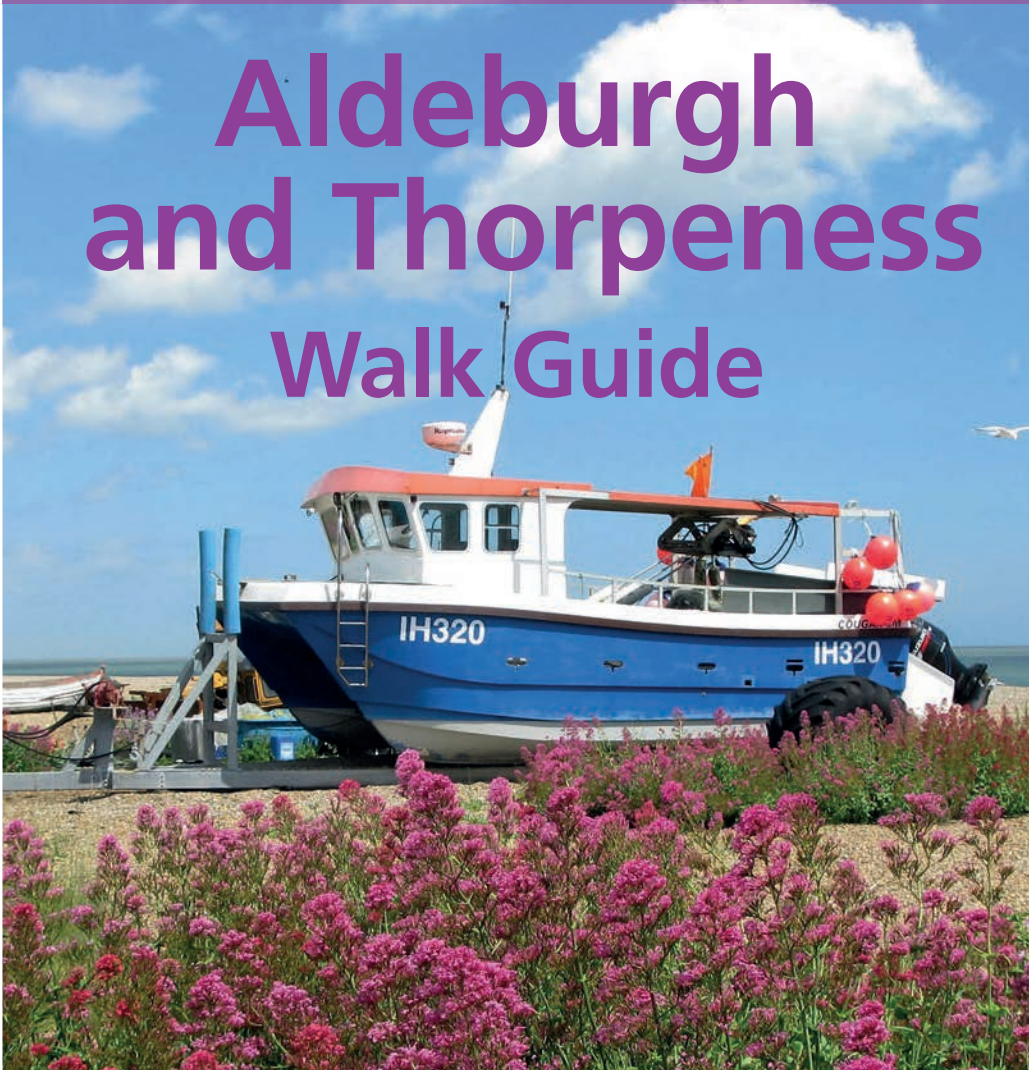


Outstanding Landscapes

Aldeburgh and Thorpeness Walk Guide



Explore a mosaic of unique landscapes including reedbed, woodland, marsh and shingle coast, which sustain a large diversity of wildlife. Visit a sea side town and an unusual village.



