

# Suffolk Coast & Heaths

Spring/Summer 2020

**FREE**

Suffolk  
Coast &  
Heaths

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Our Special 50th Birthday Issue



**50** CELEBRATING  
YEARS  
1970  
2020

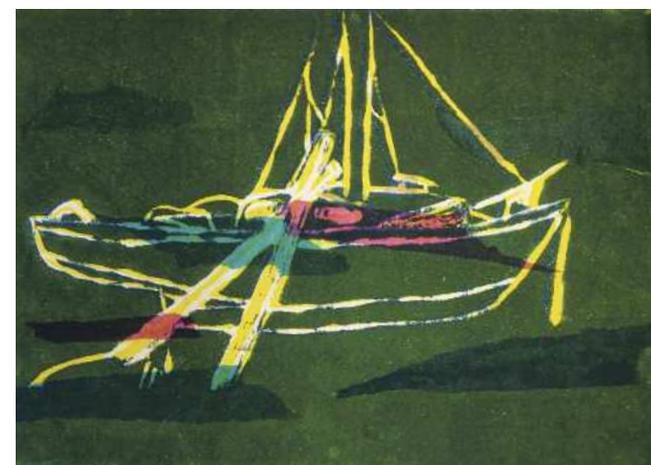
In our 50th birthday issue Jules Pretty, author and professor, talks about how designation helps focus conservation and his hopes for the next 50 years, page 9



Where will you explore?  
Be inspired by our anniversary  
50 @ 50 places to see and  
things to do, centre pages

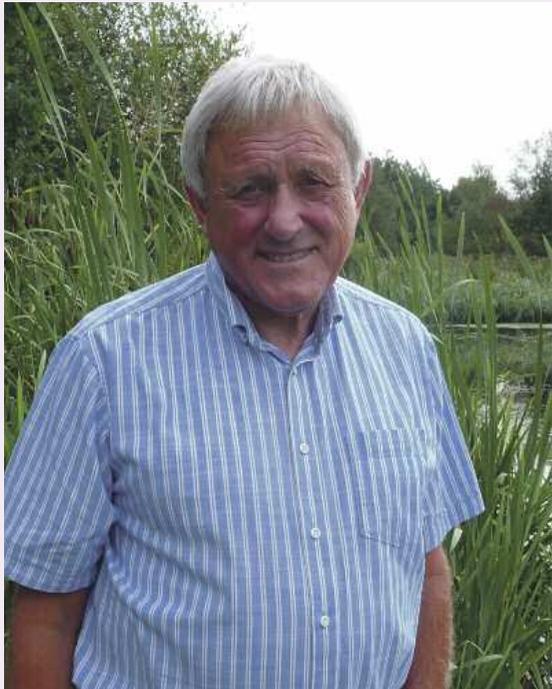


What will you do to conserve our  
landscape? Join a community beach  
clean or work party! See pages 7,  
17, 18 for ideas



Art and culture are great ways to  
inspire us to conserve our landscape,  
and we have the best landscape for  
doing this! See pages 15, 18, 21, 22

# A Message from Our Chair



Our national Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are going to have a year to remember and it will be locally significant too! In December 2019 the Chair's from all the AONBs collectively committed the national network to the Colchester Declaration for Nature, and we will all play our part in nature recovery, addressing the twin issues of wildlife decline and climate change. Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership will write a bespoke Nature Recovery Plan and actions, and specifically champion a species to support its recovery.

These are terrific plans and will take place during our 50th anniversary year. Our birthday is on 4 March, and alongside nature recovery and the recommendations of the Government's Landscape Review (aka Glover Review) we will be encouraging more diverse people to visit and enjoy the outstanding landscape – take a look at our 50 @ 50 Things To Do (centre pages) for some inspiration, and at the AONB website for free walking and cycling leaflets. We are very pleased to get funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund towards our 50th birthday community led photography project – keep your ears and eyes open for how you can get involved in this (page 10).

We have continued to see development proposals for major energy projects on the Suffolk coast. What was once known as the nature coast is now sometimes referred to the energy coast – a name that I personally am not particularly fond of. The AONB Partnership will continue to champion the purposes of the AONB, to conserve and enhance natural beauty, to ensure that the proposals acknowledge the importance of the area in

terms of natural beauty, quality of life for residents and its associated tourism industry. See articles on page 4.

The National Association for AONBs has recently published a position statement relating to housing, and the Government has updated its advice on how to consider light in the planning system.

We also look forward (if that's the right term, as we say goodbye to Pete Cosgrove), to the completion of the Defra Marine Pioneer activity, hosted at the AONB. It has been working with (and funded by) Defra to help meet the objectives of the 25 Year Environment Plan and has informed the forthcoming Environment Bill. We also say goodbye to Lynn Allen (see page 7). We anticipate the completion of the Suffolk sections of the England Coast Path, the ratification of the southern boundary of the AONB in Essex, and the implementation of the Landscape Review proposals for a different way for National Parks and AONBs to operate going forward, within a new 'National Landscape' framework.

To end of a personal note, I've been extremely pleased with the amount raised by my sponsored walk of the Suffolk Coast Path in aid of Multiple System Atrophy. £4,500 will be going to MSA for research.

We look forward to sharing our 50th anniversary with you all.

**Councillor David Wood, Chairman Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership**

## East Suffolk Council Environment Vision



As newly elected District councillor for the Deben Peninsula and cabinet member for the environment at East Suffolk, I have also been appointed as Vice Chair of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee. All three roles complement each other, and I am pleased to be able to champion the far reaching aims and principles of the AONB.

The environment and corresponding climate and biodiversity emergencies will be a critical if not the most important challenge for the AONB in 2020, its 50th birthday year. How we use our resources and expertise, not only in the management of our land but also in our engagement with residents and visitors, will be of the utmost importance.

After a career in the city of London I entered local politics to make a difference particularly for the challenges of the environment. The Leader of East Suffolk, Steve Gallant, has a clear vision of making the environment one of the Council's top priorities and I am working closely with Steve to develop and implement his vision. However the environment is not just the trees and fields we see outside the window but also buildings, infrastructural works, jobs, transport, and how we consume and dispose of our waste. At East Suffolk our environment policies will work alongside and complement our business strategy making sure we benefit residents and all stakeholders.

How we deal with the questions and challenges of the environment will define a generation, we must make choices and we must act. Small changes will make a big difference over time and collectively if we work together in changing our behaviour, the choices we make can protect and nurture the beautiful and important landscapes of East Suffolk.

**Cllr James Mallinder, East Suffolk Council - Deben Ward**

## £4.8m Invested in AONB Landscape

Our 50th year is a great opportunity to celebrate our partnership with UK Power Networks and to look back over work undertaken to remove visually intrusive electricity wires and poles from our outstanding landscape and re-routing them underground.

The first undergrounding project was delivered at Blythburgh Marshes in 2008, and since then another six schemes have been completed at Chillesford, Erwarton, Sutton Hoo, Sutton Common, Shingle Street, and on the Alde Estuary. Together these projects have removed over 14 miles of wire and almost 300 electricity poles from our landscape – a tremendous achievement.

This undergrounding work has only been made possible thanks to the support from landowners who gave their permissions for the new underground cables to go through their land; and thanks to £2.7 million of Ofgem allowance which has funded this work.

Further undergrounding schemes are currently underway - on the Blyth Estuary and at Felixstowe Ferry, Shotley and Orford. £2 million of Ofgem funding has been agreed to deliver these projects which would see the removal of an additional 12 miles of wires.

The great news is that Ofgem are proposing to continue their funding for undergrounding work within AONBs into the future. The AONB Team are looking forward to working with UK Power Networks, local communities and landowners to develop great proposals.

**Claire Cadman, AONB Projects Officer**



Poles and lines come down beside burial mounds at Sutton Hoo - part of a one-mile dismantlement project completed in 2013.



Shingle Street residents and UK Power Networks staff celebrate as the last pole is removed from this exceptional landscape in October 2019

# Gateway Welcomes the Landscape Designation

Essex County Council (ECC) very much welcomes and supports the proposed inclusion of the south side of the River Stour in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. It also recognises the great work that Tendring District Council (TDC) has done in partnership with the AONB to get to the current position.

This proposed extension will pave the way for many economic opportunities, by attracting more visitors to the area who will be able to enjoy the natural run of the River Stour into the beautiful landscape of Flatford and Dedham, which is the outstanding gateway to the well renowned Dedham Vale AONB. The two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will work

## Essex Path to Prosperity

The Essex Path to Prosperity project will encourage more local people and visitors to the area to enjoy the wide range of opportunities on our coastline. It is a new initiative funded until March 2021 by the Coastal Communities Fund, Essex County Council and several partners, and will raise awareness about the Essex coast path from Manningtree to Canvey Island.

One of the most important aspects of Essex Path to Prosperity is to promote sustainable travel and access to the coast via the use of footpaths, by promoting increased use of bus and rail services. We are producing maps and waymarking rights of way to the coast to enable visitors to find their way more easily from bus and rail stations to our coastal path. A pilot scheme for a hopper bus service will operate at weekends during the summer months to take the public to the less serviced areas of our coast and reduce travel by car. More information will be available as the year progresses.

Our project will also deliver up to 20 apprenticeships for people coming to the end of short-term contracts in tourism and local businesses across the Essex coastal areas, and will offer business support and training for local businesses in customer service to increase memorable visitor experiences. See [www.coastalessex.org/essex-path-to-prosperity](http://www.coastalessex.org/essex-path-to-prosperity) for more information.

With the AONB boundary now extending into north Essex and the England Coast Path also opening up opportunities, it is a great time for us all to be mindful of our footprint by using our cars less and our feet more.

**Juliana Vandergrift, Essex Path to Prosperity Project Manager**



L-R Cllr Carlo Guglielmi (Essex CC), Simon Amstutz (AONB), Clive Dawson (Tendring DC) and Cllr David Wood (AONB Chair and Suffolk CC)

together in a carefully managed plan to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the area is maintained and maximised to the full.

As the ECC Member for Tendring Rural West, and Deputy Leader of TDC, I am delighted that this long marathon is now reaching its final stage. I first became involved in this project back in 2007 and it has been a very complex process, where several obstacles had to be overcome, such as austerity, changes to the Landscape Designation, and the restructure of Natural England and DEFRA. We are now on the home straight and I am very thankful to Essex and Suffolk County Council's for their strong and continued support, and of course to the huge amount of work by the AONB and TDC. I look forward to being the first to step into the new extension!

**Cllr Carlo Guglielmi, Essex County Council Member for Tendring Rural West**



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# Minsmere Levels and Sizewell Marshes after Sizewell C

Just over 200 years ago, in 1815, the General Commissioners for Drainage completed major works which transformed Minsmere Levels and the Sizewell Marshes, of which over 490 hectares today form much of the RSPB Minsmere Reserve in the AONB, when accumulations of shingle had closed the mouth of the Minsmere River and established the large area of marsh, fen and reed bed.



So well had the gravity fed sluice, installed then, stood the test of time that it had largely stabilised the coastline and no fundamental repair or remodelling had been required until the storm surges of 2006 and 2007 blocked pipes. The resultant problems of freshwater discharge into the sea and inland flooding became so acute that an army explosive ordinance team were just about to be called upon to blow-up the outfall when a particularly high tide suddenly cleared them.

Major refurbishment of the sluice by the Environment Agency in 2013 followed to reinforce coastal defences and construct the North Wall to protect the RSPB reserve from the weakness of the coastal frontage immediately south of Dunwich Cliffs. With the sluice being so crucial to the management of water level and quality in both Minsmere Levels and Sizewell Marshes, the hope was this work would ensure that the sluice would be able to cope with sea level rise and the anticipated rise in rainfall for at least the next 50 years.

Sadly, none of this reckoned with the proposals of EDF Energy for Sizewell C, revealed just as the 2013 works were completed. EDF's plans became progressively more alarming as the scale of their interventions on the complex ecosystems in Sizewell Marshes became clear. Despite our increasing local vocal demands for EDF to indicate the probable cumulative impact of Sizewell C on hydrology and ecosystems, both during the probable 10-15 year construction phase and subsequently over its 60+ year operational lifetime, it has remained unanswered. Will the marshes dry out? Or will they be flooded with contaminated water? Sizewell C will probably still be standing there in 2115. But will the systems that the Commissioners for Minsmere Drainage so carefully planned and put in place in 1815 survive it?

**John Rea Price, Minsmere Levels Stakeholder Group**  
[www.minsmerelevelsstakeholdersgroup.onesuffolk.net](http://www.minsmerelevelsstakeholdersgroup.onesuffolk.net)

# Energy Coast Developments

The Suffolk 'energy coast' projects continue to dominate much of our thoughts in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As I write this in early 2020 we are starting to look at the detail of Scottish Power Renewables two proposed offshore wind farms following the acceptance of the application by the Planning Inspectorate. The AONB Partnership has registered as an interested party with the Planning Inspectorate for both schemes and will in due course be making representations to ensure that the purposes of the AONB, to conserve and enhance natural beauty, are given due consideration when determining the application.



