

# DISCOVER THE DEBEN PENINSULA

An ancient land, full of natural beauty & hidden surprises



Ssshhhh! The peaceful Deben Peninsula is surely the Suffolk Coast's best-kept secret. Just a few miles from Ipswich or a ferry ride from Felixstowe, the stretch of Suffolk Sandlings between the treasured royal Anglo-Saxon burial grounds of Sutton Hoo and Henry II's towering Orford castle-keep is so much more than just an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Rivers, rolling uplands, flat coastal levels, long shingle beaches and vibrant little village communities, it's an area that's irresistible to all who enjoy the great outdoors - history-rich, full of wildlife and peppered with surprises.

Hunt out the world's first fully operational radar station or track down the home of Suffolk Punch horses. Take a seasonal cycle-ride or stroll out and crunch along pinecone paths. Get a taste for fresh asparagus or look for

samphire and prehistoric sharks' teeth on the river beach. Sit on ancient Burrow Hill and see the centuries fall away by Butley's row-boat ferry. Let your soul soar with a kite, high above rare, vegetated shingle shelves or follow Marsh harriers circling above Martello towers. Go wild about picnics or enjoy something deliciously local at a thatched, 'Suffolk pink' pub.

## Stay a While

The uncommercialised Deben Peninsula lends itself to get-away-from-it-all self-catering stays, time-out in farmhouse and village B&Bs or a country house hotel retreat.

Whether you plump for a self-catering cottage, pitch up for some family fun at Tangham's Forest Centre campsite, take the caravan for a trundle or mooch along with the 'mo-ho' to stop at small-scale camping and caravanning sites at the heart of the community, there really is room for everyone to enjoy.

Nearby Woodbridge and Orford also offer a wide selection of B&Bs, hotels and pubs with rooms. [thesuffolkcoast.co.uk](http://thesuffolkcoast.co.uk)

The Pocket Guide to the Deben Peninsula is produced by Deben Coastal Community Team & East Suffolk Council.



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### Ferry Nice Indeed

Don't miss a trip on one of the Deben Peninsula's historic foot-ferries. Cross the Deben between Bawdsey and Felixstowe by little boat or enjoy being rowed across Butley River near RSPB Boyton Marshes en route to/from Orford. The seasonal boat services take bikes too, but best check details before setting out. Bawdsey Ferry: 01394 282173 (office) / 07709 411511 (ferryman); Butley Ferry: [aldeandore.org](http://aldeandore.org)



### Another Ferry Nice 'Tweet'

Boat trips around the Alde and Ore estuary and to RSPB Havergate Island from Orford quay are not just for birdwatchers! Discover Suffolk's only natural island, the low-lying salt marshes in Butley River estuary embanked back in 1450, home to brown hares, avocets, terns, spoonbills, plus migrating ducks and waders. Don't forget your binoculars! [orfordrivertrips.co.uk](http://orfordrivertrips.co.uk); [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

### FULL OF MYSTERY...

Why the dark-red cliffs and grey-brown clay? The 'blows' of sand and strange lumps and bumps in the haunting landscape? What happened to Suffolk's second largest priory at Butley and why was an 'Elizabethan' style mansion built at Bawdsey in the 1880s? Who were the 'Sand People'? What's left of 'Goseford', the Deben's mighty medieval shipping port on a par with Lynn and Yarmouth that was more important than Ipswich when supplying ships to Edward III? Did elephant ancestors really walk these lands? Why was horse-thief Margaret Catchpole caught at Hollesley Bay? What are all the strange concrete structures which dot the coast?

