

# THE DEDHAM VALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour estuary in the east to Wormingford in the west. A wider project area extends along the Stour Valley to the Cambridgeshire border. The AONB was designated in 1970 and covers almost 35 square miles/90 square kms. The outstanding landscape includes ancient woodland, farmland, rivers, meadows and attractive villages.

## VISITING CONSTABLE COUNTRY

 Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No. 196 (Sudbury, Hadleigh and the Dedham Vale).

 Stoke by Nayland can be reached by following the B1068 from the A12 (junction 30) or the A134.

 Stoke by Nayland recreation ground car park, CO6 4QY

 Public transport information: [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) or call: 0871 200 22 33

 Stoke by Nayland can be reached by bus or taxi from Colchester Station, which is on the London Liverpool Street to Norwich main line. Train information: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or call: 03457 48 49 50

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Research, text and some photographs by Simon Peachey.  
Disclaimer: The document reflects the author's views. The Dedham Vale AONB is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



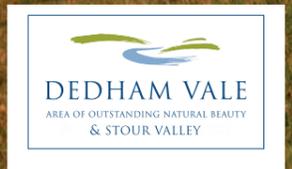
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# Walking in STOKE BY NAYLAND



Follow quiet paths to enjoy the beautiful rolling countryside that surrounds Stoke by Nayland and discover history and mystery



## STOKE BY NAYLAND Highlights

The Suffolk villages of Stoke by Nayland and Polstead sit at the heart of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**1** **STOKE BY NAYLAND** is situated on a promontory above the valleys of the river Box and the river Stour. The village grew wealthy from the cloth making industry, as demonstrated by the many fine buildings and the impressive church of St. Mary. This was constructed in the 15th Century on the site of a much older building. The red brick tower of the church is visible for many miles around and features in several paintings by the artist John Constable. Possibly the most important features of the church are the medieval doors of the south porch. These display beautiful carvings depicting biblical figures.

**2** **THE RIVER BOX** is a tributary of the river Stour. It has carved a gentle valley into the Suffolk countryside, from its source near Great Waldingfield to its junction with the river Stour near Langham. The Valley features woodland, rough grassland, small fields and a scattering of peaceful villages, including the historic hamlet of Scotland Street. This mix of



habitats makes it a special place for wildlife – barn owls can be spotted, even in daylight and herons can be seen hunting for food.

**3** **POLSTEAD** is a beautiful village with a grisly episode in its history. In 1827, Maria Marten, the daughter of the village mole catcher, was having an affair with local farmer William Corder. When Maria became pregnant, her family insisted that she and William should marry. The couple agreed to meet at the Red Barn (long since demolished) and elope to Ipswich. Maria never left the barn, but William moved to London, married a woman he met via a lonely hearts column and set up a school. A year later, Maria's mutilated body was discovered under the floor of the barn.



William was arrested, found guilty of murder and hanged at Bury St. Edmunds. This sad tale has become known as the Red Barn Murder.

**4** **TENDRING HALL PARK** dates from the 1300s when William de Tendring owned the land. The park is notable because it was re-designed by landscape designer Humphrey Repton in 1791. He was commissioned by the then owner Sir William Rowley to create a landscape park, with lawns, trees and a flower garden. His brief even included beautifying a cow shed to make it look more attractive from Tendring Hall! Although the Hall was demolished in 1955, the sweeping landscape park still shows the hand of Repton. The unusual building beside the road is known as The Temple and pre-dates Repton.



**5** **ROWLEY WOOD COMMUNITY NATURE RESERVE** was developed on land donated by the Tendring Hall Estate. The Greenlight Trust and the Dedham Vale AONB worked with local people to create habitats for a variety of species. These habitats include deciduous woodland, a wildflower meadow, wet grassland and a pond. There is also an outdoor classroom where children can learn about nature. Many species of plant, insect and animal have been attracted to the nature reserve, including nightingales, woodpeckers, grass snakes, stag beetles and speckled wood butterflies. The reserve is now managed by the community.

