



Saffron Walden

Saffron Walden is an ancient town with a rich heritage of old buildings reflecting its wealth as a rural market town. The name saffron relates to the importance of the valuable crocus sativus crop between the 15th and 18th centuries, grown as a medicine, dye and flavouring. The local market was established in 1141 and received the first Charter in 1236. It is now held on Tuesdays and Saturdays and together with many specialist small shops it contributes to making shopping in Saffron Walden a very pleasant and relaxed experience.

Saffron Walden successively prospered as a centre for wool production in the 15th century, saffron in the 16th and 17th centuries and malt in the 18th and 19th centuries. This continuing prosperity has left numerous fine old buildings whilst retaining the original medieval street layout. Bridge End, Castle Street, Myddylton Place and Church Street display many timbered houses dating from the 15th century, of which the Youth Hostel and the Old Sun Inn are outstanding examples.

The town's crowning glory is St Mary's parish church, the largest and one of the most beautiful parish churches in Essex, built between 1470 and 1540. Nearby, the Museum, built in 1834 to house the collections of the Saffron Walden Natural History Society, is one of the earliest purpose built museums in the country. It now contains many interesting collections and displays from Africa, the Americas, Australasia and the Pacific, as well as decorative arts that include ceramics and glass, furniture and woodwork, costumes and needlework, dolls and toys.

The delightful Victorian Gardens at Bridge End were created during the late 18th century and middle 19th century and have been recently restored to their original splendour. The town is uniquely fortunate to have two important mazes: the yew hedge maze in the Bridge End Garden and the ancient turf maze on the Common, which is the largest example of its type in the world and one of only eight surviving turf mazes in England.

Thaxted

Thaxted is an attractive historic town and a real architectural gem. As well as its landmark buildings, St John the Baptist church and the 15th century Guildhall there is plenty more to see. The compact nature of the historic centre with its timber framed buildings, its steeply pitched roofs and chimneys contrasts with the surrounding agricultural mosaic of brown, yellow and green. Gustav Holst, the celebrated composer, lived in Town Street and drafted part of the Planets Suite here, a Blue Plaque marks the house. The music tradition has been very much kept alive by the annual music festival that is held over four weekends – last two in June and the first two in July – attracting performers of international repute. The festival is known for its ambitious repertoire including orchestral and choral works. Thaxted is also the venue of the famous Morris Ring on the first weekend after Spring Bank Holiday attracting up to 300 Morris dancers from all over the country.



Attractions along the route:

1. Saffron Walden Museum

Friendly, family-size museum. Exhibits include moccasins, mummy cases, woolly mammoths and Wallace the Lion! Meadow for picnics with castle ruins. Winner Best Museum of social history. Accessible for disabled visitors. Tel: 01799 510333

2. Bridge End Garden

Very interesting Victorian garden that has undergone major restoration. Bridge End Garden is in fact a series of seven interlinked gardens laid out by the Gibson family in the 19th century. These grade II* listed gardens featured recently in 'Hidden Gardens' series on BBC. Tel: 01799 524002

3.The Fry Art Gallery

Situated in the centre of Saffron Walden, the gallery houses an impressive number of paintings, prints, illustrations and decorative designs by artists of the 20th century including Edward Bawden RA, Eric Ravilious, Michael Rothstein RA, Kenneth Rowntree and others. Tel: 01799 513779 www.fryartgallery.org

4. Audley End House (English Heritage)

Built by Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Lord Treasurer to King James I, Audley End is one of England's most magnificent stately homes. Enjoy over 30 lavishly decorated room interiors by Robert Adam and a wonderful collection of paintings and furnishings. Explore the beautiful Elysian garden, 19th century parterre with its elaborate floral displays and the organic Kitchen Garden. Tel: 01799 522399 www.english-heritage.org.uk

5. Audley End Miniature Railway

Lord Braybrooke's private 1.5 mile railway through mature woodland adjacent to Audley End House. A wonderful addition to your day at Audley End. Tel: 01799 541354 www.audley-end-railway.co.uk

6. Debden Antiques

Displayed in a beautiful 17th century Essex Barn, you will find a wonderful selection of antique furniture and in the Courtyard Garden fountains, statues and an array of unusual items. Tel: 01799 543007 www.debden-antiques.co.uk

