




For over 20 years, **ALEXANDER STEWART** (left) has walked, trekked and tramped in more than 30 countries worldwide, producing guidebooks including Trailblazer's *New Zealand – The Great Walks*, *Inca Trail* and the *Walker's Haute Route*. These days he's on a mission to prove the UK offers as much adventure as anything you'll find overseas and spends part of every summer in Norfolk, finding much joy in wild places close to home, while sharing stories of the wildlife, history and heritage here.

## Norfolk Coast Path and Peddars Way

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The maps in this guide were prepared from out-of-Crown-copyright Ordnance Survey maps amended and updated by Trailblazer.

### Dedication

For Katie, Rory, Merryn and Esme, who love this place.

### Acknowledgements


I'd like to thank the people all along the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path who assisted me with the research for this book, showed me such hospitality and took time to answer my many queries. As ever, thanks to the team at Trailblazer as well: Bryn Thomas for encouraging me to explore this stunning region and providing me with the opportunity to write and travel; Anna Jacomb-Hood for diligently editing and tying the text together to make this a better book and for the index; Nick Hill for interpreting my drawings and producing the maps, and Jane Thomas for proofreading. Thank you, too, to all the Trailblazer readers who wrote in with comments and suggestions; in particular, Keith Apps, Jonathon Bond, Allison Bradnock, Carol Buxton, Matthew Chaddock, P Chalk, Marlene Cousins, Nick Dowson, Tony Ferrari, Alison Gibson, Maurice Humphries, Lyn Keates, Chris Layton and Tania Young.

### A request

The author and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. Nevertheless things change. If you notice any changes or omissions that should be included in the next edition of this book, please write to Trailblazer (address on p2 or email us at info@trailblazer-guides.com). A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

### Warning: long distance walking can be dangerous

Please read the notes on when to go (pp13-16) and outdoor safety (pp82-4). Every effort has been made by the author and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

Updated information will be available on:  [trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:info@trailblazer-guides.com)

**Photos – This page:** Heavily eroded cliffs above a shingle beach beyond Weybourne.

**Front cover:** View of Cley Windmill, Cley-next-the-Sea, across a sea of reeds and grasses.

**Overleaf:** The Norfolk Coast Path traverses a sea defence wall on the way to Thornham.

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This guidebook contains all the information you need. The hard work has been done for you so you can plan your trip without having to consult numerous websites and other books and maps. When you're ready to go, there's comprehensive public transport information to get you to and from the trail and detailed maps (1:20,000) to help you find your way along it.

- All standards of accommodation with reviews of campsites, hostels, B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels
- Walking companies if you want an organised tour and baggage-transfer services if you just want your luggage carried
- Itineraries for all levels of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when is the best time to walk, how hard is it, what to pack and the approximate cost of the trip
- Walking times in both directions; GPS waypoints as a back-up to navigation
- Availability and opening times of cafés, pubs, tea-shops, restaurants, and shops/supermarkets along the route
- Rail, bus and taxi information for the towns and villages on or near the Way
- Street maps of the main towns and villages
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

## POST COVID NOTE

This edition of the guide was researched after the Covid pandemic but is liable to more change than usual. Some of the hotels, cafés, pubs, restaurants and tourist attractions may not survive the further hardships caused by rising fuel prices, inflation and staff shortages. Do forgive us where your experience on the ground contradicts what is written in the book; please email us – [info@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:info@trailblazer-guides.com) so we can add your information to the updates page on the website.

### □ MINIMUM IMPACT FOR MAXIMUM INSIGHT

*Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you and storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.* John Muir (one of the world's first and most influential environmentalists, born in 1838)

Why is walking in wild and solitary places so satisfying? Partly it is the sheer physical pleasure: sometimes pitting one's strength against the elements and the lie of the land. The beauty and wonder of the natural world and the fresh air restore our sense of proportion and the stresses and strains of everyday life slip away. Whatever the character of the countryside, walking in it benefits us mentally and physically, inducing a sense of well-being, an enrichment of life and an enhanced awareness of what lies around us. All this the countryside gives us and the least we can do is to safeguard it by supporting rural economies, local businesses, and low-impact methods of farming and land-management, and by using environmentally sensitive forms of transport – walking being pre-eminent.

# INTRODUCTION

*In that country of luminous landscapes and wide horizons where the wind runs in the reeds and the slow rivers flow to our cold sea, a man may still sense and live something of the older England which was uninhabited, free and natural.*

*Alan Savory, Norfolk Fowler*

On the surface, the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path seem unlikely companion routes. One is an ancient ‘dry’ route to the shore-line whilst the other is a more modern trail vulnerable to the vagaries of the North Sea. However, this marriage of convenience results in one of the most straightforward and enjoyable National Trails to walk.

**... one of the most straightforward and enjoyable National Trails to walk**

It was Noel Coward, in *Private Lives*, who labelled Norfolk ‘very flat’, dismissing at a stroke Britain’s fifth largest county as being rather dull. True, this is a peaceful, undramatic countryside



**Above:** Boats moored at Blakeney Quay.

Dog-legs in the notoriously straight Roman road near Ringstead lead to the sea, where there is an unassuming meeting of the two paths at Holme-next-the-Sea. Nothing prepares you for the scale and beauty of the North Norfolk coast. From here on the Coast Path bears both west to Hunstanton – the official start point of the Norfolk Coast Path – and east towards Cromer and on to Hopton-on-Sea. The Coast Path combines brisk head-up walking over beach, bunker and boardwalk, through fragile dunes and past salt-marshes, crumbling cliffs, and creeks of fast-filling, fast-emptying tidal water. Along this stretch there is a constant blurring of sea, salt, sand and sky, but rather than making the area too similar the coastline has an ever-changing beauty.

The western half of the coast path enjoys vast expanses of beach and dunes with plenty of sand and space between amenities, while



**Above:** Many villages in Norfolk have colourful hand-painted signs, some featuring their crests.

**Below:** The vast skies and wide sands of Holkham Beach.





**Above:** Both the Peddars Way and the Norfolk Coast Path are well signposted. Look for the acorn symbol which is used to designate all National Trails in England and Wales.

As part of an ambitious programme to complete the England Coast Path (see box p10), a trail that connects the entire English coast with its countless inlets, estuaries and jagged bits, the Norfolk Coast Path was extended from Cromer right round to Hopton-on-Sea and the border with Suffolk.

### HOW DIFFICULT ARE THE PATHS?

Neither of these is a technically demanding walk and most people with a reasonable level of fitness ought to be able to complete either or both without any problems. However, do not underestimate the distances, or Norfolk's seemingly flat landscape; there are still gradients to tackle and the path can stretch ahead interminably if you are not well prepared.

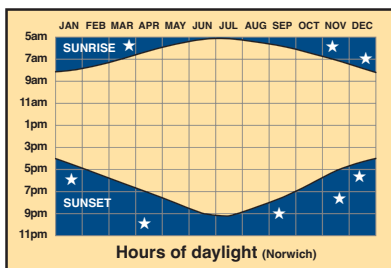
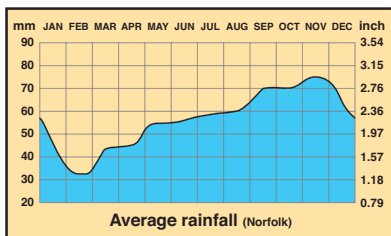
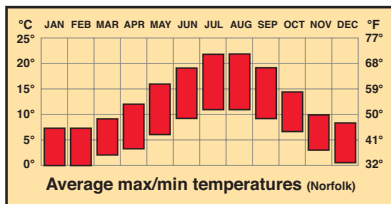
**Most people with a reasonable level of fitness ought to be able to complete either or both paths without any problems**

Although more isolated, the Peddars Way is more straightforward; the going on grassy tracks, green lanes (unsurfaced country ways often with hedges either side and sometimes quite old) and metalled roads is easy and the gradients gentle. However, the distances between villages are greater and there are extended sections without the opportunity to replenish supplies of water or food. Once on the coast, the gradients are more pronounced, the sand and shingle underfoot are more enervating, and the path is more exposed to the elements. Always be aware of the ever-present danger of cliff edges, especially on the section between Mundesley and Sea Palling, where the coast and crumbling cliffs are in a constant battle with erosion caused by the waves, one that they aren't winning. Cliff falls can occur all along the route though. Take care too on the broad expanses of beach, especially as the tide turns. Be aware of steeply shelving beaches, treacherous cur-

#### **□ PEDDARS WAY AND NORFOLK COAST PATH CERTIFICATE**

National Trails offer completion certificates to walkers who finish any of the designated routes, including either the Peddars Way, Norfolk Coast Path, or indeed the whole trail. Visit the website ([thetrailshop.co.uk/collections/peddars-way-and-norfolk-coast-path](http://thetrailshop.co.uk/collections/peddars-way-and-norfolk-coast-path)) and click on 'Completion certificates' to fill in your details. If you buy a certificate (from £6), you also get free entry to their Hall of Fame. As a memento of your trip you can also buy woven cloth badges (from £3.99).





migrants arriving from Scandinavia, Germany and Russia. This is also the rutting season for red and fallow deer, which fight to protect their territories and breeding females.

## Winter

Many locals claim that this is their favourite time of year, with the crowds of visitors dispersed yet the weather cold and crisp enough to still crunch along a shingle beach or stroll through a nature reserve where the trees are bare so you stand a better chance of spotting secretive birds. The weather can vary from crisp bright days to snow, rain or hail.

Throughout November thousands of geese arrive from their breeding grounds and seal pups are born.

## TEMPERATURE

Norfolk sits at the crossroads of four wind patterns, with easterlies coming off the continent, southerlies carrying warmer air, westerlies bringing temperate conditions and northerlies channelling colder


winds. Generally though, the Norfolk climate is temperate and even in winter the air temperature is relatively mild. Consequently, temperatures are generally quite comfortable at any time of year and on rare occasions the summer can actually get too hot for walking.

## RAINFALL

Norfolk is relatively dry for the UK but can still occasionally feel the force of the violent weather systems that sweep in from the North Sea. Most rainfall occurs from late summer and into winter, with spring being a drier period.

## DAYLIGHT HOURS

If walking in autumn (particularly after the clocks have changed; see box above), winter or early spring, you must take account of how far you can walk in the available light.



Peddars Way  
Public Footpath  
Holme-next-the-Sea  
46 miles (74 km)

A wooden directional sign with a white arrow pointing right. The text is painted in black. To the right of the text is a small black and white icon of a bell. The sign is mounted on a wooden post.

#### THE PEDDARS WAY

**Above:** The Peddars Way begins in woodland at Knettishall Heath, just over the border in Suffolk, and ends in Holme-next-the-Sea.

**Below:** Duckboards along marshy ground by the River Thet, early on the Peddars Way.

**Bottom:** Sand dunes at Holme-next-the-Sea.





**Castle Acre** (see p110) has some of the finest village earthworks (**below**) in England. The 11th century castle was built soon after the Norman Conquest. The main road into the village still passes through the original Bailey Gate (**left**).

The ruins of Castle Acre Priory (**above**), founded in 1089 and originally home to the Cluniac Order, form one of the largest and best preserved monastic sites in England.







**Above:** Brightly coloured beach huts on Wells beach.  
**Below, left:** Boardwalk through the reeds, Cley next the Sea.





**Above:** The attractive town of **Blakeney** was once an important port. **Below:** Boating round Blakeney Point (see p170) and its distinctive blue visitor centre; samphire for sale (**bottom**, see p23).





**Above:** Happisburgh lighthouse, built in 1791, is the oldest working lighthouse in Norfolk. It's open to visitors on Sundays in summer. **Below:** Sea defences and beach groynes at Hopton.



# PLANNING YOUR WALK

# 1

## Practical information for the walker

### ROUTE FINDING



This should be straightforward since the entire path is clearly visible, well-trodden and marked with clear signage. Finger-posts marked with an acorn symbol show the direction of the path at most junctions. The Peddars Way is perfectly straight in many places and can be seen arrowing across the countryside, while the Norfolk Coast Path largely follows the North Norfolk shoreline, occasionally detouring inland. Where you have to cross Great Yarmouth to conclude the trek, look for stickers showing the National Trail acorn symbol on lampposts instead of the traditional finger signposts.

### ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION AIDS AND MAPPING APPS

*I never carried a compass, preferring to rely on a good sense of direction ... I never bothered to understand how a compass works or what it is supposed to do ... To me a compass is a gadget, and I don't get on well with gadgets of any sort.*

**Alfred Wainwright**

While Wainwright's acolytes may scoff, other walkers will accept GPS technology as a well-established navigational aid. With a clear view of the sky, a **GPS receiver** will establish your position as well as elevation in a variety of formats, including the British OS grid system, anywhere on earth to an accuracy of within a few metres. Most **smartphones** have a GPS receiver built in and can receive a GPS signal from space as well as estimate its position often as accurately using mobile data signals from hilltop masts. These signals are two different things: GPS comes free from American, Russian or European satellites and is everywhere all the time but works best outdoors. Much stronger 4- or 5G mobile signals beam off towers up to 40 miles away and are what you pay the phone company for.

Accessing an online map with mobile data (internet via your phone signal, not wi-fi), your position can be pinpointed with great accuracy. But with no signal – as is the case in Britain's remoter regions – your phone will use GPS to display your position as a dot on the screen. Except that, *unless you import a map into your phone's internal storage* (which may require an app and even a small financial outlay) without a signal, the kilobit-sized 'tiles' which make up a **zoomable online map** cannot be downloaded. The internet brows-





from the path to one of the larger nearby villages or towns, where you will generally find a wider range of places to stay.

Once you arrive on the coast there is generally more choice, from campsites to luxury hotels, although as you head round the coast from Cromer towards Hopton-on-Sea there is substantially less than on the more popular North Norfolk Coast. The route guide (Part 4) includes a full selection of places to stay both on the trail and in the nearby villages.

Book all accommodation in advance (see box p20), especially during the high season (Easter to September). Pre-planning is crucial, particularly for barren areas such as the start of the Peddars Way.

Also take into account the fact that although there are fewer people on the trail outside the summer season there are, however, fewer beds as some establishments shut down over the winter months.

### Camping & glamping

Camping is an excellent way of immersing yourself in a landscape and there is a great deal of satisfaction to be gained from spending both the day and night in the great outdoors. Technically **wild camping** (see p79) is not permitted anywhere along the Peddars Way or Norfolk Coast Path although a friendly farmer or landowner may allow you to pitch a tent in a field. However, there are several official campsites, with basic facilities such as shower and toilet blocks, charging £5-18 per person, making this the most economical way of walking the path.

Some sites offer **glamping** (pre-erected and equipped tents or shepherd huts ie luxury camping). However, you may need to use B&B-style accommodation not only on the Peddars Way and on the Coast Path between Cromer and Hopton-on-Sea, but also if you are planning short days as the campsites are not spaced evenly along the path. Equally at certain times of year you may find them closed, so will have to make alternative arrangements.

