

Local Adnams pubs



WHITE HORSE Tel: 01728 648222

Darsham Road, Westleton, Saxmundham, IP17 3AH

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| Location: Village | | Restaurant/dining room | Yes |
| Garden/courtyard | Yes | Bar meals | Yes |
| Children welcome | Yes | Accommodation | Yes |
| Disabled access | Yes | Dogs welcome | Yes |
| Parking available | Yes | Credit cards welcome | Yes |

BELL INN Tel: 01728 648286

The Green, Middleton, Saxmundham, IP17 3NN

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| Location: Village | | Restaurant/dining room | Yes |
| Garden/courtyard | Yes | Bar meals | Yes |
| Children welcome | - | Accommodation | - |
| Disabled access | - | Dogs welcome | Yes |
| Parking available | Yes | Credit cards welcome | Yes |



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. Over several years we have been working hard to make our impact on the environment a positive one, please visit our website to discover some of the things we’ve been up to.

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.

We’d love to hear your thoughts on the walks (and the pubs!), please upload your comments and photos to our website adnams.co.uk.”

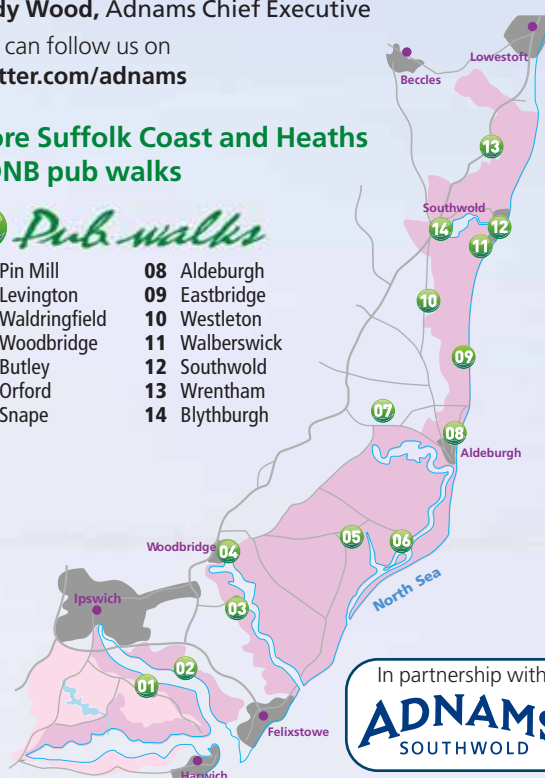
Andy Wood, Adnams Chief Executive

You can follow us on twitter.com/adnams

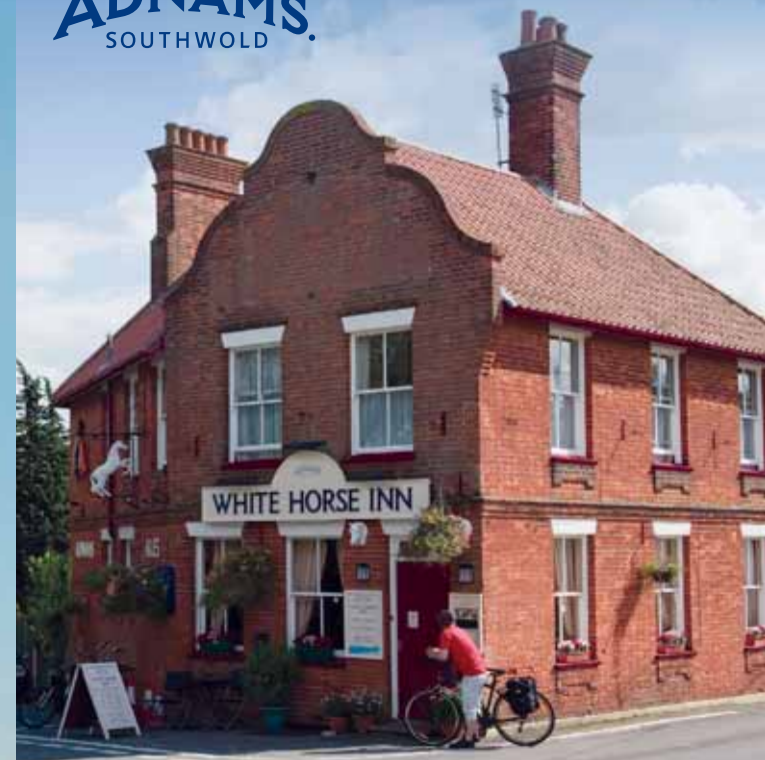
More Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB pub walks



