

Southwold

Explorer Guide



Enjoy two fascinating walks around the seaside town of Southwold.



Southwold is an interesting town on the Suffolk coast, with many fine buildings, a traditional pier and a long promenade. At Southwold Harbour, the River Blyth flows out to sea past colourful boats and black painted sheds.

- 4 **The Marshes** are part of the Suffolk Coast National Nature Reserve. They are an important home for birds such as bittern, marsh harrier and heron. The Marshes were claimed from the River in the 19th century when flood defence banks were built.



- 5 **Southwold Harbour** is used by a handful of fishing boats and many pleasure craft. In the early 1900s there were over 100 working boats and a fish market and processing unit. The Harbour Inn has a line on the wall showing the height of the floods in 1953, a reminder of the vulnerability of coastal communities. Near the river mouth, the 1893 Alfred Corry life boat is displayed in a traditional boat shed.



- 6 **Gunhill Cliff** provides a panoramic view of the coastline. For this reason, it was chosen as the place to locate the town's defences. The cannon were presented to Southwold by the Royal Ordnance in 1746.



Images: Front cover - Southwold Pier. A: Southwold Pier - traditional seaside fun (Southwold Pier Ltd). B: The Lighthouse - an iconic feature of Southwold. C: Strawberry Clover - the pink seedpods are visible in late summer (Darren Underwood). D: Bittern - elusive marsh dweller. E: Southwold Harbour - home to a small fishing fleet. F: Gunhill Cliff - the cannon have a fascinating history.

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Highlights of Southwold

- 1 **Southwold Pier**, with its wooden buildings, traditional amusements and gift shops, evokes seaside holidays of the past. In 2013 the Pier was bought by Gough Hotels and remains a family run business. Gough Hotels will build on the success of the previous owners and in time develop the pavilion into a luxury Art Deco style hotel to transform the business into a 365 days a year enterprise.
- 2 **The Lighthouse** was built around 1889 to guide ships entering the River Blyth and to warn of dangerous shingle banks along the coast. It remains a working lighthouse today, although remotely controlled from Harwich. During the summer, it is sometimes open to visitors.



- 3 **The Town** of Southwold has many fine Georgian, Regency and Victorian buildings. Fire destroyed the town in 1659 and the numerous 'greens' of Southwold are thought to have been left as fire breaks. The Church of St Edmund is one of the finest seaside churches in England. Near the lighthouse is the Sole Bay Inn. The name recalls the Battle of Sole Bay fought off Southwold in 1672, part of an on-going war with the Netherlands over trade and naval superiority. Southwold is well known for its brewing industry. Adnams has brewed beer in the town since 1872. To find out more about the town's history, visit Southwold Museum in Victoria Street.



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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 north to Kessingland. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

Visiting Southwold

- Ordnance Survey Map No. 231 (Southwold and Bungay).
- Easy access via the A12 and A1095. Plenty of parking.
- Public transport information: www.suffolkonboard.com or call 0845 606 6171

Southwold Tourist Information:
www.visit-sunrise.co.uk
or call 01502 724729

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

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01502 722105
www.southwoldpier.co.uk

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- Buildings and Boats beside the Sea
- Harbour, Marshes and a Bracing Beach
- A Road
- B Road
- C Road
- Bridleway/ Foot Path
- 'Highlights' Location
- Parking
- Water Tower
- Seasonal Ferry Crossing
- Caravan Park
- Southwold Golf Club
- Wooded Area
- Marshland
- Settlements

Some walks take you onto or across public highways. Please be aware of traffic.

'Buildings and Boats beside the Sea'

Distance
4 miles (6.4 km)

Time: 2 hours

Terrain: Paths and tracks, which can be muddy after rain. Section of beach walking. This walk takes you onto public highways. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Start in front of Southwold Pier facing inland. Turn left and follow the path beside the railings onto the low cliffs. The path continues past greens and elegant houses.

When you reach South Green (signed) turn right. Walk inland across the grass until you come to a large green. Cross the road and head towards the post box. Continue past the post box into a short dead-end lane. At the end, take the path between two flint walls. As the path turns left, continue ahead on the footpath.



Turn left, towards Walberswick. This is the track bed of the Halesworth to Southwold Railway, which closed in 1929.

Just before the river bridge, turn left. Follow the footpath alongside the river to join the unmade road through Southwold Harbour. When the road turns sharply left, leave it and cross the car park. Walk over the dunes onto the beach or follow the wide grassy area behind the dunes.

When you reach the first beach huts, look for the Gunhill Beach Café. Take the path beside the Café that turns right and leads up Gunhill Cliff. Walk through the gardens beside the railings and drop down to the promenade. Continue along the promenade to the Pier or explore the town.



'Harbour, Marshes and a Bracing Beach'

Distance
2.8 miles (4.5 km)

Follow 'Buildings and Boats beside the Sea' Walk until you reach the post box.

Turn left at the post box and follow the road as it drops downhill. At the bottom, where the road turns left, keep straight ahead on the footpath towards Southwold Harbour.

When you reach the road at Southwold Harbour, turn left. When the road turns sharply left, cross the car park and walk over the dunes onto the beach or follow the wide grassy area behind the dunes.

Follow the beach (or grassy area) and promenade back to the Pier.

Time: 1 hour 30 mins

Terrain: Well surfaced paths and tracks. Section of beach walking. This walk takes you onto public highways. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.

Turn right at the road. Follow the road past a car park entrance. Turn left at the junction along Godyll Road. Follow the road past attractive houses with Southwold Common on the left. Soon another big green opens up on the right. Continue along the road as it bends to the right. When you come to the T junction, cross the road and turn left towards the two water towers, using the mown path alongside the road.

Soon, a grass path leads off diagonally across the green, heading just to the right of the towers. Keep on this path across the golf course until you reach a junction with a track.



Images: A: South Green – one of many greens in the town. B: Southwold Houses – the town has many attractive buildings. C: Southwold Harbour – safe anchorage for many boats. D: Southwold – the perfect beach for a day at the seaside. E: Herring Gull – a familiar coastal resident.

Countryside Code

The area has a network of footpaths and bridleways. We have shown suggested routes on this map. Here are a few simple suggestions to help you enjoy the area safely and assist our work in caring for it.

Follow the Countryside Code:

Plan ahead and follow any signs

Leave things as you find them

Protect plants and animals, control fires and take your litter home.

Dogs are very welcome, but please keep them under close control at all times and on lead as advised.

Thank you.

Find out more about the Countryside Code:
www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk