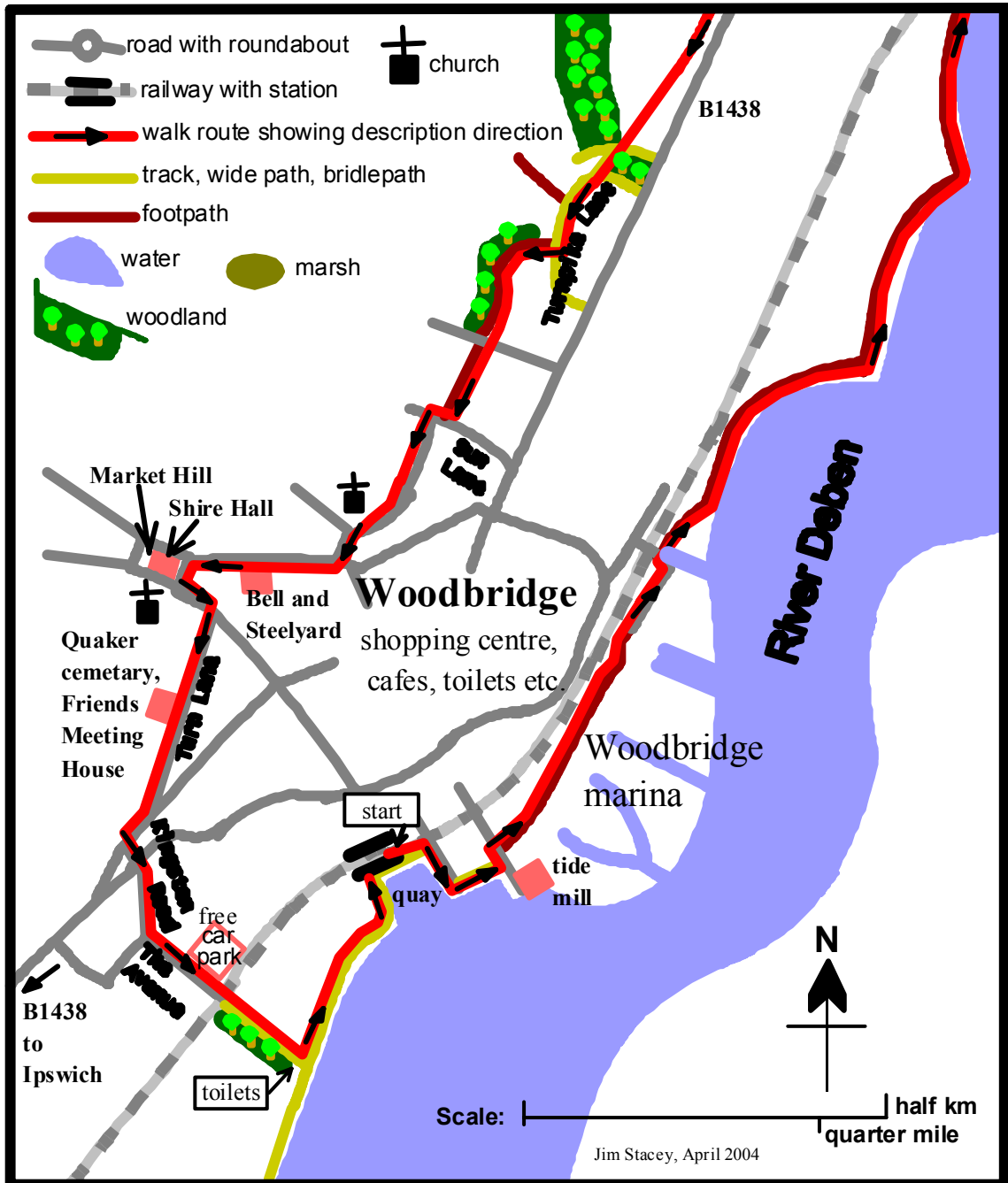


Walk 3 - Woodbridge and Melton

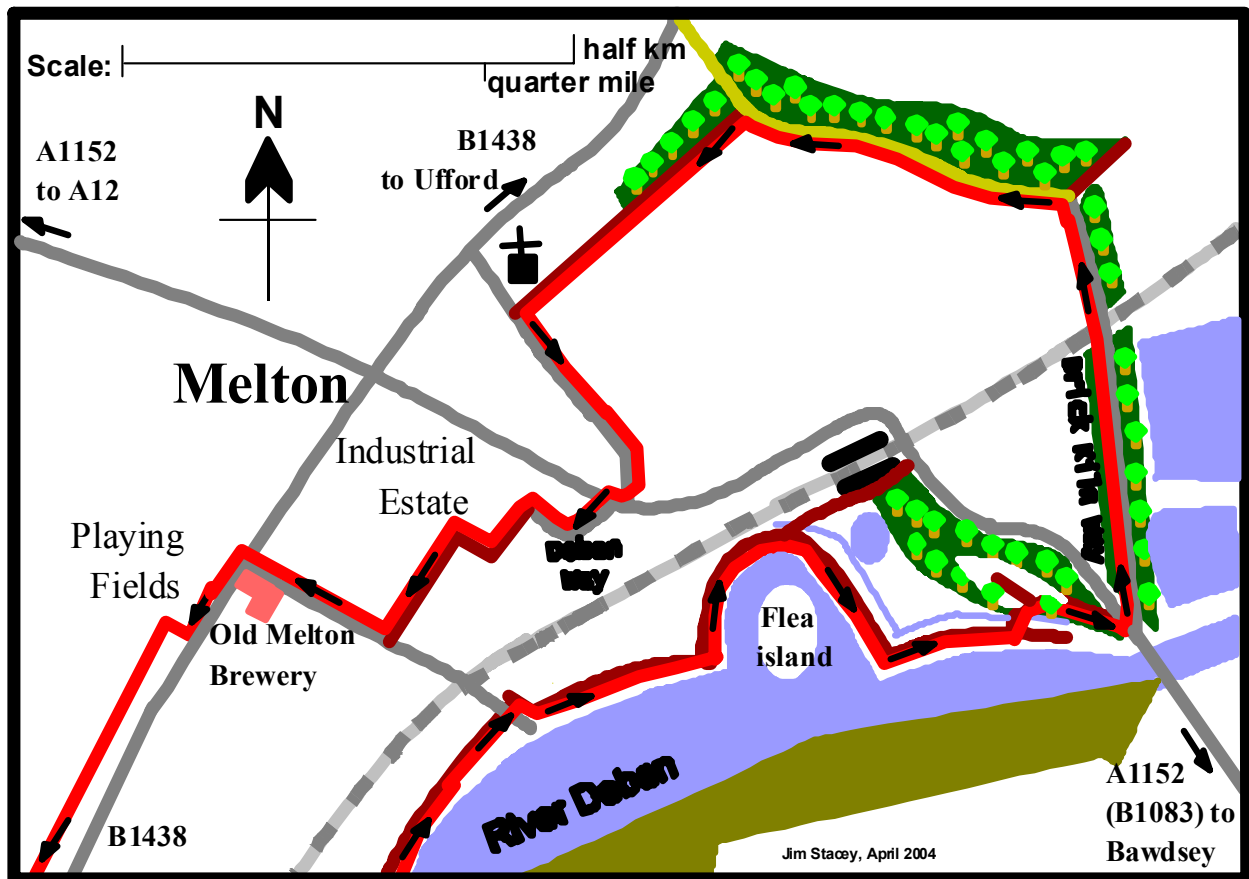
A Walk Round Waldringfield by Sue and Jim Stacey.



Start/End: Woodbridge Station

This is well served by Anglia Railways, making the walk available to all. It is a very pleasant journey between Ipswich or Westerfield and Woodbridge. The return train starts at Lowestoft and passes through Melton.

The railway station is at the side of the B1438 which passes right through Woodbridge and Melton. There are several parking places in Woodbridge. A convenient car park is mentioned in the detail below.



Terrain: easy

The walk is mostly flat with just a few gentle hills. There are no stiles.

This walk can be done in trainers or similar footwear. Boots or stout shoes will be required only if there has been recent significant rain.

The Wilford Bridge public house at Melton is almost half way and provides sandwiches and meals at lunch time. The last half mile of the walk is through Woodbridge town where there are many cafes, pubs, tea-rooms and toilets.

Distance: 4.5 miles.

One way of making the walk less than half the distance is to follow the walk to Melton and then catch the train or bus from Melton Station back to Woodbridge.

Points of Interest:

This walk is intended to be fun. Although some history has been included for interest, there are walks available specifically covering the history of the area from the Tourist Information Centre at Woodbridge station.

- Varied riverside scenery
- Light industry and residential suburban scenery.
- Attractive, historic Suffolk town.



