

# Welcome



Needham Market lies next to the River Gipping in mid-Suffolk and has a history that is deceptively old. Its name derives from Anglo-Saxon “Nied” meaning ‘place of refuge’ and “Ham” meaning ‘hamlet’. As a small hamlet and part of the “Manor of Barking” its’ name does not appear in the Domesday Book. However, with Roman roads connecting it to many other settlements, it became one of Suffolk’s earliest market towns with its market status granted under Henry III in 1245. It became its own parish in the early 20th Century.

The major pilgrim route from the east coast to the St Edmunds’s shrine in Bury St Edmunds and on to St Etheldreda at Ely, passed through Needham Market and led the town’s expansion during the Saxon-Viking era.

Later, the town’s location by the River Gipping brought trade and manufacturing, and water mills and windmills on the edge of town supported farming and the medieval woollen cloth industry. The main industry here was ‘wool combing’ where wool was prepared for weavers.

During the Black Death (1663-1665) the town was isolated with two thirds of the town’s population lost. Chains were installed at both ends of the town to contain the spread. This marked the decline in the medieval woollen cloth industry, with trade only recovering two hundred years later with the canalisation of the River Gipping in the late 18th Century.

The medieval high street has a fascinating history and is a designated Conservation Area: in 1744 one of the country’s first “penny banks” was founded here by a local Quaker; the parish church of St John has one of the finest hammer beam roofs in England; and amongst its many notable buildings are shops and cafes.

## Location



## Directions

Needham Market is just one mile from the A14 / A140 junction, approximately 9 miles north of Ipswich and 3.5 miles south-east of Stowmarket. The walk starts from Needham Lake Visitor Centre, **A** Coddenham Road, Needham Market IP6 8NU. There is a café in the Visitor Centre, with a picnic area and play facilities. The walk is waymarked in places with ‘TO BARKING AND BACK AGAIN’ discs.

## Public Transport

Needham Market is on the mainline train service from Ipswich to Cambridge and is served by a number of buses. Visit [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) to plan your journey.

## 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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Circular Walks

