A large parish with homes scattered over a wide area, Badingham still manages to achieve a community spirit and even has a community garden in the extended graveyard of St John the Baptist. It's a steep climb up to the church but worth every step to look inside and discover the 15th century font with its exquisitely carved panels depicting the seven sacraments.

This is one of Suffolk’s ‘hidden’ villages and, nestling among pretty cottages, the church of St Mary’s is almost hidden too. But you will spot the ancient tower as you walk or cycle through. As you approach, admire the flint flushwork – the art of the medieval mason using the only local stone available. Inside, the church is full of interest from the soaring font cover to the beautifully carved Stuart benches.

An historic town with a colourful market place and a famous castle, seat of the powerful Howard dynasty, is the setting for St Michael’s church. The handsome church tower can be seen for miles, acting as a landmark for walkers striding out to Badingham or Dennington. Once inside, visitors are inevitably awestruck by the magnificent tombs of the Howards and their links with Henry VIII and his wives.

The sturdy St Mary’s with its lofty tower dominates the village and is virtually unrivalled in Suffolk and beyond for its medieval treasures. The view down the nave to the east window is breathtaking and among the many features to discover are the superb alabaster effigies of Lord Bardolf, one of Henry V’s ‘happy few’ who fought at Agincourt, and his lady wife Joan.

The Angels & Pinnacles project covers six clusters of churches across Suffolk. Walk or cycle between the four churches to combine the best of the countryside with Suffolk’s magnificent medieval heritage.

www.angelsandpinnacles.org.uk
Angels & Pinnacles – Church Heritage Trails

Route 1 — 4.75 miles / 7.5 km each way

S’ Michael’s Framlingham to S’ John the Baptist Badingham

Leave St Michael’s church by the church hall and turn left for the castle, then sharp left along the bank of the dry moat. Look up to the battlements and imagine Mary Tudor rallying her supporters before being crowned Queen in 1553. Cross the wooden bridge and turn left towards the mere. Dug out by Roger Bigod, second Earl of Norfolk, who rebuilt the castle, today it is managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Go down the steps and over the bridge and continue with the mere and Framlingham college on your left. Go round the sports field, ignoring the first footpath sign, until you come to a wooden gate. Cross the road and turn left, then right at the sign. Follow the hedge round to the right.

At the top of the hill, take the official footpath diversion round Little Lodge, turning right and heading over the bridge. Turn right, then left up the side of the field. The field winds round a mill pond on your right. Here you cross the field to go left towards Badingham church tower. Continue on to Oakenhill Hall, once the site of a Roman villa, turning left at the road and picking up the footpath on your right, then immediately left through the hedge. Cross the field, heading towards the river, then over the bridge and straight ahead over the stile up to the slope to the field. Turn left, then sharp left down the drive by the side of the house. Look out for a path through the hedge. Keeping straight, you’ll see the White Horse pub in front of you on the B1120. Walk up beside the pub and through the village. The church is on your right. Return by the same route.

You can park at Framlingham church for a donation, or use the car park at the castle entrance with the fees refunded if you visit the castle. Toilets are available in the church or in Crown and Anchor Lane, off Church Street.

There is a wide choice of places to eat and drink in Framlingham.

Public transport - On weekdays or Saturdays you may consider taking the bus one way. Timetables and journey planners are available at www.suffolkonboard.com

The Dennington Queen is a public house serving lunches and evening meals next to St Mary’s church.

www.thedenningtonqueen.co.uk

The White Horse is a public house serving food on the A1120 at Badingham

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There is limited parking near Dennington church or opposite Badingham church.

More walks and great days out at www.discoversuffolk.org.uk

Route 2 — 2.5 miles / 4 km each way

S’ Mary Dennington to S’ John the Baptist Badingham

Leave Dennington church at the south porch and turn sharp right just before the gate to follow the church wall with the pub on your left. Go through the iron gate to follow the path between the hedges alongside the sports field. Emerge into the meadow and cross over to the barn on the other side.

By the barn, go across the field. At the corner of the field, you’ll see the footpath sign. You can hear the church clock striking if the wind is in the right direction.

The path crosses the centre of the field towards Clay House Farm, although there is a permissive footpath round the field. Cross the next field and looking back, you can still see Dennington church tower in the distance. You will emerge on a grassy track where you turn right. Turn left to follow the lane down towards the A1120. Cross with great care, turning left, then first right down the track and over the bridge that crosses the River Alde. The river used to be navigable by small flat-bottomed boats all the way to the sea at Aldeburgh. Rivers such as the Alde were the equivalent of roads in Anglo Saxon times!

Immediately next to the iron gates of Capons Green Farm, take a sharp right between the conifer hedge and wall. Follow this narrow path to the end and take the gap in the hedge past the footpath sign and into the field.

Cross the field and, at the end, turn left as indicated by the sign. You can still see Denningham church from here. Go left again through the hedge, then turn right on to the track, then left across the concrete standing.

Follow the track down towards Dennington wood. Walk alongside the wood to the corner where the track bears round to the right and continue on for approximately half a mile until you come to Badingham Low Street. Turn left and you will see the church on your right.

Take a look round the community garden in Badingham churchyard before heading back by the same route.