

Aldeburgh to Saxmundham walk

Aldeburgh to Thorpeness seafront, an old railway trackbed, North Warren nature reserve, the Sandlings Walk to the village of Friston, and across fields to Saxmundham

Length 16 kilometres

OS Maps Aldeburgh, grid reference TM465564, and Saxmundham station, grid reference TM303352, are both in Suffolk.

OS Explorer 212 (Woodbridge and Saxmundham).

OS Landranger 156.

Toughness 3 out of 10.

Features The walk follows the sea front North from Aldeburgh to Thorpeness, then takes an old railway trackbed South. You turn West to cross North Warren nature reserve and follow the Sandlings Walk to the village of Friston (diverting to Knodishall for lunch while the pub at Friston is closed), then continue across fields to Saxmundham.

Shortening the Walk A more direct route from Point 1 to Point 2 is described in the text, which misses out Thorpeness and reduces the distance by 1.1 kms.

A circular walk of 12.9 kms, returning to Aldeburgh from Point 2, is also described in the text. This also draws on the directions in SWC Walk Wickham Market to Aldeburgh.

Note that the main route is via the Butchers Arms at Knodishall, but if you do not intend to visit this pub, a more direct alternative from Point 3 to Point 4 is described in the text, which re-joins the main route just before Friston. This reduces the distance by 0.8 kms. An alternative route from Point 5 to Point 6 is included via the Old Chequers at Friston. This makes minimal difference to the walk's length, but it means a slightly earlier lunch. For either of these options, refer below to 'alternative route via Sloe Lane and /or the Old Chequers'.

You could catch a 521 bus from Knodishall or Friston, which would reduce the distance by 6.7 kms or 5 kms respectively (see below).

Travel Catch the train nearest to 9am from Liverpool Street to Ipswich. Trains run hourly but two hourly on Sundays. Currently the 9am train connects with the 10.17 from Ipswich and First bus 65 at 11.08 from Melton, reaching Aldeburgh at 11.50. You can pick up this bus from Ipswich without changing trains, but the train station is a fair way from the bus station. Alternatively, stay on the train as far as Saxmundham for the 11.07 bus (64A) to Aldeburgh (11.35).

If you decide to shorten the walk, Borderbus 521 will take you from Aldeburgh (departing 14.57) to Saxmundham (and Halesworth). It stops at Thorpeness (15.05), Knodishall (15.18) and Friston (15.22).

All these buses operate every day except Sunday (and bank holidays).

Saxmundham is outside the Network South East railcard area, which ends at Manningtree, but there are often Advance single tickets available which represent excellent value if you are willing to commit to a specific train for the return journey.

If there are no Advance tickets available or if you wish to be flexible, your best option (if you have a Network South East railcard) is to buy a return to Manningtree and an off-peak return from Manningtree to Saxmundham.

The journey time from Saxmundham to Ipswich is 40 minutes.

Points of interest **Sandlings Walk**

Runs through the Suffolk heathland (or Sandlings) for 59 miles from Ipswich to Southwold.

Suffolk Coast Path

Stretches for 55-60 miles depending on the chosen route, from Lowestoft to Felixstowe.

Aldeburgh

Formerly a fishing and boatbuilding centre which is enjoying a new lease of life as a fashionable resort. It still has a small fishing fleet and it is renowned for its fish and chips, as well as for the annual Aldeburgh Festival, which was started by local resident Benjamin Britten in 1948. His opera Peter Grimes tells the tale of a fictitious Aldeburgh fisherman.

Thorpeness

This was a tiny fishing hamlet until its development from 1910 as a private holiday resort, featuring mock Jacobean and mock Tudor holiday homes and The Meare boating lake, much loved by JM Barrie, creator of Peter Pan, and now the home of the Thorpeness Regatta in August.

North Warren RSPB reserve

North Warren is one of the RSPB's oldest nature reserves, first purchased in 1939. An extensive area of wet grazing marsh, reed bed, acid grass and heathland which is home to species including nightingale, woodlark, Dartford warbler and marsh harrier, as well as reptiles and insects.

Lunch You will need to choose between an early lunch at Thorpeness or a later lunch at Knodishall or Friston.

The Dolphin Inn, Peace Place, Thorpeness, was resurrected after a devastating fire in 1995 and rebuilt in 1998. Serves haute pub food from a blackboard window. The pub adjoins the village store and serves food from 12 to 2.30pm. The pub is reached after 3.7 kms including a short detour and would be particularly suitable if doing the Aldeburgh Marshes and Thorpeness Circular Walk.

Tel: 01728 454994. <http://www.thorpenessdolphin.com>

Old Chequers, Aldeburgh Road, Friston. This pub has had a 'checkered' history of late. It re-opened in April 2015. Tel: 01728 688039. <http://www.oldchequers.co.uk/>

The Butchers Arms, Leiston Road, Knodishall. This pub, reached after 8.9 kms, re-opened in autumn 2012. Tel: 01728 833873.

Tea Queens Head, 21 High Street, Saxmundham.

Tel: 01728 602856

The Bell Hotel, 31 High Street, Saxmundham. Rebuilt in 1842 on the site of an old inn which was an important stop for stage and mail coaches from London to Great Yarmouth. The bar and parlour are 'open all day'.

Tel: 01728 602331. <http://bellhousehotelsax.co.uk/wp/>

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Photos Upload your photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start:** [Aldeburgh, Suffolk, IP15 5DU](#),

Finish: [IP17 1BW](#)

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version Apr-18

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Walk Directions

<>1) Aldeburgh to Thorpeness (3.5 kilometres)

1. Get off the bus from Ipswich or Saxmundham in the High Street opposite Barclays Bank. Facing the buildings, turn left and in 100 metres right under an arch at the Peter Pears Gallery. In 30 metres cross King Street, go through the car park and in 20 metres turn left on the

- seafront (Crag Path) with the shingle beach to your right. In 120 metres you pass Oakley Square car park and a 19th century lookout tower.
2. In 80 metres you pass between Jubilee Hall and the new lifeboat station. The distinctive 'golfball' of Sizewell power station is already visible in the distance. In 120 metres you pass a model yacht pond and a statue of Snooks, the dog of a local doctor. In 40 metres you pass the timber-framed Moot Hall housing Aldeburgh Museum. In 50 metres you pass the White Lion and in 110 metres the Wentworth Hotel. You can continue on tarmac, grass or shingle, but in 500 metres you may detour to the right to inspect Scallop, the memorial to Benjamin Britten in the form of a shell.
 3. You can now make out the red House in the Clouds at Thorpeness, to the left of Sizewell. In 750 metres you see an isolated house on the opposite side of the road – the path to the left of this ruined cottage (Point 1) would be a good shortcut if you do not wish to visit Thorpeness, see directions below.
 4. Continue North-wards on the beach, now following the Suffolk Coast Path (SCP). In 500 metres continue past the corner of a wire fence and the first house on the left. The way ahead on sand and grass is lined by mock Tudor and modernist holiday homes. In 600 metres leave the beach by a boardwalk following an SCP arrow (before an old wooden hut on the beach). In 50 metres turn right at the next post, leaving the SCP. Continue ahead at the next post in 40 metres, then in 120 metres turn left at another footpath arrow, along the right hand side of a gravel car park. Cross the Aldeburgh Road in 70 metres.
 5. Continue ahead on the lawn to the right of the Meare Shop and Tearoom and Meare boating lake (there are public toilets here). After the boating lake continue on the road (The Haven). In 150 metres ignore Lakeside Avenue. In 60 metres turn left in to The Uplands, signed as a public footpath (for the Dolphin Inn, continue ahead in to The Whinlands – the pub is to the right at the next corner in 150 metres).
 6. **Short cut avoiding Thorpeness** : Cross the coast road (Thorpe Road) at Point 1 and take the path to the left of the ruined cottage. Continue West on a flood bank across the marshes with fences and water channels to both sides, and views across the open meadows of the North Warren RSPB reserve to Sizewell power station and the House in the Clouds (both to your right). Nearer to hand, you may see marsh harrier, hobby or kestrel on this stretch. In 450 metres the path turns to the right then to the left (South-West). In 300 metres go through a metal gate and turn right on to a path which leaves the SCP and follows the old Saxmundham/Aldeburgh railway line. Go past gates to both sides in 250 metres. In 850 metres, turn left to follow the directions below from Point 2.