### ...AND HISTORY

Millions of years ago sands were deposited here in shallow seas where whales and sharks swam. Prehistoric trees dropped pollen, inspiring modern-day scientists to recreate a Pliocene forest at Sutton Knoll; a 'mastodon' tooth was found nearby. Our early ancestors cleared wide stretches of heathland to graze their flocks, exposing the sandy soil. A ghostly premonition led to Basil Brown's Sutton Hoo excavations and his discovery of Raedwald's Anglo-Saxon ship-burial revolutionised our understanding of early England. Bawdsey and Alderton merchant mariners counted amongst the shipping magnets of Goseford, a long-lost cluster of harbours around the Deben estuary. The Reformation saw Butley Priory fall from grace and a Victorian stockbroker couldn't resist splashing his cash on his seaside residence. Countless smugglers like the lover of legendary Margaret Catchpole operated along the coast and when war threatened, everything from Napoleonic gun towers to later anti-tank defences were put in place - and left behind for generations to remember.

### Ancient Local Building Blocks

Can you spot where Shottisham and Sutton churches were repaired using 'Boxstones' in Victorian times? Ufford and Eyke churches include rough blocks of Red Crag, whilst the medieval tower of Chillesford church near Butley was built totally from Coralline Crag. [geosuffolk.co.uk](http://geosuffolk.co.uk)



- ### Superlative Stuff
- World's first fully operational radar station - Bawdsey
  - Smallest licensed ferry in Europe - Butley Ferry
  - A rock-type unique to Suffolk - Coralline Crag
  - One of medieval England's top sources of shipping - 'Goseford'
  - UK's oldest stud for the oldest English breed of working horse - Hollesley
  - Suffolk's largest parish - Sutton
- ### Key
- ① Sutton Hoo [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)
  - ② Bawdsey Radar [bawdseyradar.org.uk](http://bawdseyradar.org.uk)
  - ③ Suffolk Punch Trust [thesuffolkpunchtrust.co.uk](http://thesuffolkpunchtrust.co.uk)
  - ④ Orford Castle [englishheritage.org.uk](http://englishheritage.org.uk)
- 🚉 Railway Station
  - P Car Parks
  - S Picnic site
  - F Ferry
  - WC Public Toilets

- ### Countryside Code
- Plan ahead. Be prepared.
  - Follow paths, advice and local signs.
  - Consider the local community/others enjoying the outdoors.
  - Be careful with naked flames/cigarettes at any time of the year.
  - Leave gates/property as you find them.
  - Take litter home. Clean up after your dog.
  - Always keep dogs under close control, especially amongst livestock/during bird nesting season. Release your dog if chased by cattle.



### Quiet Lanes for Gentle Journeys

All users are expected to respect each other on 'Quiet Lanes' - designated minor rural roads close to other public rights of way. Please slow down and greet those you meet!



## ADVENTUROUS LITTLE COMMUNITIES

Discover the 'Secret Seven' parishes of the Deben Peninsula, just a few miles from the towns of Woodbridge and Orford, yet worlds apart. Surely Enid Blyton visited and found inspiration here during her time at Seckford Hall near Woodbridge?

### Alderton ('Auld-a-ten')

The church tower of 'Alderton-on-Sea' as it was known in the 1500s was a landmark for ships. It collapsed around a decade after Martello towers were built on the coast nearby. By its creeper-clad remains, St Andrew's bell now has a new stand.

### Bawdsey ('Board-see')

A port, an island, a secret spot where radar was invented - Bawdsey has been many things in its time. In 1880 stockbroker- MP Sir Cuthbert Quilter made it his own, building a quirky seaside mansion - allegedly adding towers with every million he made! Today a foot-ferry replaces his Deben steam chain-ferry. In the village, don't miss the rare Edward VIII post box!

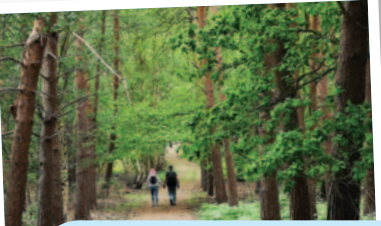


### Boyton ('Boy-ten')

Close to ancient Burrow Hill, old Boyton docks and its nature reserve by Butley River, Boyton quietly remembers its industrious past when it was once rich from the spoils of pottery clay and coprolite pits. Smart 18th century almshouses sit alongside St Andrew's medieval tower, but it was the Victorians who rejigged and repositioned a fine Norman doorway - to be in view of the rectory!