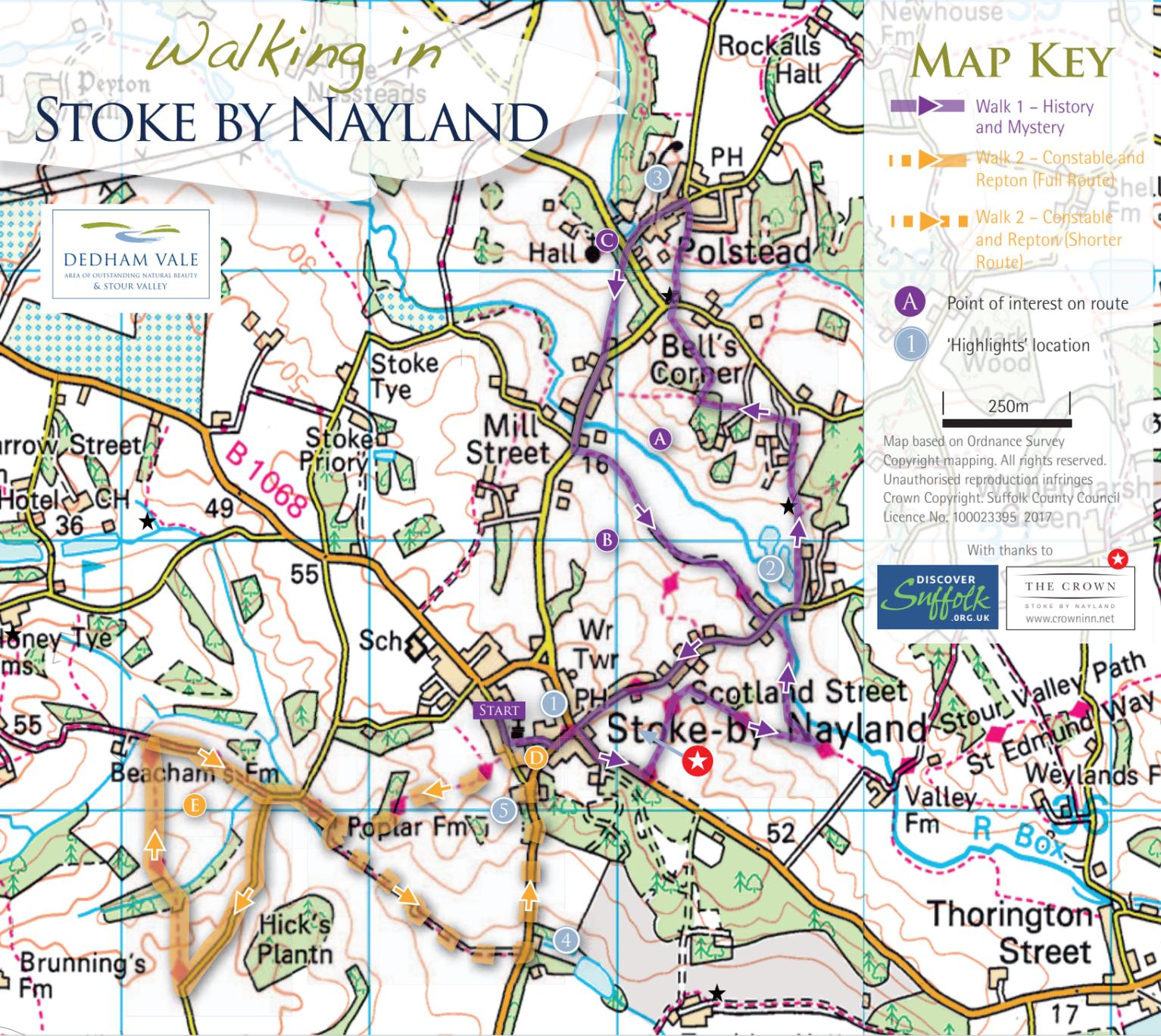


**Front Cover:** St. Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland, as seen from Walk 2; **A** St. Mary's Church – an impressive sight for miles around; **B** The Guildhall – one of the finest timber framed buildings in Stoke by Nayland; **C** Scotland Place – set deep in the beautiful Box valley; **D** Polstead – a pretty village with an intriguing history; **E** The Temple – an unusual building on the edge of the Tendring Hall Estate; **F** The Rowley Wood Community Nature Reserve – a great place for people and wildlife.



# Walking in STOKE BY NAYLAND

DEDHAM VALE  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
& STOUR VALLEY



## MAP KEY

- Walk 1 - History and Mystery
- Walk 2 - Constable and Repton (Full Route)
- Walk 2 - Constable and Repton (Shorter Route)

- Point of interest on route
- 'Highlights' location

250m

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WALK  
2

## CONSTABLE AND REPTON

This walk can be a continuation of the first route. Easy to follow paths and tracks take you to a beautiful view of Stoke by Nayland Church which inspired the artist John Constable. You will also look across a landscape designed by Humphrey Repton and pass through a community nature reserve.

