

DISCOVER BECCLES



Stand above the Waveney on the steep river cliff, or at the helm of a Broads-bound dayboat. Splash out in the town's independent shops, or in its ever-popular 'Lido' open-air swimming pool. Follow tiny alleyway 'scores' right down to the river-edge or climb the bell tower with its head in the clouds. From Old Market to New Market and flat cross-fen paths to Stepping Hill steps, however you look at Beccles it's full of fascinating contrasts, fine architecture and opportunities to enjoy.

Go angling for evidence of its fishing port heritage. Paddle off on a canoe trail, or dive into delicious delis and stroll down The Avenue for a picnic on the Common. With a food and drink festival to feast on, quayside antiques markets, regular music and more at the Public Hall and the Broads National Park on hand too, no wonder Beccles is one of England's fastest-growing market towns!

Markets & Milestones

Market: since Saxon times
Market Day: Friday
Fairtrade Town: since 2008
Lowestoft: 10 miles/16 kms
Norwich: 18 miles/29 kms
Ipswich: 40 miles/64 kms

Town Charter: 1584
Waveney River Navigation: from 1670
Turnpike (Toll) Roads: 1792
Railway Lines: since 1854
Tivetshall » Bungay » Beccles: 1863-1953
Beccles Bypass: 1983

Key

- 1 Bell Tower
 - 2 St Michael's Church
 - 3 St Peter's House
 - 4 Old Market
 - 5 The Staithes
 - 6 Iron Bridge
 - 7 The Quay
 - 8 Historic Pound
 - 9 Site of Old Printworks
 - 10 New Market
 - 11 Town Hall
 - 12 Site of Leper Chapel
 - 13 St Benet's RC Church
 - 14 Puddingmoor Stone
- Railway Station
 - Bus Stop
 - Ferry/River Trips
 - Parking
 - Public Toilets
 - Library
 - Chemist
 - Post Office
 - Town Museum
 - Public Hall/Theatre
 - Visitor Info Point
 - Footpath

Can you find the 10 animals and birds hiding around this Pocket Guide?

- A Play Areas
- B Sport Fields/Skate Park/Tennis
- C Canoe Hire
- D Dayboat Hire/Boatyard
- E Beccles Lido (Outdoor Swimming Pool)

Spot the Red Herring

Are these Beccles bits and bobs true or false?

- After 1066, **Beccles annual tithe** to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds doubled from 30,000 to 60,000 herring.
- Puddingmoor** has nothing to do with cakes. A 'Pody Moor' was a marshy patch that was home to toads.
- Actor Sir John Mills** performed at Beccles Public Hall as a schoolboy.
- Beccles Bell Tower** was bought by the Borough Council in 1972 for 1p!
- Waveney boat-sails** were originally red (not pitch-black), stained with herring oil - until rats got a taste for their fishy flavour!
- 'Boney's Island'** on Beccles Common recalls an 1815 bonfire party marking the end of the Napoleonic wars.

Answers: All (probably) true, except no. 6 - celebrations in Beccles actually took place prematurely in 1814!

STEP OUT & ENJOY VIEWS & PEWS HERITAGE WALK

A Stroll around the Historic Highpoints of Beccles (& Places to Sit & Ponder)

2.3 miles
3.7 kms
CIRCULAR WALK



INCLUDES STEPS!

