The White Hart and Blyth Estuary, Blythburgh, Suffolk

2 miles Circular 1 hour

The White Hart dates from the 16th century and is a traditional country inn known for its oak-beamed interior.

A 2 mile circular pub walk from the White Hart in Blythburgh, Suffolk. The walking route heads south along the edge of the Blyth Estuary with plenty of birdlife to enjoy, before returning via green lanes and paths to visit the village church, known as the Cathedral of the Marshes.

Getting there

Blythburgh is located on the main A12, about 4 miles west of Southwold in Suffolk. The walk starts and finishes from The White Hart pub, which is on the A12 and has its own car park.

Approximate post code IP19 9LQ.

Walk Sections

Start to Lodge Lane

Standing on the A12 pavement, with your back to the White Hart, turn right and then fork right down the stone track signed as a footpath. Just before the track opens out, turn right onto the footpath signed to Walberswick. Follow this over a few steps and then through a kissing gate into Walberswick National Nature Reserve.

Follow this grass path with the pub garden to the right and the Blyth Estuary and Angel Marshes to the left. This nature reserve is valuable particularly for its diverse group of habitats within a small area including reed bed, heath, grassland, grazing marshes, shingle, woodland, saline lagoons, mud flats and salt marshes. This matrix of habitats ensures healthy numbers of visitor and

Access Notes

1. The route is fairly flat and follows unmade paths which can be muddy after rain and can also get a little overgrown in the summer.
2. There is one kissing gate and some steps to negotiate along the way.
3. You will need to cross the A12 twice and the road can be busy so take particular care at these points.

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inhabitant birds including Avocet, Black Tailed Godwit, Bittern, Marsh Harriers and Woodlark. Further downstream the River Blyth’s estuary mouth forms the main fishing harbour area of Southwold.

A little way in you’ll see a bird hide down to the left (accessed via a stretch of boardwalks), a great place to visit should you wish to spend more time enjoying the wildlife within the estuary. Continue some distance further, until you reach a signed junction of paths (with yellow arrows marking paths ahead and to the right). Turn right here and then swing right to merge with a wider path heading back in the direction you came. The path narrows through trees and then climbs a little to become a wider grass track between hedgerows, known as Lodge Lane.

Lodge Lane to A12

Keep ahead along the green lane and continue as the path becomes a farm access track. You will emerge out to a T-junction with Dunwich Road. Turn left for a few paces and then cross over to turn right down the tarmac drive (with Mill Creek/ Mill Cottage to the left) signed as a bridleway.

Keep ahead as this drive dwindles to a narrow grass path between hedgerows. Eventually this path will lead you to a T-junction with the A12.

A12 to Blythburgh Church

Turn right along the pavement for a few yards and then cross over, with extreme care, to take the signed footpath opposite. Follow this narrow path down the slope and then swinging right to follow a straight level section with a fenced paddock to the right.

Soon you will be forced to swing left and you’ll reach the corner of a white cottage. Turn right passing the row of terraced cottages on the left and keep ahead on the stone vehicle track. The track climbs and then swings right and, before you reach the road, turn left up the steps into Blythburgh’s church.

Blythburgh Church to End

The magnificent medieval church is Grade I listed and its sheer scale has led to its nickname as the Cathedral of the Marshes. Every night since the 1960s the church has been flood-lit and is a landmark for travellers on the A12. Christianity came to Suffolk early in the seventh century and Blythburgh was one of its most important centres. At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 Blythburgh was part of the royal estate. It was one of Suffolk’s twelve market towns, and its church was especially rich, worth ten times the average for Suffolk, one of the richest counties in England.

Keep ahead towards the porch entrance and then swing left around the end of the church. At the far side keep straight ahead and go down the paved steps in the church yard corner. At the bottom of the steps turn right and after a few paces you’ll come to a T-junction with another path. Turn left here and you’ll emerge to a pretty grass area alongside the River Blythe. There’s a strategically placed bench here should you wish to pause and enjoy the views across the river and to the hills beyond.

When you’ve finished enjoying the views, turn right along the track with the river running to the left. Continue past a metal vehicle barrier and follow the surfaced track as it swings steadily right, leading you to the village hall on the right. Cross left over the main A12 with care to reach the White Hart for some well-earned hospitality.