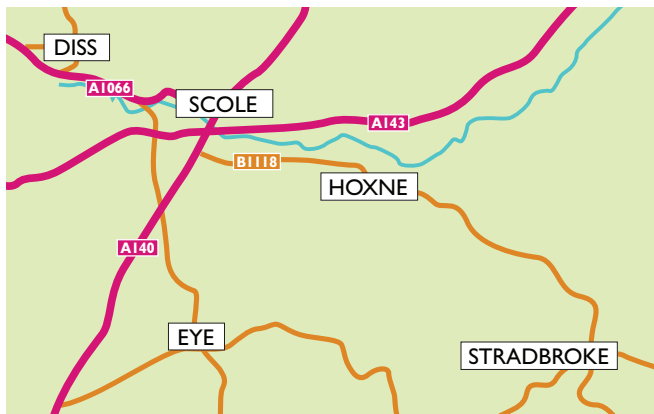


Treasured Suffolk Hoxne

In the Footsteps of a
Saint and a Philanthropist



Hoxne lies on the B1118, about 5 miles (8km) east of Diss and 4 miles north of Eye, clearly signed off the A143 and A140.

Parking is available in the village or at the Village Hall by Goldbrook Bridge.

Use O.S. Explorer Map 230 Diss and Harleston to enjoy this walk.

Treasured Suffolk

Treasured Suffolk Walks are a series of walks based on archaeological finds and historic sites around the county. Each walk starts in a town or village, where you can find local shops or pubs for refreshments. The walk leaflets can be downloaded from Suffolk County Council's Discover Suffolk website.

Discover many more walks and rides and great days out in the countryside at www.discoversuffolk.org.uk

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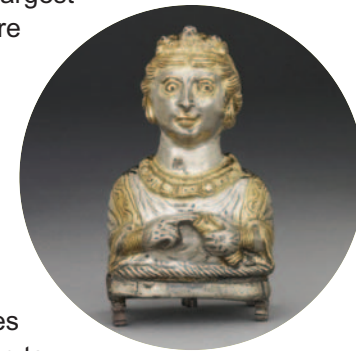


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Introduction

Hoxne is a picture postcard village and an absolute treasure trove of history with a unique and ancient past. This is where the tools of early humans were first recognised, where the largest hoard of Roman treasure in the UK was discovered, and where legend has it that Saint Edmund's martyrdom took place.



Today, the gentle beauty of the small village of Hoxne provides an understated backdrop to the important role it has played in England's turbulent history and its continuing archaeological importance. The combination of lovely countryside and intriguing historical events makes this the definitive, and literal, Treasured Suffolk Walk.

Hoxne is a very pretty village with the Church of St Peter and St Paul proud at one end of the village, the village hall at the other. Between the two lies the village green with the magnificent 16th century pub, The Swan Inn providing a perfect place to refresh and refuel before, or after, your walk. The village shop and post office is a useful stop for picnic provisions.

The Hoxne Walk is a mixture of on and off-road walking using quiet lanes and public rights of way. There are a small number of bridges to cross and some stiles to climb over but overall this is a lovely, easy walk through some slightly undulating scenery with fine views and many fascinating stories.



Treasured Suffolk Hoxne

Distance: About 5.5 miles (9 km)

Time: 2-3 hours

Terrain: Quiet lanes, public footpaths, slightly undulating, easy to gentle.

Start your walk at the Village Hall.

1 St Edmund's Hall

Built in 1879 by Sir Edward Kerrison, the lord of the manor of Hoxne, the Hall commemorates King Edmund of the East Angles, killed by invading Danish Vikings in AD 869/70, by legend in Hoxne.

Look for the roadside brick wall, an example of a local style known as 'Banham walling' after the local brickworks. Look also for the carving of the Goldbrook legend, below the statue of King Edmund on the gable facing the road.



The legend holds that King Edmund was flayed, bound to a tree and shot with arrows. His head was then cut off and hid in bramble thickets so that the body couldn't be given a decent burial. Edmund's followers were led to the head by shouts of 'here' and found it being guarded by a wolf. The Christian king was held to have been martyred by the heathens and was venerated as a saint soon afterwards, his body taken to Bury St Edmunds, named in his honour.

From St Edmund's Hall walk over the historic Goldbrook Bridge.

2 Goldbrook Bridge

King Edmund hid from his enemies under this bridge, but when a passing honeymoon couple saw the gleam of his golden spurs, they betrayed him to the Danes. While Edmund was being taken prisoner he laid a curse upon all those about to be married who crossed the bridge. Nowadays brides avoid crossing the bridge on the route to their wedding!

Bear right towards Swan Bridge into the village centre.

3 Oakley Park or Hoxne Hall

Just before Swan Bridge, on your left, is the entrance that formerly led to Hoxne Hall, a grand moated hall with elaborate gardens and once one of the country palaces of the bishops of Norwich. Only the converted stables and red-brick walls of its kitchen garden remain.

4 Swan Bridge and The Swan Inn

This ancient crossing of the Chickering Beck brings you to the Swan Inn, a fine 16th century, timber-framed building, with the front encased in colour-washed brickwork and older framing still visible at the rear.

Keep to the right side past the village green, uphill on a lane to the B1118 and across to the church of St Peter and St Paul.

5 Church of St Peter and St Paul, Hoxne

Once the Suffolk seat of the Late Saxon and medieval bishops of East Anglia, this was once named 'St Ethelbert's church in Hoxne' but was re-dedicated to St Peter by the mid 12th century.

Go inside the church where, amongst the old bench seats in the north east corner, is a carving of a wolf holding St Edmund's head.



6 The Vicarage moat

From the rear of the church is a view of the substantial medieval moat that surrounds the late 15th century former vicarage, possibly the site of the original bishop's residence.