FROM/TO: Beccles Bell Tower, The Walk NR34 9AJ

St Michael's look-out/loud-speaker/beacon bell tower 1 was built (1500-40) to make Beccles seen and heard for miles. Henry VIII's Reformation put paid to its planned steeple, but views from its 30m/97ft tower are some of Suffolk's best by far. Look out for Lowestoft's wind turbine, Gulliver, on a clear day! St Michael's Church 2 (c. 1369+) lost its roof to the Great Fire of Beccles (1586) and has pillars reputedly 'pinkened' by the flames. Upstairs in the porch (1450), there was once a gunpowder store (presumably not in 1586, thank heavens!) and a library. Can you spot its unusual 'squinch' window? Head for the cliff-top platform outside St Michael's west-end for fine river/site of Saxon fishing port/wide Waveney Valley views. Take **Church Steps** down to **Puddingmoor**. Turn right to reach St Peter's House 3, incorporating remains of round-towered Church of St Peter the Fisherman (900s-1530s), at junction with Old Market 4, probably site of Saxon fish/trade markets/1800s livestock markets. The Bear & Bells inn remembers fairs/entertainment seen here in later centuries rather than the 1800s livestock markets. Detour left down **The Score** (convenient, time-honoured direct access to the river). Retrace steps, turn left down **Northgate**. Low windows of former shops give way to redbrick Georgian façades (Montagu House/Oswald House with Flemish gables), warehouses, tannery buildings, maltings with further scores to river.

Did you know?

Beatrix Potter's delightful children's books were originally printed in Beccles by the Clowes (formerly Caxton) printworks. In 2004, the company moved to nearby Ellough airfield.

THEATRE? CONCERTS? FILMS? INDOOR & OUTDOOR FESTIVALS & EVENTS?

- The Public Hall • St Michael's Church
- The Quay • The Lido • River Waveney

There's Simply Something for Everyone!

- Antiques Markets • Food & Drink Festival
 - Triathlon • River Festival & Carnival
 - Beer Festival • Christmas Lights & Festive Shopping
- visitbeccles.co.uk thesuffolkcoast.co.uk

Recipe for Success

Dorothy Crowfoot (Hodgkin) convinced her Beccles schoolteachers to let her do chemistry rather than cookery. In 1964, she won the Nobel Prize for work enabling the mass synthetic

production of penicillin. Beccles' long association with medicine/nursing may have started under Abbey rule when herbology-trained Benedictines possibly founded the town's leper hospital (1267).

Signs of the Times

Saltgate, Northgate, Ingate, Newgate... so many 'gates', but no town walls? It's another red herring - 'gate' comes from old Norse 'gata' meaning street!



No 41 The Staithes 5 (left) site of original riverport quay; Railway Score/The Crossings (left) remembers Waveney Valley Line to Bungay (1863-1953). At crossroads by town sign, turn left (**Bridge Street**) for town/river views from iron bridge 6 (1884) - its pre-1500s stone predecessor had its own chapel and resident hermit! Retrace steps to junction. Turn left (**Fen Lane**) to The Quay 7 (1830s). Cross bridge for pews with views/Marsh Trail to site of Iron Age causeway. Retrace steps to Northgate. Turn left (**Rosemary Lane**), right into Ravensmere. (Detour left for historic animal pound 8, retrace steps.) On corner of crossroads, supermarket (ahead left) has mural celebrating site of Clowes (formerly Caxton) Printworks 9. Turn right, following **Smallgate** left past Old Market (right) and fine 1900s façades of early 'bridged' Co-operative department stores (right). Along here to left were sites of Beccles Manor House and a medieval Guildhall's barn (Guild of the Holy Ghost) - just before former White Lion and 1785 Assembly Rooms, Public Hall T. Continue ahead at crossroads to banking quarter, **Exchange Square** for views down historic Blyburgate (left). Raised 3-storey bank (opposite), site of 1800s Fisher Theatre/Corn Hall. Turn right (**Sheepgate**) past The King's Head (Beccles' largest coaching inn since Charles II times) to **New Market** 10. Go right, then around the market's island of 'stalls' (now shops), via **Tavern Lane** by Town (Shire) Hall 11 (built 1766 on Market Cross site), past Swan House (left - inn for 400+ years), former White Horse Inn (right), ahead into **Ballygate**, passing fine 1700s façades to Leman House (1570 flint-faced, now museum M/gardens with pews/river/Lido views). Continue down **Ballygate** to find Fauconberge Gate (of 1846-1906 school) at St Mary's Leper Chapel site 12, town sign and St Benet's Minster 13 built 1908 as monastic site. Retrace steps past M to descend **Stepping Hill** (steps) to **Puddingmoor**. Turn right to discover enigmatic glacial erratic, The Puddingmoor Stone 14, on bank (left) just before climbing **Church Steps** back to St Michael's Church 2.