### Hollesley ('Hoze-lee')

It boasted a fishery, church and mill in Domesday times, but the largest village on the Deben Peninsula today is renowned for Hollesley Bay Stud (est. 1759) - home of the Suffolk Punch Trust. Don't miss its hilltop church with traces of medieval arcading and its two colourful commons.



### Ramsholt ('Rams-howlt')

Coprolite pits, chicory maltings, oyster beds, boats, farms and cottages - Ramsholt has seen them all come and go. Round-towered All Saints' sits alone on an ancient spot, surrounded by wildflowers and inspiring Deben views. Its quayside and river beach are popular spots for all sorts of paddlers from samphire seekers to canoeists.



### Shottisham ('Shot-i-shum')

With its clusters of pink pantiled cottages, thatched pub, weatherboarded water mill and St Margaret's church peeping its medieval tower above the trees, Shottisham is true to the rural idyll painted on its village sign. Its brook winds across water-meadows to meet the Deben at Shottisham Creek.

### Sutton ('Sut-ten')

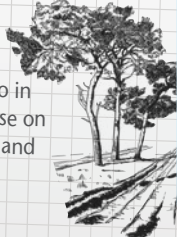
Home to farm- and heathland, to world famous Anglo-Saxon ship-burial site, Sutton Hoo, and prehistoric forest site, Sutton Knoll, the parish of Sutton is Suffolk's largest and perhaps its most intriguing. Wood Hall has reminders of a priory governed by Ely abbots, even though powerful Butley Priory was nearby.

## BEAUTIFUL - NATURALLY

Purple Ling heather on Hollesley Common and the flit of a Silver Studded Blue. Ground-nesting Little Terns amidst Shingle Street's sea kale. The chack-chack of a Stonechat perched on Sutton Heath gorse. A Common lizard basking by the sandy woodland track. A Marsh Harrier circling the reedbeds by Boyton Dock. Waders putting their best foot forward by old Deben oyster beds near Shottisham Creek. Sand Martins carving out a new river-cliff home near Ramsholt. A Nightjar's churr in Tangham Forest at dusk.

Only 20% of The Sandlings' lowland heath survives to this day. Together with Suffolk's ever-changing coastline, these valuable pockets of our past have been designated as part of the Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Deben Peninsula is the proud home of Special Protected Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Sites (wetlands) for birdlife; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for wildlife and geology and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). A mitigation strategy (RAMS) supported by Natural England is also in place to reduce the impact of recreational use on habitat sites. Thank you for visiting, sharing and enjoying the Deben Peninsula responsibly.



# The Pocket Guide to the DEBEN PENINSULA

River Deben • Estuaries, Coast & Countryside  
Wildlife • Ancient History • Military Heritage  
Family Fun • Walks & Cycle Rides

Explore Suffolk's most beautiful, ancient secret



## GETTING AROUND

- By Road:** A12 (Ipswich/London/Lowestoft)
- By Bus:** [suffolkonboard.com](http://suffolkonboard.com)
- By Rail:** East Suffolk Line [eastsuffolklines.co.uk](http://eastsuffolklines.co.uk); [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)
- By Water:** Info/navigation [debenestuary.pilot.co.uk](http://debenestuary.pilot.co.uk); River-users code [riverdeben.org](http://riverdeben.org)
- By Bike:** On Regional Cycle Route 41 (uses foot ferries - all carry bicycles)
- On Foot:** Suffolk Coast Path; Sandlings Walk Each c.60 miles/97 kms [suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://suffolkcoastandheaths.org)
- Foot-ferry Services:** Butley & Bawdsey [thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/four-foot-ferries-of-the-suffolk-coast](http://thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/four-foot-ferries-of-the-suffolk-coast)
- OS Maps:** OS Explorer 197/212



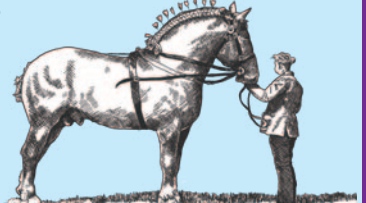
## Awesome Events

Theatre in the forest, dawn chorus walks, beachcombing, fun family activities, concerts and more... [thesuffolkcoast.co.uk](http://thesuffolkcoast.co.uk)



## Drive & Explore

Take an attraction-packed circular drive from Woodbridge (31 miles/50 kms) via Rendlesham Forest, passing Butley Priory to RSPB Boyton Marshes. Continue to the Suffolk Punch Trust (Hollesley), Bawdsey Radar/East Lane/Quay. Call in at Ramsholt Quay and Sutton Hoo. Oh, and don't miss the Tide Mill back at Woodbridge!

