



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).

 Nayland is located beside the A134 between Colchester and Sudbury.

 Nayland Village Hall car park, CO6 4JH (located off Church Lane in Nayland).

 Public transport information: www.traveline.info or call: 0871 200 22 33

 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 or call: 03457 48 49 50

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Disclaimer: The document reflects the author's views. The Dedham Vale AONB is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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Walking in NAYLAND



The ancient village of Nayland is surrounded by some of the loveliest countryside in the Dedham Vale



NAYLAND Highlights

Follow riverside paths from Nayland to explore quiet corners of the Dedham Vale. Visit an ancient church where a dragon lies in wait and look for otters slipping into the dark waters of the river Stour.

1 **NAYLAND** has over 100 listed buildings, nearly all of which are timber framed and some over 500 years old. They were built when Nayland was a wealthy wool town, with a thriving weaving industry. A tax survey in 1522 indicated that Nayland was the 42nd most prosperous town in England. However, the decline in the weaving industry by 1700 meant that the fortunes of the town changed and it had to rely on other industries such as tanning, soap manufacture and milling. Very little re-building took place, so today you can wander the streets and admire the ancient buildings, which were created by prosperity and saved by poverty.

2 **ST. JAMES'S CHURCH** sits at the heart of the village. The building dates from around 1400 and has a bright and welcoming interior. The most famous feature of the church is the altarpiece painting by the artist John Constable - Christ Blessing the Bread and Wine. It was probably commissioned by Constable's aunt and village resident, Martha Smith. According to letters from the time, Constable was reluctant to start the painting and had to be encouraged by his mother. Just beyond the church, beside the path, is Alston Court, one of the finest medieval town houses in Britain.



3 **THE COURT KNOLL** is, at first glance, a flat field, but look carefully and you can see that it is surrounded by a deep ditch, a human-made structure. There is ongoing historical discovery of this Scheduled Monument to determine its significance. Documentary evidence relates back to the Norman Conquest, when the landowner Robert, of Norman/Breton descent, was known personally by William the Conqueror. The site may have originated as a Late Anglo-Saxon thegn's residence, including a church and hall complex within a defended enclosure. The large quantity of Roman ceramic building material suggests a high status, probably ecclesiastical building was constructed using rubble robbed from a Roman site. The settlement of Neyland, or Eiland meaning 'island' as it is called in the Domesday Book, is at an important river Stour crossing point.



port of Sudbury. Local goods, including grain and wool, were exported in the same way. The Anchor Inn is so named because is roughly half way along this route. The barges would be moored here and the boatmen would take a well-earned rest. Commercial traffic stopped many years ago, but the river is still popular with canoeists. In addition, it is home to many species of animal, including herons, kingfishers and otters.

5 **ST. MARY'S CHURCH** at Wissington (or Wiston) is an ancient Norman building which dates from at least 1135, when it is recorded as being owned by Robert Godbold. It sits within a moated enclosure, indicating that the site may have been used since Saxon times. Although "Norman" features were added in the Victorian period, many original Norman features still exist - including the richly carved south doorway, the chancel arches and the windows on the south side. Inside the church, the walls are decorated with medieval paintings. Opposite the south door is an image of a dragon, which may have been inspired by the story of an evil dragon that roamed the land nearby. Another wall painting features the earliest known depiction of St. Francis of Assisi. Information in the church helps you understand more.



4 **THE RIVER STOUR** is a peaceful waterway today, but 200 years ago, it was the main trade route into Suffolk and north Essex. Cargo, such as coal and bricks, was unloaded from sea going vessels at the estuary port of Mistley and transported 25 miles by barge to the inland



Front Cover: Walking beside the river Stour at Nayland;
A Alston Court - said to be one of the finest medieval town houses in England; **B** Pargetting on the wall of Clare Cottage;
C St. James's Church - contains a painting by John Constable;
D The Court Knoll - a quiet place with an ancient history;
E The River Stour - a peaceful waterway;
F Wissington Church - an ancient Norman building.



