

Welcome

Mendlesham's name first appeared in the Domesday Book as Melnesham and Mundlesham, meaning 'Myndel's village'. In 1280 it was granted a Tuesday market and today is known for its May Day Street Fayre.



Old Market Street is the historic heart of the village with timber-framed buildings, bakery and stores, fish and chip shop, post office and the Kings Head pub (01449 766543), daily 12pm–12am (Sundays 11pm). On Church Street is the medieval Church of St Mary with a memorial to the USAAF 34th Bomb Group, stationed here during WW2, and Commonwealth War Graves.

The village made history on 23 November 1981 when it was struck by a tornado during the largest tornado outbreak in Europe with 104 tornadoes touching down across England and Wales!

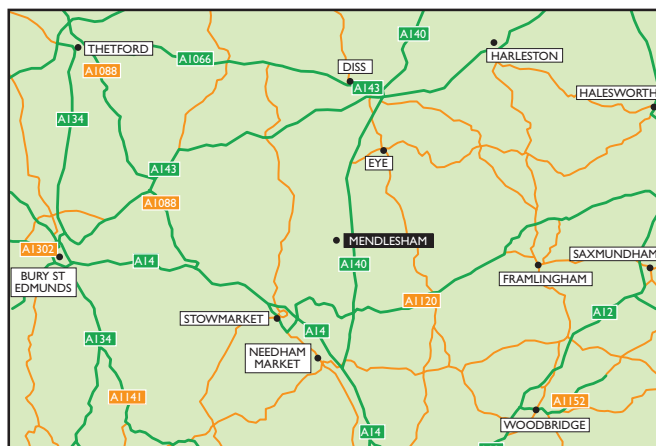
The parish has a fascinating history told through these 3 walks. All walks start at the Mendlesham Community Centre and overlap at Millennium Wood in Vicarage Plantation, where there are picnic tables.

Please follow the Countryside Code:

- ✓ Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- ✓ Leave gates and property as you would find them and follow paths.
- ✓ Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.
- ✓ Keep dogs under effective control.
- ✓ Plan ahead and be prepared.
- ✓ Follow advice and local signs.



Location



Directions

Mendlesham lies just 1 mile off the A140, approximately 10 miles north of Needham Market, 6.5 miles north-east of Stowmarket, and 7.5 miles south of Eye.

Parking is available at Mendlesham Community Centre, Old Station Road IP14 5RU where all walks start **A**.

Public Transport

Mendlesham is served by a number of buses. Visit www.suffolkonboard.com for timetables and to plan your journey.

Discover Suffolk

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

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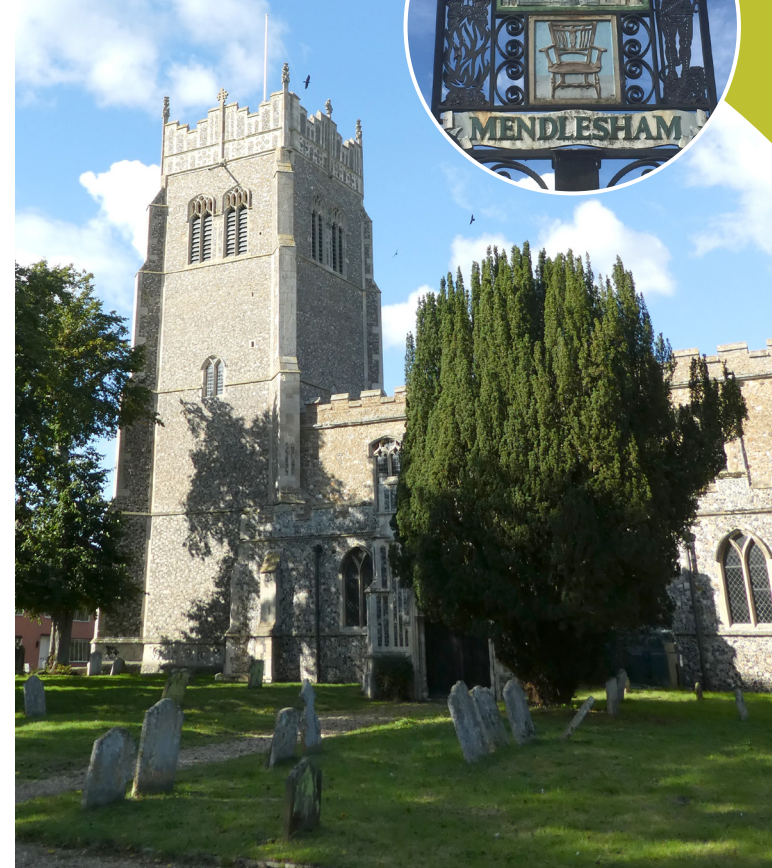
Produced by the Mendlesham Walking Group and Suffolk County Council.



