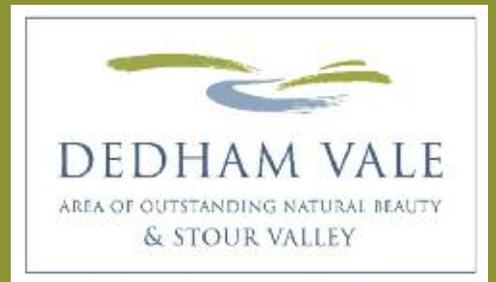


DEDHAM VALE & STOUR VALLEY NEWS



News and Visitor Information for the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

Free

Spring/Summer 2020

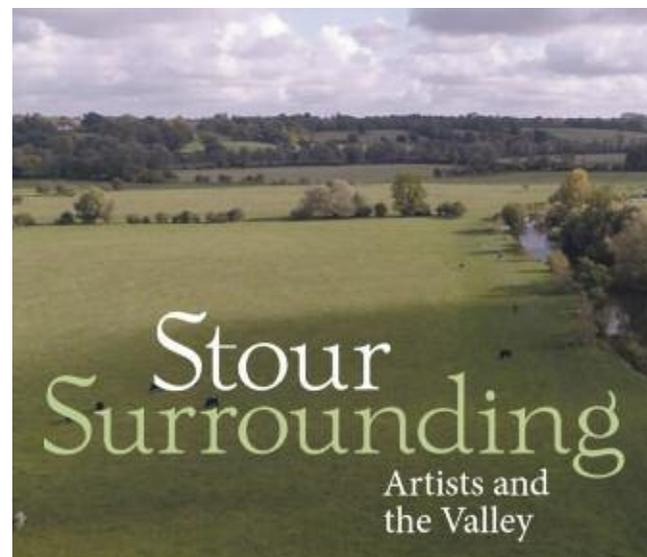
Our Special **50** CELEBRATING YEARS 1970 2020 Birthday Issue



Jules Pretty, author and professor, talks about how designation helps focus conservation and his hopes for increased access and wellbeing in the next 50 years, page 9



Where will you explore? Be inspired by our anniversary 50 @ 50 places to see and things to do, centre pages



Visit the Stour Valley project updates, including new art of the Stour Valley film and guides, page 7



What will you do to conserve our landscape? Communities get busy! See pages 4, 8, 17, 20-21 for ideas

A Message from Our Chair

This is a very busy time for the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and, as I am now combining my role as chair of its Joint Advisory Committee with that of chair of the Partnership, I have hit the ground running!

There are two goals for us this year. Firstly, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the AONB itself and, secondly, to work with our fellow AONB teams across the country on aspects of the Government's Designated Landscapes Review, 'The Glover Report' as it is known, that looks into the future of National Parks and AONBs. We all want to do our very best to ensure the Government adopts its recommendations and furthermore we need to progress with those matters that do not need any legislation.

It is very exciting to realise the AONB is half a century old! We are commemorating it in style and there is a lot of information in these pages on events, things to do, and, of course, memories to share. Our annual Forum Conference will be held on our actual birthday – Wed 20th May – to which everyone is invited (see website for details). The best way to celebrate is to get out in the Valley and just revel in what we have got on our doorsteps.

The Glover Report recognised the value and potential of AONBs, or National Landscapes as it calls them, and says, "we want them to work with big ambitions, so they are happier, healthier, greener, more beautiful and open to everyone". So, as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, I am keen to ensure that we begin that work now and attract those who love our landscape already or are new to it or who do not yet visit it because of limited mobility, cultural or economic barriers. Everyone is welcome!

Coupled with this, we must heed the aspirational agreement addressing the biodiversity crisis, known as the 'Colchester Declaration for Nature', that came out of the National Conference for AONBs, held at Essex University last summer. Consequently, we are working with partners to develop and deliver projects to support wildlife recovery across both our AONBs.

Our core activity is to protect and conserve the AONB. Our National Association has recently published a Position Statement on Planning for Housing within AONBs, which collates relevant national policies and how they have been interpreted by Local Plan Inspectors, so that local planning authorities can make appropriate decisions. A useful document. Raising its head again is the possibility of the enhancement of Bramford to Twinstead power line to carry some of the North Sea generated electricity inland; we shall be keeping an eye on that.

I am particularly delighted that members of our team, supported by LEADER European funding, are working to improve the Stour Valley for visitors. Along with informative leaflets they have produced a splendid new film 'Stour Surrounding-Artists and the Valley' made by Jevan Watkins Jones, which I urge everyone not to miss!

Please enjoy the Valley and all it has to offer, especially in our 50th year.

Councillor Nigel Chapman
Chairman, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley
Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and Partnership



Nigel unveiling the plaque to Pauline Phillips on the Bures Hamlet Footpath – read more page 4

Stour Valley Farm Cluster

Farmers and land managers in the AONB and the proposed AONB extension area have formed the Stour Valley Farm Cluster (SVFC). The group is working on projects to promote habitat management and biodiversity at a landscape scale, integrating projects with their farming operations. In 2019 the group grew to 27 members who collectively farm 8,000 hectares (c20,000 acres). 10% of the area is woodland, 50% arable and 24% grassland, the latter supporting cattle and sheep grazing that is integral to maintaining the mosaic of habitats depicted in the paintings of John Constable. The group has 312kms of hedgerows and 51kms of river and brook.

Like other farmer clusters in England the SVFC has a Facilitator Ecologist as well as benefiting from advice from organisations such as the AONB & Stour Valley team, the Suffolk and

Essex Wildlife Trusts, and the Environment Agency. For each 2 year period farmers choose their habitat or species conservation priorities: current projects include working with the AONB to provide new nest boxes for swifts; with the Wildlife Trusts on a river management project to protect kingfisher and water vole, and pond restoration and creation. SVFC members host 90 school visits and 17 farm walks a year and provide 12kms of permissive paths in addition to looking after 75kms of public Rights of Way. We trust that as the group develops (described by some as a wobbly foal finding its feet!), we are able to forge strong links with the wider community as we work on landscape scale conservation. Find out more at www.farmerclusters.com/the-stour-valley.

Fiona Wells, Stour Valley Farm Cluster Facilitator



They Will be Greatly Missed

Roger Drury had served on the AONB Partnership for many years as a representative of the Essex Association for Local Councils. He will be remembered as a robust defender of the qualities of our nationally designated landscape. One of the many legacies that Roger will leave is encouraging Parish Councils to contribute financially to the AONB team's project work, money that is used to support river restoration projects, volunteer efforts on environmental projects and our responses to planning applications.

Rachel Hoskin worked with the team in 2004 on volunteer tasks, visitor management work and wildlife projects, before moving on to Natural England and then Footprint Ecology. At the latter she developed much of the work relating to the mitigation of harmful impacts on designated sites in Suffolk and Essex.

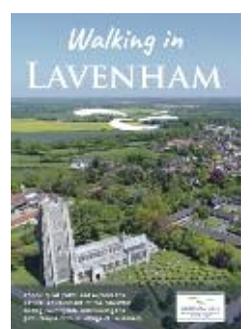
Their skills, knowledge and character will be sorely missed by all those that knew them.

Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager

New Visitor Guides

Look out for a range of new Stour Valley Visitor Guides as they are published throughout the year, inviting you to discover food, heritage, walking and family friendly places. All will be published for FREE on the AONB website. These are produced as part of the Visit Stour Valley project, read more on page 7.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting



Still Going Strong

The Dedham Vale Society, one of the oldest preservation societies in the country, was founded in 1938 with the immediate aim of preventing the demolition of the coaching arch at the Sun Inn on Dedham High Street. The arch and the Society are still going strong. Over the last eighty plus years the Society has been involved in almost every major decision affecting the exceptional landscape in which we are lucky enough to live. Probably the most momentous was the designation of the Vale as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1970, a status that has added great weight to our efforts to preserve the appearance and tranquillity of the area over the last half century.

We have had major victories, like the recent defeat of the Buntings plans for a theme park at Great Horkesley, but of course we have not always been successful. Recent failures include the ever growing, ugly fruit processing factory of Konings at Leavenheath and the imminent construction of large housing dormitories on the edges of East Bergholt.

The need for the Society is greater than ever. Threats to the appearance of the Vale from inconsiderate and rapacious development, driven by an ever expanding demand for more housing in this commutable area, never let up. Sadly there are an increasing number of incomers who have only a superficial interest in this exceptional landscape.

The Society, now nearly 1,000 strong, remains a voluntary organisation. All our work is carried out entirely by members, serving on the Committee and in specific roles for many years. Three members of the Committee are still there after more than 30

years. Our two Planning Secretaries continue to study the District Councils' websites every week for the latest unsympathetic addition to houses in the conservation areas of our major villages, for the next attempt to nibble away at the edges of the AONB with small and apparently innocuous additions to villages or premises in the Vale. They have learnt to keep up with current planning speak. A recent proposal described as a 'contemporary re-imagining of the modern agricultural vernacular' was actually a largely rectangular house in place of a skeletal barn, finished in slate grey.

The next eighty years holds plenty of challenges for the Society. Apart from the low level routine, we will continue work to ensure that the major electricity transmission lines which pass through or impinge on the Vale are underground. We will also continue to lobby for the extension of the AONB to Bures and towards Sudbury.

David Eking, Dedham Vale Society



Dedham Vale 2020 Forum Conference



Forum 2019 site visit to Mount Bures Motte

The Dedham Vale AONB 50th birthday is on Weds 20th May 2020, and what better way to celebrate than to hold our annual Forum Conference on that date! The event celebrates all that is best about our outstanding landscape, including the partners and organisations we work with and the volunteers that put in so much time to conserve it, and is always a highlight of the year with inspirational speakers. More details on www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org.

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The Stour Valley Path in numbers

21 churches

23 crosses of the River Stour

25 towns and villages

24 woodlands

115m highest point

2m lowest point

60 miles of footpath

Passport Places (Part Two)

Throughout 2019 we celebrated the 25th birthday of the Stour Valley Path, introducing our Passport scheme. We are very grateful to the numerous businesses who are supporting us by being Path Passport stamping stations. Part One of the list was in the 2019-20 Autumn-Winter AONB newspaper. Download your Passport from the AONB website.

Alex Hewitt, AONB Stour Valley Path Officer

Palace House – Newmarket: A leading centre of horseracing history, this beautiful building contains much history and knowledge of the sport and has recently been revitalised.

Marquis of Granby – Stetchworth: This quiet little gem of a pub has a cosy, comfortable feel as soon as you step in the door, to warm you up on a winter's day or refresh you all year round.

St Mary's Church – Great Bradley: The church varies in age from 14th to 18th Century and is a noble and welcoming building boasting some late Norman architecture as well. Nestled between fields and woodland glades, St Mary's has a caring community to support it.

