

Rail & Trail in the Stour Valley

by the Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

Moat Farm, Bures St. Mary.
Picture: Bryan Harker.



- Walking in the Stour Valley (linked to Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- Based on the St. Edmund Way and the Stour Valley Path.
- Visiting options off the main route.
- The walk starts and finishes at Bures railway station.
- Varied woodland, lake, meadows, wildlife and river views.

Ten miles (16km) of walking through some of the finest countryside in Essex & Suffolk, taking in the villages of Bures St. Mary, Wissington, Little Horkesley and Wormingford. The first half of the itinerary is based on the St. Edmund Way, with optional visits to St. Stephen's Chapel, the Arger Fen and Wiston Church. The second half of the walk is based on the Stour Valley Path with optional visits to the Beehive pub in Little Horkesley, Nayland village, and St. Andrew's Church and the Crown pub in Wormingford. The route has some narrow bridges, stiles and wet areas to cross and reference to the Ordnance Survey Explorer map no. 196 is highly recommended.



Keyore's House, Wissington. Picture: Bryan Harker.

Wormingford church.
Picture: Bryan Harker.



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The Car(e)-Free itineraries are designed to encourage visitors to explore and enjoy the special landscapes of the East of England with minimal impact on the environment, while generating positive benefits for local people. The itineraries give visitors exciting ideas about what to do in the area, by leaving their car at home or at their accommodation, and exploring the area by foot, bike, boat, bus or train.

The Itinerary

(Section letters refer to the map on the back page.)

A From Bures railway station, go left at the Paddocks and then right into Station Hill. Go down Station Hill, passing the Swan pub. At Station Hill's junction with Bridge Street, bear left. (You may wish to visit the Village Deli, on your left.) Cross the bridge, noting the views of the River Stour.

(Bures consists of three parishes: Mount Bures, Bures Hamlet and Bures St. Mary.) Bures Railway station is actually in Bures Hamlet and you are now entering Bures St. Mary.

Proceeding along this street, pass St. Mary's, the Bures Parish Church, and then take a right into Church Square. The village Post Office and the Three Horseshoes pub are in this road. Follow the road (Nayland Road) around the bend and past the school/village hall on the right.

B At around 400 yards, follow the Public Footpath sign on the left into Claypits Avenue. At the top of this hill, proceed straight on, taking the St. Edmund Way footpath, a steep incline. From here, you can take in the splendid views across the Stour valley.

At the top of the incline, go left along the lane until it meets the Bures to Assington road (Cuckoo Hill). Then go right, walk along the road a few yards, then at the first Public Footpath sign, follow the footpath through the Fysh House Farm entrance.

C Continue along this track for around 500 yards into the countryside, where there are again wonderful views of the Stour valley. At the end of the track, continue straight ahead on the Footpath (or turn right if you wish to visit St. Stephen's Chapel, just a few yards along a track). The path then passes a bench, where one might like to take a rest or a picnic and admire the views across the valley.

Walking down this slope for around 400 yards, you come to a small, narrow bridge by the water meadows. Cross over this bridge and proceed straight up the hill (400 yards to the top). It is steep; you can take it easy by zigzagging. At the top of the hill, stop to admire the views.

D Follow the Footpath for 300 yards, over a stile and passing Over Hall Cottage on your right. When you arrive at the road T-junction, go left. You can then either continue straight down the road and visit the Arger Fen (approximately 300 yards on the right), or take the Byway a short distance along on your right.

Taking the Byway, Dead Lane, which narrows down after the houses on the left, you pass a Hullback's Farm sign on the left after around 900 yards, and around 300 yards further on, Farthing Hall, also on the left. At the T-junction, bear right, signposted 'Bures 4 miles'. Follow this road for approximately 400 yards, passing a cottage on the right. (Caution, there may be an Alsatian in a garden.)

E Take the Public Footpath on the left, over a stile, passing Grange Wood and Wissington Grange on your left. Take a right at the Public Footpath sign and over another stile. This Footpath is well marked. Follow the next Public Footpath sign, over a stile and straight on.

