

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 north to Kessingland. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

Visiting Snape Maltings

-  Ordnance Survey Map No. 212 (Woodbridge and Saxmundham)
-  Snape is accessible from the A12 and is within easy cycling distance of the East Suffolk Railway line, which provides a regular service between Lowestoft, Ipswich and London
-  Snape is also served by local buses: www.suffolkonboard.com or call 0845 606 6171



Snape MALTINGS

Snape Maltings Information
Open daily from 10am, with free parking
01728 688303
www.snapemaltings.co.uk
Snape *Walk Explorer Guide* has been produced with the generous support of Snape Maltings.

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

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Snape

Walk Explorer Guide



Enjoy two wonderful walks on the banks of the River Alde



This leaflet was first produced in 2012 by the Balance Project and part-financed by the European Union through the Interreg IV 2 Seas Cross-Border programme. Original research, text and some images by Simon Peachey, with additional route checking by Mary and Tony Bishop. This edition November 2016, reprinted with minor amendments June 2018.

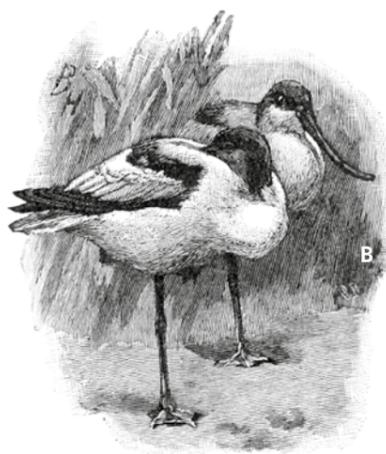


Snape

Suffolk Coast & Heaths *Walk Explorer Guide*

Highlights of Snape

1 The Snape Maltings complex and the village of Snape are an ideal base from which to explore this fascinating area, which is part of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Snape Walk Explorer Guide consists of two trails, taking in the river, Snape village and the Alde valley. Both trails start from Snape Maltings. The Maltings was built in the mid-19th century and was once one of the largest barley maltings in Suffolk. It was located at the head of the estuary as barges were able to navigate as far as Snape, providing easy transportation in an era before road transport. Since its closure as a maltings in 1965, the site has developed into a unique art, leisure and shopping complex.



2 The River flows through a wide, barely discernible valley. The countryside here is highly characteristic of the AONB, an intimate mosaic of wetland, woodland, farmland and heath that makes the area so special and deservedly recognised as one of Britain's finest landscapes. Signs of habitation around the River Alde date back to at least Roman times. Today, Snape village remains a thriving rural community whilst Snape Maltings is an excellent example of an enterprising business flourishing within a protected landscape.