7. Thaxted Guildhall

Is a fine example of a medieval guildhall few of which now remain. It was built in the 15th century and it houses a permanent display of old photographs and objects relating to the history of Thaxted. Tel: 01371 831281

8. St John the Baptist Church, Thaxted

The church stands proud and spacious in a gently undulating landscape, its splendid 180ft high steeple dominating the countryside for miles. Saved from harsh restoration, this medieval church is Gothic architecture at its best. Tel: 01371 830221

9. John Webb's Windmill, Thaxted

John Webb's Windmill was built in 1804 by John Webb, a local farmer, at a time when the demand for milled wheat and malt was increasing. The mill stands on the site of the earlier Church Mill and was constructed of local bricks. It has been recently restored and is now open to the public. Tel: 01371 830285

10. Broxted Church

The church dates from the early English period with a north aisle added about two hundred years later. The oak pulpit is 300 years old, as is the fine processional cross. Roman tiles can be seen built into the walls. There are also two remarkable windows, dedicated in January 1993 commemorating the captivity and the release of the Beirut hostages.

11. Tilty Church

The parish Church of St Mary the Virgin was once part of a Cistercian abbey. All that remains of the abbey are the ruins of the cloister wall, but the church, formerly the gate chapel of the abbey and dating from around 1220 is still in regular use. The church is dominated by the magnificent east window to the chancel, built in circa 1330 in the decorated style.

12. Prior's Hall Barn

One of the finest surviving medieval barns in eastern England, tree-ring dated to the mid-15th century, with a breathtaking aisled interior and crown post roof, the product of some 400 oaks. Tel: 0870 3331181 (English Heritage Customer Services) www.english-heritage.org.uk



Getting to Saffron Walden

Arriving by Road

Travel on the M11 if travelling from London or the south. At junction 8 either take the A120 then B184 via Thaxted or the B1383 via Stansted Mountfitchet and Newport. Alternatively exit at junction 9 and travel south on the B184 via Great Chesterford. If travelling from the north arrive via the M11 taking the A505 at junction 10, then the A1301 and B184.

For detailed travel information call 0871 200 2233 or visit www.traveline.org.uk

Arriving by Train

Saffron Walden is served by a regular service by National Express East Anglia www.nationalexpresseastanglia.com tel: 0845 600 7245 directly from London Liverpool Street to Audley End Station (2 miles away).

Essex



Accommodation

1 The Bell House

★★★★ B&B
Castle Street, Saffron Walden, CB10 1BD
Tel: 01799 527857

2 Fieldview Bed & Breakfast

★★★★ B&B
Howlett End CB10 2XW
Tel: 01799 599616
www.fieldview.eu

3 Crossways Guesthouse

★★★★ Silver Award – Guesthouse
32 Town Street, Thaxted, CM6 2LA
Tel: 01371 830348
www.crosswaysthaxted.co.uk

4 Thaxted Bed and Breakfast

★★★★ Guest Accommodation
Totmans Farm, Dunmow Rd, Thaxted, CM6 2LU
Tel: 01371 830233
www.thaxtedholidaycottages.co.uk