Prefer a Stroll without the Steps?

Why not explore the town's Beatrix Potter connections on the fun and family-friendly Beccles Fen Explorer walk (see overleaf).

Taste the Place

- Seppings' Hungate Sausages
- Ellough Farmers' Market Veg
- Shipmeadow Free-range Wild Boar

GETTING AROUND

By Road: A146 (Norwich), A143 (Diss/Gt Yarmouth), A145/A12 (Ipswich)
By Bus: thewaytogosuffolk.org.uk
By Rail: East Suffolk Line (Beccles) eastsuffolklines.co.uk; nationalrail.co.uk
By Water: The Broads/River Waveney visitthebroads.co.uk; Beccles Quay Yacht Station becclestowncouncil.gov.uk
By Bike: On National Cycle Network route 1 & Regional route 30. Beccles Cycle Map: thewaytogosuffolk.org.uk/cycle
On Foot: Angles Way (93 miles/150 kms) discoversuffolk.org.uk
Walking/Cycling/Horse-riding: discoversuffolk.org.uk
Car Parks/Cashless & Ticketless Parking: myringoo.co.uk
OS Maps: Outdoor Leisure OL40/ OS Explorer 231

WHO'S WHO?

A Light-hearted Guide to Beccles Big-wigs

Eadwig & The Benedictines: Anglo-Saxon (950s) teen-king Ed traded Beccles Manor for St Edmund's blessing. But reigning just 4 years, his bargain back-fired. Or did it? In 1066 the storming Normans found Beccles already in French hands (those of Bury St Edmund's Abbot Baldwin!) so left the town alone. It prospered under Abbey rule until Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries.

William Rede & Son: Bill the Elder bought Beccles Fen back for the townfolk with the 1539 town purse. Son, Billy, bought Beccles Manor. Accused of dodgy-dealing, the ensuing decades of disputes were resolved only by Elizabeth I granting a charter (1584) to John Baas, first portreeve/bailiff of Beccles (immortalised on town sign).

Be sure to visit the FREE **Beccles & District Museum** at Sir John Leman's Ballygate home/school. becclesmuseum.org.uk

Sir John Leman: Dick Whittington character/Beccles benefactor with a zest for life and education. John slipped from butter/cheese-trader to Fishmongers' Guild supremo, landing the ultimate catch - Lord Mayor of London (1616). Spot the lemons on his coat of arms!

Catherine Suckling: Grand-niece of Britain's first Prime Minister, Barsham-born Kate fell for and married a Beccles curate in St Michael's Church. As Mrs Nelson, she had 11 children including, Horatio, named after Horace Walpole. *The rest is naval history...*



The Pocket Guide to BECCLES

Southern Point of the Broads National Park
 Waveney River Port & Market Town Heritage • Boating
 Independent Shops • Artisans & Events • Food & Drink
 Family Fun on the Water • Wildlife, Walks & Cycle Rides



EXPLORE & ENJOY BECCLES & BEYOND

Walk, canoe, cruise, drive or cycle - however you embark upon your gentle Waveney Valley adventures around Beccles and its hinterland towards the coast, you'll surely find fun times along the way. Expect wonderful wildlife encounters, real village gems, fab food and drink and a large helping of well-I-didn't-know-that history too! From Nelson connections to grisly ghost stories and crumbling cliffs, exotic gardens and beautiful broads, what will you discover?



The Angles Way

FOLLOW THE ANGLES WAY PATH...
Fully waymarked, this long distance path is ideal for exploring Waveney Valley landscapes on foot and passes directly through Beccles via Puddingmoor and The Quay.
Directions: east.suffolkclines.co.uk/walks

OS MAP: OL40 /231
8 miles 13 kms LINEAR WALK
5.5 miles 9 kms LINEAR WALK

Nature Watch
By the River Waveney at Beccles Fen, North Cove or Carlton Marshes, by 'Boney's Island' on Beccles Common or Sotterley's ancient oaks, what will you spot today?