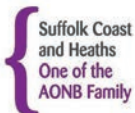
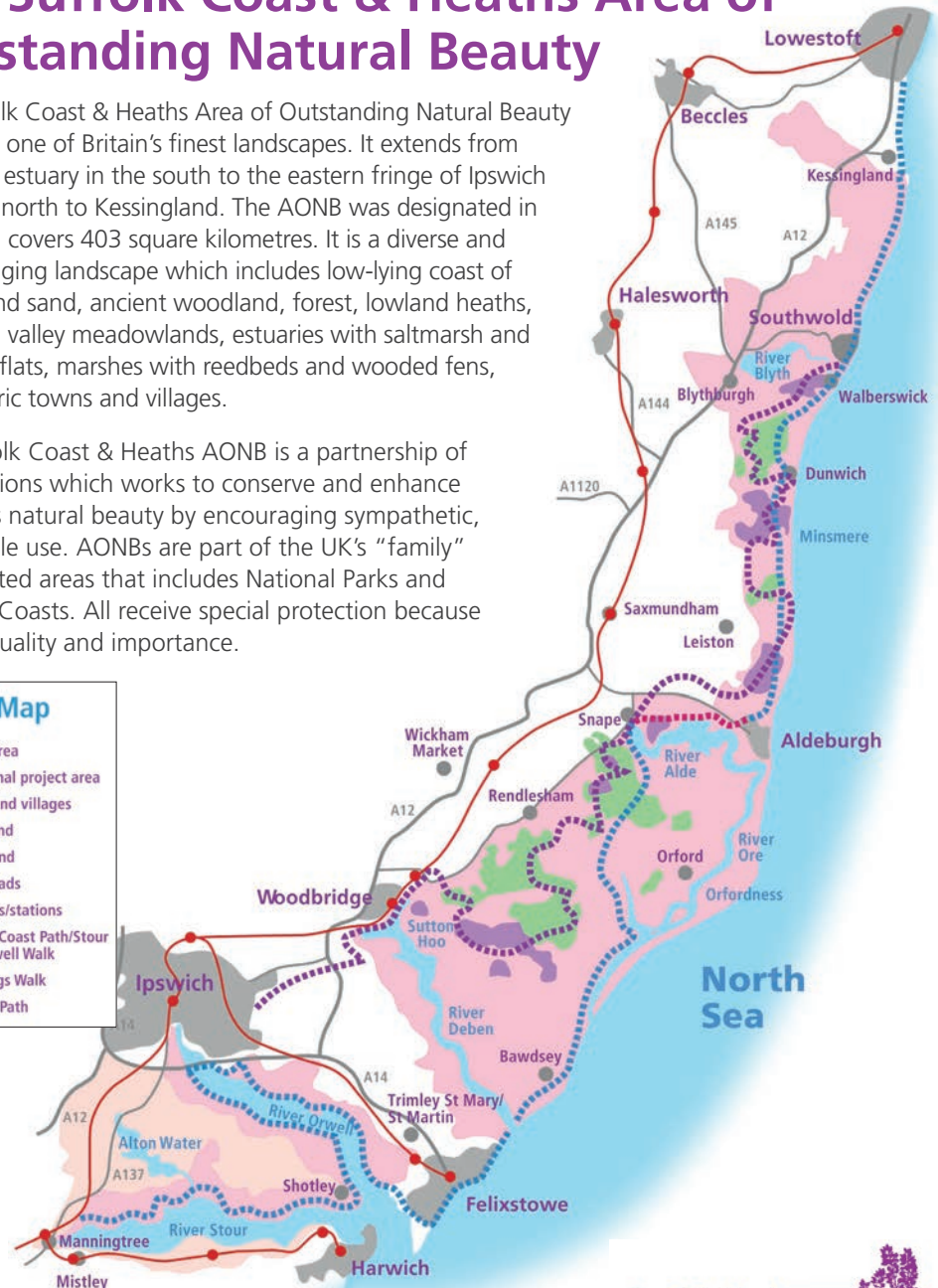
The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and then north to Kessingland. The AONB was designated in 1970 and covers 403 square kilometres. It is a diverse and ever changing landscape which includes low-lying coast of shingle and sand, ancient woodland, forest, lowland heaths, farmland, valley meadowlands, estuaries with saltmarsh and intertidal flats, marshes with reedbeds and wooded fens, and historic towns and villages.

