



Circular Walks

Thurston Circular Walks

Halls, Churches and lots of History



Welcome



Thurston, like most settlements in England, has grown and changed greatly since it was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.

It was part of the Thedwastre Hundred which consisted of 24 parishes in Suffolk. Thedwastre or Thedwestry was listed in the Domesday Book as Thevardestreu. The name derives from the Theodwards's tree, presumably a notable tree situated on the area's boundary. In 1660, the Thedwastre Hundred Court met once a year at Easter on Thurston Plains or on Thedwastre Hill.

For many centuries Thurston was a small, scattered parish of about 300 people, many of which were involved in farming. Situated in East Anglia with its chalky soil, rich boulder clays and low rainfall, it was ideal for the growing of cereal.

The construction of the railway in the early 1800's led to major change, dividing the village and resulting in the development of the western side of the village.

Today, Thurston is a village with excellent facilities, services and schools. Together with the rail links and the proximity to the A14 corridor, Thurston has expanded and grown.

Both the walks in this leaflet start at the New Green Community Centre where you will also find a popular community café with customer toilets. At the train station you will find a small commercial shopping area with further facilities along Barton Road including the Fox and Hounds Public House and a Post Office.

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

Thurston is situated approximately one mile north of the A14 (junction 46). Five miles east of Bury St Edmunds and 10 miles west of Stowmarket.

All walks start at the New Green Community Centre car park **A**. Car parking at the centre is permitted for these walks. What3Words [///comet.hedgehog.orders](https://www.what3words.com/comet.hedgehog.orders)

Alternative parking (pay and display) can be found adjacent to Thurston railway station.

Bike parking is available at the New Green Community Centre and the train station.

Public Transport

Thurston has a railway station with trains running every hour to Ipswich and Cambridge. There is a limited bus service connecting the village to Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket and Diss. Visit www.suffolkonboard.com for timetables and to plan your journey.

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Follow us on



Old Orchard Walk

DISTANCE: 4.5 miles (7 km)
10,000 steps



DURATION: 2 hours

TERRAIN: Pavement, field edge paths, country lanes & meadows. Several kissing gates.

From **A** join the cycle/pedestrian path passing Thurst Café on your left and the children's play area on your right.

Continue through New Green Open Space, bearing slightly left to reach Sandpit Lane at the junction with School Road.

1 Cross Sandpit Lane and follow the pavement along School Road. After passing Thurston Butchers, turn left on to School Lane. The old Primary School is on your right.

Continue straight along the footpath with the recreation ground and Cavendish Hall on your right.

The Cavendish Hall was built in 1914 as a memorial to Tyrell Cavendish who lost his life on board the Titanic in 1912. Both he and his wife were travelling to America to visit Mrs Cavendish's father. Mrs Cavendish survived but never returned to live in Thurston House, which they had purchased shortly before the voyage.



2 At the end of the recreation ground turn left on Church Road. St Peter's Church is opposite.

St Peter's Church, which is open during the day, dates back to the 14th century and is worth a visit.

The present chancel dates from the early 15th century replacing an earlier structure and was the only part to survive when the tower collapsed in 1860. The Greene family, of Nether Hall, and the Blake family, of Thurston House, commissioned much of the 19th Century stained glass.

Under the tower is a memorial to George Wickes, one of our greatest silversmiths and goldsmith to George III. Born in Bury St Edmunds, he founded Garrad in London and retired to Thurston.

Continue past the War Memorial and take the footpath on your right **3**, across open fields.

Cross the bridge, bear left and continue between arable fields and then bear right up a hill towards Myatt's Wood.

4 Walk through this deciduous wood, planted in the mid 1980's.

Leaving Myatt's Wood turn left and follow the field edge to reach Oak Road.

Turn left along Oak Road. **5** This is the hamlet of Great Green.

The 1905 Ordnance Survey map of Thurston shows Great Green as an area of smaller, independent farms where the owner was also the farmer. Farms were clustered around a central green which before the Enclosure Act was common land.



For many centuries Thurston existed as a small, scattered parish, with most residents living in the east. The west was sparsely populated and featured an expanse of heathland.



Continue to Norton Road. Cross this busy road, bear left, and after two cottages take the footpath on your right. **6**

Follow the field edge, bearing left at the top of the field and continuing with the hedge on your right. At the end of the field continue straight for a short distance then bear right. Keep the hedge on your right until the end of the field.

Situated on the Thurston/Pakenham boundary of Orchard Lane, a large orchard area was designated to the growing of dessert apples by a Mr Zavalloni, an Italian prisoner of war, who remained in Thurston, marrying a local girl. After he died in the 1990s the land was sold and is now arable fields.

Turn left and follow the field edge. This area was once an apple tree growing area, as you bear right, notice the alder trees on your left which were planted as a form of protection for the orchards from wind and frost.

