



Wickham Market to Aldeburgh Walk

Blaxhall Common, Suffolk heathlands (the Sandlings), Snape Maltings for lunch, the historic Sailors' Path along the River Alde estuary along, then either the seawall around Aldeburgh Marshes or a shortcut to seaside Aldeburgh.

Length 22.8 kilometres

OS Maps OS Explorer 212 (Woodbridge and Saxmundham). OS Landranger 156.

Wickham Market station, grid reference TM327557, is located in the neighbouring village of Campsea Ashe, Suffolk. Aldeburgh, grid reference TM465564, is also in Suffolk.

Toughness 3 out of 10.

Features The walk goes through pleasant farmland to Blaxhall Common, then crosses the Suffolk heathlands, known as the Sandlings, to Snape Maltings, for an early lunch at the Plough and Sail. After lunch you cross the River Alde and closely follow its estuary, making use of the historic Sailors' Path - a remarkably varied section which should on no account be missed. You then have the option of following the seawall around Aldeburgh Marshes or taking a more direct route to give more time in the attractive seaside town of Aldeburgh, but pay careful attention to the notes below about bus times.

We are indebted to James Richards, Rights of Way Officer, Alde Valley Ramblers, for clarifying the status of the route between the Sailors' Path and Aldeburgh Marshes.

Shortening the Walk You could reduce the distance by 2.3 kms by staying on the Saxmundham Road and omitting section 4 around Aldeburgh Marshes altogether. You are advised to check the time of the last bus from Aldeburgh before embarking on section 4.

Alternatively, you can cut through from the Saxmundham Road to B1122 for a bus, via either Golf Lane or Linden Road, again omitting section 4, but this means not seeing anything of Aldeburgh.

Travel Wickham Market 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 (as it may be necessary to get a bus from Aldeburgh to Saxmundham at the end of the walk).

Catch the train nearest to 9am from Liverpool Street. In 2025 the 9am train on a Saturday connects with the 10.16 Abellio Greater Anglia train from Ipswich which arrives at Wickham Market at 10.42, with trains back from Saxmundham at 5 minutes to each hour. Trains run hourly.

First Bus 64 runs from Aldeburgh to Ipswich via Saxmundham, approximately hourly. In 2025, the last departures from Aldeburgh were at 5.05 and 6.05 on Saturdays, five minutes later on weekdays. There were no Sunday services.

Borderbus 521/522 runs from Aldeburgh to Beccles via Saxmundham, approximately hourly. In 2025, the last departures from Aldeburgh were at 4.01 and 5.01. There were no Sunday services.

There are no longer any scheduled buses to Snape Maltings, but Katchalift provide an excellent 'on demand' service. If you book in advance you can arrange for them to collect you at Wickham Market and take you to Snape Maltings. On request they may be able to drop you at other convenient locations, e.g. Tunstall Forest Equestrian Centre near the end of Section 1. <https://www.katchalift.com/>

Points of interest**East Suffolk Line Walks**

A booklet has been produced of walks between stations on this line. This walk in its early stages intersects with the ESLW from Wickham Market to Saxmundham.

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.

Snape Maltings

This is a complex of converted 19th century buildings used for the malting of barley for brewing beer. The Maltings closed in 1960 but it now houses art galleries, craft shops, an RSPB visitor centre and the concert hall which hosts the annual Aldeburgh Music Festival.

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.

Lunch

The Plough and Sail, Snape Maltings. The suggested lunch option, reached after 10.3 kms. Advertises quality, seasonal food, using produce from local suppliers wherever possible, the menus featuring traditional favourites, modern British cuisine and dishes influenced from around the world. Spacious restaurant. Tel: [01728 688413](tel:01728688413).
<http://theploughandsailsnape.com/>

Malt Cafe and Takeaway, Snape Maltings. Does light meals such as quiche, pasties, paninis and filled rolls. Tel: [01728 688303](tel:01728688303).
<http://www.snapemaltings.co.uk/eat/granary-tea-shop/>

River View Cafe and Bar, Snape Maltings. Another option for a light lunch.

There are also seats at the Snape Maltings complex and there is one seat shortly afterwards at Snape Warren which could be used for an isolated picnic.

Tea

Aldeburgh Market, 170-172 High Street, Aldeburgh. Deli offering gourmet sandwiches and home-made cakes to take away or eat at tables on the street. According to the Good Food Guide 'a fishmonger, deli, greengrocers and livewire daytime cafe under one roof, the market is a fiercely local foodie enterprise with an eclectic edge'.