5 Cosh Cottage

★★★★ Self Catering
Duddenhoe End, Saffron Walden, CB11 4UX
Tel: 01763 838880

Tourist information

Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre

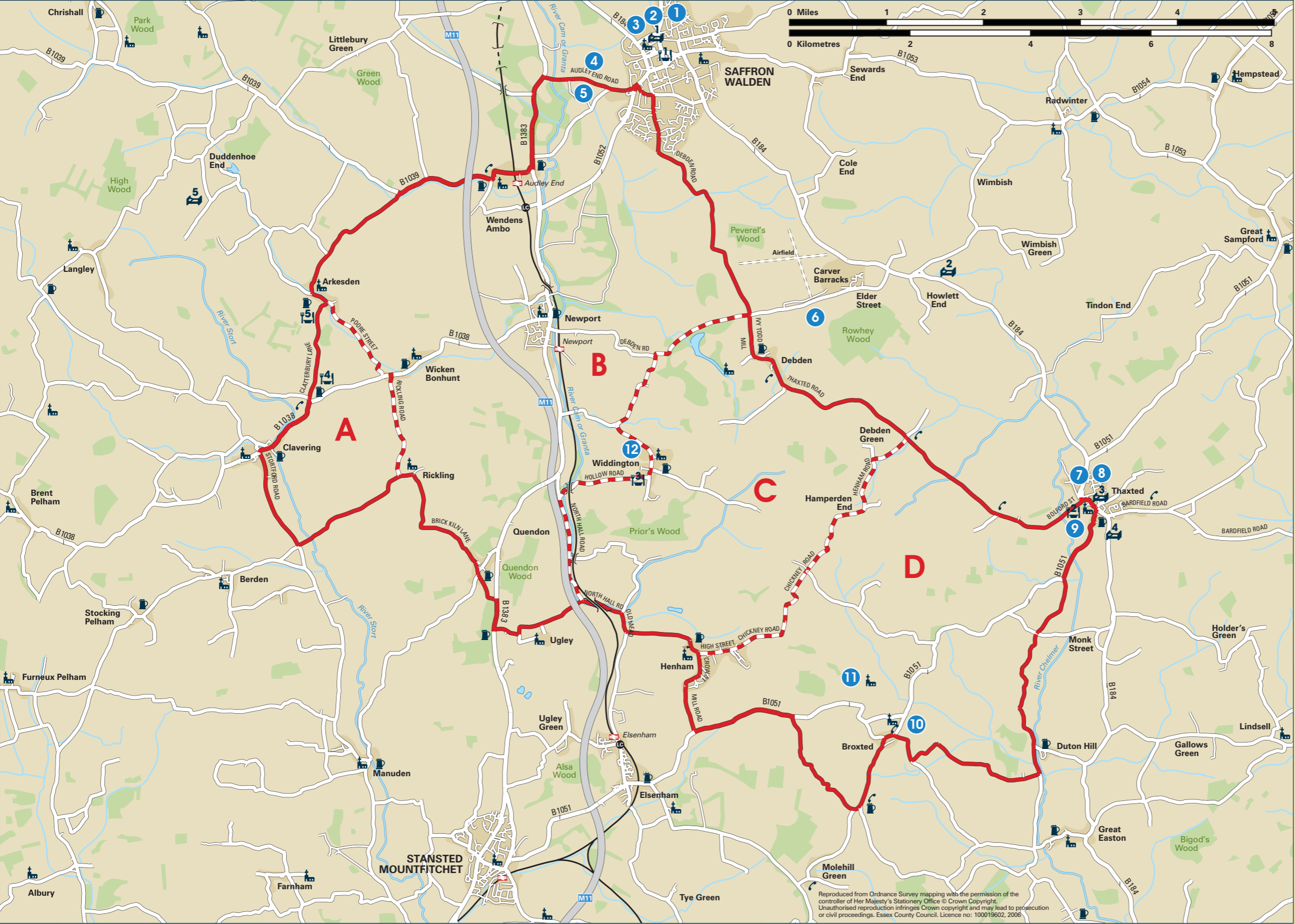
Telephone 01799 524003
www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk



Medieval markets, mazes and Morris dancing

Saffron Walden and Thaxted routes

Total distance of main route is 55km/34miles



Short rides

- A** 10.2km/6.4miles
- B** 29.3km/18.3miles
- C** 19.7km/12.3miles
- D** 24.3km/15.2miles

Attractions along this route

- 1 Saffron Walden Museum
- 2 Bridge End Garden
- 3 The Fry Art Gallery
- 4 Audley End House (English Heritage)
- 5 Audley End Miniature Railway
- 6 Debden Antiques
- 7 Thaxted Guildhall
- 8 St John the Baptist Church
- 9 John Webb's Windmill
- 10 Broxted Church
- 11 Tilty Church
- 12 Prior's Hall Barn

Accommodation

for details see overleaf

- 1 The Bell House
- 2 Fieldview Bed & Breakfast
- 3 Crossways Guesthouse
- 4 Thaxted Bed and Breakfast
- 5 Cosh Cottage

Places to eat

- 1 Dish
01799 513300
www.dishrestaurant.co.uk
- 2 Poppy's Tearoom
01371 830453
- 3 The Fleur de Lys
01799 543280
- 4 The Cricketers
01799 550442
www.thecricketers.co.uk
- 5 Axe and Compasses
01799 550272
www.axeandcompasses.co.uk

This map is intended as a guide only. Please refer to relevant OS Explorer maps for specific details.

Key

- Cycle Route 1
- - - Short rides
- Place of worship
- Telephone in rural area
- Public House
- National Rail
- Accommodation
- Restaurants