



Circular Walks

Norton

Water Meadows,
Ancient Woodlands
and Misericords



Welcome

Situated just north of the A14, the village of Norton is mid-way between the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket and its network of footpaths are ideal for easy walking.



The name Norton, which means northern town or farm, once formed part of the Blackbourn Hundred which appears in the Domesday Book.

The northern and eastern parts of the village are mainly arable farmland, dotted with listed farmhouses. This slightly elevated land affords good views for several miles in all directions across the parish. Norton Little Green to the east, was once part of the much larger Bottenhaugh Green which extended over four parishes. The south is bounded by the ancient, Norton Wood, and the extensive water meadows of the 'Black Bourn Nature Reserve', and the grounds of the Grade 2* Little Haugh Hall lie to the west.

In the centre of the village, you will find The Dog Inn, War Memorial and garage. Nearby, the village sign, that stands by the entrance to the village hall, represents a 1st Century harness mount found nearby in 1856.

The medieval parish church of St Andrew is located out in the fields, accessible through an avenue of trees. Make sure you visit and look at the font and historic carved misericords (see inset image, top right).

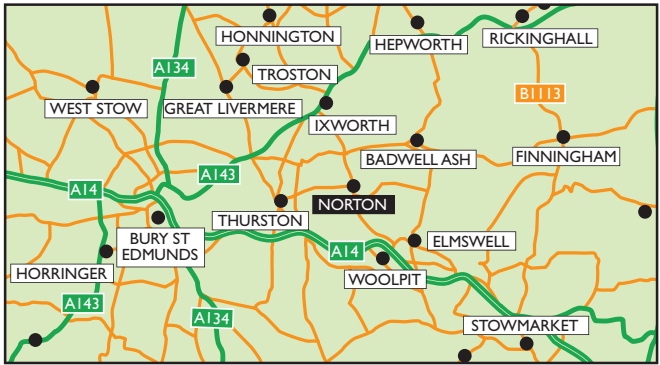
There is ample parking at the Village Hall where all the walks start.

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



Directions

Directions: Norton lies just off the A14 (junction 47) on the A1088. It is 10 miles east of Bury St Edmunds and 8 miles west of Stowmarket.

All three walks start at Norton Village Hall Car Park, 4 Ixworth Road, Norton IP31 3LE.

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Public Transport

Visit www.suffolkonboard.com for timetables and to plan your journey.

Discover Suffolk

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Follow us on



A Circle of St Andrew's

DISTANCE: 3.3 miles (5km)



7,000 steps



DURATION: 2 hours

TERRAIN: Pavements, road & field edges

From **A** turn left beside the A1088. Continue past the pub to reach the road junction with The Street, next to the War Memorial **1**.

Turn left and use the pavement to walk along The Street. At Rookery Drive, where the pavement ends, follow the road with care.

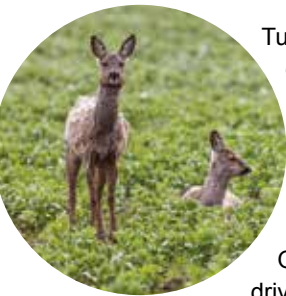
When you reach a sharp left bend, bear right along the road towards Norton Hall. **2**

After a telegraph pole and before you reach the entrance to Norton Hall, turn left following the 'official footpath diversion'. **3**

Follow the field edge until you reach the end of the farm buildings and turn right. Then, after a short distance, turn left onto a farm track. **4**

Follow the track and when you reach a hedge line turn left and follow the field edge path. **5**





Turn right at the waymarker and cross over a small footbridge.

Continue with the field on your right to reach buildings and a concrete hardstanding on your left.

Turn left. Follow the path through Oaktree Farm and continue along the driveway to reach Ashfield Road.

6 Turn right. Follow the road for a short distance with great care. Turn left onto a footpath.

Cross over the footbridge and continue along the field edge until you reach another footbridge.

Cross the footbridge. Bear right and follow the field edge.

You can see St Andrew's in the distance through the hedge on your right.

Continue ahead to reach a junction of paths.

Follow the footpath ahead, through a small wooded area, to emerge at the road to the church, which is now on your right. **7**

Accessed via a narrow treelined path on your right, the medieval church of St Andrew's is believed to stand on the site of a Saxon church.

In the church you can find a collection of 14th century stalls with misericord seats which are some of the finest in Suffolk. A misericord is a small wooden structure on the underside of a folding seat which, when the seat is folded up, acts as a ledge to



support a person during long periods of prayer. The superb carvings include a woman carding wool and a monk falling asleep over his manuscript.

Whilst in the church take time to appreciate the 15th century font with its carved reliefs and interesting supporters, including a wodevole, a mythical 'wild man of the woods'.

