Discover Suffolk

Suffolk County Council

Circular Walks

Cratfield

Tranquil circular walks in ancient countryside





Welcome

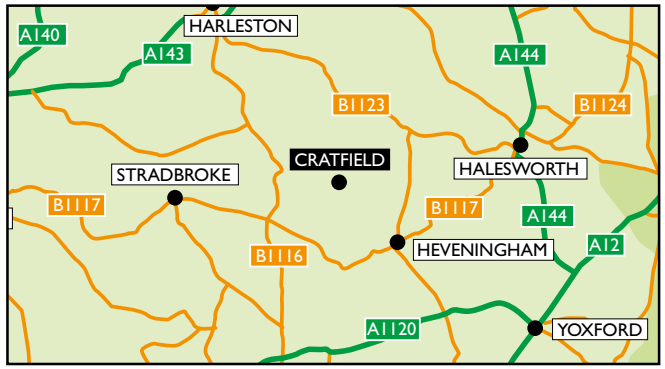
Cratfield is a small village situated on the clay uplands of “High” Suffolk between Framlingham and Halesworth, where the waters of the River Blyth rise before flowing out to the sea at Southwold. The Roman Road Margary 35, now a delightful green lane, also passes through the parish, probably on its way from Caistor to Dunwich.

People were living here at the time of the Domesday Survey when the village was called Crata-felda. This means “Craeta’s clearing”, suggesting the area was probably once summer grazing for the Saxon estates at Blythburgh. The village sign, located outside the Old School, depicts the four greens of Cratfield – Bell, North, Swan and Silverleys – which have become emblematic of the parish and represent the remnants of these ancient commons.

The church, where one of the walks begin, is remarkable for its fine Seven Sacrament Font, unfortunately damaged by William Dowsing, the famous Laxfield iconoclast. Another notable sculpture also originated here – the bronze of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square, which was designed by Ivor Robert-Jones in Copping’s barn.

On Sundays between May and September Fire and Feast offers refreshments in its Tipi café, but at other times visitors will need to bring their own refreshments, as there are no shops or pubs in the village.

Location



Directions

Cratfield is in north east Suffolk, located 10 miles north of Framlingham and 7 miles west of Halesworth. Both walks start from the centre of the village either at the church or the village hall, both have parking available.

St. Mary’s Church, Church Rd. IP19 0BX
what3words///starting.newspaper.relay

Cratfield Village Hall, Manse Lane. IP19 0DJ
what3words///wizard.seasons.ringside

Public Transport

Public transport to Cratfield is very limited.

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

Discover Suffolk

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Suffolk Creating the Greenest County

Produced by Cratfield Parish Council and Suffolk County Council

In the Footsteps of the Romans

CIRCULAR WALK

DISTANCE:	**3.5 miles (5.5km)** – can be combined with Big Skies – Sunrise to Sunset to make a 6.5 mile (10.5km) loop
DURATION:	**2 hours**
TERRAIN:	**Bridleways, footpaths, ancient common and country lanes. Muddy after rain.**

From the Village Hall car park (A) turn left on the road for just under 0.5km to Tong's Lane. (1)

Turn into Tong's Lane, passing Coppings on your left, and continue along the bridle way for about 1.75km until it ends in a T-junction with the road. (2)

Coppings used to be home to sculptor Ivor Roberts-Jones. In 1973, in the barn beside the house, he created the statue of Winston Churchill that now stands in Parliament Square.

Tong's Lane marks the route taken by one of the minor Roman roads (Margary 35) and is thought to have been part of the way from Caistor St Edmunds (Venta Icenorum), the largest Roman town in East Anglia to Dunwich, a Roman Coastal Fort. There is no evidence that Cratfield existed as a village then and it is likely that the land alongside the road would have been uninhabited scrub woodland. Today the path is a tranquil green lane edged with primroses and dog violets with rolling arable fields either side and bird song overhead.

Turn left along the lane and after about 100m take the footpath on your right, just after the entrance to Silverleys Barn. (3) The path soon takes a diagonal route across an arable field to the left of farm barns. Cross the footbridge to Chippinghall Green. Follow the path alongside the pond. Once on the open common follow the road to the left.

