Aldeburgh Museum

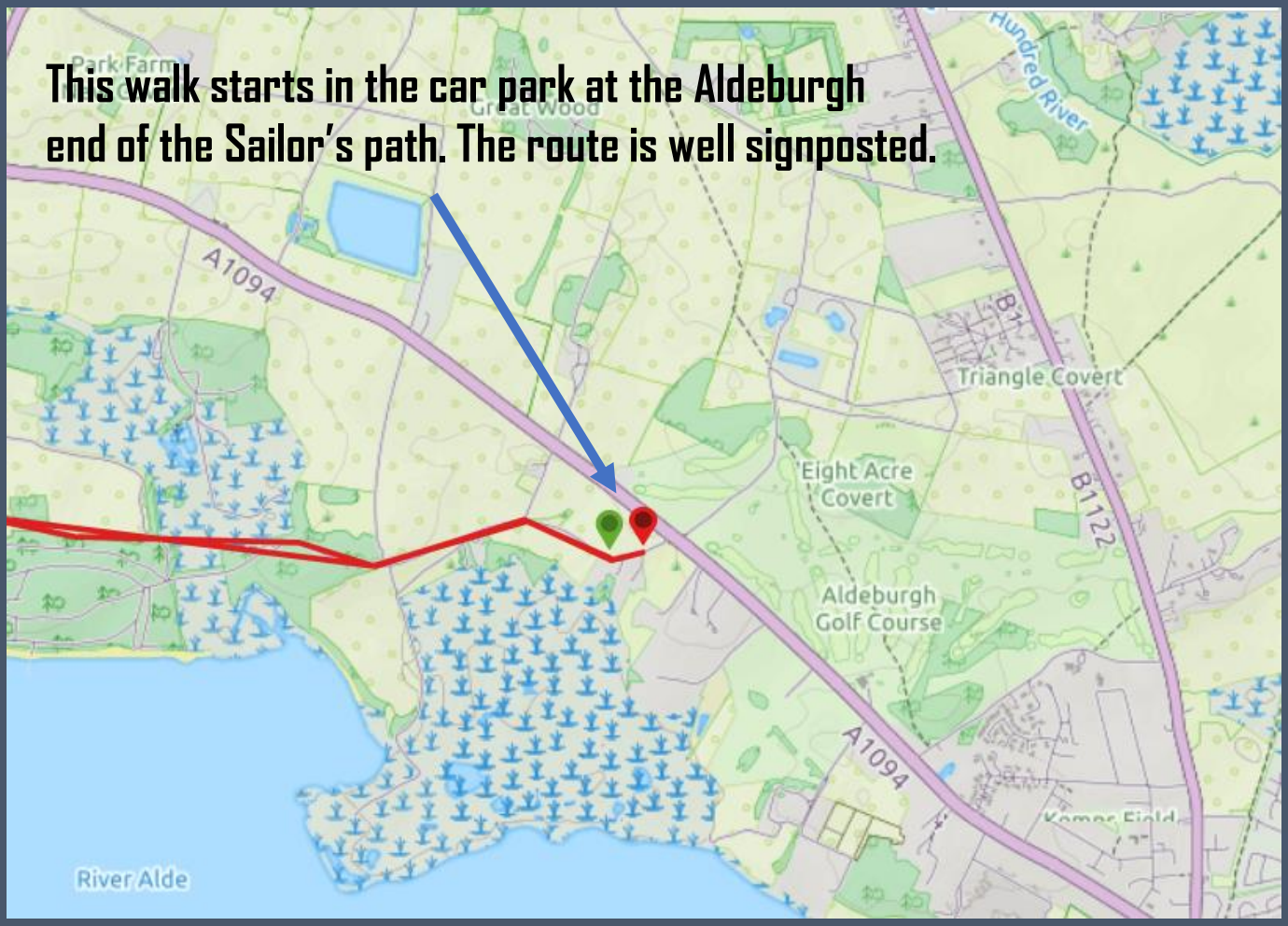
MOOT HALL

Heritage, Heath & Hedgerow

Historic nature walks with Aldeburgh Museum

The Sailor's Path is a well-worn route, initially used by seafarers, smugglers and fisherman. The full 6 mile route runs from Aldeburgh to Snape and offers a fascinating view of the picturesque River Alde.

This walk, at 2.5 miles, offers an introduction to the route.



The patch of land behind the signpost, was used by the **Royal Flying Corps in World War 1**.