EDF Energy said at a Community Forum in late December 2019 that they are planning to submit their Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate within the first half of 2020. At that forum EDF reported back on some information on the findings of the stage 4 consultation. It was no great surprise to see that the environment, impact on tourism and quality of life and transport were the issues of great concern to many. A moment of tension arrived at the Community Forum when representatives from EDF Energy decided not to answer questions relating to a planning application for the movement of Sizewell B facilities that will be required to deliver the Sizewell C project as they said that the Community Forum only related to specific Sizewell C issues. A group called Together Against Sizewell C has started proceedings for a Judicial Review of the decision to approve the planning application for relocating the Sizewell B facilities.

Plans are also afoot for the development of two interconnectors, connecting the UK with the continental Europe's electricity distribution networks. Like the offshore wind farms, these will require significant onshore infrastructure, which could have a negative impact on the AONB. The AONB Partnership continues to champion the AONB and its statutory purposes to those that will make the decisions relating to the only proposed new nuclear power station in a nationally designated landscape.

**Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager**

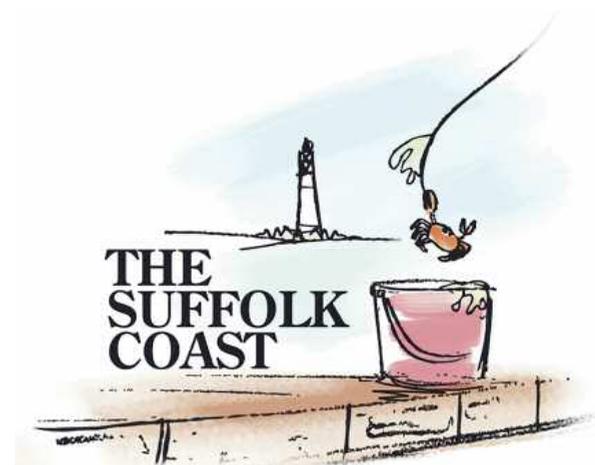
# Energy Infrastructure Projects will Damage the Tourism Economy

Plans for the development of new energy projects on the Suffolk coastline could impact the local visitor economy by up to £40m per year and result in 400 job losses, according to research commissioned by The Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation (DMO). The research has evaluated the potential impact of EDF Energy's Sizewell C new nuclear power station and Scottish Power Renewables' planned construction of onshore infrastructure connected to new coastal windfarms. If both projects go ahead, the

construction phases are likely to overlap over the next 10 to 12 years, and between £24m - £40m per annum could be lost to tourism. This figure amounts to nearly 25% of direct spend within the AONB tourism area, on both day visits and overnight stays.

The research also confirmed that the Suffolk Coast's tranquil environment was its greatest asset, according to the survey of 1,700 respondents. The survey's findings are deeply concerning. As the marketing body promoting the sector we believe it is essential that tourism businesses, stakeholders and politicians at a local and national level are aware of the damage these projects could cause to an essential part of the county's economy. Losing even 5% of their turnover could be very damaging for many of our members.

Whilst we recognise the UK's need for renewable energy we simply cannot ignore the risks to this sensitive geography, which is so reliant on tourism. The survey suggests that we could lose new visitors, a vital segment of our market, and that to protect existing markets and attract new visitors, significant investment will be needed to ensure the positive image of the Suffolk Coast brand is not overshadowed by construction projects.



The Suffolk Coast DMO urges both Scottish Power Renewables and EDF Energy to reconsider the extent of mitigation to both the environmental and traffic consequences of what they are planning in order to reduce the negative impact on tourism. The research does indicate that increasing awareness of the attractions of the area could draw new visitors and mitigate some of the impact. See the full report at [www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/tourismresearch-and-reports](http://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/tourismresearch-and-reports).

**Annie Willey & Harry Young, The Suffolk Coast DMO**



## Where Have the Eels Gone?

As Wild Learning Officer I have been delivering workshops to students at Alde Valley Academy in Leiston to explore the amazing story of the European eel. Funded by Galloper Wind Farm, students have been learning about the natural history of this critically-endangered fish and the threats it faces - the greatest threat being people.

Jellied eel used to be a delight in the past but has now fallen out of favour in our culture, but eel isn't off the menu for everyone. In Asia and Russia, eel is a delicacy and unfortunately for the European eel they are the most sort after. It is illegal to ship eels

out of the EU, which has created a black market with 1kg of elvers selling for £1,000, creating a trade worth over £3 billion pounds a year making the European eel the most trafficked animal in the world.

Students at Alde Valley Academy visited Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Sizewell Belts Nature Reserve to hear the fascinating story of the eel from Warden Dayne West and helped maintain the reserve by completing some practical conservation work with Assistant Warden Charlie McMurray. They've also been spreading the message of the eels' plight creating art pieces, a library display and a short stop-motion documentary.

**Vicky Bolton, Wild Learning Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust**



## Suffolk Heritage Garden

Many plants bred in Suffolk struggle with the sandy conditions of the coast and as the Heritage Garden holds the Suffolk county collection of garden plants, we have to keep them going, preferably without using too much irrigation. After a challenging summer of drought the much needed rain in autumn proved a life saver.

The Heritage Garden has a new professional manager thanks to funding from the Amenity and Accessibility Fund. Hayley Churchyard lives only a few miles from the Trust and has taken on the role with enthusiasm. Since taking over in November Hayley has sourced and organised for a large consignment of wonderful compost to be spread on the beds. This will keep some of the summer warmth in and prevent the soil from drying out too quickly.

We have put up notices to inform the public how these areas are being managed and what birds and plants they may see. The Suffolk varieties orchard produce was picked and offered to visitors to sample, and we are keen to increase plant sales so that some of the varieties will catch on and be planted in people's gardens.

Based at the Suffolk Punch Trust - founded to breed our Suffolk horses - the surrounding area must be kept well trimmed and free of harmful invasive plants such as ragwort, and where possible are being managed to provide wildlife habitats.

**Margaret Wyllie, Suffolk Heritage Garden**



Roses and clematis on the Suffolk Heritage Garden pergola June 2019

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## Lynn Allen Departs

After around 20 years, Lynn Allen has moved on from her role as AONB Countryside Project Officer. Many people will have been impressed by Lynn's work, either directly as a volunteer with her on one of her fantastically organised Great British Beach Clean events or in her role in organising the Coast and Estuary Wardens. I can guarantee we will all have benefitted from the work she did, be that the Beachwatch programme or enhancing access to the nationally designated landscape. As one volunteer



Lynn Allen (left) and Emma Black (right)

wrote on hearing Lynn had decided to become a Teaching Assistant: *I have no doubt that the AONB team and the area will miss you and all the hard work you have put in.*

We will miss Lynn as a person and education will benefit from those tremendous skills, and we're pretty sure she will continue to care for our environment whatever happens!

**Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager**

## What a Legacy to Follow!

Taking over from someone who has been incredibly good at their job for the past 20 years is a daunting thing. Having sat next to Lynn Allen for the past three years, I heard much about the success of the Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) iconic annual Great British Beach Clean weekend, that Lynn coordinated for the Suffolk coast. I was always amazed by the phenomenal volunteer effort and how Lynn could keep on top of all the

different groups that needed equipment and direct them to a beach to clean.

MCS has recently released the data relating to the 2019 'Great British Beach Clean'. Nationally there were over 10,800 volunteers who helped clean 437 beaches around the UK, removing almost 11 tonnes of litter. The report is available at [www.mcsuk.org/clean-seas/great-british-beach-clean-2019-report](http://www.mcsuk.org/clean-seas/great-british-beach-clean-2019-report).

The results of the Great British Beach Clean in Suffolk are an incredible achievement. The weight of litter is declining year on year, but the number of litter items removed is increasing, because larger bits of litter are more conscientiously picked up, but the smaller, harder to see fragmented bits of plastic are left behind.

The Great British Beach Clean is on 18 - 21 September 2020. I look forward to facilitating another superb volunteer effort on the Suffolk coast. Visit the MCS website for more details and to register [www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/greatbritishbeachclean](http://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/greatbritishbeachclean) or contact us for local advice and to borrow equipment.

**Emma Black, AONB Countryside Project Officer**



Boyton Parish Council volunteers after their Great British Beach Clean 2019

## Lynn Recalls Some Unusual Finds

A bomb casement found in 2019 is by far the most unusual find for quite some time! We had a very bloated dead seal at Shingle Street, which was very distressing to see, but usually we find quirky things: a roll of carpet, a computer monitor, and last year we found a hand-held radio at Trimley – this was taken away by a BT employee who cleaned it up and it was used later! Someone (allegedly) found a silicone breast implant, and we've had an aeroplane tyre found, which my friends took back home to London to make a feature in their garden! Then there was all the clothing etc we found on the Orwell last year: we called him Rubbish Man.



## Suffolk GBBC Results in Brief:

- 21 beaches were cleaned
- 386 volunteers were involved
- 90.25 bags of litter were collected
- 9,582 total number of litter items removed

## We All Want Beauty

"We all want quiet. We all want beauty... We all need space. Unless we have it, we cannot reach that sense of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us gently." Those words were spoken in 1883 by Octavia Hill, co-founder of the National Trust. This year we're marking the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Trust, and in our hectic lives today those words are more relevant than ever.

2020 marks the 25th Anniversary of Orford Ness opening to the public, and so it's a joint celebration year with the AONB here on the Ness. The National Trust is inviting everyone to enjoy the benefits that being in the great outdoors offers. We believe that nature, beauty and history are for everyone, for ever, and at a time when nature and the historic environment are under threat they're essential to everyone, they enrich people's lives, are part of the fabric of society and they urgently need more care.



The marshes at Orford Ness

© National Trust Images Chris Lacey

We're running celebratory events for our visitors to engage with the unique landscape here on Suffolk's secret coast. From early morning walks with Rangers, wildlife safaris and encouraging families to enjoy nature together, to a series of creative workshops in art, writing and photography to capture the beauty of the Suffolk coast. Most of all we are encouraging people to journey across the river and experience that sense of wellbeing that being in the great outdoors provides.

**Glen Pearce, Orford Ness**

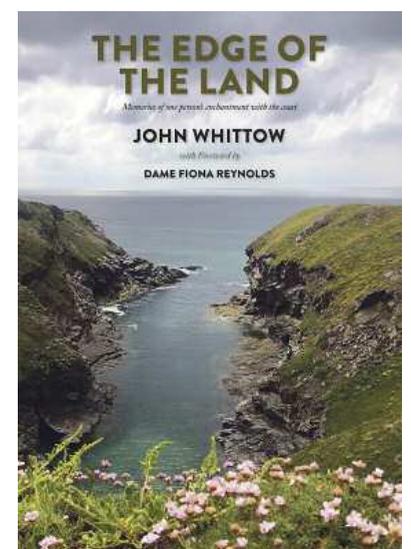
## The Edge of the Land

As the only survivor of the five people who, in 1965, founded the National Trust's Enterprise Neptune Coastal Campaign, it was suggested that, after some 50 years of giving advice on coastal acquisitions, I should write a book chronicling these events. This led me to write a 552-page account not only of the National Trust 775 miles of coasts, but also of my research and work on the shores of the entire British Isles.

The book is called *The Edge of the Land*, with a Foreword by Dame Fiona Reynolds (Director General 2001-2012). The book explores past, present and future, and includes how famous artists, writers, poets, and composers have been inspired by coastal scenery.

A chapter is devoted to East Anglia and especially the Suffolk Coasts & Heaths AONB. In the book I describe how I was involved in the purchase of Orford Ness and I am looking forward to the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Ness to the public.

**John Whittow, Author**



## Deben Soundings

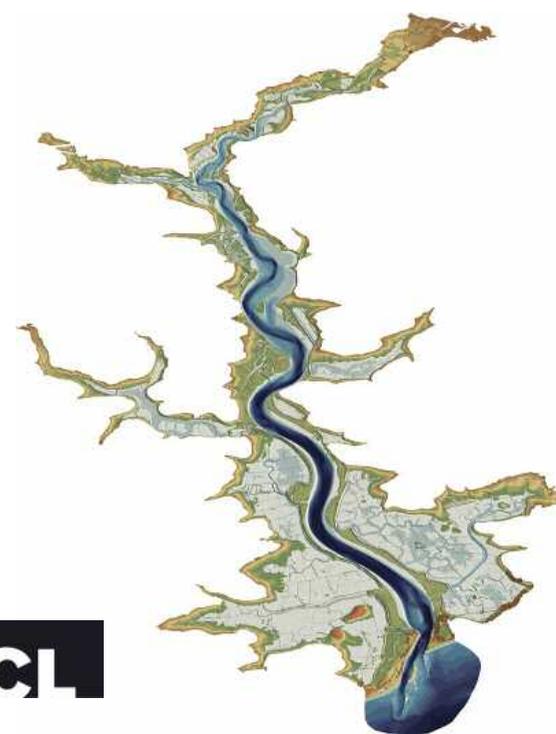
The Deben Estuary is a special place – but are things around us changing? How should we manage this landscape now and into the future? Two important developments are happening in 2020.

