

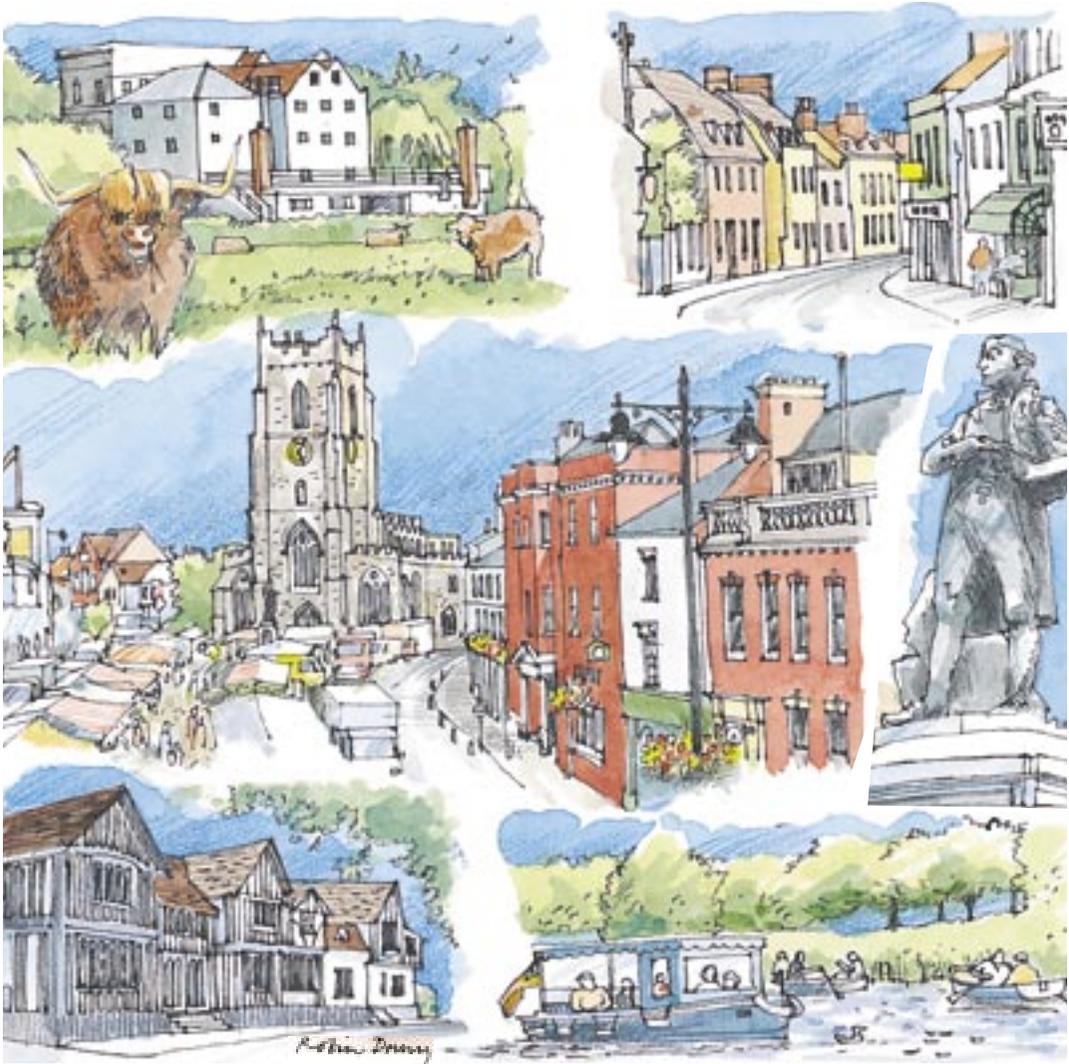
LOCAL TOURISM
SIGHTSEEING
THINGS TO DO
WALKS
SHOPPING
SPORT & LEISURE
EVENTS
STREET MAP

A SHORT GUIDE TO

SUDBURY



Ancient Suffolk Market Town
Birthplace of Thomas Gainsborough



Published by The Sudbury Society

Sudbury is a thriving and ancient market town set in the heart of the River Stour valley and well known as the home of Thomas Gainsborough.