### Hostels

Hostels (both YHA and independent) are good places to meet like-minded fellow walkers and allow you to travel on a budget without having to carry camping gear. These days, the comfortable, modern YHA hostel in Sheringham (see p184) is the only one operating along the routes in this book (there is a YHA hostel in Wells-next-the-Sea but it is only available for exclusive hire). Beds are available in shared or private rooms. Washing facilities are generally shared but increasingly en suite facilities are on offer too. There is a well-equipped kitchen (Sheringham also provides meals for an extra charge), a lounge and communal area as well as a drying room for wet gear. Credit cards are accepted and wi-

#### ❑ YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION

You don't have to be a member to stay at a **YHA hostel**. However, when you join the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) of England and Wales (☎ 0800-019 1700 or ☎ 01629-592700, 📧 [yha.org.uk](http://yha.org.uk)) you can save on every YHA booking and also gain access to a number of other benefits including discounts on outdoor clothing, equipment and more; see the website for details.

## LOCAL FOOD

Norfolk has a strong tradition of farming and walkers will soon see the benefits when sampling the local produce. Being stuck out of the way has meant that Norfolk eateries have also had to strive to attract attention. The result is that the region is now known for its fantastic local produce and there are scores of good-quality restaurants, pubs and delis, making it an ideal destination for foodies.

● **Seafood** Drawing on the bountiful reserves right on its doorstep, each of the coastal villages has developed a seafood speciality: Brancaster its mussels, Stiffkey its cockles (p166), Wells-next-the-Sea its whelks, Sheringham its lobsters and Cromer its crabs. Head to the Smokehouse (see p174) in Cley next the Sea to pick up umpteen delicious varieties of seafood, such as North Norfolk kipers, preserved using a traditional process.

The main **seasons** are: **mussels** – best during any month with an ‘r’ ie October to April; **crabs** – late March to early October; **lobsters** – July to October; **cockles** – January to April; **whelks** – June to September.

● **Game, meat & poultry** The grain fields and coastal marshes shelter a mass of game: partridge, quail, woodcock, wild duck and pheasant. The area is also known for its Norfolk Black turkeys, famous for their distinctive, gamey flavour. Hare also frequently appears on menus, as does rare-breed pork, organic lamb and naturally reared beef. Venison from the grounds of Houghton Hall is also available in butchers and restaurants.

The main **seasons** are: **partridge** – September to February; **quail** – year-round but best June to September; **woodcock** – October to January; **wild duck** – September to January; **pheasant** – October to February.

● **Cheese** Cheese-making is another skill associated with the area. Catherine Temple, of Mrs Temple’s Cheeses close to Wells-next-the-Sea, makes the finest in East Anglia; you can pick up her wares in delis in towns and villages throughout North Norfolk. Try the simple Wighton; mature, crumbly, Cheshire-style Walsingham; or the creamy, semi-soft Binham Blue. Elsewhere look for: Norfolk Dapple, a hard cheddar-style cheese with a distinctive dappled rind; Norfolk Tawny, which is bathed in Norfolk strong dark ale; and Norfolk White Lady, a soft, slightly sharp sheep’s milk cheese.

● **Mustard** The fields around Norwich are also full of brilliant yellow mustard seed, used to produce hot English mustard. The name **Colman** is synonymous with the stuff. Originally a flour miller, Jeremiah Colman began to mill mustard seed in 1814 and the Colman factory still produces mustard to this day.

● **Samphire** Samphire (see also p74), sometimes referred to as ‘glasswort’ or more colloquially as ‘poor man’s asparagus’, is a wild, succulent sea vegetable that can be harvested all along the coast. The season starts in June and lasts until about August; samphire can be cooked like French beans or pickled, as was popular in Victorian times. During the season bundles are often for sale from stalls outside houses in the villages adjacent to the sea. Delicious organic vegetables are widely available as well.

● **Treacle tart** Norfolk is as famous for its treacle tart as the North East, although both versions differ slightly; the Norfolk tart is sometimes referred to as Norfolk treacle custard tart but actually it’s just a lighter version, with a subtle hint of lemon.



## Self-guided holidays

These are generally all-in packages which usually include detailed route advice, notes on itineraries, maps, accommodation booking, baggage transfer and transport to and from the start and finish of the walk. Most companies listed on p28 can also tailor-make a holiday. At the time of writing some companies offering the Norfolk Coast Path still finish at the original end point of Cromer, but it would be worth checking if this is still the case when you contact them.

● **Travel/medical insurance** Until 31st December 2020 the **European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC) entitled EU nationals (on production of an EHIC card) to necessary medical treatment under the UK's National Health Service (NHS) while on a temporary visit here. However, this is not likely to be the case for EU nationals now, especially once their EHIC card has expired; check on [nhs.uk/nhs-services](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services) (click on: 'Visiting-or-moving-to-England') before you come to the UK.

However, the EHIC card was never a substitute for proper medical cover on your travel insurance for unforeseen bills and for getting you home should that be necessary. Also consider getting cover for loss or theft of personal belongings, especially if you're staying in hostels, as there may be times when you have to leave your luggage unattended.

● **Weights and measures** In Britain milk is sold in pints (1 pint = 568ml), as is beer in pubs, though most other liquid including petrol (gasoline) and diesel is sold in litres. Distances on road and path signs are given in miles (1 mile = 1.6km) rather than kilometres, and yards (1yd = 0.9m) rather than metres. The population remains divided between those who still use inches (1 inch = 2.5cm), feet (1ft = 0.3m) and yards and those who are happy with millimetres, centimetres and metres; you'll often be told that 'it's only a hundred yards or so' to somewhere, rather than a hundred metres or so. Most food is sold in metric weights (g and kg) but the imperial weights of pounds (lb: 1lb = 453g) and ounces (oz: 1oz = 28g) are frequently displayed too. The weather – a frequent topic of conversation – is also an issue: while most forecasts predict temperatures in Celsius (C), many people continue to think in terms of Fahrenheit (F; see the temperature chart on p16 for conversions).

● **Time** During the winter the whole of Britain is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The clocks move one hour forward on the last Sunday in March, remaining on British Summer Time (BST) until the last Sunday in October.

● **Smoking** Smoking in enclosed public places is banned. The ban relates not only to pubs and restaurants, but also to B&Bs, hostels and hotels. These latter have the right to designate one or more bedrooms where the occupants can smoke, but the ban is in force in all enclosed areas open to the public – even in a private home such as a B&B. Should you be foolhardy enough to light up in a no-smoking area, which includes pretty well any indoor public place, you could be fined, but it's the owners of the premises who suffer most if they fail to stop you, with a potential fine of £2500.

● **Telephone** The international country access code for Britain is ☎ 44 followed by the area code minus the first 0, and then the number you require.

If you're using a **mobile (cell) phone** that is registered overseas, consider buying a local SIM card to keep costs down. Also remember to bring a universal adaptor so you can charge your phone.

● **Emergency services** For police, ambulance, fire brigade and coastguard dial ☎ 999 or ☎ 112.

## TAKING DOGS ON THE PEDDARS WAY & NORFOLK COAST PATH

Dogs and dog walkers are welcome on the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path. Dogs are allowed on many of the beaches, and pubs or places to stay are often accommodating of them. There are though some areas where dogs are banned or must be kept on a lead at certain times of the year, most usually to minimise disturbance of wildlife such as little terns and ringed plovers that nest in the open and are very sensitive to dog disturbance.

For more information, see pp234-6.

## DISABLED ACCESS

Given Norfolk's reputation as a flat landscape it may come as no surprise to learn that sections of the Peddars Way and Coast Path are accessible by wheelchair. There are several sections where you can gain equal access to enjoy the countryside and coast although it's worth noting that the trail is frequently unsurfaced; along the sea walls at Sheringham and Cromer there is easy parking and a tarmac surface on which to explore. Elsewhere there are metalled surfaces and access to sections of boardwalk which may not be totally even but should be negotiable nonetheless. In this way it's possible to enjoy the saltmarsh and sea views at Holkham, Thornham and Blakeney. Between Old Hunstanton and Holme-next-the-Sea is a stretch of path that is alternately surfaced and unsurfaced but generally level and accessible.

The unsurfaced path between Holkham Gap and Pinewoods to the north of Wells-next-the-Sea is also readily accessible at either end, and even enough to tackle. To the east of Weybourne the cliff paths would provide spectacular views and several miles of accessible track, although there is a short section of compacted shingle to negotiate before joining the unsurfaced path. Both Snettisham Bird Reserve and Cley Marshes Reserve have hides with wheelchair access.

Sheringham Park on the outskirts of Sheringham has wheelchair-friendly waymarked paths leading to parkland views. Beyond Cromer there are large sections of path that make their way along the beaches. In places there's a promenade at the back of the beach that is accessible by wheelchair but often the only option is the sand, which is not.

## Budgeting

The amount of money that you spend completing the walk will depend on the standard of accommodation you use and the quality of meals you enjoy. If you carry a tent, camp and cook your own meals you can expect to get by cheaply with minimal expenses.

However, most people prefer some sort of night out and even the hardy camper may be tempted to swap their canvas for something more substantial when the rain is falling. After all, the pubs and inns with rooms on the route are

## Itineraries

The route guide in this book has not been split into rigid daily stages. Rather, it has been structured to provide you with accessible information in order to plan your own itinerary. The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path can be tackled in various ways, the most challenging of which is to do it all in one go; this requires around 10-13 days.

Some people choose to complete the walk in three stages: The Peddars Way and coast path from Holme-next-the-Sea to Hunstanton; the coast path from Hunstanton to Cromer; and the remainder of the route from Cromer to Hopton-on-Sea. Alternatively, people tackle the trek as a series of short walks, returning year after year to do the next section. Others just pick and choose the best bits, skipping those areas that don't interest them as much. Still others go on linear day walks along the coast, using public transport to return to their base.

To help you plan your walk see the planning map (opposite the inside back cover) and the table of village and town facilities on pp32-5; the latter provides a full rundown of the essential information you will need regarding accommodation, eating options and services.

### SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

The suggested itineraries in the box on p36 may also be helpful; they are based on staying in B&B-style accommodation – with notes on camping and hostels options where relevant – and are broken down into three alternatives according to how quickly you walk. These are only suggestions though; feel free to adapt the itinerary to your needs. You will need to factor in your travelling time before and after the walk too.

Once you have worked out a schedule, turn to Part 4 for detailed information on accommodation, places to eat and other services in each village and town both on the route and close to it. In Part 4 there are also summaries of the route to accompany the detailed trail maps.

### WHICH DIRECTION?

Traditionally the Peddars Way is tackled south to north and then the Norfolk Coast Path west to east. This way you are drawn towards the sea and then able to explore the salt-marshes and nature reserves strung along the coast.

Some may choose to walk in the opposite direction. The maps in Part 4 give timings and since these are relevant in either direction the guide can easily be used in reverse or simply for day trips.

*(cont'd from p32)***VILLAGE & TOWN FACILITIES & DISTANCES****Walking north on Peddars Way and east on Norfolk Coast Path**

PLACE* & DISTANCE* APPROX MILES / KM FROM PLACE ABOVE	BANK (ATM)	POST OFFICE	INFO	EATING PLACE	FOOD SHOP	CAMP- SITE	HOSTEL	B&B HOTEL
<b>NORFOLK COAST PATH – Hunstanton to Hopton-on-Sea (cont'd)</b>								
(Weybourne) t/o 2¼/3.6 (+¾/1)		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Sheringham 3/5</b>	ATM+✓	✓		✓✓	✓		YHA	✓✓
(West Runton) t/o 1¾/2.75 (+½/0.8)		✓		(✓)		✓		✓
<b>East Runton 1¼/2</b>				✓(✓)		✓		
<b>Cromer 1½/2.4</b>	ATM+✓	✓	VIC	✓✓	✓			✓✓
<b>Overstrand 2/3.25</b>	ATM	✓		✓✓				✓✓
<b>Mundesley 6/9.5</b>	ATM	✓	VIC	✓✓	✓			✓✓
<b>Walcott 4/6.5</b>	ATM	✓		✓✓	✓			✓
<b>Happisburgh 1¾/2.75</b>				✓(✓)				✓
<b>Sea Palling 4/6.5</b>	ATM	✓		✓✓	✓	✓(Waxham)		✓✓
<b>Winterton-on-Sea 7/11</b>	ATM			✓✓	✓	G		✓✓
<b>Caister-on-Sea 5¼/8.4</b>								
<b>Great Yarmouth 3/5</b>	ATM+✓	✓	TIC	✓✓	✓			✓✓
<b>Gorleston-on-Sea 3¾/6</b>				✓✓(✓)				✓
<b>Hopton-on-Sea 2½/4</b>								

*(for key and notes see previous page)***SIDE TRIPS**

The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path give a fairly thorough impression of what the region has to offer. However, there are some sections and highlights that are worth spending more time on, if you have additional days to spare.

**The Great Eastern Pingo Trail** (8 miles/13km) is on the eastern edge of the Brecks; the trail starts and finishes in Stow Beddon, just to the east of Thompson (see p98), and takes in Thompson Common, Thompson Water and the village itself. Much of the walk goes through wooded countryside and wetlands and incorporates a section of the Peddars Way.

**Blakeney Circular Walk** (4½ miles/7.25km) is a fantastic walk along the sea defences from Blakeney to Cley next the Sea, past the marshes and bird reserves, that returns to the start point via Wiveton and Blakeney Rd. Both Blakeney and Cley are stops on Sanders No 4 bus route; see p54.

The **boat trips** to Blakeney Point (see box p170) make a relaxing change to walking and provide an excellent excursion on a day off. A trip to Scolt Head Island (see p150) is also worth doing. If you are interested in wildlife an additional day or two spent exploring the **salt-marshes** and **wildlife reserves** anywhere along the coast will not go amiss.

**EXTENDING YOUR WALK****The Greater Ridgeway**

If you want to extend the Peddars Way, consider starting your walk earlier on the Greater Ridgeway, which runs from Lyme Regis, on the west Dorset coast,

(cont'd from p33)

**VILLAGE & TOWN FACILITIES & DISTANCES****Walking west on Norfolk Coast Path and south on Peddars Way**

PLACE* & DISTANCE* APPROX MILES / KM FROM PLACE ABOVE	BANK (ATM)	POST INFO OFFICE	EATING PLACE	FOOD SHOP	CAMP- SITE	HOSTEL	B&B HOTEL
<b>PEDDARS WAY – Holme-next-the-Sea to Knettishall Heath (cont'd)</b>							
(Snettisham) t/o 1½/2.4 (+3/5)			✓✓				✓
(Great Bircham) t/o 2¼/4 (+2/3)			✓✓	✓	✓+G		✓
(Harpley) t/o 4/6.5 (+2/3)			✓				
(Great Massingham) t/o 1½/2.4 (+1/1.6)✓			✓(✓)	✓			✓
<b>Castle Acre</b> 5/8	CB	✓	✓✓	✓		H	✓
(Sporle) t/o 4½/7 (+1¼/2)			✓	✓			
(Swaffham) t/o 1/1.6 (+2/3)		TIC	✓✓				✓✓
<b>South Pickenham</b> 3¾/6							
(Great Cressingham) t/o 2/3 (+1½/2.3)			✓				✓
<b>Little Cressingham</b> 1/1.6				✓			
(Watton) t/o 2¼/4 (+2/3)	ATM+✓	✓	VIC	✓✓			✓✓
(Thompson) t/o 2¾/4.5 (+1¼/2)		✓		✓			✓✓
<b>Stonebridge</b> 3/5							
<b>Knettishall Heath</b> 6½/10.5					✓(+2)		✓(+2)
(Thetford, 6/9.7 from KH)	ATM+✓	TIC	✓✓	✓			✓✓

(for key and notes see previous page)

all the way to Hunstanton. From Lyme Regis, the **Wessex Ridgeway** goes to Marlborough, Wilts, from where it is an easy walk to join **The Ridgeway** from Overton Hill to Ivinghoe Beacon; a series of green lanes, farm and forestry tracks and paths collectively known as the **Icknield Way** run along the chalk spine from Ivinghoe Beacon in the Chilterns to Knettishall Heath in Suffolk, passing through Baldock, Royston, Great Chesterford and Icklingham, to meet the Peddars Way and thus reach the coast at Hunstanton.

