

# Welcome

Brettenham is a quiet, beautiful village nestled in the heart of the Suffolk countryside. It was first documented in the Domesday Book 1086 with Robert Count of Mortain, and Richard son of Count Gilbert, owning most of Brettenham. By the 12th century the Earl of Gloucester and Hertford (Gilbert De Clare) owned the bulk of the village and in the 13th century the Sampson family, who also inherited Fellbrigge estates in the 15th century, took control of the village.

Today Brettenham is a conservation area and a small but active community boasting a 14th century church, 29 grade 1 and 2 listed buildings including a grade 2\* manor house dating back to the 15th century, and 2 independent schools, one of which once tenanted Joseph Bonaparte, the ex-King of Spain and the brother of Napoleon. There is a village hall which doubles up as a village inn two days a month and various activities such as yoga, zumba and pilates, whist and painting classes.

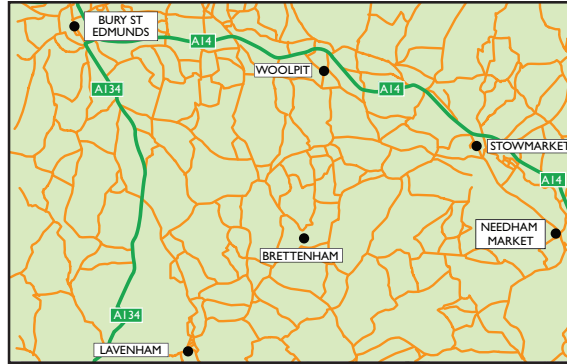
The three walks in this leaflet follow footpaths and quiet lanes and can be combined to make a longer walk.

## Please follow the Countryside Code:

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- Leave gates and property as you would find them and follow paths.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under effective control.
- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Follow advice and local signs.



## Location



Brettenham is located about 12 miles southeast of Bury St Edmunds, 7 miles southwest of Stowmarket, and 5 miles northeast of Lavenham.

## Public Transport

Brettenham is served by a demand responsive bus service operated by Hadleigh Community Transport linking Lavenham and Hadleigh with surrounding villages. Visit [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) for more information or call 01473 826 to make a booking.

## OS Explorer Map

Use O.S. Explorer Map 211 Bury St Edmunds & Stowmarket to enjoy this walk and the wider area.

## Discover Suffolk

Discover many more walks and great days out in the countryside at [www.discoversuffolk.org.uk](http://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk).

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Produced by Brettenham Parish Council and Suffolk County Council.



Circular Walks

# Brettenham Walks

Farms and Woodlands



# Woods and Farms

**DISTANCE:** 3 miles (5km)

**DURATION:** 1-2 hrs

**WAYMARKER:** Circular Walk



Start at St Marys Church **A**.

St Marys dates from the 14th century when the nave and tower were erected. The tower contains a medieval bell frame and three bells, and its base serves as a porch. The chancel was added during the 1420's and the church contains examples of decorated and perpendicular styles of architecture.

From the church turn right along Church Road passing Cock Farm on your left and the school on your right.

The Rectory next to St Mary's Church was originally an old moated building and until 1860, parts of the house incorporated an ancient tithe barn. The Rectory is now a Special Needs school (The Centre Academy for East Anglia).

Walk past the Academy and after a small allotment, white thatched house and barn conversion on your right, turn left **1** onto a footpath. Cross the field to cross a footbridge and follow the path. Spain's Plantation is on your right. At the waymarker sign go ahead to America Woods **2**.

**America Woods was the site of an ancient farm dating back to 1540s.**

At the woods turn right and follow the path before crossing a field. You'll see Lower Farm to your right.

**The farm has remnants of a moat and is a very ancient farm site.**

You soon join Lower Road **3**. Turn left and after just 50m left again onto a footpath. Follow this until you reach a wood, **4** then turn right and head uphill, following the footpath over a couple of footbridges until you reach Dux Street. Opposite is Rattlesden Airfield **5**.

**Rattlesden Airfield was built on the site of Waterhall Farm which dated back to the 16th century and was surrounded by a rectangular medieval moat. The airfield was built in 1942 as a bomber airfield for B-17 Flying Fortresses. It served as home to US Army Air Forces with groups based here from Florida and, later in the war, Nebraska.**

The station transferred to the RAF in October 1945 and was used briefly as a Ministry of Food buffer depot. In the 1960s part of the site was used for RAF Bristol Bloodhound surface to air missile. The site was sold in 1967 and mostly returned to agriculture, with little evidence of its war time use. Today, the airfield is used by the Rattlesden Gliding Club, you may see gliders overhead, with the wartime Control Tower as their club house.

Turn left, in the direction of Preston, and head down Dux Street. After several houses and just before Ryece Hall Farm turn left onto a footpath **6**.

At the end of the field turn right along a wooded path, turning left at the waymarker. The footpath leads past a line of trees back to Church Road. Turn right to retrace your steps back to the church.