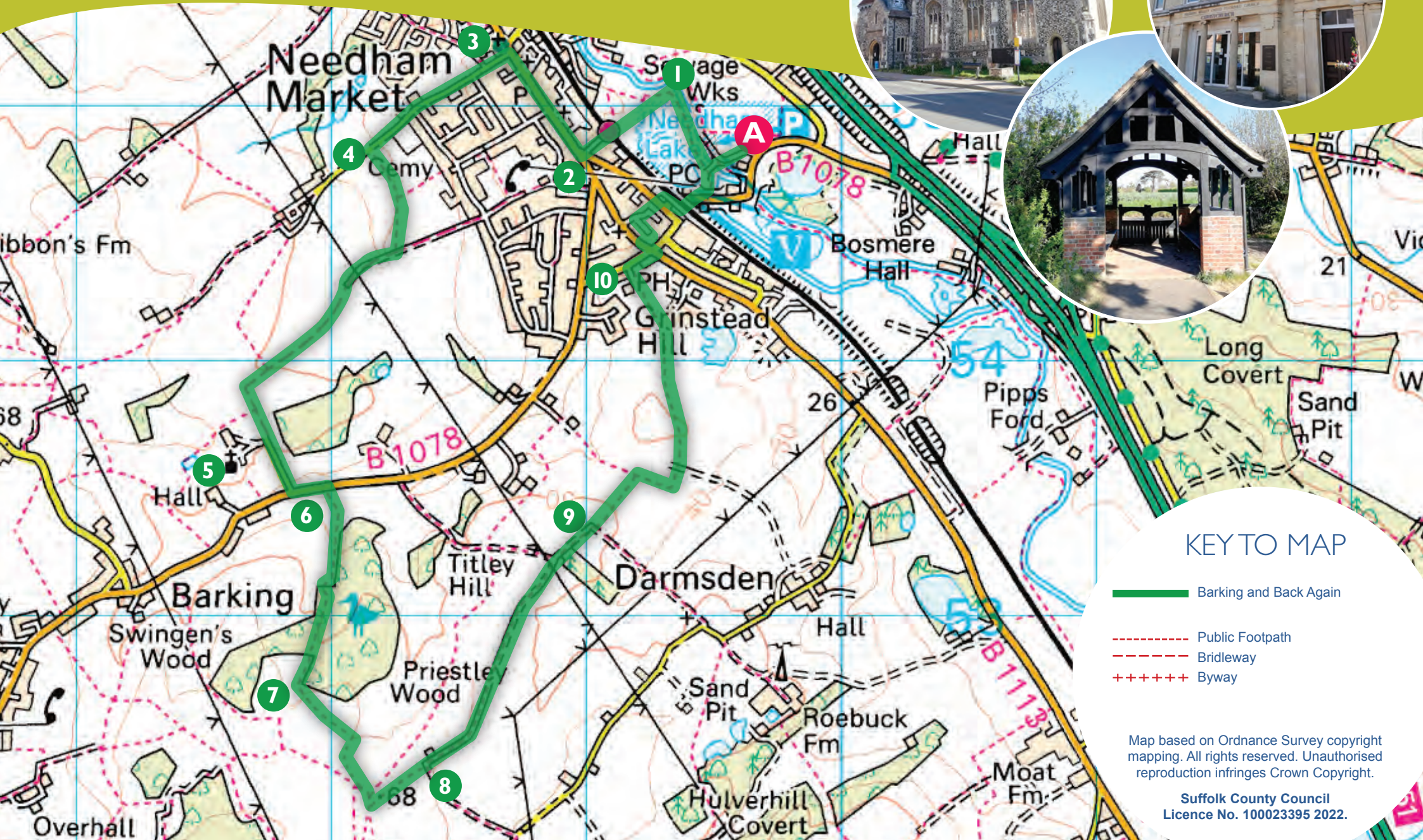
# Barking and Back Again

A Walk in the Gipping Valley



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## KEY TO MAP

-  Barking and Back Again
-  Public Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  Byway

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# Barking and Back Again

**DISTANCE:** 5.5 miles (9 km)

**DURATION:** 3 hours

**TERRAIN:** Ancient woodlands, footpaths, field edges, and pavements



With the Visitor Centre **A** behind you, cross the wooden bridge over the River Gipping. Turn right and continue ahead keeping the lake on your left.

Needham Lake was created in the 1970s when sand and gravel were extracted here for the construction of the A14.

The lake has a variety of birds including grebes, ducks and swans. In spring you can find orchids and other flowers growing in the riverside meadows.



At the nature reserve bear right following the Barking and Back Again waymarker. Keep the river on your right and when it bends, by a bench, **1** continue straight ahead across the grass towards the train station.

As you approach the station, on your right, is the Camping Land. The name is derived from Campan or Campball, a rough and often rowdy medieval ball game and the predecessor of rugby.

Pass through the low Cattle Tunnel, dated 1846 (mind your head!). Turn left to reach Station Yard.

The Victorian station must have been an impressive sight when it opened in 1849. It was designed by architect Frederick Barnes, who also designed the Old Town Hall located on School Street. Originally, the station resembled a miniature Blickling Hall in Norfolk with Jacobean style curved Dutch gables and decorative brickwork.

Leave Station Yard past the shops to reach the High Street **2**.

At the High Street, on the corner on your left, is 17th Century Theobald House. Once a free school for the poor during the Stuart era, it later became Theobalds Grammar School until the early 20th Century.

Turn right to walk up High Street.



Medieval High Street has many original timber framed buildings behind brick facades. Most of the buildings are Grade II Listed, dating to the 15th and 16th Centuries, built when this was a wealthy town. Some buildings would have been workshops for making cloth, clay pipes and even mouse traps!

Christchurch was previously the United Reformed Church dating to 1837. Joseph Priestley, a chemist, was minister here from 1755 to 1758. He discovered oxygen in 1774, invented carbonated water, and has a crater on the moon named after him! The ancient wood you enter later is also named after him.

Cross over at the traffic lights. Continue ahead, passing The Causeway on your left.

Needham Market has two road names linked to the plague of 1663-65. The Causeway is thought to be a corruption of 'the corpseway' and was part of the route taken by funeral parties to Barking Church. Chainhouse Road, off the Barking Road, was named after chains installed to isolate the town.

Further along High Street, is the Post Office. Constructed in 1772, during the ages of enlightenment and revolution, this was originally a Quakers Meeting House. It was an important centre for the Friends for several generations. There is a Quakers graveyard at the rear.

The Limes Hotel was a meeting place for the Guilds and a calling house for pilgrims on their way to Bury St Edmunds. The Georgian facade masks Tudor carvings and oak beams inside.