Walking in NAYLAND



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

- 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

Corner Industrial Estate. Carefully cross road and take path exit opposite. Follow path ahead, keeping fence on left. Continue beside fields and through thickets. Ignore all path exits. When you reach wall of Wiston Hall, bear right and then left. Cross lane and visit Wiston Church.

Retrace steps for about 200 metres and turn right across bridge (or continue straight here to shorten the route by 2 miles – see paragraph below)*. Follow path ahead through willow plantation. Cross bridge and go through thicket. At field edge and path junction, turn right and follow path to lane (the official

WALK 1 HISTORIC NAYLAND

Soak up the history of Nayland on this short walk visiting St. James's Church and the ancient Court Knoll. Follow this with a delightful stroll along the banks of the Stour, passing the impressive Nayland weir.

WALKING DISTANCE AND TIME: 2 miles/3.3km. 1 hour (not including stops).
START: Nayland Village Hall car park, CO6 4JH
TERRAIN: Paths and tracks, some minor roads and village roads. Route can be very muddy in places and flooding is possible after heavy rain. Take care near areas of deep water.

Leave village hall car park via access road and turn left into lane. Take next right and walk beside St. James's Church. Turn left into main street. Continue and then take path junction off left through gate. Walk beside Court Knoll earthwork and keep straight at gate. Bear right when path divides and then almost immediately left beside pond. Enter thicket. Cross small bridge and then larger bridge over river Stour. On far side, turn sharp right on permissive path. Follow winding path beside river until large arched bridge.



Turn right across bridge and continue ahead over green. Cross road and turn right along pavement. Just before bridge, take path off left down steps. Follow winding path beside river until main road. Climb bank and turn sharp right across river, keeping behind crash barrier. Bear right, away from main road, and continue beside river.



When you reach road beside bus stop, turn right along pavement (cross road and turn left here to follow 'In Search of a Dragon!' route). Follow pavement into Nayland. After some distance, turn right into High Street. Continue for a short way and then turn left into Church Lane. Continue ahead and then retrace route back to start.

A Nayland weir – an impressive river feature; B Watching the river Stour at Nayland; C Nayland has over 100 listed buildings; D Beautiful countryside near Nayland; E The dragon wall painting in Wissington church; F Old Josselyns – a beautiful house near Nayland.

WALK 2 IN SEARCH OF A DRAGON!

Extend the first walk to include a visit to the Norman church of St. Mary's at Wissington. Look out for the Medieval painting of a dragon! On the return route, cross into Essex to enjoy beautiful views of the Stour Valley.

WALKING DISTANCE AND TIME: (Walk 1 length included): 5.8 miles/9.3km (this can be shortened by 1.6 Miles/2.6km if desired). Full distance 2.5 hours (not including any stops).
TERRAIN: Paths and tracks, some minor roads and village roads. Route can be very muddy in places and flooding is possible after heavy rain. Take care near areas of deep water.

Follow 'Historic Nayland' route until you reach bus stop on road into Nayland, then cross road and immediately turn left along far pavement. Continue until beside main road, then carefully cross road using pedestrian crossing. On far side, continue along Wiston Road for short way until entrance to Nags



footpath runs across field, but path may follow field edge). Turn left and follow lane uphill. At left bend, take path off left beside hedge. Follow path for some distance between fields. At corner of wood, turn right and continue to lane. Turn left and follow lane downhill past houses. Continue past Lower Dairy Farm and then, after about 100 metres, turn left along path. Follow path between hedges, across bridge and then across field. As you near Wiston Mill, turn sharp right. Continue across bridge and beside field to path T junction.

Turn right and*retrace path back to main road. Re-cross road and continue straight ahead along pavement into Nayland (you will need to cross to right hand side of road as the left pavement ends).



Follow road for some distance, then turn right into High Street. Continue for a short way and turn left into Church Lane. Continue ahead and retrace route back to start.