# Brettenham Circular Walks

Farms and Woodlands



## KEY TO MAP

- Woods and Farms
- Peace and Quiet
- The Wenyve Way and Devils Hill Wood
- - - - - Public Footpath
- - - - - Bridleway
- +++++++ Byway

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# Peace and Quiet


**DISTANCE:** 5 miles (8km)


**DURATION:** 2-3 hrs

**WAYMARKER:** Circular Walk


Start at St Marys Church .

**The Church's notable features include a 14th century octagonal font, late 17th century Communion rails and fragments of medieval glass which is incorporated in the north chancel window.**


Turn right along Church Road for about 200m and then left onto a footpath . Follow the path, turning right at the end to follow a small wooded track to a field. Proceed straight ahead into America Woods .

Continue through the woods, turning left at the waymarker . Follow the path out of the woods and around the edge of a field for about 500m to a gap in the hedge. Pass through the gap and continue past a footbridge on your right and then a ditch on your right.




**This ditch contains the very upper reaches of the River Brett, which flows southwards through Hadleigh before meeting the River Stour to flow through Dedham Vale.**


The footpath brings you to Dux Street . Turn left and follow the road passing Tudor Lodge and Ryece Hall Farm.



**There has been a house on the site at Ryece Hall since 1439 and it was once part of the Abbey of St Edmund's estate. In 1641 Ryece Hall Farm owned by Thomas Cutler was settled to his daughter Elizabeth, wife of Dr Matthew Wren, uncle to Sir Christopher Wren.**

Continue to a concrete hard standing , turn right and follow the footpath downhill crossing the River Brett.

The village is the source of the river Brett. A common misconception is that the village is named after the river, when in fact the opposite is true. The river was first identified in a Saxon Charter of AD 962 as the Mearcellan or Boundary Stream. It was not until the 16th century that the name Brett or Bretton was first recorded, the river then becoming named after the village.

After the river turn left, then right, heading uphill to Great Hastings Wood . At the wood turn left over a footbridge, keeping the wood on your right to another footbridge. After this footbridge turn left and follow the path downhill. At the bottom, cross a metal footbridge  and turn left to follow the footpath uphill, then across a field to cross another footbridge. Follow the footpath to the small village green at Mill Corner .

Turn left and follow Dux street in the direction of Felsham. You'll pass Mill House on the left and Mill Cottage on the right and soon reach the hard standing . This time, turn right over a footbridge and follow the footpath over a footbridge to another footbridge.

Cross over and follow the path for about 100m, at the post turning right. At the road, turn left and follow the pavement, turning right onto a footpath beside the Old Chapel . The footpath leads between two houses and heads straight ahead across a field to a waymarker post. Once across, turn left and continue, turning right over a footbridge, to a waymarker crossroads . Turn left and follow this footpath, crossing a bridge and running around the edge of a field, until you eventually reach The Street. Turn right to return to the church.

## Wenyeve Way and Devils Hill Wood

**DISTANCE:** 2.5 miles (4km)



**DURATION:** 1 hr



**WAYMARKER:** Circular Walk





From the Village Hall  turn right up the street until you see a footpath sign by the Old Chapel .

The village hall was once a reading room for the villagers. Opposite once stood the old wheelwright's shop, now four cottages and a blacksmith shop (Forge) known as Quality Row.


Follow the footpath between Honeysuckle Cottage and the Old Chapel onto a cross-field path. At the far side, turn left and follow the path, turning right over a footbridge. Turn right at the waymarker crossroads  and follow the footpath past Boxhall Grove on your left. At the far end of the field, pass by the first footbridge on your right to cross the second footbridge into an open field .

Carry on, keeping trees and then Devils Hill Wood on your right. Cross over the footbridge on your right  and follow the footpath uphill. The Gamekeepers Cottage is almost hidden in the woods. On reaching the road  turn right and proceed downhill for 300m.

Turn right at the footpath sign  by Hitcham Lodge and proceed through the gate and between box hedging downhill past a pheasant enclosure until you reach a footbridge . After the footbridge follow the waymarker arrow across the field passing a large field oak until you reach the far edge of the field (ahead is often a corn wildlife strip). Keep the strip on your right until you reach a wooden finger post in the woods. Continue ahead, following the edge of the wood, with Old Buckenham Hall School school grounds on your left.

**In 1631 Thomas Cutler sold Brettenham Manor to Edward Wenyeve. The Wenyeves family remained there until 1847 when it was sold to Joseph Parker in 1850.**

**Brettenham Park estate was sold again in 1860 to Thomas Beale. In 1902 the estate was sold to the Warner Family and in 1956 the hall and park was sold and renamed Old Buckenham Hall School bringing an end to almost 1000 years of estate history.**

Follow the footpath through Park Farm  onto a concrete road back to the village hall.