Pass over another stile and down to a stream, then go over the stile on the right. Further along this Footpath is a seat for a picnic. Follow the Footpath, with the stream on your left. Keep following the Footpath signs.

F At the junction with a road (Campion Hill), go right. Then, a short way down Campion Hill, at the T-junction, go right into Bures Road. Follow this road down to another T-junction. Follow the sign for Wiston Church, passing an old-style 'phone box on the left.

G Go south down this road to Wiston Church (St. Mary the Virgin). Just past the church, take the left turn, passing Wiston hall on your right. Note the abundance of snowdrops in the winter. You then pass Eeyore's house on your right.

Go over a footbridge (or straight on if you wish to visit Nayland, 1 mile or 1½ km). Follow the Public Footpath and Stour Valley Path signs. After 100 yards or so, cross over another small bridge and keep following the Footpath signs straight ahead. Be careful, as it can be rather wet here in the winter.

H Then go over a small bridge and straight on across the field, crossing another footpath, and then up the hill. At the top take a left, following the Stour Valley Path sign. At the junction with the lane (School Lane), go straight on, signposted 'Footpath only'. Alternatively, go left to visit Little Horkesley and the Bee Hive Pub for a meal (500 yards), then return to this point.

Take time out to admire the views across the valley. They are enough to make you want to paint them. Follow the Footpath for about 400 yards, and then follow the Stour Valley Path sign to your left. After 200 yards, you will come to some steps; go down these and then go right. Walk along the road (School Road) and after around 100 yards, follow the Stour Valley Path & Public Footpath signs on the right.

Crossing over a small bridge, bear left. Then keep going straight on, over a stile, following the Stour Valley Path signs. Take care here as there is electric fencing. Go down the hill and at the bottom go right at the stile, again following the Stour Valley Path signs.

I At the end of the field go right (noting Bottengoms Farm on your left). At the junction of this path with a road (Garnons Chase), go left. At the top of the hill there is a wonderful view of the Stour valley and the tower of Nayland church, which John Constable painted.

On the right hand side, follow the Stour Valley Path & Public Footpath signs. Go through a gate, down the hill, through another gate and over a small bridge. Keep following the Stour

Valley Path & Public Footpath signs. Continue over a stile on the right hand side. Continue following the Stour Valley Path signs to the left.

Go through the gate at the top of the hill, following the Stour Valley Path & Public Footpath signs on the right and passing over a stile. Observe the view across the vale and Wormingford Church in the distance. Follow the Stour Valley Path sign. About 75 yards along this field path, take a right turn across the field, towards a school (Wormingford Primary School).

J Go through a gate and follow the school entrance road to the T-junction. Go left towards the church (St. Andrew's). Note the 'Leaning Church Wall of Wormingford'. (If you want to visit the Post Office go straight on for 600 yards. The Crown pub is 100 yards further up the road, then right at a T-junction and 100 yards on the right.) Go through the church gates. Then follow the Stour Valley Path and Public Footpath signs through a gate on the right hand side. In winter, note the carpet of snowdrops in the churchyard.

Follow the Stour Valley Path sign up and down the hill for 600 yards, turning right at the bench, through a gate and straight on. From the top of the hill, you can see the path back to Bures and more splendid views of the area. At the bottom of the hill go through a gate and follow the Public Footpath sign, at the sign go straight on across a field.

K At the next Stour Valley Path & Public Footpath signs, go into the field. Walk around the edge and at the end go right. Further along, take a left at the telegraph pole with a Stour Valley Path sign on it. Follow the Stour Valley Path & Public Footpath signs over a small bridge and then over a stile, towards the white building in the distance (Bures Mill), keeping the River Stour on your right.

L Keep following the signs over stiles and then over a small bridge which crosses the river Stour, passing the weir on your left and Bures Mill on your right. Exiting the Bures Mill entrance, cross the road and follow the Stour Valley Path & Public Footpath signs across the field.