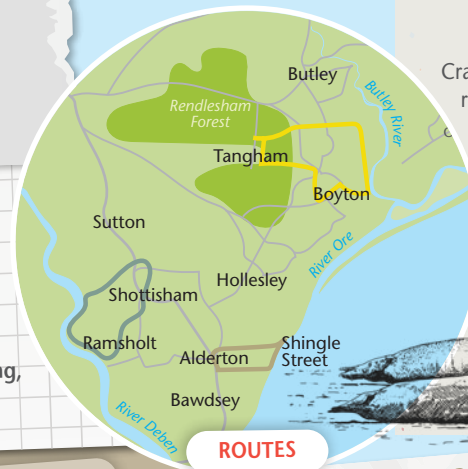




# EXPLORE & ENJOY THE DEBEN PENINSULA

Criss-crossed by miles of rural footpaths and bridleways linking areas teeming with wildlife, layered with geological interest and brim-full of history, the Deben Peninsula is simply superb for everything from a Sunday stroll to a right old ramble or first-class cycling adventure.

Whether you're into kite flying or kite surfing; sea angling or seal watching; sailing, orienteering, off-road cycling, kayaking, beachcombing or birding, there's always something different to discover. What a beautiful breath of fresh air!



## Nature Watch

Crag cliffs and shingle beaches; riverbanks, salt-marshes and mudflats; meadows, heathland, ancient woods and 20th century forests – all these Deben Peninsula habitats are precious homes to wildlife. *What will you spot today?*

- |  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer          | <input type="checkbox"/> Kingfisher    | <input type="checkbox"/> Avocet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barn owl      | <input type="checkbox"/> Common lizard | <input type="checkbox"/> Curlew |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Harrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Seal          |                                 |



## Shottisham » Ramsholt Circular

### TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

OS Explorer Map: 212/197

6.5 miles/10.5 kms **CIRCULAR WALK**

**PARK, START/FINISH:** St Margaret's Church, Shottisham IP12 3JH  
**TERRAIN:** Flat with gentle inclines. Cross-meadow/field margin/riverbank footpaths. Some very sandy tracks. Tarmacked lanes. Gates, stiles, steps.

Find Sutton Knoll's forest that time forgot and Ramsholt's round tower church with divine Deben views. Stroll past strange creeks, cliffs, quaysides and Suffolk pink cottages. What boats will you see on the Deben and what will you find on the river beach?

**DIRECTIONS:** Go down Church Lane, Shottisham to allotments. Turn left onto footpath. Through gate. Cross stream. Path leads left to stile/B1083. Cross to follow private road. At Wood Hall (hotel) bear right to footpath (left) by Coach House entrance. Through wooden gate, then metal gate to Sutton Knoll. Turn right for information boards. After the second board turn left to reach river. Left along path, over Shottisham Creek, round headland, briefly through woodland before regaining riverbank. Continue for Ramsholt Quay (river beach/pub) or take footpath left uphill across meadows to Ramsholt Church.

From church, continue north along path. Turn right at junction. Path bears left to meet lane. Turn left to cross B1083 by Shottisham Hall Farm, onto sandy track which leads to Shottisham village emerging opposite Church Lane.



### Did you know?

When the Deben Peninsula Sandlings were declared 'A Defence Area' in 1939, all signposts were removed!