Further down river is the landscape which inspired John Constable. The whole valley area is today designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. An Iron Age

settlement once occupied the high ground in Sudbury, roughly between The Croft and Stour Street, but the foundation of the present town dates from the Middle Saxon period. The

present semi-circular street pattern represents successive expansions of the town in Saxon and Norman times.

The medieval woollen cloth industry, the

coming of the river navigation and the railway and the 19th century silk industry, all helped to generate prosperity and contributed to the unique and diverse building heritage that is Sudbury's pride. For example, there are three fine medieval churches and impressive timber-framed cloth merchants' houses but also many terraces of three-storey 19th century silk weavers' cottages where the weavers worked at their hand looms lit by the wide, first-floor windows.

The main shopping area centres on Market Hill and the streets

radiating from it, particularly North Street. Market Hill itself is a fine public space, although perhaps its architecture is best appreciated on a Sunday morning when it is quieter and there are fewer cars about.

On Thursdays and Saturdays Market Hill is crowded with stalls for



Morris dancing outside the Mill Hotel



Gardens in School Street



Salter's Hall and Chantry, Stour Street



Gainsborough's statue

the long-established markets which attract shoppers from the town and the surrounding villages and communities.

A short walk down Gainsborough Street is Gainsborough's House, the painter's birthplace, now an excellent museum and gallery. From Friars Street, with its elegant Georgian façades, you may turn down Quay Lane to reach another of Sudbury's special features, the area round The Quay.

For two centuries the River Stour Navigation was the main artery of the town and a busy barge traffic linked the town with the sea.

Here one old warehouse has been converted to a theatre and the other into the headquarters of the River Stour Trust.

Whilst being proud of its heritage Sudbury does not live in the past and has many other attractions.



With ample 3-hour free parking close to the centre, there is a wide range of specialist small shops, often independently run, as well as many High Street names. The town centre

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT SUDBURY?

Market Hill



also has an array of restaurants and cafés to suit all tastes, and friendly local pubs serving East Anglian beers. Visiting families might explore Belle Vue Park, one of the town's hidden attractions yet only a few minutes walk from Market Hill. The Kingfisher Leisure Centre is in Station Road with free parking and Waitrose supermarket nearby. On the edge of town along the eastern bypass there are a growing number of large stores and other commercial outlets. The town won the coveted Anglia in Bloom Award in 2001 and 2002.

We have left perhaps the best thing to last. Sudbury has a vibrant commercial heart yet the visitor, on foot, can easily take various routes to leave behind the bustle of North Street and Market Hill. Within a few

minutes walk is the peace and quiet beauty of the ancient Common Lands, bounding the River Stour, which loops around the town. A place to sit and picnic, fish or take a leisurely stroll. This close relationship of town and country is one of Sudbury's unique features and makes it such a special place both for residents and visitors.



Boat rides on the Stour



Sudbury's 'Common Lands' looking towards the Mill Hotel



1



2



3



6



8

1 The Town Hall A dignified and elegant expression of local civic pride dating from 1826, the Town Hall faces St Peter's Church. At the side, down Gaol Lane, is the Town Council Advice Centre 01787 372331. Further down, through the entrance to what was once the old Town Gaol, is the Tourist Information Centre 01787 881320, and Town Heritage Centre. The TIC has leaflets for the Talbot Trail, which starts here, and nearby Weavers' Piece, a garden celebrating Sudbury's long history of textile making.

2 St Peter's Church dominates the eastern end of the market place, a building of splendid proportions and lovingly cared for by The Friends of St Peter's. Although now redundant it is a lively venue for concerts, exhibitions, craft fairs and other local events. Usually open on Market Days; you can get the key at other times (see notice at the door). Inside, there is a feeling of spaciousness and height with fine timber roofs to admire and much else of interest. Outside, the statue of Thomas Gainsborough, palette in hand, gazes down Market Hill towards his birthplace. On the north side of the church is the famous drinking trough where, in the book *101 Dalmatians*, Pongo and Missis took a drink at midnight.

3 Sudbury Market On Thursdays and Saturdays all is noise and bustle as the stall holders arrive and Market Hill begins to fill with shoppers. Many local markets are a shadow of their former selves; Sudbury's retains a rich vitality and vibrancy. This area has been a market place since the 14th century.

