

A Walk in The Saints

Map - Outdoor Leisure 231 – Southwold and Bungay

Distance - About 9 3/4 miles

For this walk, you can park your car at the Flixton Village Hall Car Park

1. From the Village Hall turn right and then immediately right into Abbey Road (signed for St Peter's Brewery)

Continue up the hill and on the right hand side go past Abbey Farm behind which you will see the Priory Ruins In 1258 a priory was erected on the site, and housed a prioress and eighteen nuns. It remained there for about three-hundred years, until the disestablishment in 1528 by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. All that remains today is a single ivy-clad wall, and the present farm-house which is believed to have been the original vicarage. The stone was probably taken to build St Peter's Hall

At the top follow the road around and you will see the memorial to the 446th USAAF which is sited at the former Flixton airfield. Initially allocated to the Eighth Air Force on 4th June 1942 as a bomber base, when finally completed in April 1944, the airfield had three intersecting runways. The 446th led the 8th Air Force on the first mission of D-Day The 446th Group's last raid was flown on 25th April 1945, by which time they had clocked up 273 combat missions during which they delivered 16,800 tons of bombs. Total losses amounted to 58 aircraft in action, and 28 due to other operational causes

2. About 300 yds (247m) turn right along the concrete path opposite the signpost for Stanacre Farm. keep straight ahead on the concrete track past Ancient Woodlands on your right.

3. Turn left at the next road to pass a Mushroom Farm and, in 300yds (274m), go right on a field-edge path just beyond two red cottages (The Angles Way) After ½ mile (800m), you reach a junction of paths with a half-white, half-weatherboarded farmhouse visible to your right. Turn left to climb towards a small wood and continue through the woods. Go through a gate, cross a stream and climb the green lane to a road.

4. Turn left then right in 300yds (274m) on to a lane signposted 'South Elmham Hall'. Follow this lane round to the right and down the drive to the Hall

5. South Elmham Hall dates back to the 13 th Century and was built by the Bishops of Norwich who held the South Elmham villages at Domesday as part of the ancient Saxon estates. They came here to hunt the deer in the park that surrounded the Hall and to entertain the rich and powerful including royalty.

The hall and farm were acquired from Henry VIII in 1540, by Edward Lord North, and in the following 460 years the property has changed hands only four times.

Walk into the car park and between the trees and cross the moat on a permissive path. and keep straight ahead across the meadow. Go through a gate and turn left along a green lane enclosed by hedges. At a junction of tracks, continue ahead and walk down the side of the field with the ditch to your left to the site of the Minster, a romantic ruin enclosed by trees.

6. After visiting the Minster, continue straight ahead along the line of the hedge and turn left at the end of the next meadow to cross a footbridge and climb on a field-edge path. Turn right at the road and after 300yds (274m) turn left on to a quiet lane. Stay on this lane as it bends to the right and continue for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.2km).

7. Cross the main road and keep straight ahead on a grassy field-edge path. Pass through a hedge, cross the next field and turn right beyond the hedge. Walk beside this hedge for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (800m) until you come to a junction where you turn right on to a cross-field path that becomes a wide track. Turn left at a crossroads and walk across the fields with a water tower to your right to reach St Michael's Church.

St Michael is one of the so called "Thankful Villages". These are the the 50 or so parishes out of almost 20,000 in England where all the inhabitants who fought in the Great War returned safely. It is the only village in East Anglia that did not lose any residents in either of the world wars of the 20th Century

8. Turn left along the road. After $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (800m), cross a humpback bridge and stay on this road to climb to St Peter's Church. Follow the road round to the right past the entrance to St Peter's Hall, then turn left across a plank bridge to walk beside the moat. The path swings right then left, following the line of a hedge between open fields.

St Peter's Hall dates from around 1280 (the Library Bar area) but was extended in 1539 using 14th and 15th Century 'architectural salvage' taken from Flixton Priory. The building materials from Flixton Priory were particularly valuable as they consisted of Caen stone from Normandy, an immensely valuable material in a region where no stone, only brick and flint existed. The agricultural buildings now house St Peter's Brewery

9. At a junction of paths, turn left along a field-edge track, waymarked 'Angles Way'. This soon becomes a grassy lane and then a pebbled farm drive. Go past Stanacre Farm (known in previous times by the far more interesting name of Starknaked Farm!) and shortly you will reach the road

10. Turn right and walk back down the hill to collect your car from the Village Hall