This part of Suffolk is famous for its "greens" – the remains of medieval common land that was used for grazing and collecting fuel. Most greens have since been enclosed, the last by Parliamentary Act in the mid-1800s. Cratfield had six recorded greens, four of which were still intact until Parliamentary Enclosure. This walk passes through three of these: Silverleys Green and Swan Green, both now only remembered in the names of properties adjoining the former common land; and Goostead Green, now completely lost, except on historic maps.

Chippinghall Green, which is just in Fressingfield parish, is one of a few greens that escaped enclosure and in the summer the commoners still graze horses on it. The rough grass and scrub of this green gives an impression of what most of this landscape would have looked like when the Romans traversed it.

Pass Elm Lodge and leave the common via the cattle grid.

At the T-junction (4) turn right and continue along the lane for 0.5km.

After Grove Farm turn left (5) on the footpath beside a bungalow onto a farm track. This is Jones Lane, which skirts Swan Green. Continue on this path for 0.75km where you will meet Tong's Lane. Turn right, retracing your steps back to the start of Tong's Lane. Turn left then almost immediately right taking the footpath through the trees on the opposite side of the lane. (6) This path runs along the edge of what was once Goostead Green.

Once across the ditch and in the open field, turn right, the Village Hall will be ahead on your left and is reached by a footpath across the arable field.







Big Skies - Sunrise to Sunset

DISTANCE:	**3.7 miles (6km)**
DURATION:	**2 hours**
TERRAIN:	**Bridleways, footpaths, and country lanes**

St Mary the Virgin, Cratfield, is a small rural church rich in the craftsmanship and character of 15th-century Suffolk. Its fine west tower, completed on the eve of the Reformation, features carved spandrels of a woodwose and a dragon, and was partly funded when the parish sold its silver rather than surrender it to the Crown. Inside, a superb 15th-century Seven Sacrament font, considered one of the finest in England, with six beautifully carved panels still retaining traces of original colour. The church also preserves Jacobean benches with unusual stylised poppyheads, fragments of a medieval screen, and a well-crafted Victorian restoration by Richard Phipson.



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.



From Cratfield Church **B** turn left down the hill, and almost immediately right **1** onto a footpath. Follow this footpath through two grass fields, then onto arable land keeping the hedge on your left. Take the second footpath on the left, down some steps into a tree belt, then out to the road.

Turn left and almost immediately right into Tong's Lane **2**. After 350m take the footpath left **3** alongside an arable field. Follow this path as it widens into the remnants of a green lane – Jone's Lane, and then a farm track, eventually reaching the road with a bungalow to your right.

Suffolk is famous for its big skies. This second part of the walk shows them off to particular advantage with wide vistas of open country looking back towards the church. These views are particularly wonderful at sunrise and sunset.

Turn left onto the lane **4** and continue for 0.5km. Just before the sharp left bend in the road take the footpath left running along the back of Rose Farm **5**. Continue straight on along the path, with tall hedge on your right, then along the hedge adjoining the Fire and Feast Campsite and Café **6**.

Fire and Feast Campsite and Café offers rustic dining, woodfire cooking and camping. Visit www.fireandfeastsuffolk.co.uk to find out more about events and workshops. On Sundays between May and September Fire and Feast offers refreshments in its Tipi café.

At the field corner, either stop for a Sunday morning coffee, or turn right along the path, passing a wooden bridge, continuing along the field edge on the permissive path which rejoins the footpath a little further on.

Turn left and continue along the footpath, passing another wooden bridge on your left and pick up the wide grassy track to the right of the trees and pond. This takes you to the road at Church Farm. At Church Farm turn right **7** onto the road and down the hill. Just as the road begins to rise again a footpath to your left takes you back towards the church **8**.

Notice the flat section of road as you head downhill, this is where the route of the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway (The Middy) ran. Cratfield was only ever a goods stop, and the line from Laxfield never went beyond it as the company ran out of funds.

The path begins as a green lane. After 250m take the hidden footpath on the left crossing an arable field. At the road turn left, then take the right **9** turning into Church Road and back to the Church.







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KEY TO MAP

- In the Footsteps of the Romans Route
- Big Skies –Sunrise to Sunset Route
- Permissive path
- Public Footpath
- Bridleway

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