4 Auction Off the market place, down Burkitts Lane, is the Auction Room. Until quite recently local livestock was still being brought for sale here; what survives today are the regular auctions of household goods and personal effects, held on alternate Thursdays. Auctioneers 01787 880305

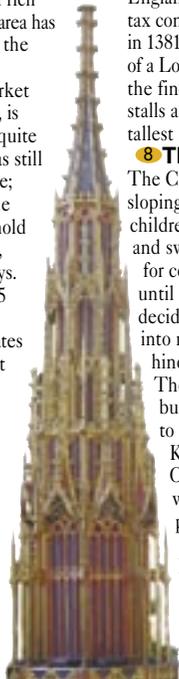
5 Sudbury Library This fine building dominates the western end of Market Hill, embodying what Nicolas Pevsner called "the early Victorian sense of security, superiority and prosperity". For over 100 years it was the Corn Exchange; look up high on the façade for the group of reclining reapers resting with their

tools against a stook of sheaves. It was saved from demolition and skilfully converted into a Library in 1969. In addition to the normal lending services there are local and family history research facilities and free access to the internet. 01787 296000

6 Gainsborough's House Thomas Gainsborough, one of England's most celebrated artists was born here in 1727 and indeed much of his early work depicted local scenes and people. The house is entered via Weavers Lane. It is now a national museum dedicated to the artist. Here you will find more of the artist's paintings, drawings and prints on display than anywhere else in the world. The House also offers visitors a lively programme of contemporary art exhibitions, a gift shop and a coffee shop. Next door is the Gainsborough's House Print Workshop where you can often find printmakers working their presses. Behind, there is a tranquil walled garden with an ancient mulberry tree. 01787 372958

7 St Gregory's Church Christians have worshipped on this site for well over 1,000 years; Bishop Aelfhnut visited Sudbury in 797 AD. (He died here and you can see his statue just outside the churchyard wall on The Croft.) The grisly relic of the head of Simon of Sudbury is kept locked in the vestry. Simon founded a college for priests here and became Archbishop of Canterbury and then Chancellor of England. His introduction of the poll tax contributed to the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and his beheading at the hands of a London mob. Inside the church note the fine carved misericords, chancel stalls and 15th century font cover (the tallest in Suffolk).

8 The Croft and Mill Acre The Croft is a large, triangular green sloping down to the mill cut where children love to feed the many ducks and swans. It has been an open space for centuries. Fairs were held here until 1862 when the Borough Council decided that "they had deteriorated into mere pleasure fairs to the hindrance of the trade of the town". The fine oak trees may look ancient but were actually planted in 1902 to commemorate the Coronation of King Edward VII. Over the footbridge is Mill Acre, where there is a boating pond, picnic place and, beyond, the wide expanse of Great Fullingpit Meadow beckoning the walker.



9 Belle Vue Park, in the grounds of Belle Vue House, has attractive formal and informal gardens with large areas for relaxing, picnicking or casual ball games. A wide range of leisure and play facilities are provided including toddler and children's playgrounds, a skateboard park, trim trail, cable ride, tennis and basketball courts and a putting green. All ages can enjoy the Pet Area. Toilets on site; park open all the year round until dusk. Belle Vue House now houses the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

10 The Kingfisher Leisure Centre

This is one of the Eastern Region's premier indoor water-based leisure facilities. This impressive building overlooks Friars Meadow and the start of the Valley Walk. The pool has a shallow beach area, a wave machine and flumes. Other attractions include a sauna and spa bath, sunbeds, Harper's fitness gym and a refreshment area offering both hot and cold food. There is also a crêche where Centre users may leave young children for up to 2 hours. Ample free parking. 01787 375656

11 The Quay Theatre, occupying a restored Georgian warehouse standing on a backwater of the Stour, Sudbury's own theatre is the home of Sudbury Dramatic Society which puts on regular performances. The SDS is a talented amateur group that has won 'Best Play' in the National Drama Festival Awards. You can enjoy evening entertainment here with a stimulating programme of drama and music by local performers, touring companies and individual artists. The theatre has a bar upstairs, open lunchtimes and evenings, with views over the river. The bar and foyer provide a venue for live music and constantly changing art exhibitions. For more information call 01787 374745

12 The Granary Standing close to the Quay Theatre is another restored warehouse - headquarters of the River Stour Trust, a registered charity led by volunteers. Its riverside Tea Room offers light lunches and homemade cake; with boat trips available between Sudbury, Great Cornard and Great Henny. Open Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays (Easter to October), pre-booking required for some trips, private charters available on other days of the week. www.riverstourtrust.org 01787 313199

13 All Saints' Church The fine 15th century tower of All Saints dominates the western approaches to the town. The church itself is set hard up against a sharp corner in Church Street with the old Vicarage

on the north side. In the tree-lined churchyard is the Gainsborough family tomb. Inside, there is a beautifully proportioned nave, each arch decorated with shields, floral devices and crowns. There is also a rare pre-Reformation pulpit, a stunning lectern in the form of a standing angel and a finely carved set of screens.