Archeological evidence suggests that Woodbridge has been the site of habitation as far back as the Neolithic times (2500-1700BC). There seems to be two opinions regarding the derivation of the name. Firstly, that the name comes from the Saxon 'Woden Brigg' which means Woden's town, and secondly from a wooden bridge over Steyning Brook that linked an ancient settlement at Kyson Point with one in the area of the present Woodbridge.

Detail

From the station to Wilford Bridge

Refer to the Woodbridge map. (Please note that the colour version of the maps, which are much easier to understand, can be downloaded from www.tuddenhamtattler.com)

If you arrive at the station from the Ipswich direction, it will be necessary to cross the footbridge and then double back under the footbridge to leave the platform. Go down the ramp to the level crossing, turn right and go straight forward onto the quay. At the end turn left, keeping close to the waters edge, to arrive at a road that goes down to the Tide Mill. This is the majestic white towering building standing on its own on the river side.

The Tide Mill utilises water draining from a pool upstream to drive a water wheel as the tide ebbs. The incoming tide then fills the pool to continue the process. There is evidence that there was a mill on this site in 1436 when the Lord of the Manor granted the "Key and Pool" to the Prior of Woodbridge. However the present mill is thought to have been built in 1793. It is possible to visit the mill between 11.00 - 17.00 at weekends and bank holidays in April and October and for the same times every day from May to September (according to the notice in the window on 17th April 2004). The wheel turns for two hours each time.