Kedington Library – Kedington: The library is integral to the town, with friendly and dedicated staff delivering a happy service.

Café Clare – Clare: With good food and a tea and coffee list that will make your mouth water, Café Clare is a must on your walk of the Stour Valley Path. If that wasn't enough, there is ample room inside the Café to keep you out of the rain or the sunshine.

The Granary – Sudbury: This beautiful redbrick building hosts a café owned by the River Stour Trust and run by volunteers, with a lovely view of the waterfront.

St Mary the Virgin – Wissington: This extraordinarily shaped church has breath-taking paintings inside dating back to the 1280s.

Anchor Inn – Nayland: This local pub has a warm hearth in a wonderfully designed building and you won't be disappointed if you visit.

Angel Inn – Stoke by Nayland: A perfect stopping place for any walk along the Stour Valley Path, the cosy interior will refresh your spirit and relieve your feet.



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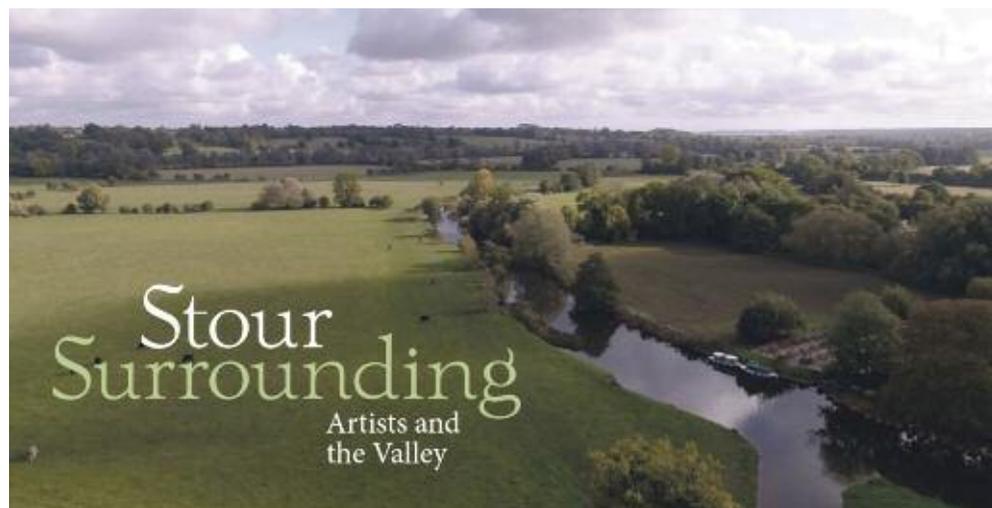
Inspiring Visitors All Year Round

As the Improving the Stour Valley for Visitors project progresses, more and more activities, events, guides and a film are available for inspiration, whether you live near or afar, visit as a family or individually, are interested in the outdoors (walking and cycling) or heritage (textiles, churches and archaeology), art and artists of the valley, or food, there is something for everyone's tastes. Some of our projects are highlighted on this page.

It is a business development project supporting high quality visitor products and services, funded by LEADER and hosted by the Dedham Vale AONB.

Oka Last and Katherine Davies, Visit Stour Valley Development Officers

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas



Stour Surrounding – Artists and the Valley

This new documentary film tells the story of art and artists of the Stour Valley, celebrating artists both past and present who have responded to the landscape of the Stour Valley. The film launch event in January sold out, hosted by Firstsite in Colchester, and the screening was followed by a Q&A with artists Jevan Watkins Jones, Simon Carter and Jenny Hand, Director of The Munnings Art Museum.

In the film we hear how this special landscape – of John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, Cedric Morris and Alfred Munnings – continues to shape and speak to the work of contemporary artists today. Moving between studio interviews and beautiful footage across the valley we hear from painter and sculptor Maggi Hambling who speaks of 'absorbing' the landscape, and from Simon Carter and May Cornet who talk expressively about how they respond to the Stour Valley and landscape in their individual ways.

The film has been produced by artist and gardener Jevan Watkins Jones with Paul Press and colleagues of Offshoot Films. It was commissioned by the 'Improving the Stour Valley for Visitors' project, which is hosted by the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and funded by The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

There will be more opportunities to view this film, listed on the River Stour Festival website, and a short introductory version is available on www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org. Please contact the team if you would like to arrange a film screening event near you.

River Stour Festival 2020

The 2020 programme for the River Stour Festival is underway, with some exciting curated events coming up, including a music concert featuring organists and contemporary electronic music at St James Church in Nayland, a walk and conservation management talk over Sudbury Common Lands, an art exhibition about Natural Beauty, and a tour of Gestingthorpe Roman Villa and Museum.

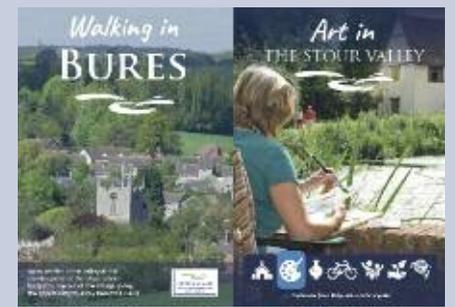
As well as curating their own unique events, the festival provides a platform for various

venues and organisations to promote their events throughout the valley, from nature days at the Field Studies Council at Flatford, to family activities and walks at Clare Castle Country Park, and everywhere in between.

Details of all these events and many more can be found on the festival's social media pages and website www.riverstourfestival.com, as well as in a festival programme distributed around the valley. Email details to riverstourfestival@gmail.com if you have an event to include in 2020.

Guides for Visiting the Stour Valley

Hot off the press is a new range of high quality guides for visitors to explore the Stour Valley. The series started with guides covering walking and exploring the Stour Valley including: Art in the Valley, Wool Towns of the Stour Valley, Walking in Bures and Walking in Lavenham. Further guides to look out for this year are Walking in Long Melford, Walking in Steeple Bumpstead, A Short Break in the Stour Valley, themed explorer guides e.g. cycling, churches, family activities, archaeology and wildlife.



Also in the series are three Stour Valley food trails, developed by our partner Suffolk Market Events, for discovering local food and produce, launched with the Visit Stour Valley Food Trail guided walk on 29th May, part of the Suffolk Walking Festival 2020, see below.

Other project activities include a series of podcasts and events throughout the year to celebrate the visitor attractions of the Stour Valley, linking in with the release of the new visitor guides. For all upcoming project events see the River Stour Festival website www.riverstourfestival.com, and for your free copy of each guide see the AONB website www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org.

Food Inspiration in the Stour Valley

Look out for the new Stour Valley Food and Drink inspired trails, developed by Suffolk Market Events, to link up a wide range of quality food and drink producers in the area, funded by the Improving the Stour Valley for Visitors EU LEADER project.



Longhorn grass fed cattle at Colletts Farm in Wormingford

Food tourism is a growing part of the visitor economy and offers opportunities to bring visitors here year-round and for longer stays as well. They are often very in tune with local landscape and seasonality so this initiative should inspire residents and potential visitors from afar to enjoy Stour Valley produce.

Here's a little 'taster' to give you a 'flavour'.....!

- 1) Enjoy a morning browsing the Sudbury Farmers Market on Market Hill, grab a coffee and a pastry and walk along the historic water meadows up to Long Melford. Stop off for a tour and taste of the locally brewed ale at Nethergate Brewery before travelling on to Cavendish for a well earned meal at the award-winning George Pub and Restaurant.
- 2) Pick up some fresh Jersey milk and some Longhorn grass fed beef from Colletts Farm in Wormingford before walking up to popular community local pub The Lamarsh Lion. For those with more energy continue up river to finish at the Henny Swan for a riverside drink and bite to eat.
- 3) Get hands on with some seasonal fruit picking at McLaughans near Boxted or Pippin at Langham, followed by a tour and wine tasting of local wines at Dedham Vale Vineyard – a great way to keep all members of the family happy!

Alex Paul, Suffolk Market Events



December Flooding from the Air

These stunning aerial photographs of the River Stour in flood at Nayland were taken using a drone on 22nd December 2019 by local resident Adrian Szabo, showing the peak in flooding that occurred. After a very dry summer we experienced a much wetter period between October and December, with rainfall over this period being 136% of the long-term average in both Suffolk and Essex. Mean flows in the River Stour during December were notably high, being 225% of the long-term average.



Nayland from the west end of the village, by the A134 bypass, looking east along the Stour Valley in the direction of Boxted Mill and Higham. In the foreground is the Nayland Land Company's conservation meadow and pond, bordered on one side by the River Stour and on the other by Horkesley Road and the full flowing Flood Relief Channel.

Once flows in the river reach a certain threshold they overtop the banks and spread out to occupy the undeveloped floodplain. This provides a natural "pressure release" from flooding, helping to protect people and property, and a large area for the storage of floodwater which can then drain back into the river system once water levels subside. Periodic inundation of floodplain habitats such as wet grassland, so characteristic of the AONB, also provides significant biodiversity benefits for a range of wildlife including breeding and overwintering waders and wildfowl.



The village from the east looking west, with Longwood Meadow and Nayland Fennages in the foreground

Rob Dryden, Nayland Land Company

Nayland Conservation Meadow

In 2005 the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society instigated a community fund raising project to acquire a large field near the centre of the village in order to safeguard the area against the possibility of future inappropriate development. The same process was undertaken in 2012 when more funds were raised by the Society from the community to acquire an adjoining field on the southern boundary.

Until now the public have not been able to access the fields as they have been used for pasture, so David Slater, one of the board members of the company which was formed to hold ownership of and manage the land, suggested creating a permissive footpath to allow a degree of pedestrian access. This new path links with the existing footpath along the river for pedestrians to avoid walking along the busy adjacent road.

To achieve this project, it was necessary to create a new post and wire boundary for the length of the path and install a new double gate. The board also decided to implement an infield tree planting scheme which requires appropriate fencing to protect the young trees. The cost of this exercise was significant, so the board made an application to the AONB Sustainable Development Fund for assistance and the work on the permissive path started in early January. In late January Nigel Chapman, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Chairman, formally opened the new path and it is already becoming a popular route.

Mike Hunter, Nayland Land Company



Above, Emma Black leads a volunteer team to do in-field planting at the Nayland Conservation Meadow. Right, official opening.



Court Knoll Status Increases

Readers may recall from earlier editions that the listed ancient monument known as Court Knoll in the village of Nayland was subject to a limited archaeological excavation in September 2016 organised by the Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society. Since that time the enormous number of finds retrieved from the dig have been undergoing analysis. Unstinting support from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund for the past four years has totalled £12,664 towards the total project costs incurred to date of £33,000.