14 Ballingdon Bridge The design of this stunning new bridge, opened in 2003, was chosen from five entries in a RIBA competition. Viewed from the water meadows, its quiet and gentle profile seems to hover over the water. Excavations in preparation for building the new bridge revealed a succession of bridges on this site, back as far as a stone bridge, first mentioned in 1180, providing bridge tolls for Amicia, Countess of Clare, who founded a hospital on the north bank. A succession of bridges followed, some of wood, others of stone or brick. Because the River Stour was the boundary in Saxon times between the South Folk (Suffolk) and the East Saxons (Essex) there were constant disputes about who was responsible for the bridge's upkeep and it was in a continual state of disrepair for centuries. Ballingdon, the attractive community beyond the bridge, only became part of Suffolk in the mid 19th century.

15 The Valley Walk Today the Gainsborough Line links the town with the main line to Liverpool Street. Before Dr Beeching the railway continued to Cambridge along the line of the Valley Walk. This now provides the walker or cyclist with superb views of the town and river; beyond Ballingdon railway bridge you can continue on towards Rodbridge Picnic Site or descend onto the footpaths of the Common Lands - the jewel in Sudbury's crown.

16 The Common Lands Sudbury's Freemen have grazed their cattle in summer on these ancient pastures for over 900 years, removing them each autumn to drier fields. However, names like Fulling Pit Meadow indicate that many other activities once took place on these lands (in this case the fulling of woollen cloth). Today the Common Lands are still primarily managed to provide grazing but a variety of other habitats have been developed for wild birds, animals and flowers. There is an excellent network of paths criss-crossing the commonlands for visitors to enjoy. Main access is via either the Croft or by the Mill Hotel. A guide leaflet is available at the TIC.



7



9



11



14

Golf Newton Green Golf Club is a few minutes drive along the A134 beyond Sudbury Garden Centre; turn right after the Saracen's Head. An 18-hole par 69 course, flat with interesting features. There is a restaurant and bar; green fees welcome on most days. 01787 313215

Old Joe's Driving Range Little Cornard, also off the A134 (turn right after Sudbury Garden Centre, then first left into Joe's Road.) Choose from a 9-hole pitch and putt course, 18-hole putting green or the driving range itself then relax in the coffee shop afterwards. 01787 374807

Pick-your-own On Joe's Road, just beyond the driving range, there is the turning to **Wheldons Farm Shop** and **PYO**. Fruit and other local products are available in the shop throughout most of the year and in summer and early autumn you may pick your own soft fruit; what better way to spend a leisurely hour or so? 01787 374322

Fishing The river is a lovely location for angling and offers good coarse fishing. A rod licence is available from the Post Office in East Street.

Cycling Sudbury is at the heart of excellent cycling country although it is not quite as flat as newcomers to East Anglia might imagine. There is a leaflet on South Suffolk Cycle Routes that take in Sudbury, available from the TIC.

Rowing, boating and canoeing The special atmosphere of the River Stour can be best appreciated from out on the water. **Sudbury Rowing Club** who are based next to the Quay, is active all year round. Crews row and scull most days of the week. **Sudbury Canoe Club** are also regularly on the river. The **River Stour Trust** runs boat trips (see page 4), from the Granary. The river is suitable for light, manually-propelled craft, such as rowing boats and canoes. Such licensed, privately-owned craft may be launched from the Trust's slipway, but at your own risk. To find out about boat licensing call the Trust on 01787 313199

Crickets and football In summer the Cricket Ground in Quay Lane is a delightful place to sit and watch a weekend game. **Sudbury Cricket Club** has been playing here since 1891.

AFC Sudbury, the town football club play their Zamaretto League matches at their ground in Brundon Lane, Ballingdon.