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is a partnership of organisations which works to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty by encouraging sympathetic, sustainable use. AONBs are part of the UK's "family" of protected areas that includes National Parks and Heritage Coasts. All receive special protection because of their quality and importance.

Key to Map

- AONB area
- Additional project area
- Towns and villages
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Main roads
- Railways/stations
- Suffolk Coast Path/Stour and Orwell Walk
- Sandlings Walk
- Sailors' Path



Aldeburgh and Thorpeness Highlights

This Outstanding Landscape and its wildlife is part of a network of habitats that are considered rare and significant, and are the reason for the **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** designation. Within the AONB are many site-specific conservation designations, helping this remain an Outstanding Landscape, for now and future generations. The area around Aldeburgh and Thorpeness includes two of these designations:

- 🌿 **Special Protection Area (SPA)** – strictly protected sites classified for rare and vulnerable birds.
- 🌿 **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** – represent the country's best wildlife and geological sites, supporting plants and animals that are rarely found elsewhere. All SSSIs are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



You can help to protect these habitats and their wildlife by remaining on Public Rights of Way and clearly signed permissive paths and by not allowing you or any dogs to cause disturbance at any time of the year. Please follow the countryside code and any information signs displayed.

1 Aldeburgh was once a thriving fishing and boat building town. This industry declined with the silting up of the River Alde after violent storms which eroded the east coast and destroyed many buildings. Maps from 1594 indicate at least four rows of streets between the market place, where the Moot Hall is today, and the shore. By 1790 maps show that none of these remain. The hall was built in the 16th Century in the centre of Aldeburgh to serve as the Council Chamber, focus for the market and prison; it is now a local museum and still houses the Council Chamber. The fortunes of Aldeburgh were revived in the 1800's by the tourist trade, when it became a fashionable place to enjoy clean fresh air and excellent sea water.



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2 The Scallop and path to Thorpeness.

The stainless steel sculpture of a scallop was created by Maggi Hambling and dedicated to Benjamin Britten, who often walked along the beach. It is inscribed with words which are taken from Britten's opera Peter Grimes. On the other side of the road views of low lying marsh can be seen. As you pass the Thorpe Road car park and you continue north on the path towards Thorpeness look out for beautiful grasses, wildflowers and butterflies in the summer months. The concrete section of this path ends opposite the now derelict sluice cottage which was also once the site of Black Mill which drained the Aldeburgh meare for farm land in the 1800's. Between the end of the car park and sluice cottage it is possible to enjoy views from a path and two viewing platforms amongst the gorse on the opposite side of the road.

3 Vegetated Shingle is a beach with shingle stable enough to support vegetation. These rare and fragile habitats are seldom found outside North West Europe, Japan and New Zealand. Plants are specially adapted to conditions where there is no soil, it is very windy and salty and there is little fresh water. Yellow Horned Poppy has waxy leaves and fine hairs that restrict water loss and act as a sunscreen;



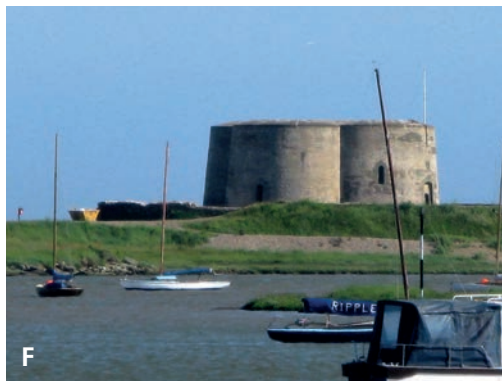
Sea Pea grows very low to the ground to avoid the wind and its seeds can survive for 5 years in the sea; and Sea Kale has long thick tap roots to reach freshwater and leaves that reflect sunlight. These plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and must not be picked, they have adapted to survive this harsh environment but they can easily be destroyed by trampling and the adverse effect from dog poo & BBQs.