Mike Hunter (left) thanks Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager, for ongoing AONB support

In December 2019 the supervising Archaeologist, Jo Caruth of Cotswold Archaeology, entertained a large audience of members, guests and visitors with the latest news, while the research is ongoing. Jo gave a summary of the history of the site and the excavations organised by the Society, and an update from the expert analysis of glass and charcoal.

On the glass fragments the expert concluded that: *The Court Knoll glass is a forest type glass... it is very unusual in several respects and no exact match has been found for it... the glass is perhaps from the 13th Century or slightly earlier, in which case this is a rare early example of the use of Forest Glass in England. Glazing for the Palace of Westminster was procured at this time and any contemporary glazed buildings would also have been of similar status.*

The charcoal expert reported: *The small size and shape of the pieces suggest some form of decoration or carving detail... and that carved motifs or something similar extended around the chapel.*

These finds are in addition to the recovery of the late Saxon polychrome tiles which are similar to tiles known from sites in Bury St Edmunds and the undercroft at Westminster Abbey. All these discoveries lend support to the theory that this Anglo-Saxon chapel may have been of very high status.

Mike Hunter, Chair Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society

Nayland Kissing Gate

In 2019 the Fenholders in Nayland were very pleased to receive a generous grant from the Dedham Vale AONB Sustainable Development Fund for the installation of a new kissing gate. The gate was constructed in December and is an improved public access to a 50 acre field known locally as Nayland Fen.



Mig and Peter Drew and their dogs using the new gate

The new gate replaced a sub-standard stile which was the only recognised means of entry to the Fen. This field, which is almost completely surrounded by the River Stour, was designated Open Access Land in 2000 by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and is registered as Common Land with no owner. It also has ancient grazing rights upon it dating back to at least the 14th century and the current owners of these rights, known as Fenholders, are legally registered as occupiers of the land. In days gone by the owners of the grazing rights had animals of their own which grazed on the Fen but these days all the grazing rights are hired out to a local farmer whose cattle are seen every year during the summer months.

Until the installation of the new gate only fit and able people were able to access the field by climbing over the old stile or surrounding fences, and those with disabilities or poor mobility have been denied the pleasure of walking there. It has now improved access for all.

Wendy Sparrow, Nayland Fenholders

Celebrating 50 Years of AONBs in the East



It is a wonderful thing, to find ourselves celebrating 50 years of our AONBs in the British landscape. Along with national parks and green belts, their designations marked an important system change. We began to focus conservation and preservation efforts not just on particular species, or on preventing destructive tendencies of modern economies, but on thinking about whole scenes and landscapes. We began to think of land as having both natural and social components.

And great progress has been made. Damage has been prevented, species that had disappeared have now returned: the otter and buzzard, peregrine and dormouse. We have planted more trees, farming has become more sustainable, people have never cared for nature more. We have come to

realise that being in nature is good for mental and physical health, and that ecosystem services from well-managed AONBs contribute substantially to the formal economy. Yet these are dark times too for the planet, with the accelerating global destruction of biodiversity and stable climates.

Some losses seem to have crept up: insect numbers and populations have collapsed. Many people will remember how driving at night brought blizzards of moths in the headlights. These have disappeared. If we take the small bits out of ecosystems, inevitably whole systems will one day collapse. But it is climate change that is the greatest single danger to us all. Unchecked, it will force change on all our landscapes, it will undermine economies and the way we live. The scale of what is required is enormous, yet not out of reach. The world emitted 59 Gigatonnes (Gt) of greenhouse gases last year (as CO2 equivalents). This needs to fall to 40 Gt per year to hold temperature increase to 2°C; and to 24 Gt to hold the rise to 1.5°C. It must fall to 10 Gt to ensure the planet stays a safe and habitable place for all of us. That is just over *One Tonne* by each of us per year. This must be our new collective target, and it dwarfs all other concerns.

Looking Ahead

In our 50th year we continue to develop how we will adopt the Colchester Declaration for Nature, as well as look forward to the UK Government's Agriculture and Environment Bills, and to the implementation of the Landscape Review. These contain the basis of how the countryside is managed into the future, and the AONB network is hopeful that the nationally designated landscapes are recognised as the special places they are and that policies will reflect the benefits that they bring to society.

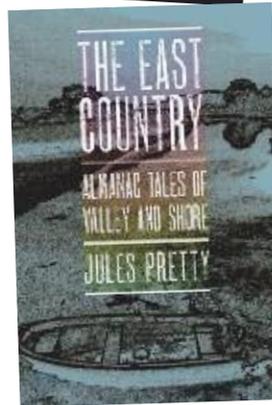
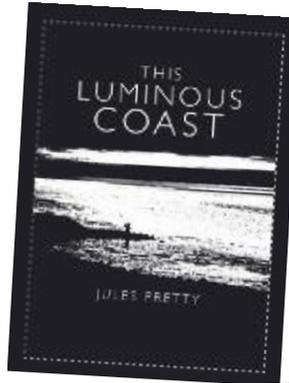
The Declaration is our collective response to the unprecedented concern for the future of the natural environment. The AONB network has pledged to support the recovery of wildlife species and habitats as well as creating further opportunities for people from all sections of society to make an emotional connection with nature. It will also build on the findings of the Government's Landscapes Review of AONBs and National Parks, published September 2019. The designated landscapes world is waiting with interest to see how the Government responds to the review, and welcome the proposals that relate to enhancing the designated landscapes, the wildlife it contains and the quality of life for residents as well as making these national landscapes an important part of the visitor economy.

Locally we were delighted that our Advisory Committees - the representatives from its funding partners that provide set strategic direction for the staff team and oversee its finances - agreed to release funds for the appointment of an AONB Nature Recovery Officer. This new post will seek to work with our partners to implement the aspirations of the Colchester Declaration for Nature.

We will be using our 50th year to widen our engagement with all people to build awareness of how the AONB designation was made to benefit the visitor economy, our natural landscapes and the wildlife it contains, and to enhance resident's quality of life.

Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager

This might seem so out of reach that we will feel both paralysis and guilt. Yet the best place to start is to select behaviours and make choices that reduce our material consumption. Walk more, visit nature and the countryside, celebrate our natural assets, sit with friends a while and listen to the birds, spend time in your garden, stop and watch the sunset, and the full moon rising over water. Not only do these reduce our consumption of the planet, they are also good for our long term health.



Two of my recent books have been set in AONB landscapes: *This Luminous Coast* (2011) and *The East Country* (2017). Delve a little, and you will find landscapes both farmed and wild. There are deer and bat, otter and rare stag beetle; fields of onion, potato, sugar beet; rippling stands of malt barley and milling wheat; dappled orchard and survivor elm; flowered cottage garden and allotment; long horn cattle and murmuring sheep; the air hushed with the scent of honeysuckle. Overhead plane red kites, flocks of jostling jackdaw and rook roaming and roosting together. One river vale twice was menaced by dragons, short battles and long tales, and in a hilltop chapel the crown was placed on a flaxen fifteen year old. The churches have their symbols, yet also stone beast, green man in roof timbers, and depicted in one chapel's stained glass, the green philosopher and composer, Hildegard of Bingen. The waters of the rivers are crystal clear, cordate lilies flower yellow and white, and shadowy pikes lie in the deeps. There are hidden places, cool glades in woodland, ripples over weirs, silent pools and swirling midges, track of fox, and tall alder, black poplar, bat willow, veteran oaks. There are no mountains in our east countries, just sharp hill, tapestry valley, liminal marsh, coastal cliff, mud flat and shingle beach. None of us should live without this nature.

Big achievements begin with small steps. Significant challenges remain for our planet, so we should begin at home, and in landscapes celebrated for both beauty and nature. The great American poet, Mary Oliver, wrote a short poem of seven words. It is called, very appropriately, *Instructions for Living a Life*: "Pay attention, Be astonished, Tell about it."

Jules Pretty, author, Professor of Environment & Society at University of Essex, and long time resident of our Essex and Suffolk AONBs

This Luminous Coast was winner of the 2013 New Angle Prize for Literature; and *The East Country* won the 2018 East Anglian Book of the Year Award.



Campaigning for Protection

Everything happens for a reason – and this is no exception with the two Suffolk Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) established fifty years ago. However, we need to go back further than the fifty years to understand why they came to be protected.

Atomic power, pylons and London overspill were the watch words in the 1950s and 1960s. The location for an atomic power station with proximity to water supply, solid ground for heavy foundations and remoteness from major centres of population was required. At the same time, long held plans for London population decentralisation were being realised. Suffolk was in focus.

The Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS), the landscape and buildings campaigning charity founded in 1929, was proactive around these huge issues; unless handled sensitively they would irrevocably and detrimentally harm the character and appearance of this attractive, rural county.

The choice of Sizewell by the Central Electricity Board as the most suitable location for an atomic power station led to concerns regarding the associated power lines which would straddle the county. By 1961 two alternative pylons routes were made public and SPS was at the forefront of a campaign to minimise the damage to the countryside.

The government's 1961-81 *South East Study* earmarked areas for development expansion, and preparations were going ahead for substantial growth. At the same time successive governments were also responding to public pressure for greater care in the preservation of what was left of the English countryside and its architectural heritage. Good does sometimes come out of bad and the possible expansion of East Bergholt and large scale development at Stratford St. Mary were hotly contested, along with proposals for other villages in south Suffolk, and this led to the *Survey of Dedham Vale* in 1966. This was an important milestone in the history of planning in Suffolk.

Under the *National Park & Access to the Countryside Act 1949*, the National Parks Commission was formed and entrusted with the designation of AONBs and local planning authorities were given powers to preserve and enhance the areas. Part of the Dedham Vale had just been designated an AONB, and now the coastal area came under scrutiny. A band of land stretching from Kessingland to the Deben was recommended for protection - abutting the newly created Dedham Vale. The SPS pressed for the inclusion of the whole of the Deben and Orwell estuaries which created a continuous coastline from Lowestoft to Shotley. This was confirmed in 1970 including all that SPS had pressed for - with the new title 'Heritage Coast'.

SPS was there, with others, when the fight for the AONBs in Suffolk commenced and we still engage today. Through our professional planners, we continue to support these areas to prevent development harm. SPS was in at the beginning and we continue to strive to monitor and safeguard the innate quality of Suffolk's landscape character, so these special places can be passed on to coming generations.