Ten-pin bowling **Strikes Bowl** is a modern 10-lane ten-pin bowling alley, that also includes a **LaserQuest** arena for up to 16 players, a café and a licensed bar. 01787 312288

Adventure playground Also on Northern Road **Giggle Factory Indoor Adventure Playground** offers fun for young children. Also toddler area and refreshment facilities. 01787 311143

Drop-in centre for 13-18 year olds **Eden's 45 Club** Gainsborough Street - Café-bar upstairs serving delicious and affordable alcohol-free cocktails and an atmospheric Screenzone Bar downstairs. Office open during day, bars on Friday and Saturday evenings. 01787 375247

Nightclubs Sudbury has two nightclubs **Eastern's**, 31 Station Road. 01787 374241

Vita, East Street. (Converted from the former Gainsborough Cinema). 01787 466197

Shopping in Sudbury Sudbury's town centre is a delightful place to shop. There are the usual high street multiples as well as many independent retailers which includes a thriving locally-owned department store, Winch & Blatch. Supermarkets include Waitrose, Roys, Aldi, Somerfield/Co-op and Iceland. There is plenty of parking (free, up to 3 hours) Access to town centre shops is easy and only a few minutes walk from the principal car parks, bus station and rail station (see back page map).

ANNUAL EVENTS

February - March Festival of Music, Speech and Drama

June Rotary Prom*; St Peter's Day Service*

June - early August Sudbury in Bloom

July Summer Horticultural Show*; Street Fair (2nd Friday)

August Rowing Regatta (first w/e)

September Organ Marathon*; Autumn Horticultural Show*

October Model Railway Exhibition*

October - December Christmas Card Shop

November (last Friday) Street Fair & Christmas Lights switch on

December Schools Carol Service & Christmas Tree Festival*

* in St Peter's Church

Eating out There is plenty of choice for the visitor. The Tourist Information Centre has a list available of coffee or tea shops, pubs serving food, hotels and restaurants and fast food or takeaway outlets.

Where to stay Again the TIC Guide *Where to Stay in the Heart and South of Suffolk*, gives information on hotel, bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation in Sudbury and the local area. However, there are other hotels and pubs which do not choose to register their accommodation with the Tourist Board; these include the Black Boy, the Bay Horse, the Mill Hotel and the Waggon and Horses.

Local transport Suffolk County Council's *Suffolk Area 5 Comprehensive Timetable Guide* covers both road and rail services in this area. Available from the TIC.

Rail Sudbury is connected by rail to London, Liverpool Street, via Marks Tey. This little branch line (known as the Gainsborough Line), passes through the delightful countryside of the Stour Valley and over the magnificent Chappel viaduct.

Taxis The taxi rank is in East Street, opposite the Post Office.

Toilets at Gaol Lane (behind the Town Hall), the Bus Station and Belle Vue Park.

Local newspapers Suffolk Free Press. 01787 375271
Sudbury Mercury. 01787 882275

Tourist information

Sudbury TIC Town Hall, Market Hill. 01787 881320
e-mail: sudburytic@babergh.gov.uk

Useful Websites

General Sudbury information www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk
Sudbury Society www.sudburysociety.org.uk
Sudbury photo archive www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage
Town Council www.sudburytowncouncil.co.uk
Chamber of Commerce www.sudbury.org.uk
Gainsborough's House www.gainsborough.org
Quay Theatre www.quaytheatre.org.uk

Just a few of the places that are within an hour's drive of Sudbury. However it can also be very rewarding to get off well-beaten tourist routes and to make your own discoveries in South Suffolk and North East Essex.

EXPLORE

BEYOND SUDBURY

Clare A pretty village with ancient houses, market place and a superb Perpendicular parish church. The jagged ruin of a 13th century castle keeps watch over the Country Park.

Long Melford Well named, the tree-lined main street stretches over a mile, ending at the splendid 15th century church on the green. Famed for numerous antique shops and fairs. It has two red brick Tudor mansions: Melford Hall (NT) and Kentwell Hall (with regular recreations of Tudor life).

Castle Hedingham A Norman keep built in 1140, including a banqueting hall with minstrels' gallery. Woodland walks and a picnic area in the grounds. Colne Valley Railway is nearby.

Nature Reserves
Rodbridge Picnic Site Lakes, riverside walks, picnic tables, toilets and large car park.
Cornard Country Park Views over Sudbury and the Stour Valley. Walk or picnic in wild flower meadows and woodland.