- 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



Westleton & Middleton





Route overview

Two circular walks start from the White Horse pub in Westleton. A third is a route from the Bell Inn, Middleton, to Westleton and back.

Both pubs have car parks, but out of courtesy, check before you leave your car there unattended, especially if you plan to walk first and visit the pub later.

Alternatively, park at Dunwich for the 'long walk' (7 miles), visiting Westleton en route.

Long walk: mainly heathland, on path or track, with short stretches of road, and some road crossings, to be treated with caution.

Short walks: farmland.

Further information

Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB

Tel: 01394 384948

www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

East of England Tourism

www.visiteastofengland.com

Public transport

Bus Service details can be found at:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/TransportAndStreets/PublicTransport/

Coastlink Demand-responsive bus service links Darsham station with locations in the AONB area between Southwold and Leiston. Tel: 01728 833526 to book a journey.

Trains The nearest railway station is Darsham.


www.suffolkonboard.com,

0845 606 6171


Westleton

Long walk – 7 miles/11.2 km

NB – You are advised to take an OS map with you, and check instructions and map carefully between points 4 and 7, as changes to the Forest could alter paths, signage and landmarks.


 From the White Horse Inn, head past phone box, up lane along left side of village green, to crossroads 3.

Westleton once had **two mills**, and some of their remains are in the village sign: part of it is a sail beam from an old post mill, and a mill stone lies at its base. Oak from the mill post itself was recycled to repair pews in **Blythburgh Church**.

 Fork left (Blythburgh Road). Just before bus shelter, take footpath to right 4. Follow path through open grassy heath, parallel to road, to junction of tracks 5. Turn left (briefly) then bear right onto second available path leading obliquely into woodland – part of Dunwich Forest (signed).


Under a new plan for **Dunwich Forest**, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and RSPB are working in partnership with the Forestry Commission to revitalise this old conifer plantation. Both wildlife conservation and public access will be enhanced. Here in the southern part of the Dunwich Forest, conifers have been felled to make way for lowland heath with some wet woodland and broadleaved woodland.

Dogs will enjoy all the walks, but please observe the Open Access restrictions on heathland, where dogs must be on leads between 1 Mar and 31 July so as not to disturb ground nesting birds (and observe any additional restrictions on signs), restrain them from worrying livestock and clear up and dispose of dog waste properly.

 At a forestry track 6, turn right and then immediately left, onto footpath down slope. After about 50m, follow footpath bearing right off track 7 (marked). Path reaches cross track, opposite fenced entrance marked as 'private land' 8. Turn right onto cross track - also route of The Sandlings Walk.

The dry sandy heaths of the Suffolk coast are known as **the Sandlings**. Since about 1900, some 80% of the total heathland area has been lost to agriculture and forestry.

The Sandlings Walk is a 96.5km footpath from Ipswich to Southwold, linking as many fragments of the old heathland as possible.


 Here, the path becomes broad track, leading to Westleton Heath Nature Reserve 9: enter reserve and follow path. At "No Entry" symbol, turn left, out of reserve, and follow Sandlings Walk waymarks.

Westleton gives its name - geologically - to the '**Westleton Beds**' of sand and gravel, laid down in an ancient sea, that cover this area of Suffolk, producing a dry acid heathland soil. Were it not for sheep grazing in the past, these heaths would be tree-covered. Now bracken, birch, hawthorn and sloe will colonise the heath if allowed, so active management including rotational burning is needed, to preserve this special habitat. (Firebreaks help contain accidental fires, a real risk in summer.)

