England. The Tudor recess in the banqueting room was where the massive gold and silver plate used at feasts was washed within sight of the lord of the manor.

In 1891 the Hall was used as a granary. Restoration was carried out in the 20th century by A.C.Crisp. An infamous resident was Gilbert Debenham, who was implicated in the murder of one James Andrew in 1435 but pardoned in 1438.

Beyond the church, turn left through the iron gate and follow the path along the side of the lake for 0.7km to meet the driveway to the Hall. Turn right and walk down the driveway to the road (0.1km) and then proceed along the road for 0.2km to the second Public Footpath on the right. Traverse the field to the T-junction with another path (0.3km), turn left and view back gardens on the right. After 0.5km, on reaching Days Road, turn left again and proceed along the road for another 0.3km to the first path on the right. Continue straight across the fields and a bridge, keeping left, on this path for 0.7km, take the next path on the right and then follow the paths that formed the beginning of the walk for 1.1km back to the starting point.

The Village

Capel St. Mary lies 6 miles south of Ipswich on either side of the A12 and on the line of the old Roman road between Ipswich and Colchester. Excavations in the locality have revealed many Roman artifacts and suggest that there was extensive occupation in Roman times. There has certainly been a village on this site since 1086, when the inhabitants numbered just 25. By 1951 this number had increased to 582, but by 1981 the population had swelled to 3,356, which is close to the current figure.

Capel is the Saxon word for church and the village has grown around St. Mary’s (cover picture), which is to be seen on high ground adjacent to the Street. The chancel of the church dates from early 14th century and the nave, porch, south aisle and tower (plus spire) from the early 15th century. There is no spire to be seen today for it was taken down in 1818. The tenor bell was given to the church before 1546, in the reign of Henry VIII, and both the treble and second bells were cast by T. Mears at the Whitehall foundry in London where Big Ben was re-cast in 1858 after it had cracked during testing. The church clock was suscribed by parishioners in 1897.

Originally, public footpaths in the Parish all led to the church and, in 1597, three people were excommunicated for non-attendance. Now a considerable network of such paths exist and this pamphlet suggests how some of them can be linked to form a pleasant walk in the countryside.

Refreshments are available at The White Horse public house (recorded as a beer house in 1644), The Plough public house and shops in the village shopping precinct.

Compiled and published 1995 by D.L.Murrell in association with FINGERPRESS for Capel St. Mary Parish Council

Funded by Suffolk County Council
PARISH PATHS partnership
A COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION INITIATIVE
The Walk

The walk is across undulating farmland on well-defined grassy paths and tracks covering a distance of about 7km (all distances given are approximate). At a leisurely pace it should take 2 hours. The walk starts from Thorney Road near its junction with Longfield Road. Commence the walk by heading north along a path that for a short distance passes between back garden fences. Continue through shrubbery with houses to the right and then across an open field (0.6km). Then take the left hand fork and follow the edge of the field for 0.2km; after making a sharp left turn, bear sharp right on coming to the first path on the right. Follow this for 0.3km to the T-junction at its end, turn right, continue for another 0.3km to the junction with the next path on the left and turn left. This part of the walk is around the edge of cultivated fields. The soil is mixed, consisting of deep, well-drained fine loam, coarse loam and sandy soils over clay or gravel and supports crops of cereals and oil-seed rape.

After 0.4km, cross a bridge and turn right onto a track that, just before the junction with the next path on the left, crosses the line of a dismantled railway that ran across the northern sector of the Parish from east to north-west. This was the Bentley-to-Hadleigh branch line, which was opened in 1847. In 1933, the passenger service was discontinued, after which the line was used for running goods until its final closure in 1965. Proceed along the path on the left, across a bridge and then the Capel St Mary-Wenham Parva boundary, to a path, again on the left, that has been re-routed. Turn left and climb two stiles. This is an area of scattered farms and the re-routed path passes behind Parkhouse (1), a fine old renovated house with out-buildings. Climb over the next stile and veer right. Climb another stile, proceed for 0.4km along this path, then veer left onto a track from which charcoal kilns and the timbered frontage of the 15th century Grove Farm (2) can be seen across the fields to the left, where the old timbered buildings of Jermyrn's Farm (3) also come into view. After 0.5km, bear left and follow this track which leads to Little Wenham church (4) and Wenham Hall (5) (0.6km): both were once part of the manor owned by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. The church (now redundant) and Hall were built by the same masons between 1260-1270. In 1643, Puritanical Vandals destroyed 26 stupendous pictures in the church and ordered its steps to be levelled. Nevertheless, it is one of those in Suffolk still with mural paintings. There is an ancient sundial on one of the buttresses.

Wenham Hall was built by a successor of the Norman conquerors, Sir John de Villabus, and is a castellated manor house. It is part moated and, although fortified, its defences were never tested. After 1514, Robert Brewse made alterations with the abundant use of Flemish bricks. This is believed to be the earliest example of such brickwork in