



## Woolpit

Long before you reach the village with its timbered buildings clustered round the old market square, you will see the spectacular Victorian spire of St Mary's church, an important landmark in the area.

Admire the beautiful flint flushwork on the clerestory, before entering the church through one of the most lavish porches in Suffolk. Inside you will discover the famous hammerbeam roof with its profusion of saints and angels.



## Rattlesden

Set in a steep valley in rolling countryside, Rattlesden church sits at the heart of this old Suffolk village with its two pubs and many half-timbered houses.

The exquisitely carved angel roof dates from the 1880s but the real wonder of the church is the complete replica of a medieval rood screen, loft and rood, completed in the early 20th century. The 1920s glass in the nave is also beautiful.

## Shelland

This little gem of a church up a tiny country lane is a joy to discover on foot or by bike. Its location among pastures and wild hedgerows, gives it a 'miles from anywhere' feel.

Stepping inside, you will be pleasantly surprised by the delightful Gothick pastel wall colours and the complete set of Georgian box pews. Remarkably, there's a barrel organ, dating from 1820 that's still in use.



## Hessett

Angels, parapets and pinnacles decorate the tower of this gorgeous little church named for a Saxon king of East Anglia murdered in 794. The rich interior contains fine woodcarving, vibrant medieval glass and a 14th century wall painting of the Seven Deadly Sins as figures on the branches of a tree. Learn more about the discovery inside the parish chest of rare medieval treasures, now in the British Museum.



Other trails in the series:

Framlingham Eye Southwold  
Clare Mildenhall

### A Step Further

St Mary's Woolpit  
to St Ethelbert's Hessett  
2.6 miles / 4 km each way

This is a walk for wide-open country and big Suffolk skies. From Woolpit church, follow Route 1 to No. 3 on the map. Now head straight on to Drinkstone church with its 17th century brick tower. Inside you'll discover an exquisitely carved screen dating from 1390. Leaving the church, turn right for a few yards and take the footpath on your left at Home Farm. Over the stile, cross the meadow diagonally, go over the wooden bridge, then straight by the side of the fence. Go over another stile to a wide track. Pause to look back for a great view of Drinkstone All Saints tower rising above the village. Join the drive of Moat Farm House and go straight on at the road junction. Take the footpath, bearing right onto the field, with Park House on your left. Follow the path across the field towards a lone Scots pine on the horizon, picking up a hedgerow on your right. Very soon you will see the pinnacles on Hessett church tower. Return by the same route.

A ride round three churches  
8.7 miles/14 km

You can take a leisurely circular cycle ride from Woolpit St Mary's to Shelland church, returning via St Nicholas Rattlesden. Starting at Woolpit church, turn left, then right at the junction. Ride through Woolpit Heath and keep right at the next junction into Borley Green. Fork left to Shelland and cross the green to see Shelland church on your right.

