

Orford

Explorer Guide



Highlights of Orford

1 **The Quay** is a bustling place, with boats leaving for Orford Ness, children crabbing and fishermen returning with their catch. Many boats are drawn up on the shore in front of the black painted fishing sheds.



2 **Orford Ness** is a huge bank of shingle built as wave and tide move pebbles down the coast, a process known as 'long shore drift'. Behind this bank marshes and lagoons have formed that are home to wading birds, wildfowl, marsh harrier and hares. Each year the river mouth at the southern end of the shingle spit changes shape. The strange pagoda-like structures were used during the Cold War to develop and test nuclear bombs. Orford Ness is owned by the National Trust and holds the best preserved area of vegetated shingle in Europe, a globally rare and extremely fragile habitat. The Ore estuary and the Ness have international recognition as a nature reserve.



3 **The River Ore** starts life as the River Alde but changes its name at Orford. Shingle blocked the Alde's former estuary at Aldeburgh, forcing it to run parallel to the coast for miles. The River's winding has created islands and creeks, including Havergate Island. This RSPB reserve provides a summer habitat for breeding avocets and terns. In late summer, the salt marshes are washed blue and purple by the flowers of sea lavender.



Enjoy two walks around the fascinating town of Orford






Orford is a beautiful town on the Suffolk Coast. Streets of red brick cottages surround the dramatic Norman Castle and the ancient church of St Bartholomew. Beside the river Ore, the quay faces mysterious Orford Ness.

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

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, in the north, to Kessingland. It covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife-rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

Visiting Orford

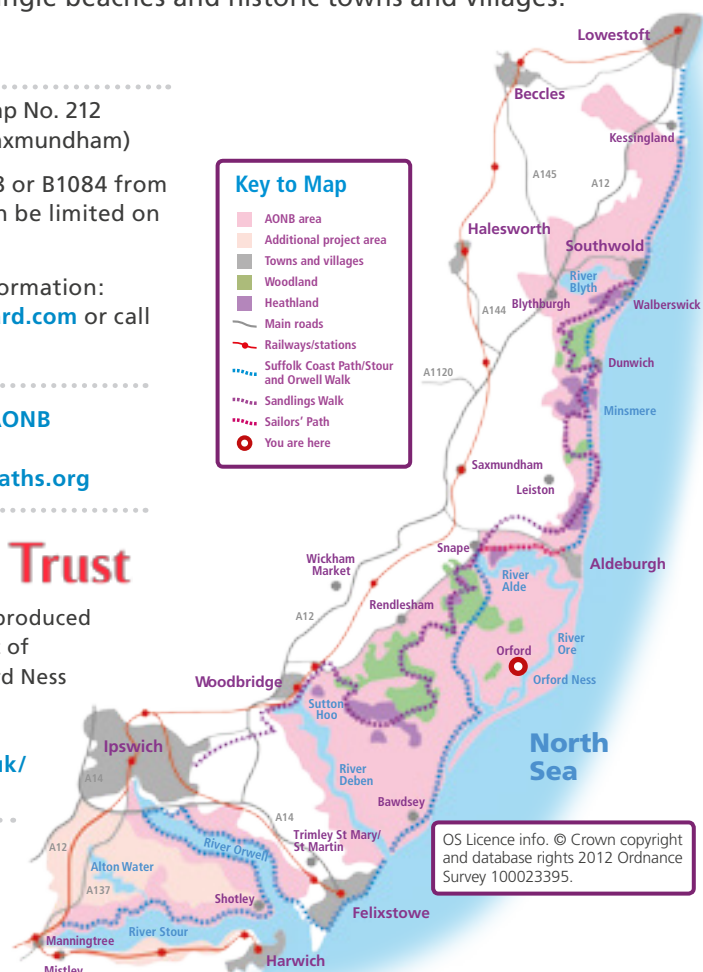
-  Ordnance Survey Map No. 212 (Woodbridge and Saxmundham)
-  Access via the B1078 or B1084 from the A12. Parking can be limited on very busy days.
-  Public transport information: www.suffolkboard.com or call 0845 606 6171

