

Local Adnams pubs



ANCHOR INN Tel: 01502 722112
The Street, Walberswick, IP18 6UA

Table with 3 columns: Feature, Yes/No, and Yes/No. Rows include Location: Village, Garden/courtyard, Children welcome, Disabled access, and Parking available.

BELL INN Tel: 01502 723109
Ferry Road, Walberswick, IP19 6TN

Table with 3 columns: Feature, Yes/No, and Yes/No. Rows include Location: Near Ferry, Garden/courtyard, Children welcome, Disabled access, and Parking available.

River Blyth (Ros Gordon)



This leaflet has been produced with the generous support of Adnams to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

Adnams has been proud to work with Suffolk Coast and Heaths for many years on a variety of projects. We are based in Southwold, just inside the AONB and it is with this beautiful location in mind, that we have great respect for the built, social and natural environment around us.

We often talk about that "ah, that's better" moment and what better way to celebrate that, than walking one of these routes and stopping off at an Adnams pub for some well-earned refreshment.

If you take this leaflet along to The Bell at Walberswick they'll be happy to offer you 10% off your meal before, during or after your walk."

Andy Wood, Adnams Chief Executive
adnams.co.uk 01502 727200
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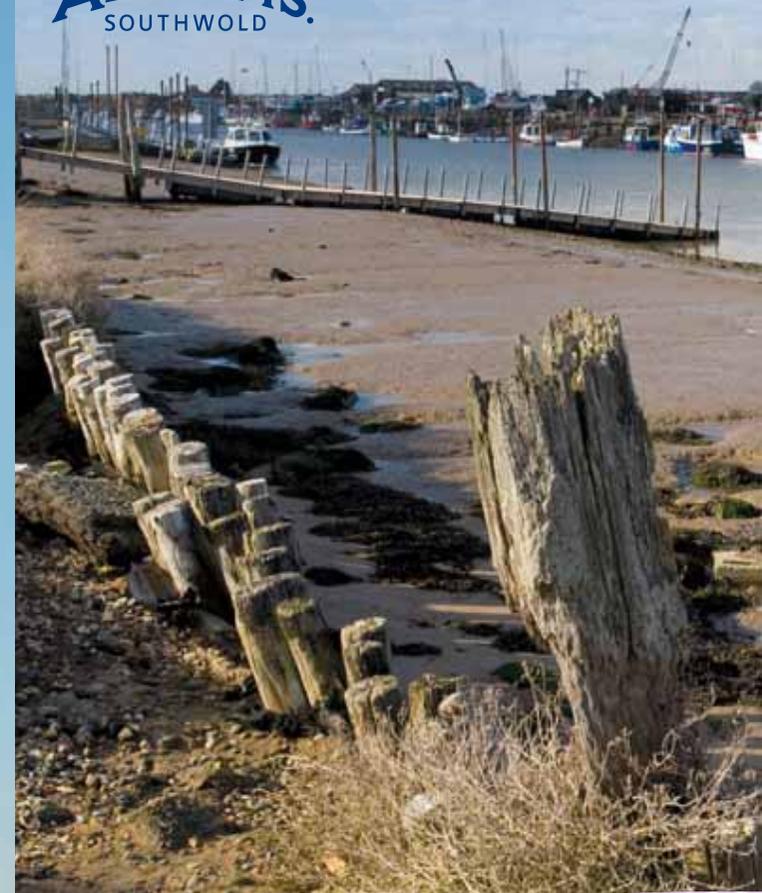
More Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB pub walks



- 01 Pin Mill, 02 Levington, 03 Waldringfield, 04 Woodbridge, 05 Butley, 06 Orford, 07 Snape, 08 Aldeburgh, 09 Eastbridge, 10 Westleton, 11 Walberswick, 12 Southwold, 13 Wrentham, 14 Blythburgh



Walberswick





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### Further information

#### Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB

Tel: 01394 384948 [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

#### Public Transport

**Trains** Nearest station is Halesworth.

**Buses** East Anglia Buses run to Southwold

[www.angliancoaches.co.uk](http://www.angliancoaches.co.uk) Tel: 01502 711109

**Coastlink** – on demand bus service Tel: 01728833526

**Ferry** Walberswick to Southwold 10:00am - 12:30pm | 2:30pm - 5:00pm. Runs: each day through the Summer Dogs travel free.

