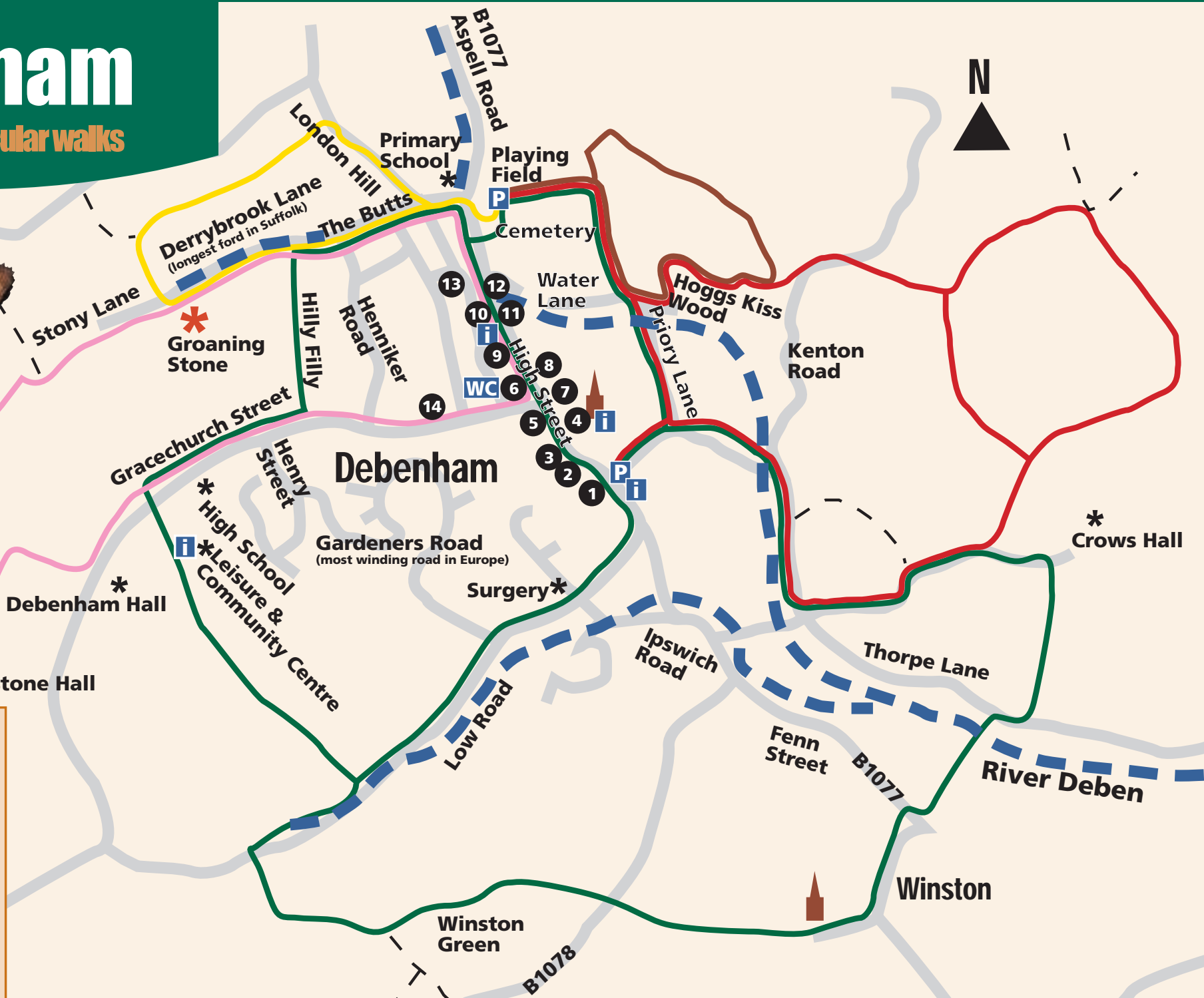









Exploring Debenham

Village map and circular walks



Key

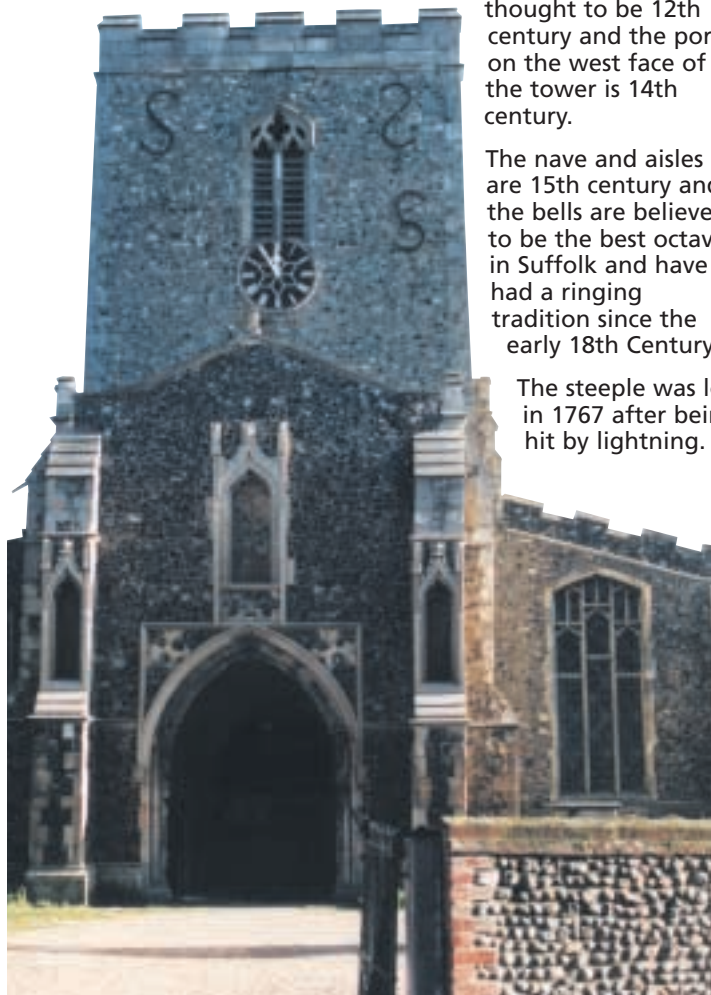
-  A. Main circular walk
-  B. Circular walk of 2 lengths
-  C. Short walk with views (through or above ford)
-  D. Circular walk passing Millennium Wood
-  * Walk passing "Groaning Stone"
Many stories of this stone moving and moaning at full moon.
-  1-14 Buildings of interest
-  --- Connecting Walks