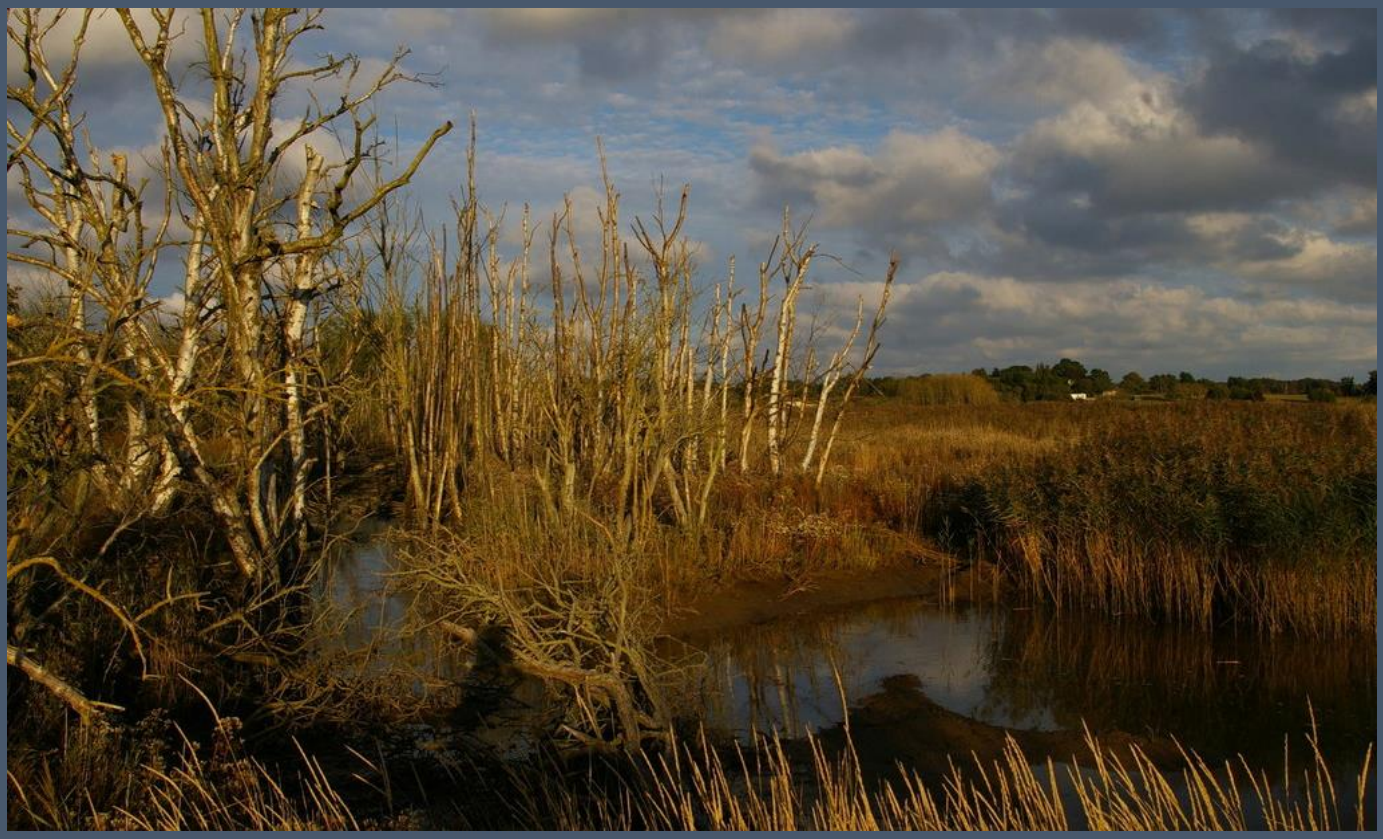
They created a small single track railway to transport goods from their airbase at **Hazlewood Hall** across this patch of land to the **Brick Dock** jetty on the river.

Notice the **creeping buttercup** along the edge of the path.

Arriving at the open field to the left is a good viewpoint to see **Yarn Hill** which is other side of the river. It is said that St Botolph (Anglo-Saxon Saint of Travellers) wanted to build Iken church here but found it full of eerie and ghostly happenings and changed the church location to where it is today.

Splendid yellow gorse in full flower is evident along the path and throughout the Suffolk coast.

Less commonly named Furze or Whin, it has an almond/coconut like scent and is very prickly! It is an important nectar source for bees in Spring when few flowers have bloomed.



The sad, dead trees to the left of the path **before Marsh Cottage** are evidence of the breach in the river wall and consequently the flooding of **the Hazlewood marshes in 2013**.

Red campion (it is actually pink) is scattered along the edge of the path.

