MILLS & MEADOWS
A CIRCULAR WALK
OF 4 MILES STARTING FROM
BRAMFORD PICNIC SITE

THE RIVER
THE WALK BEGINS by following The Gipping Valley River Path upstream to Bushman’s Bridge. During the early 19th century the river was a place of great activity, with up to thirty barges using it to transport goods between Ipswich and Stowmarket. Cargoes included corn, slate and coprolite (fossilised animal droppings) which made excellent fertiliser. Fifteen locks were constructed to help barges navigate the Gipping, the remains of one of these can be seen at Bramford alongside the river path. The building of the railway led to the decline of navigation, as more goods were transported by rail. By 1932, navigation had come to an end.

BRAMFORD MEADOWS
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE
OWNED BY SUFFOLK County Council and managed by The Gipping Valley Countryside Project, these were once wet grazing meadows. They are now managed for wildlife and public access. As well as restoration of the ditches, areas have been planted with a variety of trees associated with wetland.
AGRICULTURE
THE GENTLE SLOPE of the valley down to the River Gipping can clearly be seen from the footpath leading to Thornbush Hall farmyard. Large areas of the Gipping Valley are dominated by agriculture and in particular, cereal production. Over the years, fields have been enlarged to accommodate modern farm machinery and this has resulted in a change from the traditional “enclosed” landscape to a more open one. From aerial photographs of the valley, it is still possible to identify where the old field boundaries used to be.

SPROUTHON
SPROUTHON VILLAGE possesses several interesting buildings, including a large tithe barn and the old village lock-up. Local wrongdoers would be put in the lock-up overnight before being released, or sent for trial at Ipswich. Both buildings can be seen in Lower Street, which leads to the river. Opposite the church is Sproughton Mill, one of twelve mills that operated along the Gipping. The large pool in front of the mill is a good place for spotting fish such as bream, roach and perhaps, a lurking pike.

WALK INFORMATION
THE WALK STARTS and finishes at Bramford Picnic Site, which is approximately 2½ miles from Ipswich Town Centre, toilets and a car park are provided. Local buses stop at both Bramford and Sproughton. For timetable information, please call Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 (calls from landlines cost 10p per minute). The walk is signposted with MILLS & MEADOWS circular walk discs. When walking, please consider the interests of other users and landowners.