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB
01394 445225
www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

National Trust

Orford Explorer has been produced with the generous support of the National Trust at Orford Ness National Nature Reserve.
01728 648024
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/orford-ness

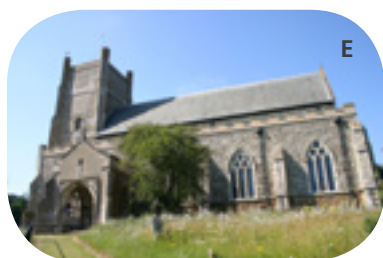
Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is a partner of the BALANCE project, part-financed by the European Union through the Interreg IV A 2 Seas Cross-border Programme.



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4 **Orford Castle** was commissioned by Henry II and completed in 1173. Built to assert Henry's authority over the powerful Suffolk Barons, the castle keep remains today. Originally there would have been a surrounding wall or 'bailey'. The castle is an effective navigation mark for shipping. From the castle roof you can savour views stretching for many miles.



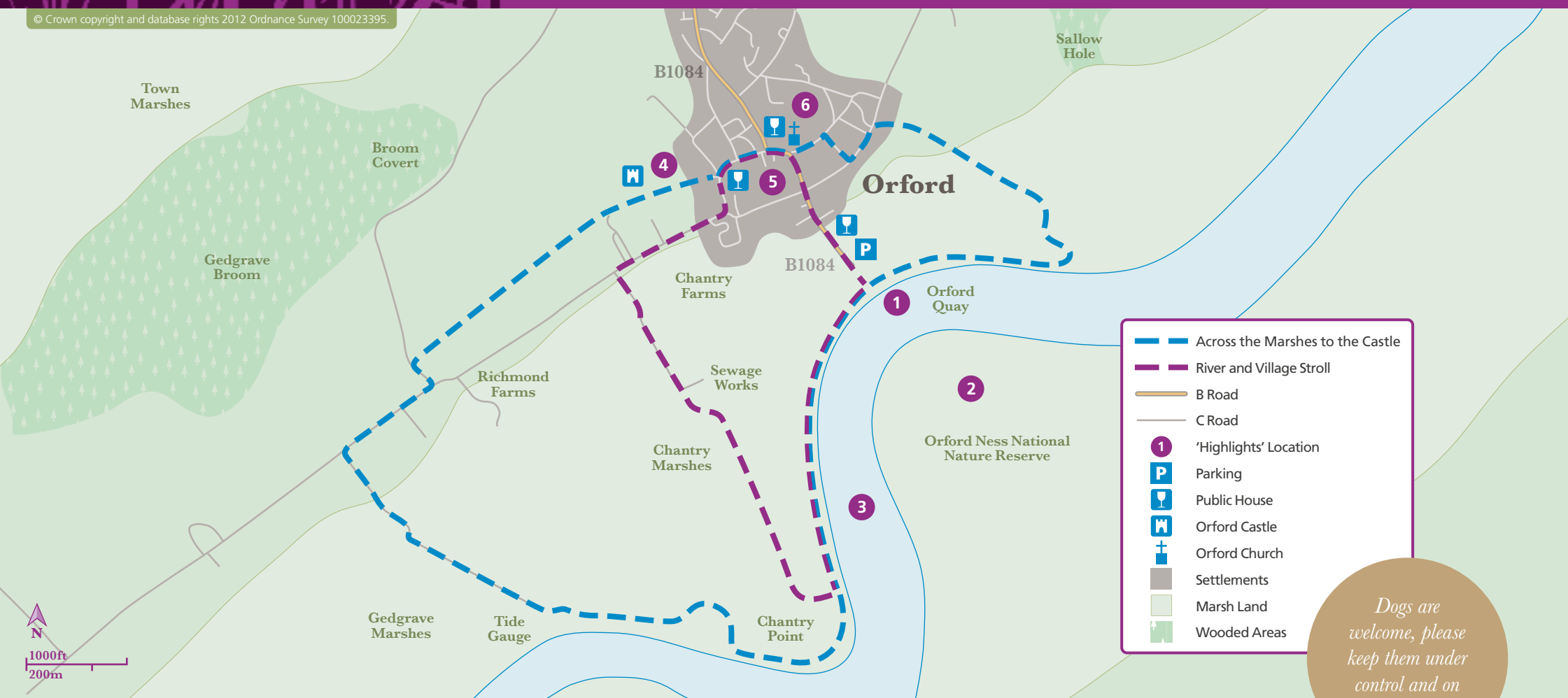
5 **The town of Orford** has fine buildings, many constructed of warm, red brick. The roads are arranged in a grid pattern, a layout dating from the Norman period. Until the 16th Century, fishing and the wool trade brought prosperity to Orford. However, the growing shingle spit of Orford Ness cut off the harbour and Orford lost its buzzing port.