Both here and on **Dunwich Heath**, the heather species are mainly common heather, with some deep purple bell


heather, spectacular in flowering season (June-September). The White Admiral butterfly thrives on their nectar, together with many other insects – solitary bees and wasps, glow-worms and striped-wing grasshoppers.

The Dartford Warbler, Stonechat and Woodlark are found on the heath, but all are shy. The woodland is home to Nightingale and Woodcock.

 Ignore first crossing track, then at next junction of tracks 10 turn left onto a bridleway, past Sandy Lane Farm (left) then cottages (right). After about 950m, at crossroads 11, take road straight across, into Dunwich.

Optional diversion: at grass triangle, turn left for beach 12 (toilets and café here).

Dunwich beach and cliffs, cut in the 'Westleton Beds', suffer from unremitting coastal erosion, and the old medieval port of **Dunwich** is long lost beneath the waves. On the beach, you can see an innovative approach to retaining the shingle and protecting the cliffs, using 'geotextile sausages' filled with beach material.

 Resuming from grass triangle, take clifftop footpath (unfenced) into wood, marked with Sandlings Way and Coastal Path signs. Cliff is in soft material, so - taking note of any signs about recent cliff slippage or path diversion, dogs on leads, children under control, peeking over edge inadvisable... follow path along cliff top, ruins of Greyfriars Franciscan friary to your right. Following signs, turn left through wall, through wood, then right on to footpath and lane past cottages.



Go through gate 13 to join Westleton Road – head straight on. Then, soon turn left at Dairy House 14 following the Coastal Path sign. Stay with footpath and Coastal Path signs through the wood, emerge on to Minsmere Road 15 with care. Cross to a bridleway almost opposite.

At a cross track, ignore Coast Path turning off left – your route continues straight on the bridleway.

Mount Pleasant Farm, on right, was acquired by British Energy in 1990 as an intended dumping ground for peat extracted in the construction of Sizewell C nuclear power station. This has not taken place, and the site has been bought by RSPB and National Trust, to compensate for loss of coastal habitats to erosion, and for heathland creation that will link with existing fragments to form a more valuable ecological unit.



Pass through a gate, Dunwich Heath on your left, and carry straight on, eventually down a hill with a steep sided World War Two tank trap to the right.

This area is “Westleton Walks” – not a reference to leisure but to the sheepwalks, as the heathland grazing was known.

In the 18th and early 19th century, smuggling was rife along this coast. **Scott’s Hall**, to your left, was once known as a repository for smuggled goods en route inland from the coast. Also to your left is



Vault Hill. The sandy soil was ideal for hiding goods in holes, or vaults, which were covered with boards then turf.



Pass through a second gate 16 and at the tarmac lane 17, by the entrance to Minsmere Reserve, turn right. Follow this lane and at a “Give Way” sign carry straight on toward Westleton (signed), crossing Westleton Common.

On either side of the path across the common are **old gravel workings**; pits were worked here from at least 1885. Initially small scale, for local use, extraction increased in World War Two for runway construction at nearby airfields.

In the 1990’s the area was bought by the Parish Council, with Heritage Lottery Fund assistance, to be managed as public open space and for wildlife. The gravel workings have resulted in an area of diverse habitats, and the rare Silver-studded Blue butterfly is now sometimes seen here.



At the bottom of a gentle hill fork right and enter Westleton past some cottages. Go straight over cross roads and return to the White Horse past the duck pond.

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

Suffolk Coast
& Heaths
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Westleton

Short walk – 2.25 miles/3.6 km



From the White Horse, follow the Darsham Road to the left, out of village.

Westleton, derivation ‘Vestlithi’s homestead’, nestles in a shallow valley facing south to the Minsmere River, and away from the bitter northerly winds. Norseman Vestlithi chose a good spot – the place always seems to generate a warm glow.