### WALKING DISTANCE AND TIME:

3.4 miles/5.5 km. 1.5 hours (full route) or  
1.9 miles/3 km. 45 mins (shorter route).  
Not including any stops.

**TERRAIN:** Paths and tracks, some minor roads and village roads. Route can be very muddy in places.

Turn left out of car park and follow lane. Look for path exit on right between two buildings, opposite church. Follow path then track ahead, as it winds down hill. At bottom of hill, bear right past Poplar Farmhouse (to shorten route by 1.5 miles/2.5 km, turn left before farmhouse, as described below\*). Continue until T junction with lane. Turn left and follow lane for some distance. At second left bend, turn sharp right onto footpath, which is part of St. Edmund Way. Follow path between hedges and across fields for some distance. At T junction with



D

sunken track, turn right. Continue on track up hill, keeping golf course to left. Bear left on to lane and retrace steps back to Poplar Farmhouse. Turn right after farmhouse\* onto concrete track and follow to main road. Turn left over foot bridge and follow permissive path towards Stoke by Nayland. At top of field, enter Rowley Wood Community Nature Reserve. Pass pond and turn sharp left. Follow path around to right and up steps into copse of small trees. Bear left and follow winding path through copse, keeping left. Exit woodland and keep straight towards buildings. Turn right at path junction and retrace steps to start.



E

A Suffolk can be surprisingly hilly! B Autumn colours in the Box Valley; C St. Mary's Church, Polstead; D St. Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland, as seen from The Downs - an aspect which inspired the artist John Constable; E Beautiful countryside near Stoke by Nayland.

## WALK 1 HISTORY AND MYSTERY

Follow this route from historic Stoke by Nayland to the beautiful village of Polstead, famous as the location of the Red Barn Murder, where local lass Maria Marten met a grisly end. On the way, enjoy the gentle scenery of the river Box and discover some of the hilliest countryside in Suffolk.

### WALKING DISTANCE AND TIME:

4.7 miles/7.5 km. 2 hours  
(not including stops).

**START:** Stoke by Nayland recreation ground car park, CO6 4QY

**TERRAIN:** Paths and tracks, some minor roads and village roads. Route can be very muddy in places. Take care near areas of deep water.

Turn left out of car park and follow lane until level with church. Turn left along footpath beside church. Continue ahead as path joins lane. At small green, bear left. At road junction, turn right. Cross road to the Crown Inn and continue ahead on verge and then path that runs parallel with road. Follow path as it turns left. Keep on this path along edge of field, heading away from road. Follow path and field edge around to right and continue. Pass through small wood and continue across field ahead. At path junction, turn sharp left along path between hedge and fence. Follow path as it passes through garden and alongside cream painted house.



B

At lane junction, turn right. Pass Scotland Place on left and cross small bridge. When level with cottage on right, turn left through gap in hedge. Follow path beside black metal fence. Pass small lake on left and go through gate. Continue on path across field. At sign post, bear left towards kissing gate into woodland. Follow path through wood and then turn right onto grassy track. Follow track until shortly before lane, then turn left onto path between fences. At junction with lane, turn right and then immediately left back on to path. After going through kissing gate, bear right, keeping to top of hill. When you reach seat, follow path ahead down steep hill into Polstead and to road junction at bottom.

Continue straight on road for short distance, then turn sharp right up path beside conifer hedge. When lane reached, continue ahead up drive of white house.

At next lane junction, turn sharp left downhill. At bottom of hill, cross road and continue on path opposite. Follow path across field towards white house. Join road and continue straight for some distance. Cross bridge over river Box. Shortly after junction with lane on right, take path exit off left (you can continue straight on road if you want to avoid cattle in fields, but please be careful of traffic). Continue on this path, keeping hedge to right. When farmyard reached, go through gap in fence on right and continue straight, keeping hedge to left. When junction with lane reached, near Scotland Place turn right and follow lane up hill to Stoke by Nayland. Once in village, retrace route to start.



C

## Countryside CODE

The area has a network of footpaths and bridleways. We have marked suggested routes on this map and have a few simple suggestions to help you enjoy the area safely and assist our work to care for it. Please follow the Countryside Code: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code)

- Plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave things as you find them.

Take your litter home.

- Help look after our plants and wildlife by keeping to footpaths and not trampling verges.
- Dogs are welcome, but please keep them under close control at all times, especially when amongst farm animals and in bird nesting season (March-September). Release your dog if chased by cattle.
- Always clean up after your dog.

Thank You

FOR HELPING US KEEP THIS  
OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFUL



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