2 Thorpeness to Knodishall (5.4 kilometres)

1. In 300 metres you pass the curious House in the Clouds (a former water tower converted to holiday homes) on your right and Thorpeness Windmill on your left. You pass the golf clubhouse on the left and car park on the right and cross a drive in 100 metres. In 20 metres take the path ahead marked by a yellow arrow. Continue South-West, downhill at first then carefully with the hilly golf course to your right and long lakes to your left (the path is prone to flooding). Turn left (South) in 550 metres at a complex path junction, with a seat to your right, signed for the Sandlings Walk, which you now follow almost to Knodishall. You are also following the trackbed of the old railway line from Saxmundham to Aldeburgh - this is Sheepwash Crossing.
2. In 400 metres descend from the embankment at Point 2 in to dense woods (**or continue ahead for the Aldeburgh Marshes and Thorpeness Circular Walk, following the directions below**), go through a gap in the wooden fence and then in 240 metres fork right (West) on a path which crosses heathland, with a wire fence on the left. In 320 metres you pass a memorial seat. In 200 metres you continue past a seat identified as Peggy's Perch. The path takes you across North Warren Nature Reserve and in 300 metres you cross the B1122 (Leiston Road).
3. Take the lane opposite, signed for Heath House. In 220 metres you pass the entrance, then go gradually uphill. You pass some industrial buildings, a private drive on the left and farm buildings. The lane ends in 300 metres and continues as a path. In 350 metres you pass an electricity relay station on the right and in 150 metres you go past a tall transmitter mast.
4. Go through a gate at the edge of a field, then past a footpath signpost on the left in 50 metres with Sizewell now dominating the views to the right. Continue on a wide bridleway between fields. (!) In 320 metres take the path on the right with woods to your left, marked by a yellow arrow (Point 3 – continue ahead here if you do not intend to visit the Butcher's Arms at Knodishall Common, following the alternative route below) leaving the Sandlings Walk. In 150 metres at an unconnected gate turn right, away from the woods. In 75 metres turn left at a yellow arrow, at first with a hedgerow on your right and a barbed wire fence on your left. This becomes a grass path across fields.
5. In 450 metres you reach a line of pylons and enter woods. Turn left here at a wooden signpost on to a muddy footpath (Fiche's Lane) which runs under the line of pylons. In 150 metres there are residential gardens on your right. In 250 metres ignore a tarmac path to the right. In 60 metres immediately after a school fork right, still following the overhead wires. In 50 metres you have brick walls and residential fences on your left. In 150 metres you cross a road (The Fitches) and continue on Judith Avenue. In 75 metres you cross the B1069 (Snape Road). The walk continues opposite across the green, where you will also find seats, but the Butcher's Arms is to your right in 150 metres.

Alternative route via Sloe Lane and/or the Old Chequers

1. At Point 3 stay on the path, which curves to the left (West), shaded by a hedge and woods to the right. You pass by the edge of a wood on your left, then to the right of a larger wooded area (Great Wood).
2. In 500 metres at a T-junction with a Sandlings Walk sign and bridleway arrow follow the lane to the right (Sloe Lane) passing Billeaford Hall on the right in 400 metres. The path becomes tarmac and in 400 metres you turn left (South-West) on to the B1069 (Snape Road) once more, opposite the Brethrens Meeting Room (the Butcher's Arms is a short distance to your right here). In 120 metres, turn right at a bridleway sign, heading West at first and gradually uphill. In 450 metres you ignore a bridleway to the right and continue at the left edge of a large field. The track curves to the right past an open area. You continue ahead at a second footpath to the right in 300 metres, re-

joining the main route (Point 4), with a hedge on your right. The path swings to the left.

