposite Bridge Cottage, Flatford CO7 6UL  
Scheduled and chartered boat trips on the Dedham Vale section of the River Stour.  
[riverstourtrust.org/river-trips](http://riverstourtrust.org/river-trips)  
01787 313199

## 17 RSPB FLATFORD WILDLIFE GARDEN

Flatford Rd, East Bergholt CO7 6UL  
A family-friendly wildlife garden designed to inspire visitors with ideas for their own gardens.  
[rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/flatford-wildlife-garden](http://rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/flatford-wildlife-garden)  
01206 391153

## 18 THE FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL, FLATFORD MILL

East Bergholt CO7 6UL  
The Centre provides a variety of activities for individuals, families and school groups.  
[field-studies-council.org/flatfordmill](http://field-studies-council.org/flatfordmill)  
01206 391153

## 19 FLATFORD, NATIONAL TRUST

Flatford, East Bergholt CO7 6UL  
Easy access for all the family to beautiful countryside and riverside walks.  
[nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford)  
01206 298260

## 20 CONSTABLE PARK

Riversend, Bergholt Road, Brantham CO11 1QR  
Facilities include: riverside café, kayak and paddleboard hire and other action adventure activities, glamping and cabins to stay.  
[facebook.com/constablepark.co.uk](http://facebook.com/constablepark.co.uk)  
07594 304400  
**OPENING SUMMER 2021**

## 13ARGER FEN & SPOUSE'S VALE

Near Assington, Sudbury CO8 5BN  
Spectacular springtime bluebells. Families can explore the woods and spot the nature that lives there.  
[suffolkwildlifetrust.org/arger-fen](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org/arger-fen)  
01473 890089

## Stour Valley Education Network

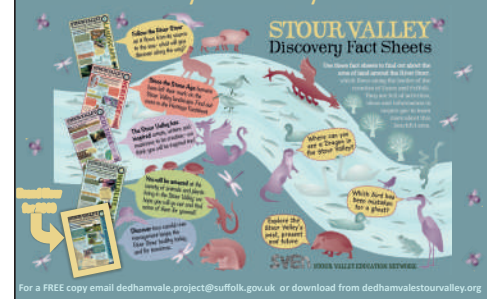
## GO...

Pond dipping  
Bug hunting  
Nature walking  
Bat detecting  
Scavenger hunting  
Arts & crafting  
Canoe or Boating  
Wild camping  
Stargazing

**SVEN**

The Stour Valley Education Network (SVEN) is a group of outdoor learning organisations from across the Stour Valley who are involved in environmental education. As well as working with schools and groups, SVEN run a range of activities for children and their families where they connect and learn about their local environment. Visit [dedhamvalestourvalley.org/managing/projects/sven](http://dedhamvalestourvalley.org/managing/projects/sven) for SVEN partner contact details and to download a copy of the Stour Valley Discovery Factsheets on the Valley's heritage, culture, landscape, wildlife and River Stour.

## Stour Valley Discovery Factsheets





TOP FAMILY ACTIVITIES IN THE STOUR VALLEY

Exploring at a slower pace... Take a family nature walk and let the children run wild and free. You can explore the Valley and Wool Towns by foot using quiet country lanes and public paths. There are a range of guided and self-guided walks, see below for more information:



- **Hadleigh Town Guides**  
visithadleighsuffolk.co.uk
- **Sudbury Town Guides**  
sudburytowncouncil.co.uk
- **Lavenham Town Guides**  
lavenham.onesuffolk.net/hub/visitor-information
- **Dyehouse Field Wood and The Lavenham Walk** (see Map for details)
- **Clare Walkers** (programme of self-guided, weekly health walks and volunteer-led walks) visit-clare.co.uk
- **Suffolk Threads Trails**  
visitsuffolk.com/blog/suffolk-threads-trails.aspx
- **Stour Valley Path**, a 60 mile long-distance route that can be broken down into short sections for the whole family to enjoy. A series of 'Walks off the Stour Valley Path' and short circular walks around several picturesque Stour Valley towns and villages can be downloaded here:  
dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting

- **Discover Suffolk**  
discoversuffolk.org.uk/walking
- **Suffolk Walking Festival**  
suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk
- **Essex Walks**  
essexwalks.com
- **Bringing heritage alive**  
Whether it be climbing to the top of the castle motte at Clare Castle Country Park or going to the splendid Kentwell Hall, the history and archaeology of the Stour Valley tells some fascinating stories. Families can try archery or look for the legendary Bures dragon etched on the hillside. The dragon is best viewed from St Stephen's Chapel CO8 5LD where visitors can also see stained glass and medieval graffiti. Check website before visiting - the chapel is on private ground with access by permissive footpath.  
bures-online.co.uk/chapel/chapel\_barn.htm

The Wool Towns of the Stour Valley - Clare, Long Melford, Sudbury, Lavenham and Hadleigh are some of the best-preserved historic towns and prettiest villages in the region. Exploring them can feel like stepping back in time to the 15th century, when the wool trade was at its peak. See *Wool Towns of the Stour Valley* guide for more...