The review of the Deben Estuary Plan will increase our understanding of the estuary and just how important this quiet pattern of water and land, heath and woodland is in our lives. The original Plan (April 2015) was endorsed by the District and County Councils as a material consideration in regard to planning decisions. Setting out the Flood Risk Management Strategy for the estuary, it was also appreciated for its holistic approach to estuary matters and the community involvement which helped to inform policy.

The review will also look at how climate change is bringing a range of challenges to coastal communities increasing pressure on the environment and will explore the concept of 'natural capital' - the value of the estuary landscape in all its aspects. Contact the Deben Estuary Partnership via email to [c.m.block@outlook.com](mailto:c.m.block@outlook.com).

Imagining the Measure of Change is a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This will see visual artist Simon Read (Middlesex University London) and myself, a coastal scientist, lead a new way of looking at opportunities for communities and experts to join together to develop a shared response to present and future patterns of change likely across the estuary. Through a series of interactive workshops community representatives and local people can come together to explore, understand and capture what is happening to an important environment. See project website [debensoundings.wordpress.com](http://debensoundings.wordpress.com) or contact [debensoundings@gmail.com](mailto:debensoundings@gmail.com).

Helene Burningham, University College London



## Filming on the Butley River

For a few days in September 2019, the Butley River became the backdrop for scenes in a film being made of the novel "The Dig" by John Preston. The beautiful scenery made such an impression on the director that additional scenes were written into the film. The book is a dramatised account of the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo by local archaeologist Basil Brown, played in the film by Ralph Fiennes. Mrs Pretty, the owner of the land where the discoveries were made, is played by Carey Mulligan.

Butley Ferry stands in for the old Slaughden Ferry, which no longer exists, with Boyton Dock, Shingle Street and Snape all featuring as locations. The scenes involving the ferry needed a ferryman and his wife so real-life Butley ferrymen Stephen Worrall and Teresa Asslet were cast in those roles. The scenes took a full day of filming, supported by a small army of perhaps fifty people, with vehicles and equipment spread out below Burrow Hill, along with a temporary canteen.

One of the most impressive aspects of this mini 'invasion' was that as soon as filming ended a small team of people replaced anything that had been moved, cleared up any litter and left the site looking like they had not been there at all. The film crew treated our river, landscape and its wildlife with respect and, as the saying goes, took only photographs, left only footprints.

Roy Truman, Chair, Butley Ferry



## Catchment Scale Restoration on the Blyth



From the wide tidal mudflats of the Blyth estuary, where the river enters the North Sea at Southwold, to the tributaries that wind their way through towns, villages and farmland, the River Blyth is a beautiful feature of East Suffolk. However, sections of the Blyth are impacted by surface runoff, sedimentation and invasive plant species, as well as historic modifications that affect the way it flows through the landscape, all resulting in a lack of habitats for fish, invertebrates and flora.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust is working with the Environment Agency to tackle these issues on a catchment-wide scale. This two-year Water Environment Grant-funded project will see seven sites across the catchment restored. The first stage of the

project saw a 900m section of the river improved with 43 log jams and flow deflectors, which help vary the flow and reduce sedimentation. Further upstream, leaky log jams were installed to help slow the flow during heavy rain.

The restoration work continued over the winter with riverside tree planting, to provide shelter for fish and create shade to help regulate water temperatures and control the growth of in-channel vegetation. A team of volunteer Blyth River Wardens help with the planting, as well as conducting regular monitoring of the river and estuary, and looking out for any signs of pollution, remove litter and record wildlife sightings. Contact me by phone 07826 897009 or email [alice.wickman@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:alice.wickman@suffolkwildlifetrust.org).

Alice Wickman, Blyth River Catchment Advisor, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

## River Deben Association Anniversary



River Deben Association

2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of the River Deben Association (RDA), and its aim of protecting and conserving the character, beauty and environment of the River Deben remains just as pertinent today as it was in 1990. Perhaps more so given housing and other pressures on the surrounding area.

This is an association not just for those who like being on the river, but also those who like being near it, whether as bird-watchers, walkers, joggers, photographers or artists, and our membership of more than 800 attests to its enduring appeal. We have always understood that spending time in nature has a huge range of potential benefits to wellbeing - increasing happiness, reducing stress and anxiety, encouraging physical fitness and connecting people to nature and to other people.

While we agonise as an association about flood defences, speeding boats, inappropriate planning applications, river silting, and pollution, it is just as important to celebrate this special river. We publish two magazines a year (for members and non-members) which salute the Deben's boats, wildlife, activities and the varied group of folk who work in or beside the river. We have recently set up a Facebook and Instagram page for the Association and encourage you to post photos of things that you love about the Deben - judging from contributions so far, there are some excellent photographers out there. To find out more about the RDA and to become a member, see [www.riverdeben.org](http://www.riverdeben.org).

Sarah Zins, River Deben Association

# Celebrating 50 Years of AONBs in the East



It is a wonderful thing, to find ourselves celebrating 50 years of our AONBs in the British landscape. Along with national parks and green belts, their designations marked an important system change. We began to focus conservation and preservation efforts not just on particular species, or on preventing destructive tendencies of modern economies, but on thinking about whole scenes and landscapes. We began to think of land as having both natural and social components.

And great progress has been made. Damage has been prevented, species that had disappeared have now returned: the otter and buzzard, peregrine and dormouse. We have planted more trees, farming has become more sustainable, people have never cared for nature more. We have come to

realise that being in nature is good for mental and physical health, and that ecosystem services from well-managed AONBs contribute substantially to the formal economy. Yet these are dark times too for the planet, with the accelerating global destruction of biodiversity and stable climates.

Some losses seem to have crept up: insect numbers and populations have collapsed. Many people will remember how driving at night brought blizzards of moths in the headlights. These have disappeared. If we take the small bits out of ecosystems, inevitably whole systems will one day collapse. But it is climate change that is the greatest single danger to us all. Unchecked, it will force change on all our landscapes, it will undermine economies and the way we live. The scale of what is required is enormous, yet not out of reach. The world emitted 59 Gigatonnes (Gt) of greenhouse gases last year (as CO2 equivalents). This needs to fall to 40 Gt per year to hold temperature increase to 2°C; and to 24 Gt to hold the rise to 1.5°C. It must fall to 10 Gt to ensure the planet stays a safe and habitable place for all of us. That is just over *One Tonne* by each of us per year. This must be our new collective target, and it dwarfs all other concerns.

## Looking Ahead

In our 50th year we continue to develop how we will adopt the Colchester Declaration for Nature, as well as look forward to the UK Government's Agriculture and Environment Bills, and to the implementation of the Landscape Review. These contain the basis of how the countryside is managed into the future, and the AONB network is hopeful that the nationally designated landscapes are recognised as the special places they are and that policies will reflect the benefits that they bring to society.

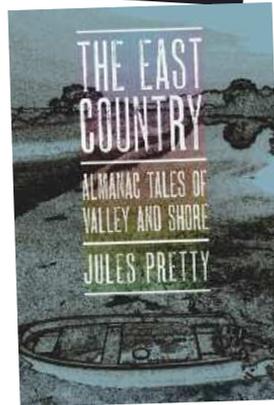
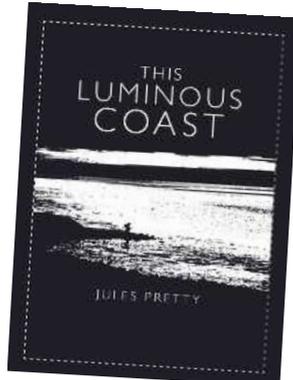
The Declaration is our collective response to the unprecedented concern for the future of the natural environment. The AONB network has pledged to support the recovery of wildlife species and habitats as well as creating further opportunities for people from all sections of society to make an emotional connection with nature. It will also build on the findings of the Government's Landscapes Review of AONBs and National Parks, published September 2019. The designated landscapes world is waiting with interest to see how the Government responds to the review, and welcome the proposals that relate to enhancing the designated landscapes, the wildlife it contains and the quality of life for residents as well as making these national landscapes an important part of the visitor economy.

Locally we were delighted that our Advisory Committees - the representatives from its funding partners that provide set strategic direction for the staff team and oversee its finances - agreed to release funds for the appointment of an AONB Nature Recovery Officer. This new post will seek to work with our partners to implement the aspirations of the Colchester Declaration for Nature.

We will be using our 50th year to widen our engagement with all people to build awareness of how the AONB designation was made to benefit the visitor economy, our natural landscapes and the wildlife it contains, and to enhance resident's quality of life.

Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager

This might seem so out of reach that we will feel both paralysis and guilt. Yet the best place to start is to select behaviours and make choices that reduce our material consumption. Walk more, visit nature and the countryside, celebrate our natural assets, sit with friends a while and listen to the birds, spend time in your garden, stop and watch the sunset, and the full moon rising over water. Not only do these reduce our consumption of the planet, they are also good for our long term health.

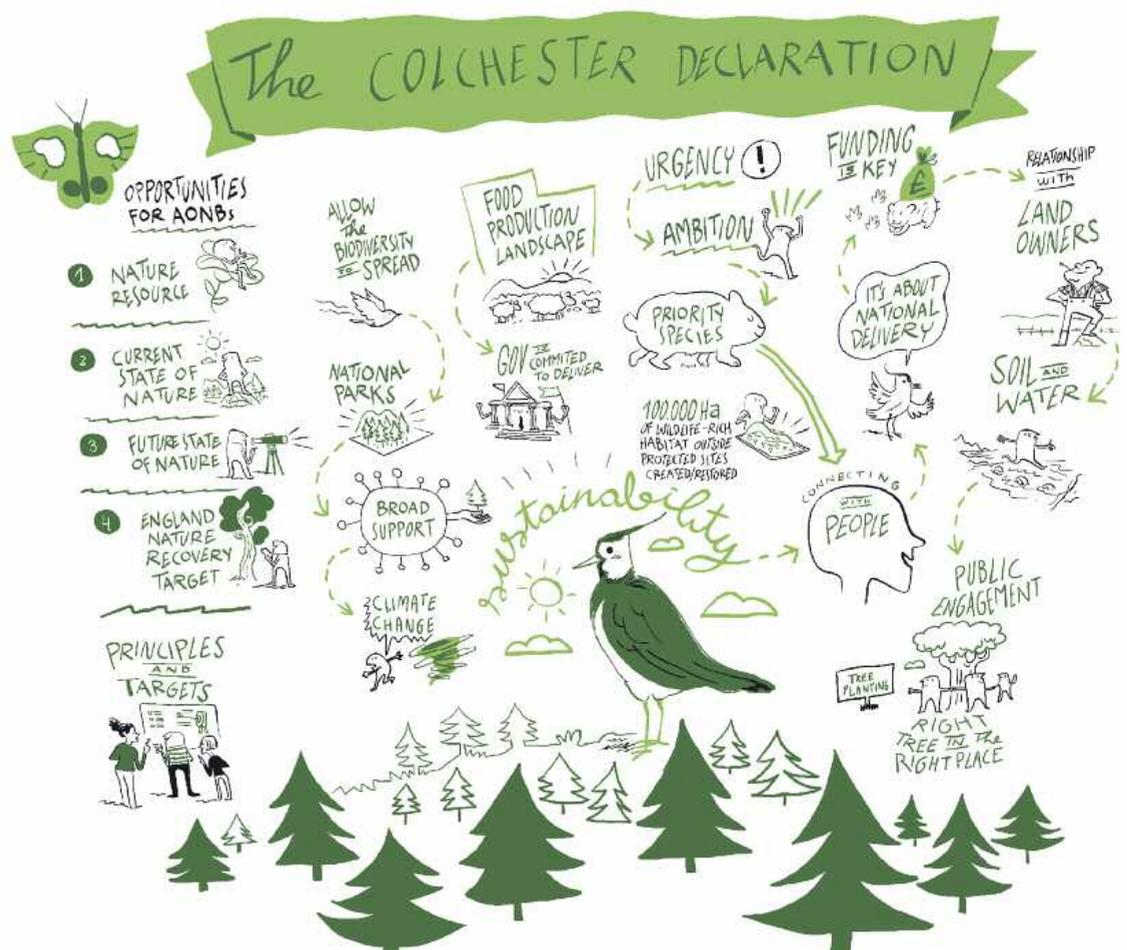


Two of my recent books have been set in AONB landscapes: *This Luminous Coast* (2011) and *The East Country* (2017). Delve a little, and you will find landscapes both farmed and wild. There are deer and bat, otter and rare stag beetle; fields of onion, potato, sugar beet; rippling stands of malt barley and milling wheat; dappled orchard and survivor elm; flowered cottage garden and allotment; long horn cattle and murmuring sheep; the air hushed with the scent of honeysuckle. Overhead plane red kites, flocks of jostling jackdaw and rook roaming and roosting together. One river vale twice was menaced by dragons, short battles and long tales, and in a hilltop chapel the crown was placed on a flaxen fifteen year old. The churches have their symbols, yet also stone beast, green man in roof timbers, and depicted in one chapel's stained glass, the green philosopher and composer, Hildegard of Bingen. The waters of the rivers are crystal clear, cordate lilies flower yellow and white, and shadowy pikes lie in the deeps. There are hidden places, cool glades in woodland, ripples over weirs, silent pools and swirling midges, track of fox, and tall alder, black poplar, bat willow, veteran oaks. There are no mountains in our east countries, just sharp hill, tapestry valley, liminal marsh, coastal cliff, mud flat and shingle beach. None of us should live without this nature.