[www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com), 0845 606 6171

#### Dartford warbler birdsong recording:

[www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/d/dartfordwarbler/](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/d/dartfordwarbler/)

#### Southwold railway:

[www.southwoldrailway.co.uk/history/index.php](http://www.southwoldrailway.co.uk/history/index.php)

## Walberswick Route overview

Parking in Walberswick is £3 a day in the car parks, and spaces elsewhere are hard to find, especially at busy times. Both pubs have some parking, but check with staff before you walk.

Both walks are written as if starting from the Bell Inn, near the Ferry Car Park, but can be joined from any convenient point. The longer walk is an extension of the shorter – they start out together, and take in the beach and marshes to the south east of the village, and the church. The longer walk then sets off for a further loop to the north of the town, to Walberswick Common, and the river Blyth, whilst the short walk returns past the Anchor Inn and through the village. Be prepared for some muddy paths in winter, especially out on the marshes. The terrain is flat – apart from a few minor bumps in the heathland.

Most of the walk is off-road, but the road leading back into Walberswick is narrow, with small pavements. There can be heavy tourist traffic, so exercise caution, as they may be strangers to the area too.

The walks are suitable for taking dogs, but they should not be allowed to run on to the marshes, shingle or heath as they may disturb the bird life. Take note of Open Access signs at the Reserve.

## Walberswick

Long walk – 3.75 miles/6km

Short walk – 2.5 miles/4km



From the Bell Inn, take the track opposite, between some rows of terraced cottages, and follow round to right to steps over sea wall that protects this low-lying part of Walberswick from flooding.

Cross footbridge to your right, and follow path over shingle area to sand dunes.

Walberswick and its surrounding landscape have been a favourite venue and inspiration for artists since the beginning of the 19th century to the present day. **Philip Wilson Steer**, who spent several summers here perfecting his own impressionist style, is known for his beach scenes and seascapes. He was part of a **Utopian artists' colony** that congregated in Walberswick in about 1880, as was the architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh.



Turn right on the beach and head south. You may see areas fenced off to nurture the vegetation that helps hold the sand in place, so it can play its part in protection of the coast.



About 500m beyond the black beach huts, turn right **2**, dropping down from the shingle bank, to a path waymarked Suffolk Coast Path. (This is before the path into Walberswick Nature Reserve, marked with an interpretation board.) Cross a footbridge, over the Dunwich River.

This river used to meet the sea at **Dunwich** from the west. Now it turns northwards to flow parallel to the beach, behind the shingle bank, to meet the Blyth at Walberswick.

In the late 13th century, when the coastline was considerably further out to sea, the **Blyth** flowed along this route in the opposite direction, its mouth being just to the north of the Dunwich River. Dunwich was a nationally important port then, with a good natural harbour, but erosion, and build-up of shingle at both river mouths, forced changes. Dunwich declined from 1328, despite efforts to dig the shingle away, and the Dunwich river was diverted northwards.

By 1587, the Dunwich river was flowing into the Blyth, and the Blyth reached the sea via a man-made channel direct to the sea, as it is today. This meant that the **port of Walberswick** had to change its focus: previously, it had faced the lower Blyth on the south side of the town, but the new orientation shifted port operations north, to the bank of the new Blyth route.



After bridge, turn left following the Suffolk Coast Path signs and then fork left at a junction **3** again following the Suffolk Coast Path sign, down to a boardwalk alongside the river. Shortly after crossing a small wooden bridge turn right onto a footpath through the reeds heading toward a seat **4** on a low hill.

From here there are magnificent views towards Dunwich, across **Oldtown** and **Corporation Marshes**, and of the extensive shingle bank protecting them, which is periodically breached by the sea. Also note the industrial heritage: an old drainage wind pump in the marshes, and **Sizewell Nuclear Power Station** in the distance. Walberswick's original parish church was allegedly sited hereabouts, but moved inland as the port shifted its emphasis.