4 Thorpeness. In the 1900's Thorpe, as it was known then and much of the land around, was owned by the Ogilvie family who decided to create a fantasy holiday haven. The outlet of the river Hundred, which was once part of an Elizabethan safe shipping haven that had silted up over the centuries, was permanently blocked to create the meare in the centre of the village. The 60 acres of shallow water, ornamental gardens and islands, were hand dug in the winter of 1912 -1913. JM Barrie the author was a family friend of the Ogilvie's and the Meare is based on his Peter Pan stories.

5 House in The Clouds and The Mill. The House in the Clouds, once an old water tower, used to supply Thorpeness with water. The tank at the top was disguised to look like a fairy-tale cottage, in keeping

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with the Ogilvie vision of the village, with accommodation below. In 1943 while firing at a low flying V1 flying bomb, an English shell passed through a corner of the tank causing extensive damage. At the time the resident Miss Humphreys sisters were asleep below, both were rescued unharmed. In the 1970's the tank was removed to create more living space. The mill used to grind corn in nearby Aldringham and was moved in 1923 to be reused to pump water to the tower.



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6 North Warren Nature Reserve and Old Railway Line. Take a while to sit on the bench at Sheepwash Crossing and overlook the RSPB North Warren nature reserve. This reedbed is a great place to see Hobbies, Marsh Harriers, Bearded Tits and dragonflies and hear male Bittern's booming. The old railway line was a branch line that ran from Saxmundham to Aldeburgh and the station at Thorpeness was open from 1914 to 1966. Along the length of the path, some of which is permissive, sheltered places and areas of scrub attract dragonflies, bees, butterflies, warblers, bullfinches and nightingales. You can take one or two very short detours off on the left to visit viewing platforms which overlook marshes and reedbeds, where cattle and Konik ponies graze to create the ideal conditions for wading birds to nest and ducks and geese to feed.

7 Martello Tower and Slaughden. The tower is the largest and northernmost of 103 English defensive towers built between 1808 and 1812 to resist a Napoleonic invasion. This unique quatrefoil Martello Tower was built with nearly a million bricks to house four heavy guns. It stands at the root of the Orford Ness peninsula, between the River Alde and the sea and is the only surviving building of the fishing village of Slaughden. This once busy village had three quays and was a hive of boat building and fishing industry. By 1936 all the houses and infrastructure had been lost to erosion by the North Sea.

8 The Mill. Built in 1842 it is an old flour mill which produced up to 20 tonnes of flour every week. After its sails snapped it was converted into a home in 1902 but later adapted again with the addition of a gun tower to serve as a battery observation post to guard its stretch of coast from German invaders during World War Two.

Front Cover) Fishing boat at Aldeburgh with Valerian; **A)** Aldeburgh Moot Hall **B)** The Scallop Sculpture, Aldeburgh **C)** Sea pea on shingle; **D)** View over the Meare of The House in the Clouds and The Mill, Thorpeness; **E)** Enjoying the view over North Warren; **F)** Looking over the river Alde to Slaughden Martello Tower..



E

Aldeburgh and Thorpeness walk

▶ Start: Fort Green Car Park, Slaughden Road, Aldeburgh IP15 5DE. TM464559

👤 Walking distances and times: 6.5 miles/10.5km. Allow 3hrs to enjoy this walk.

🏔️ Terrain: Mostly flat. Route follows Public Rights of Way footpaths and also permissive paths.

⚠️ Caution: Routes can be muddy in places. There are short stretches along roads.



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Starting from Fort Green car park. Head towards the public toilets and pass on the sea side of them to join Crag Path which runs between the edge of Aldeburgh Town and the shingle beach. **Views**

of Thorpeness can be seen in the distance while you walk past the old lifeboat lookout towers, seaside holiday homes, local fresh fish huts and the Lifeboat station and shop.