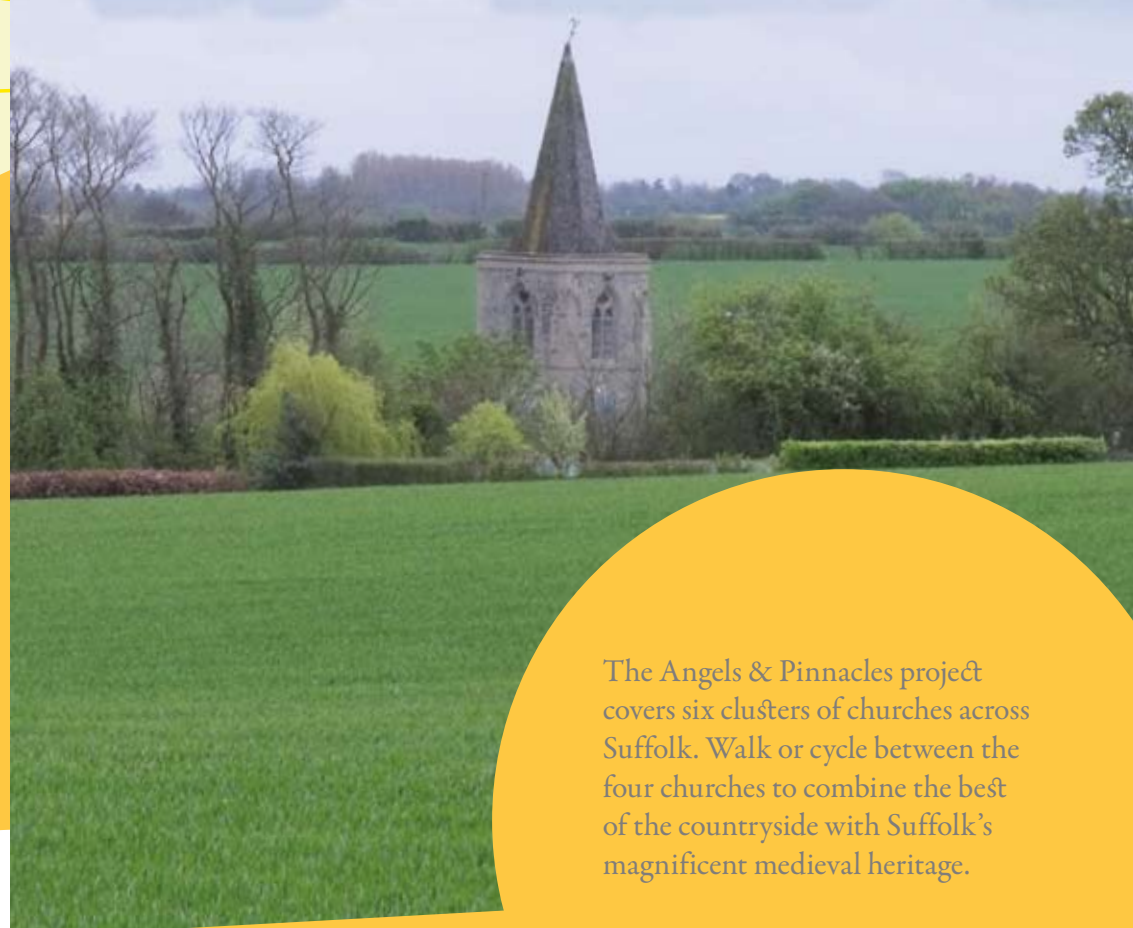


Leaving the church, turn right and take the next right signposted Onehouse and Stowmarket. Turn right by the red pillar box for Buxhall and Rattlesden. Ride across Harleston Village Green — perfect for a picnic with benches to sit on — then ride on through the trees to a narrow lane taking you across country. At the bottom of the hill, turn left signposted Buxhall. Entering Onehouse, turn immediately right to Rattlesden, opposite the thatched cottage. The road crosses the River Rat, then climbs up into Rattlesden. Fork right at the village sign and you'll soon see the church on your left. From the church, return to the village sign and turn sharp left up the hill, following the road round past Clopton Hall on your right. A straight road takes you back to the old market place at Woolpit. Stop at the café for a much-deserved cup of tea before turning right to Woolpit church.



## Angels & Pinnacles Church Heritage Trails

No.4 in the series: Woolpit cluster



The Angels & Pinnacles project covers six clusters of churches across Suffolk. Walk or cycle between the four churches to combine the best of the countryside with Suffolk's magnificent medieval heritage.

[www.angelsandpinnacles.org.uk](http://www.angelsandpinnacles.org.uk)