- Norfolk Hawker Dragonfly
- Purple Loosetrife
- Canada Goose
- Grey Squirrel
- Marsh Harrier
- Reed Mace
- Field Mouse
- Kingfisher



Make a Splash!

Beccles Lido - A Great Swimming Tradition

Is it 'Lee-doh' or 'Lye-doh'? Who cares! First-class and fun, Beccles heated outdoor swimming pool has to be East Anglia's finest! If you're up for a family day out, powering up and down the lanes, bouncing about on aqua inflatables or just lazing poolside, this is the Beccles place to be. With competitions and water carnivals taking place in/on the river for decades, it's a real tradition too. In 1894, versatile architect Francis Banham (designer of St Benet's Church) planned 'The Bathing Place', a serviced area dug out from the Waveney as a safer option to river-swimming. Its 1959 successor - an unheated pool separate from the river, free from fish, eels and without a pea-shingle floor! - was transformed into the heated 3 pool Lido in 2009. beccleslido.com



GO FOR A POTTER Beccles Town & Marshes BEATRIX'S BECCLES FEN EXPLORER



2.5 miles 4 kms CIRCULAR WALK

OS MAP: OL 40

FROM/TO: Beccles Bell Tower, The Walk NR34 9AJ/The Quay, Fen Lane NR34 9BH
TERRAIN: Flat/gentle inclines/river banks. Pavements. Tarmac paths/natural hard surfaces on signposted easy-access Blue Walk.

Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck, Jeremy Fisher, Mrs Tiggywinkle... whose real-life cousins will you spot on this family-friendly nature walk out of town into the typical Broads landscape of Beccles Fen?

Over the centuries it's been underwater, home to an Iron Age motorway, Victorian railway line and a life-saver to local folk through common grazing and access rights. Today river-, marsh- and meadow-side paths lead past mini nature reserves, criss-crossed by dykes - colourful, buzzing habitats in spring/summer. In the 1950s, Peter Rabbit would have had a field day when parts were used for growing carrots!

Hop along from Beccles Bell Tower 1 to Beccles Fen and see how many birds, dragonflies, flowers and beasts you can clock up on the way! Cross Saltgate to head via Rooks Lane/Manor House Lane to former Clowes Printworks site 2 where Beatrix Potter's early 1900s books were printed. Turn left (Newgate). Keep ahead, following Ravensmere (detour to animal pound 8 if wished), Rosemary Lane (left) and Northgate/Fen Lane to The Quay 7. Cross footbridge. Turn left. Path bears right, under road-bridge, then between river/Calves Hurn (meadow). Beyond Sailing Club, turn right, over bridge. 2,000 year old causeway timbers (one now in museum) were discovered in meadow (left) in 2006. Turn right onto straight path, then left, back to river. Retrace steps under road-bridge to quay.

Simply Brilliant Birdwatching
Swoop down to North Cove Nature Reserve (by bus). Follow footpaths to nature reserve (NR34 7QQ) for siskins, sparrowhawks, woodpecker, woodcock and warblers. Return along the Angles Way. Don't forget the binoculars! (suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

6 miles 9.5 kms LINEAR WALK

Prefer to Pedal?
The 17 mile/27.5 kms circular Marshes & Lanes Cycle Tour explores both sides of the river between Beccles/Bungay and beyond. discoversuffolk.org.uk

17 miles 27.5 kms CIRCULAR RIDE

Ghostly Goings-on...

Expect spectral snarl-ups between Beccles and Barsham. Around Roos and Barsham Halls there are allegedly curious coaches pulled by headless horses, galivanting grooms (decapitated, of course) and chain-rattling ghosts (hanging out by 'Nelson's Tree' - Roos Hall's gallows oak). Local gent and MP, Thomas Colby died soon after building his 1583 redbrick, look-at-me 'lantern' house, Roos Hall. Ownership of this hugely haunted place was later enjoyed (?) by Beccles big-wigs, the Sucklings (Horatio Nelson's kinsfolk) and the Redes.

