**The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB**

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain’s finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and then north to Keswick. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife-rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

**Route Highlights**

1. **Snape Maltings** rises above the marshes like a great ship. The huge complex was built in stages from 1846. The great Eastern Railway arrived in 1859, ensuring the Maltings remained a viable business for many years. However, they eventually closed in 1965. This provided an opportunity for Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier, who had established the Aldeburgh Music Festival in 1948. They were looking for a permanent home for the event, so they converted the Maltings into a concert hall. Since then, Snape Maltings has become an internationally famous venue for music and the performing arts. The opening of the Hoffmann Building in 2009 is the latest development. As well as the concert hall and shops, the Maltings offers tempting places to eat.

2. **The River Alde** has one of the most beautiful estuaries on the east coast. The river flows through a landscape of wide marshes and low hills under a huge Suffolk sky. In the past, barges would have transported goods to and from the Maltings at Snape. The mudflats provide a vital habitat for many species of resident and migrant bird.

3. **Orford** has numerous beautiful buildings. The roads are arranged in a distinctive grid pattern, a layout which dates from the Norman period. Until the 16th Century, the fishing industry and wool trade brought prosperity to Orford. However, the growing shingle spit of Orford Ness cut off the harbour and the town lost its trade. Opposite Orford Quay is Orford Ness. The strange pagoda-like buildings were used to develop and test weapons during the Cold War. Orford Ness is now owned by the National Trust and is the best preserved area of vegetated shingle in Europe, a globally rare and extremely fragile habitat.

**Orford Castle** was commissioned by Henry II and completed in 1173. It was built to assert Henry’s authority over the powerful Suffolk Barons. Only the castle keep remains today, but originally there would have been a surrounding wall or bailey. One reason the castle has survived is because it is an effective navigation mark for shipping.

**St. Botolph’s Church** is an ancient place. The thatched nave is over 800 years old and the site has been a place of religious significance for at least 1,350 years. It is said to be the location where St. Botolph founded a monastery in AD654 to convert the pagan tribes of East Anglia to Christianity. Inside the church, are the remains of a Saxon cross, which may date from this period.

**How to get to Wickham Market (Campsea Ashe) Station & Snape Maltings**

- **Sat Nav postcode**
  - Snape Maltings: IP17 1SR

- **Train information:**
  - Wickham Market Station is on the East Suffolk Line (hourly service Ipswich to Lowestoft).
  - www.traveline.info
  - Call 0871 200 2233
  - www.suffolkonboard.com
  - www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

- **Public transport information:**
  - www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
  - Yourfreemovetaxis
  - Or call 01394 382240

- **Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB**
  - 01394 445225
  - www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

**Information on Snape Maltings**

- **Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No. 212** (Woodbridge and Saxmundham).

- **Route Highlights**
  - The Maltings offers tempting places to eat.

- **Development.** As well as the concert hall and shops, the opening of the Hoffmann Building in 2009 is the latest music and the performing arts. The event was looking for a permanent home for the Maltings, so they converted the Maltings into a concert hall. Since then, Snape Maltings has become an internationally famous venue for music and the performing arts. The opening of the Hoffmann Building in 2009 is the latest development. As well as the concert hall and shops, the Maltings offers tempting places to eat.

- **F. Orford Castle – A fine Norman keep.**

- **Images:**
  - Front cover – A cyclist pauses at Orford Quay. A. Snape Maltings Concert Hall – A world famous venue for music.
  - B. The River Alde – Beautiful and mysterious.
  - C. St. Botolph’s Church, Iken – An ancient building.
  - D. Orford – Many traditional buildings.
  - E. Looking towards Orford Ness – A place with an intriguing history.
  - F. Orford Castle – A fine Norman keep.
Wickham Market (Campsea Ashe) Station – Orford.

Distance: 24 miles/39 km
(15 miles/24 km if the route is started at Snape Maltings).

Starting at Snape Maltings
This section of route follows Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route 41 – which is well signposted. Leave Snape Maltings and turn left. Just after Maltings, bear left, signposted Orford. Follow this road (taking care of traffic). After some distance, take first left, signposted Iken. Continue along minor road and take first left to visit Iken Church. Leave church, retrace route and bear left at junction. Continue on road, ignoring first right. After some distance, take second right, signposted Orford. Continue on road, ignoring all exits, until left turn signposted Orford. Take turning and continue to crossroads. Turn left and then right at the next junction to reach Orford. At junction with main street, turn left and continue to quay.

Leave Orford Quay and retrace route up street. Take first left and follow road around to right to visit castle. Leave castle and continue straight ahead up hill, past Crown and Castle Hotel. Continue to far side of village square and turn left in front of Kings Head Inn. Follow road for short distance then turn right, signposted Iken. Follow road to crossroads, then continue straight. From here, retrace route followed earlier back to Snape Maltings or Wickham Market (Campsea Ashe) Station.

Safe Cycling Guidance

- Make sure your bicycle is safe to use
- Wear a hi-vis jacket and a helmet that comply with current standards
- Obey the rules of the road and follow the Highway Code
- Be courteous and acknowledge people who give way to you
- Ride in single file to let vehicles overtake if the road is busy or narrow
- Don’t assume everyone can see or hear you
- Give way to pedestrians, wheelchair users and horse riders
- Ring your bell or call out to warn others of your approach
- Please cycle on roads, byways, cycle paths – not on public footpaths
- Try to reach the start of your ride using bike or public transport

Thank You