3. If you wish to visit the Old Chequers or to catch a bus from Friston, in 500 metres you fork left (Point 5), at a public footpath signpost and Sandlings Walk sign. Follow the muddy path across a field, heading for the left of a white house beneath telegraph poles. In 350 metres go over a stile and cross a farm track. Leave the Sandlings Walk here, and continue on a path under the telegraph wires with a hedge to your left and residential gardens on your right. In 300 metres turn right on the B1121 (Aldeburgh Road). The Old Chequers is opposite you in 30 metres.
4. After the Old Chequers, cross Grove Road in 20 metres and cross the right hand edge of the green (there are seats here), with a ditch to your right. In 200 metres leave the green by a bridge with railings and continue on Church Path with the ditch now on your left. In 40 metres fork to the right, passing Friston Village Hall on your left and the church on your right. Cross Church Lane in 80 metres and take the signed footpath opposite. In 150 metres at a cross paths and a signpost for Friston Circular Walks (Point 6) you re-join the main walk by turning left at the start of section 4.

3) Knodishall to Friston (2.4 kilometres)

1. Retrace your steps from the Butcher's Arms to the green and take the path which runs to the right of the stream (the Hundred River, which feeds in to the Meare at Thorpeness, then continues to the sea). In 120 metres cross the stream by a footbridge. Turn right, with a house (The Lilacs) to your right. In 60 metres turn right again on gravel with more houses on your right. In 80 metres, immediately after a wooden house set back from the road (Whinbeck) turn right through a gap in the hedge and continue alongside the river. In 80 metres ignore a wooden bridge and turn left away from the river, with a recreation ground on your right. In 15 metres fork left, as indicated by a yellow arrow on a post. In 40 metres pass under telegraph wires, cross a gravel path and continue on a grass path. In 150 metres continue ahead at a yellow arrow and a circular walk sign between fields at first, then following the right hand edge of a field. In 200 metres you continue in the next field.
2. In 200 metres you reach an oddly positioned wooden bench by a signpost and continue ahead across the next field. In 280 metres, turn right at a blue arrow on to a wide dirt track, re-joining the Sandlings Walk, though it is not marked at this junction (Point 4), with a hedgerow to your right. In 500 metres you continue ahead (Point 5), at a public footpath signpost (ignoring a Sandlings Walk sign pointing left). Continue on a wide farm track heading West past farm buildings (Church Farm) to reach Grove Road in 300 metres.
3. Turn right on Grove Road, then in 50 metres take the signed footpath on the left, initially West then North-West after it turns to the right at a signpost marked Friston Circular Walk in 40 metres. Ignore footpaths to the left and right in 120 metres (Point 6).