**Paddling the River Stour**  
The textile industry was focused along the River Stour and its tributaries. Riverside mills (some still stand today) processed the wool and working barges, known locally as Stour Lighters, navigated the Stour. With the river gently meandering through this outstandingly beautiful landscape, it's a special place to simply 'be' in the moment. Watch and listen to the water

rushing over a sluice gate or play pooh sticks on a bridge. Take a canoe or boat trip through one of the operators and enjoy the tranquillity of being on the water - spot a streaking blue kingfisher and damselflies dancing over the water.



- Getting closer to nature**
- Watch a 'Constable cloud'
  - Hug a tree
  - See ducks dabble
  - Hear wood pigeons 'coo'
  - Find a 'whomping' willow
  - Look for rainbows
  - Jump in muddy puddles
  - Throw fallen leaves in the air
  - Find colours in nature
  - Look for animal tracks
  - Spot 5 different leaves
  - Spot 10 different birds



Experiencing nature is good for people's health and wellbeing. Come rain or shine, the Stour Valley provides a home for over 1,500 plants, 175 birds and almost 1,000 moths, including iconic species such as black poplar and cricket bat willow. The area has many nature reserves, designated wildlife sites and protected areas, including the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural

Beauty, which all support numerous wildlife conservation initiatives.

Go on an adventure outside before sunrise and listen to the dawn chorus (springtime is the loudest!) Follow nature trails to see the wildlife that is living in the Stour Valley. In spring the woodlands are covered in a carpet of bluebells and in summertime meadows and verges are full of orchids and wildflowers. See activity providers overleaf and *Nature and Wildlife in the Stour Valley* guide for more...

**Stour Valley Food**  
Treat yourselves to edible delights from award-winning farmers markets and top-quality pubs and restaurants, cafes, artisan food and 'field to fork' producers (for the grown-ups only - pop into one of four vineyards producing a Stour Valley tippie!). Pack a picnic and choose your perfect spot - whether it be a spectacular view of the Stour Valley Landscape, nestled in a woodland, by a river bank or historic building. See *Stour Valley Food Trail* for more...

**Big night skies - spend a night under the stars**  
Get wrapped up and go outside at dusk when skies are clear. Watch for barn owls gliding over tussocky grass and bats flitting around your heads as they begin a night's hunting, except in winter when bats hibernate. Families can enjoy the drama of a beautiful sunset and experience a campfire with one of the permitted campsites or adventure providers. Listen for wildlife of the night - you may hear tawny owl or little owl hooting, fox or muntjac calling, or if lucky, the loud snuffles of a hunting hedgehog. **Go stargazing and spot a shooting star** - away from the streetlights the Stour Valley has some of the most beautiful night-time skies.

VISITING THE STOUR VALLEY

The Stour Valley is a nationally significant area for landscape and heritage, positioned on the border between Essex and Suffolk - and under an hour by train from London. It's the perfect getaway for families to relax and reconnect with beautiful surroundings, get closer to nature, see the local sights and get active in the great outdoors. The Stour Valley offers a wide range of activities for the whole family to enjoy including exploring picture-perfect villages and countryside by foot or bicycle, paddling on the River Stour and stepping back in time with the area's special heritage attractions and historic towns.

**Visit the Stour Valley for a Family Adventure**  
The Stour Valley offers memory-making experiences and adventures for the whole family to enjoy from getting closer to nature, with wildlife themed activities, to wild camping and glamping under the stars. Get active on the water by taking a canoe or boat trip, try your hand at archery, find a castle, and glimpse a dragon on the hillside. You can step back in time with a visit to the picturesque Wool Towns or majestic manor houses. Consider staying a while longer to relax and enjoy the area, exploring at a slower pace by foot or bicycle.

VISITING THE STOUR VALLEY

Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project  
Tel: 01394 445225

Please consider travelling sustainably where possible. There are good links to the Stour Valley on the Gainsborough rail line between Marks Tey and Sudbury, and there are bus routes throughout the area. For up to date local public transport timetables, contact Traveline on: traveline.info or 0871 200 22 33.

For detailed maps of the area, use Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No's. 196 (Sudbury, Hadleigh and the Dedham Vale), 210 (Newmarket and Haverhill), 211 (Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket) and 195 (Braintree and Saffron Walden)

Email: dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk  
Web: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

Family Activities in THE STOUR VALLEY



Explore the Stour Valley with a series of guides