Lin Clapham, Editor, Suffolk View, Suffolk Preservation Society
www.suffolksociety.org



Pylons. An intrusion or a majestic feature in the landscape? (1960s)

50 YEARS OF TWO OUTSTANDING NATIONAL LANDSCAPES





- 1970's**
 - 1970 Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths designated as AONBs
 - 1971 Cattawade Barrage finished to control sea water
 - 1973 UK becomes a member of the European Communities
 - 1978 Ipswich Town wins the FA Cup
- 1980's**
 - 1981 Dedham Vale Landscape Project begins
 - 1982 Orwell Bridge opens
 - 1985 Fen Bridge on the River Stour replaced
 - 1987 The Great Storm causes the loss of many trees in the UK
- 1990's**
 - 1993 Creation of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Unit
 - 1995 Sizewell B starts to generate electricity
 - 1996 The 50 mile Suffolk Coast Path launched
 - 1999 First Suffolk Beachwatch events along the coast as part of the national adopt-a-beach scheme
- 2000's**
 - 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act brings improved funding and protection of AONBs
 - 2002 New bridge across the Stour links Suffolk and Essex at Bures
 - 2008 First schemes completed to remove overhead powerlines in both AONBs
 - 2009 'I'm a Good Dog' campaign launched in Suffolk Coast & Heaths as part of the BALANCE project
- 2010's**
 - 2010 International Year of Biodiversity
 - 2015 Plastic bag levy introduced
 - 2019 25th Anniversary of the Stour Valley Path
 DEFRA's Year of Green Action
 All UK AONBs sign the Colchester Declaration
 Landscape Review (Glover) published
- 2020** 50th YEAR ANNIVERSARY

National Lottery Funding for 50th Projects



© Gill Moon

As we mark our 50th anniversaries, we are delighted to announce that the Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONBs have been awarded £129,000 from the National Lottery. The funding supports a project to connect people to the landscape, raise awareness of the special qualities of the AONBs and track the changes to the landscape through photography.

The photography initiative will be a long-term project and will see the installation of fixed-point photography posts across both the AONBs. Residents and visitors will be invited to upload their photographs on a dedicated website that will help to build a unique record of the changing landscapes through the seasons, capturing the impact of weather, river levels, coastal erosion, plant life and more, over the next five years.

Our 50th anniversary has come at a crucial time. The recently adopted Colchester Declaration for Nature sets out how the AONB national network will seek to recover nature and mitigate the impacts of climate change and wildlife decline. This grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund will allow us to deliver projects that not only celebrate 50 years but help to ensure this national landscape is conserved and enhanced for all.



The official Dedham Vale anniversary is on **Wednesday 20 May**, when we will hold a special Forum Conference, and for Suffolk Coast & Heaths on **Wednesday 4 March** with a celebration event for our partners. So many people make such an important contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.



50 @ 50 CELEBRATING YEARS 1970 2020

Top 50 Things to See and Do in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

To celebrate our 50th year we invite you to explore our Top 50 places with this special guide.

50 years ago the Dedham Vale was designated as one of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the same year as our closest neighbour, the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. This National Landscape is known for its picturesque villages, rolling farmland, rivers, meadows, ancient woodlands and a wide variety of local wildlife, and much, much more. This traditional English lowland landscape on the Suffolk-Essex border, made famous worldwide by artists, is still as recognisable today as it was when painted by John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough and Alfred Munnings.

If we've missed your favourite thing to do in the Dedham Vale AONB let us know on twitter @DedhamValeSVP #50at50DedhamVale



© David Taylor, River Stour Trust

Enjoy Activities with the River Stour Trust

Culture

The rolling hills, river and open skies in the Dedham Vale have inspired artists for generations. The landscapes have been made world famous by artists John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, John Nash and Alfred Munnings. The area still attracts many artists who come to the valley to capture the stunning views.

I associate my careless boyhood with all that lies on the banks of the Stour. Those scenes made me a painter. (John Constable).

Download our FREE Art in the Stour Valley leaflet for additional inspiration.



Munnings Museum at Castle House

© Visit Essex

Gainsborough's House

Sudbury is the birthplace of the leading English painter Thomas Gainsborough. The house is now a museum and gallery with a beautiful garden. Numerous paintings by Gainsborough give an insight into his working life, along with special exhibitions. Wait a while to visit, it reopens after redevelopment in 2021.

www.gainsborough.org



Thomas Gainsborough's Headstone, Sudbury



Dedham Art and Craft Centre

Dedham Art and Craft Centre

Housed in a converted church in Dedham village centre, the Art & Craft Centre showcases and sells the work of over 60 artists. There are also refreshments available in the tearoom.

www.dedhamartandcraftcentre.co.uk

John Constable Exhibition

Discover how Flatford and East Bergholt inspired artist John Constable. The exhibition is in the heart of Flatford and visitors can then explore the local area and see some of the iconic landscapes.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford/features/john-constable-exhibition

Munnings Art Museum

Displayed throughout the former home and studio of artist Alfred Munnings are over 200 paintings, drawings and sculptures showcasing his successful career. The Museum also runs workshops and special events and is open between April and November.

www.munningsmuseum.org.uk



Sir Alfred Munnings' artwork at Castle House

© Visit Essex

Leisure

The stunning landscape doesn't only provide incredible views, but the open fields and meandering river offer a perfect location to get active. Choose from rowing and kayaking on the River Stour to camping and cycling in order to explore the area. There are also opportunities to get hands-on by becoming a volunteer.

Rowing Boats at Dedham

Boating on the River Stour has been a popular pastime for generations and is still a wonderful way for people to enjoy the beautiful landscapes in the Dedham Vale.

www.dedhamboathouse.com/boat-hire

Wild in the Stour Valley

Fun outdoor activities for the family run annually by the Stour Valley Education Network (SVEN) includes pond dipping, minibeast hunting, art and craft activities, kayak sessions, wildlife and foraging walks. Friday 29th May.

www.riverstourfestival.com/event/wild-in-the-stour-valley-family-activity-day

Polstead Heath Campsite

Whether you're a camper or a caravanner, this campsite is the perfect base for exploring the landscape throughout the AONB.

www.polsteadtouring.com

Mill 2 Mill Swim

This annual social swim takes place between Dedham and Flatford and ends with swimmers and their families enjoying a picnic on the bank of the river. Sunday 9th August 2020.

www.hamiltonsfitness.co.uk/Mill2Mill

Volunteering

As the Dedham Vale celebrates its 50th anniversary, there has never been a better time to volunteer for one of the many projects that take place throughout the year, from being a Stour Valley Path warden or supporting a wildlife project.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

Hall Farm Shop

Opened in 2001, the shop is part of the Hall Farm, a working mixed farm owned by the same family since 1929. The shop is located in Stratford St Mary, the gateway to Constable Country and is a great place for picnic supplies before walking one of the many routes throughout the AONB.

www.hallfarmshop.com

Coracle Racing

The annual Coracle Regatta takes place every August on the River Stour. Organised by local boat owners and the River Stour Trust, the event provides an opportunity for people to come along and test their skills on this unusual and traditional vessel. Saturday 8th August 2020.

www.riverstourtrust.org/events/coracle-regatta



Mill 2 Mill Swim

Pooh Sticks from Fen Bridge

This historic crossing over the River Stour near Dedham would have been familiar to John Constable. Although the crossing used today is a modern replacement, it still provides beautiful views of the landscape and the perfect spot for a game of Pooh Sticks.

Cycling Through a Masterpiece

Enjoy a bike ride through the landscape that has inspired many artists. Download free cycle guides before your adventure.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/visiting

SVEN Factsheets

The Stour Valley Educational Network (SVEN) brings together the organisations involved in the delivery of environmental education and part of this has included producing five factsheets for children and their families to raise awareness of the landscape, heritage, culture and wildlife of the Stour Valley and encourage discovery.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

Spot Otters in the River Stour

A fantastic way to explore the river, enjoy the peace on the water and get a close-up view of some of the species who live there is by canoe or kayak.

www.outdoorhirecentres.com/river-stour-explorer

Create Your Own Masterpiece

The Dedham Vale is well known for its inspirational views and there are plenty of places to sit and enjoy the landscape, and perhaps use paints to create your own masterpiece.

www.field-studies-council.org/locations/flatfordmill

Become a Dedham Vale Youth Ranger

Open to anyone between the age of 13 and 18 who enjoys the outdoors and doing practical activities. The Youth Ranger group meets monthly in Flatford and activities are organised by the RSPB, National Trust, Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre and the AONB team.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/volunteering