Dare to go on a Halloween ghost walk around Beccles?
Fancy a history walk around Beccles?
beccleshelpinghands.co.uk



OS MAP: OL40/231

FROM/TO: Beccles Lido/Ferry Quay, Puddingmoor, Beccles NR34 9PL

TERRAIN: Flat/gentle inclines. Field-edge, cross-field, wooded paths. Tarmac roads/pavements. Stiles, steps, gates. Part signed Angles Way (AW).

Set out for Shipmeadow via Lord Nelson's ancestral homelands. Tread carefully past one of England's most spectre-filled stately piles, along smugglers' paths and stop by at Barsham church where Stone Henge-style wizardry makes a statue 'come to life' exactly on the Equinox. Barsham-rectory-born Catherine Suckling possibly courted her curate sweetheart, Rev. Edmund Nelson, here when Waveney wherries still went upriver to Bungay.

DIRECTIONS: Follow Puddingmoor to Bungay Road (B1062). Turn right (AW- pavement/grass verge path). Before Roos Hall (left), cross B1062, leaving AW to take leafy trackway past houses to Ringsfield Road. Turn right onto footpath to Lodge Farm. Turn right (Lodge Farm Lane) to cross B1062. Footpath opposite leads via Holy Trinity Church Barsham back to B1062. Turn right along verge towards Shipmeadow (or was it Sheepmeadow?). At Nunery Farm, go left through its gateway (AW) to cross stile in bottom of garden! Path leads along field. Ignore next stile (left), heading right across field to footbridge, then over stile into green lane by marshes. Continue ahead, through gate, past cottage (left), keeping left onto 'Locks Lane' track to pumping station.* Follow footpath ahead as it curls right, rejoining AW to edge woods/fields to enormous stile. Cross and continue (fenced path between field/wild cherry woods), go over track (site of Barsham Hall, left). Continue past drainage dyke, path bears right to meet B1062. Turn left, along verge to Roos Hall (left). Retrace steps into Beccles.

*For Geldeston Locks Inn/ferry, take footpath (left) over water-meadows/footbridge/river bridge. NB summer/dry weather route only!

7 miles 9 kms CIRCULAR WALK

4 miles 6.5 kms LINEAR WALK

Paddle & Discover

Dip your paddle in the water and glide along the Waveney on an up-close-to-nature trail. Whether you hire a canoe, kayak or stand up paddle board at Beccles or Geldeston or have your own, the Waveney provides some great places to launch and explore. Paddling at a leisurely pace, an excursion to/from the historic inn at Geldeston/Shipmeadow Lock from Beccles is easily doable in a day. visitthebroads.co.uk

Cruise & Snooze

Hire a Beccles dayboat and head further into the Broads on a relaxing cruise to the Waveney River Centre and enigmatic 'ziggurat' church at Burgh St Peter. Discover your inner-captain as you and your passengers enjoy the scenery, sunshine, wildlife and camaraderie of other folk on the river. A 6.5 hour hire is plenty to get there and back, moor up for food/explore-time and take in the famous 'Back Gardens of Beccles' views. visitwaveneyvalley.co.uk

Go with the Flow (& the Big Dog Ferry)

Want to enjoy the river, but pushing paddles, rowing or skipping just isn't your cup to tea? You'll find the perfect solution at Beccles Lido quay. **Big Dog Ferry** offers a gentle 3-mile summertime shuttle to Geldeston's 1670s lock, where its waterside inn is renowned for traditional music, good food, fine ales and great walks around, about or back along the well-signed Angles Way path (★ Beccles - 3 miles/5 kms). bigdogferry.co.uk

Let the ferry help you explore more on walks marked ★

Discover Digital Trails

Let your phone do the directing on an interactive trail around Beccles. Download the app and discover. thesuffolkcoast.co.uk

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Did you know?

Look out for Morris, Maypole and Molly dancing at Geldeston Locks Inn community pub, plus 'dwileflonking', where rival teams catch a beer-soaked cloth in a chamber pot!

Countryside Code

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