Big achievements begin with small steps. Significant challenges remain for our planet, so we should begin at home, and in landscapes celebrated for both beauty and nature. The great American poet, Mary Oliver, wrote a short poem of seven words. It is called, very appropriately, *Instructions for Living a Life*: "Pay attention, Be astonished, Tell about it."

Jules Pretty, author, Professor of Environment & Society at University of Essex, and long time resident of our Essex and Suffolk AONBs

*This Luminous Coast* was winner of the 2013 New Angle Prize for Literature; and *The East Country* won the 2018 East Anglian Book of the Year Award.



## Campaigning for Protection

Everything happens for a reason – and this is no exception with the two Suffolk Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) established fifty years ago. However, we need to go back further than the fifty years to understand why they came to be protected.

Atomic power, pylons and London overspill were the watch words in the 1950s and 1960s. The location for an atomic power station with proximity to water supply, solid ground for heavy foundations and remoteness from major centres of population was required. At the same time, long held plans for London population decentralisation were being realised. Suffolk was in focus.

The Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS), the landscape and buildings campaigning charity founded in 1929, was proactive around these huge issues; unless handled sensitively they would irrevocably and detrimentally harm the character and appearance of this attractive, rural county.

The choice of Sizewell by the Central Electricity Board as the most suitable location for an atomic power station led to concerns regarding the associated power lines which would straddle the county. By 1961 two alternative pylons routes were made public and SPS was at the forefront of a campaign to minimise the damage to the countryside.

The government's 1961-81 *South East Study* earmarked areas for development expansion, and preparations were going ahead for substantial growth. At the same time successive governments were also responding to public pressure for greater care in the preservation of what was left of the English countryside and its architectural heritage. Good does sometimes come out of bad and the possible expansion of East Bergholt and large scale development at Stratford St. Mary were hotly contested, along with proposals for other villages in south Suffolk, and this led to the *Survey of Dedham Vale* in 1966. This was an important milestone in the history of planning in Suffolk.

Under the *National Park & Access to the Countryside Act 1949*, the National Parks Commission was formed and entrusted with the designation of AONBs and local planning authorities were given powers to preserve and enhance the areas. Part of the Dedham Vale had just been designated an AONB, and now the coastal area came under scrutiny. A band of land stretching from Kessingland to the Deben was recommended for protection - abutting the newly created Dedham Vale. The SPS pressed for the inclusion of the whole of the Deben and Orwell estuaries which created a continuous coastline from Lowestoft to Shotley. This was confirmed in 1970 including all that SPS had pressed for - with the new title 'Heritage Coast'.

SPS was there, with others, when the fight for the AONBs in Suffolk commenced and we still engage today. Through our professional planners, we continue to support these areas to prevent development harm. SPS was in at the beginning and we continue to strive to monitor and safeguard the innate quality of Suffolk's landscape character, so these special places can be passed on to coming generations.

Lin Clapham, Editor, Suffolk View, Suffolk Preservation Society  
[www.suffolksociety.org](http://www.suffolksociety.org)



Pylons. An intrusion or a majestic feature in the landscape? (1960s)

### 50 YEARS OF TWO OUTSTANDING NATIONAL LANDSCAPES

- 1970's**
  - 1970 Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths designated as AONBs
  - 1971 Cattawade Barrage finished to control sea water
  - 1973 UK becomes a member of the European Communities
  - 1978 Ipswich Town wins the FA Cup
- 1980's**
  - 1981 Dedham Vale Landscape Project begins
  - 1982 Orwell Bridge opens
  - 1985 Fen Bridge on the River Stour replaced
  - 1987 The Great Storm causes the loss of many trees in the UK
- 1990's**
  - 1993 Creation of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Unit
  - 1995 Sizewell B starts to generate electricity
  - 1996 The 50 mile Suffolk Coast Path launched
  - 1999 First Suffolk Beachwatch events along the coast as part of the national adopt-a-beach scheme
- 2000's**
  - 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act brings improved funding and protection of AONBs
  - 2002 New bridge across the Stour links Suffolk and Essex at Bures
  - 2008 First schemes completed to remove overhead powerlines in both AONBs
  - 2009 'I'm a Good Dog' campaign launched in Suffolk Coast & Heaths as part of the BALANCE project
- 2010's**
  - 2010 International Year of Biodiversity
  - 2015 Plastic bag levy introduced
  - 2019 25th Anniversary of the Stour Valley Path DEFRA's Year of Green Action All UK AONBs sign the Colchester Declaration Landscape Review (Glover) published
- 2020** 50th YEAR ANNIVERSARY

## National Lottery Funding for 50th Projects



© Gill Moon

As we mark our 50th anniversaries, we are delighted to announce that the Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONBs have been awarded £129,000 from the National Lottery. The funding supports a project to connect people to the landscape, raise awareness of the special qualities of the AONBs and track the changes to the landscape through photography.

The photography initiative will be a long-term project and will see the installation of fixed-point photography posts across both the AONBs. Residents and visitors will be invited to upload their photographs on a dedicated website that will help to build a unique record of the changing landscapes through the seasons, capturing the impact of weather, river levels, coastal erosion, plant life and more, over the next five years.

Our 50th anniversary has come at a crucial time. The recently adopted Colchester Declaration for Nature sets out how the AONB national network will seek to recover nature and mitigate the impacts of climate change and wildlife decline. This grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund will allow us to deliver projects that not only celebrate 50 years but help to ensure this national landscape is conserved and enhanced for all.



The official Dedham Vale anniversary is on **Wednesday 20 May**, when we will hold a special Forum Conference, and for Suffolk Coast & Heaths on **Wednesday 4 March** with a celebration event for our partners. So many people make such an important contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.



# 50 @ 50 CELEBRATING YEARS 1970 2020

## Top 50 Things to See and Do in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

To celebrate our 50th year we ask you to explore our Top 50 places with this special guide.

50 years ago the Suffolk coast was designated as one of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the same year as our closest neighbour, the Dedham Vale AONB. This National Landscape is known for its shingle beaches, muddy estuaries, purple heathland, ancient and modern forests, military heritage and much, much more.

If we've missed your favourite things to do in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB let us know on twitter @SuffolkAONB #50at50SuffolkCoast



## Heritage

Relics and reminders from Suffolk's long history have, over time, become part of the landscape. The burial mounds at Sutton Hoo which date back to the 6th Century and the unique polygonal tower of Orford Castle built in the 12th Century demonstrate how the past influenced the landscape. There is significant religious heritage that can be seen in the ruins of Greyfriars Priory, in the unique thatched roof of St Peter's Church in Westleton and in the classical Georgian towers at Mistley.

### St Peters Church, Westleton

The exterior of the church is unusual because it has no tower or spire and it also has a thatched roof.

[www.westleton.onesuffolk.net/church](http://www.westleton.onesuffolk.net/church)



### Mistley Towers

Overlooking the River Stour, the two porticoed towers stood by the end of an unconventional Georgian church designed by Robert Adam in 1776.

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/mistley-towers](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/mistley-towers)



### Sutton Hoo

Visit this Anglo-Saxon royal burial site located near Woodbridge for the improved visitor experience including a new viewing tower.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo)

### Orford Castle

Home to one of England's most complete and unusual keeps, visitors can explore the castle from the basement up to the roof.

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle)



### Greyfriars Priory

Grade II listed ruins of a mid-13th century Franciscan friary near the village of Dunwich.

[www.dunwichgreyfriars.org.uk](http://www.dunwichgreyfriars.org.uk)

## Places to Visit

The AONB has a huge range of things to see and do, from getting up close to the famous Suffolk Punch horse to staying in the House in the Clouds in Thorpeness. Dunwich Museum reveals the history of the city under the sea, while Landguard Fort, Bawdsey Radar Museum and HMS Ganges Museum all look at the area's military history. There is an opportunity to see how local food and drink is produced such as flour at the Woodbridge Tide Mill or beer and gin at the Adnams Brewery Tour. The vast coastline and estuaries provide an opportunity to explore the area by boat, with not only several foot ferries but also tour operators that offer pleasure trips on the rivers. Our helpful visitor destination organisation is an ideal start for exploring even more [www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk](http://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk).



## Suffolk Punch Trust

The farm located on the Deben Peninsula not only breeds endangered Suffolk Punch horses but has rare breed animals and runs events throughout the spring and summer.

[www.thesuffolkpunchtrust.co.uk](http://www.thesuffolkpunchtrust.co.uk)

## Landguard Fort

One of England's best-preserved coastal defences surrounded by the Landguard National Nature Reserve in Felixstowe. Visitors to the fort can learn about its history and enjoy re-enactments throughout the year.

[www.discoverlandguard.org.uk/attractions/landguard-fort](http://www.discoverlandguard.org.uk/attractions/landguard-fort)

## Woodbridge Tide Mill Museum

One of the first tide mills in the country is still working on the same site well over 800 years later. Visitors will not only discover how the flour is made but can buy a sample to take home.

[www.woodbridgetidemill.org.uk](http://www.woodbridgetidemill.org.uk)

## Dunwich Museum

The village of Dunwich was once a large, thriving port but was lost to the sea over six centuries ago. The museum tells the story of the town and the lost city under the water.

[www.dunwichmuseum.org.uk](http://www.dunwichmuseum.org.uk)

## HMS Ganges Museum

The museum, located in Shotley Gate, is dedicated to the 160,000 boys who went through the Royal Navy Training Establishment between 1905 to 1976.

[www.hmsgangmuseum.com](http://www.hmsgangmuseum.com)

## Suffolk Foot Ferries

There are four foot ferries operating across the estuaries of the AONB; Walberswick-Southwold, Butley, Felixstowe Ferry-Bawdsey and Shotley-Harwich-Felixstowe.

[www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

## Southwold Pier

Originally built in 1900, Southwold Pier once welcomed holiday makers arriving by steamboat. Today the Pier offers attractions, entertainment, food and drink.

[www.southwoldpier.co.uk](http://www.southwoldpier.co.uk)

## The House in the Clouds

Nestled in the skyline at Thorpeness, this quirky house was built to cover a former water tower. Today, the house is available as a holiday let.

[www.houseinthecLOUDS.co.uk](http://www.houseinthecLOUDS.co.uk)

## Adnams Brewery Tours

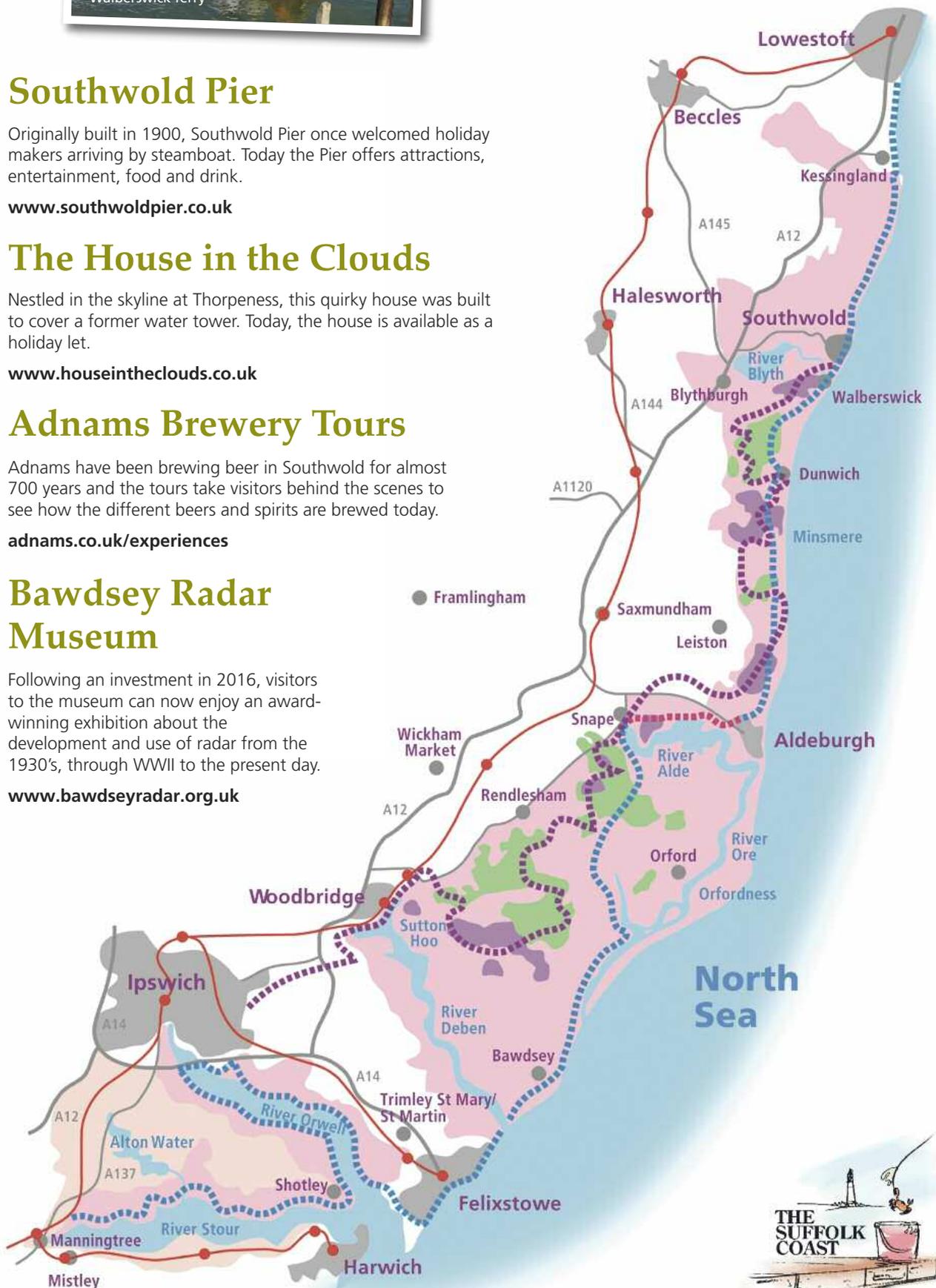
Adnams have been brewing beer in Southwold for almost 700 years and the tours take visitors behind the scenes to see how the different beers and spirits are brewed today.