Unless you wish to visit the mill, turn left through some iron flood gates and then immediately turn right to go along a narrow path between the buildings. The route soon follows a gravel path which goes along the dyke by the marina. Stay on this path as it bears left off the dyke to go alongside the railway. It then becomes a road that passes some old cottages and a boatyard. The road turns left to go across a level-crossing. Turn right just before the level-crossing to go on the path immediately alongside the railway.

Continue along the path as it climbs onto the dyke and then follows the water's edge. (Refer to the Melton map)

When you come to a boatyard, go straight forward across a concrete road and turn right down a narrow path alongside a low wall. Again continue along the path to a sharp left corner by an old wreck.

After this corner, the path bends round to the right. You will come to a flight of steps on your left which leads off the dyke onto a path. If you wish to return by train or bus from Melton station, take this path and at the road, turn left and cross the level crossing. The station and bus stop are on your left.

To continue the walk, stay on top of the dyke. The isolation of Flea Island that you can now see provides a haven for birds. On a cold, grey day in early March the authors saw redshank, oyster catchers, dunlin, curlew, lapwing and avocet in this area; well worth the freezing fingers holding the binoculars. At a sharp left bend, there is an information board and on your left a drainage channel. Continue along the path to a flight of steps leading down to your left by a notice that says the river path is temporarily re-routed. Take this left turn and then keep right to walk through the trees and arrive at the road almost opposite the Wilford Bridge public house.

Turn right to go towards Wilford bridge built in 1898.

Around Melton

To continue the walk, cross the road just before Wilford Bridge and turn left to follow the bridleway signpost along Brick Kiln Lane. Cross the railway and continue uphill. At a junction with a footpath, keep left along the bridleway. You will now come to a row of houses on your left. Immediately after the last house, turn left down a narrow path with more houses on the left until you arrive at the road. On your right is the impressive St. Andrew's church of Melton.



Back to Woodbridge

Turn left down the road and use the footpath on the right side of the road. Follow this as it bends right to join the main road. A very short distance up the main road, cross over into Deben Way. Follow this road as it bends round to the right and keep to the left alongside a high fence with railway sleepers forming its lower part. Pass through the gap between the fence and the buildings and turn sharp left. Follow the path behind the buildings as it turns first right and then left to come out on a road. Turn right.

Go up the road to the top. The large building on the left corner was once Melton Brewery, owned by the Quilter family. It was Cuthbert Quilter who owned Bawdsey Manor. The section that faces onto the main road is now "The Old Brewery Antiques" shop. This was the stable section of the brewery with the actual brewery itself being at the back. Cross the main road and turn left.



Woodbridge Tide Mill

Continue to the entrance into Melton Playing Fields and go in. Turn left to pass the tennis courts and then children's play area. (return to the Woodbridge map). Go towards the far right corner of the field where there is a gap. Go straight forward, crossing a broad gravel track, to go onto a short connecting track that arrives at the corner of another gravel track. This is Turnpike Lane.

Continue forward to pass Turnpike House up the hill to your right. Keep a sharp lookout for a narrow path on your right just before a cottage called Pembertons. Take this right turn and continue along the path to arrive at a road opposite Woodbridge Clinic. Go straight across the road onto another path until you arrive at an attractive row of cottages on Sun Lane. Turn right and then immediately left. After a short slightly uphill distance, descend the hill to pass St. John's church, built in 1846, on your right. Continue downhill until you come to the T-junction at the bottom. Turn right and walk up the hill.

You will pass The Old Bell and Steelyard on your left which was built between 1500 and 1550. The iron work which you can see was part of a weighing mechanism. Loaded wagons were weighed on the way to the market and then again on their return to calculate the weight of the corn or other produce that had been delivered. You arrive at the square known as Market Hill where you face the Shire Hall, built in 1575, by Thomas Seckford. In the Middle Ages a fair was held at Market Hill on St. Audrey's Day, 23rd October. The gaudy, cheap items for sale are thought to have given rise to the word 'tawdry'.

Return to the Station

Turn left and follow the road round to the left as it descends the hill. Go down the first narrow street on the right called Turn Lane. Watch out for a door on your right giving access to the Quaker burial ground with its small, plain gravestones in keeping with Quaker beliefs. This is managed by the town council. Open the door and you will discover a place of peace and tranquillity. Adjacent to the cemetery, just a little further down the lane, is the old Friends Meeting House which is now a private house. The Friends Meeting House was built in 1678 to seat 300 people.

At the bottom of Turn Lane, turn right and then take the next turn to the left along Kingston Road. Cross the main road at the crossing and continue down Kingston Road. Turn left along The Avenue to pass the free car park on your left. Pass through the pedestrian gates at the level-crossing and continue along the track to reach the riverside. Turn left and walk along the promenade back to the station. Cross the pedestrian bridge to get to the entrance.

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