Ye Olde Cross Keys, Crabbe Street, Aldeburgh, serves an extensive selection of fresh sea food, which is caught daily by the Aldeburgh fishermen. The menu includes Aldeburgh Fish and Chips. Just off the High Street.

Tel: [01728 452637](tel:01728452637). <http://www.aldeburgh-crosskeys.co.uk/>

Mill Inn, Market Cross, Aldeburgh. 17th century pub on the sea front. Tel: [01728 452563](tel:01728452563)

Help Us! After the walk, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:

By Car

Start

Finish

Help

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version

Mar-26 [Mike Powell](#)

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Walk Directions

1) Wickham Market to Blaxhall Common (7.8 kilometres)

1. Wickham Market station is located in the neighbouring village of Campsea Ashe and there is only one platform. Turn left from the station car park on Ashe Road (B1078), passing opposite the Duck pub in 70 metres. In 80 metres the road turns to the right, but you continue ahead on Mill Lane, following a sign for an East Suffolk Line Walk (ESLW). In 180 metres, turn left between modern houses on Ullswater Road, marked by a green public footpath signpost. In 80 metres ignore a turning to the right and continue ahead on tarmac. In 50 metres turn right on a path between a hedge and the railway fence (on the left), ducking under some very low branches. After 250 metres (at a junction with a path on the right), you cross the line with great care by two stiles either side of a Look and Listen crossing. Continue ahead (South-East) along the edge of a large field with a rough hedgerow on your left. Carry straight on in 500 metres at a cross paths marked by another ESLW motif (Copperas Barn Farm is to your right) on a grass track, now at the right edge of a field. Continue parallel with overhead wires (on your right) to re-join the circuitous Ashe Road in 350 metres.
2. Cross the road and take the grassy bridleway ahead (East), at an ESLW sign and another green signpost, with a hedge on both sides, then trees to the right and a ditch to the left. In 550 metres you enter woods and in 150 metres, take the path to the left (North) (*the SWC Wickham Market to Felixstowe walk continues ahead here*), still following the ESLW at the left edge of a field with woods to your left (Barnes Grove). In 300 metres, follow the path to the right (East) parallel with a line of overhead wires to your left. In 160 metres turn right on Ivy Lodge Road.

3. In 30 metres at the end of the hedge opposite, take the concrete drive on your left (by a sign for Ashgreen Farm), marked as part of the ESLW. In 120 metres you pass the farm and when the drive ends continue on a grassy bridleway, then with a field on your right. Cross another meadow and continue on a grassy path with tall trees on your right. In 520 metres the path turns to the right, away from the woods (Rackham's Grove) and in 80 metres to the left. In 200 metres, before telegraph wires, turn sharp left (North) on to a wide (unmarked) bridleway across a field, heading towards the back of a road sign. In 120 metres turn left on a road, again with an ESLW sign and a green public footpath signpost. In 80 metres take the grassy path to the right, again with a public footpath sign bearing the ESLW motif. Avoid forking left through a gap and continue with tall trees on your left.
4. In 200 metres you go under a line of telegraph wires. In 60 metres ignore a signpost pointing left (the ESLW goes this way). Continue with a fenced horse pasture on your right and a line of trees on your left. In 350 metres ignore another footpath to the left. In 50 metres go under more telegraph wires.
5. In 200 metres turn right on Church Road. In 180 metres take the signed footpath to the left at a bend in the road. You cross a large field, with a well-spaced line of trees to your right. In 250 metres turn left at the end of the field (by the last tree) and turn right in 30 metres. Follow the telegraph wires to your left and turn left on School Road in 200 metres.
6. In 150 metres pass Old Hall Farm on the right. In 500 metres take the minor road to your right. In 550 metres cross the busy B1069 (Snape Road) and turn left with no pavement. In 200 metres take the unmarked bridleway to the left (North), opposite Walk Farm Road and the Tunstall Forest Equestrian Centre, along the right hand edge of a field. In 350 metres continue into the next field in the same direction with a hedge intermittently on your right. In 350 metres (at the end of the field on your left) turn right and then in 30 metres turn left, to continue on a bridleway with a field on your left and part of Tunstall Forest on your right. In 400 metres turn right at a signpost, ignoring the path ahead and the path to the left (which leads to the former Blaxhall Youth Hostel).