**Other possibilities**

For the similarly adventurous there is the 226-mile (363km) **Around Norfolk Walk** which connects the Nar Valley Way, Peddars Way, Norfolk Coast Path, Weavers' Way and Angles Way. The 34-mile (54km) **Nar Valley Way**, which starts in King's Lynn, runs through the watershed of the River Nar to cross the Peddars Way at Castle Acre, although it continues to its finish point at Gressenhall. At Cromer, you can continue to Great Yarmouth by tackling the 56-mile (90km) **Weavers' Way** which combines footpaths, disused railway lines and some sections of minor road to travel inland from the farmland and woodland of the north to the grazing marshes of the Broadland river valleys.

The **Angles Way** is a 77½-mile (125km) route linking the Broads to the Brecks, connecting Great Yarmouth with the Peddars Way at Knettishall Heath. Alternatively, if you prefer a circuit to a linear walk, consider the **Iceni Way**, an 80-mile (129km) path which connects Knettishall Heath to Hunstanton via Thetford, Brandon, King's Lynn, Sandringham and Snettisham. By linking this and the Peddars Way it is possible to create an attractive circular loop.

## THE BEST DAY AND WEEKEND WALKS

If you don't have time to walk the entire trail these day and weekend walks highlight some of the best sections of the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path.

The Coast Path from Hunstanton to Mundesley is particularly good for short walks as it is well served by Lynx's Coastliner No 36 and Sanders No 4 bus services (see box p50-1 & p54); unless specified, both ends of the routes described below are stops on, or very near, a bus route.

Beyond Mundesley public transport is much more limited so bear this in mind when planning a day walk.

### Day walks

- **Ringstead to Old Hunstanton** – 4 miles/6.5km (see pp128-33) A chance to

#### □ ALTERNATIVES TO WALKING – CYCLING OR HORSE-RIDING

If you want to explore the region but don't fancy doing so on foot, it is possible to access sections of the **Peddars Way** on bike and horseback.

- **Cycling** The route is easily accessed via the Sustrans cycle network, which intersects the trail at various stages and can be used to link Thetford (Route 13) and King's Lynn (Route 1) railway stations with the Peddars Way. Most of the Peddars Way can be cycled as the route is largely classified as a bridleway, marked with blue arrows, or unsurfaced country road.

Although there are short sections of public footpath, for instance between Knettishall Heath and the A11 trunk road, immediately prior to North Pickenham, from Fring to just south of Ringstead and on the final approach to Holme-next-the-Sea, there are alternative road links to bypass them, indicated on the maps in Part 4. There are also a few places where the trail is classified as a footpath, but here it simply runs parallel to a tarmac road, usually on the grass verge; cyclists must use the road at these points. The result is an attractive 50-mile cycle trail between Thetford and Holme-next-the-Sea.

There is, however, no right to cycle on the Norfolk Coast Path. Instead, there is a specifically created cycleway (**The Norfolk Coast Cycleway**) which runs just inland from the coast between King's Lynn and Cromer, using National Cycle Network Route 1 between King's Lynn and Wighton to the south-east of Wells-next-the-Sea and Regional Route 30 from there to Cromer and beyond to Great Yarmouth. A map (£2) is available from tourist information centres in the area.

Bike hire, which usually includes suggested routes and specific maps, is possible from the following: **'On Yer Bike' Norfolk Cycle Hire** (☎ 07584-308120, ☐ norfolkcyclehire.co.uk; Nutwood Farm, Binham Rd, Wighton) offers mountain bikes, tandems and tricycles for half-day or 1- to 5-day hire; they will also arrange delivery to and collection from your accommodation, subject to distance; **Wells Bike Hire** (☎ 07920 016405, ☐ wellsbikehire.co.uk; 7 Southgate Close, Wells-next-the-Sea) rent mountain bikes, hybrid bikes and kids bikes for three hours or a full day, with discounts available for bookings of more than three days. **Deepdale Camping & Rooms**, in Burnham Deepdale, also offers cycle hire; see p148 for details.

If planning to cycle consider getting *Norfolk Cycle Map* published by CycleCity.

- **Horse-riding** It is also possible to ride much of the Peddars Way on horseback although again you cannot follow the path where it is designated a public footpath, and must use alternative detours or stick to the tarmac road. Again, there is no right to ride on the Norfolk Coast Path.



helps distribute the weight with most of it being carried on the hips. Rucksacks are decorated with seemingly pointless straps but if you adjust them correctly it can make a big difference to your personal comfort while walking.

When **packing** the rucksack make sure you have all the things you are likely to need during the day near the top or in the side pockets, especially if you don't have a bum bag or daypack. This includes water bottle, snacks, waterproofs, your camera and this guidebook (of course). A good habit to get into is to always put things in the same place and memorise where they are.

It's also a good idea to keep everything in **canoe bags, waterproof rucksack liners** or strong plastic bags. If you don't it's bound to rain.

Consider taking a small **bum bag** or **daypack** for your camera, guidebook and other essentials for when you go sightseeing or for a day walk.

## FOOTWEAR

### Boots

Your boots are the single most important item of gear that can affect the enjoyment of your trek. In summer you could get by with a light pair of trail shoes if you're only carrying a small pack, although this is an invitation for wet, cold feet if there is any rain and they don't offer much support for your ankles. Some of the terrain can be quite rough so a good pair of walking boots is a safer bet. They must fit well and be properly broken in. It is no good discovering that your boots are slowly murdering your feet three days into a week-long trek. See pp83-4 for more blister-avoidance advice.

### Socks

The traditional wearing of a thin liner sock under a thicker wool sock is no longer necessary if you choose a high-quality sock specially designed for walking. A high proportion of natural fibres makes them much more comfortable. Three pairs are ample.

### Extra footwear

Some walkers have a second pair of shoes to wear when they are not on the trail. Trainers, sport sandals or flip flops are all suitable as long as they are light.

## CLOTHES

Experienced walkers will know the importance of wearing the right clothes. Don't underestimate the weather: Norfolk juts out into the North Sea so it's important to protect yourself from the elements. The weather can be quite hot in the summer but spectacularly bad at any time of the year.

Modern hi-tech outdoor clothes can seem baffling but it basically comes down to a base layer to transport sweat from your skin; a mid-layer or two to keep you warm; and an outer layer or 'shell' to protect you from the wind and rain.

*Norfolk Coast Path Peddars Way AZ for walkers*, part of the AZ Adventure Series ([collins.co.uk/collections/az-adventure-maps](http://collins.co.uk/collections/az-adventure-maps)), is a booklet containing the relevant part of the OS maps, each to a scale of 1:25,000, for the whole walk and there is also an index. Harvey Maps also produce a *Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path* map (1:40,000).

You can also travel along the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path virtually, as both have been street viewed by Google. Walkers carrying the Google Trekker camera, itself made up of 15 camera lenses, trek the trails and record them so that you can explore them from the comfort of your home with literal, ground-level views of what to expect.

## RECOMMENDED READING AND VIEWING

Most of the following books can be found in the tourist information centres in Norfolk as well as good bookshops elsewhere in Britain.

### General guidebooks

There are two guides to the architecture of the region in the Pevsner Architectural Guides series currently published by Yale University Press: Volume 1 covers *Norwich and North-East Norfolk*, while the more immediately relevant Volume 2 deals with *North-West and South Norfolk*.

*Norfolk Beaches Handbook* by Suzy Watson is published by Explore Norfolk. It is a comprehensive guide to 28 beaches and their varied appeal with a focus on access, attractions and whether they're appropriate for children, dogs, etc.

### Walking guidebooks

*Pub Walks along the Peddars Way & Norfolk Coast Path* and *Pub Walks in Norfolk*, both by Liz Moynihan, published by Countryside Books, contain 20 circular walks varying in length from three to eight miles. Suzy Watson (see above) has also written *Dog walks around the Norfolk Coast*, published by Explore Norfolk, a handy little book detailing 16 coastal dog walks.

### General reading

There isn't a great deal of writing on the part of the country the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path pass through. In 1883 Clement Scott wrote an article for the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper entitled 'Poppyland' that described the North Norfolk Coast and was responsible for bringing the region to the attention of the London literati. For a flavour though look out Paul Theroux's *Kingdom by the Sea*, in which the caustic travel writer travelled clockwise around the coast of Britain in the early 1980s to see what the country and its inhabitants were really like. Robert Macfarlane's beautiful eulogy, *The Wild Places*, contains a description of Blakeney Point and a night spent sleeping rough on the shingle.

The naturalist Richard Mabey grew up on the coast at Cley next the Sea and there are references to Norfolk in many of his books, including *Beechcombings*. Mark Cocker's *Crow Country* is a detailed examination of the rooks and jackdaws that flock around the author's home in remote Norfolk.

## Getting to and from the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path

A quick look at a map of Britain will show that Norfolk is relatively accessible and well connected to the rest of the country. The fact that it is within a fairly short hop of London and all the transport options available there means that sections of the county at least have become popular weekend retreats for city folk. In reality, although there are good road and rail links with the region, the start of the Peddars Way is poorly serviced.

Public transport, in the form of trains and coaches will get you to Thetford or Bury St Edmunds easily enough, but there is no public transport service to Knettishall Heath where the trail actually starts. Despite this the options available (see p88) are better than driving to the start of the trail. The end of the Norfolk Coast Path at Hopton-on-Sea is similarly poorly connected so you will probably have to go back to Great Yarmouth as that has regular rail and National Express coach services.


### 📄 GETTING TO BRITAIN

- **By air** Most international airlines serve London Heathrow and London Gatwick. In addition a number of budget airlines fly from many of Europe's major cities to the other London terminals at Stansted and Luton as well as London City Airport. Norwich International Airport (📄 [www.norwichairport.co.uk](http://www.norwichairport.co.uk)) is four miles north of Norwich city centre and has connections to a number of European destinations, often via Amsterdam. There are frequent bus services to the city centre. Alternatively, it is a short taxi ride.
- **From Europe by train (with or without a car)** Eurostar (📄 [eurostar.com](http://eurostar.com)) operate a high-speed passenger service via the Channel Tunnel between Paris/Brussels/Amsterdam and London. Trains arrive at and depart from St Pancras International Terminal, which also has good underground links to other railway stations. For more information about rail services between Europe and Britain contact your national rail operator or Railteam (📄 [railteam.eu](http://railteam.eu)). Eurotunnel (📄 [www.eurotunnel.com](http://www.eurotunnel.com)) operates 'le shuttle', a train service for vehicles via the Channel Tunnel between Calais and Folkestone taking 35 minutes to cross between the two.
- **From Europe by ferry (with or without a car)** Numerous ferry companies operate routes between the major North Sea and Channel ports of mainland Europe and the ports on Britain's eastern and southern coasts as well as from Ireland to ports both in Wales and England. For further information see websites such as 📄 [directferries.co.uk](http://directferries.co.uk).
- **From Europe by coach (bus)** Eurolines (📄 [eurolines.com](http://eurolines.com)) have a huge network of services connecting over 500 cities in 25 European countries to London.

## NATIONAL TRANSPORT


### By rail

For those walking the entire trail, the closest railway stations are at Thetford (15 miles from the start of the Peddars Way at Knettishall Heath) and Great Yarmouth just before the point where the Norfolk Coast Path concludes. King's Lynn is the closest railway station to Hunstanton for the start of the Norfolk Coast Path.


There are also stations at Sheringham, West Runton and Cromer, the midway point on the Coast Path; these are stops on the **Bittern Line** (part of Greater Anglia, see below;  [bitternline.com](http://bitternline.com)). The Bittern Line offers a regular service, with good-value fares. The Bittern Ranger (adults £11.50, seniors £7.60, family £27) offers one day's unlimited train travel between Norwich and Sheringham and includes bus travel on the Coasthopper bus service (Sanders CH4 & CH5) between Mundesley and Wells-next-the-Sea, and the Coastliner (Lynx 36) bus (see box pp50-1 & p54) between Wells and Hunstanton. Tickets are available

### RAIL SERVICES

**Note:** not all stops are listed

**Greater Anglia** ( [greateranglia.co.uk](http://greateranglia.co.uk))

- London Liverpool Street to Cambridge, daily 2/hr
- London Liverpool Street to Stansted Airport, daily 2/hr
- London Liverpool Street to Norwich via Colchester, Ipswich & Diss, daily 1-2/hr
- London Liverpool Street to King's Lynn via Cambridge & Ely, Mon-Fri 1/day
- Stansted Airport/Cambridge to Norwich via Ely, Brandon, **Thetford**, Attleborough & Wymondham, daily 1/hr
- (**Bittern Line**) Norwich to **Sheringham** via Hoveton & Wroxham, North Walsham, **Cromer** & **West Runton**, Mon-Sat approx 1/hr, Sun approx 1/hr but 7/day to West Runton
- (**Wherry Line**) Norwich to Great Yarmouth, daily 1/hr
- (**Wherry Line**) Norwich to Lowestoft, daily generally 1/hr
- Ipswich to Lowestoft via Saxmundham & Beccles, daily 1/hr
- Ipswich to Cambridge via Bury St Edmunds, daily 1/hr
- Ipswich to Peterborough via Bury St Edmunds, Mon-Sat 8/day, Sun 5/day

**Great Northern** ( [greatnorthernrail.com](http://greatnorthernrail.com))

- London King's Cross to Cambridge, daily 2/hr
- London King's Cross to King's Lynn via Cambridge & Ely, daily 1/hr

**Thameslink** ( [www.thameslinkrailway.com](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com)) also provides regular services to Cambridge from Brighton via St Pancras International.

**East Midlands Trains** ( [eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk))

- Liverpool Lime Street to Norwich via Manchester, Nottingham, Peterborough, Ely, Attleborough (limited service) & **Thetford**, Mon-Sat 11-12/day, Sun 8/day

### Steam train journeys

Two other options for travel by train in Norfolk are the services geared to sightseers: **North Norfolk Railway/Poppy Line** (see p182) is a full-size steam and diesel railway which runs between Sheringham and Holt, and **Wells and Walsingham Light Railway** (see p158), which is the longest 10½-inch gauge steam railway in the world.

# THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

## The environment and conservation

To the uninitiated, the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path don't seem all that distinctive. They lack many of the recognisable features of other national trails in England. Yet on closer examination it is possible to determine a wide variety of contrasting terrains and habitats from one end of the trail to the other: grasslands, heath, woodlands, forests, sand dunes, salt-marshes, wide beaches and vast stretches of coast. These varied environments are home to an equally diverse selection of flora and fauna. The following is not designed to be a comprehensive guide to all the animals, birds and plants you might encounter, but rather serves as an introduction to what you're likely to see.

By making an effort to look out for wildlife and plants as you walk the route you will garner a broader appreciation of the landscape and region you are passing through. You will begin to understand how the species you encounter interact with one another and will learn a little about the conservation issues that are so pertinent today.

### LANDSCAPES

Norfolk has been moulded by a series of glaciations. The land has been shaped, smoothed and stripped by the passage of ice. The chalk ridge running through north-west Norfolk was rounded while wide swathes of clay and gravel were deposited on top of older rocks. Intriguing features such as the pingo ponds around Thompson Water (see box p98) remain as evidence of these successive ice ages. As the coast and cliffs have been subjected to erosion so they have given up a series of secrets. The bones and teeth of hippo, hyena and deer have been found while the 85%-complete fossil skeleton of a 15ft tall, 650,000-year-old mammoth was unearthed in 1990 in the cliffs between East and West Runton, indicative of a time when the landscape looked very different indeed.

Within the Norfolk Coast AONB (see p58) there are eight distinguishable landscape types. The **coastal region** with its open, remote and wild panorama of wide skies and long views to the sea is the most typical of the area and the one that conjures the most ready images. Characteristic features include marshes, sand dunes and



shingle ridges as well as small coastal settlements comprising flint buildings, significant churches and windmills. In the east there are pollarded willows (heavily pruned each year to encourage a close, rounded head of branches) alongside long straight roads. In the west, rectilinear fields are defined by ditches, sparse hedges and occasional stands of trees.

**Inland** a varied, undulating landscape of rolling hills and large stretches of heathland dominates. Village estates are typified by buildings of attractive carstone (coarse, grained, granular sandstone, usually yellowish brown).

In all, it is a region of wide and varied interest that is in a state of constant flux, being shaped and re-shaped by the elements and the tides.

**Breckland** Breckland is a fairly recent term for an internationally important landscape, coined to describe a much older setting identifiable from its surroundings by its terrain, land-use and distinctive wildlife. Broadly speaking, Breckland comprises a gently undulating, low plateau underlain by a bedrock of Cretaceous chalk, covered by thin deposits of sand and flint. What started as deciduous woodland was slowly razed by early Neolithic man in pursuit of flint (see box below), which was dug out of the ground here. The open heath was then grazed extensively by sheep and rabbits, removing the vegetation, exhausting the soil and turning it into a sea of loose, shifting sands, which meant that villages contracted and people moved out of the region or retreated to the river valleys. During the 18th and 19th centuries Scots pines were planted to try and bind the soil together and stabilise the land for cultivation, whilst in the 20th century land was given over to conifer plantations. The result is a modern landscape of open areas and flint-filled fields, dotted with stands of deliberately planted trees.

The greatest extent of remaining heathlands are centred on the Stanford Training Area and Brettenham Heath (see p90). The Brecks/Breckland are particularly cherished for this remaining heathland and the mosaics of grass-heath which support populations of invertebrates and ground-nesting birds. Traditionally they are areas of heather and grass although more recently they have been invaded by bracken and scrub. The area is significant for a wide range of flora and fauna dependent on open ground, arable margins and disturbed soil. Unique landforms such as pingo ponds are also important for insects. For more information see [brecks.org](http://brecks.org).

#### FLINT

Flint is a mineral found in bands within chalk and has played a big part in the history of the landscape across which the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path travel. When man first found the ability to make tools, the people who lived in the region began to make arrowheads and knives from flakes of flint. It was also found to be useful in starting fires. Flint can still be seen in local village architecture as it is a very versatile building brick. The traditional fishermen's cottages all along the coast wouldn't look like they do today if it weren't for flint, and the atmosphere and the character of the area would be markedly different.

## Flora and fauna

### BIRDS

Few birdwatchers, serious or amateur, will not have been to Norfolk or know of its reputation amongst twitchers. This is largely due to the county's strategic location facing Scandinavia, slap bang on a migration pathway, its long coast line and its extremely diverse range of coastal and inland habitats, many of which enjoy protected status as nature reserves (see box below). The marshes and intertidal mudflats along the coast are important breeding grounds for a vast number of species as they offer feeding and safe roost sites. The county has some of the best year-round birding sites in the country, with locations that consistently attract rare birds. The following lists give just a few of the more than 300 species that have been documented in Norfolk and ought to give you a flavour of what you should see whilst walking the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path.

### Scrubland, grassland and heaths

**Lapwings** (*Vanellus vanellus*) prefer the open country but can be seen on mudflats, marshes and in meadows; the reserve at Cley next the Sea and the coast

#### ❑ BIRD RESERVES

- **Holme Bird Observatory and Reserve** (see p128) Managed by the Norfolk Ornithologists' Association (see p61), this five-hectare patch of pine- and scrub-covered dunes is ideal for migrating thrushes, warblers and finches. Admission is £3 for non-members, under 16s are free.
- **Titchwell Marsh RSPB Reserve** (see p61 and p143) Diverse habitats (reedbeds, saltmarsh and freshwater lagoons) attract a wide range of birds. Good café. Free entry for RSPB members, £5 for adult non members.
- **Holkham National Nature Reserve** (see p59 and p154) Managed by Natural England (✉ [holkham.co.uk/visit/holkham-beach-nature-reserve/](http://holkham.co.uk/visit/holkham-beach-nature-reserve/)), this vast 4000-hectare (9580 acres) stretch between Burnham Norton and Blakeney offers a fantastic diversity of habitat. Seasonal charges apply.
- **Blakeney National Nature Reserve** (see p59 and p170) Overseen by the National Trust (see p61), highlights include **Stiffkey Marshes** and **Blakeney Point**, where you can see vast numbers of birds congregating. There is an information centre at Morston Quay. Free entry.
- **Cley Marshes Reserve** (see p174) Founded in 1926 this is the Wildlife Trust's oldest bird reserve in England, with boardwalks and hides close to the pools and roost sites. It is run by Norfolk Wildlife Trust (see box p61) and there is an excellent, modern information centre. Entry costs £5 for non members (£5.50 with Gift Aid), members and children are free.
- **Snettisham RSPB Reserve** (see p61 and p122) Overlooking The Wash, there are bird hides with excellent views out over the islands, ideal for spotting waders and wildfowl. Free entry for all but donations appreciated.

### ❑ RARE BEE-EATERS RIGHT AT HOME IN NORFOLK

Among the waterbirds and waders more commonly associated with Norfolk, some rather rare visitors made themselves at home. In June 2022, eight European bee-eaters took up residence near Trimmingham, to the east of Cromer, and excavated nest burrows in the sandy banks of an old quarry. It was the first time for five years that bee-eaters had nested in the UK, and when they successfully fledged it was the first time since 2014 that eggs had hatched here. These slender, multi-coloured birds with long pointed black beaks have claret-red backs, yellow throats and turquoise, marine blue bellies. They're about the size of starlings. They feed on dragonflies and other flying insects, including, as their name suggests, bees, which they catch in mid air. Usually they nest in southern Europe or north Africa before wintering further south but were right at home during the scorching summer of 2022.

Around 15,000 people are thought to have visited a viewing area close to the site, which was managed by the RSPB, to try and catch a glimpse of the visitors. Many more watched their progress via a live webcam. Once the eggs had hatched and chicks grown sufficiently for the journey ahead, the birds flew south to southern Africa for the winter as a family group. There's no guarantee you'll come across these birds while on the Coast Path of course but sightings in the UK have been increasing over the last 20 years – a flock of nine bee eaters was seen in Great Yarmouth the previous year, although they didn't nest. The worry of course is that the notable increase in nesting attempts by a species typically found further south is a sign that our climate is warming rapidly.

around Holkham are good spots to search them out. These medium-sized waders, which feed on insects and invertebrates close to the surface of ponds or puddles, are also known locally as 'peewits' after their mournful cry. The seemingly black plumage is in fact green and purple, which contrasts with the bird's white underparts. Once killed for food, their eggs used to be collected and sold as delicacies, leading to a decline in numbers. Nowadays resident breeding pairs are less common but large flocks of immigrating birds gather briefly in Norfolk during autumn and winter.

**Barn owls** (*Tyto alba*) are distinctive, beautifully marked birds that appear totally white but actually have shades of grey, buff and brown on their backs and wings. Seen throughout the year they are most usually spotted hunting along roadsides or ghosting across farmland and coastal fields at dawn and dusk. Holme Dunes is a particularly good spot to look for these birds, which are known in Norfolk as 'Billywix' or 'hushwing', due to their silent flight. **Short-eared owls** (*Asio flammeus*) are medium-sized owls with mottled brown bodies, paler underparts and yellow eyes. They commonly hunt during the day but are seen most widely during winter when they can be spotted on coastal marshes and wetlands.

**Stone curlews** (*Burhinus oedipnemus*) are easily identifiable by their wailing call, which contributes to its local nickname, the wailing heath chicken. They have brown, black and white plumage that provides perfect camouflage against the sandy heaths where they hide during the day before feeding at night. They have long yellow legs and large yellow eyes which are adapted for night-



time foraging. Norfolk is a stronghold for the species, which can be particularly spotted in Breckland.

**Yellowhammers** (*Emberiza citronella*) are types of bunting that can be seen on commons, heaths and farmland, especially around Breckland. They are typically a vibrant golden colour and have an attractive song said to sound like 'a little bit of bread and no cheese'. **Reed bunting** (*Emberiza schenclius*) are sparrow-sized, slim birds with long, deeply notched tails and a drooping moustache. They are largely seen on farmland or wetlands. **Snow buntings** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) are large buntings with predominantly white underparts that contrast with a brown and mottled plumage. They breed all around the Arctic then migrate south in winter, arriving in coastal areas from late September, where they remain till February.

**Skylarks** (*Alda arvensis*) are small birds with a streaky brown back and white underparts lined with dark brown. Often seen in open country such as grazing marshes, coastal dunes and heaths, they are often spotted and heard at Cley next the Sea and Holme Dunes, when their melodic, seemingly endless song rings out from late winter to midsummer. In winter they form small flocks and descend on coastal salt-marshes.

**Linnets** (*Carduelis cannabina*) are reasonably common, slim finches with forked tails and red breasts. Their distinctive twittering call can be heard on heaths and commons, especially in Breckland and on the coast. They are seed-eaters and feed on grains, grass and wildflower seeds, often collecting in flocks to forage in fields or coastal marshes. **Twites** (*Carduelis flavirostris*) look similar to linnet but have brighter, yellowish bills that stand out in contrast to the dark feathers of their heads. They breed on moorland and stony areas near to the sea but over-winter on salt-marshes and shorelines, or continue across the North Sea to the Low Countries.

**Grey partridges** (*Perdix perdix*) often crop up on farmland or grasslands, especially in West Norfolk, when you can most easily spot them during autumn scavenging on ploughed or stubble fields. Plump with short legs and orangey-brown feathers, they spend the majority of their time on the ground. **Red-legged partridges** (*Alectoris rufa*) are larger than greys, have large white chin and throat patches bordered with black. They have greyish bodies and bold black flank stripes. Introduced to the UK from Europe they are now seen year-round in England especially in the east, usually in groups and in open fields.

**Nightjars** (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) are summer visitors from Europe, which inhabit open heathland and moorland in close proximity to small stands of trees that provide roosting sites. They can sometimes be seen in Breckland. Largely nocturnal, they commence their feeding and courtship activities at dusk. This allied to their clever camouflage and tendency to hide in thick cover makes them difficult to see. Their song is very distinctive though and their strange churring song, like a chainsaw, can be heard ringing out over the copse at dusk.

## Woodland

**Buzzards** (*Buteo buteo*) are the commonest bird of prey in the UK and can be seen soaring over farmland, moorland and more arable areas. They are quite



**Top:** Oystercatchers in flight. **Above (left):** greylag goose; **(right):** shelduck.



**Above, clockwise from top left:** Black-backed gull, herring gull, black-headed gull, coot, whooper swans, reed bunting, pochard.



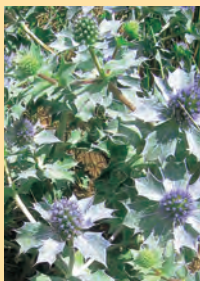
Above, clockwise from top left: Linnet, red kite, grey heron, brent geese, great white egret, chaffinch.



Common seals can often be seen basking off Blakeney Point and by The Wash (© Alex Stewart).



Sea Campion  
*Silene maritima*



Sea Holly  
*Eryngium maritimum*



Thrift (Sea Pink)  
*Armeria maritima*



Common Vetch  
*Vicia sativa*



Herb-Robert  
*Geranium robertianum*



Red Campion  
*Silene dioica*



Lousewort  
*Pedicularis sylvatica*



Meadow Cranesbill  
*Geranium pratense*



Common Dog Violet  
*Viola riviniana*



Common Knapweed  
*Centaurea nigra*



Common Centaury  
*Centaureum erythraea*



Old Man's Beard  
*Clematis vitalba*

C6 Common flora

---



Common Ragwort  
*Senecio jacobaea*



Yarrow  
*Achillea millefolium*



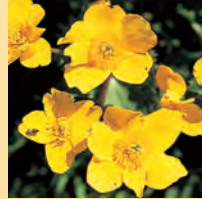
Hogweed  
*Heracleum sphondylium*



Gorse  
*Ulex europaeus*



Meadow Buttercup  
*Ranunculus acris*



Marsh Marigold (Kingscup)  
*Caltha palustris*



Bird's-foot trefoil  
*Lotus corniculatus*



St John's Wort  
*Hypericum perforatum*



Tormental  
*Potentilla erecta*



Primrose  
*Primula vulgaris*



Cowslip  
*Primula veris*



Honeysuckle  
*Lonicera periclymenum*



Harebell  
*Campanula rotundifolia*



Foxglove  
*Digitalis purpurea*



Rosebay Willowherb  
*Epilobium angustifolium*



Rowan (tree)  
*Sorbus aucuparia*



Dog Rose  
*Rosa canina*



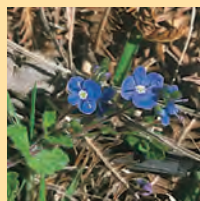
Forget-me-not  
*Mysotis arvensis*



Scarlet Pimpernel  
*Anagallis arvensis*



Self-heal  
*Prunella vulgaris*



Germander Speedwell  
*Veronica chamaedrys*



Ramsons (Wild Garlic)  
*Allium ursinum*



Bluebell  
*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*



Ox-eye Daisy  
*Leucanthemum vulgare*





Above, clockwise from top left: Redshank, avocet, curlew, sanderling, turnstone, knot.