On a left hand bend, take bridleway on right 1 (Old Hall Lane), past houses. Cross field towards small wood and carry straight on at cross tracks onto a footpath. Cross two more fields towards farm buildings.

In spring, the paths are lined with Alexanders, the first umbelliferous plant of the year to flower. Brought here by the Romans, who ate the leaf, stem, root and buds, it tastes celery-like, but its place was taken by our more familiar celery varieties in the 19th century. Often seen in the AONB area, it particularly thrives in near-coastal locations. Its success can make it invasive, crowding out other early-flowering plants such as snowdrops and primroses, and obstructing footpaths.



At tarmac lane turn right past Charity Farm (NB no verge). After sharp bends, turn right onto footpath opposite large red roofed barn.

You have been walking across “**ancient estate claylands**”, but this path is at the transition from clay to sand, and from here you can see the heath and pine belts that mark the “**estate sandlands**” of **Dunwich Forest**.

 **Cross first field, follow direction of next footpath sign away from power lines, leftish and into a second field towards corner of a wood.**

After 150 metres – before reaching wood – fork right onto another footpath 2 (White’s Lane), passing to the right of a small clump of trees and back toward the power lines.

Cross sleeper bridge over ditch, turn right and follow the field edge. At cross tracks go straight on – becomes bridleway.

Follow field edge, woodland to right. The field is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, managed as a wild haymeadow (dogs on leads please). The bridleway becomes a green lane following line of power cable. Enjoy the sculptures in the large garden abutting the lane.


Turn right at village green: the White Horse Inn is ahead.

The **village pond** is a tranquil place to sit and watch the ducks, easily accessible and a delight to young and old.


Around the village pond, eighteen lime trees were planted, each commemorating a villager who gave his life in the World War One.

Middleton/Westleton


Link walk – 1.5 miles/2.4 km

 **From the Bell Inn car park, bear left on the road, and pass the village school on the right.**

Middleton is notable for its tradition of hunting the Cutty (little) Wren, on St Stephen’s Day, 26 December. Thought possibly to stem from a Druid practice of telling the future from the song of a captured wren, these days it is celebrated with a lantern procession from the village hall, and Molly dancing at the Bell Inn.


 **Turn left onto a footpath by the Old Church Room.**

The meadows and streams here are home to Wagtails and Swallows, which feed on the rich insect life. Skylarks are here too, and the insects and berries of the hedgerows attract visiting warblers like Blackcap and Whitethroat in summer.

 **Cross the Minsmere river, over a bridge and weir.**

Upstream to the left is **Yoxford**, and to the right, **Eastbridge, Minsmere Nature Reserve**, and the coast. The mouth of the Minsmere river, once an estuary, was blocked by a shingle spit, and silted up to form the low-lying marshland that extends from here to include the Nature Reserve.


The course of the river has been modified, especially between Middleton and the sea, to give improved drainage to the surrounding levels. From Eastbridge, it flows to the sea via the New Cut, constructed in the early 19th century, and then a sluice. You can trace the course of the Minsmere Old River, still followed by the parish boundary, on an OS map. Although some distance from the sea, Middleton is at the top edge of the tidal floodplain that extends inland from Minsmere.

 **Carry straight on to reach a junction with a tarmac lane. Turn right past farm buildings and turn left onto a footpath up a hill. Follow this broad track through the fields to another junction with a tarmac road.**

Turn right and walk down this road (NB no verge) toward Westleton. Just after The Grange, cross a stile on the corner of Wash Lane, cross the field diagonally, and go through gate into the churchyard.

Westleton Parish Church of St Peter dates from 1340. It has had two towers in its history - the first burnt down, and the second was irrevocably damaged by a stray landmine that fell on it in World War Two. The thatched roof is one of the largest in Suffolk.

The churchyard is managed as a wildlife sanctuary, and is home to many wild flowers and grasses.

 **Follow the path alongside the church and out to the road. Turn left and pass the village hall on the right and continue up to the White Horse Inn.**

Return to Middleton by the same route.