## Walk the Width of the Deben Peninsula

Setting out from picturesque Shottisham, riverside Ramsholt or inland Alderton and Hollesley, why not enjoy a 14 mile loop, linking 4 church heritage trails? Drink in Deben-side views, look out over shingle beaches at the North Sea and enjoy plenty of scenic countryside encounters in between. A gentle journey, or reason for a rural return? Directions: [angelsandpinnacles.org.uk](http://angelsandpinnacles.org.uk)

### An Indiana Jones Adventure

With its almost desert-like sandy soils and tales of smugglers, pirates, ship burials and lost ports, the Sandlings of the Deben Peninsula seem simply out of this Suffolk world. Why not set yourself a photo-challenge to remember your other-worldly adventure by?

The fully waymarked Melton » Bromeswell » Sutton Hoo circular walk (5.5 miles/9 kms from Melton Station or Melton Riverside car park) is a great way to start.

[eastsoffolklines.co.uk/walks](http://eastsoffolklines.co.uk/walks)

- A mini-sandstorm 'blow' or sandy path through pines
- 'Hieroglyph' bird-prints
- Pyramid-topped church tower (Boyton or Bromeswell)
- Sphinx bench-end in All Saints' Church, Hollesley
- The treasured burial mounds of Sutton Hoo
- Sandlings Walk waymarker – the Sahara-crossing Nightjar

OS Explorer Map: 212/197

8 miles/13 kms **CIRCULAR WALK**

## Shingle Street » Alderton Circular TOWERS & BELLS

**PARK, START/FINISH:** Coastguard Cottages, Shingle Street IP12 3BG

**TERRAIN:** Flat with gentle inclines. Shingle beach - please avoid the vegetation. Cross-meadow/field margin/flood wall footpaths. Tracks, tarmacked lanes, pavements. Footbridges.

Martello towers, tank traps and WWII pillboxes edge the sweeping shingle bay where a white shell line weaves around sea kale to the sea. Sweep inland and at Alderton, the church bell-tower has a different tale to tell. A bracing coast and countryside walk with lots of birdwatching interest too.

**DIRECTIONS:** Walk south along the beach following the Suffolk Coast Path (SCP). After the cottages, take footpath (right) beside Martello Tower 'AA'. Head left across grazing marsh to reach top of flood bank. Continue south along the bank passing Martello Tower 'Z'.

About halfway between this and a third one (Martello Tower 'Y'), descend bank to leave SCP, cross the ditch and follow field track inland. Take second footbridge, going left between fields towards houses. As path becomes a track continue ahead, bearing left then right, passing houses and recreation ground to reach Alderton village centre. (St Andrew's Church is behind the old pub to the left).

Turn right heading north along Hollesley Road to turn right onto lane signed 'Buckanay Farm'. Continue all the way to the farm and when the tarmac lane goes right, take footpath ahead across field and ditch to flood wall where SCP leads back north to the car park.

### Unusual Look-outs

Bawdsey Manor and St Mary's church, Hollesley House and a tree at Dumboy House near Shingle Street were all used as WWI military observation posts as well as Orford castle and a Martello tower.

### Did you know?

Shingle Street's shell line - estimated to include over 20,000 white whelk shells - was started in 2005 by Lida Kindersley and Els Bottema, both survivors of cancer, as a symbol of friendship.

## ROUTES

### TOWERS & BELLS TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED PRIORS & FLYERS

OS MAP:197

4.6 miles/7.5 kms **CIRCULAR WALK**



### Did you know?

Shingle Street's Lifeboat Inn was blown up by secret munitions testing during WWII.

### More Martello Magic

View Martello Tower 'W' and add Martello Tower 'Y', plus some fascinating wartime archaeology to your arsenal. Set out from East Lane, Bawdsey car park (IP12 3AP) to discover a gun battery, observation tower, pill boxes and the finest sweeping view of Suffolk military heritage. Join the Towers & Bells circular walk from the seawall walk at the inland footpath to Alderton. 2 miles/3.2 kms (return). OS Explorer map 197.