At the end of the field bear left and follow the field edge. Ahead of you is a wonderful view of St Mary's Church.

After passing a line of houses you will meet the Pakenham to Thurston Road.

7 Turn right towards the Church and Pakenham village, where The Fox pub can be found.

In front of the Pakenham churchyard **8**, turn left on to a track that leads to Nether Hall.

St Marys Church, Pakenham, with its octangle tower, was built in 1100 AD. The church is open daily from 10am to 4pm and is worth a visit.

Continued overleaf

Continued from overleaf

Cattle may be present in the parkland between the Church 8 and Sheep Lane 9. To avoid this section: from the church follow the road back towards 7 and then continue along Pakenham Road for 550 metres to reach Sheep Lane. Turn right and rejoin the walk at 9.

Keep to the track and then continue straight passing through the kissing gate and across the open parkland of Nether Hall Estate. Pass through another kissing gate to reach Sheep Lane.

Originally the seat of the de Pakenham family, Nether Hall has had many owners in its history including the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds. Later it became the seat of the Greene Baronets. The first Baronet, Sir Edward Greene was grandson to Benjamin Greene, who established the Greene King Brewery.

It was remodelled in the early 18th Century, 1875 and again in 1901 by Philip Webb, friend of William Morris (of the Arts and Crafts Movement).

9 Turn right and continue along Sheep Lane until you come to a footpath sign on your left.

10 Enter the meadow via the kissing gate. (There is a permissive route around the field, avoiding the cattle, if present.) The footpath leads diagonally across the field before reaching another kissing gate to the right.

Walk through the trees and at the end turn right through an area of rough grassland. Cross the bridge and turn left onto a green lane. After a short while you will reach the tarmacked Meadow Lane. Continue straight towards Norton Road.

At Norton Road 11 use the pedestrian crossing to cross the road. Across from Sandpit Lane is the oldest known pub in Thurston, The Victoria. Turn right down Sandpit Lane to reach the New Green Open Space. Turn right at the cycle/pedestrian path 1 and return to A.



Blackbourn Valley Walk

DISTANCE: 6.5 miles (10.5 km)
15,000 steps

DURATION: 3 hours

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



Follow the green  walk until 5.

Continue along the road. Shortly after Green Farm Cottage, take the footpath on your right 1. Continue along the field edge path.

Cross the footbridge and at the road, turn right 2. Continue, passing Gypsy Lane and Moat Farm until you reach Wyards Lane, a byway, on your left.

Turn left 3 and continue to a kissing gate which is the entrance to the Black Bourn Valley nature reserve.

Formerly called Grove Farm, in 1995 this 88 hectare site became a legacy gift to Suffolk Wildlife Trust from Laura Cooper, a former Second World War land girl with a great attachment to the farm she worked on.

Enter the reserve and continue until you meet a junction of paths. Turn left 4 and make for a large gap in the hedge line. Continue through the meadow until you come to a kissing gate. Exit the reserve and continue beside the river until you reach a wooden bridge on your right. Cross the river and continue to reach a single-track road.

Turn left 5. You will soon reach Thurston Road. Turn left again 6 and take care whilst you walk along this busy road. After crossing an interesting iron bridge, the road goes uphill. Before reaching the brow of the hill, turn right through a small gap in the hedge to join a footpath 7.

Pass through a kissing gate and continue

straight, leaving a wooded area on your right. In front of you stands the stunning Grade II* Georgian manor house, Little Haugh Hall.

Before reaching the house, turn left 8 passing the wonderful children's tree houses on your right. Proceed through another kissing gate and cross an aeroplane landing strip, noting the hangers on your right. Bear slightly right, then, slightly left, following a wide track between two hedges. Eventually, you will come to a concrete pad.

Crossing the pad, turn slightly right 9 and follow the track. There are lovely views looking towards Stowlangtoft on your right.

When you reach a footpath junction, bear left 10. On your right is Pakenham Wood.

Despite being planted with coniferous trees in the 20th century, the ancient woodland, Pakenham Wood, still retains some native hardwood trees. The wood is gradually being restored to allow native trees and plants to thrive. It remains one of the best places to see Silver-Washed Fritillary butterflies in Southeast England.

Continue walking beside the wood. As the track bears left, keep straight on a narrow path through trees until you reach a field of paddocks. Keep straight. At the end of the field turn left using the kissing gate to access another meadow.

Walk down the hill where 11 you can either continue straight to the road and Pakenham village (returning to the church 8 via Church Hill) or bear left and take the old wooden steps into St Mary's Churchyard.

Pass through the kissing gate and bear right to the Church porch where you take the path down to Church Hill Road 8.

Follow the green  walk to return to A.



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KEY TO MAP

- Old Orchard Walk
- Blackbourn Valley Walk
- - - - - Public Footpath
- - - - - Bridleway
- + + + + + Byway

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