[adnams.co.uk/experiences](http://adnams.co.uk/experiences)

## Bawdsey Radar Museum

Following an investment in 2016, visitors to the museum can now enjoy an award-winning exhibition about the development and use of radar from the 1930's, through WWII to the present day.

[www.bawdseyradar.org.uk](http://www.bawdseyradar.org.uk)



## Walking

For locals and visitors alike walking is one of the most popular pastimes in the AONB and there are several long-distance paths and numerous footpaths to choose from. Whatever the distance, walkers can see unique landscapes including shingle beaches, heathland, saltmarshes and forest and see the species that live there. The AONB website has over twenty walk guides that are free to download [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org).

### Suffolk Coast Path

A long-distance walking route (50 miles) that links Felixstowe and Lowestoft passing river and coastal paths, marshes and heathland.

### Pin Mill

A quiet spot along the River Orwell with heathland, wooded cliffs and river valley.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/pin-mill/trails/pin-mill-natures-autumn-harvest-walk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/pin-mill/trails/pin-mill-natures-autumn-harvest-walk)



Orwell Country Park

### Stour and Orwell Walk

42-mile walk between Felixstowe and Cattawade through a landscape that has inspired many artists and poets.

### Suffolk Walking Festival

Annual celebration of walking in the county that takes place throughout May.

[www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk)

### Orwell Country Park

Officially opened 1995 and on the edge of Ipswich, the park follows the Orwell estuary and covers almost 500 acres.

[www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/about-orwell-country-park](http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/about-orwell-country-park)

### Sandlings Walk

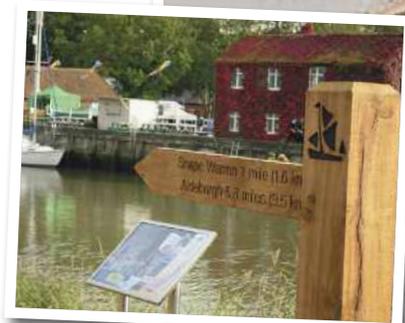
58-mile long-distance walking route that stretches from Ipswich to Southwold passing through forests and heathland to the coast.

### Sailors Path

Beautiful walking route between Aldeburgh and Snape Maltings exploring varied landscapes and the Snape Warren Nature Reserve.



Stour and Orwell Walk



Sailors Path



Suffolk Coast Path

## Leisure Activities

There are numerous ways to get active in the AONB. You can explore the area by bike or visit Tunstall and Rendlesham Forests which both have dedicated trails for families and advanced mountain bikers. There are canoes and paddleboards available to hire at several beach locations as well as great spots for crabbing. Every year, the AONB takes part in the Great British Beach Clean which is a great way for people to help in the effort to improve the local environment.

### Tunstall Forest

Tucked between Tunstall and Blaxhall Commons, the forest is home to many ground nesting birds including nightjar and woodlark. There is also the Viking Trail – a 10-mile advanced mountain biking route.

### Dog walks

Suffolk is a very dog friendly county and there are fantastic walks for dogs. While some beaches restrict dogs in the summer months, many are open including Denes Beach to the north of Southwold. The AONB encourages owners to take responsibility for reducing dog disturbance of wildlife.

### Iken Canoes

Explore the River Alde by canoe, kayak or stand up paddle board and keep an eye out for otters and seals who often visit the area.

[www.ikencanoe.co.uk](http://www.ikencanoe.co.uk)

### Crabbing

There are lots of great spots for crabbing in the AONB and popular locations are Walberswick, Bawdsey or Felixstowe Ferry.



© The Suffolk Coast

Tunstall Forest

### Great British Beach Clean

There are lots of ways to support your local environment but a popular way to get started is to join the annual Great British Beach Clean which this year takes place between 18-21 September.

[www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

### Swimming and sandcastles

Suffolk's beaches are a mix of sand and shingle and many people enjoy taking a dip or spending a family day out making sandcastle in front of traditional beach huts.

[www.suffolkmag.co.uk/home/best-beaches-in-suffolk-1-6161495](http://www.suffolkmag.co.uk/home/best-beaches-in-suffolk-1-6161495)

### Rendlesham Forest

1,500-hectare mixed woodland near Woodbridge offering walking, cycling and orienteering trails including the famous UFO trail.

[www.forestryengland.uk/rendlesham-forest](http://www.forestryengland.uk/rendlesham-forest)



Crabbing at Bawdsey



Orwell Bridge and barge

### Become a beach detective

Download our handy guide to help understand all the items you might find on our shingle beaches.

### River boat trips

Take a different look at the beautiful Suffolk coast and rivers by enjoying a sightseeing or chartered boat cruise.

[www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/articles/explore-the-suffolk-coast--by-water](http://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/articles/explore-the-suffolk-coast--by-water)

## Cultural Heritage

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB has a rich and varied cultural heritage. Aldeburgh and Snape are world-renowned for their close links to 20th Century composer Benjamin Britten and the annual Aldeburgh Festival is now in its 74th year. Other festivals include: literary festivals such as Way with Words at Southwold, and the music festival Latitude, which has been attracting some of the biggest names in rock and pop since 2006. At Snape Maltings there is an opportunity to enjoy sculptures by Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Alison Wilding, while Maggi Hambling's Scallop sculpture can be found on the beach at Aldeburgh.



Red House, Aldeburgh

© Philip Vile, Britten-Pears Foundation

### Aldeburgh

One of the most popular seaside towns in Suffolk and well known for its links to composer Benjamin Britten - you can visit his home The Red House [brittenpears.org/visit](http://brittenpears.org/visit) - and famous for the great fish and chips!

### Latitude Festival

Now in its 14th year, this annual music festival takes place in Henham Park, near Southwold.

[www.latitudefestival.com](http://www.latitudefestival.com)

### Way with Words

Every November the coastal town of Southold opens its door for this popular five day literary festival.

[www.wayswithwords.co.uk](http://www.wayswithwords.co.uk)

### Maggi Hambling 'Scallop' sculpture

Installed on Aldeburgh beach in 2003, 'The Scallop' commemorates composer Benjamin Britten and displays a quote from Britten's Peter Grimes: 'I hear those voices that will not be drowned'.

### Snape Maltings

One of the world's leading centres of music, Snape Maltings, originally a working maltings, became a concert hall in 1965 as a venue for the Aldeburgh Festival of Music.

[snapemaltings.co.uk](http://snapemaltings.co.uk)



Snape



Scallop

© Andrew Dunn

## Landscape and Nature

Without doubt, the scenic beauty of the AONB makes it a unique place to live and to visit. Central to this is connecting with nature and being close to so many different and rare habitats including estuaries, reed beds, saltmarshes and shingle. Enjoyment with respect is our advice. Many rare birds make the AONB their home including the woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler while others such as the Redshank and Oystercatcher come for the breeding season. Other threatened species such as the silver-studded blue – the UK's rarest butterfly – can also be found in the patchwork of ancient heathland. There are plenty of opportunities to learn more about the plants, animals and birds in the AONB by visiting nature reserves managed by the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and National Trust.

### Deben estuary

A Site of Special Scientific Interest covers the River Deben and its banks, along the 16 kilometres from its mouth at Felixstowe Ferry to Woodbridge, and is home to 40% of Suffolk's saltmarshes.

### Orford Ness

Internationally important Nature Reserve with the best conserved area of vegetated shingle in Europe.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/orford-ness-national-nature-reserve](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/orford-ness-national-nature-reserve)

### Sutton Heath

Managed by the Woodland Trust, this mixed woodland features sweet chestnut, pine and oak trees - most of them 70-100 years old - as well as several varieties of bat.

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/sutton-heath](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/sutton-heath)

### Wrabness Nature Reserve

Overlooking the River Stour and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust, Wrabness is home to many species including the nightingale and short-eared owl.

[www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/wrabness](http://www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/wrabness)



Orford Ness

© National Trust

### Benacre National Nature Reserve

With a combination of reedbeds and lagoons, as well as woodland and heathland, the nature reserve is home to over 100 bird species.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/suffolks-national-nature-reserves/suffolks-national-nature-reserves](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suffolks-national-nature-reserves/suffolks-national-nature-reserves)

### The RSPB

The RSPB has several reserves across the AONB providing an opportunity to visitors to learn more about the different habitats and glimpse some of the incredible bird species that live, breed and feed in Suffolk. Visit Snape Warren, North Warren Aldeburgh, Dingle Marshes, Minsmere, Havergate.

[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

### Dunwich Heath and Beach

One of several National Trust reserves at Dunwich you can follow the family wildlife trails and learn about the different species who live and breed on the heathland. There are also accessible routes for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunwich-heath-and-beach](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunwich-heath-and-beach)

### Shingle Street

A coastal hamlet famous for its shingle beach providing a home to a variety of wildlife including birds and insects.

[bawdsey.onesuffolk.net/our-village/shingle-street](http://bawdsey.onesuffolk.net/our-village/shingle-street)

### Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Numerous nature reserves are owned by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, who manage almost 8,000 acres of unique habitats and support threatened species such as dormouse, hedgehog, swift, water vole and lapwing [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org). At Trimley Marshes on the Orwell estuary the wetland is home to wigeon, teal, brent geese and redshank.

[www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/trimleymarshes](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/trimleymarshes)



Dunwich



Redshank

© RSPB



Trimley

# Suffolk Walking Festival

Join us in May for the 13th annual Suffolk Walking Festival. Last year's festival left an incredible 29 million footprints over 23 days across the county! From 9 to 31 May (including Half Term) for over 3 weeks you can explore the landscapes, villages and towns of Suffolk with over 120 guided walks.



There are family friendly and fringe events at some of Suffolk's most iconic and spectacular locations. The launch is at Clare Castle Country Park on 9 May, plus there is a brand new Challenge Walk 'Go West' over 5 days (16-20 May). There is something for everyone: short, medium, and long walks, photography and art workshops. You can experience 'Forest Bathing' (Shinrin-Yoku), Mindful Nature Walks, discover the Romans and Normans, and learn about the Cold War at Bentwaters. There are walks on the mysterious Orford Ness with Kite the Sheepdog (and his shepherd Andrew) and an Orwellian Adventure down the River Orwell. All details are on [www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk).

Anna McGowan, Suffolk Walking Festival



Sara Holman (left) from Suffolk Wildlife Trust with Kellie Dimmock (centre) and Sophie Green from Suffolk Libraries with the ten Wild Read books

## Years of Recycling



Recycling has come a long way over the past 50 years... We've gone from dumping all our rubbish into a single bin (probably galvanised!), through the setting up of glass and other bring banks, to the introduction of wheelie bins and the mixed kerbside recycling collection we have now. Since the formation of The Suffolk Waste Partnership in the late 1990s, district and county councils work better together to provide the best services for Suffolk residents.

The 2019 recycling rate in Suffolk was 48% compared with less than 20% in 2001/2. But there are still challenges ahead! We have increasing levels of contamination in the recycling collections, with the worst offenders being glass, food, textiles, plastic bags and nappies (yes nappies!). At the same time recycling markets are demanding high quality materials to reuse. Getting your recycling right is more important than ever.

Public awareness around marine litter and plastic pollution has never been greater and rightly so. We need to capture this momentum to reduce the amount of single use plastic we use by making savvy shopping choices, choosing reusables and refillables where we can and making sure that our waste ends up in the right bins so that it doesn't pollute the environment. Visit [www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk](http://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk) for more information.

