

KINGS AND SAILORS: THE ORFORD HERITAGE AND PUB TRAIL, SUFFOLK



Easy Terrain

5.5 miles
Circular
2 to 2.5 hours

270514



Access Notes



1. The walk has just a few gentle slopes and the riverside/farm paths can be a little muddy in winter and after periods of rain.
2. There are no stiles on route, just a few steps and a couple of gates to negotiate.
3. There are a couple of stretches along the village/country lanes so take care of any traffic at these points.

With opportunity to visit two Adnams pubs along the way, the Jolly Sailor and the King's Head, there are lots of options for refreshments before or after your walk.

A 5.5 mile (can be shortened to 4.5 miles) circular trail from Orford, Suffolk. The walking route takes in a lovely stretch of the River Alde before turning inland, with an optional arm into the old Sudbourne Estate, and back into Orford with chance to visit the 12th century Orford Castle.

Getting there

Orford is located on the Suffolk coast, about 4 miles south of Aldeburgh. The walk starts from the Jolly Sailor pub on Quay Street. There is a large pay and display car park directly opposite the Jolly Sailor on Quay Street. The charges are (correct Spring 2014) £2.50 for 3 hours or £4.00 for 8 hours.

Approximate post code **IP12 2NU**.

Walk Sections



Start to Chantry Point



Standing on Quay Street facing the Jolly Sailor, turn left along the lane and keep ahead down to the quay. As you enter the quayside area, swing right in front of the shelter and right again onto the signed footpath, passing Quay House on the right. Follow the path as it swings right, up a few steps and then keep left along the embankment path.

Follow the embankment path with the River Alde on the left for some distance. This section of the river (from

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ADNAMS
SOUTHWOLD

Orford out to the sea) is also known as the River Ore. Across to the right you'll see Orford Castle in the distance, which you'll be visiting towards the end of the walk.

Over to the left you'll see a red and white lighthouse and some old military buildings set on the shingle spit, Orford Ness. The lighthouse was built in 1792, but decommissioned in 2013. Orford Ness has had a colourful history. The Ministry of Defence used the peninsula for secret military tests during both world wars and the Cold War including the first tests during the 1930s on the defence system that would later be named radar. The pagoda style buildings were designed for weapons testing, to absorb any accidental explosions whilst allowing gases to dissipate safely. Orford Ness is today managed by the National Trust as a nature reserve, with ferries to the site running from Orford Quay on designated open days.

Join the boardwalk to go through the gate and keep ahead on the riverside path. The path soon swings right to reach the most southern point, Chantry Point.



Ignore the first footpath off to the right, simply stay on the sandy track passing some horse paddocks and chicken enclosures and you'll come to pine woodland, Gedgrave Broom, ahead. Follow the track as it bends right, with the pine woodland running to the left. Follow this track for some distance and eventually it will lead you past a small row of pretty cottages on the left.

1 → 2 Chantry Point to Gedgrave Road



Stay on the embankment path as it continues to swing right around Chantry Point, following the river downstream. On the opposite side of the river now is Havergate Island, a marshy island nature reserve run by the RSPB. The island is an important breeding, roosting and feeding site for many migratory and resident bird species. Birds that can be found on the island include avocets, oystercatchers, redshanks, ringed plovers, golden plover, dunlin and greenshank.

Follow the path as it swings round a small triangular section of riverside marsh. Some distance further the path swings hard left and, a few paces later, fork right down the grass slope marked as a footpath to reach a metal gate. Pass through this and keep ahead on the track between reeds and open marsh farmland.

Over to the right are Chantry Marshes and to the left are Gedgrave Marshes, both providing valuable farmland. Follow the track all the way up to a T-junction with the road, Gedgrave Road. It's also home to a population of hares.

2 → 3 Gedgrave Road to Cottage Row

Turn right along the road, taking care of any traffic. You'll pass Richmond Cottages, a set of terraced cottages set back from the road to the right, and soon afterwards you'll see a pair of sandy tracks off to the left. Take the left-hand of these two, passing to the left of a large metal outbuilding.

3 → 4 Cottage Row to Sudbourne Hall



Ignore the footpath off to the right immediately after these cottages. Continue on the main track until you pass the next property (Orford Lodge) on the left and you'll come to a crossroads of paths. Here you have two choices.

If you wish exclude the optional arm out to Sudbourne Hall and back (reducing the walk to 4.5 miles) turn right at the crossroads and then pick up the instructions as marked in the next section. For the full walk turn left at the crossroads.

Pass alongside the black metal vehicle gates into Sudbourne Estate. Follow the lane, with open fields to the right and a line of horse chestnut trees to the left. A little further in, the track leads you past the cricket pavilion and ground to the right. The track then swings left to reach a crossroads. If you glance to the right you'll see the remnants of the old main estate entrance drive, with some of the ancient trees still lining the edges. Go straight ahead for a short distance further, to reach the pair of old untopped pillars from where you'll have the best views of the buildings of Sudbourne Hall.

Sudbourne Hall was once the centre of a thriving working estate, but today the remaining buildings have been converted into private homes. In 1600 the Manor of Sudbourne was purchased by Sir Michael Stanhope from the Crown. The estate then passed through the hands of the Viscounts of Hereford and the Marquises of Hertford. In the early 1900s the estate was an important stud farm for Suffolk Punch horses. During World War II the village of Sudbourne was evacuated and the hall and

village used for army accommodation and the estate used for tank training.

4 → 5 Sudbourne Hall to Orford Castle



When you've finished admiring the buildings, turn round and walk back the way you came. Keep ahead at the crossroads, past the cricket pavilion and eventually you'll emerge past the gates to reach the crossroads alongside Orford Lodge. Keep straight ahead here.

NOTE: if you are following the shortened walk, pick up the instructions from this point.

Follow this grass track between hedges and it will lead you past the fire station and out to a junction with the road in Orford. Turn right, passing the primary school and then playing fields to the right, and join the left-hand pavement along this road. As the pavement ends, ignore the turning off to the left, simply keep ahead between houses taking care of any traffic.

As you reach the market square (to the left), take the next turning on the right and after just a few yards this leads you to Orford Castle directly ahead.

5 → 6 Orford Castle to End



Take time to explore the castle and grounds should you wish, which are managed by English Heritage (assistance dogs only I'm afraid). The castle was built from 1165 when Henry II ordered that a new castle should be built overlooking Orford harbour, partly to consolidate his control over the Earl of Suffolk. The Earl of Suffolk, Hugh Bigod, had long been a thorn in Henry's side and Henry had confiscated Bigod's castles. Bigod was the leader in a revolt some years later against Henry. The keep is circular in shape with three square towers surrounding



this. The design was better than the earlier simple square keeps as it removed the blind spots that allowed attackers to creep up on the corners. The castle is remarkably intact allowing visitors to explore from the basement, through the lower and upper halls to the roof and today houses a museum.

When you've finished exploring, walk back the way you came to the long market square (now home to a parking area). Walk to the far end and you'll see the King's Head pub to the left, your second opportunity for a pint of Adnams on this trail.

Turn right and follow the main road, taking care of any traffic, as it swings left. You'll pass St Bartholomew church on the left. The church was first built between 1170 and 1220 and you'll see some fine Norman remains from that period outside the east end of the church. Continue as the road now swings right and then keep straight ahead at the crossroads, signed to Orford Quay. Continue past some pretty cottages and then you'll come to the Jolly Sailor on the right, marking the end of the walk.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