4 Friston to Saxmundham (4.7 kilometres)

1. Continue ahead on the Circular Walk towards tall pylons with a hedge on the right. In 170 metres continue in the next field, now with the hedge on the left. In 150 metres cross the middle of the next huge field. In 300 metres continue in the next field on a grassy path. In 100 metres you pass under the two lines of pylons. In 70 metres follow the edge of another large field, with a ditch and trees to your left. In 170 metres you reach a house on your left (named as Little Moor Farm on the OS map) by a three armed wooden signpost. Ignore the path to the right and continue past the house, on the right edge of another large field, with a ditch and trees to your right. In 120 metres turn left across the field at a wooden signpost (***if this way is impassable continue to the corner of the field and turn left, go past a farm gate and re-join the main route by turning right at the next signpost***).
2. In 250 metres cross the gravel farm drive and continue on grass, passing a private wooden foot bridge to your left. In 40 metres you pass the main farm building (named on the ground as High House Farm, but as Moor Farm on the OS map). In another 40 metres go through a wooden field gate and continue with a fence on your left and a hedgerow on your right. In 30 metres turn right on a gravel drive. In 50 metres, go through a wooden field gate. In 30 metres continue on a gravel lane (Fristonmoor Lane) at a wooden signpost pointing back to High House Farm and right to Friston Farm.
3. In 180 metres the lane bends to the right. In 90 metres at a wooden signpost take the public footpath to the left over a wooden bridge, across the middle of a field, towards the right edge of a copse. In 300 metres go over another wooden bridge by a signpost, cross a dirt track and continue half right. In 220 metres go over another wooden bridge and continue by trees at the left hand edge of a field. At the corner of the field in 280 metres turn left over yet another wooden bridge, then right to resume your direction (North-West) on a wide path across a large field.
4. In 240 metres your path turns half left (West) towards Wood Farm. (!) In 260 metres the OS map shows a path leading half right across the field and passing well to the right of the farm, but this may be unclear on the ground. ***If you can identify the path, take it and in 400 metres turn right on to a farm drive with woods to your left***. Alternatively, stay on the main path past the farm and in 220 metres turn right on the farm drive. In 350 metres you pass the junction with the supposed path. In 200 metres cross the B1119 (Church Hill) and turn left on the pavement.
5. Follow the road downhill, past St John's Church opposite and cross the River Fromus by a bridge in 400 metres. ***The most direct route to Saxmundham station is to cross the High Street (B1121) to New Cut opposite and then turn right***. For the recommended route, turn right after the bridge in to Waitrose car park, keeping to the right of the supermarket. In 150 metres you pass a white post pointing you to the White Hart. Continue ahead to reach Fromus Square and the war memorial on your left, which were opened in 2004. In 40 metres you reach the High Street, which is full of interesting Tudor buildings with Victorian facades. The White Hart with its tall 19th century octagonal chimney stacks is on your left and the Queens Head is further along to the left. Turn right and cross the High Street at the traffic lights. In 60 metres turn left after the Bell Hotel. Follow the signs to the station, which you reach through the car park in 150 metres. Trains for Ipswich depart from Platform One on the near side.

Aldeburgh Marshes and Thorpeness Circular Walk

1. For the first section of this walk you will need to refer to the directions for SWC Walk 205 (Wickham Market to Aldeburgh). Catch a bus from Ipswich and ask to be dropped off at the Linden Road stop, just after Aldeburgh Golf Course on your left (so this is not strictly a

- circular walk). Follow the directions in section 4 of SWC Walk Wickham Market to Aldeburgh, but at the end simply stay on the sea front (rather than turning left for King Street car park) and follow Sections 1 and 2 of this walk, possibly having lunch at the Dolphin, Thorpeness.
2. From Point 2 continue on the old railway path past gates to both sides in 850 metres. In 250 metres a path crosses the line. In 650 metres you can see Scallop directly to your left. In 250 metres, go through a gate in to the caravan park on your left, marked by a yellow arrow. In 200 metres continue ahead at a junction with a seat and a sign for Deben Way, as per a yellow arrow. In 80 metres fork right across grass between the caravans, passing another post with yellow arrow. In 80 metres cross a drive and leave the caravan park by a kissing gate.
 3. Cross Church Farm Road and take the path opposite between houses. Cross a private drive in 200 metres and ignore a path to the left at a wooden signpost in 50 metres. Go through a gate in to the church yard in 100 metres. Continue to the left of the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul (Britten and the tenor Peter Pears are buried here) and turn left on Victoria Road (A1094) in 180 metres. In 150 metres turn right down the High Street (the Mill Inn is directly ahead at this junction). For a bus back to Ipswich or Saxmundham, the first bus stop is reached in 70 metres.

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