These marshes are unique in the area – they are 'open coastal fens', the flat valley floor of the old Dunwich River and **coastal flats**, covered in a deep peat deposit.

**Oldtown Marshes** were associated with the old port before the river course altered, and **Corporation Marshes** were enclosed by 1587. **Westwood and Dingle Marshes** were also reclaimed. Coastal flooding in the 20th century has damaged some of the drainage, and the area is now the **Walberswick Nature Reserve**, with some cattle grazing on the higher areas, and extensive reedbeds.



Behind the seat turn right, and follow the path, which bends left and out of the Reserve, heading towards Walberswick Church **5**. Turn left on unmade road between houses, then cross a tarmac lane into a byway towards the church and churchyard.

The size of the ruins of **St Andrew's Church**, dating from late 15th century, demonstrates the wealth and status of this maritime community. This was the village's third church, built at the end of the 15th Century. It was partly dismantled, late 17th century, to save the burden of its upkeep, and the new church built within it. It contains a number of features that date from the medieval period, including floor slabs with merchants' marks. The tower was preserved from demolition thanks to its importance as a prominent mark for mariners.

**Decision time now – to carry on a further 2.5km or so – or not. See overleaf for the longer walk.**

### Short walk – continued



Turn right and follow this road - with care, narrow pavements - back into Walberswick, passing the Anchor Inn on the right. The road bends left, past the village green and eventually to the Ferry Car Park, passing the Bell Inn on your right.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. Located on the coast of East Anglia and covering 403 square kilometres, the AONB extends from the Stour estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and to Kessingland in the north.

[www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

## Long walk – *continued*

 **Cross over, visit church, or carry straight on into Church Lane. It becomes a bridleway, and enters Open Access land. Soon after this, take the second available bridleway turning off to the right, crossing Walberswick Common.**

**Walberswick Common** is the largest of several tracts of land around the village held by the Walberswick Common Lands Trust. This charitable organisation, originally set up in the 19th century to manage grazing land for cattle, uses income from the lands, which include the car parks, to fund scholarships and to protect the environment, with the help of contributions from Defra under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme. One of its principles is to maintain unrestricted access for Walberswick residents.

 **Go straight over a crossing path, then take the left fork where the tracks split **6**. At a T-junction of tracks, turn right (waymarked with Sandlings Walk nightjar symbol) **7**.**

The Common is characteristically clothed in gorse and heather. This is the ideal home for the rare Dartford warbler, now re-establishing itself in the county. It first re-appeared

at the **Dunwich Heath Nature Reserve**, but breeding pairs have now been seen on the Common. They are particularly vulnerable to cold winters, but the gorse offers some protection, as well as a perch from which to sing.

 **At a metalled path turn left **8** and soon you will pass a seat on the left, marking the location of Walberswick Station.**

The **Southwold Railway** opened in 1879, with a 3 foot gauge track running 8.75 miles from Southwold to Halesworth, crossing the river Blyth via a swing bridge. Southwold was by then in decline as a port, unable to compete with Lowestoft, but needed to serve its ongoing fishing industry, to trade, and to draw in 'tourists'. Plans were put forward to extend and improve the line, but none came to pass. World War One damaged the fishing industry, motor bus services were introduced in 1925, and the line closed in 1929.

 **Carry straight on along the bridleway, on the embankment of the old railway line, across the marsh to a steel Bailey bridge that replaces, and uses the foundations of, the old railway swing bridge.**

Upstream (left) from the bridge, the river Blyth opens out into a wide area of **saltmarsh** and **mudflats** leading up to **Blythburgh**. In recent years there has been controversial local debate between the community, advisors, consultants and government agencies over how best to 'manage' the area, and the river, to balance the risks and costs of actual and predicted flooding against the costs and benefits of flood defence.

 **Turn right before the bridge onto a footpath on river wall beside the River Blyth. Follow this path back to Walberswick and Ferry Car Park.**

***Alternative route back to Walberswick in summer months (via ferry – does not run in winter): Cross bridge, turn right along river wall. You will come to Southwold Harbour: Adnams Harbour Inn on left, and sheds selling fresh fish and, nearer the river mouth, the ferry back to Walberswick and the car park.***