# MINIMUM IMPACT & OUTDOOR SAFETY

3

## Minimum impact walking

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

#### Buy local

Rural businesses and communities in Britain have been hit hard in recent years by a seemingly endless series of crises. Most people are aware of the countryside code (see box p81); not dropping litter and closing the gate behind you are still as pertinent as ever, but in light of the economic pressures that local countryside businesses are under, there is something else you can do: buy local.

Look and **ask for local produce** (see box p23) to buy and eat. Not only does this cut down on the amount of pollution and congestion that the transportation of food creates – so-called ‘food miles’ – but also ensures that you are supporting local farmers and producers, the very people who have moulded the countryside you have come to see and who are in the best position to protect it. If you can find local food which is also organic so much the better.

Money spent at local level – perhaps in a market, at a greengrocer, or in an independent pub – has a far greater impact for good in that community than the equivalent spent in a branch of a national chain store or restaurant. It would be going too far to advocate that walkers boycott supermarkets, which after all do provide local employment, but it’s worth remembering that smaller businesses in rural communities rely heavily on visitors for their very existence. If we want to keep these local shops and post offices, we need to use them.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A walking holiday in itself is an environmentally friendly approach to tourism. The following are some ideas on how you can go a few steps further in helping to minimise your impact on the natural environment while walking the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path.

#### Use public transport whenever possible

Although there is minimal public transport along the Peddars Way, public transport on the Norfolk coast is good and in the case of Lynx’s Coastliner No 36 and CH1 and CH2 Coasthopper bus service (see box p51 & p54) specifically geared towards the coast-path walk-



## Outdoor safety

### AVOIDANCE OF HAZARDS

With good planning and preparation most hazards can be avoided. This information is as important for those on a day walk as for those walking the entire path.

Ensure you have suitable **clothes** (see pp40-1) to keep you warm and dry whatever the conditions and a spare change of inner clothes. A compass, whistle, torch and first-aid kit should be carried and are discussed on p42. The **emergency signal** is six blasts on the whistle or six flashes with a torch. A **mobile phone** may also be useful.

Take plenty of **food** and at least one litre of **water** although more would be better, especially on the long northern stretches of the Peddars Way. It is a good idea to fill up your bottle whenever you pass through a village since stream water cannot be relied upon. You will eat far more walking than you do normally so make sure you have enough food for the day, as well as some high-energy snacks (chocolate, dried fruit, biscuits) in the bottom of your pack for an emergency.

Stay alert and know exactly where you are throughout the day. The easiest way to do this is to **check your position regularly** on the map. If visibility suddenly decreases with mist and cloud, or there is an accident, you will be able to make a sensible decision about what action to take based on your location.

**If you choose to walk alone**, you must appreciate and be prepared for the increased risk. It's a good idea to leave word with someone about where you are going and remember to contact them when you have arrived safely.

### Safety on the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path

Although the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path are both ostensibly fairly easy routes, through gentle terrain, there is always the potential for an accident to happen. Do not become complacent or underestimate the route and the terrain just because it seems straightforward. Always err on the side of over-caution and think twice about walking if you are tired or feeling ill. This is when most accidents happen. To ensure you have a safe trip it is well worth following this advice:

- Keep to the path – avoid walking on the marshes or muddy inlets at low tide
- Avoid walking in windy weather – the coast can be very exposed
- Wear strong sturdy boots with good ankle support and a good grip rather than trainers or sandals
- Be extra vigilant with children
- Keep dogs under close control
- Wear or carry warm and waterproof clothing
- In an emergency dial ☎ 999 and ask for the police, ambulance or coastguard.

### Safety on the beach

Norfolk's beaches are spectacular in any weather but it's when the sun is shining that the sweaty walker gets the urge to take a dip.

# ROUTE GUIDE & MAPS

# 4

## Using this guide

The trail guide has been divided into stages but these should not be seen as rigid daily stages since people walk at different speeds and have different interests. The route summaries below describe the trail between significant places and are written as if walking north towards the coast on the Peddars Way and then east along the Norfolk Coast Path since this is by far the most popular direction for people tackling the trail. To enable you to plan your own itinerary, practical information is shown clearly on the trail maps. This includes walking times for both directions, places to stay and eat, as well as shops where you can stock up on supplies. Further service details are given in the text under the entry for each place.

For an overview of this information see the suggested **itineraries** on p36 and the **village and town facilities tables** on pp32-5.

For **overview maps** and **trail profiles** see the colour pages at the end of the book.

### TRAIL MAPS [see key map inside cover; symbols key p236]

#### Scale and walking times

The trail maps are drawn at a scale of 1:20,000 (1cm = 200m; 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches = 1 mile). Walking times are given along the side of each map and the arrow indicates the direction to which that time refers. Black triangles show the points between which the times have been taken. See the **note on walking times** in the box below.

The time-bars are there as a guide and are not to judge your walking ability. Any number of variables will affect the speed at which you actually walk, from the weather conditions to the number of beers you drank the previous evening. After the first few hours' of walking you should be able to gauge how your speed relates to the timings on the maps.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE – WALKING TIMES

Unless otherwise specified, **all times in this book refer only to the time spent walking**. You should add 20-30% to allow for rests, photos, checking the map, drinking water etc, not to mention time simply to stop and stare. When planning the day's hike count on 5-7 hours' actual walking.



### DIRECTION INDICATORS ON MAP SIDE BARS



To Holme-next-the-Sea



To Hopton-on-Sea

To Hunstanton  
(KNETT = To  
Knettishall Heath)

### Up or down?

The trail on the maps is marked as a broken line. An arrow across the trail indicates an incline: it always points to the higher ground. Two arrows show that the slope is steep. If, for example, you are walking from A (at 80m) to B (at 200m) and the trail between the two is short and steep it would be shown thus: A-->>--B. If the arrow heads are reversed they the trail is downhill.

### Other features

Other features are marked on the maps when pertinent to navigation. To avoid cluttering the maps and making them unusable not all features have been marked each time they occur.

### ACCOMMODATION

Apart from in the larger towns along the coast where some selection of places to stay has been necessary, almost every relevant accommodation option within easy reach of the trail is marked. Details of each place are given in the accompanying text. The number and type of rooms is given for each place: **S** = single bed, **D** = double bed, **T** = twin beds ie two separate beds, **Tr/Qd** = triple/quad ie rooms that can sleep up to three/four people, but note that this often means two people sharing a double bed and the other(s) in single or bunk beds; these rooms can also be used as doubles or twins.

The text also mentions whether the premises have **wi-fi (WI-FI)**; if a **bath** is available (♾) in, or for, at least one room; if a packed lunch (🍷) can be pre-ordered and whether **dogs** (🐕) are welcome. Most places will not take more than one dog in a room and also only accept them subject to prior arrangement. Many make an additional charge (usually per night but occasionally per stay) while others may require a deposit which is refundable if the dog doesn't make a mess. See also pp234-6.

**Rates** given are **per person (pp)** based on two people sharing a room for a one-night stay – rates are almost always discounted for a longer stay. Where a single room (**sgl**) is available the rate for that is quoted if different from the per person rate. The rate for single occupancy (**sgl occ**) of a double/twin is generally higher and the rate for three or more sharing a room may be lower. Unless specified, rates are for B&B. At some places the only option is a room rate; this will be the same whether one or two people share. See pp20-1 & pp29-30 for more details on prices.

Note that many places only accept bookings for a minimum of two (sometimes three) nights, particularly in the summer months. However, to help walkers staying for two (or more) nights there is a handy coastal bus service (see p50)

that lets you walk out in one direction and then catch a bus back to your overnight stay. The next day simply take the bus to where you finished the day before and pick up the trail.

## Peddars Way

Peddars Way follows a Roman road built along the line of an even older trackway. The trail starts in the Brecks and runs north from Knettishall Heath for 46 miles to Holme-next-the-Sea (see p128) where it intersects with the Norfolk Coast Path.

If you are arriving by train or bus, Thetford (see below) is the closest stop to the start of the trail at Knettishall Heath six miles away.

### THETFORD [see map p88]

Thetford was once the capital of Saxon East Anglia. An important medieval religious centre, its fortunes changed when the Dissolution of the Monasteries meant the religious buildings were destroyed, removing much of Thetford's wealth and prestige.

Nowadays it is pleasant enough and boasts a number of significant historic buildings including **Thetford Priory** ([www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/thetford-priory](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/thetford-priory)), which belonged to the Cluniac Order (see box below) and dates from 1107. The extensive remains (free admission), although little more than outlines of structures, are all that's left of one of the most important East Anglian monasteries; see also p110. Other sites include **St Peter's Church** from the 1300s as well as older Iceni-fortified ramparts at **Gallows Hill** dating from AD40, Saxon defences, and a Norman castle built on a massive man-made mound, **Castle Hill**, dating from the 1070s. The earthworks, the tallest in England, stand 81ft high and measure 1000ft around the base.

The largest area of lowland pine forest left in Britain, **Thetford Forest**, stands on

the north-western edge of the town. Although it's not an ancient woodland and the pine trees here are not indigenous, it's an attractive area with a network of good walking trails.

On King St there is a gilded, bronze **statue of Thomas Paine** who was born in Thetford in 1737. He worked as an excise-man here before going to America, where his pamphlets *Rights of Man* and *Age of Reason* made him famous in the late 1700s. He played an active part in both the American and the French revolutions. You'll also stumble across a **statue of Captain Mainwaring** sitting on a bench by the Bridge St bridge, designed as a reminder of Thetford's links with the ever-popular 1970s BBC sitcom *Dad's Army*, in which the town doubled as Warmington-on-Sea. Fans of the series can find memorabilia, set mock-ups and photos from the show at the **Dad's Army Museum** ([dads.armythetford.org.uk](http://dads.armythetford.org.uk); Mar-Nov Sat 10am-3pm, Aug Sun 10am-1pm; free) on Cage Lane.

**Snetterton Circuit** (see p15), 12 miles/20km north-east of Thetford on the A11, is a motor-racing track that hosts

### CLUNIAC ORDER

The Cluniac Order was a medieval organisation of Benedictines centred on the abbey at Cluny in France. Founded in 910, the order became the furthest reaching religious reform movement of the Middle Ages and at its height was second only to the papacy as the chief religious force in Europe. Gradually superseded by the Cistercians and finally suppressed by the French Revolution.

British touring cars, Formula Three and superbike events.

### Services

Everything of importance including **supermarkets**, such as Tesco Express and Aldi, and **banks** with ATMs can be found by turning left out of the station and walking into the centre of town.

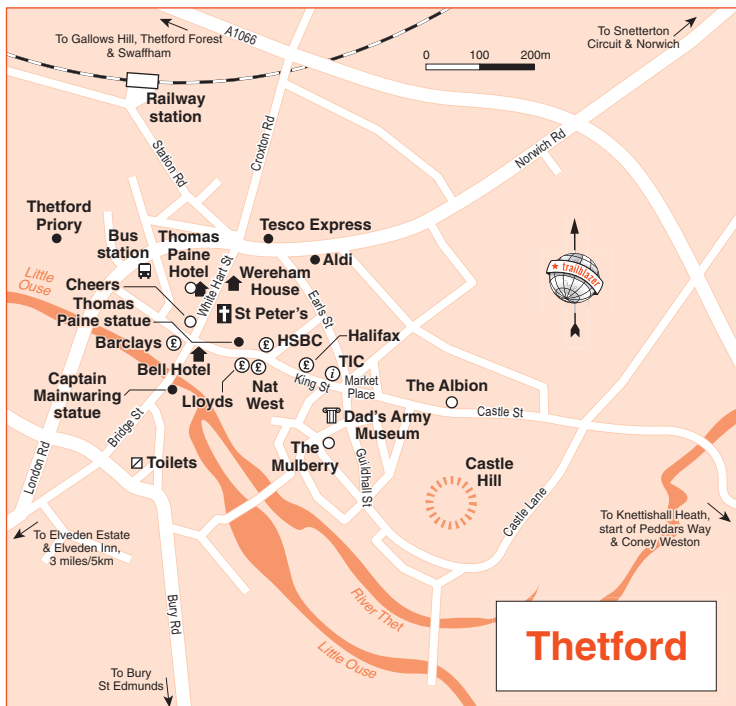
There is a **tourist information centre** (TIC; ☎ 07802-701911, [www.visitthetford.co.uk](http://www.visitthetford.co.uk); Mon-Sat 10am-2pm but not on bank holidays) at 20 King St. They can provide information about the area in general and the website has resources including about accommodation. Note that they work on a volunteer basis so are not always available.

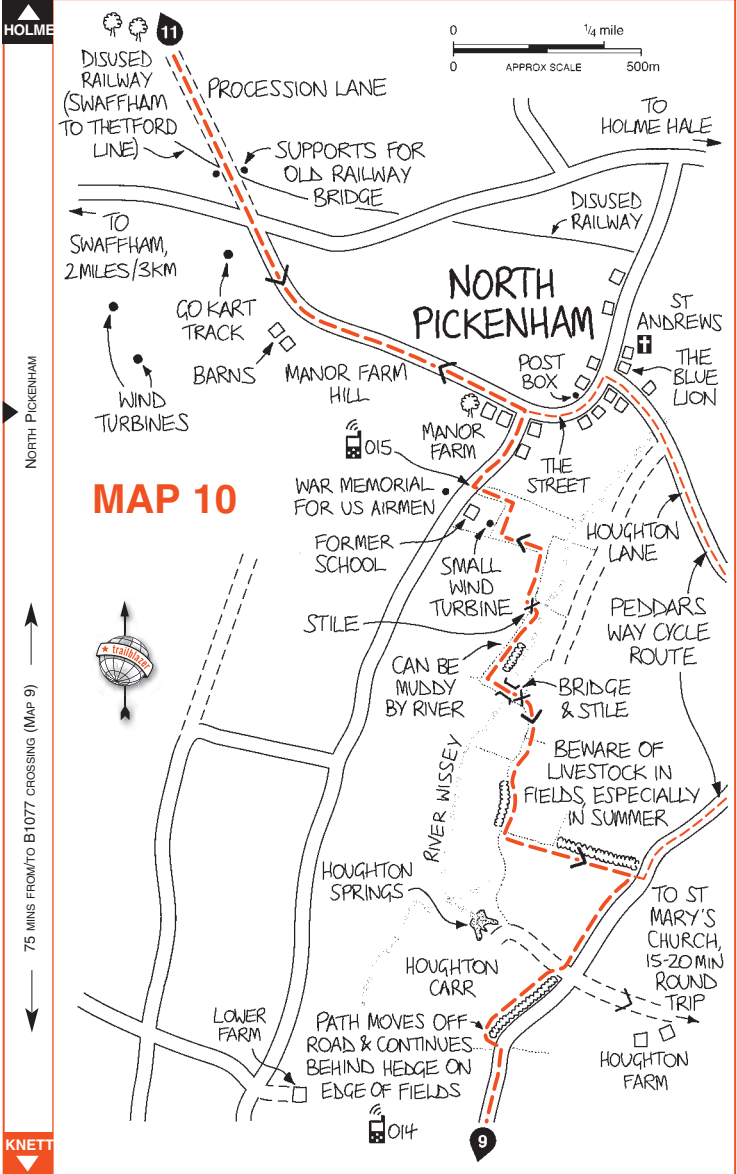
### Transport

● **Getting to Thetford** Thetford is a stop

on Greater Anglia's **train** services between Stansted Airport/Cambridge and Norwich and also East Midlands Trains' between Liverpool/Ely and Norwich. Cambridge and Norwich provide services to London and other UK destinations; see box p48. National Express **coaches** NX490, 491 and 727 (see box p49) stop here. Coach Services' Nos 40, 81, 84, 86, 200/201 and 332 **bus** services connect with surrounding towns and villages; see pp50-4 for details.