There are interesting times ahead, as we look forward to seeing what changes the UK's Environment Bill will bring. In discussion have been deposit return schemes for drinks containers, consistency in recycling systems and a tax on all plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.

Caroline Fish, Suffolk Waste Partnership

## Get Wild About Reading!

Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Libraries are launching a new partnership project to connect the natural world and the written word and celebrate the different ways authors relate to nature. This Wild Reads project will run to the end of 2020 to give everyone the opportunity to enjoy the very best nature writing, as well as inspire and ignite a love of nature in our readers through the lenses of a wide variety of writers.

A Wild Reads collection of ten books has been selected including authors such as the BBC's Kate Humble, Isabella Tree and Melissa Harrison. We will also be hosting book-related events, readings and discussions as well as walks and activities to promote Wild Reads.

Wild Reads books will be available across Suffolk and can all be reserved at [www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/wild-reads](http://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/wild-reads). For events and activities inspired by Wild Reads, visit [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events).

Kellie Dimmock, Suffolk Libraries

## The full list of Wild Reads:

- Wilding, Isabella Tree
- All Among The Barley, Melissa Harrison
- The Peace of Wild Things, Wendell Berry
- The Wild Places, Robert Macfarlane
- Nature Cure, Richard Mabey
- Notes from Walnut Tree Farm, Roger Deakin
- Thinking on My Feet, Kate Humble
- Meadowland, John Lewis-Stempel
- The Overstory, Richard Powers
- The Salt Path, Raynor Winn

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES

## Discover the Past

Suffolk Archives is home to 900 years' worth of Suffolk's history captured through thousands of documents. We are open for everyone to discover the past through our collections in our branches in Bury St. Edmunds, Lowestoft and Ipswich. Our team of staff and volunteers work to look after Suffolk's nationally and internationally significant archives. We have volunteering opportunities to suit busy lifestyles or those looking to do more with their time. Whether you can spare us a minute, an hour, a morning/afternoon or a regular day, your support is precious to us. Is your interest piqued? See our website for our broad range of volunteering opportunities, across the two AONBs and Suffolk, and sign up to the challenge.



Rebecca Harpur, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator for Suffolk Archives

## Cycling and Riding Better for the Environment

You, O Reader, doubtless love the AONBs whose news is usually cheerful and attractive. But on 22 August 2019 the Commons Science and Technology Committee highlighted the lack of government policies to deliver the net zero carbon target by 2050. Meanwhile our County and District councils have declared a state of emergency and aim for carbon neutrality by 2030. That Commons Committee's headline was "Give up cars to meet climate targets", which many country folk and visitors will say is unrealistic or impossible. But is that true? Please think for three seconds before every trip: "Could I make it by walking, cycling, bus, train or a combination?". Could any money saved be invested in better public transport? Why not conserve your car - preferably electric - for special events, redirect your traffic congestion frustrations for the day's puzzles and preserve your body, mind and spirit for a happier & healthier retirement?

Andy Cassy & Neil Winship, [QuietLanesSuffolk@gmail.com](mailto:QuietLanesSuffolk@gmail.com)



## Not Just Human Visitors Love the Coast

Thousands of birds use our coast and estuaries every year during their migration, to nest or overwinter here, and some live here all year round. Our wonderfully large muddy estuaries and salt marsh mean wading birds love it here. Suffolk mud provides a banquet of food, so you can see lots of different birds. Beak size and shape means birds can specialise in different food and not compete with their neighbours, so you can see hundreds of birds on the mud together.

Birds can live happily, feeding and resting close to this larder if they aren't disturbed. Some birds are used to people and will feed close to shore, but when there's disturbance in sensitive areas or at certain times, the birds will get scared, stop feeding and leave the area. Our estuaries can have a wide mix of human and species activity on them and sometimes there's not many other places birds can land and feed, so they try and come back to the same spot once they feel safe.

It's not just birds we are looking at though. Our coast is special in many ways, including being one of the few areas where shingle ridge vegetation survives in England. Unfortunately, unintentional trampling can destroy whole communities of this sensitive vegetation, so it's important to know where it is and avoid damaging it.

I am working with the Partnership of East Suffolk, Ipswich Borough and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils on the Suffolk Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy, known as RAMS. Our project area is a corridor of land up to 13km from the coast and estuaries, focusing on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar wetlands. Our working group is made up of local organisations and community groups, including the AONB, who help us with planning for the project and determining what mitigation may be required. Find out more at [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/s106/rams](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/s106/rams).



Shingle and lagoon near Walberswick, with roped off bird nesting area

We use a variety of important information, including where, and how many houses are planned to be built, where there are sensitive bird roosts and feeding areas, sites where there is special vegetation that could be damaged, and where there may be recreational use in the future when more people live near the coast.

For planning applications within the project area, developers need to provide mitigation to make sure the birds and vegetation won't be impacted by the new residents or visitors. When payment to the RAMS is made for mitigation, we can work collaboratively to achieve the best mitigation for that site. Larger developments will also be expected to provide greenspace for use of the new residents.

**Stephanie Walsh, Suffolk Coast RAMS**

## Supporting Nature at Benjamin Britten's Aldeburgh Home



Early last year I started my role as the Garden Manager for the Britten-Pears Foundation, which cares for and maintains Benjamin Britten's home at The Red House in Aldeburgh. I manage a five-acre garden that includes lawns, grounds and beds, some of which were established by Britten and his life partner Peter Pears when they moved to the house in 1957.

We are lucky to be located in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nestled by Aldeburgh Golf Club and North Warren nature reserve, and I am keen to celebrate our local natural history, support the flora unique to the Suffolk coast and create a garden that is resilient in the face of climate change. I am strongly committed to horticultural practices that promote sustainability and I have established a nursery to increase the plant diversity across the site, propagating from existing shrubs to

maintain the longevity of significant plants. I have already made extensive changes to the garden, including planting new beds and flowers that are well-suited to their location.

In summer 2019 I led a project involving the whole team to plant bee borders, which flower over a long period in order to support pollinators. I am lucky to be supported by the Foundation's desire to open the garden as much as possible as well as to encourage local people's involvement in their activities. Looking to the future, I am keen to develop the kitchen garden to generate more locally grown produce to share with the Aldeburgh community.

**Penny Brice, Britten-Pears Foundation**

## Freeing the Trees



Here in Stutton we have a community woodland, managed by Stutton Grows. We have planted some 1,000 trees over a period starting in 2003. Like the AONB we too were concerned about the plastic spirals used. Being exposed to the elements they were beginning to deteriorate and break up, and furthermore the trees being well established they no longer needed protection, so our merry band got on hand and knees and cleaned up our woodland.



**Bill Hewlett, Stutton Grows**

*Editor: Please get in touch with the AONB team if you know of Trees that need Freeing in the AONB! We could help with volunteers or reusing the spirals.*

## Managed Aquifer Recharge Trial Update

The Topsoil project MAR trial on the Broxstead Estate was completed in March 2019. The aim was to determine whether we could use spray irrigation to top-up (recharge) natural groundwater stores in the winter to significant levels to enable it to be used the following summer for irrigation.

The trial demonstrated that it is possible to 'recharge' the Suffolk Crag aquifer with significant volumes of water using surface irrigation. We found that we could apply up to 192mm (11,900m<sup>3</sup>) of water within six weeks without causing runoff, damage to soils or nutrient leaching. Data

showed the water moving through the soil layers so there was good infiltration, but no changes to groundwater levels were detected. We could not, however, detect groundwater level changes or record how long the additional water stayed in the aquifer.

Continued exploration of this concept is needed to help tackle water shortages which will become more acute as the climate changes. Detailed analysis is published on our website. The trial has already provided valuable insights, helping design a full-scale pilot at Bucklesham for 2021. Thanks to Sustainable Water Solutions for running the trial,

Soil Moisture Sense Ltd for providing probes, Suffolk Produce Ltd for the trial site, and our funders: Interreg, Suffolk County Council, Amenity & Accessibility Fund, AONB Sustainable Development Fund and Galloper Wind Farm Fund.

**Jane Herbert, Essex & Suffolk Rivers Trust**



## Scattered Orchard: Five Years On



Early days, 2015

In November 2015, with trees funded by the AONB, Transition Woodbridge set about creating a community Scattered Orchard behind the play area at Beresford Drive, Woodbridge. This was to be no ordinary orchard, but a row of trained espalier fruit trees with fruit for the community to harvest in years to come.



The ground was a challenge being on the clay seam and it was overgrown with brambles. Undaunted we cleared the ground, covered it with manure and cardboard to suppress the weeds, set up the wire frame and planted the trees. Further trees (including Suffolk variety "Lady Henniker") were added with Woodbridge Methodist Church and Deben Rotary funds the following year.

The AONB 2016 Pollinator Patches project helped us to plant crocuses and daffodils around the area to encourage pollinators to the trees, creating biodiversity in a residential setting. Every year between April and October residents from the vicinity have been watering the trees during their growth period, and a group of us clear and weed. We have carefully trained the trees, and it was very satisfying to see so many bearing fruit last autumn. For information about this and other Transition Woodbridge projects see [transitionwoodbridge.org.uk](http://transitionwoodbridge.org.uk) or email us at [ttwoodbridge@gmail.com](mailto:ttwoodbridge@gmail.com).

**Jane Healey and Jessica Mills, Transition Woodbridge**



Continuing the good work, 2018

## Waldringfield Dreams

Many of us in Waldringfield dream of planting a woodland one day, but with no land available we have decided to make do with as much hedge planting as we can. In January 2020 twelve enthusiastic volunteers gathered on Mill Road, Waldringfield to plant 110 metres of mixed native hedging. In just an hour and a half all 560 trees were planted.

Many thanks to our planters from inside and outside of the village, including some who are regular AONB volunteers. The Eco Team at Waldringfield School were helped to plant a 13 metre stretch of the same mix of hedging back in November.



The hedging was funded by the AONB and by Waldringfield, Newbourne and Hemley Scattered Orchard Project. Thanks also to Andy Archer of Newbourne for

digging the site over prior to planting - this made the job so much easier.

I plan to organise more hedge planting each year, with permission from our village landowners, and eventually plan to begin a tree nursery in the village, as by planting from seed and repurposing saplings we can continue to improve our hedges for free. Contact me on [mariahskellorn@hotmail.com](mailto:mariahskellorn@hotmail.com) if you have native saplings in your garden and would like to pot them up for our hedges. I would be very happy to collect and look after them.

**Mariah Ballam, Waldringfield**

## Wild Technology

Thermal imaging cameras are now being used at several Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserves, including Trimley Marshes, Captain's Wood, Carlton Marshes, and Rendlesham Forest, to help create a better picture of wildlife activity during nocturnal hours. The project, funded by the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, has allowed the Trust to gather information about everything from deer movements to bat and badger activity.

**Christine Luxton, Head of Development, Suffolk Wildlife Trust**



Thermal imaging helps spot badger movements across the landscape

## Sutton Hoo Landscapes



Tawny owl chick

At Sutton Hoo National Trust work is underway to conserve and manage this landscape for future generations. Whilst a lot of people recognise the importance of this landscape archaeologically as being home to the ship burial of an Anglo-Saxon king, what is less obvious is how important it is for wildlife.

Since the site passed to the National Trust in 1998 the acid grassland landscape has been actively managed through conservation grazing using rare breed sheep and controlling the bracken. This work has improved nesting areas for skylarks and we are hoping to encourage the return of woodlarks. The estate is home to large areas of woodland which are being brought in to management through working with community groups including the Green Light Trust. We are restructuring plantation woodland, reinstating coppicing and encouraging native broadleaf trees, to try and create a more diverse ground flora providing habitats for birds including nightingales (which are red listed), buzzards, tawny owls and little owls.

Down on the River Deben the salt marshes and mudflats are nationally recognised as vitally important habitats for breeding birds. We are working to conserve this section of the river and are hoping to install bird hides in the future to improve access.

**Joshua Ward, Sutton Hoo**

## A Swift Reflection

Having (apparently!) taken my first steps on Thorpeness beach in 1954 and returned there many times with my brother for summer holidays, our Suffolk coast and heathland is in my blood. Ice cream from the café at the Meare probably is too! Some years later, seeing a majestic Purple Heron and Spoonbills during a visit to Minsmere, cemented my love of birds and of the landscape, but the memory of Swifts screaming around my uncle's house has influenced me most.

Inspired to start Aldeburgh's Amazing Swifts project three years ago, our nest box campaign produced its first nesting success during 2019 and by offering a Swift rescue service, we have been able to bring a rare, close up sight of these birds to many people. The need to care for the Swifts and provide

homes for them, demonstrates the effects that we are having on our wildlife as the use of pesticide and thoughtless roof refurbishment take their toll. However, people are becoming increasingly aware of the need to preserve homes for our birds and with more new houses being built in the towns and villages around our AONB, we should be consciously integrating homes for wildlife.