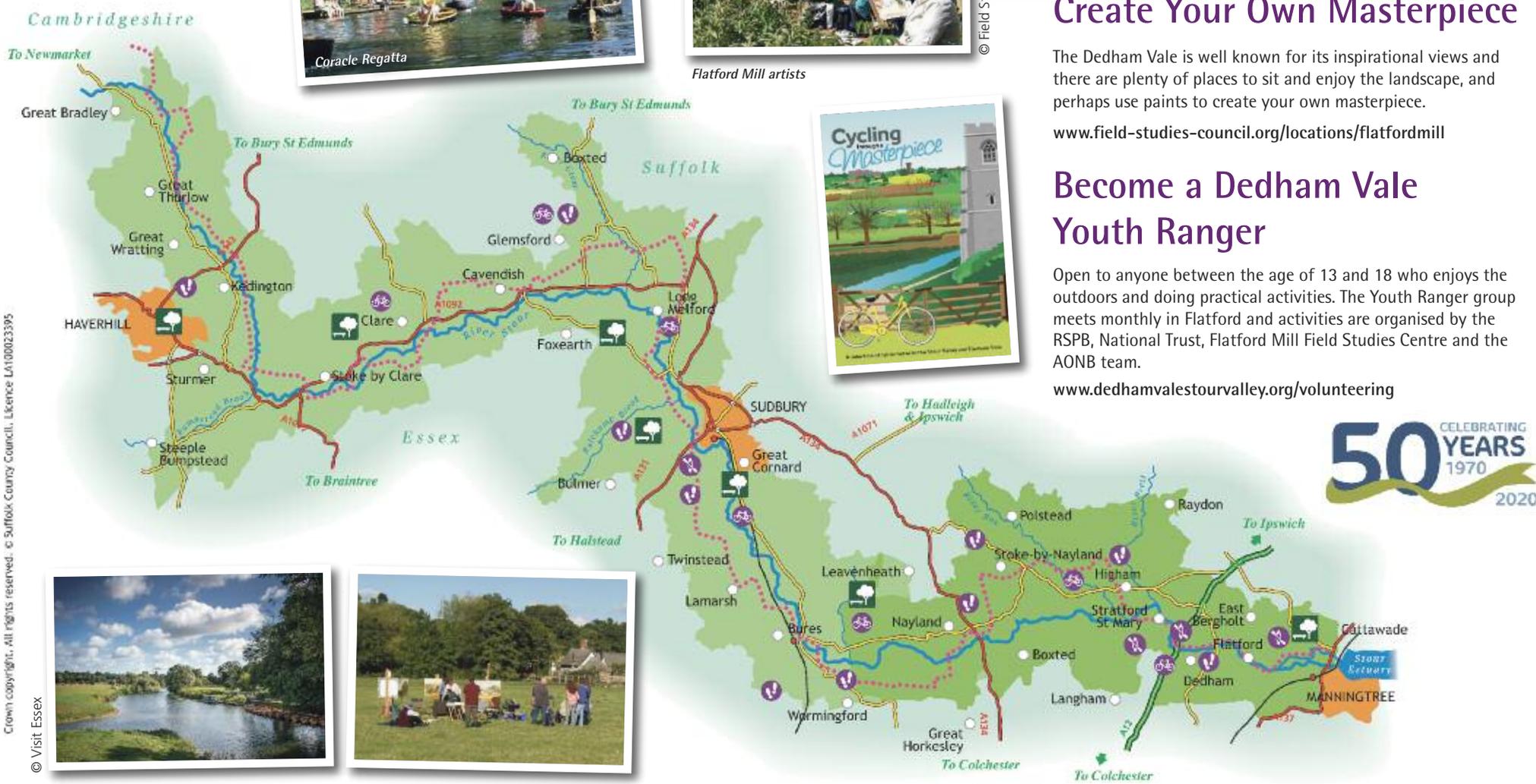


Coracle Regatta



Flatford Mill artists

© Field Studies Council



Dedham boat trips and rowing boats



Create your own masterpiece

Attractions

The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley is a popular visitor destination and there are activities for people of all ages to enjoy all the area has to offer. From a relaxing trip on a Stour Lighter down the river followed by afternoon tea, or visiting a Farmers Market to tasting a sparkling wine from locally grown grapes.



River Stour Trust, Trusty II electric boat



Essex Rose, Dedham

Afternoon Tea at the Essex Rose

This popular tearoom in the picturesque village of Dedham is the perfect place to stop for refreshments after a stroll along the River Stour or after exploring the AONB.

www.tiptree.com/index.php/essexrosetroom

Dedham Vale Vineyard

40 acres of vines, woods and pasture on the edge of the AONB producing still and sparkling wine. The vineyard offers tours and tasting events throughout the year.

www.dedhamvalevineyard.com



Dedham Vale Vineyard

River Stour Festival

The festival celebrates the river, its culture as well as the surrounding landscape and people. The programme includes walks in the landscape, talks, a wild river swim, boat trips, exhibitions, music, poetry, painting, photography and wild writing.

www.riverstourfestival.com

Electric Boat Trips

The River Stour Trust is a charity dedicated to the restoration and conservation of navigation on the River. The Trust operate electric boat tours from Flatford to Dedham, and further up the river at Sudbury they also take passengers on a restored Lighter, a traditional River Stour boat.

www.riverstourtrust.org

Family 50 Things

The National Trust invite families to download their activity pack full of recommendations of things for children to do before they turn 11¾, from bug hunting to learning about tree species.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford/features/childrens-activity-pack

RSPB Flatford Wildlife Garden

Designed to inspire visitors on how to encourage wildlife to visit their own gardens, the Flatford Wildlife Garden offers tips on providing habitats and plants for a variety of birds and insects.

www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/flatford-wildlife-garden



Heritage

The Dedham Vale has a long and fascinating history. Throughout the towns and villages, the historic buildings and churches give a clue to the wealth from the wool and fabric trades, and the area's importance as a trading route. Villages can trace their history back to Saxon times, with dwellings clustered around angular greens or tyes. There are prominent Medieval churches with knapped flint decoration demonstrating prosperity, and a rich heritage of original timber framed buildings. Across the landscape there are farmsteads and manorial halls, often moated.

Dragon in St Mary's Church, Wissington

This unusual Norman church is known for the incredible wall paintings that date back to 1280. Over the north door is a ferocious dragon which is thought to have been added in the 15th Century.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle



Wissington Church

Willy Lott's House

Named after the farmer who lived here between 1761-1849, the house in Flatford was added to over three centuries. Parts of the house can be seen in several Constable paintings including The Mill Stream and The Hay Wain.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford/features/willy-lotts-house-at-flatford



Willy Lott's House, Flatford

Stour Valley Wool Towns

A significant area for cloth heritage in Medieval and Tudor times, the Wool Towns of Essex/Suffolk have wonderful architecture and streets of timbered buildings, and exceptionally large and magnificent churches. Explore Clare, Long Melford, Lavenham, Sudbury and Hadleigh, plus Coggeshall in Essex. Download the Wool Towns Guide from the AONB website.

www.wooltowns.co.uk



East Bergholt Church - Bell cage on right

Flatford Mill

Sitting on the bank of the River Stour, this Grade I listed watermill was once owned by Constable's father and features in a number of his iconic paintings. The property is now owned by the Field Studies Council.

www.field-studies-council.org/locations/flatford

Dedham Church

Standing in the heart of the village of Dedham, the church's iconic tower can be seen from miles around. Tours up the tower can be arranged and visitors can see Constable's painting The Ascension which was hung in the church in 1965.

www.dedham-and-ardleigh-parishes.org.uk/Groups/290515/St_Marys_Church.aspx

The Bell Cage, East Bergholt

The cage was originally erected in 1531 as a temporary measure when funds for building the church ran out. Today, the bells - the heaviest in England - are rung by hand for church services and weddings.

www.eastbergholt-bells.org.uk

Walking

The best way to explore the Dedham Vale is by foot and there are a wide variety of routes available. There are two long distance routes including the Stour Valley Path which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2019. In addition, there are several shorter, circular routes which take walkers through beautiful countryside as well as historic towns and villages.

Stour Valley Path

This 60-mile route follows the valley sides of the River Stour through the beautiful Dedham Vale AONB and the countryside of Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire. Use the Path Passport to tick off stops on the route.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/stour-valley-path

The Essex Way

Another long-distance route that passes through the edge of the Dedham Vale stretches between Harwich and Epping Forest. Follow the white plaque with two red roses which marks the 82-mile route.

www.essexwalks.com/walks/essexway

Flatford Ramble

Throughout the year, the National Trust run guided walks from Flatford around the Dedham Vale to help visitors find some of the hidden gems in the landscape.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford/lists/flatford-winter-rambles



Landscape and Nature

The stunning landscapes in the Stour Valley are not only inspirational views but are home to many endangered and rare species and unique habitats. From otters and water voles in the river to Cricket Bat Willows and Black Poplars which stand out on the horizon. There are also nature reserves which are home to many birds and insect species and historic churches whose towers can be seen across the landscape.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Arger Fen Nature Reserve

A combination of ancient coppice woodland and new naturally regenerating woodland alongside wet meadows, Arger Fen is one of the few ancient woodlands in Suffolk with wild cherry. The best time to visit is in spring when the woods come alive with the incredible displays of bluebells.

www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/arger-fen

River Stour

Flowing eastward from Cambridgeshire, the River Stour is around 47 miles and forms most of the county boundary between Essex and Suffolk. The river is popular for canoeists, walkers, cyclists and artists.

www.riverstourtrust.org

Polstead

Considered to be a quintessential English village, Polstead can be dated back to the Domesday Book and has a medieval church and 19th Century cherry orchards.

www.polstead.onesuffolk.net/about-polstead

Nayland

Scattered throughout the Valley are many beautiful towns and villages. Nayland has over 100 listed buildings, nearly all of which are timber framed and some over 500 years old built when Nayland was a thriving trading town.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org (Visitor Guides)

Tiger Hill

This 54-acre nature reserve near Arger Fen has woodland, heath and fenland and is home to badgers, bats and endangered dormice.

Dawes Hall Nature Reserve

Sitting on the Essex-Suffolk border, Daws Hall is a 25-acre wildlife haven dedicated to environmental education. Throughout the year, families are invited to the open days to enjoy this beautiful nature reserve.

www.dawshallnature.co.uk

Look for Cricket Bat Willows

Benefiting from the fertile riverbanks along the River Stour, Cricket Bat Willows have been grown in the Dedham Vale for centuries. They are fast-growing and produce tough yet lightweight wood which is ideal for cricket bats.



Stoke-by-Nayland church with lowland valley landscape



RSPB garden



Arger Fen

Suffolk Walking Festival

Annual celebration of walking in the county that takes place throughout May.

www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk

AONB Walking Guides

The Dedham Vale AONB has developed lots of walking guides to explore the towns, villages and countryside. Choose from seven 'Walking In' guides, Walks Off the Stour Valley Path, and Station to Station Walks. These can be used to explore: Constable Country – enjoy the views made famous in John Constable's incredible paintings; Nayland – for views around St James's Church, the ancient Court Knoll and the impressive Nayland weir; Dedham, Stoke by Nayland, Bures, Lavenham and Long Melford.



Wormingford dragon, Old Bures

© Cathy Shelbourne

Crop Circles in Wormingford

Looking across the landscape, eagle-eyed visitors may see a hint of some of the history of the Dedham Vale in the form of crop circles.

Black Poplar Hunt

Often found along floodplains and wet meadows, the Native Black Poplar is one of Britain's rarest trees and is a key species in the Dedham Vale AONB. Look out for the distinctive triangular, dark green, glossy leaves.

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

Find a Bee Orchid

This small orchid is easily recognisable by its two greenish pink petals and rich brown fur which gives the appearance of a bee. It grows well in chalky soils and boulder clay.

www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/beeorchids

Stoke-by-Nayland

Set between the valleys of the River Box and River Stour, Stoke-by-Nayland is well known for the distinctive church tower of 10th century St Mary's which can be seen for miles around and features in several Constable paintings.

www.naylandchurches.wordpress.com

Suffolk Walking Festival

Join us in May for the 13th annual Suffolk Walking Festival. Last year's festival left an incredible 29 million footprints over 23 days across the county! From 9th to 31st May (including Half Term) for over 3 weeks you can explore the landscapes, villages and towns of Suffolk with over 120 guided walks.



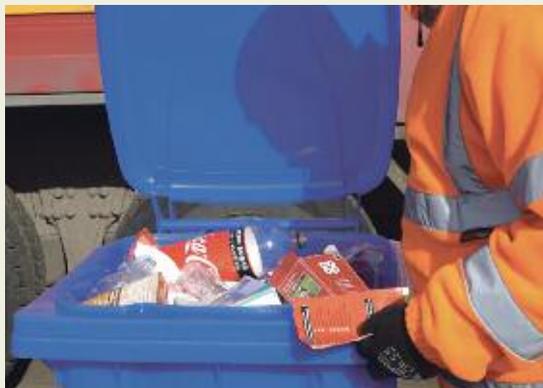
There are family friendly and fringe events at some of Suffolk's most iconic and spectacular locations. The launch is at Clare Castle Country Park on 9th May, plus there is a brand new Challenge Walk 'Go West' over 5 days (16th - 20th May). There is something for everyone: short, medium, and long walks, photography and art workshops. You can experience 'Forest Bathing' (Shinrin-Yoku), Mindful Nature Walks, discover the Romans and Normans, and learn about the Cold War at Bentwaters. There are walks on the mysterious Orford Ness with Kite the Sheepdog (and his shepherd Andrew) and an Orwellian Adventure down the River Orwell. All details are on www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk.