This path takes you onto the Nayland Road. Follow this road to the left, past the Three Horseshoes pub. At the T-junction, take a left, over the bridge, noting the river Stour views. Take a right and follow the signs back to Bures railway station. You have reached your destination, and well done.

Useful Hints

Check the weather forecast. Take an Ordnance Survey Explorer map 196, a magnetic compass, waterproof footwear and warm clothing in winter, a mobile phone (O2 is o.k., other networks have not been tested), some water and a picnic, a pen or pencil, a camera, binoculars. And, finally, tell someone you are going on this walk, leave your mobile phone number with them, and tell them when you expect to be back. The whole walk will take approximately 4 to 5 hours.

Itinerary Listings

Things to see and do

Bures St. Mary – St. Mary’s Church - Bures parish church – for more information visit www.parishchurch.co.uk.

Bures St. Mary – Chapel of St. Stephen - For more information visit www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/buresstephen.htm. It is believed that St. Edmund was crowned King of East Anglia here. The Chapel was dedicated to St. Stephen on St. Stephen’s day, December 26th, 1218 by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Steven Langton.

Arger Fen is a small fragment of the wildwood that once covered Suffolk. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area is the home of interesting wildlife, including grasshoppers, warblers, butterflies, woodpeckers, wrens, goldcrests, nightingales and hawfinch. In the spring, thousands of bluebells (recorded in the Domesday Book) carpet the woodland floor. In May, admire the wild cherry trees with their shiny, reddish-brown bark and white blossom. The Arger Fen is maintained by Suffolk County Council. For more information call 01473 265106 or visit www.suffolk.gov.uk and www.bures-online.co.uk/arger/arger.htm.

Stour Valley Path

Enjoy the unique character of this route which follows the valley of the Stour. Walk through the landscapes that inspired such artists as Constable, Gainsborough, Munnings and Nash.

Wissington – Wiston Church – St. Mary the Virgin

For more information visit www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/wissington.htm. A Norman Church (not common in Suffolk), but the Victorians thought it wasn’t Norman enough and added the eastern extension and some Norman furnishings.

Wissington – Eeyore’s House

Eeyore is a character in Winnie-the-Pooh. He is a pessimistic, gloomy, old, depressed, grey stuffed donkey who is a friend of Winnie-the-Pooh. Eeyore’s name is a phonetic representation a donkey's bray. Eeyore is very busy and not always at home.

Wormingford – Bottengoms farm

For many years this was the home of John Nash the artist. For more information and pictures visit www.btinternet.com/~wormingford/bottengoms.htm.

Wormingford Visit www.wormingford.btinternet.co.uk or www.british-history.ac.uk.

Wormingford – St. Andrew’s Church

John Nash and relatives of John Constable are buried here. Visit www.acny.org.uk.

What to buy

Bures Hamlet – The Village Deli, Bridge Street – 01787 228 032 – Vitalinas Ice Cream, fresh daily baguettes, Suffolk-made chutneys & jams.

Bures St. Mary – Post Office, Church Square – 01787 227 252 – Stationery

Wormingford – Post Office, Church Road – 01787 228 535 – Vitalinas Ice Cream, stationery, autographed books, post cards, local produce, bread, cakes and meat.

Where to eat and drink

Bures Hamlet

The Swan Inn, Station Hill – 01787 228 121

The Eight Bells, Bridge Street – 01787 227 354

Bures St Mary

The Three Horseshoes, Church Square - 01787 228 303

Picnic in the Arger Fen

Little Horkesley

The Bee Hive, School Road - 01206 271 610

Wormingford

The Crown at Wormingford, Main Road - 01206 227 405

Where to stay

Arger Fen House Bures CO8 5BN

01787 227 362, mobile: 07798 575 411, jane@argerfenhouse.co.uk, www.argerfenhouse.co.uk

Adjacent to the Arger Fen, 4 star.

For more information on B&Bs and self-catering establishments see www.realessex.co.uk.