● **Getting to the start of Peddars Way** There are no scheduled bus services from Thetford to Knettishall Heath (for the start of the Peddars Way) so the best way to get there is by booking a **taxi** from the railway station. Sometimes cars are waiting but, if not, try: C&S Taxis (☎ 01842-760322), Daley's Taxis (☎ 01842-750777, [daleystaxis.co.uk](http://www.daleystaxis.co.uk)), or A2B Taxis (☎ 01842-







provides access to the site. Turn right along the river briefly and ascend into **Castle Acre**, entering the centre of the village by passing beneath a bailey gate.

## CASTLE ACRE

This picturesque medieval village occupies a strategic location overlooking the River Nar and controlling traffic on the Peddars Way. Roughly halfway along the Peddars Way it makes for a good base and is one of the most appealing villages in the area.

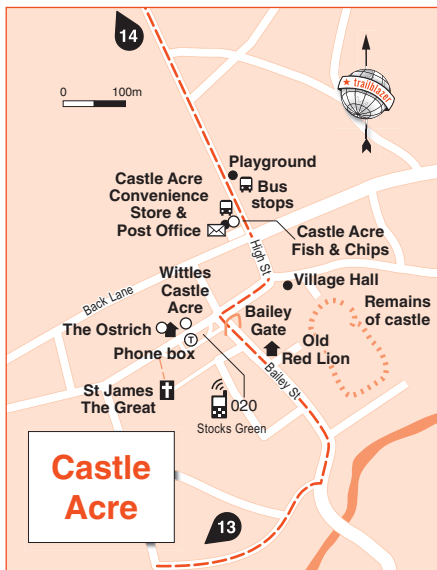
The village itself lies within the outer bailey of an 11th-century castle and the road into the village still passes under the **Bailey Gate**, the former north gateway to the planned walled town. The village takes its name from the Norman motte-and-bailey castle, built soon after the Conquest by William de Warrene, first Earl of Surrey. Initially a stone country house it was converted into a keep defended by stone walls, stood on the motte and surrounded by a system of ditched earthworks. Although only its walls and ramparts remain, it still provides an impressive indication as to what the castle must once have looked like; some consider these the finest village earthworks in England. Access is from Bailey St, adjacent to the Old Red Lion (see Where to stay) and is free. Interpretative panels dotted about the site provide information and reveal just how extensive the planned village and fortifications were in their prime while walkways and wooden steps help you up and down and across the ditches.

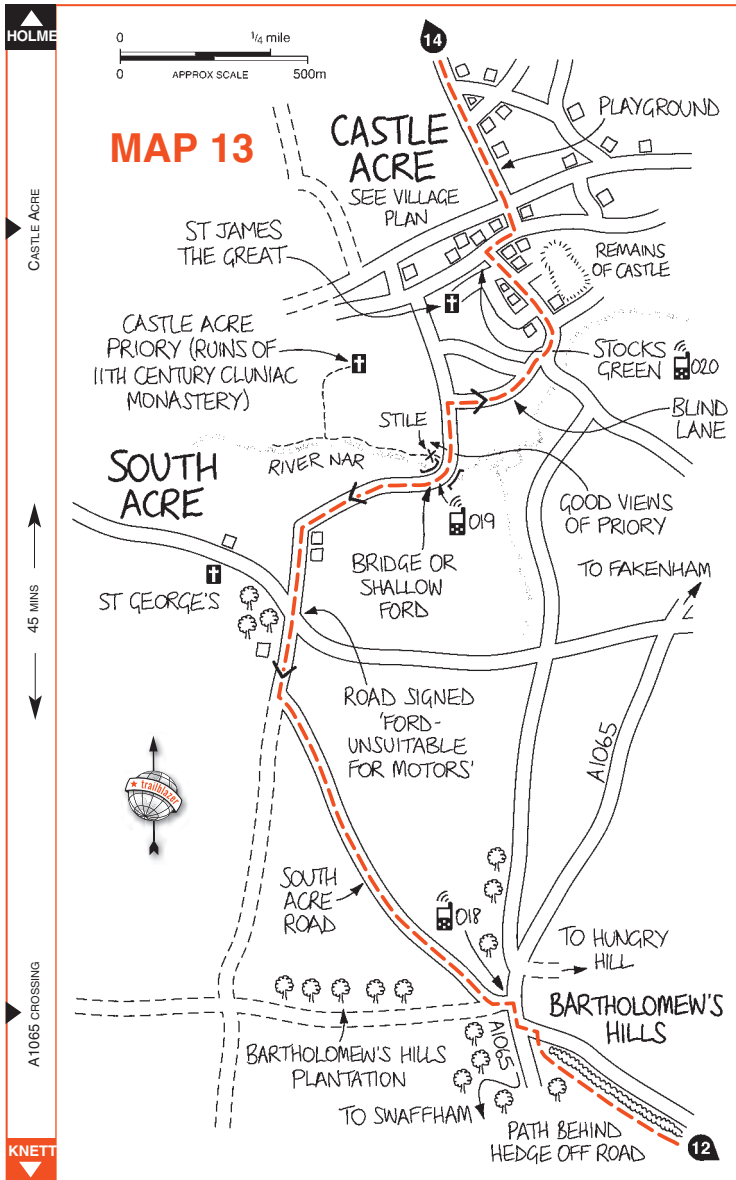
The remains of **Castle Acre Priory** (Map 13; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk); Apr-Oct daily 10am-5pm, Nov-Mar Sat-Sun 10am-4pm; adult/child £8.10/4.80, English Heritage members free) here are worth exploring. The priory is thought to have been founded in 1089 and was inspired by the monastery at Cluny in France. Originally built within the walls of the castle it was too small for the monks, so was moved to its current location by the River Nar. Although tumbledown, the evocative ruins,

which are in the care of English Heritage, are still in good condition. It's possible to see the great west front of the building, complete with tiered ranks of intersecting round arches, and much of its core structure including a 15th-century gate house and porch.

The substantial prior's lodgings are also well preserved and boast traces of wall paintings and two fine oriel windows. At its height 25 monks resided here in fine style, but all of this was wiped away with the Dissolution in 1536. Next to the priory is a recreated herb garden. There is also a visitor centre with a display of artefacts, a site model and exhibition as well as a small shop selling snacks and public toilets. There is another ruined priory in Thetford (see p87 and box p87).

Centred on Stocks Green, Castle Acre is an attractive place with plenty of pretty houses. The church of **St James the Great** stands at one end of the Green and enjoys sweeping views out over the countryside.



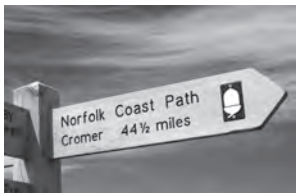


## Norfolk Coast Path

### HUNSTANTON TO BURNHAM OVERY STAITHE

(MAPS 25-23 & 26-31)

This **16-mile (26km; 6¼-7¾hrs)** route is your first real experience of the North Norfolk coast. From The Green in the centre of Hunstanton the path drops down onto the promenade. There's a route along the cliff tops and another that runs below the famous striped cliffs along the beach, all the way to **Holme-next-the-Sea** (see pp128-30); Holme is 2¾ miles (4.5km) and 1-1½hrs from Hunstanton.



From Holme you can join the Peddars Way and trek inland along this route to

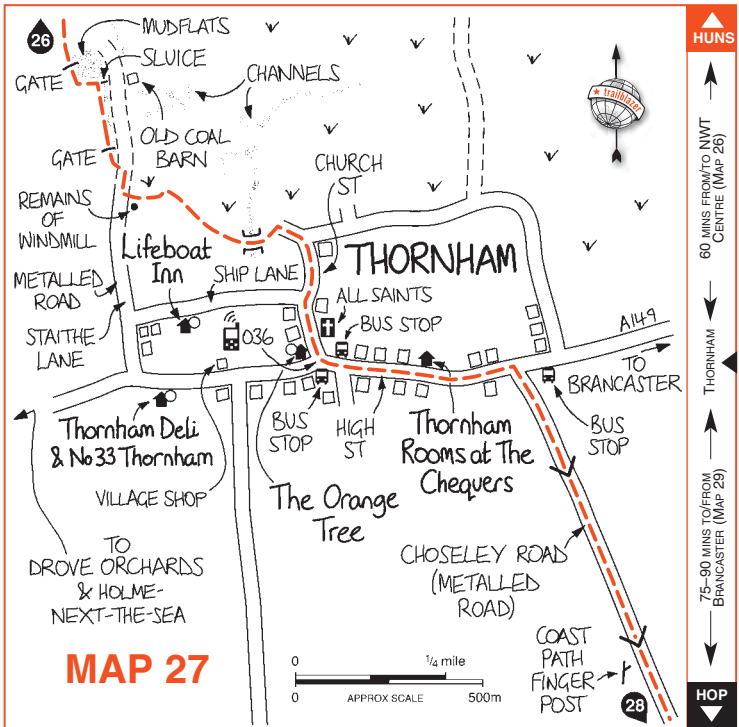
Ringstead. For the Norfolk Coast Path, once you arrive at Holme continue to follow the finger-posts arrowing along the top of the dunes. Follow the path east towards Gore Point (Map 26) and Holme Dunes Nature Reserve; the latter is managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust (see p61) but it includes a Bird Observatory which is maintained by Norfolk Ornithologists Association (see p61). To the seaward side are lavender marshes and shingle bars that provide refuge for roosting and migrating birds. During the autumn and spring keep an eye out for oystercatchers and knot roosting in vast numbers. A section of boardwalk ends just before **Gore Point** (Map 26), the headland beyond which was the original location of Seahenge (see box opposite).

An undulating, rolling **boardwalk** weaves across the top of the dunes before entering a stand of Corsican pines, just before **Norfolk Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre** (see p61 for website details; Apr-Oct daily 10am-5pm, Nov-Mar Thur & Sun 10am-4pm), which has lots of interesting information on the reserve and its inhabitants. Drinks, snacks and ice-cream are available – the *café* closes half an hour before the centre does – and there is a deck overlooking Broad Water and the marshes on which to enjoy them. They have an emergency telephone and toilets.

The path then bends inland (see box p230 about a possible route change for the England Coast Path), rounding **Broad Water** and heading south past **Ragged Marsh** on a sea defence bank. When the tide is out, look for wading birds probing the waterline and boats stranded on the exposed mud banks. Ahead you'll see an **old coal barn** (Map 27), the subject of lots of paintings and photographs over

#### ❏ IMPORTANT NOTE – WALKING TIMES

All times in this book refer only to the time spent walking. You will need to add 20-30% to allow for rests, photography, checking the map, drinking water etc.



Alternatively, each also offers accommodation in case you want to stay for a night.

### Services and transport

There is a small **village shop** (Mon-Wed & Fri-Sat 8am-5pm, half-day Thur & Sun) selling a variety of food and drink.

On the outskirts of the village there's **Thornham Deli** (☎ 01485-512194, 📧 thornhamdeli.co.uk); this fine food shop sells local, seasonal produce but also includes a **café** (summer Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm, Sat & Sun 8am-5pm, kitchen closes 4pm, winter 9am-4pm; wi-fi; 🐾) serving a wide range of tasty homemade treats, freshly made pastries, cakes and barista-brewed coffee, which you can enjoy in the airy dining room, filled with a mix of contemporary and industrial-style architecture, local

materials and stylish furniture and furnishings, or on their outside, south-facing terrace. There's also a lifestyle shop selling home, kitchen and garden-ware, much of it designed and made locally.

Lynx's Coastliner 36 **bus** service stops in front of **All Saints church**; see box p51 and map pp2-3.

### Where to stay

There is B&B at **Lifeboat Inn** (☎ 01485-512236, 📧 lifeboatinnthornham.com; 15D/1T, all en suite; 🍷; wi-fi; 📺; 🐾), set back from the main road on Ship Lane. This charming country pub has been operating since the 16th century when it was reputed to be a smugglers' alehouse. It's been through some changes since then but the history and character of the place have been

preserved. In keeping with the Inn's history, each room is named after the crew of the *Licensed Victualler's III*, the last pulling lifeboat at Hunstanton lifeboat station, which started service in 1900. The stylish, good-sized rooms (many of which have sea views) are spacious and bright with neutral colours that reflect the landscape outside. B&B costs £77.50-110pp (sgl occ £142-220); an extra bed can be put in some rooms.

At the other end of town, on the High St, is the Lifeboat Inn's sister establishment, **Thornham Rooms at The Chequers** (☎ 01485-512229, 📧 thornhamrooms.co.uk; 11D, all en suite; ♣; WI-FI; 🚰; 🐕). Warm and welcoming, combining rustic charm and contemporary style, the rooms here, graded Small Good, Good, Better and Best, make the most of the nooks and crannies that come from the building dating back to 1499 and are stylish and cosy with king-sized beds – the larger ones also have enticing double-ended baths and comfy seating areas. Each room also has a diminutive decanter of sloe gin for you to dip into and two glasses. B&B costs £47.50-95pp (sgl occ rates on request); note that breakfast is eaten at the Lifeboat Inn. Room only rates are also available.

Between these two, on the High St close to the church, is **The Orange Tree** (☎ 01485-512213, 📧 theorangetreethornham.co.uk; 4D/13D or T, all en suite; ♣; WI-FI; 🚰; 🐕), a stylish gastro pub that has contemporary rooms decorated in shades of cream and chocolate, set around a **courtyard** (4D/2D or T); B&B here costs £44.50-105pp (sgl occ room rate). You can also stay in the neighbouring **Old Bakery Annexe** (4D or T) which has themed bedrooms, or **Manor Lodge** (7D or T), snuggled between the two properties. The Lodge offers luxurious rooms, three of which have their own enclosed, terrace gardens. B&B

costs £44.50-105pp (sgl occ rates on enquiry) per night. In each instance, call the hotel for their best rates.

Above Thornham Deli (see p141) there is smart B&B accommodation at **No 33 Thornham** (☎ 01485-524352, 📧 33hunstanton.co.uk/thornham.html; 4D, all en suite; ♣; WI-FI; 🐕). The sister property of the similarly named boutique B&B in Hunstanton, this branch of the No 33 brand has four elegant suites (with a sitting area and bathroom with both bath and shower) painted in a soothing palette and full of stylish flourishes. Rates are £85-100pp (sgl occ from £150) and include a sumptuous breakfast (Mon-Fri 9-10am, Sat & Sun 8-10am) served in the deli. They also have four carefully restored self-catering cottages with a minimum three-night stay (from £390).