Circular Walks

Mendlesham Village Walks

3 WALKS AROUND HISTORIC MENDLESHAM



Tan Office and Mendlesham Green Circular

DISTANCE: Approx. 5.5 miles (9km)

DURATION: 3 hours

TERRAIN: Mainly natural surface footpaths and tracks with some road walking.



From (A) **A**, turn right, cross the road, and follow the pavement to its end. Turn left onto the footpath **1**.

Go over the road and follow the footpath to Oak Farm Lane. Turn right **2**. This is the Mid Suffolk Footpath, a 20-mile trail between Hoxne and Stowmarket. After 1 mile, at Oak Farm, pass by a gate. Follow the track to a metal gate. Pass by this gate into the hamlet of Tan Office.

Tan Office was a former Quaker settlement where there was also a tannery. In the Middle Ages a place of work was referred to as an 'office' and this is where the shortened name Tan Office comes from.



After 50 metres, turn right **3**. Follow the waymarkers through gardens to emerge at a field. Bear left, go under pylons, and at the far end turn left to follow the path to the next footpath sign. Turn left, cross the footbridge and follow the field edge to a gap in the hedge. Follow the path, crossing another footbridge, to reach Mendlesham Green.

The Mendlesham Martyrs were five men from Tan Office and Mendlesham Green burnt at the stake for protestant non-conformity. Situated in a valley with the source of the River Gipping, this area was a 'slough' – a marshy swamp – and a perfect hiding place for non-conformists. But, between 1546 and 1558 numerous people were evicted because of those beliefs. There is a display about the Mendlesham Martyrs in The King's Head.

Cross the road **4**. Continue past allotments on the left and turn right in front of the Old Mill House.

Mendlesham parish sits on a band of heavy clay, making it difficult to grow crops. Because of this the 16th to 18th century landscape would have looked very different with woodland and pastures, although many of the houses, fields, ponds and tracks are unchanged.

Before the thatched cottage go through a gap in the hedge on the left. Turn left and continue around the edge of the field with cottages, playground, and



houses on your left until you cross a small footbridge.

Continue into a meadow. Turn right at the telegraph pole **5**. Follow the footpath, bearing left in the 2nd field under telegraph wires. Turn right at the waymarker, cross two bridges and continue to Willow Farm. Cross the stile to the road. Turn left.

Continue along the road, turning right at the footpath before the junction **6**. Follow this over a footbridge and continue crossing two more bridges. Turn left at the grey barn (Whiting's Farm), then follow the concrete track to Wash Lane **7**. St Mary's Church tower can be seen in the distance.

Turn left to the junction. Cross to the byway opposite **8**.

Continue past the grain store to an entrance into Vicarage Plantation. Follow the green walk from **3** to return to **A**.

Mendlesham's Woodland

DISTANCE: Approx. 1.25 miles (2 km)

DURATION: 1 hour

TERRAIN: Pavement followed by natural paths in woodland.



From **A**, turn right onto Old Station Road. Go past Middy Close and at the end of the pavement, follow the path ahead with the field on your right. Cross a wooden footbridge to enter Vicarage Plantation **1**.

The fields that make up the plantation have been named Oak Meadow, Cricket Meadow (formerly a cricket pitch), Long Meadow and Water Meadow.

Take the second path on the right just beyond the signboard. The path takes you through Long Meadow and into Water Meadow where there is a picnic site on the right.

