



Walton-on-the-Naze Circular walk

Coastal walk from a faded grandeur Victorian seaside resort with pier to a fast eroding, fossil rich headland and a sand spit. Return along the beach or through a nature reserve.

When to do this walk

Some parts of this walk **cannot be done at high tide, or from 1st May and 1st Aug**. Check first! (there is a time and tide safe option if you don't)

- The Naze (headland). Best done **at mid or low tide** (so as to be able to walk out along the cliffs, and back along the beach (or visa versa). Take care : **Parts of the walk below the Naze cliffs may be cut-off at high tide**. You can walk along the Naze's cliff-top path at any tide.
- Stone Point (spit) and Stone Marsh : Best done **at low tide, and not from 1st May to 1st Aug when Stone Point is closed**. Take care : the route out to Stone Point may be **cut-off at high tide**. The last part of the walk, out along the spit/beach to Stone Marsh and Stone Point and back, **is closed during Little Tern breeding season**. A seriously misguided English Nature close the entire spit as it may be used by Little Tern's (a ground nesting bird) and they are too lazy to rope off individual nests, or signpost a path which avoids them, which is done in many other places (i.e. a narrow path for people, and a whole beach for the tern's). They are also too lazy to update their website with the fact that Stone Point gets closed at all, or its current status. You **can** still do the first part of the walk out along the Naze headland though. [Dec'14] The closure date are the same for 2015.

Features

This is a short and easy but varied costal walk is as much a day out as a walk. It starts in a faded grandeur Victorian Seaside resort with a long pier. But its real star is the Naze - a headland with fine views and red cliffs of London Clay subject to rapid erosion and a fossil hunters paradise after stormy weather.

After leaving the pier, arcades, beach huts, some nice Victorian architecture, and good swimming beaches behind, you quickly reaches the Naze - a wild headland with good sea views. There is a small tower with a tea room, which is visible for much of the walk as a landmark. Due to the erosion on the headland - by up to 2m a year - walking along the beach is quite interesting, and can be rich in fossils after storms. After the Naze is a sand spit out to Stone point (closed May 1st to July 31st in case there are any ground nesting birds)

The Naze and spit protect the backwaters, shallow waters with salt flat islands, which inspired Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons books. The return route is either along the beach, or optionally around a nature reserve's sea wall overlooking the backwaters (good for birdwatching, but a bit hard going in summer as overgrown)

Depending upon tide times, walk out along the cliffs, and back along the beach or visa-versa

After returning to the town centre, head out to the end of the pier. For a longer walk, head south along the coast and beach huts to Frinton (station)

Your opinion of this walk will be in part how you see Walton-on-the-Naze - faded grandeur, or tacky amusments which may be busy and noisy during summer evenings. In winter, the town would be very quiet, the amusements closed, and beaches empty

Walk Options

- If Stone Point is closed, or the tides are wrong, walk around the nature reserve - a bit overgrown in summer, with views from the seawall over the backwaters

Length 7.6 miles / 12.2km (5.6 miles for the tide-safe seawall option)

Toughness 1 out of 10 (3 in summer if you walk around the nature reserve)

Transport Trains from London Liverpool Street, hourly, about 1hr 30, usually changing at Thorpe-le-Soken (where the line splits to Clacton-on-Sea) for a waiting train. Check the return trains times, as they aren't as regular in the evenings

Saturday Walkers Club Take the train closest to 10:00

Stone Point **The walk out along the spit to Stone Point hasn't yet been walk checked.**

The spit out to Stone Point is part of Hamford Water National Nature Reserve. *"There is restricted access to this area (including the beach below the high tide mark) between 1st May and 1st Aug, during the Little Tern's (a birds's) breeding season ... There are proposals to formalise a permissive footpath with Tendring District Council in this area. It is proposed that the route will include interpretation boards explaining that an area of the path will be closed during the Little Tern's breeding season."*

The spit is managed by [a local Sailing Club](#), who welcome visitors, but in order to keep "unfettered access", urges them to "take care not do anything that either disturbs the wildlife or destroys plants and vegetation." Its a popular mooring for small boats in the Summer.

"In Arthur Ransome's ('Swallow and Amazons') book 'Secret Water', the children name [it] Flint Island... Stone Age flints have occasionally been found here... Stone Marsh is surrounded by gentle slopes of soft sand and mud, and small boats often use this as a temporary mooring" -- Essex Coastline: Then and Now By M.P.B. Fautley, J.H. Garon

See the warnings above about Nature England's obsession with the Little Tern's breeding season. In other reserves, a roped off path guides visitors, and dogs on leads, along a specific route. Birds soon learn to avoid a 50 ft strip either side of the path, and everyone's happy.

- Links**
- [Walton-on-the-Naze](#) - history and nature
 - [Naze Tower](#) - £2.50 to climb, has a free tea room, open April to October
 - [The Nazeman - Geology and Nature](#) - a fan site!
 - [Fossils](#), also see: [\[2\]](#) and [\[3\]](#)
 - [A similar walk on the BBC website around the John Weston Nature Reserve](#)
 - [John Weston Reserve](#) - wetlands, good for birdwatching
 - [Hamford Water NNR](#) - the Naze backwaters, including Stone Point (not much information - the Nature England pages about Hamford Water no longer exist)

Help Us! After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

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



By Car **Start** CO14 8DH

Map Walk This walk **requires** an OS map and a compass or GPS for navigation. You can print out OS maps using the link above.

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

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Walk Directions

Walton to the Naze

1. Head down to the sea front, and turn left (north) - not right (signposted 'beach')
2. Pass the pier and town beach, and on your left, the start of the high street (Co-op supermarket, pubs, fish and chips)
3. Walk along the seafront, keeping close to the sea
4. Leaving the town behind, pass a nice looking cafe down on the beach

Along the Naze

At this point you can choose, out along the cliff and back along the beach, or visa versa. Low tide is best for the beach, so choose according to the tides. The following assumes you walk out along the cliffs

5. Keeping close to the cliff edge, continue until you reach the Naze Tower with a cafe (recommended)
6. Optionally visit the cafe (free tea room, not free viewing gallery)
7. Continue, keeping close to the cliff edge. The path becomes a raised track, with a narrow "salt flat beach" to your right.

Stone Point (low tide only, if open)

9. (Not during May-July) At the end of the path, turn right to the sea (25m), then continue out along the beach to the end of the spit - Stone Point. Then retrace your steps to this point.

Return via the beach (low tide only), or the Seawall Path

Now you have a choice of ways back to Walton

10. Option A) Return along the beach to Walton-on-the-Naze, and view the red cliffs from the bottom (recommended)
11. Option B) Walk around anticlockwise the Naze along the seawall (path can be overgrown and a bit hardgoing in summer).
 1. Turn left (west), and follow the sea wall (west for 1km, then south for 1km). You can walk on top of (nice view) or just below (easier) the sea wall.
 2. Eventually, you pass a road (don't join it), carry on south along the path for another 500m
 3. Just after the seawall path turns west, head inland (southeast, then east) on a footpath. At a small field, bear right to a come out on a road.
 4. Head left (east) along the road towards the sea. Back at the coast, turn right (south), and retrace your outward route to the town centre

Visit the Pier (Optional)

12. Once Back in Walton, walk out to the end of the pier and back (no entry charge). Its so long, it adds a mile to the walk!

Back to the Station

13. Retrace your steps to the train station,

Continue to Frinton Station

14. For a longer walk, head south along the sea front towards Frinton (train station, on the same line). This is [Walk 52 in reverse](#)

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