

FARM STAY EAST ANGLIA

A DAY OUT BETWEEN THETFORD AND DISS

The pretty village of EAST HARLING boasts a beautiful medieval CHURCH and a splendid vineyard with a wine & gift shop in the gardens of a Victorian mansion. You can take a GUIDED half day TOUR of Norfolk churches, starting every Thursday from Feb – Nov at 2pm from the church.

BANHAM ZOO is not far from here set in landscaped countryside it provides a haven for many exotic, near extinct animals and birds. There is a jungle clearing adventure playground, a road train and all weather activity centre. Across the A11 at GREAT ELLINGHAM are the TROPICAL BUTTERFLY GARDENS AND BIRD PARK where hundreds of tropical butterflies and birds fly around heated landscaped gardens. A Falconry has flying displays and you can have coffee or light meals in the Bamboo coffee shop or browse round the garden centre here.

KNETTISHALL HEATH COUNTRY PARK is just off the A1066 between THETFORD and GARBOLDISHAM. Enjoy the riverside, woodland and heathland walks and explore its wildlife.

The A1066 from Thetford to Diss takes you past REDGRAVE FEN home of the endangered Raft Spider on a site managed by the local Wildlife Trust. Eat at the South Lopham WHITE HORSE or the pub of the same name in nearby THELNETHAM where there is also a working WINDMILL and you can buy the stoneground flour.

BRESSINGHAM GARDENS AND STEAM MUSEUM is just down the road and provides a day out in itself. The huge PLANT CENTRE and world famous display GARDENS are a mecca for plant lovers with many perennials introduced by the nursery founder, Alan Bloom MBE, during 70 years of gardening. The adjoining STEAM MUSEUM has narrow gauge railway rides and stationary engine displays as well as a Victorian steam roundabout.

Visit a vivid recreation of DADS ARMY Walmington-on-Sea and the other special events held during the season. There is so much to see and do here for both children and adults, with excellent refreshments at the RESTAURANT when you are tired out.

The thriving town of DISS has a picturesque old world charm, especially in the older part around the market square – market day is Friday – and the six acre mere. A variety of specialist shops and restaurants can be found in the streets leading from the church to the market place & mere.

Take the A140 south from Diss & follow the signs for THORNHAM WALKS. Park at the Thornham Field Centre where you can get maps of the waymarked walks – one suitable for wheelchairs – and leaflets on the excellent programme of NATURE EVENTS, which take place throughout the year. Do sample the delicious homemade fare at the tearoom before you leave here.

From Thornham you can go across country to WATTISFIELD via Rickinghall on the A143 to visit WATSON'S POTTERIES which has been here for 200 years. They produce the Suffolk Collection of printed terracotta ware and the shop sells good quality seconds.

Head on towards Bury St Edmunds and you will pass STANTON POST MILL, a working mill open on occasional days. You will find good food at the ROSE & CROWN in the main street here. Nearby are WYKEN HALL GARDENS AND VINEYARDS where there are 4 acres of garden and an Elizabethan manor house. There is a spectacular woodland walk and a country store selling wine, quilts, local pottery, baskets etc and the vineyard restaurant café has a high reputation for good food – booking advisable.

Just off the A143 before Bury the grade 11 listed PAKENHAM WATERMILL on a Domesday site has been carefully restored and the unspoilt countryside around it, with a short river walk and the mill pool, make a perfect place for a picnic or barbecue.