Opposite Limes Hotel, on the corner of Bridge Street, is a finely carved Angel Corner Post on the former Bull Inn. The Bull Inn opened in 1607 and has also been known as the White Horse and Compasses.

It served its last customer in 1985. Tolly Cobbold, the name of the local Ipswich brewery, is on its wall.

**Fifteenth Century St John the Baptist Church was once a resting place for travellers and pilgrims. It became Needham Market's parish church in 1901.**

**Inside is an excellent example of a double hammerbeam roof. Built in the 15th Century by the medieval carpenter Munro Cautley, this magnificent roof has been described as 'the climax of English roof construction' and the 'culminating achievement of the English carpenter'.**

**The church burial ground is located on Barrett's Lane which you'll pass later.**

Continue ahead to Barrett's Lane **3**.

**The former Barclays Bank building on the opposite corner of Barrett's Lane was originally occupied by The Bank of Alexander. Founded in 1744 by Samuel Alexander, a Quaker, it was one of the earliest private banks in England. The bank amalgamated with the Gurney family bank in 1770, and later joined forces with Barclays Bank in 1896. The Alexander family are buried in the Quakers graveyard.**

Turn left on to Barrett's Lane and continue past public toilets past Crowley Park. At the top of the rise is St John the Baptist burial ground. Dedicated in 1921, the churchyard also houses the War Memorial.

Past the burial ground, at the bottom of the dip, turn left on to a footpath **4**. Follow the footpath to a gap in the hedge. Go through the gap and over a concrete bridge. Follow the wooded path, through a metal barrier, turning right before a wooden bridge to continue along the wooded path. This section of path is a continuation of The Causeway you passed in the High Street. Cross a track to stay on the wooded path until you eventually meet a narrow lane. Turn right. The lane leads to St Mary's Church **5**. You are now in Barking.



**St Mary's Church, one of Suffolk's grander churches, served both Barking and Needham Market until the 20th Century.**

**The church has 14th Century gargoyles, three porches with the south porch door containing medieval carvings, a tower rebuilt in 1870 in proportion to the nave and chancel, and inside, a roodloft supported by intricate and beautiful coving.**

**Next to the church is a fine Regency building, originally the rectory. The many Cedars of Lebanon are a legacy of a 19th Century vicar who was a botany enthusiast.**

Retrace your steps along the lane to Barking Road. Turn left and follow the pavement for 50 metres to reach Priestley Wood on the right **6**. Cross over the road with great care. Enter the wood through the kissing gate.



**Priestley Wood is a remnant of the original woodlands that once covered the Gipping Valley and is one of East Anglia's finest ancient woodland.**

**It is mentioned in the survey of the Bishop of Ely's estate in 1251 as 'Prestele'. The modern spelling is thought to originate from Joseph Priestley.**

**Local people would have cleared the wood for farmland, fuel and building material. Today it is important for its diverse wildlife. Notable trees include hornbeam, and the rarest of all native species, the wild pear. Over 130 flowering plants have been recorded here and in spring, great displays of orchid and bluebells can be seen. Birds include owls and in springtime nightingales.**

**The wood is managed by The Woodland Trust.**

Follow the path through the wood, bearing right at the first junction, right at the second junction, and then left at the third junction to exit the wood **7**.

Follow the field edge path to a gap in the mature hedge. Go through the gap and continue straight ahead over the large field in front of you.

At the end of the field turn right and follow the footpath. Exit a small wood and turn left. With a small meadow on your right, the footpath leads to a well walked path. Turn left to follow that path.

Go through a wooden gate **8**, passing through a private garden, and then through a kissing gate. The path becomes a wide track. Where this track bends right **9** (you can see St Andrew's Church, Darmsden in the near distance), continue ahead onto the grassy path with fields on both sides.

This path bends right, continue with a hedge on your left and onwards to the crest of a hill.

Follow the descending wooded path beside a wire fence to reach a road **10**.

Cross the road. Turn right. Follow the pavement to the main road. Bear left around the corner to a dropped kerb. Cross with care. Turn right then immediately left to pass between bungalows into Limetree Close. At the T-junction by a Royal Mail letterbox, cross and turn right. Continue to the end of the cul-de-sac and follow the tarmac path between garden fences to Coddendam Road.

Cross over. Turn right. Go under the railway bridge to return to Needham Lake. With the lake on your left return to the wooden bridge over the River Gipping and the Visitor Centre **A**.



### 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.