### Where to eat and drink

**The Lifeboat Inn** (see Where to stay; food daily 8-10am & noon-9pm) is firmly established as a local favourite. The bar area is full of mattocks, traditional tools and other antique equipment; you can sense the history of the place as you ease into one of the pews around the carved oak tables with a pint of one of their real ales. There are several nooks and five open fires, ideal if the weather hasn't been co-operating. The menu is the same whether you dine al fresco at The Sail or in their main restaurant; tuck into a bowl of mussels, served either with Norfolk cider, leeks and bacon, Thai style or classic (starter/main £9.50/22), then follow it up with venison sausages (£19.50), bass fillet (£26), or ribeye steak (£28). Sourdough pizzas are also available and start at £15. They also serve sandwiches (from £7.75) daily noon-6pm. There's a good-value Sunday menu as well that includes several succulent roasts (from £16.50) as well as mains.

### SYMBOLS USED IN TEXT

- ♣ Bathtub in, or for, at least one room; WI-FI means wi-fi is available
- 🚰 packed lunch available if requested in advance
- 🐕 Dogs allowed subject to prior arrangement (see pp234-6)
- fb signifies places that have a Facebook page (for latest opening hours)

screens and occasionally live music, bingo and karaoke on some weekends.

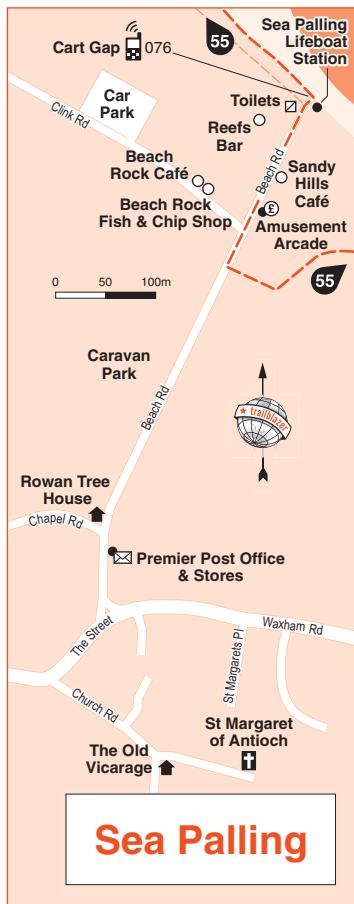
Alternatively, pick up classic fish & chips from **Beach Rock Fish & Chip Shop** (daily noon-3pm & 6-11pm), or stop in the adjacent **Beach Rock Café** (summer Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm, Sat-Sun 9am-6pm), which serves pastries, milkshakes, all-day breakfast, baguettes and jacket potatoes.

Over the road, **Sandy Hills Café** (☎ 01692-598391; school summer holidays daily 9.30am-9pm, rest of year daily 10am-6pm; ☺; fb) serves all kinds of hot and cold snacks and drinks as well as donuts and ice-creams. The **amusement arcade** (summer daily 10am-9pm, winter Mon-Fri to 6pm, Sat & Sun 10am-9pm) has an ATM inside. Inland a little is **Premier Post Office & Stores** (☎ 01692-598235; shop Mon-Fri 8am-7pm, Sat 8am-6pm, Sun 8am-4pm; post office Mon-Fri 9am-1pm & 2-5.30pm, Sat to 12.30pm).

Sanders Coaches' No 34 **bus** service picks up from Beach Rd here and from North Walsham their X55 service operates to Norwich; see box p54 for details.

Although the majority of accommodation here is holiday lets, **B&B** is available at **Rowan Tree House** (☎ 01692-598418, rowan-tree-house.co.uk), on Beach Rd, right across from the village post office and store. It has a smart self-contained annexe (1D private facilities; wi-fi; ☺; Apr-end Oct) with self-catering facilities; the rate (from £45pp, sgl occ room rate) includes a light continental breakfast. However, they require a three-night minimum stay.

Alternatively, try **The Old Vicarage** (☎ 01692-598015, theoldvicarage-norfolk.co.uk), on Church Rd which has a self-catering holiday let (1D/1D or T; wi-fi; ☺), usually for a week at a time, but they will consider lets for a minimum of three



nights. Rates vary depending on the season; contact them for details.

## SEA PALLING TO CAISTER-ON-SEA

[MAPS 55-60]

Ahead is a **11¼-mile (18km; 4½hrs) hike** through some of this area's wildest and most empty coastline, where you'll encounter glorious expanses of sand, big skies and seemingly endless sea. The stretch between Waxham and Winterton-on-Sea is especially good for birdwatching, with twitchers hunkered down amid the dunes to glimpse chiff-chaff, stonechat, cranes and red-throated divers, while Horsey is home to a seal colony right on the shore.

**GREAT YARMOUTH** [see map p225]

Great Yarmouth stands at odds with many of the towns and villages you will have walked through so far. Brash and boisterous, it's a bit like an East Anglian Blackpool but without the packs of drunken lads and hen parties. Seaside tat stretches from the pier all along the length of Marine Parade to the Pleasure Beach.

Although it's a tacky, neon spectacle for much of the year, people flock here for old-fashioned bucket-and-spade fun and the chance to paddle in the sea, much as holidaymakers have done since the late Victorian era when the town rose to fame as a resort. Prior to that though, the town grew rich on the back of the herring fishing industry. The River Yare, a channel parallel to the coast, provided a safe harbour and lucrative port over the years, as it led to the network of inland waterways leading to Norwich.

The fishing industry started in the 10th century and expanded through the Middle Ages, making Great Yarmouth one of the wealthiest towns in England. In the early 20th century as many as a thousand fishing boats still sought the 'silver darlings' as the herring were known. Since then though, much like most of the seafaring coast that relied on fishing, the town suffered during the post-war period as the industry faded out, its decline slowed by the North Sea oil industry and rise of tourism as an alternative. There are impressive architectural remnants from Great Yarmouth's heyday along with one of the most complete medieval town walls in the country, built between 1261 and 1400, although much of the town was flattened by bombing in 1942.

The slightly misleadingly named **heritage quarter** is home to fairly run down social housing that sits cheek-by-jowl with rare remnants of Great Yarmouth's merchant houses, which are more than 400 years old, and a few museums. The best of these are: the 16th century **Elizabethan House Museum** ([www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk); Apr-end Oct Sun-Fri 10am-4pm; £6.20/5.30 adult/child, free for NT members), on South Quay, which offers a glimpse into what life in Tudor times would have been like; and **Time & Tide Museum**

(☎ 01493-743930; daily Apr-end Oct 10am-4.30pm winter Mon-Fri to 4pm, Sat & Sun noon-4pm; £7/6 adult/child), on Blackfriars Rd, in what would have been a smokehouse close to the old town walls. The museum describes Great Yarmouth's history from sandbank to thriving port and seaside resort. It also looks at the impact of the herring industry and shows the smoking and curing process, brine baths and smoke room, all with the lingering odour of smoked fish for added authenticity. For details of both of these see [museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://museums.norfolk.gov.uk).

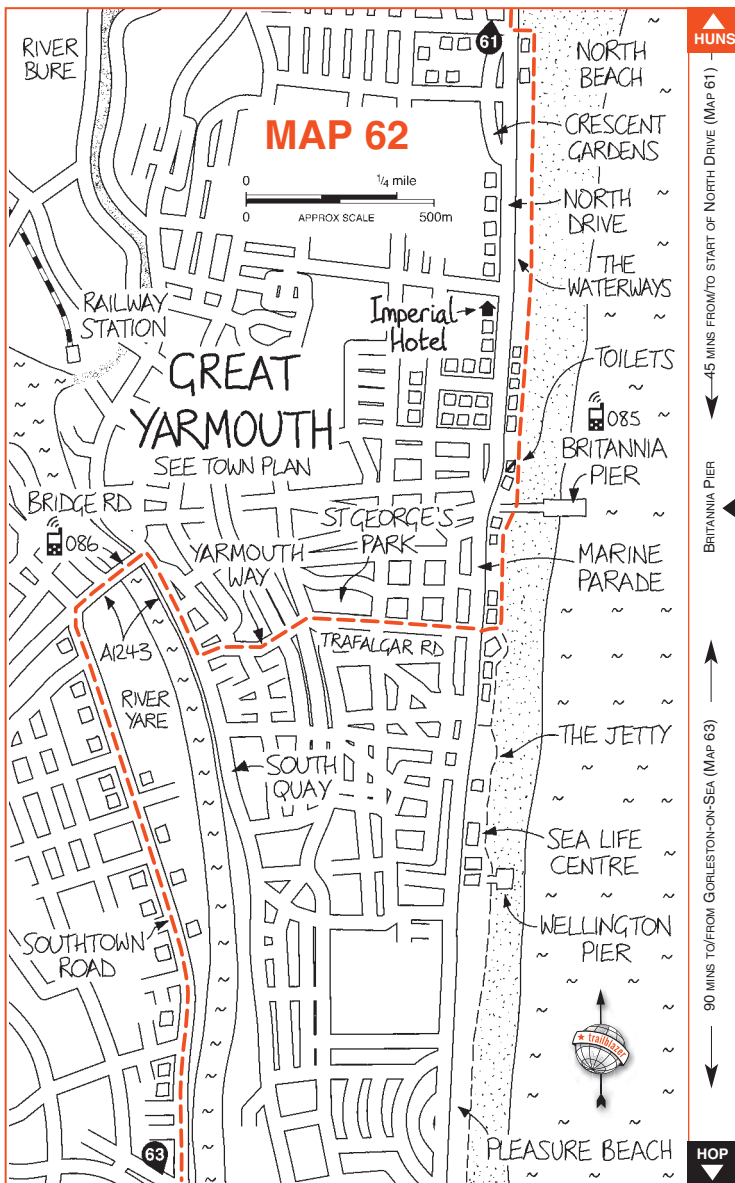
Look out too for the 169ft-high **Nelson Monument** (Map 63), on Ferner Rd/Monument Rd towards the southern end of the peninsula, overlooking the mouth of the river; there's a slim spiral staircase to the top although the monument is open irregularly.

Elsewhere there's quirky shopping along **Market Row** and its neighbouring streets and a permanent market in the centre (see Services p224). The main draw though is the front and its great expanse of sand and sea, broken up by three piers. At the northern end is the fun-filled **Britannia Pier** ([britannia-pier.co.uk](http://britannia-pier.co.uk)), which has been rebuilt several times over its 160-year history, twice after being hit by ships and cut in two. The quiet **jetty** is a popular fishing spot, while the 1854 **Wellington Pier** ([wellington-pier.co.uk](http://wellington-pier.co.uk)) in the south is the oldest of the three.

The wide seafront promenade, Marine Parade is stacked with attractions, ranging from **Pleasure Beach** amusement park ([pleasure-beach.co.uk](http://pleasure-beach.co.uk)), home to the UK's oldest wooden rollercoaster, to the **Sea Life Centre** ([visitséalife.com/great-yarmouth](http://visitséalife.com/great-yarmouth)), home to tanks of sharks, rays and penguins, and **Merrivale Model Village** ([merrivalemodelvillage.co.uk](http://merrivalemodelvillage.co.uk)), where you'll find various scenes set up to wander among.

**Services**

To find out about the town's attractions as well as the various historic buildings and their accessibility, use the comprehensive website for the **tourist information centre** ([visitgreatyarmouth.co.uk](http://visitgreatyarmouth.co.uk)) or call the





council (☎ 01493-846346). At the time of research it was not certain if or when the TIC itself, in Maritime House at 25 Marine Parade would reopen.

There's a **post office** in WH Smith at 183 King St. **Banks** and **ATMs** for most branches can be found, most often on Market Place or King St. There's a Premier **convenience store**, Roundabout Stores (Mon-Sat 6.30am-10pm, Sun from 7.30am) at 18 St Peter's Rd, and a Lidl **supermarket** (Mon-Sat 8am-9pm, Sun 10am-4pm) on the A1243, also known as Pasteur Rd. There's a permanent covered **market** (Mon-Sat), in the centre as well, with a large area of pedestrianised space, part cobbled, part paved and surrounded by historical buildings.

### Transport

Greater Anglia's Wherry Line connects Great Yarmouth with Norwich; there are regular **train** services (see box p48) and the journey takes about 30 minutes.

National Express's NX491 **coach** calls here; see box p49. First Norfolk & Suffolk operate several **bus** services (1/1A/1B/1C/X1/X11) from here to surrounding towns and villages. Sanders No 6 and Border Bus's No 580 also call here – most services stop at Market Gates (Temple Rd). See pp50-4 for details.

### Where to stay

There are lots of **B&Bs** just back from the front, particularly clustered on Trafalgar Rd.

Alternatively, **Classic Lodge** (☎ 01493-852851, 📧 classiclodge.com; 3D, all en suite; wi-fi), at 13 Euston Rd, has original Victorian features and rich fabrics in good-sized rooms with B&B from £32.50pp (sgl occ £45).

**Barnard House** (Map 61; ☎ 01493-855139, 📧 barnardhouse.com; 2D/1T, all en suite; wi-fi), on a leafy crescent at 2 Barnard Crescent, is more modern and a touch more stylish, with well-appointed rooms and they welcome walkers. B&B costs from £50pp (sgl occ £80). They require stays to be at least two nights.

Smarter though is the much enlarged **Andover House** (☎ 01493-843490, 📧 andoverhouse.co.uk; 2S/23D/2D or T, all

en suite; ☹; wi-fi), at 27-30 Camperdown, which has contemporary, stylish rooms that stand out from the competition in Great Yarmouth. Rates vary considerably according to room type, size and whether they have a bay window or lounge but expect to pay £40-70pp (sgl £69-72, sgl occ room rate), and include a complimentary full breakfast when booked direct.

In a similar, smart vein is the large **Imperial Hotel** (Map 62; ☎ 01493-842000, 📧 imperialhotel.co.uk; 4S/35D or T, all en suite; ☹; wi-fi; 🐾) overlooking Great Yarmouth's Venetian waterway gardens at 13-15 North Drive. There's a variety of rooms, many with sea views; some rooms can sleep two adults and up to two children. B&B starts at £50pp (sgl/sgl occ from £90/100) but can be double that if you want a larger room at the front of the hotel.