As we look forward to the next 50 years of our AONB, mindful of the current threats of rising sea levels and energy projects, we should seize the moment and experience the delights our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – long may it continue to provide a refuge for both wildlife and visitors.

**Alan Collett,**  
[aldeburghsamazingswifts.co.uk](http://aldeburghsamazingswifts.co.uk)



Alan Collett (left) and his brother

## Caring for our Footpaths



Have you ever walked along a public footpath and found it difficult to use because of brambles and branches sticking out from the side? Twenty years ago, some of the Alde Valley Ramblers felt the same way and decided to do something about it, forming the Alde Valley working party group to care for paths in the coast and heaths area, with me as the group co-ordinator.

Over the years our tasks have ranged from repairing and replacing waymarker posts, building steps, adding handrails, netting boardwalks and removing stiles, to putting in sleeper bridges, as well as general clearing sessions, all to keep access to the countryside open in this area.

From the start, we decided to get approval and support for our work from SCC Public Rights of Way. They supply

all our timber and hardware and provide public liability insurance. The group is a very easy-going collection of volunteers who turn up whenever they can and do as little or as much as they feel up to. We always have a café or pub available for refreshment afterwards. New members are welcome, please contact me at [aldevalleyramblers@gmail.com](mailto:aldevalleyramblers@gmail.com).

Although PRoW in East Suffolk have greatly improved in the last 20 years, recent budget cutbacks mean that less work is being given out to contractors and the work of volunteers has become even more valuable. Brambles still grow and timber still rots!

**Nigel Meadows, Alde Valley Ramblers**

## Suffolk's Anglo-Saxon Past Revealed

A National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for £517,300 has been awarded to Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service for a community project to uncover the hidden archaeology in the Deben valley. The project, Rendlesham Revealed: Anglo-Saxon Life in South-East Suffolk, follows a pilot project undertaken 2008-2017 which uncovered evidence of the Anglo-Saxon royal settlement first recorded by Bede in the 8th Century. It was where the East Anglian kings would have stayed, feasted their followers, administered justice, and collected dues and tribute.



Volunteers excavating an Anglo-Saxon house at Rendlesham in 2014

The grant has attracted a further £200,000 in match funding from local and national partners, universities and volunteers, and is made possible by the kind support of local landowners. Smaller grants have been generously given by Institute of Archaeology at University College London, the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, The Sutton Hoo Society and Council of British Archaeology East.

This project will connect the unique stories of the princely burials of Sutton Hoo and the site of the royal palace at Rendlesham to put them into the context of the wider Anglo-Saxon communities and landscapes. The involvement of local people will be essential to the project, with a range of opportunities, starting summer 2020, for people to take part in surveys and excavation, join hands-on experimental archaeology events, specialist and family workshops, guided walks and exhibitions. Find out more and sign up to our e-newsletter at [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendleshamrevealed](http://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendleshamrevealed).

**Alice De Leo, Project Delivery Officer**

## Landscape in Intimate Detail

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is wonderfully diverse which makes it fantastic for landscape photography. I have been photographing this environment for the last ten years and there is always something different to see and so many varied landscapes to capture and understand.



© Gill Moon

Taking photos is a really good way of getting to know a landscape in intimate detail. It teaches you to see the world with an artist's eye, to observe more closely and notice the tiny details that might otherwise go unseen. It is also a great way to relax and reconnect with the natural world.

Thanks to funding in 2019 from the Amenity & Accessibility Fund I have been able to publish a book, *A Guide to Photographing the Suffolk Coast*, and run a series of photography workshops aimed at getting people to explore more of the AONB with their cameras.

The project has been so much fun and I have met some amazing people who really enjoyed exploring some of the area's most attractive landscapes. As well as popular locations like Southwold and Walberswick, my workshops cover quieter areas like Bawdsey Quay, Westleton Heath and Upper Hollesley Common. The aim is to master observational skills and identify interesting compositions, and to see the world in a different way. For more information about the book and further workshops see [www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk](http://www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk) and [www.gillmoon.com](http://www.gillmoon.com).

**Gill Moon, Photographer**

## Geological Layers & Coastal Art Excursions



Art Branches CIC worked with geo-conservationist Tim Holt-Wilson to explore the geology of Suffolk's coast, aided by an Amenity & Accessibility Fund grant. In September/October 2019 we invited Suffolk Young Carers to attend our workshops. The children, aged 6-13, were lucky enough to spot a range of fossils including flint sponges. They also found a seal skeleton which they enjoyed piecing together. The children were inspired by the cliffs at Dunwich to create geological layered cakes which they promptly ate, to paint watercolours of fossils found and studied under magnification. Art

Branches met with and mentored a young man (NEET) struggling with mental health issues to help as a volunteer on this project. It was good to see his interaction with the children and a gradual increase in confidence and engagement with the tasks at hand.

In our Coastal Art workshops we worked with artists to provide respite trips for other young carers to Thorpeness and Minsmere. The days centered on learning about different habitats in the area and detailed studies were made of the life found. Of particular note was the day in which parents with mental health issues were invited alongside their children who have a demanding life. Art Branches social care Director Deborah Pipe reported "It was marvelous to see how the parents responded to learning something interesting in an environment new to them. For some children it was the first day out in a long while".

Plants from the shoreline areas were identified and studied, and field notes made to encourage the generations to learn about plant adaptations. At Minsmere we concentrated on bird spotting and the importance of habitat management including of reed beds and grazing. A parent said "My children had a lovely day. Deborah and Jackie were very nice and helpful. They had a lot of knowledge about insects and nature, which helped us appreciate our natural surroundings a whole lot more." With thanks to Galloper Wind Farm Fund and the AONB for supporting this opportunity. The days out provided much relief, fun and change for young carers from their usual role, which can be very demanding. If you are interested in our future geology, art or environmental education workshops, please email [artbranches@icloud.com](mailto:artbranches@icloud.com).

**Stephanie Hartick, Creative Director Art Branches**

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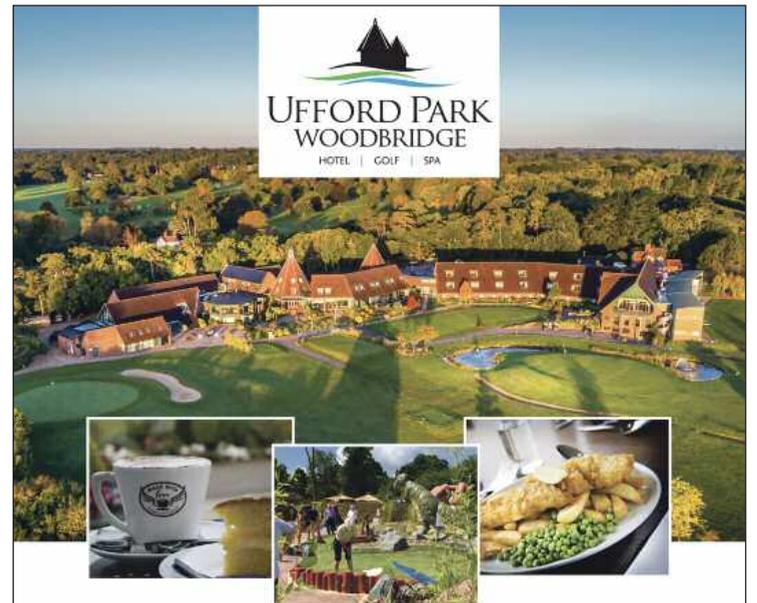
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## Suffolk Secrets Supports Nature

Across the world, the UK and, of course, in Suffolk, there are many people working to reverse the trend of wildlife decline. Within living memory, more than half of our wildlife has been lost. With such staggering figures in mind the following decade is going to be crucial for the natural environment.

Suffolk Secrets, one of the county's leading agencies for holiday cottage lettings, has pledged £24,000 over a two-year period to help support the county's wildlife charity, Suffolk Wildlife Trust. These much-needed funds will be used to build a new boardwalk at Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve near Lowestoft and a variety of other conservation projects across Suffolk Wildlife Trust's coastal reserves.

Suffolk Secrets puts enormous stock in being 'truly local', integrating community support and involvement at the heart of the business, and is well known as a supporter of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB through numerous projects and a special fund supporting conservation for more than a decade.

Sally Owen from Suffolk Secrets says, "We know how important wildlife and Suffolk's beautiful landscapes are to our customers. When asked why they holiday in Suffolk 80% said they enjoyed walking, 43% liked to visit our nature reserves and 26% expressed a love of bird watching, so our support of Suffolk wildlife is a great fit. We're proud to be doing our bit to protect and nurture what makes our county so special for residents and visitors alike."

**Michael Strand, Community Fundraising Manager, Suffolk Wildlife Trust**



L-R, Louise Gregory, Visitor Experience and Centre Manager, Carlton Marshes; Sally Owen, Suffolk Secrets Brand Marketing Manager, and Michael Strand, Suffolk Wildlife Trust Community Fundraising Manager]

## Siren Springboard



Climate emergency; species extinction; loss of nature; future prospects for young people; all are sounding an alarm and stir emotions. Few of us like being told to give up something or change behaviours, yet these issues are threatening what we in Suffolk and Essex all cherish.

In 2019, with support from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, we launched a new community-led initiative, aiming to encourage broad audiences to consider these issues by combining art, science and performance, and appealing to hearts as well as heads.

Siren commenced with a popular festival in Aldeburgh in August where over 3,000 people were drawn to take part. We have also run workshops, working with local partners, to help skill young people around film-making, public-speaking, event organising, photography, self-confidence, local democracy and more, bringing together creative people, scientists, environmental advocates, performers, trainers and mentors. The transferrable life skills learned can help young people feeling anxious about their future find their voice, strengthen their relationship with the natural world, and explore new ways of thinking and living for their communities - creating projects that will be showcased at the next Siren, an annual landmark arts and environment festival for our region. Find out more at [www.sirencalling.org](http://www.sirencalling.org).

**Ian & Gina Rowlands, Incredible Oceans**

## Children Dig Up Blythburgh Heritage

Blythburgh school children, supervised by professional archaeologists, are digging test pits in village gardens. In a continuation of a project initially sponsored by Cambridge University the aim, with an AONB Community & Conservation Fund grant, is to plot the development of the village since Anglo-Saxon times. One-metre-square pits will be dug and finds recorded every 10cm will be expertly assessed and dated.

Everyday items used and thrown away by villagers over the centuries, such as pottery and glass, are expected to be found, evidence of the working of tradesmen, and lost items such as coins. There is a good idea of the location of Anglo-Saxon Blythburgh but there is much still to be learned about the fluctuation of the community's fortunes, affected by the Black Death, the dissolution of its priory, and that scourge of thatched, timber-framed settlements, fire. The pits will be openings into 1,400 years of village history, as you can read on our website [blythburgh.onesuffolk.net/history/archaeology](http://blythburgh.onesuffolk.net/history/archaeology).

The children will benefit from working in groups on a disciplined project, and villagers will learn more about the place where they live, making a genuine contribution to local history knowledge. The finds will also be a reminder of the way in which centuries of man's activity have shaped our landscape.

**Alan Mackley, Blythburgh Archaeology Group**



Fragment of a Bellarmine jug, found in a testpit in 2019, of a type exported from Germany in the 16th and 17th centuries and copied in England

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## Butley Ferry Improvements



The hards which give access to the ferry are continually being covered in silt and raising them has been found to be counter productive as the silt just continues to rise around them. Early last year the Gedgrave jetty was raised above the old hard on short legs, allowing a flow of water through the structure.

It was so successful that in June/July 2019, volunteers spent the equivalent of 38 man-

days improving the Capel jetty. It was not straightforward as on close inspection the old jetty was found to have been so badly attacked by marine worms (*toredo*) that only two of the original piles could be reused. The entire jetty had to be rebuilt. Oak replaced the parts of the jetty which would be underwater. Oak doesn't stop the marine worms, but it will slow them down. We also lowered both jetties to make access easier at low water.

Of course, work like this is expensive, with the timber alone costing around £3,500. It was made possible by a grant from the Amenity & Accessibility Fund of around £3,000, administered through the AONB. The support and advice given by them was invaluable. The remainder was provided by the Alde and Ore Association. The ferry is now easier to access at any state of the tide with passengers able to start and end their crossing with clean shoes and the mud staying where it belongs.

Roy Truman, Chair, Butley Ferry

## Following Holbrook Creek into Print

Children with special educational needs from Holbrook Academy visited the Sudbourne Printmakers Studios in September 2019 to spend the day printmaking. It was a lovely fun opportunity for them to use the facilities of a working print studio, where they were introduced to three different printmaking techniques. They explored a new way of making and looking, with particular emphasis on translating their experience of walking along the banks of Holbrook Creek into print images. Thank you to the AONB's Community and Conservation Fund for funding this special day.



Holbrook students, Dylan Palmer and Evie Abbott in the foreground, Joe Peto in the background, showing their print skills. Students also produced the boat print on the newspaper front cover.