Retrace your steps to **7**.

Continue straight ahead through the car park.

The old Rectory, behind the church, is believed to be the country's first private madhouse, when, back in the 17th Century, John Ashburne opened it to treat paying guests.

Born in 1611, Ashburne, lived here with his wife Abigail when he became Rector in 1646. Abigail was the daughter of Samuel Ward, the celebrated Puritan Divine and Town Preacher of Ipswich.

Ashburne, widely credited as the founder of the 'Private Madhouse System', gained a considerable reputation for curing those afflicted by mental illnesses. However, on 1st August 1661, he was brutally murdered with a pitchfork by his own brother-in-law, one of his patients!

The Rectory is now a private dwelling.

Continue through a grassy area and then turn left over a footbridge.

Turn right immediately **8** and continue with the field on your left. Continue straight and cross over a footbridge. Follow the path through a shaded area to reach a junction of paths. Keep left along a narrow path. The houses along the A1088 are in the distance.

Cross the footbridge and follow the path between houses to reach the A1088. **9**

Turn left. Continue along the pavement to return to **A**.



A Stroll through Norton Woods

DISTANCE: 3.8 miles (6km)

 8,500 steps

DURATION: 2 hours

TERRAIN: Pavement, road, field edge, farm tracks and woodland rides.



From **A** follow the Green Walk to **I**.

Turn left and use the pavement to walk along The Street. At Rookery Drive, where the pavement ends, follow the road with care for just under 200 metres to reach a footpath on your right. **I**

Turn right and follow the footpath between fields before crossing another field to the gap in the hedge. Cross over the footbridge and continue along the edge of the next field and through a small wood on your left.

Note the pillbox on your right.

After the wood continue across the next field to reach a farm road. **2** Turn left. Follow the road to reach Crawley Hall Farm. Turn right and then left to pass through the farmyard and continue along a grass track.

3 At the end of the hedge turn right and continue along a winding wooded path to reach Norton Wood.

Norton Wood is a 61-acre biological Site of Special Scientific Interest. This ancient woodland of coppice with standards is situated on a sloping plateau of slightly acidic soil comprising of a layer of sand and loess over boulder clays.

The site is largely made up of acid Oak, Hazel and Ash Woodland with abundant Birch but there are also several wet and waterlogged areas too providing a range of habitats.

Although Bramble dominates, the ground flora is rich and includes Primrose, Dog's Mercury, Ramsons and Oxlip, a scarce but locally abundant species.

Keep an eye out for numerous deer, including Muntjac, when you pass through the wood.



In Norton Wood, continue straight ahead to reach a junction of woodland rides. **4**

Turn left and follow the ride through the wood.

Continue straight and cross a footbridge. Exit the wood and turn right along the field edge and at the farm track turn left.

5 Follow the track to reach a barn.

Turn left. **6** Follow the farm track downhill past the horse paddocks on your right to reach a large barn at the rear of Norton Hall. **4**

To extend join the Green Walk, turn right and continue along the track **4.**

Leave the track and follow the official footpath diversion behind the barn, turning left and following the field margin until you reach the access road for Norton Hall. **3**

Turn right. Follow the access road to reach Ashfield Road. **2**

Turn left. Follow Ashfield Road with care, joining the pavement when it becomes The Street and continue to reach the junction with the A1088. **1**

Turn right and return to **A**.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Water Meadow Walk

DISTANCE: 2.2 miles (3.5km)



4,900 steps

DURATION: 1 hour

TERRAIN: Terrain: Road, boardwalk and meadows (some uneven and boggy). Features kissing gates.



From **A** follow the green walk to **1**.

Cross the A1088 with care, turning right into Heath Road. **1**

Walk along Heath Road, continuing past Hawe's Lane and around a sharp left-hand bend.

Continue ahead until you reach a footpath sign on the right. **2**



Turn right and continue past the entrance to the fishing lake on your left. The path continues through a wooded area and soon bears left and follows a stream.

Continue along the footpath, crossing over two bridges and a section of boardwalk to reach the kissing gate at the entrance to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust nature reserve. **3**

Blackbourn was a hundred of Suffolk, consisting of 66,272 acres, situated in the north-west of Suffolk and appears in the Domesday Book as Blachruna and Blackebrune meaning 'black bourn'. A bourn is a stream. The stream is still known as the Black Bourn and flows north through the nature reserve to join the River Little Ouse.



The Black Bourn Valley Nature Reserve is managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/blackbournvalley. Formerly known as Grove Farm, the Suffolk Wildlife Trust is 'wilding' the 294 acre Black Bourn Valley site by taking fields out of arable production and allowing nature to take over. On the grazing marshes look out for flocks of teal and gadwall ducks and feeding snipe.