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In the summer months this part of the shingle is scattered with Valerian growing between the fishing boats. In the distance views of Sizewell Power Station dwarfs the House in the Clouds at Thorpeness. On leaving the built up area of Aldeburgh the vegetation on the shingle beach increases.

Continue along the shingle and grass path to Thorpeness.

When you reach the houses walk past them keeping the sea on your right and the houses on your left. Take the first boardwalk on your left between two bungalows, opposite a sign that reads "No dogs beyond this point between 1st May – 30th September". Walk through the car park and emerge opposite Thorpeness

meare. Cross the busy road and onto the grass verge on the outside of the meare to follow the road signed Aldringham. Cross over Lakeside Avenue, the road that leads to Thorpeness Hotel and Golf Club, and take the footpath (FP) on your left along the gravel track of Uplands Road.

This FP will lead you past the House in the Clouds and the Mill.

When you reach the car park of the golf course continue on the FP which is ahead between trees. This path follows the edge of the meare on your left with the golf course on your right. On reaching a T-junction of paths near to the old gatekeepers house and other red brick houses turn left to walk approx. 1.7 miles (2.7km) to reach Aldeburgh along the old railway line.

On reaching a caravan park on your left where FP's cross continue straight ahead. When you reach a road, cross over then



© Roger Tidman FLPA

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turn right and then immediately left onto a FP which leads to the A1094. Cross this main road, turn right. When you see the Railway Inn on the other side of the roundabout (the site of the old railway station) turn left, following the sign for public toilets. Follow the tarmac path which you can see on the right of the play equipment. From here you can enjoy expansive views over Aldeburgh Marshes and the masts of Orford Ness in the distance.



The path becomes an access road, keep straight on passing the Pumphouse. This Victorian sewage pumping station is now used as venue for Aldeburgh Music. When you reach the road turn right. You will pass JT Pegg & Son

G) Anchors and Yellow Horned Poppy on Aldeburgh beach; H) Sea Holly along the path, one of the many plants which attract butterflies; I) Thorpeness Mill; J) Marsh Harrier © Roger Tidman FLPA; K) Common Blue butterfly on bramble.




Countryside Code

Please follow the Countryside Code www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code



Respect other people:

-  consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
-  leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths.

Protect the natural environment:

-  leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
-  fires can devastate wildlife, habitats and property – so be careful with naked flames and cigarettes at any time of the year
-  keep dogs under close control at all times, especially when amongst livestock and during bird nesting season. Release your dog if chased by cattle. Wherever you are, clean up after your dog.

Enjoy the outdoors:

-  plan ahead and be prepared
-  follow advice and local signs.

where the Scallop Sculpture was made.

About 60m before the High Street turn right onto the FP leading to the river wall. Remain on the FP turning right and then left. Head across the marshes, bearing left to the river wall. Go up the steps onto river wall and turn left to walk along the top of the wall. Cross over the track and then up a set of steps onto the sea wall, turn left and follow the path back to Fort Green Car Park.

9 Visiting Aldeburgh and Thorpeness



Ordnance Survey
Explorer Map No. 212
(Woodbridge and Saxmundham).



Aldeburgh accessed via the
A1094 or B1122. Thorpeness is
approximately 2 miles (3.2 km)
north of Aldeburgh.



Sat Nav: Fort Green Car Park,
Slaughden Road,
Aldeburgh IP15 5DE.



Public transport information:
www.suffolkonboard.com or
call **0345 606 6171**.

Local buses from Leiston,
Saxmundham, Halesworth,
Woodbridge and Ipswich.



Connecting Communities: This
is a local book in advance travel
service which links to public
transport **01728 635938**.



Nearest train station
Saxmundham.
www.nationalrail.co.uk Tel:
08457 484950



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Disclaimer: Whilst the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of maps and information within this publication, they are provided as guidance only and we cannot accept any liability for their interpretation and use.

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