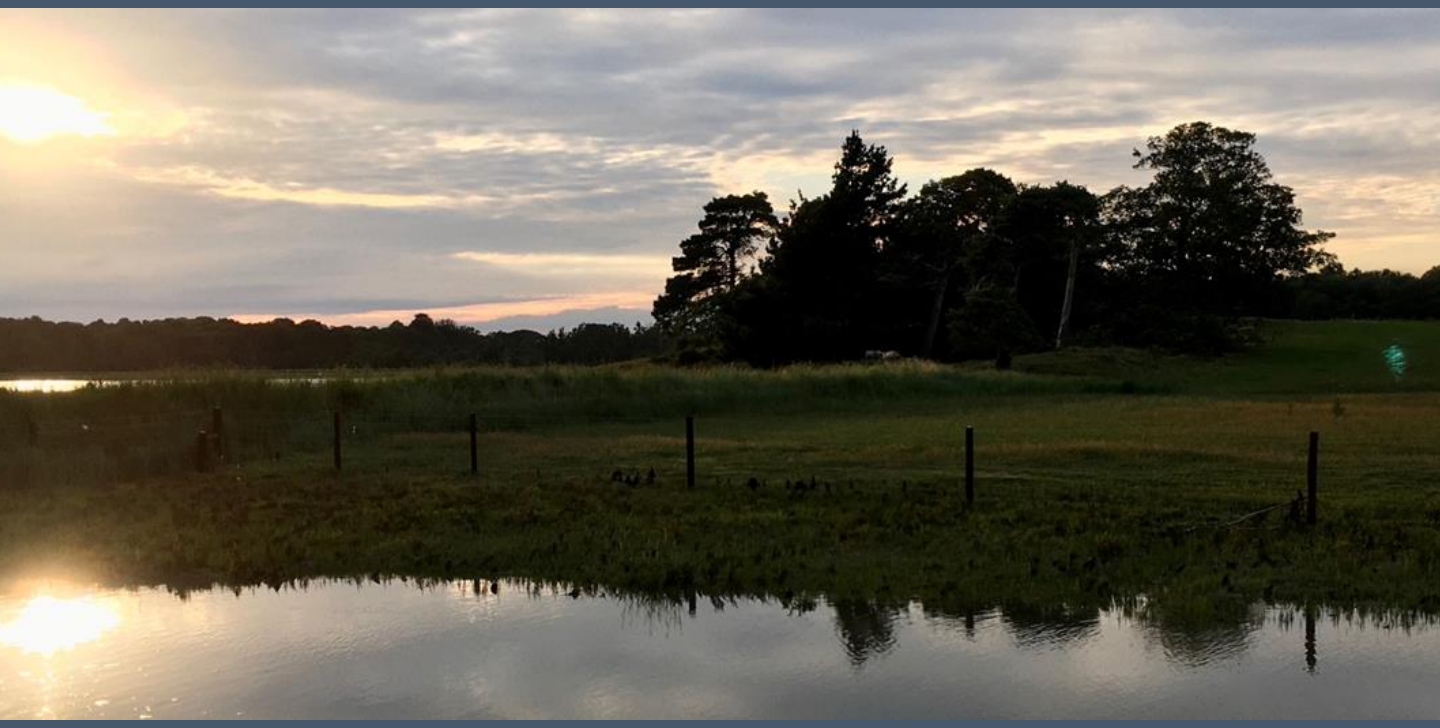
According to folklore, red campion protects fairies from being discovered.

A little way beyond the house is a sign for **Hazlewood Marshes and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust** bird hide, where you may spot **Avocets, Spoonbills, Godwits, Dunlins and Redshank.**

An interesting detour **but no dogs are allowed to the hide.**

The wooded area beyond the signpost is shady and cool – see if you can find the **field mouse-ear chickweed.**

Continuing on the footpath are banks of ***jack-by-the-hedge*** **or Poor Man's Mustard** which have a garlicy scent.



Soon you will be able to see **Little Japan and Barber's Point** through the trees. Two well-known landmarks on the river: **Barber's Point*** was the setting for the Anglo-Saxon archaeological digs between 2004 and 2013

Little Japan is so called for the tree lined sandy beach, well frequented by local sailors.

A mist of **Hawthorn blossom** brings us to the locally named '**Hansel and Gretel' cottage**, situated on the Blackheath estate.

Once through the kissing gate, the boardwalk takes us through wetlands where **otters and foxes** can be occasionally spotted and **geese, heron and moorhens swim** in the waters. If you are lucky, you might hear a **woodpecker** in the nearby trees. Look to your right on the little bridge, and you will see a beautiful clump of **lesser celandine** on the riverbank.

The metal gate at the end of the board walk is the end of this walk. You can if you like continue through the **Blackheath Estate to Snape**. Otherwise turn around and return to the car park.

***There is a display of the Barbers Point dig and finds in Aldeburgh museum**