Anna McGowan, Suffolk Walking Festival



Sara Holman (left) from Suffolk Wildlife Trust with Kellie Dimmock (centre) and Sophie Green from Suffolk Libraries with the ten Wild Read books

Years of Recycling



Recycling has come a long way over the past 50 years... We've gone from dumping all our rubbish into a single bin (probably galvanised!), through the setting up of glass and other bring banks, to the introduction of wheelie bins and the mixed kerbside recycling collection we have now. Since the formation of The Suffolk Waste Partnership in the late 1990s, district and county councils work better together to provide the best services for Suffolk residents.

The 2019 recycling rate in Suffolk was 48% compared with less than 20% in 2001/2. But there are still challenges ahead! We have increasing levels of contamination in the recycling collections, with the worst offenders being glass, food, textiles, plastic bags and nappies (yes nappies!). At the same time recycling markets are demanding high quality materials to reuse. Getting your recycling right is more important than ever.

Public awareness around marine litter and plastic pollution has never been greater and rightly so. We need to capture this momentum to reduce the amount of single use plastic we use by making savvy shopping choices, choosing reusables and refillables where we can and making sure that our waste ends up in the right bins so that it doesn't pollute the environment. Visit www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk for more information.

There are interesting times ahead, as we look forward to seeing what changes the UK's Environment Bill will bring. In discussion have been deposit return schemes for drinks containers, consistency in recycling systems and a tax on all plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.

Caroline Fish, Suffolk Waste Partnership

Get Wild About Reading!

Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Libraries are launching a new partnership project to connect the natural world and the written word and celebrate the different ways authors relate to nature. This Wild Reads project will run to the end of 2020 to give everyone the opportunity to enjoy the very best nature writing, as well as inspire and ignite a love of nature in our readers through the lenses of a wide variety of writers.

A Wild Reads collection of ten books has been selected including authors such as the BBC's Kate Humble, Isabella Tree and Melissa Harrison. We will also be hosting book-related events, readings and discussions as well as walks and activities to promote Wild Reads.

Wild Reads books will be available across Suffolk and can all be reserved at www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/wild-reads. For events and activities inspired by Wild Reads, visit www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events.

Kellie Dimmock, Suffolk Libraries

The full list of Wild Reads:

- Wilding, Isabella Tree
- All Among The Barley, Melissa Harrison
- The Peace of Wild Things, Wendell Berry
- The Wild Places, Robert Macfarlane
- Nature Cure, Richard Mabey
- Notes from Walnut Tree Farm, Roger Deakin
- Thinking on My Feet, Kate Humble
- Meadowland, John Lewis-Stempel
- The Overstory, Richard Powers
- The Salt Path, Raynor Winn

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES

Discover the Past

Suffolk Archives is home to 900 years' worth of Suffolk's history captured through thousands of documents. We are open for everyone to discover the past through our collections in our branches in Bury St. Edmunds, Lowestoft and Ipswich. Our team of staff and volunteers work to look after Suffolk's nationally and internationally significant archives. We have volunteering opportunities to suit busy lifestyles or those looking to do more with their time. Whether you can spare us a minute, an hour, a morning/afternoon or a regular day, your support is precious to us. Is your interest piqued? See our website for our broad range of volunteering opportunities, across the two AONBs and Suffolk, and sign up to the challenge.



Rebecca Harpur, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator for Suffolk Archives

Cycling and Riding Better for the Environment

You, O Reader, doubtless love the AONBs whose news is usually cheerful and attractive. But on 22nd August 2019 the Commons Science and Technology Committee highlighted the lack of government policies to deliver the net zero carbon target by 2050. Meanwhile our county and district councils have declared a state of emergency and aim for carbon neutrality by 2030. That Commons Committee's headline was "Give up cars to meet climate targets", which many country folk and visitors will say is unrealistic or impossible. But is that true? Please think for three seconds before every trip: "Could I make it by walking, cycling, bus, train or a combination?". Could any money saved be invested in better public transport? Why not conserve your car - preferably electric - for special events, redirect your traffic congestion frustrations for the day's puzzles and preserve your body, mind and spirit for a happier & healthier retirement?

Andy Cassy & Neil Winship, QuietLanesSuffolk@gmail.com



SVEN Outdoor Learning Survey

There are many organisations in the Stour Valley which provide some form of outdoor learning about the special qualities of the Stour Valley to children and young people either as formal or informal education. A 2019 survey of SVEN (the Stour Valley Education Network) partners has revealed that there is some wonderful education happening in the valley. Some SVEN partners work with adults, children and young people with learning and physical disabilities. Some provide activities for people with mental health needs and those not in education, employment or training. Some work with ethnic minority groups and refugees.



The table below highlights the results from 15 partners. It has been encouraging and is able to give SVEN partners an indication of what education is occurring in the Stour Valley. This will help steer future work of the members to ensure the special qualities of the Stour Valley are experienced by those that are unable to access them.

One event that attracts lots of families is **Wild in the Stour Valley**, on Friday 29th May 11.00am – 4.00pm, at Mill Acre Pond, Croft Road, Sudbury CO10 1HR. This is a **FREE** hands-on family day out with lots of fantastic outdoor activities provided by SVEN partners such as kayaking, minibeast hunts, wild arts and crafts, chicks and pond dipping.



2019 Outdoor Learning Survey Results

- 335 school visits, 114 community group visits, 115 community events
- 14,200 children and young people engaged with some form of outdoor education
- 75% study science topics, followed by geography, history and other activities e.g. forest school, art
- Main age range is primary school
- Most visits are annual
- Group visits say they like the location, uniqueness of site and price of visit
- Most come from the villages within the Stour Valley and from Sudbury, Manningtree, Colchester, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich
- More schools say they would visit if there was help with transport costs and support in making curriculum links, and that it helps when a provider visits a school and talks to the headteacher

Tree Planting and More!

In late November Little Ropers Woodland Camping held a Tree Planting Weekend. We had applied for and taken delivery of a free Working Wood pack of 420 saplings from the Woodland Trust. Over two days these were planted by friends and family of all ages including members of the Stour Valley Education Network (SVEN), Eden Rose Coppice Trust and our own Camping community. Tea and biscuits were consumed, and new links and friendships forged as planters dug and staked.



The new woodland extends an existing plantation in the direction of Tiger Hill Wood (a Local Nature Reserve), hopefully providing further habitat for the plants and animals that live in the area. This year we are also hoping to install a compost toilet as an additional onsite toilet, in order to be able to accommodate larger groups such as Scouts and Duke of Edinburgh Award groups, as well as more families. Our campsite shop now sells a range of locally made crafts in addition to camping essentials. Look for our Facebook page or see our website www.littleroperswoodlandcamping.co.uk.

Ellie Mead, Little Ropers Woodland Camping

Mud, Not so Glorious Mud

At Foxearth Meadows, the reserve manager Mark Prina involved several of his regular team of volunteers in some very muddy work, and they hope to see a double benefit. It began with an attempt to increase the flow into Island Pond, one of the main ponds at the reserve, which then feeds into a series of smaller ponds that are important for dragonfly and damselfly larvae.



Solving this problem created another. The water was flowing faster but carrying too much silt with it. So Mark had a re-think, and, inspired by a paper produced by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (*), he re-drew his plans (metaphorically speaking).

Using recycled materials the team built a series of silt traps and mini weirs, remodelling the ditch-like stream into a series of mini ponds. It was hard and muddy work. The odd welly got filled, but the results were satisfying. We hope the project will provide a flow of cleaner water into Island Pond and also create some important new mini habitat. Ash and alder saplings were planted in one section and other parts were left open to let the sunlight in for the dragons.

Visit our website to find out more: arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/foxearth.

Andy Jowitt, Volunteer Community Engagement Officer, Foxearth Meadows

(* 'Constructed Farm Wetlands: treating agricultural water pollution and enhancing biodiversity' (S.M. Mackenzie and C.I. Mellwraith, WWT, March 2015)



Schools at Arger Fen

Arger Fen and Spouse's Vale Nature Reserve is a special place. I have had the honour of leading school groups and family events there for several years. It's a great place to take children as there's so much to explore.

We have been grateful to be able to offer Countryside Stewardship funded School Visits that link to the curriculum or the natural environment. The bluebells in the Spring provide inspiration for poetry, and the butterflies in the summer for art and puppet making. The reserve is ideal for finding out about trees, plants, invertebrates, mammals, birds and reptiles, and provides a challenging enough environment to practice compass skills (and find the treasure!).

In 2018 Suffolk Wildlife Trust fund-raised to give every primary school in Suffolk a copy of *The Lost Words* by Robert McFarlane and Jackie Morris, a book of acrostic spells and beautiful illustrations to conjure up natural words such as dandelion, bluebell and acorn, excised from the Oxford Junior Dictionary. It has been a joy to work with schools at Arger, creating their own acrostic spell poems and artwork, to bring these natural words back into everyday life, and I have been amazed at the work produced by the children.

To find out more about Arger Fen and Spouse's Vale Nature Reserve, our events and learning activity, please visit www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org.

Joanne Atkins, Wild Learning Officer, Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale



Ten Rivers Project Update

Autumn and winter were busy carrying out river habitat enhancements in our Water Environment Grant funded Essex and Suffolk Stour Valley Ten Rivers Project. 140m of fencing and 7 timber guards erected on the River Stour in Brundon, Sudbury; 55 trees planted on the River Stour in Brundon, Sudbury; and 750 trees planted on the Belchamp Brook in Borley.



Two new backwaters were created on private land in Nayland, along with the planting of 100 riverside trees and shrubs. Backwaters are a very rare habitat on the main river Stour and its tributaries. Creating shallower areas off the main river channel is beneficial for fish fry that can develop faster in the warmer water and escape the more turbulent flows. The gently sloping edges of the backwaters are also preferable for various species of native marginal aquatic plants. The 10 Rivers Project will continue until March 2021.

Alex Moore da Luz, River Stour Project Officer



New backwaters being created in Nayland

Cooperation, Skills and Conservation

It has been a great experience to be the Designated Landscapes Volunteer Placement. I have had a chance to visit parts of Suffolk and north Essex I haven't seen before, work alongside people as passionate about our landscapes as I am and pick up plenty of new skills and knowledge along the way.