### Where to eat and drink

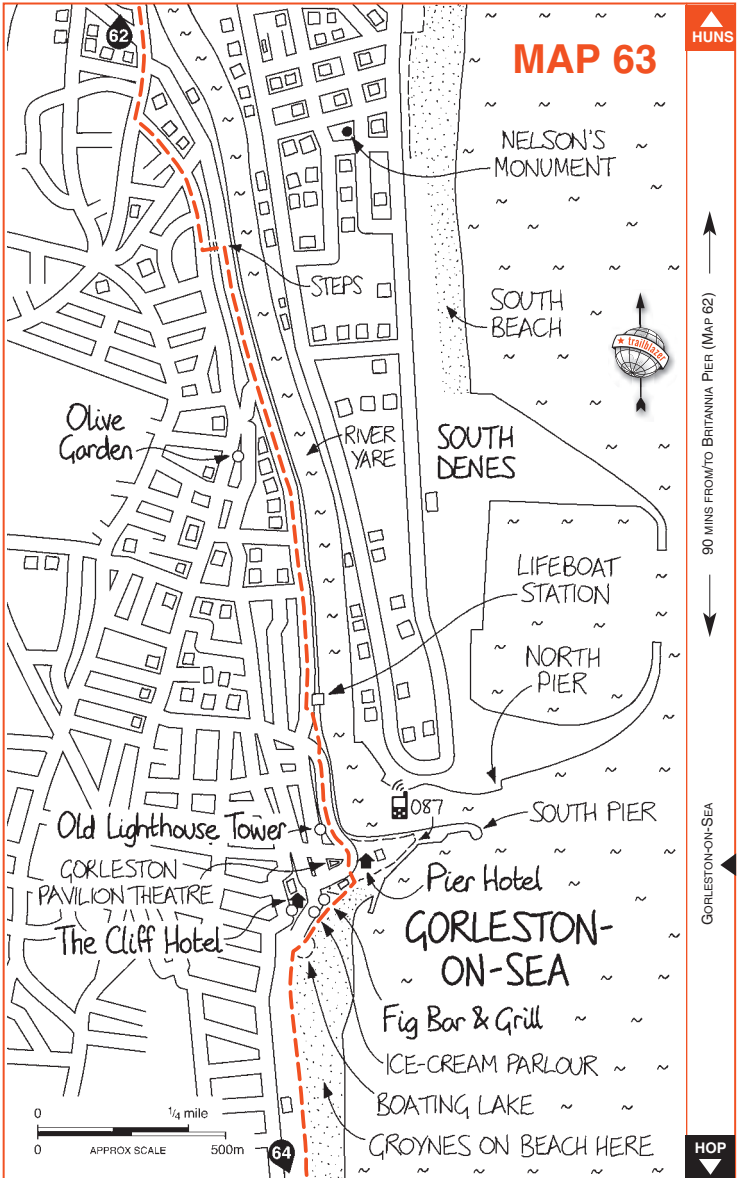
The town is full of masses of interchangeable cafés, fast-food outlets and restaurants. Browse the menus and pick one that takes your fancy.

For a more imaginative meal try **Copper Kitchen** (food Mon-Sat 6-9pm) in **Andover House** (see Where to stay). Perhaps start with a ham-hock scotch egg (£8.25), followed by spinach and ricotta dumplings (£15), or stuffed lamb breast (£18) though the menu does vary. Andover House's **bar** (daily 11am-11pm) specialises in gin but serves Adnams ales as well.

At the Imperial Hotel (see Where to stay above) there's a well-regarded **restaurant** (Mon-Sat 6-8.45pm), a fully glazed terrace with retractable roof and sea views (food: Mon-Sat 7-9.30am, Sun 8-10am; Mon-Sat noon-2pm, Sun to 3pm; Apr-Oct dinner daily 6-9pm), and a bar as well.

Despite the town's heritage, there's a dearth of decent places to eat freshly caught fish. On the seafront try **Fish & Grill** (☎ 01493-330200, 📧 fishandgrillgy.co.uk; Mon-Thur noon-9pm, Fri-Sun to 11pm if busy, winter Fri 5-7pm, Sat-Mon 11.30am-7pm), at 24 Marine Parade, which offers a decent fish & chips but also plenty for people who prefer something other including flame-grilled, chicken, steak and ribs.





## APPENDIX A: GPS & WHAT3WORDS WAYPOINT REFERENCES

Each waypoint below was taken on the route at the reference number marked on the map as below.

**GPS references** are given below. **What3words references** that correspond to these waypoints are also shown here and may be particularly useful in an emergency (see p83). Gpx files for waypoints can be downloaded from [trailblazer-guides.com](https://trailblazer-guides.com).

MAP WAYPT	MAP REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	WHAT3WORDS
1	001	52° 23.433' / 00° 51.318' Finger-post – start of the Peddars Way	surviving.emerge.symphonic
1	002	52° 23.800' / 00° 51.411' Bridge over Little Ouse river	enclosing.bowhead.aware
1	003	52° 24.648' / 00° 51.386' A1066 road crossing	shatters.sides.stack
2	004	52° 25.289' / 00° 51.254' Bridge over River Thet	coconuts.trace.spreading
3	005	52° 26.845' / 00° 50.688' A11 road crossing	foot.centuries.smooth
4	006	52° 28.783' / 00° 50.152' Stonebridge	date.extensive.vampire
5	007	52° 30.019' / 00° 49.856' Junction: branch right on track along edge of Military Training Zone	emeralds.soaps.chops
5	008	52° 31.066' / 00° 49.099' Thompson Water	goods.shortens.adopts
7	009	52° 33.413' / 00° 48.217' Crossroads – take dirt track left	reseller.talking.ghost
7	010	52° 33.891' / 00° 47.425' Dirt track meets B1108 – cross over and turn left	grumbles.mango.baked
8	011	52° 33.933' / 00° 45.791' Little Cressingham	winks.hunches.senders
8	012	52° 34.804' / 00° 45.647' Crossroads – go straight over	glosses.zoos.unframed
9	013	52° 36.290' / 00° 44.874' Crossroads – South Pickenham	baker.changing.swarm
10	014	52° 36.719' / 00° 44.886' Path leaves road and continues behind hedge	loafing.organist.homework
10	015	52° 37.522' / 00° 44.869' Join road and turn right – North Pickenham	dented.decompose.splashes
11	016	52° 39.122' / 00° 43.532' A47 crossroads	punks.narrating.strict
12	017	52° 39.779' / 00° 42.851' Sporle Road junction – dog leg right	stooping.chairing.stream
13	018	52° 41.110' / 00° 41.305' Cross A1065 – take dirt track heading north-west	valuables.handover.snap
13	019	52° 41.904' / 00° 41.140' Bridge over River Nar	undercuts.unless.vision
13	020	52° 42.210' / 00° 41.267' Castle Acre, Stocks Green	brightens.crusaders.dolly
14	021	52° 43.547' / 00° 40.456' The path rejoins the road at the crossroads by Old Wicken Cottages	annual.enabling.crunches
15	022	52° 44.947' / 00° 39.408' Trig point, Shepherd's Bush	farmed.flattens.acrobatic
16	023	52° 46.293' / 00° 38.517' Crossroads, dirt track to right goes to Great Massingham	sterna.beak.handbags
17	024	52° 47.892' / 00° 37.530' A148 road crossing	sunset.release.palettes
18	025	52° 50.000' / 00° 36.182' B1153 road crossing by Anmer Minque	reinvest.hovered.repaying

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## APPENDIX B: TAKING A DOG

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Both Norfolk Coast Path and Peddars Way are dog-friendly paths and many are the rewards that await those prepared to make the extra effort required to bring their best friend along the trail. However, you shouldn't underestimate the amount of work involved in bringing your pooch to the path. Indeed, just about every decision you make will be influenced by the fact that you've got a dog: how you plan to travel to the start of the trail, where you're going to stay, how far you're going to walk each day, where you're going to rest and where you're going to eat in the evening.

The decision-making begins well before you've set foot on the trail. For starters, you have to ask – and be honest with – yourself: can your dog really cope with walking day after day? And just as importantly, will he or she actually enjoy it?

If you think the answer is yes to both, you need to start preparing accordingly. For one thing, extra thought needs to go into your itinerary. The best starting point is to study the Village & town facilities table on pp32-5 (and the advice below), and plan where to stop, where to eat, where to buy food for your mutt.

### Looking after your dog

To begin with, you need to make sure that your dog is fully **inoculated** against the usual doggy illnesses, and also up-to-date with regard to **worm pills** (eg Drontal) and **flea preventatives** such as Frontline – they are, after all, following in the pawprints of many a dog before them, some of whom may well have left fleas or other parasites on the trail that now lie in wait for their next meal to arrive. **Pet insurance** is also a very good idea; if you've already got insurance do check that it will cover a trip such as this.

On the subject of looking after your dog's health, perhaps the most important implementation you can take with you is the **plastic tick remover**, available from vets for a couple of quid. Ticks are a real problem as they hide in the long grass waiting for unsuspecting victims to trot past. These removers, while fiddly, help you to remove the tick safely (ie without leaving its head behind buried under the dog's skin).

Being in unfamiliar territory also makes it more likely that you and your dog could become separated. All dogs now have to be **microchipped** but make sure your dog also has a **tag with your contact details on it** (a mobile phone number would be best if you are carrying one with you).

### What to pack

You've probably already got a good idea of what to bring to keep your dog alive and happy, but the following is a checklist:

- **Food/water bowl** Foldable cloth bowls are popular with walkers as they are light and take up little room in the rucksack. It is also possible to get a water-bottle-and-bowl combination, where the bottle folds into a 'trough' from which the dog can drink.
- **Lead and collar** An extendable one is probably preferable for this sort of trip. Make sure both lead and collar are in good condition – you don't want either to snap on the trail, or you may end up carrying your dog through sheep fields until a replacement can be found.
- **Medication** You'll know if you need to bring any lotions or potions.
- **Tick remover** See above.
- **Bedding** A simple blanket may suffice, or you can opt for something more elaborate if you aren't carrying your own luggage.
- **Poo bags** Essential.
- **Hygiene wipes** For cleaning your dog after it's rolled in stuff.
- **A favourite toy** Helps prevent your dog from pining for the entire walk.
- **Food/water** Remember to bring treats as well as regular food to keep up the mutt's morale.

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# INDEX

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Page references in **red** type refer to maps

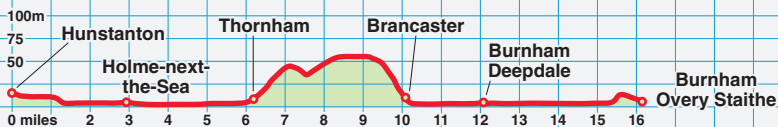
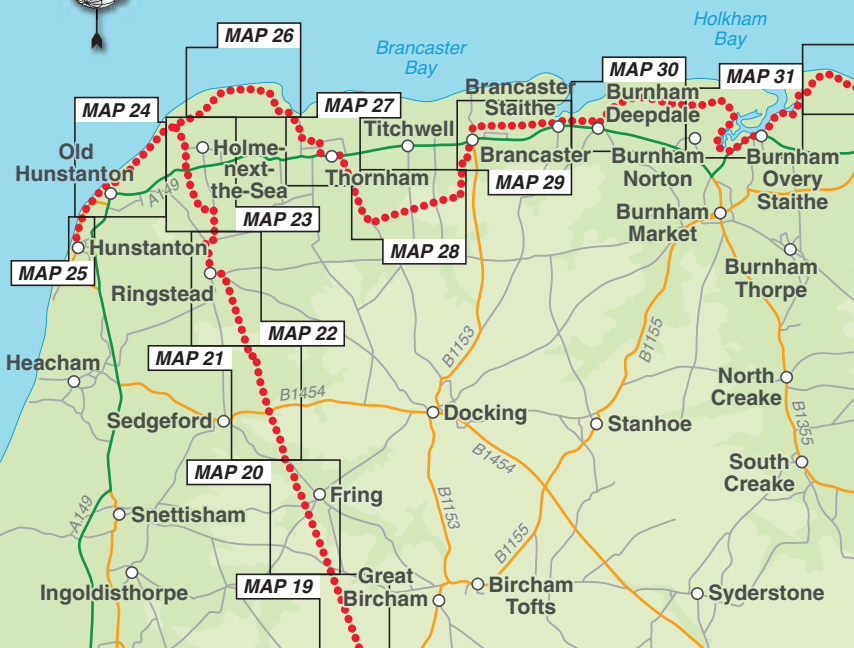
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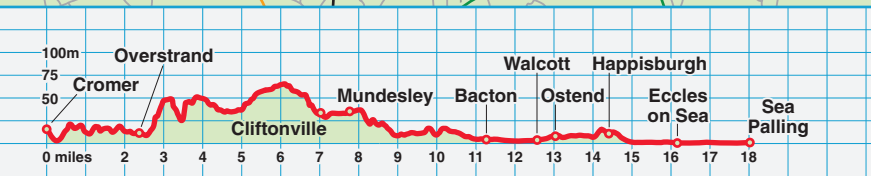
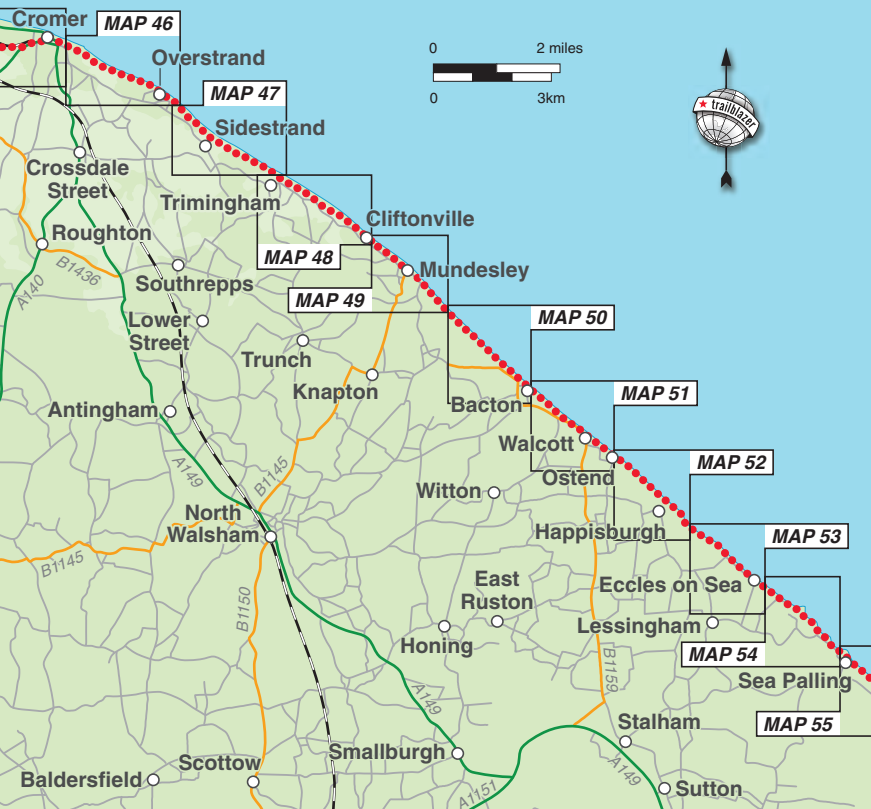
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## Maps 25-23 & 26-31 Hunstanton to Burnham Overy Staithe

16 miles/26km – 6¼-7¾hrs

NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops



**Maps 45-49, Cromer to**

**Mundesley 7¾ miles/12.5km – 3-3½hrs**

**Maps 49-55, Mundesley to**

**Sea Palling 10 miles/16km – 4hrs**

**NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops**





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