2) Blaxhall Common to Snape Maltings (2.5 kilometres)

1. Continue downhill on a narrow sandy path with bracken to both sides. (!) In 500 metres turn left (30°) marked by a wooden marker post (number 3) for the Blaxhall Common Virtual Wild Walk, to the left of the junction. Once over some uneven ground the path through heather soon becomes obvious. In 250 metres you descend and ascend through a large sandpit, veering slightly to the right on a wider track. In 50 metres turn left, gently downhill through woodland, following the Sandlings Walk, which is marked by sky blue logos featuring a nightjar. In 200 metres ignore Langham Road ahead and turn right on a road heading East (Mill Common). After one kilometre you re-join the B1069 by Dunningworth Hall. Continue along the main road (now Bridge Road) ignoring the road to the right in

350 metres. Descend slightly to pass Snape Maltings with the home of the music festival then the Plough and Sail on the right in 150 metres, now also following the Suffolk Coast Path (SCP), which is marked by yellow arrows on a blue background.

3) Snape Maltings to Saxmundham Road by the Sailors' Path (7.5 kilometres)

1. Cross the River Alde at Snape Bridge in 80 metres (the Sandlings Walk stays on Bridge Road, passing the Crown Inn, then turns right to Priory Road and the Golden Key). In 40 metres turn right on the Sailors' Path, signed to Snape Warren and Aldeburgh (5.8 miles/9.5 kms). In medieval times Snape was much larger and Aldeburgh was effectively its port. You follow the Northern bank of the river on a raised path. The clay river wall can be sticky in wet conditions. In 350 metres you pass the Blackheath sluice. In 30 metres you pass an information board about Snape Marshes. In 200 metres the way turns sharply to the left. There is another information board in 220 metres. In 200 metres you enter the woods ahead and turn right by a wooden bench at a public footpath sign (the Sailors' Path and SCP turn to the left here).
2. In 120 metres you pass a wooden seat with excellent views ahead, including Iken church. Continue on the grassy path, soon with a wire fence on your left and the estuary to your right. It can be treacherously slippery. In 300 metres go through a gate on your left with yellow arrows and an open access notice, in to Snape Warren Nature Reserve, following a marked public footpath which takes you gently up a slope and away from the estuary, through glorious heather.
3. The path levels out in 400 metres and you continue downhill across heathland then mixed birch and oak woodland. The path converges with a fence to your left and at the foot of the slope in 250 metres, just before a wooden gate, turn sharp right (60 degrees) on to a clear path which runs parallel with the wire fence on your left and gently uphill (the red topped marker posts which formerly marked the path across Snape Warren have been removed). A red brick house is clearly visible to the left with other houses to its left. In 200 metres ignore a wooden gate to your left and continue beside the wire fence.
4. In 180 metres you cross a private lane (leading to New England Farm on the right), with a cattle grid to your left. The path continues to follow the wire fence (95 degrees). In 250 metres, ignore a wooden field gate set back to your left. The wire fence turns to the left but you continue on a grassy strip across the heather with more views of the estuary (120 degrees). In 260 metres you cross a wide bulldozed track and a line of posts (in 2026 it looked as though the path might be diverted this way, which would be regrettable). Continue ahead for superb estuary views, then in 40 metres turn left on a wide grassy path, away from the sea and towards trees (15 degrees).