6 **St Bartholomew's Church** dates from the mid to late 1100s. The oldest section is the ruined Norman chancel. The nave and tower date from the early 1300s when the church was re-built to accommodate Orford's growing population. The church remains a beautiful building, with fine stained glass and a 15th century stone font.

Images: Front cover – Orford Ness across the river from nr the Quay. A: Orford Quay – boats and bustle. B: Sailing Barge – a common site at Orford. C: Sea Lavender – a beautiful salt marsh plant. D: Orford Castle – the impressive Norman keep. E: St Bartholomew's Church – dates back to the 1100s.



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Dogs are welcome, please keep them under control and on lead as advised

‘Across the Marshes to the Castle’

Distance
4 miles (6.5 km)

Time: 2 hours

Terrain: Paths and tracks, which can be muddy. The path along the river wall is exposed. Part of route on public roads. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Leave car park and turn left. Walk to quay and turn right along path beside river. Follow this path along river wall towards Chantry point. Round point and follow path as it leads along winding river wall. Ignore path that leads back across Chantry point.

Follow river wall around to left until path turns right and drops down off river wall towards gate. Go through gate and follow track inland. When you reach road, turn right.



Just before you reach houses on right, take track that leads off left. Just past barn, take path on right up steps through hedge. Follow path across fields to castle.

Walk past impressive castle keep until you reach road. Turn left up tarmacked road, passing hotel.

Walk across Market Hill and enter churchyard beside King’s Head Inn. Walk up to church porch and turn right. Leave churchyard by second gate and turn left along lane (if you want to shorten route, walk straight down road to quay). Follow lane for short while, before taking first turning right. At end of lane, turn left.

Images: A: The River Ore – a great place for sailing. B: Sunflower field – with the River Ore beyond. C: Boats at Orford Quay – ready for the river. D: Orford Castle – the entrance to the ancient keep. E: Flower covered cottages – Orford has many beautiful buildings. F: Thistle flower – provides nectar for bumble bees.

Walk along lane until you come to wall of High House on left. Opposite end of wall, take footpath that leads off right. Follow path beside fields and across dyke to river wall. Turn right and follow path back to quay.



‘River and Village Stroll’

Distance
2 miles (3.5 km)

Time: 1 hour

Terrain: Paths and tracks, which can be muddy. The path along the river wall is exposed. Part of route on public roads. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Leave car park and turn left. Walk to the quay and turn right along path beside river.

Keep walking along river wall, away from the town, until you reach path that leads off right. Take this path as it drops down off the river wall and goes through gate. Turn right shortly after gate, along path that leads inland. Follow this path past sewage works and join access track.



When you reach road, turn right. Follow road until road junction, then turn left between cottages. Pass castle on left and follow road as it bends to right, passing hotel.

Walk across Market Hill and enter churchyard beside King’s Head Inn. Walk up to church porch and turn right. Leave church yard by second gate and walk straight down road to quay.