## Explore more of the Deben Peninsula on Station to Station Walks

- Melton & Woodbridge along the River Deben - 1.5 miles/2.5 kms
- Melton & Campsea Ashe via Ufford and Ashe Abbey - 5.75 miles/9.25 kms [eastsoffolklines.co.uk/walks](http://eastsoffolklines.co.uk/walks)



### Is this on your Radar?

A hands-on history experience celebrating the invention of radar by Robert Watson-Watt at Bawdsey is located in a Grade II\* listed concrete transmitter block – the world's first operational Chain Home Radar Station. Bawdsey Manor is also accredited with the first radar training school, development of the filter table and Dowding communication system, and was where women held front-line military roles for the first time.

Ironically, Robert Watson-Watt was later caught for speeding thanks to a radar speed gun! He read his pleading poem - 'Rough Justice' - in court:

*"Pity Sir Robert Watson-Watt,  
 Strange target of this radar plot  
 And thus, with others I can mention,  
 The victim of his own invention.  
 His magical all-seeing eye  
 Enabled cloud-bound planes to fly,  
 But now, by some ironic twist,  
 It spots the speeding motorist  
 And bites, no doubt with legal wit  
 The hand that once created it."*

### Did you know?

The Deben Peninsula is renowned for a UFO sighting at Rendlesham Forest in 1980. Martello Tower 'Y' near Bawdsey has a strange 'bump' on its roof – another flying saucer perhaps?!

## Cycle & Discover

**Rendlesham Forest** – On- and off-road cycling including 2 waymarked forest cycle trails (6 or 9 miles/9.7 or 16 kms). Also walking trails. [forestryengland.uk/rendlesham-forest](http://forestryengland.uk/rendlesham-forest)

**Rendlesham Forest & Shingle Street** Cycle Explorer Guide (12.5–27.5 miles/ 20–44.5 kms) includes option from Felixstowe station using Bawdsey Ferry. Can be combined with...

**Snape & Orford** Cycle Explorer from Wickham Market Station, using Butley Ferry. [suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://suffolkcoastandheaths.org)



## Rendlesham Forest » Butley Priory » Boyton Circular PRIORS & FLYERS

**PARK, START/FINISH:** Rendlesham Forest, Tangham - Woodbridge Airfield Car Park (by Folly House on road to Tangham Forest Centre IP12 3NF)

**TERRAIN:** Flat with gentle inclines. Some very sandy tracks. Forest, field margin and river-wall footpaths. Tarmacked lanes, pavements. Gates, footbridges, stiles.

Discover the forest home of flying saucer sightings, bird-rich RSPB Boyton Marshes, the impressive gatehouse of Butley Priory and Boyton St Andrew's misplaced Norman doorway on a walk full of history and mystery taking in Burrow Hill and Butley Ferry. Will you spot seals or the WWII tank targets near the river or work out what happened to the church at Capel St Andrew?

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn left out of car park. Cross road opposite Folly House to enter forest. Follow signs for 'UFO Trail' to Butley Corner picnic site near the UFO sighting clearing. Continue ahead, leaving forest to meet the road. At Five Crossways junction turn right past Butley Priory gatehouse, then follow road left. Where road bears right towards Capel St Andrew, go straight ahead to Butley High Corner.

Join Suffolk Coast Path (SCP), following it over Burrow Hill to Butley River foot ferry and along the riverbank. By Boyton Dock take footpath right across RSPB Boyton Marshes, bearing right to Banter's Barn Farm. Follow track ahead to road.

Turn left, going right through Boyton village to find footpath on right which passes St Andrew's Church (left), crosses the River Tang (footbridge) to meet the road at Laurel Farm. Turn right towards Capel St Andrew. At crossroads by village sign, go left along the 'Quiet Lane' to re-enter forest. Follow the wide path straight ahead, then turn right onto Sandlings Walk, leaving it finally to go left, retracing steps to the car park.

### Did you know?

Orford Castle's most unusual prisoner was the 'Wild Man of Orford' - a merman caught in fishermen's nets in the 13th century.

The information in this guide is provided in good faith and is correct to the best of the publishers' knowledge at the time of going to press, but is subject to alteration.

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