Jennifer Hall, Sudbourne Printmakers

## East Suffolk Greenprint Forum



Are you a person who loves your community and are keen to do your bit for it and the environment? Are you looking for a way to share your knowledge or experiences with others and learn from theirs? Or seeking to input to the thinking of organisations in your area? The Greenprint Forum is one of the ways you can do this locally. It is facilitated by East Suffolk Council to enable our communities to be more resilient, supportive, engaged, valued and empowered to protect, enhance and make sustainable use of our environment.



Since our foundation in 1996 some of our key achievements have been: to support a key member with the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey, which saw 2000 volunteers surveying 44,984 field boundaries across Suffolk; supporting the East Coast Carbon Efficiency project when 200 small businesses were visited by Groundwork Suffolk and provided with reports prioritising energy efficiency measures; instigating the Sky Lantern and Mass Balloon Ban; embarking in 2018 on a Plastic Action Campaign, partly funded by the AONB to establish a network of Plastic Action Champion volunteers to act as ambassadors and helping others in their networks to reduce their consumption of single use stuff; and commissioning a Yellow Fish project to address the issue of pollution entering the natural watercourses via surface water drains. Find out more or become a member at [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum).

Daniel Wareing, Secretary of Greenprint Forum & Environmental Sustainability Officer East Suffolk Council

## Environmental Art

Awing And A Prayer is an environmental art project that will fabricate and install a large, colourful, contemporary, glass "window" placed into the ancient ruined chapel standing in the grasslands of RSPB Minsmere. The artwork will glow like a jewel in the greens and ochres of the landscape, seeming to soar into the sky, as the crumbling building has no roof!



This project began with my personal response to the rich and thriving albeit vulnerable wildlife environment and a setting that is full of stark paradoxes and historic human debris. I encourage us all to live with respect for our landscape and recognise that we are not separate - we ARE that landscape. The installation, in summer 2020, launches a programme of community activities inviting all of us to explore our connection with landscape, heritage and each other. It is collaborative, with activities ranging from drawing in the wilderness to songwriting, to walks and talks with the artist. More ideas invited! Contact me via [www.awingandaprayer.org.uk](http://www.awingandaprayer.org.uk).

We are immeasurably grateful for the funding we have received to date from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, Amenity and Accessibility Fund, Arts Council England, Hawke Optics, Nichol Young Foundation, Scarfe Trust, Wentworth Hotel and over 40 individuals. I would also like to thank RSPB Minsmere and the AONB for their belief in the project right from the start.

Arabella Marshall, Artist

## Walking Words of the Suffolk Coast Path

With funding from the Amenity & Accessibility Fund, Galloper Wind Farm Fund and the Sustainable Development Fund, our Halesworth-based Community Interest Company devised and delivered Walking Words & Coast Lines over summer and autumn 2019, the legacy of which are three new video poems exploring the Suffolk Coast Path.

Myself, Naomi Jaffa and Jeni Smith from Poetry People worked with Aldeburgh Primary School and Mrs Giddings' Year 4 class (15 children), Alde Valley Academy Year 8 group (24 students), and Reydon Primary School and Miss Hurren's Year 4 class (29 children) over the summer and autumn terms.

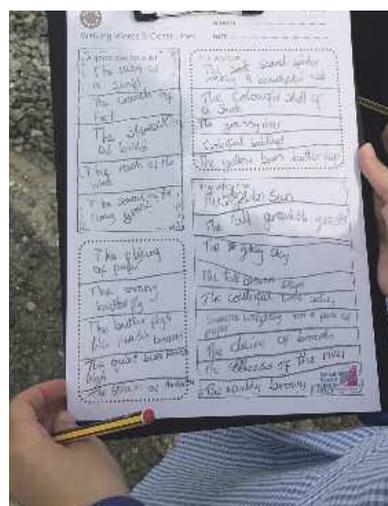
The sessions comprised creative writing, editing and audio recording - with the children working individually and as a group. Each school also enjoyed information-gathering expeditions to sections of the Suffolk Coast Path in their area. Many of the photos in the film were taken by the children on a

digital camera which was shared during their walk, with further scenes shot later by film-maker Nathan Berry.

Walking Words & Coast Lines ignited the children's interest the Suffolk Coast Path. Many had never walked it or looked closely at the natural environment on their doorstep before. "Collecting words and sounds on the Coast Path was fun," said one Aldeburgh Primary pupil. "I didn't know you could make things like that into poems!"

Enjoy all three video poems via YouTube:  
I Opened My Eyes Widely (Aldeburgh Primary) [www.bit.ly/openedmyeyeswidely](http://www.bit.ly/openedmyeyeswidely)  
Come Across (Alde Valley Academy) [www.bit.ly/comeacrosspoem](http://www.bit.ly/comeacrosspoem)  
Sunnyside (Reydon Primary) [www.bit.ly/sunnysidepoem](http://www.bit.ly/sunnysidepoem)

Dean Parkin, Poetry People



Clipboards were clicking, Sailors Path (Suffolk Coast Path)

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## Working Together for the Future

Here in Shotley we have the most delightful riverside and countryside you could imagine. It's where the mighty River Stour and River Orwell come together as one and flow out into the North Sea between Felixstowe and Harwich. Since 2009 our volunteer group Shotley Open Spaces has been looking after walking trails and community spaces. From protecting the riverbanks against erosion to helping build an outdoor shelter and woodland seating area we have worked alongside other organisations to help make our village a better place.



The help and support we have received from the AONB team over the years has been invaluable, and we offer a heartfelt thanks to the AONB from my team here in Shotley on their 50th birthday. Whether it's funding for information boards, pathway renovation projects, creation of walking leaflets or advice on preservation and protection of habitat the AONB is there to help.

In recent years we have encouraged walkers to explore the Shotley area, including the sensitive nature habitats and alongside saltmarsh and mudflats that are feeding grounds for many varieties of waders and migrating birds. It's great to share this close up experience, and our greatest challenge is to help protect these wildlife areas to ensure they aren't damaged by people wanting to enjoy them. With many additional homes being built in the area it is good that we work together with the AONB team and other organisations to achieve this.

Gary Richens, Shotley Open Spaces

## East Suffolk Lines Rail Walks



Use the rail network to walk in spectacular scenery on the Sailors Path

One of the easiest and most environmentally friendly ways to explore the AONB is to use the rail network to access a series of waymarked walks published by the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership. Eight of our twenty-two walks are situated within the AONB and pass through some of the most spectacular scenery in Suffolk.

Explore the reedy dykes of the River Deben with its rich variety of wildlife or the wooded cliffs above Nacton Shore along the River Orwell. The walks start at one station and end at the next, and with an hourly train service seven days a week, it's easy to plan your outing. There are also circular routes from Melton station to Sutton Hoo and Trimley station to Trimley Marshes. Two of our walks combine the train with a return journey to the rail station by bus: from Halesworth station the walk to Southwold takes in parts of the

old narrow gauge railway, much of which is now a footpath, to the Blyth estuary and through the Suffolk Coast National Nature Reserve. At Saxmundham station one can access the magnificent Sailors' Path which makes its way through open heaths, extensive woodlands and marshy meadows on the way to Aldeburgh.

The walks are waymarked with the East Suffolk Lines Walks logo. We offer a free companion walks booklet, downloadable maps, key-point directions and free monthly guided walks. More information is available at [www.eastsuffolklines.co.uk/walks](http://www.eastsuffolklines.co.uk/walks).

Aaron Taffera, Chairman East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership

## 2020: Reflections on Landscape

This year, Waveney & Blyth Arts celebrates 10 years of using the arts to connect with people and places along the river valleys. Our creative activities focus on the landscapes, market towns and coastal areas. We use the arts as a lens to look closely at the places on our doorstep, whilst championing the need for protecting these habitats for future generations. The environmental changes happening in our patch, including loss of biodiversity and coastal erosion, are a microcosm for what's happening around the world.

This year, Sculpture in the Valley 2020, our flagship event, will be held at Potton Hall in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB from Saturday 18 July to Sunday 2 August. The theme Reflections on Landscape asks artists to make sculptural work on the perspectives and relationships with the natural world, considering the context of climate change. The beautiful Potton Hall site has views across Dunwich Heath, sheep grazing fields, formal gardens and domestic buildings.

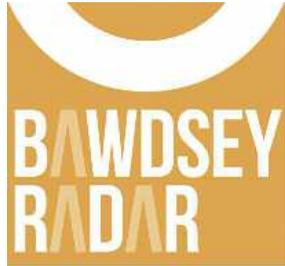


Potton Hall, overlooking Dunwich Heath and sheep grazing fields, site of Sculpture in the Valley

Our Suffolk-based curator David Baldry said: "We are blessed with a new and extraordinary site close to the Suffolk coast with its woodland, heath, marsh and of course sky. Art is at its best when pointing to something we don't always acknowledge or take for granted." We hope the visitors to Sculpture in the Valley 2020 will come away with a renewed appreciation of the landscape. Details at [www.waveneyandblytharts.com](http://www.waveneyandblytharts.com).

Genevieve Rudd, Waveney & Blyth Arts Chair

# Untold Stories of Women on the Front Line



Hilda Pearson WAAF

There were over 640,000 women in the armed forces during WWII. Of these around 8,000 of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) served in crucial and secret roles in RAF radar stations. These stations around the UK were often the first target for German bombers so working there could be very dangerous – effectively, the women were on the front line.

RAF Bawdsey was the first operational radar station and had the first school for training WAAFs in radar. The Bawdsey Radar Museum, with a Hidden Histories grant from SHARE, has been carrying out research into why relatively little is known about the lives of and the work carried out by these women who were the eyes and the ears of the wartime RAF. One key reason for the untold stories was that anyone who worked on radar signed the Official Secrets Act, and women stuck to it like glue well beyond 1971 when they were freed from its constraints.

The WAAF Radar Operators at Bawdsey in WWII exhibition – open April to October – has been given a sub-title of 'Who wore the trousers?'. Two of the WAAFs interviewed about their work described how they had to wear trousers for the first time in their lives as part of their working uniform and it infers what a vital role women played in radar. The exhibition explores the role played by women in the development and operation of RAF Bawdsey through the lives of five extraordinary individuals – Jane Trefusis-Forbes, founder of the WAAF, Dr Mary Taylor, theoretical physicist and three radar operators Hilda Pearson, Jean Semple and Peggy Haynes. See [www.bawdseyradar.org.uk](http://www.bawdseyradar.org.uk) for details of opening times.

Lynette Burgess, Bawdsey Radar Trust

# Blyth Woods is Growing!



Two years ago we purchased a two acre field, with the help of AONB grants and many other contributions. The field was very poor agricultural land surrounded by old original hedges, and adjacent to an ancient piece of woodland dating back say the church records to the 1600s. Our idea is to plant a community woodland, accessible to all. Over the past two years we have planted over 1,000 trees, with the help of volunteers from the community as well as the local primary school. The school has its own tree nursery and does regular activities in the new area with the group.

We have recently raised the money to buy the small adjoining field, known as Malsters Little Field, according to the old Tithe Map. Together this makes nearly five acres of new woodland. We will leave much of this field clear to allow wild flowers to flourish, and plant some individual fruit trees. There is also an existing overgrown pond, which will add interest and allow other habitats for wildlife. See [www.blythwoods.org](http://www.blythwoods.org) for more information.

Ann Edwards, Blyth Woods

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## Contacting the Team

**Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Dock Lane, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1PE**  
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**Email:** [schaonb@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:schaonb@suffolk.gov.uk)  
**Website:** [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)  
**Twitter:** @SuffolkAONB

### The AONB Team:

Simon Amstutz - AONB Manager  
 Alex Moore da Luz - River Stour Project Officer  
 Beverley McClean - Planning Officer  
 Cathy Smith - Communications, Funding and Development Officer  
 Claire Cadman - Projects Officer  
 Deborah Sage - AONB Officer  
 Emma Black - Countryside Project Officer  
 Katherine Davies - Stour Valley Visitor Development Officer  
 Lucy Oldham - Partnership Officer  
 Neil Lister - Countryside Project Officer  
 Oka Last - Stour Valley Visitor Development Officer  
 Paula Booth - AONB Officer  
 Pete Cosgrove - Marine Pioneer Manager  
 Samuel Morgan - Designated Landscapes Volunteer Placement

## It's our 50th birthday! Come and Explore the Suffolk Coast & Heaths



A 'family' of guides are produced by the AONB team to encourage people to explore the Suffolk coast, estuaries, forests and heaths! The area is fantastic at all times of year, and experiencing the changing seasons and discovering the different outstanding landscapes and villages are more than enough reason to return again and again...

Using the historic Foot Ferries across the estuaries adds a different perspective to your explorations, and they take people, cycles and dogs!

There are many Walk Explorer guides free to download from the AONB website, or if cycling is your preferred outdoor experience, then we also have five Cycling Explorer Guides, also free to download.



### Key to Map

- AONB area
- Additional project area
- Towns and villages
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Main roads
- Railways/stations
- Suffolk Coast Path/Stour and Orwell Walk
- Sandlings Walk
- Sailors' Path



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