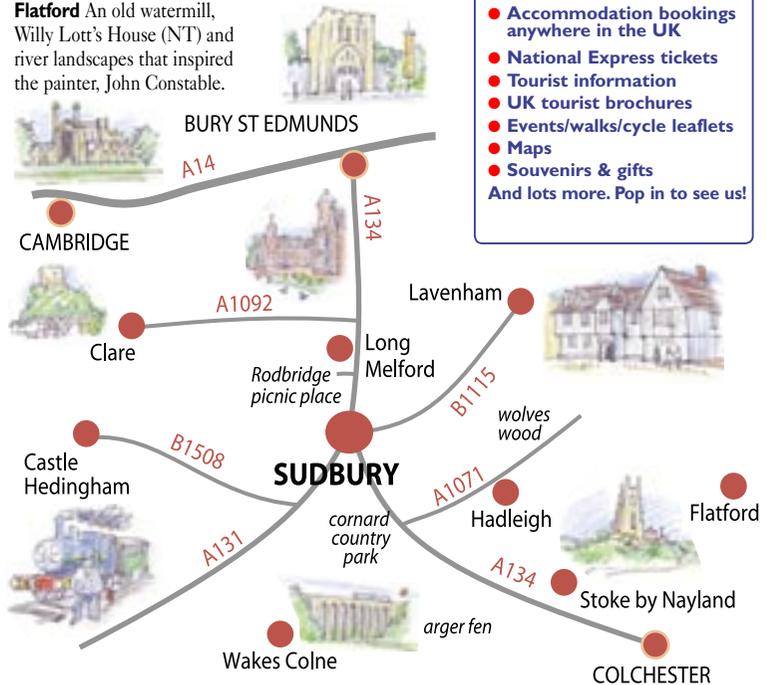
Arger Fen Nature reserve and a remnant of the ancient wildwood that once covered Suffolk. Glorious bluebell woods in May.

Wolves Wood, Hadleigh RSPB reserve, especially good for nightingales in May. If visiting between October and May bring wellingtons.

Lavenham The perfect medieval town. Scores of timber-framed houses, and a fine church, built by the wealthy cloth merchants. With a magnificent Guildhall (NT) in the Market Place.

Flatford An old watermill, Willy Lott's House (NT) and river landscapes that inspired the painter, John Constable.

Stoke by Nayland Another 'wool town' with fine old houses and a 15th century church tower dominating the surrounding countryside.



Bury St Edmunds Site of the great Benedictine Abbey. Much fine Georgian architecture and many attractions for the visitor such as the Abbey Gardens and Greene King Brewery tours.

Colchester Britain's oldest recorded town yet with many attractions for the modern visitor including the Castle Museum, Zoo and High Woods Country Park.

Cambridge A mecca for tourists but leave the car at the excellent park-and-ride points, you could then soon be shopping, visiting King's College or taking a punt out on the Cam.



Tourist Information Centre
 Town Hall (Gaol Lane entrance),
 Market Hill, Sudbury CO10 1TL
 tel: 01787 881320
 email: sudburytic@babergh.gov.uk

SERVICES OFFERED:

- Accommodation bookings anywhere in the UK
- National Express tickets
- Tourist information
- UK tourist brochures
- Events/walks/cycle leaflets
- Maps
- Souvenirs & gifts

And lots more. Pop in to see us!

A Short Guide to Sudbury Revised April 2010
 Published by The Sudbury Society on behalf of Sudbury Town Council and Babergh District Council. The Society thanks Suffolk Cllrs, John Sayers and Colin Spence - Locality Budget, Sudbury Freeman's Trust and Sudbury Town Council for financial support.

An up-to-date website version of this guide, with some more detailed information about Sudbury, can be found on the internet at www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk. We have tried to make this guide as accurate as possible. No responsibility can be taken for errors or omissions. Inclusion in this guide does not imply a recommendation. © The Sudbury Society
 Text David Burnett Design / illustration Robin Drury
 Photographs David Burnett, Robin Drury, Anthony Platt, Stephen Hough

SUDBURY

KEY

- 1** place of interest (see p3-4)
- Start of short walk
- public car park
- public toilet
- tourist information centre
- post office
- picnic place
- supermarket
- footpath
- rail station
- bus station
- main shopping area