'The heel-sinew'

Look northwards into the Waveney Valley and appreciate how the church stands on the top of a narrow east-west ridge, likened to a hoh-sinu or 'heel-sinew' by the Anglo-Saxons, hence the modern name Hoxne ('hock-sin').



Treasured Suffolk-Hoxne

In the Footsteps of a Saint and a Philanthropist

From the church retrace your steps back through the village and out on the Eye Road, passing the side road to Goldbrook Bridge on your left. Continue walking uphill until you round a corner at the top – on the right you will see a house set into a sunken area that is an old brick pit and on the left you will see a number of redundant industrial buildings including a circular brick structure with a tall chimney that is a disused brick kiln.

7 Hoxne Brickworks and the Palaeolithic Site

In 1797 John Frere of Roydon Hall, Norfolk, found flint hand axes belonging “to a very remote period indeed, even beyond that of the present world”. These came from the edge of a fresh-water lake that formed after the retreat of an ice-sheet 430,000 years ago. It infilled with silts during the subsequent warm phase called the Hoxnian Interglacial (named after this site) and the finds indicate the presence here of nomadic hunters, wild horses, deer and elephants around 350,000-300,000 BC.

Because the lake silts were ideal for making bricks they were termed ‘brickearths’ and up until 1965 were used for making bricks and drain pipes. The visible kiln dates from the 1950s.



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8 Hoxne Roman Treasure

In 1992, in the field to the right of the road, a metal detector discovered the greatest collection of late 4th and 5th century coins found anywhere in the Roman Empire. Nearly 15,000 gold, silver and bronze coins, a gold body chain, 6 necklaces, 3 finger rings, 19 bracelets, 78 silver spoons, 20 ladles, 9 toilet implements, 4 small plain bowls and a dish, two small vases, 3 small strainers, a strainer/funnel, 4 pepper pots, 2 silver padlocks, fragments of an ivory box, bone plates from a small casket and most beautiful of all, the handle of a large vessel in the form of a tigress, all once buried in a small wooden chest, were excavated. All are now in the British Museum.

Take the signposted footpath on the opposite side of the road to Chestnut Lodge, and head down it across the arable field, over a wooden bridge. Go right, then left over a stile, up a short climb to a small footbridge on the right and then through a small copse to eventually meet the road at Mill Mound.

9 Mill Mound

The mill mound lies in the small copse on the other side of the road. A windmill formerly stood on top of the mound, the mill body being supported on a timber post linked to a foundation embedded in the mound.

Leaving Mill Mound on your left, head down Nuttrey Vale onto Eye Road until you reach a signposted footpath on your left. Follow this footpath, along the edge of arable fields and the rear of Gissing Farm to cross 2 stiles to a small country lane, where you turn left and shortly enter the edge of Redhouse Farm.

10 Redhouse Farm

To the right you will see the impressive early 16th century farmhouse. The red bricks used in the infilling (termed bricknogging) of its timber-framed walls gave the farm its name.



Keep following footpath signs through the farmstead and turn left at a break in a copse, behind some cottages on the former south edge of the green, to a small bridge. The footpath leads you through some wonderful countryside with sweeping views to Low Barn and beyond – a good spot to sit and enjoy the view! Continue on past Low Barn and on to Denham Low Road where you can make a short detour to the tiny Church of St John the Baptist.

11 Low Barn

This isolated group of farm buildings, including a 19th-century red brick structure, makes a strong visual impact as you gaze across the wide vale into Denham.

12 Church of St John the Baptist, Denham

At first glance, this small, isolated and towerless church surrounded by trees looks more like a small wood than a churchyard. A church was here in 1086, but the existing one dates to the 13th or 14th century. In 1744 its ruinous south tower was removed, together with the west end of the nave and a chapel on the north side – the blocked-up arch of the chapel can still be clearly seen.



Returning to Denham Low Road walk past The Leys Fish Ponds (the ample willows are testament to their presence), and immediately after a bridge over the Goldbrook, turn left on to a footpath which leads you up the field edge towards the hamlet of Cross Street. As you climb out of the valley along a tree-lined grass path, turn back to see the site of the Chapel of St Edmund on the top of the facing valley side.

13 Chapel of St Edmund 'in the wood' or 'the new work'

Two chapels of St Edmund existed in Hoxne in 1351, reflecting the duality of St Edmund's martyrdom; his execution in one place and the 'miraculous' finding of his head in the forest in another. In 1506 there is mention of 'the image of St Edmund in the chapel at Cross Street' and 'the image of St Edmund in the chapel in the wood'. Evidence of a simple rectangular chapel was found in 1991 in a field that was named as Chapel Piece in 1757.

Turning left into Cross Street go past the well and weathervane and some wonderful examples of 'Banham walling', along Abbey Hill. From this you can make detours up the driveway of the impressive Abbey Farm and, further along, take a short walk along a permissive path across the field to the St Edmund Monument.

14 Abbey Farm the site of Hoxne Priory

In the 12th century monks founded a monastery containing St Edmund's image at this site. The monastery contained a brewery, garden and orchard, stables, malt house, dovecote (its small surrounding moat survives), a cemetery, fishponds and St Edmund's well. The long flint rubble wall beside the road is the precinct boundary of the priory.

15 St Edmund's Monument

In 1848 an ancient oak tree fell and a piece of iron, thought to be an arrowhead, was found to be embedded in the trunk. Was this one of the arrows that killed St Edmund? The locals thought so and a stone cross was put up on the site of the fallen tree in 1879. A granite stone replaced this after lightning in 1907 destroyed the original one.

Continue down Abbey Hill, fork right onto a driveway which leads to a footpath that goes through a small wood, across a footbridge over the Chickering Beck, and keep left to return to Hoxne Low Street at The Swan Inn.