I recently returned home after completing a MSc in Agroecology, Water and Food Sovereignty, and consider myself incredibly lucky to be able to now work outside in the places that inspired me to study in the first place. Much of my time has been spent planting trees on set-aside farmland in the Stour Valley, and as someone with a background in agriculture it has been great to experience farmers, the AONBs, and other partners working together to deliver benefits for our landscape, wildlife and local communities. By uniting different groups and individuals under the common goal of preserving and enhancing our outstanding landscapes, the AONBs help to facilitate such cooperation for the benefit of us all.

As we come to face the challenges of the coming decades, I think this cooperation will be key to ensuring our landscapes remain beautiful, wildlife-friendly and productive for the next 50 years to come!

Samuel Morgan, Designated Landscapes Volunteer Placement

Free the Trees From Redundant Plastic!

Do you know of any trees that need freeing from tree guards now they are well established? The AONBs believe it is time to remove and collect redundant plastic tree guards, plastic tubes and mulch mats from our landscape, returning it to its best. Do you own a piece of land with old tree guards which need removing?

Are you involved with community-owned land that could benefit from the clearing of these plastics?

Get in touch about this and if you're interested in any of our volunteering opportunities. Contact Emma Black or Neil Lister, AONB Countryside Project Officers.



Young Volunteer Effort at Foxearth

Foxearth Meadows Local Nature Reserve is developing into a wonderful site to watch nature. Mark Prina and his team of volunteers have worked wonders on the reserve and are keen to show groups around and run educational activities on the site.



On the first Sunday of 2020 they hosted one of the Dedham Vale AONB Youth Ranger sessions.

Eight young people enjoyed working on the sedge beds and visiting the reserve. The sedge had been cut prior to the youth rangers arriving so they quickly got to work raking the cut material into piles then pitchforking it to the edge of the reserve. This management will hopefully reduce the dominant sedge to allow other plants to grow. The Youth Rangers have been invited back later in the year to see the result of their work and to learn about some of the plants and wildlife that live there.

Mark is keen to work with the landowners adjacent to the reserve and when he noticed a connecting hedge had lots of redundant tree tubes, he remembered our 'Free the Trees' campaign and contacted us to see if we could help. This resulted in a joint effort to remove the tubes by the Stour Valley Volunteers and Foxearth Meadows volunteers. Over five dumpy bags full were collected. These will either be reused, recycled or disposed of depending on how intact they are.

Stour Valley Path Signage Update

We now have a small group of footpath maintenance volunteers who help keep footpaths in good condition and install signage on the Stour Valley Path and our other promoted routes. Twice a year volunteers survey their designated footpaths and report back any problems. These then feed into a work programme for this group of volunteers who enjoy doing this type of practical work. We have nearly completed the waymarking needed along the Stour Valley Path so hopefully walkers won't get lost!



Mud, Mud Glorious Mud!!!



With all the rain that we had this autumn and winter the ground became very saturated. Footpaths were very muddy and, in some places, became impassable. Constable Country Volunteer Rangers reported one of the really bad sections between Dedham and Flatford, so signs were put up to redirect walkers to less muddy paths. These volunteers are the eyes and ears on the ground for the Dedham Vale Visitor Management Group and help ensure locals and visitors have a good countryside experience when they walk in the area. One of our footpath volunteers also had a muddy walk. Check out his 'platform' walking boots!

Emma Black, AONB Countryside Project

Grandmother Grace of Tiger Hill



It has been 50 years since my remarkable grandmother, Dr Grace Griffith died. Born in China (Grace Mary Gulston) in 1889, of Christian missionary parents, she returned to England in 1895 and, from 1908, Grace was one of the first women to study medicine at Cardiff University. After qualifying as a doctor an early job was at the East Anglian Sanatorium for TB sufferers in Nayland (1917) and a year later was a GP in

Bures. Grace and her husband Dr David Griffith and six children first rented, then bought Lot 55 in 1938 from Assington Hall Estate - consisting of Warren Cottage and Kedge's Wood.

Although Grace also had houses in Bures, Newton Green and London, Warren Cottage became her sanctuary. As a keen conservationist, she kept detailed records of flora and fauna,

planted trees, cleared streams and improved habitats for nightingales, badgers, dormice, bats. When nearby Arger Fen was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1957, Grace's wish, after her death (1970), was for her land within the Dedham Vale AONB to also become a nature reserve. Kedge's Wood and Gazeley Gate were designated SSSI in 1972 and it was her daughter, Rosemary Mead 1923-2017 (my mother and Secretary for many years), with the help of sisters and grandchildren, conservation experts and advisers - William Palmer, Colin Ranson and Oliver Rackham - and support from Suffolk County Council (and another 17 years hard work after Grace's death) that Tiger Hill was officially declared a statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in 1987.

Tiger Hill LNR, now 54.6 acres, comprises Tiger Hill heath and wood, Gazeley Gate, Wright's Plantation and Long Meadow. It is looked after by a resident warden, Nick Miller (grandson), and an LNR Committee to plan, record, monitor and oversee this reserve, the only LNR in Suffolk in private ownership. It is exceptional for its wide range of habitats, providing many sightings of protected and rare species of animals, birds and insects. I have many wonderful memories of family milestones at Tiger Hill as well as endless hours of peace and tranquillity seeing nature in all its glory! Thank you, Grandmother Grace, for showing us all the way.

Janet Ainsley, Granddaughter and Secretary of Tiger Hill LNR

Challenges and Choices

There really has never been a better time to stand up for your river and the water it supplies us with! Whilst Environment Agency consultations don't generally inspire a rush for the computer, a particularly important one for our rivers is currently underway.

The Challenges and Choices consultation gives everyone a chance to have their say about how the rivers should be managed, what is important to people and how we move forward in the future, and it comes to a close on 23 April.

Essex Wildlife Trust is already involved, looking for specific protections for wildlife and more to tackle pollution. We have also been keen to point out the problems that barriers in the rivers cause for migrating fish. Mills, weirs and flood defence structures may not always be recognised for creating problems, where in contrast, fallen wood and branches that may look like obstructions are actually good for the river, providing superb habitat for sheltering fish and giving underwater structures that are great for aquatic insects.

If you care about the River Stour, and other watercourses in our area, then please do take part. You do not need to be an expert in hydrology to be able to have your say so check out this short film on YouTube which explains more about the process youtu.be/BA6gqonQLOQ, and search for Environment Agency Challenges and Choices online to take part in the survey. We look forward to the report that will come from this consultation and to working with the EA on implementing recommendations.

Darren Tansley, River Catchment Coordinator, Essex Wildlife Trust



© Roz Gordon

Bats About the Stour

Bats are amazing creatures, the only true flying mammal. There are over a thousand species world-wide, with 18 in Britain and only 11 or 12 in Suffolk and Essex. They have had legal protection in this country since the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. Thankfully that protection, introducing various initiatives to reduce habitat loss, to encourage farmers to control pesticide use and plant wildflower areas for beneficial insects slowed down the decline in the bat population. At last numbers are more stable and even growing in some areas, see www.bct.org.uk.



A Natterer's bat in a 'brick'

One project in the Stour Valley that is helping bats is the conversion of at least 17 pill boxes situated along the River Stour into bat hibernaculum (hibernation sites). The pill boxes, built in WWII to keep lookout for Germans invading via rivers that flow into the North Sea, are perfect for bats in the winter. Their thick walls and solid construction means the temperature remains constant just above freezing point. If bats freeze they will die but equally if it gets warm and they wake up when there are no flying insects around they might die as well.

Several years ago a student at Daws Hall Nature Reserve in Lamarsh invented a 'bat brick' like a house brick with slots for bats to roost in. The Bulmer Brick and Tile Company made bricks to this design and they have been cemented into the pill boxes and air raid shelters with extremely successful results. Where there are trees or buildings close to the river in the Stour Valley you are likely to see bats just after sunset on a warm evening, the path by the Granary and Eden Rose Nature Reserve in Sudbury are particularly good. Local bat groups organise bat walks from April to October, see essexbatgroup.org.uk, go to local web sites for information.

Sarah White, Essex Bat Group

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Bench Wellbeing Project

I am a local furniture designer-maker with a workshop in Stratford St. Mary - in an old chicken shed that served me as my bedroom 40 years back when my family moved to the village and building work was on-going. I have been making tables, beds, cupboards, bookcases, wardrobes, kitchens and benches (though not chairs.....) for some 25 years now, but it is the latter that have become an obsession.

Three years ago I was commissioned to make some benches for Quay Place, Suffolk MIND's wellbeing centre on Ipswich docks. MIND and I decided that public benches should be designed not only to give people a rest but also to encourage sitters to commune by being curved so that conversation could flow more easily, thus helping counter loneliness and boost wellbeing. And so, The Bench Project was formed, see www.benchproject.co.uk.

Our benches are made with a galvanised steel sub-frame that will last for decades and allows our trademark sinuous shapes to be easily achieved. They are clad with eco-friendly, local English oak slats from storm-felled trees in Ipswich's parks (planked up by the Greenways charity) for the seats and backs, see www.germain.co.uk. Each bench installation includes workshoping the design with its local community group, to make sure each one is unique to its place and encourage everyone to feel ownership of the finished bench. And we even incorporate habitat for wildlife too.

We look forward to providing our original, long-lasting, sturdy, curvaceous benches for the benefit of visitors in the Stour Valley.

Tim Germain, furniture design



Bench installed at Hitcham of local sweet chestnut with large glass marbles embedded in the back that twinkle in the sunlight. Metalwork by Kev Colbear.

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A New Life for Clare Railway

Spring has sprung around us and the sounds of chirping birds and other wildlife provide that small piece of tranquillity on a walk around Clare Castle Country Park. We've been working hard to make sure that there is something for everyone visiting us; be it a visit to Platform One Cafe, taking a walk to the top of the motte or exploring the wildlife that is all around the park.

Soon, visitors will be able to pop their head into the picturesque South Platform Waiting Room Visitor Centre to see a beautiful model railway and collect activity packs, walking leaflets and much more.

You might want to find out about what wildlife to look out for before you set off on a walk, embark on the family challenge activity, follow our accessible trail around the park or ask a question about Clare's history that has been on your mind since your last visit. A team of friendly volunteers will be delighted to see you once the building is open to the public.

As we plan for the launch of the Visitor Centre later in the year, we are keen to hear from individuals that might like to get involved with all aspects of volunteering at the park. See www.clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk for updates on upcoming events and volunteer activities, such as green wood workshops, spoon carving, nettle tea and cordage workshops, willow weaving, open-air theatre, a community bioblitz, a model railway exhibition and much more.

Natalie Tarling, Clare Castle County Park



A Cambridge bound railcar entering Clare station on 26 February 1963

© East Anglian Railway Museum

Memories of 50 Years?