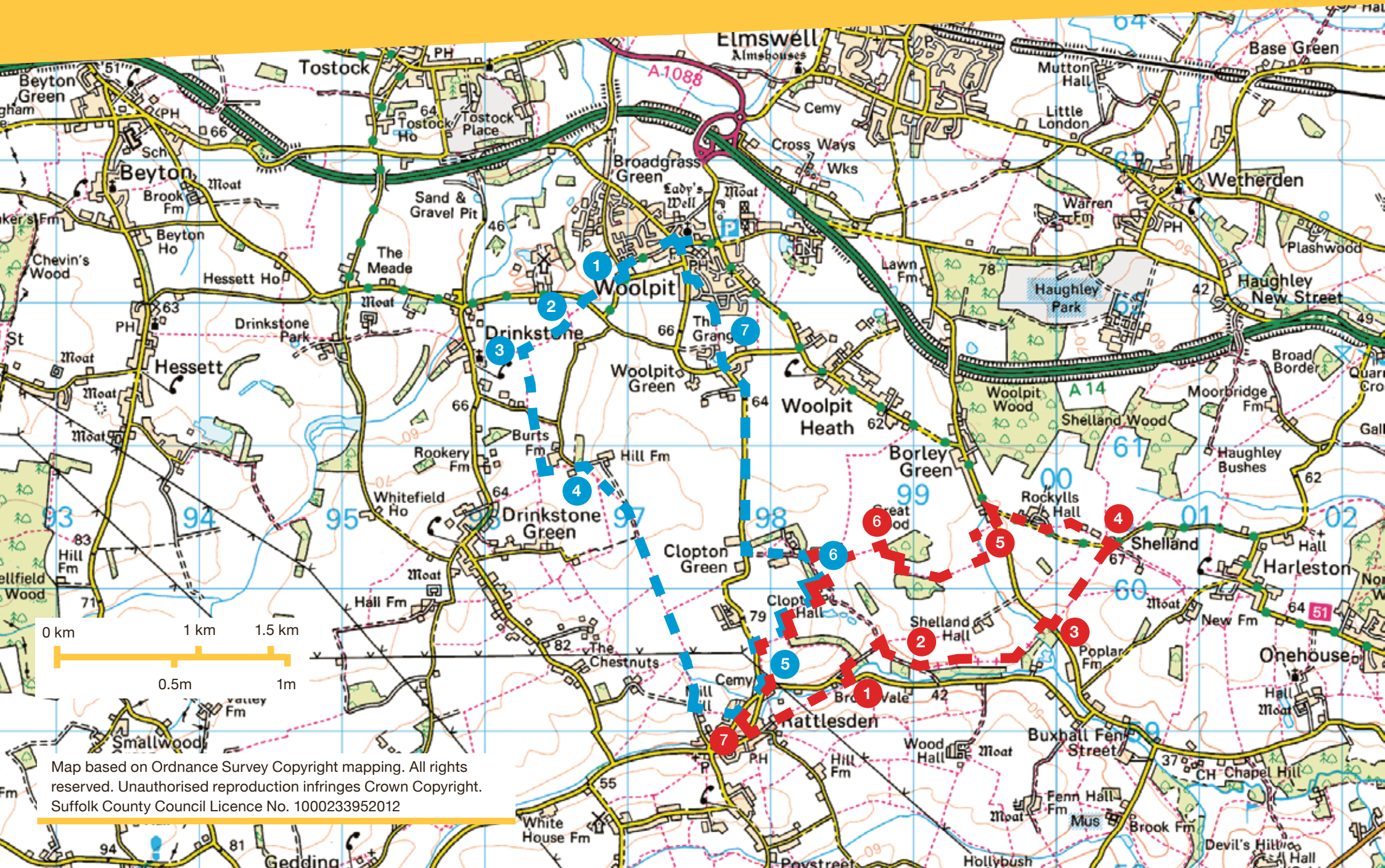


St Mary's Woolpit – St Nicholas Rattlesden  
King Charles the Martyr Shelland – St Ethelbert's Hessett





# Angels & Pinnacles – Church Heritage Trails



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## Route 1 — 6.3 miles / 10 km

St Mary's Woolpit to St Nicholas Rattlesden



At the church, turn right into the market square.

Turn right at the Post Office, then left down Rags Lane. Turning left at the junction, take the footpath on your right ①.

Cross the field at Bishop Karney Green, named after the first Bishop of Johannesburg who was Rector of Woolpit in 1903. Cross the road and continue across another field, then through some trees. At Deadman's Lane, turn left then right onto the footpath ②. On your right, see the 18th century smock mill and a 16th century post mill, thought to be the oldest in England. At the hedge corner ③, turn left at the signpost with views of Drinkstone church on your right. At the road, turn left and shortly after take the footpath on your right. Cross the plank bridge and follow the path to your left. After the second field, cross another bridge and turn left through the woods to the road. Turn right towards Hill Farm before turning right again. Keep to this path, bearing left ④.