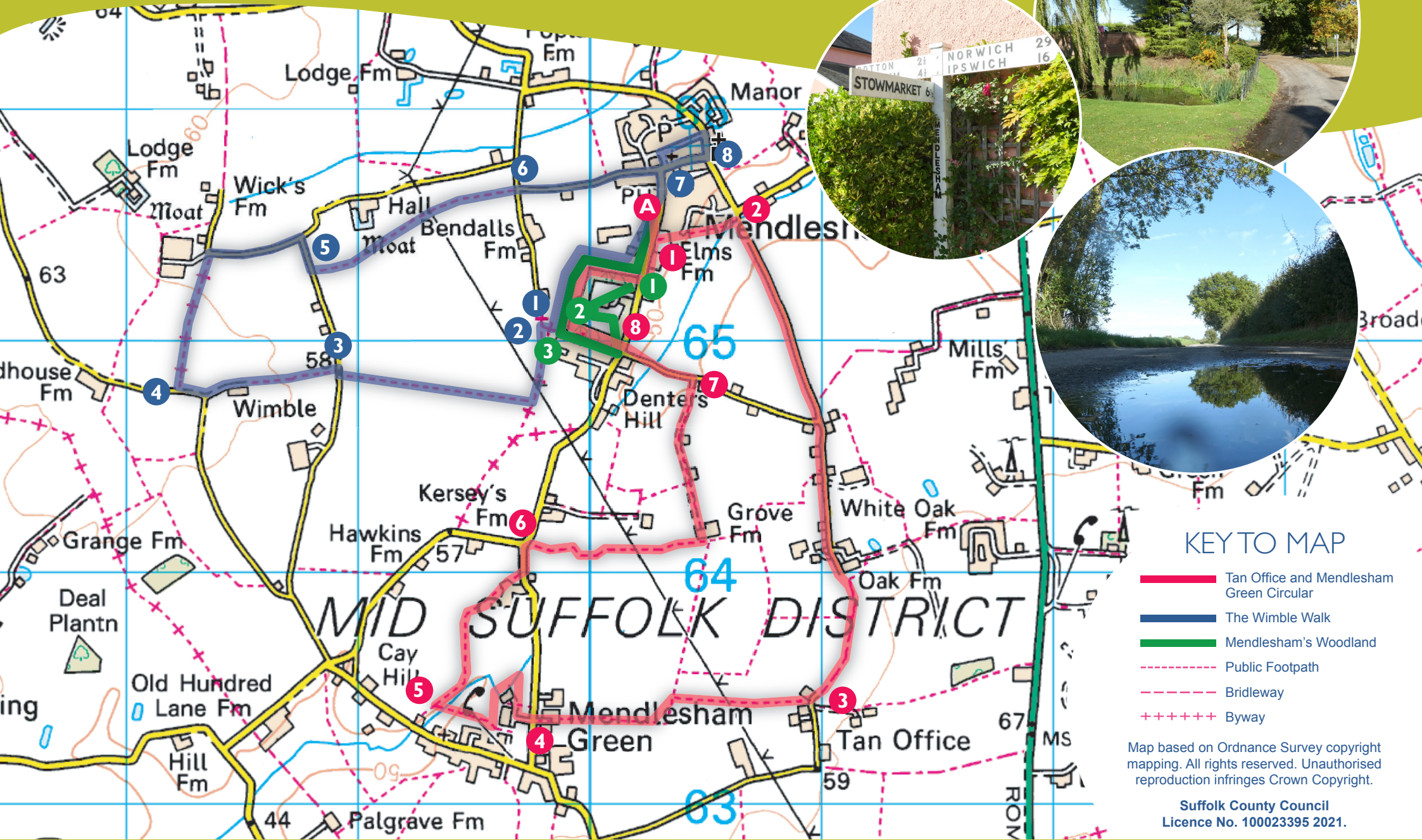


To celebrate the

Continued overleaf....

Mendlesham Village Walks

3 WALKS AROUND HISTORIC MENDLESHAM



KEY TO MAP

- Tan Office and Mendlesham Green Circular
- The Wimble Walk
- Mendlesham's Woodland
- Public Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway

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Millennium, parishioners created the 'Millennium Wood' in a 12.5 acre plot, formally part of Vicarage Farm.