Pass through the kissing gate.

Please note that there may be cows, calves and sometimes a bull in this section.

Bear slightly left and follow the waymarkers through the reserve, turning right at a pond and continuing straight at a junction of footpaths. Keep following the footpath until you reach another kissing gate at the end of the meadow.

Exit the nature reserve through the kissing gate and continue to reach a footbridge on your right. **4**

Cross over the footbridge and follow the wooded path to reach Hawe's Lane. **5**

Turn right. Follow the lane to reach Heath Road. **6**

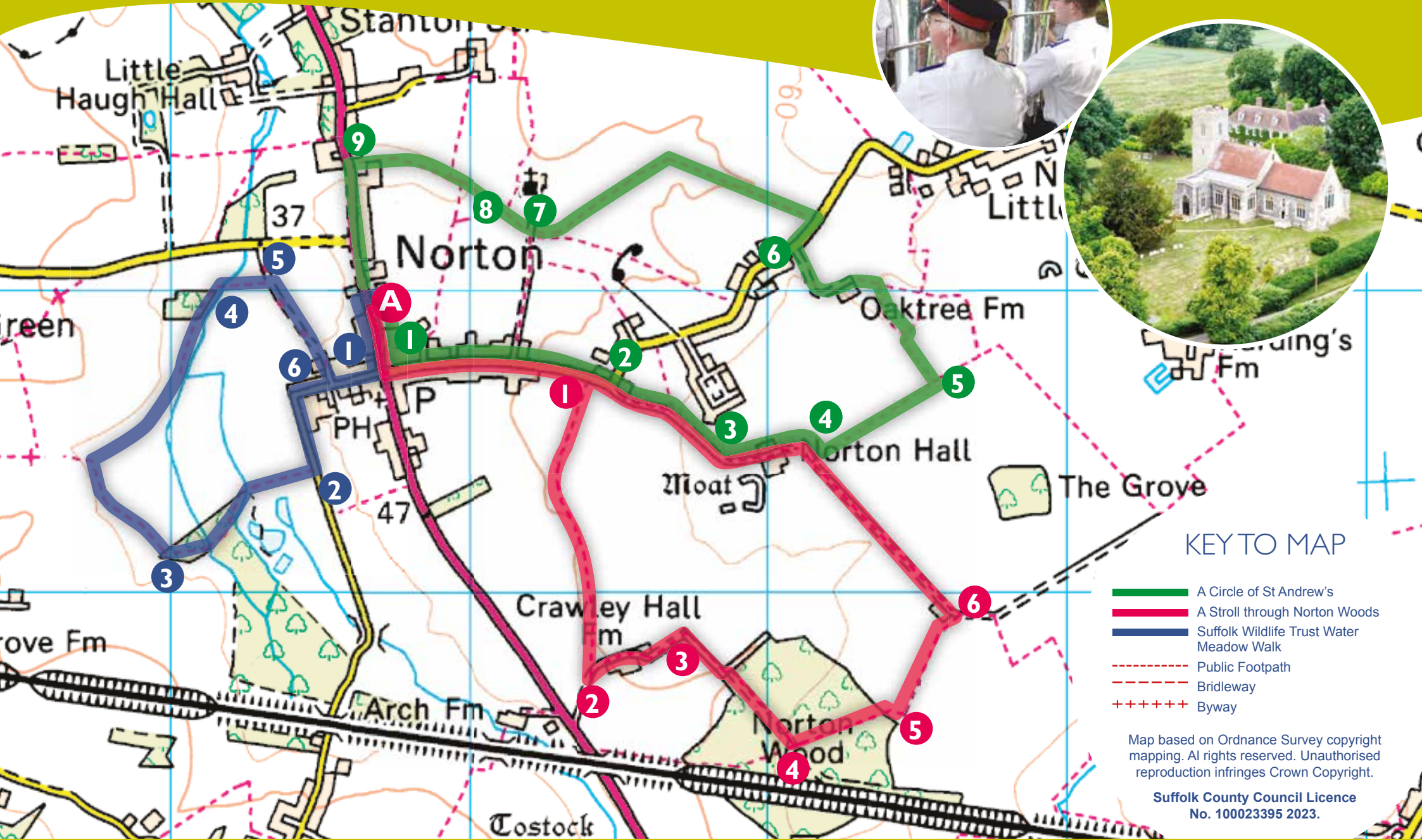
Turn left. Follow the road to reach the A1088.

Turn left, crossing over the A1088 with care and return to **A**.

Norton Walks

Water Meadows, Ancient Woodlands and Misericords

© Image courtesy Dr Andy Mason



KEY TO MAP

- A Circle of St Andrew's
- A Stroll through Norton Woods
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust Water Meadow Walk
- Public Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway

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