



The Cock Inn, Polstead

**An attractive route that takes in some quaint villages and hamlets. There are a number of hills that are moderate to hard, but with some great places along the route to rest and enjoy the views over the Stour Valley.**

The route starts ★ in the delightful village of Stoke-by-Nayland where its historic wealth from the woollen trade can clearly be seen in some of the fine buildings. Parking is limited with street parking only in the village.

As you leave the village head towards Withermarsh Green and onto Gifford's Hall Park ①. Look out for the magnificent Tudor gate house which gives access to the inner court of Gifford's Hall, a Grade 1 listed building.

Past Gifford's Hall Park the two routes split, with the touring route heading up Higham Hill towards Higham and skirting the village of Lower Raydon before arriving at Shelley. Here you will find the moated Shelley Hall ② a lovely grade II listed building dating back to the early 16th century.

The short route heads past Gifford's Hall Park towards Snakes Wood ③. This is an ancient woodland and nature reserve. A lovely place to stop for a rest!

Both routes then re-join and pass Shelly Priory Farm before heading on to Polstead. Here you will find the medieval church of St Mary's ④. This building incorporates Norman and Anglo Saxon elements while the site itself dates back to the time of St Cedd's legendary -preaching under the Gospel Oak, in the grounds of Polstead Hall in circa AD 653. This church is listed in Sir Simon Jenkins' 'One Thousand Best English Churches'.

Splitting once again, the short route heads back towards Stoke by Nayland with the touring route heading down a quiet lane towards Stoke Priory ⑤. This private property has a nine-acre garden with lovely views over the Suffolk

countryside. The garden is open by appointment and as part of the National Garden Scheme.

The route then continues towards Nayland and eventually loops back to Stoke by Nayland. Here you will find the fine 'wool church' of St Mary's ⑥. Built on the site of a 10th century Minster, the church was rebuilt in the 15th century, and renovated in 1865. Its tower dominates the surrounding area and the church tower features in a number of John Constable's paintings.

### REFRESHMENTS

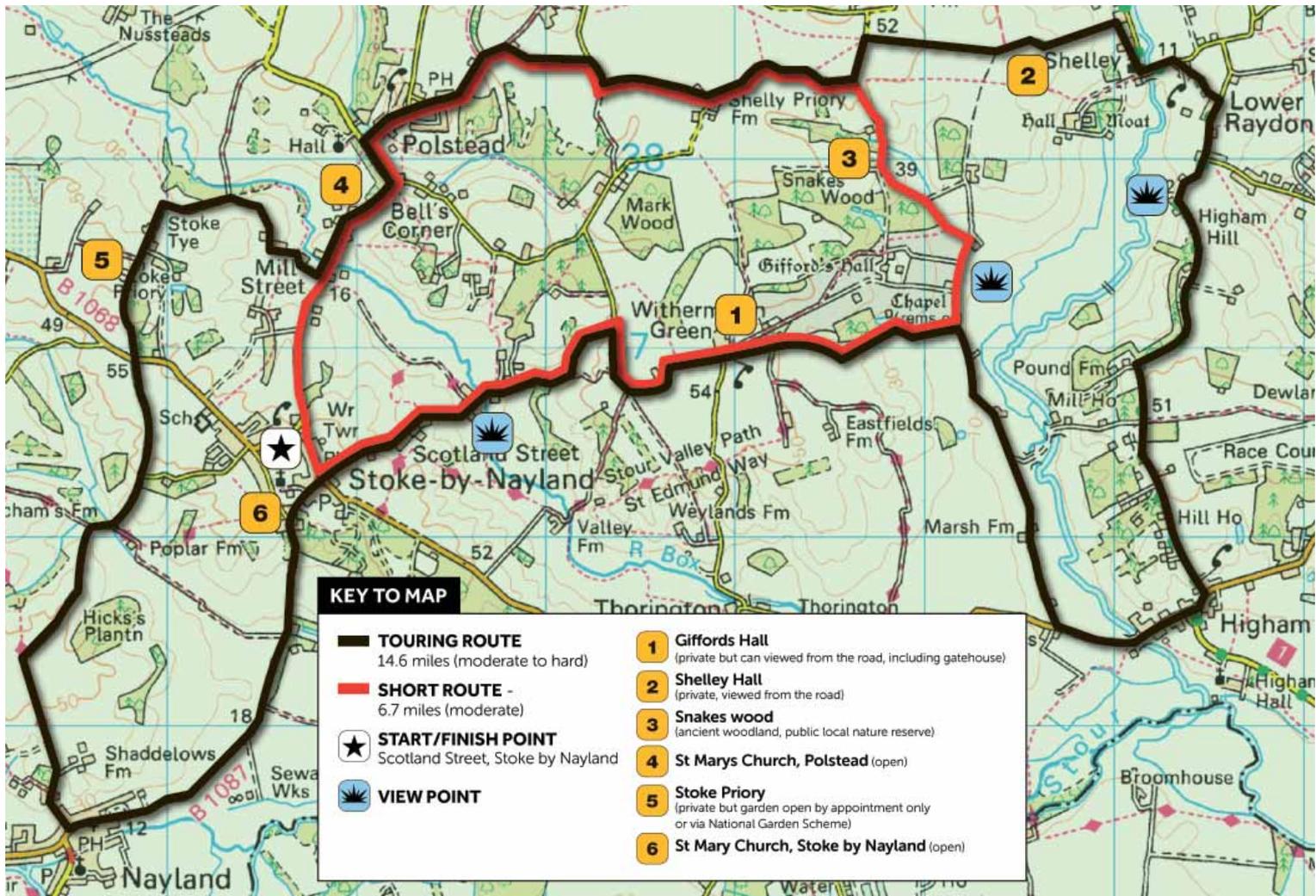
Public houses in Stoke by Nayland and Polstead.

### TOILETS

No public toilets.



View of Higham



**KEY TO MAP**

	<b>TOURING ROUTE</b> 14.6 miles (moderate to hard)		<b>Giffords Hall</b> (private but can viewed from the road, including gatehouse)
	<b>SHORT ROUTE</b> - 6.7 miles (moderate)		<b>Shelley Hall</b> (private, viewed from the road)
	<b>START/FINISH POINT</b> Scotland Street, Stoke by Nayland		<b>Snakes wood</b> (ancient woodland, public local nature reserve)
	<b>VIEW POINT</b>		<b>St Marys Church, Polstead</b> (open)
			<b>Stoke Priory</b> (private but garden open by appointment only or via National Garden Scheme)
			<b>St Mary Church, Stoke by Nayland</b> (open)