



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 Using Anglian Bus 65 you could start the walk at Snape Maltings, reducing the distance by 10.3 kms.

Directions are given in the text for starting the walk at Blaxhall Youth Hostel, for those who wish to stay overnight, joining the main walk at the start of section 2, which reduces the distance by 7.3 kms. You could also get off Anglian Bus 65 at Tunstall, which would reduce the distance by 4.7 kms and directions are given for starting the walk from there.

You could also 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.

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. Currently the 9am train connects with the 10.13 Abellio Greater Anglia train from Ipswich on a Saturday which arrives at Wickham Market at 10.42. Trains run hourly but two hourly on Sundays.

Anglian Bus 65 runs from Aldeburgh to Ipswich via Snape Maltings, Tunstall and Melton. It leaves Aldeburgh at 14 minutes to each hour until 16.46. It may be easier to catch the train from Melton, as the railway station at Ipswich is a fair way from the bus station. If you decide not to walk around Aldeburgh Marshes, you can pick up this bus opposite Linden Road without going all the way in to Aldeburgh.

First bus 64A leaves Aldeburgh on the hour to 17.00 and at 17.45. It calls at Saxmundham on its way to Ipswich.

Borderbus 521 is less frequent but will take you from Aldeburgh (departing 14.57) to Saxmundham (and Halesworth).

NB None of these buses run in the evening or on Sundays or bank holidays. In 2014 the last buses back from Aldeburgh (Mondays to Saturdays) were as follows:

65 at 16.46 to Melton (17.27) and Ipswich (18.20)

64A at 17.00 to Saxmundham (17.28) and Ipswich

64A at 17.45 to Saxmundham (18.13) and Ipswich

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/>

The Granary Tea Shop, Snape Maltings. Does light meals such as quiche, pasties, paninis and filled rolls. Tel: [01728 488303](tel:01728488303).

<http://www.snapemaltings.co.uk/eat/granary-tea-shop/>

Cafe 1885, Snape Maltings. Another option for a light lunch.

<http://www.snapemaltings.co.uk/eat/cafe-1885/>

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** IP13 0PT **Finish** Aldeburgh, Suffolk, IP15 5DU,

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

Version Mar-20 [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 Dog and 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 footpath sign. In 80 metres ignore a turning to the right and continue ahead on a footway after the last house. In 50 metres turn right on a path between the hedge and the railway fence, 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 hedge on your left. Carry straight on in 500 metres at a cross paths marked by a wooden signpost with another ESLW

- motif (Copperas Barn Farm is to your right) on a grass track, now at the right edge of a field. You pass under overhead wires 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, with a hedge on both sides. In 550 metres you enter woods and in 150 metres, take the first 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) under a line of telegraph wires. 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, marked as part of the ESLW. In 120 metres you pass Ashgreen Farm and continue on a grassy bridleway at the edge of a meadow, then continue 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. In 120 metres turn left on a road, again with an ESLW sign. 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 and turn right in 30 metres. Follow the telegraph wires and turn left on School Road in 200 metres (*the route from Tunstall joins you here*).
 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. In 200 metres take the 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 through a potentially slightly overgrown area (ignoring the path curving to the right) to carry on in the same direction with a hedge on your right. In 350 metres turn right and then in 30 metres turn left, to continue on a bridleway with a low wire fence and field on your left and part of Tunstall Forest on your right. In 400 metres turn right at a signpost (*the alternative route from Blaxhall joins you here*).
 7. **Alternative start from Blaxhall** From Blaxhall youth hostel (GR 369570) turn left on to the road and in 15 metres turn left again on to the sign-posted restricted byway, past Ship Walk House. Continue ahead by a signpost at the

end of a field in 450 metres, now following the main route from the start of section 2.

8. **Alternative start from Tunstall** If you get off the bus from Ipswich at Tunstall, turn left (East) on the B1078 (Orford Road) past the Green Man pub. In 50 metres turn left at a staggered crossroads on to School Road. In 120 metres ignore the road to the left. You join the main route in 450 metres, when you pass under a line of telegraph wires (toward the end of section 1 above, as indicated).

2) Blaxhall Common to Snape Maltings (2.5 kilometres)

1. Continue on a narrow sandy path with bracken to both sides. (!) In 500 metres turn left (30°) at an unmarked cross paths. It is easy to miss this path junction - look out for a gap in the bank on both sides of the path after a group of trees on the left. Once over some uneven ground the path through heather soon becomes obvious. In 250 metres you descend and ascend though 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 at a public footpath sign (the Sailors' Path and SCP turn to the left here).
2. In 120 metres you pass a green wooden bench with excellent views ahead, including Iken church. Continue on the grassy path, soon with a barbed wire fence on your left. In 300 metres go through a gate on your left 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 300 metres; you cross a wider path and continue downhill across heathland then mixed birch and oak woodland. At the foot of the slope in 350 metres, just before the kissing gate, turn right on to a path which runs parallel with the wire fence on your left (there is a red topped marker post at this junction, but you may only spot it after the turning). Follow the line of red topped posts across the open access land of Snape Warren, with occasional houses visible on the left and heather on your right. In 200 metres ignore a wooden gate to your left.
4. In 180 metres you cross a private lane (leading to New England Farm on the right), with wooden kissing gates on either side and a map on the second gate. The path continues to follow a wire fence and the line of red posts. In 250 metres, ignore a metal gate to your left and continue on a grassy strip across the heather with more views of the estuary. In 300 metres you turn left as per the red posts, away from the sea and towards trees.
5. In 150 metres you go through a metal kissing gate and turn right, back on the Sailors' Path and SCP. In 130 metres you go through another gate with signpost for Aldeburgh (now 4 miles/6.3 kms) and enter the woods of Black Heath estate, with tall trees to both sides. In 450 metres you pass between two tall ceramic stacked pots standing among the silver birches. In 100 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. 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 the cottages of 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). 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 and continue past the corner of the golf course alongside a low wooden fence. This route, which is partly behind a hedge, is marked as a 'licensed path', though it is little 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 (the SCP goes this way) and in 50 metres you pass opposite a bus stop where you can get a bus to Aldeburgh,

9. In another 50 metres there is a bus stop for Ipswich. *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 catch a bus from here 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. In 50 metres, just after number 155 opposite, take the wide tarmac drive to the right (with signs for MS Oakes Ltd in 2019).
2. In 200 metres the drive divides. The left fork leads to some modern box shaped houses and a gate which may be locked, giving access to a gravel track. Although this is the more direct route, it may be safer to take the right fork down towards older housing. Makeshift signs have sometimes appeared indicating the way to the jetty. After the houses, veer left across grass towards a small brick building. After passing this building you turn right on the gravel track (as mentioned above, with the newer buildings now behind on your left). Continue to the left of a large black wooden building (approximately 350 metres from the point where the drive divided). In another 100 metres, at the jetty, turn left up to the seawall and go through an unlocked swing gate. In 400 metres ignore wooden steps down to your left.
3. 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. The path is now more stony and 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.

4. In 450 metres go through a metal gate, ignoring a wooden public footpath sign to the left. Go through another metal gate in 200 metres. In 80 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*).
5. 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*).
6. 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.
7. In 250 metres, just before the 19th century South Lookout, take the next 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*).
8. 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 (by Barclays Bank) in 25 metres.

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