5. In 150 metres you go through a wooden gate and turn right, back on the Sailors' Path and SCP, with an ESLW logo on a post opposite and an information board to the right. In 130 metres you go through a metal field gate with signpost for Aldeburgh (now 4 miles/6.3 kms) and enter the woods of Black Heath estate. In 550 metres you cross a private access road. In 100 metres there is an iron fence on your left, with open parkland beyond.
6. Next in this ever changing landscape, you enter the wetlands of Ham Creek, a marshy wilderness with drainage ditches and streams crossed by boardwalks and bridges. In 900 metres you go over a bridge and through a metal gate, then on to a long section of boardwalk. Go through a metal gate in 180 metres, over a pond and through another metal gate in 80 metres. To the right of the next bridge and metal gate in 50 metres there is a house behind the barbed wire fence (to your right). The broadleaved woods of the Cliff Plantation give way to scrublands. In 300 metres a signpost before a metal gate tells you that it is 2.6 miles to Aldeburgh (or 4.1kms if you prefer). In 240 metres the next wooden signpost gives the distance as 2.5 and 3.9 respectively. To the right there is a brick house and signs for Hazelwood Marshes Nature Reserve, but you continue on the wide track.
7. In 200 metres you fork right across grass to a gravel then sandy track, following an SCP arrow on a telegraph pole, away from the intrusive traffic of the main road on your left. In 300 metres you pass cottages (Hazelwood Street) on your right. In 150 metres you reach South Warren car park and information board (now showing 2 miles or 3.2kms to Aldeburgh). The path continues ahead, to the right of the car park, but in 60 metres you come out on the A1094 (Saxmundham Road).
8. Turn right and walk on the wide verge of the A1094, passing several large houses. In 350 metres ignore a private drive to the right. After a 30 mph road sign, the path continues behind a hedge, which is a slight improvement on the verge. In 300 metres you pass opposite the main club house across the road. In 100 metres by a signpost reading 1.5 miles/2.4 kilometres to Aldeburgh you return to the main road and turn right again on the pavement. In 180 metres you pass opposite Golf Lane. *Note that the SCP goes this way; you could follow it to the B1122 and turn right for a bus to Saxmundham, which will take you about 10-15 minutes.*
9. In 100 metres there is a bus stop. Note that this is no longer served by scheduled buses. *You now need to consider carefully whether you have time to complete the walk around Aldeburgh Marshes before the last bus from Aldeburgh; if not you should either cut through to the B1122 as explained or take a more direct route to Aldeburgh.*
10. **Direct Route to Aldeburgh:** Stay on the main road for another 900 metres until the next roundabout, then turn right in to Kings Field recreation ground (with public toilets), passing just to the right of the play area and to the left of sports fields. In 350 metres continue on a surfaced path with gardens on your left and allotments on your right. Ignore the path to the right in 80 metres and a

second path to the right in another 300 metres. The path brings you out on Park Road in 320 metres; turn right and you re-join the main walk at the next path junction in 200 metres (see paragraph 4.5 below; continue ahead and turn left on the High Street for buses or refreshments).

4) Saxmundham Road to Aldeburgh by Aldeburgh Marshes (5 kilometres)

1. For the main walk, ignore a private drive in 40 metres and continue past Linden Road opposite in 100 metres (*note that this road also leads to the B1122 and the possibility of a bus to Saxmundham*).
2. *In 50 metres, just after numbers 155/153 opposite, take the wide tarmac drive to the right, Brickfields (but not named on the ground).*
3. *In 200 metres the drive divides. Take the left fork towards two groups of modern houses. The second group are box shaped and the first group have more conventional roofs. On reaching the first group in 100 metres, turn left on a surfaced path with two houses to your left and three to your right. In 30 metres turn right on a narrow path, passing to the left of the box houses. In 200 metres continue to the left of a large black wooden building. In another 100 metres, at the jetty, climb up the bank on the left to the seawall and go through an unlocked swing gate. In 400 metres ignore wooden steps down to your left.*
4. *The sea wall turns gradually to the right then in 800 metres at West Row Point it makes a sharp turn to the left (South East). The views to the right are of the River Alde and Sudbourne marshes beyond and on the left of the Aldeburgh town marshes where dykes cross rough pastures. You continue on a grassy path. In 800 metres you pass Fulcher Sluice. There are views of the old BBC World Service transmitters at Orford Ness across the estuary. In 200 metres you turn left again, towards Aldeburgh.*
5. *In 450 metres go through a metal gate, ignoring a wooden public footpath sign to the left. In 280 metres you pass Corporation Sluice and in another 120 metres go down wooden steps at a public footpath signpost, on to a wide stony track (continuing alongside the sea wall will also take you in to Aldeburgh by a less direct route).*
6. *In 100 metres where the main track veers left you fork right on a muddy grass path with water channels to both sides, across a low-lying area of grazing marsh. You pass a ruin on your right in 300 metres. The path joins another track in 100 metres and you turn right, then left at a wooden signpost in 30 metres between houses to reach Park Road in 60 metres (the direct route to Aldeburgh joins you here).*
7. *Turn right and left on High Street in 70 metres (carry on up the High Street if you are short of time for the bus to Ipswich). In 20 metres turn right in to Hertford Place and*

cross Brudenell Street in 40 metres. In 30 metres turn left on the sea front (Crag Path) with the shingle beach on your right.

- 8. In 250 metres, just before the 19th century South Lookout, take the next (narrow) turning on your left, Neptune Alley (for Ye Olde Cross Keys continue along the seafront to Oakley Square car park; the Mill Inn is further along the seafront behind the timber-framed Moot Hall).*
- 9. Cross King Street in 15 metres to come out on the High Street in 30 metres. Cross the road and turn right for buses to Saxmundham and Ipswich. The stop is outside the Regatta Restaurant in 25 metres.*

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