Throughout 2020 the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley team will be seeking your special memories of the AONB over the last 50 years, as well as capturing your hopes for the next 50! If you care for this outstanding national landscape like we do, please get in touch with a story for the next newspaper by emailing dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk. We'd also like to receive any 'heart' photos like this one. We look forward to hearing from you.



Alfred Munnings' Arcadia

To the artist Alfred Munnings Dedham Vale with its mills, locks, bridges, pools and trees was an "Arcadia". He regarded the river as a playground and with his wife and London friends took pleasure in rowing trips up the river, and wrote: *"passing along level with the banks on peaceful, calm surfaces, forcing the canoes through eddying narrows, between thick clumps of dark green rushes in the shallows... under a wide alley of overhanging willows, by open stretches of flat meadows where cattle and horses grazed. White blossoming water-weed lay in dazzling patches. Dragon flies, an occasional kingfisher and swallows - as of old - skimming the surface. In the wind and sun, without a care in the world, we made our voyage up the peaceful river, leaving the locks behind us."*



AJ and Violet Munnings in a Canoe on the Stour, 1920s

© The estate of Sir Alfred Munnings, 2020

During the 1920s and 1930s, when Munnings was often away from home with work, he seized any opportunity when at home to paint along the river valley capturing it in all seasons and all times of day and night. In his autobiography Munnings wrote passionately about protecting the Vale and took an active role in establishing the Dedham Vale Society in 1938.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Dedham Vale AONB the Munnings Art Museum is presenting, as part of its 2020 exhibition, a selection of paintings of the Dedham Vale by Alfred Munnings. These will be on display in the Studio in the grounds and admission is free. See www.munningsmuseum.org.uk for opening times and days (April to November).

Jenny Hand, Director, The Munnings Art Museum

Sudbury Canoe Club is 25!

Although a small club had existed in the 1970's it was in 1995 that six like-minded paddlers decided there was enough interest to form a new canoe group. As the club grew, members headed off to diverse locations (from Wales to the Alps) to gain skills on both flat and white water, plus coaching awards. The club aims to continue developing skills, introduce new paddlers to different experiences and use the River Stour as a base for those wanting calmer water and time to gain confidence.

Now based in Sudbury, on the Essex-Suffolk border, the club enjoys the best of canoeing and kayaking activities - from touring rivers and sea kayaking to exhilarating white water trips and freestyle in addition to wonderful weekly club paddles on the Stour. Run by qualified British Canoeing Coaches, it caters for both young and old paddlers, beginners

and the more advanced and recently Kingfisher swimming pool kindly agreed to allow the SCC to hire the pool for kayakers to brush up on skills and practice rolling or capsizes during the colder, winter months. Many club members have gone on to compete and win medals in National and International events and most recently Dan McGaley has gained the Community Coach of the Year Award.

The club has gone from strength to strength but at its core it is still a friendly group of like-minded people meeting up for good company and a paddle on the River Stour, see sudburycanoeclub.org.uk for more information.

Sarah White, Sudbury Canoe Club



Caring for Constable Country

East Bergholt Futures is a group set up to promote sustainability in the Dedham Vale. We regularly pick up litter along the River Stour and the footpaths around East Bergholt. In an attempt to cut down waste and to raise awareness of the particular problems associated with plastic waste, we applied for a grant from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to source recyclable and reusable drinks cups. After some research we found cups with a screw lid, which although made from plastic, are manufactured in this country and are fully recyclable at the end of life. They are strong and cool to hold and do not involve the air miles associated with bamboo cups.

Our application for a grant from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund was approved and we were awarded £500. We ordered our first 50 cups and have sold over half of them. We have branded the grips with Caring for Constable Country and have been selling them at the local, monthly Farmers Market in East Bergholt. Several businesses, including the bakers and a local café and shop are also selling the cups. We will reinvest the money made from selling the cups at £5 in more cups and hopefully this will be a self-financing and continuing scheme.

Judith Barford, East Bergholt Futures





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Across the Dedham Vale AONB



As the fourth smallest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the country the Dedham Vale AONB and its associated Stour Valley Project area are vulnerable to change that is potentially a detriment to the purposes of the designation. The staff team is keeping an eye on the proposed developments associated with Suffolk's 'energy coast' as that huge increase in electricity generation is anticipated to see a return of National Grid's proposals to strengthen its electricity transmission network from Bramford to Twinstead.

the visitor economy based on its outstanding landscapes, its cultural associations and enhanced access, helping to improve the quality of life for residents and support local shops and services. The River Stour Enhancement Project (page 17) is hosted at the AONB team and supported by the Environment Agency. Projects to re-naturalise the river and its tributaries, remove non-native invasive plant species and plant new trees, delivers significant environmental work in the AONB and Stour Valley.



Stoke by Nayland Primary Eco School pupils in their wildlife area with willow and stone hearts to show their love of our landscape

The staff team, working with its partners, continue to develop and deliver a wide range of projects to benefit the area. The EU funded LEADER project enhances the visitor experience in the Stour Valley (page 7) and builds

Much of the AONB teams' work is delivered by magnificent teams of volunteers (page 17), undertaking practical conservation and access works, helping us at events and to develop project activity. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

As we look forward to what 2020 will bring, it is hoped we will be successful in securing grants from the Landscape Enhancement Initiative Ofgem funded scheme to work with the Stour Valley Farmer Cluster to deliver numerous environmental projects in the AONB. The government is developing the Agriculture and Environment Bills, containing the basis on how the countryside is managed for many years. The AONB network is hopeful that the nationally designated landscapes are recognised in these Bills as the special places they are with policies reflecting the benefits that National Landscapes bring to society.

Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager

Locks and Lintels

At the height of the River Stour's industrial activity, a Stour Lighter (a type of unpowered barge) and its barge-horse (the pulling power), had a series of 26 locks to navigate between Sudbury and Manningtree. With increased competition from railways, river traffic declined and the locks gradually fell into disuse and disrepair.

Over the last 50 years, the Trust's volunteers have gradually restored and reinstated four locks. A distinctive feature of River Stour locks was a lintel, a horizontal beam and two vertical supports that prevented the lock from collapsing inward, an example of which can be seen in John Constable's painting Flatford Mill (currently on display at Tate Britain, London). The reinstatement of wooden lintels in restoration work was not structurally necessary but conserved the traditional Stour design.

The River Stour Trust formed in 1968 to fight the proposed closure of navigation on the River Stour, a right first granted by Act of Parliament in 1705. As a result, the public right of navigation remains today and is enjoyed by thousands of people each year. Through navigation has not yet been achieved, however, and the Trust continues to campaign for its restoration, along with improved river access points and changes to bylaws to permit electric boats on the length of the river. Meanwhile, the Trust's knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers offer boat trips, educational visits and talks – see www.riverstourtrust.org for details – enabling visitors (from tourists to schoolchildren) to appreciate Constable Country from the unique perspective of our river.



Restoration work on Roger Brown Lock at Stratford St Mary – May 2006



River Stour Trust
Registered charity number 257906

Michelle Mandry, River Stour Trust

Tastes of the Stour Valley



The Taste of Sudbury Food & Drink Festival – a date in the diary for many in the area – is back this summer on Sunday 14th June. This one-day event run voluntarily by a CIC, held in the centre of Sudbury on Market Hill, is free of charge for the whole community to attend, see www.tasteofsudbury.co.uk.

It is a day of celebrating the very best local producers – from within a 50-mile radius – and this year there is an increased focus on children and young families to help improve

the connections between farmers, producers, chefs and consumers. The event features a kitchen theatre where eight free cooking demonstrations are run by local chefs and bakers, and there will be sixty stalls selling local produce.

There will be a 'farmyard' where children feed the animals and learn about the connection between the fields and the provenance of their food, and how they can make good, healthy food from simple raw ingredients at a low cost. There will also be a second

kitchen area where there will be free workshops for families including bread and sausage making.

This event, that is accessible to all, really does bring people together; it revives a community spirit and instils much local pride. It is a great advert for a small rural town that has struggled to maintain a prominent position during current economic hardships on the high street.

Justine Paul, Suffolk Market Events

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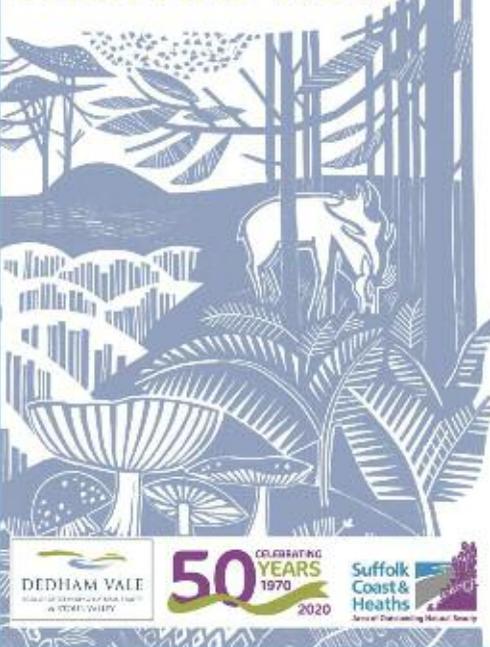
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THEN AND NOW



It's not only the AONB that has changed in the last

1970	50 years...	2020
9p	loaf of bread	98p
90p	trip to the cinema for two	£20
£32	weekly wage	£511
£600	new Mini	£16,195
72	average life expectancy	81

Contacting the Team

Dedham Vale AONB
 Dock Lane, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1PE
 Telephone: 01394 445225
 Email: dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk
 Website: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
 Twitter: @DedhamValeSVP

The AONB team:
 Simon Amstutz - AONB Manager
 Alex Moore da Luz - River Stour Project Officer
 Beverley McClean - Planning Officer
 Cathy Smith - Communications, Funding and Development Officer
 Claire Cadman - Projects Officer
 Deborah Sage - AONB Officer
 Emma Black - Countryside Project Officer
 Katherine Davies - Stour Valley Visitor Development Officer
 Lucy Oldham - Partnership Officer
 Neil Lister - Countryside Project Officer
 Oka Last - Stour Valley Visitor Development Officer
 Paula Booth - AONB Officer
 Pete Cosgrove - Marine Pioneer Manager
 Samuel Morgan - Designated Landscapes Volunteer Placement

It's our 50th birthday! Come and Explore the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley

A 'family' of guides are produced by the AONB team to encourage people to explore the river valleys, woodlands and historic villages. The area is fantastic at all times of year, and experiencing the changing seasons and discovering the different outstanding landscapes and villages are more than enough reason to return again and again...

There are many walk and cycle guides FREE to download from the AONB website.



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