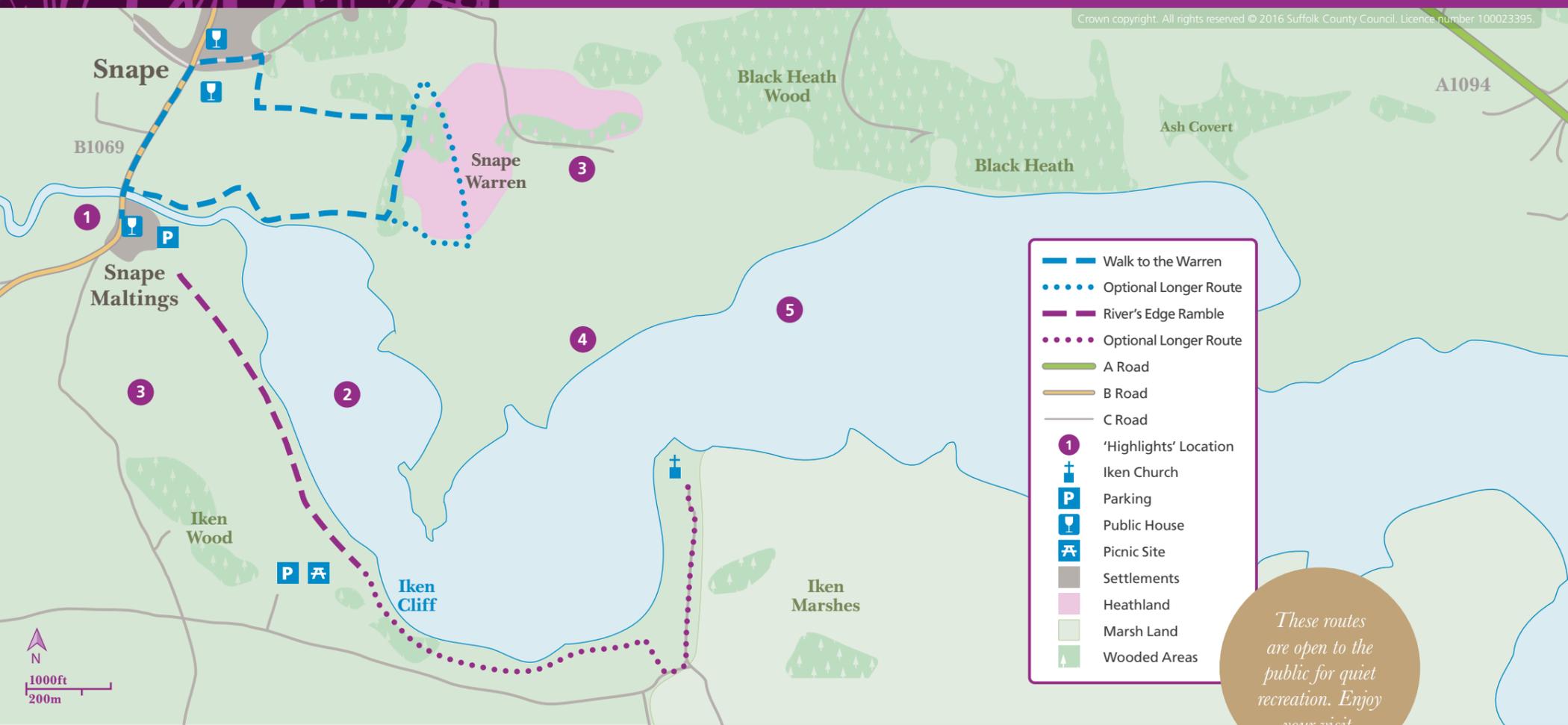


- 3 The Higher Ground** on either side of the river is part of the Sandlings plateau, a narrow band of light, sandy soil that runs roughly north-south from Southwold to the eastern fringe of Ipswich. Originally the land around the river would have been woodland, but its use by people over thousands of years has led to the more varied landscape we see today. The sandy soils were unsuitable for intensive agriculture, so sheep grazing dominated for many centuries. This led to the development of large expanses of heathland, a landscape of grassland, scattered trees and heather through which huge flocks of sheep roamed. Over the last century, modern farming methods, forestry and the growth of towns and villages have brought change and much of the area's heath has been lost. Fortunately, fragments survive in the Alde valley and elsewhere in the AONB, and conservation organisations are working together to increase it.
- 4 The Land in the Valley Floor** has always been more fertile than the higher ground above it. In places, land has been claimed from the river for cultivation and grazing. Some of the walls protecting these areas were destroyed by the infamous 1953 flood. The remains of these defences still reach out into the estuary.
- 5 The Alde Estuary** is vitally important for wildlife, in particular, migratory wading birds and wildfowl. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and, because of its international significance, a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar wetland site. Many of the species for which it is important can be seen from the Snape Explorer trails. By visiting at different times of the year, you can enjoy a wonderful wildlife spectacle that changes with the passing seasons.

Images: Front cover – Snape Maltings © Gill Moon – www.gillmoon.com. A. Sign post on the Sailability Path. B. Avocet – found in large numbers on the Alde during the winter. C. Otter – an elusive resident of the marshes and creeks © Robin Chittenden/FLPA.

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Walk to the Warren

Distance
2 miles (3.2 km)

Time: 45 mins

Terrain: Easy – Ground under foot fairly flat, part of route on minor public road, one stile. Please be aware of traffic.

From the Plough and Sail pub in front of Snape Maltings, cross Snape Bridge and turn right onto the grassy embankment with the river Alde on your right.

This lovely circular walk follows the bank of the river, winding through grazing marsh, reed beds and marshy scrub until it reaches Snape Warren. Here, the trail turns left, following a path through the wood for about 250m, before turning left once more.

Continue through marshland to Snape village. At the crossroads in the centre of Snape, turn left and follow the road back to Snape Maltings.



Extended Walk

The walk can easily be extended by adding a loop around Snape Warren, following the footpaths through the woods, foreshore and heathland. Allow an extra 15 minutes, plus more for bird watching.

River's Edge Ramble

Distance
2 miles (3.2 km) there and back

Time: 45 mins

Terrain: Easy – Ground under foot fairly flat.

This walk begins from the car park in the south eastern corner of the Maltings complex, beyond the music school building.

Follow the footpath across open farmland and then over a short, wooden boardwalk. Continue past a small area of scrub before crossing a longer boardwalk through a reedbed.

After the boardwalk, the path continues through a small area of saltmarsh (please be aware that this section can flood during very high tides). Cross farmland once more to reach the end of the trail at Iken picnic site.

Extended Walk

This walk can be extended by continuing along the riverside footpath beyond the picnic site. This provides excellent views of the river, its birdlife and Iken Church in the distance. The footpath can be very muddy in places particularly in the winter. You can walk all the way to the church by following the footpath when it turns away from the river to the public road. Turn left along the road and first left along Church Lane. Do not try to walk all the way to the Church along the river.

Part of the route is on a minor public road. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend that some type of high visibility clothing is worn. Allow an extra 1 hour. Distance 3 miles (5 km).



Images: A. Dandelion - wildflower seeds are an important food for farmland birds © Dave Pressland/FLPA. B. Bearded Tits – 'ping' in the reedbeds along the river © Paul Sawyer/FLPA. C. Gatekeeper – one butterfly to look out for on a summer walk © Malcolm Schuyll/FLPA. D. Marsh Harriers - can be seen in the area © Robert Canis/FLPA. E. Redshank - visit in important numbers in winter and breed on the saltmarsh during summer.