The church of St. Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene in Debenham is a fine church. The lower part of the tower is Saxon and has been described as the finest piece of Saxon work in Suffolk. The upper part is 14th century, the massive timber frame inside the tower is thought to be 12th century and the porch on the west face of the tower is 14th century.

The nave and aisles are 15th century and the bells are believed to be the best octave in Suffolk and have had a ringing tradition since the early 18th Century.

The steeple was lost in 1767 after being hit by lightning.



Circular walks in and around Debenham

Debenham has a wealth of interconnecting circular walks.

The principle circular walk is about 4 miles long. You can park in the village of Debenham adjacent to F.E. Neave and Son, (famous for cured hams, pork pies and sausages) opposite the village sign, or park adjacent to the play area off Cemetery Drive (Aspal Road).

From either car park follow the **MAP** and join the bridleway by the **ALLOTMENT GARDENS**. Known as Priory Field, this area is said to be the site of an Augustian Priory which was dissolved by Henry VIII but little supportive evidence has been found.

Follow the field-edge paths or walk through seven and a half acres of a newly planted millennium wood with its extensive selection of native species to join the **KENTON ROAD** then turn left. 400 metres along the road, go right onto the track by **HILL FARM**. This is one of several buildings in the area that was surrounded by a moat (no longer evident) in medieval times. When the Tithe Map was drawn, it glorified in the name of Hogsty Farm.

At the right-hand bend in the track (unless taking the shorter route) go left into **WADDLEGOOSE LANE**. Also known as Waddledickie (Suffolk dialect for donkey.) This quiet green lane was probably once a busy packhorse route. The hedgerows of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Field Maple, interspersed with Ash, Oak and Elm, screen the traveller from the surrounding farmland and the lane is rich in varied plant life.

Leaving **WADDLEGOOSE LANE** (which continues into Ashfield-cum-Thorpe), turn right and head for **GROVE FARM**. Go right again just before the farm and carry on, via another long green lane, to **CROWS HALL COTTAGES**. The Oak-lined drive to the left leads to Crows Hall but the circular walk follows the lane to the right. This moated, 16th century brick-built Hall stands near to the circular route but **PLEASE NOTE** that although a bridle way runs close by, the Hall is a private house and privacy should be respected.

Riders should keep to the lane, turning right at **HILL HOUSE**. Walkers may cut the corner by turning into Race Ground Field where horses were put through their paces when the village lamb and horse fair was held here. Cross the next field to the road. Turn right at the road and then turn left by **MALTINGS HOUSE** to return to your **START POINT**.

Buildings of interest

1. 56 High Street - the oldest house in Debenham. Date uncertain; one source suggests 1190-1250, another early C14. Originally raised aisle hall built on the foundations of an earlier building (possibly the Domesday Church of St. Andrew).
2. Forester's Hall - 1905
3. 36 -38 High Street - C14 / C15
4. 31 -37 High Street - C16 former town hall
5. Bleak House High Street and 1-3 Gracechurch Street - One building C16. Porch of No. 1 is dated 1638
6. At the corner of Gracechurch Street and High Street is the Market Cross - 1688, reputedly on the site of an Anglo-Saxon cross.
7. 27 High Street - C16 and C18. Formly the Buck, a coaching Inn, at the rear it seems there was a Tudor theatre.
8. 21 - 25 High Street C15. No 25 (The Gables) was, prior to 1650, the Green Dragon Inn. The parlour of No. 23 in 1749 was a non-conformist chapel.
9. The pink house to the left of the Post Office - C15 and C16. In 1463-4 described as the new hall of the Guild of Holy Trinity. The building has a C19 shop front.
10. Red Lion House and florist - C15 and C16. Carved C15 dragon post protrudes from the corner of Red Lion House which in 1463 was described as "Le Yeylyngghous" (the house where ale was brewed).
11. 3 High Street C15, believed to be the earliest example of a "Wealdon House" in Suffolk.
12. "Clio's Coffee Shop & Eatery" and adjoining house C15 and C16. Formerly the market toll house.
13. United Reform Church 1820, renovated 1897.
14. 24 Gracechurch Street (The Merchant House) - a late C14 hall house extended in C15. Built over the foundations of an earlier building (possibly the church of St Mary of Grace).