Trees were planted by the community, and the woodland continues to be managed by the Parish Council.

The wood contains broad leaved trees including English Oak and Ash, Field Maple, Hazel, Hornbeam, Spindle, Buckthorn, Guelder Rose, Dogwood, Small Leaved Lime, Cherry, Crab Apple, Wild Pear and the Wayfarer Tree, so named because it grows close to paths.

The woodland is also home to many wild birds: Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, many members of the tit family – great tits, blue tits, coal tits, and long-tailed tits – and you may even catch a glimpse of a tree creeper. At night, hoots and screeches can be heard from Tawny Owls!

Continue past the picnic area, bearing left at the bench, to go around the Vicarage on your left. Bear right to pass a gate on the right (this is part of an enclosure of fritillaria, bell-shaped spring flowers, which is well worth a look!). Cross Oak Meadow towards the very large Oak tree 2.

This Oak is over 450 years old and could have been planted in the reign of Henry VIII.

Turn right at the Oak, pass through a gap and past a bench into Long Meadow. Ahead of you is a 'ring of nut trees'. Venture inside! Exit ahead, veering left to follow the mown path to a wooden fence 3. Go through, turn right, and follow the perimeter path around the edge of the wood.

The perimeter contains Turkish Oak and Beech probably planted in the early 19th Century. There are also Lime, Sycamore, Elm, Ash, Hawthorn, Alder, Holly, English Oak and Holm Oak. Sadly, most of the Beech trees have died, however this has provided standing deadwood habitat for woodpeckers, and bark for burrowing insects.

At the entrance signboard 1 turn left and retrace your steps back to A.

The Wimble Walk

DISTANCE: 5 miles (8.5km)

DURATION: 2 hours

TERRAIN: Mainly natural footpaths with a little road walking



Follow the green walk to 3.

Go through two sets of fencing and turn right on to a track (Hobbies Lane) 1. Continue to the junction 2 and turn left onto a track (Whiteups Lane). Turn right at the next footpath through the hedgerow. After crossing the field, you join a section of the Middy Railway Footpath.



The Mid-Suffolk Light Railway is the Middy Line and operated over 19 miles between Haughley and Laxfield from 1904 to 1952. It was constructed to open up agriculture, with Mendlesham the second station on the line.

The 8-mile Middy Railway Footpath roughly follows the line of the Middy route from Haughley to Brockford Green.

Brockford Station, just across the A14 from Mendlesham, is home to the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum (IP14 5PW, www.mslr.org.uk) and is well worth a visit.

Follow the footpath to Hoggars Road. Turn right and then left to continue along the Middy Railway Footpath (Wimble Lane) 3.

At the end of Wimble Lane turn right. Continue along the road, turning right onto the byway 4. Follow the byway to the next road. Turn right and continue to a junction. Turn right again and continue to the next footpath on the left 5. Cross the footbridge and follow waymarkers to Mill Road 6.



Follow Mill Road into Mendlesham village. Take the first left 7 and then right into Old Market Street. Here are the village sign, bakery and stores, Post Office and at the far end, The King's Head pub.

The village sign depicts a 16th century Mendlesham Martyr, burnt at the stake for religious beliefs during the reign of Elizabeth I.



The centre of the sign is a chair. Richard Day, born at 16 Front Street, Mendlesham in 1785 (died 1838), made chairs for special occasions such as weddings & baptisms. These became famous as 'Mendlesham Chairs'. The seat was always made of elm and the back set with a ball decoration, a sophisticated design said to be the most comfortable chair of its style.

Turn right into Chapel Road.

The medieval Church of St Mary 8 contains aisles with original 13th Century doorways, a 14th Century Chancel and has an impressive 15th Century tower, housing the historically significant, rare and complete collection of Elizabethan armoury. There are also three parish chests, a copy of the 1717 'Vinegar Bible' and a 17th Century book of sermons.

In the church grounds is a memorial to the USAAF 34th Bomb Group, stationed at Mendlesham airfield between 1943 and 1945. The nearby transmitting station, visible from most of the walks, stands at the corner of the airfield.



Opposite the church follow Front Street, turning left into Old Station Road to return to the community centre A.