Drop down to a stream and join the track bearing right. Continue on the farm track, cresting the hill then dipping down. Under the power lines, follow the woods round to the right, then walk diagonally across the field. At the top of the track, bear left alongside the paddocks and through some gates before emerging on the road opposite the church. To return, take the road behind the church to the junction and village sign. Just beyond the left turn to Woolpit, take the footbridge to head uphill, then turn right, taking a track to the edge of the woods. Look to your right for a view of Gt Finborough church spire by the Victorian architect Phipson, who also built Woolpit spire. Turn left at the woods, bearing right at the end. Go down the hill turning left at the next wood. Turn right near the farm buildings and over a ditch to a track. Turn left and follow the track through the Clopton Hall estate ⑥, a moated site in medieval times, to emerge on the road. Turn right and continue on the road to the T-junction at Woolpit Green. Turn left, then immediately right along the path past the Grange ⑦ and along the edge of a field to a housing estate. Follow the path at the back of the houses to join the road. Turn left and immediately right into Abbotts Meadow. At the junction, turn left into Mill Lane to return to the market place and the church.

## Route 2 — 5.5 miles / 8.8 km

St Nicholas Rattlesden to King Charles the Martyr Shelland



Turn left out of the church porch to the gate. Turn right at the road and then left into Birds Green Road. Bear left to the playing field then continue along a concrete path, up the track to the allotments.

Continue along the grass path to reach the road where you turn left over the River Rat ①, little more than a ditch now but in the Middle Ages stone was brought to Rattlesden in flat-bottomed boats for the building of the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds.

As road bears left, turn right, passing the timber-framed Brookvale Farmhouse on your right. At the T-junction, turn right, then bear left ② onto a stony byway known as Gypsy Lane.

At the road, turn right. Immediately after passing a private track on your left, turn left through an opening in the hedge ③ to a byway known as Church Lane. Continue ahead along a grass path for a short distance to reach Shelland Church ④.

Leaving the church, cross the road and walk between houses and green, veering left onto the grass to walk in front of a large thatched cottage. Cross the driveway of 17th century Rockyll's Hall with its tall chimneys to another grassed area and back onto the road again. Turn right and continue along the road before bearing left to join another road. Turn right ⑤ to join the footpath just after Slough Farm.

Turn left at T-junction of paths and follow round where field edge path turns right, keeping right to walk three sides of field, then left to walk along gravel track between another field and the hedged Great Wood. At the end of the wood, bear right, then left ⑥.

Continue between two fields, bearing right and then left at the junction with another rough track. Turn left again at next junction. At the fork in the farm track, turn right before the Clopton Hall farmhouse and cross a wooden footbridge onto the footpath continuing on past an old farm building. The path then bears left and zigzags right and left at the top.

Turn right onto a wide grass path to enjoy lovely views to the left across the valley to see Great Finborough church spire on a clear day. Turn left just before meeting the road to use the field edge path ⑦ down to the village. Cross the road and bear right with the village-sign on your left, taking you back up to Rattlesden Church.



There is a free car park opposite Woolpit church

A toilet is available inside St Mary's church  
Teacups Tea Rooms and Elm Tree Gallery in the old market place both serve snacks and refreshments.

The Swan is a 15th century coaching inn serving food [www.woolpitswan.co.uk](http://www.woolpitswan.co.uk)

Public transport - On weekdays or Saturdays, you may consider taking the bus one way. Timetables and journey planners are available at [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com)



Limited parking is available in the lay-by opposite the Village Hall in Lower Street.

The Brewers Arms in Lower Road serves lunches and evening meals all week [www.brewersarms-rattlesden.com](http://www.brewersarms-rattlesden.com)

The Five Bells is a traditional local pub in the High Street serving refreshments and snacks.

More walks and great days out at: [www.discoversuffolk.org.uk](http://www.discoversuffolk.org.uk)