Additional Listings

Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project

Paula Booth, c/o Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House (B3 F1), 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX. Tel: 01473 264263, Fax: 01473 216824, paula.booth@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk,

<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org>. Useful leaflets and information booklets are available from the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project website, which also has more Car(e)-Free itineraries like this one!

Circular Walks around Bures by Stewart Malcolm – from good book shops.

Visitor Information Centres

Flatford Visitor Information Centre – Flatford Lane, Flatford, East Bergholt, Colchester, CO7 6UL. Tel: 01206 299460. Email: flatfordvic@babergh.gov.uk. Web: www.visit-suffolk.org.uk.

Sudbury Tourist Information Centre – Town Hall, Market Hill, Sudbury.

Tel: 01787 881320. Email: sudburytic@babergh.gov.uk. Web: www.visit-suffolk.org.uk.

Colchester Visitor Information Centre – 1 Queen Street, Colchester, CO1 2PG

Tel: 01206 282920. Email: vic@colchester.gov.uk. Web: www.visitcolchester.co.uk.

How To Get To Bures

By train to Bures station from London, Chelmsford, Colchester, Ipswich, Norwich or Sudbury
Bures station is on the Marks Tey to Sudbury branch line (off the London Liverpool Street to Norwich line), linking to the major railway network to all parts of the UK. The journey time on National Express services between London Liverpool Street and Marks Tey is just over an hour. The journey from Marks Tey to Bures is just over 12 minutes. An hourly off-peak service operates, Monday to Saturday and on Sundays, from Marks Tey station and from Bures station on your return. To ensure you make the connections available between Marks Tey and Bures, check the train times before you leave on National Rail Enquiries, www.nationalrail.co.uk, or call them on 08457 48 49 50. Enquiries to National Express, can be made on www.nationalexpress.com or by calling 0845 600 7245.

By Bus from Wormingford to Bures Parish Church (not Sundays)

Service 753 from Wormingford to Bures Church, joining the walk at the bridge in Bures Hamlet. Visit www.chamberscoaches.co.uk or call Chambers Buses – 01787 227 233 for the latest timetable details.

By bus from Bury St Edmunds (not Sundays) or Halstead to Sudbury, then by train to Bures

Take service 753 from Bury St Edmunds, via Lavenham and Long Melford, or service 12/13 from Halstead, to Sudbury Bus station, then cross the Great Eastern Road and follow the signs to Sudbury railway station and catch the hourly service to Bures, an approximately 10 minute journey. Visit www.chamberscoaches.co.uk or call Chambers Buses on 01787 227 233 (753) or www.beestons.co.uk, Beestons Buses on 01473 823 243 (12/13) for the latest bus timetable details. Enquiries about bus services to and from these villages can also be made to Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or by visiting www.traveline.org.uk.

The Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

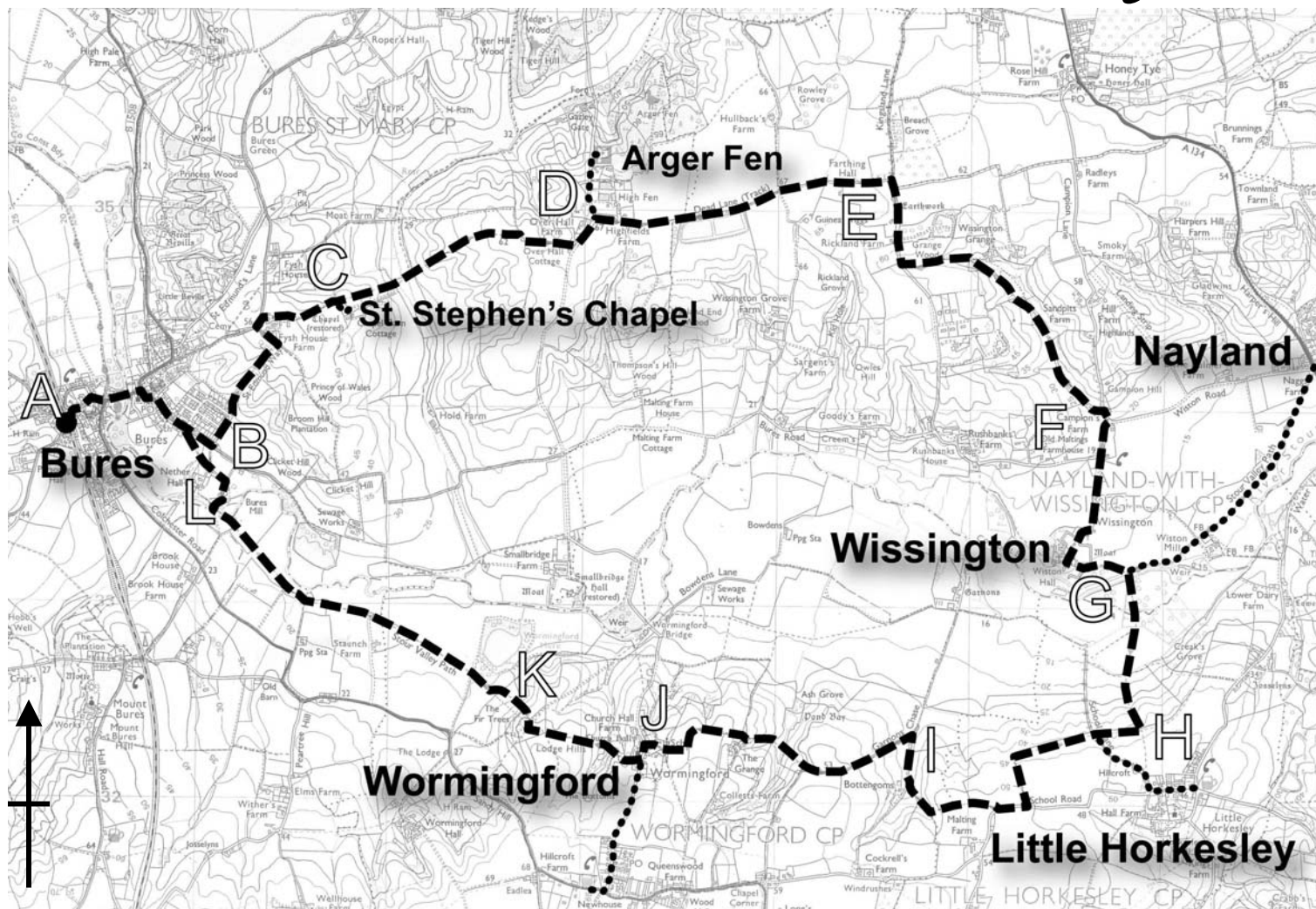
The Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership promotes and encourages rail travel for residents and business users of the communities along four branch lines, by way of regeneration, tourism/leisure and community development projects, to enable the communities to increase their economic, social and environmental welfare. The lines included in the Partnership are:

- **The Mayflower Line:** Manningtree, Mistley, Wrabness, Harwich International, Dovercourt and Harwich Town.
- **The Crouch Valley Line:** Wickford, Battlesbridge, Woodham Ferrers, North Fambridge, Althorne, Burnham on Crouch and Southminster.
- **The Gainsborough Line:** Marks Tey, Chappel and Wakes Colne, Bures and Sudbury.
- **Sunshine Coast Line:** Colchester Town, Hythe, Wivenhoe, Alresford, Great Bentley, Weeley, Thorpe-le-Soken and Clacton-on-Sea; also from Thorpe-le-Soken, the line passes through Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze.

The partnership has a website www.esscrp.org.uk.

Rail & Trail in the Stour Valley

We at the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project hope that you have enjoyed this Car(e)-Free Itinerary and that you will wish to try the others available on our web-site: www.dedhamvallestourvalley.org. If you would like to make any comments about this itinerary, please get in touch with us via the web-site.



1 km 1 mile

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