

Welcome



Situated near the border with Cambridgeshire, Lidgate is located on an original Roman road. This beautiful small village with its fine selection of medieval properties and attractive pond, has a fascinating history dating back to Anglo-Saxon times.

In 1086 Lidgate was documented as an average sized village on the road from Exning to Clare. A few centuries later, its monk and poet John de Lydgate described it as a famous castle town knocked down by the invading Danes!

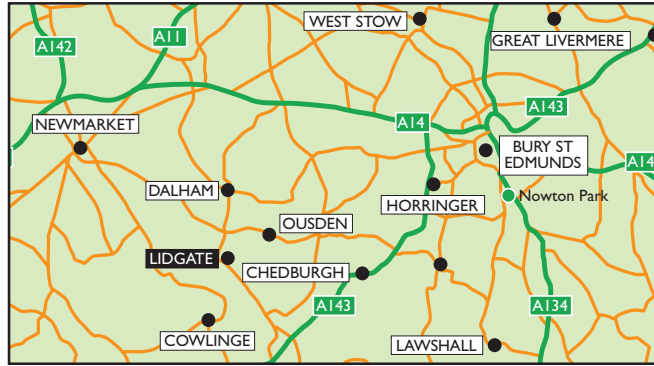
Whilst little remains of Lidgate Castle, built by the Normans in an unusual quadrangular design, this 12th Century defensive site is of historical importance. The site of the castle, including the Inner and Outer Bailey and the Bailey Pond, is recognised by Historic England as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The medieval church of St Mary, a Grade II* Listed Building, stands in the surrounds of the former motte and bailey and the remains of an ancient flint wall, part of the original Norman gatehouse, is in the churchyard. Inside, extraordinary medieval graffiti can be seen on the church's stone pillars and walls.


The Star at Lidgate is the village pub owned by a consortium of villagers, and serves excellent real ales, with a fine range of locally based food. Tel: 01638 500275, www.lidgatestar.com

The orange walk also links to circular walks around Wickhambrook www.discoveruffolk.org.uk. This leaflet can also be linked to circular walks in Ousden and Dalham Walks leaflets, in the Discover Suffolk series of walk guides.

Location



Directions

Lidgate is located on the B1063 between Newmarket and Clare, approximately 13 miles from Bury St Edmunds. All walks start at The Star at Lidgate pub car park, The Street, Lidgate CB8 9PP .

Public Transport

Lidgate is served by bus between Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket. Visit www.suffolkonboard.com for timetables and to plan your journey.

Discover Suffolk

Discover many more walks and great days out in the countryside by downloading the Discover Suffolk App (Apple and Android) or visit www.discoveruffolk.org.uk. Follow us on:



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Circular Walks

Lidgate Walks

Gentle hills and delightful views



Lidgate to Ousden Circular

DISTANCE: 7.5 miles (12.5 km)

DURATION: 3 hours

TERRAIN: The route follows public rights of way and quiet roads, along mixed flat and hilly terrain. The paths can become muddy in winter.

From **A** turn left and continue along The Street to reach Bury Lane.

Originally a Roman road, The Street is at the heart of Lidgate with many historic buildings and dwellings dating from the 17th century and earlier. Some dwellings reflect their original uses: there was a shop at St Alice; Chapel Cottage was once attached to a thriving Congregational Chapel; Chapel Cottage is one of only two dwellings in Lidgate to retain its corrugated iron roof which nearly all the thatched cottages in the village installed after WWI; and the large building (Oak House) on the corner with Bury Lane was once an inn.

Turn left on to Bury Lane **1**.



Follow the lane to a field and walk along a right-hand field boundary and proceed up the gentle rise. At the fork keep right **2** and carry on up to the "Big Mast".

The Big Mast is a local landmark. This BT Communications Mast stands on a hill and at 120m above sea level, is one of the highest points in Suffolk.

Cross the byway and take the path to the right through the gap in the hedge **3**. Follow the footpath as it leads through Spring Wood.

Spring Wood is a nature reserve and one of the best places to spot deer in the area (please keep dogs on leads). In 1942, a German plane came down in this wood. The crew gave themselves up to a local gamekeeper, whose only weapon was a pitchfork, and were taken to the RAF. Their plane was exhibited in Norwich.

At the far end of the woods, exit through an old gate. Follow the grassy path to the junction (straight on is a private drive). Turn left into a field **4** and follow the field boundary onto a narrow zig-zag path behind a garden of a large house to the road.

Turn right. The road soon bends right but continue straight ahead passing by a metal gate onto a footpath **5**. Follow this path to reach an open field. Continue ahead on the crossfield path towards the line of large trees to reach a bridleway.

Shortcut: To reduce this walk to 6 miles (10 km) – turn left on this bridleway to join **8 and continue the walk back to **A**.**

Turn right **6**. With the stream on your left continue ahead until you reach the white house (Australia Farm). Turn left after the farm buildings **7**. Follow the track to the bottom of the field and turn left. Follow the footpath along the edge of the trees into a small, wooded area. After crossing the second wooden bridge turn right to rejoin the bridleway. Follow a long ribbon of trees with the stream on your right, to a slight incline with a pond on the right.

Continue ahead until the path opens into a field. Bear right past Busses Farm and continue to the Ousden road junction.

Turn right **8**. Proceed uphill towards Baxters Green. As the road bends to the left, at a wooded area, turn left onto a way-marked byway **9**. Continue ahead to join another byway. Turn left to reach a road.

Turn right **10**. Continue along Back Street to reach a concrete footpath just past Meadow Cottage. Turn left **11**. Follow the footpath. At the end of the path turn right to re-join the footpath to Bury Lane. At the end of Bury Lane, turn right on to The Street and return to **A**.



Please follow the Countryside Code:

- ✓ Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- ✓ Leave gates and property as you would find them and follow paths.
- ✓ Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.
- ✓ Keep dogs under effective control.
- ✓ Plan ahead and be prepared.
- ✓ Follow advice and local signs.



Lidgate Walks

Gentle hills and delightful views

Castle & Dam Walk in Historic Lidgate

DISTANCE: 1 mile (1.6 km)

DURATION: 30 minutes

TERRAIN: Mainly natural surface footpaths and tracks on gentle slopes, with some road walking



From the car park **A** turn right.

The Star at Lidgate is in one of the oldest buildings in the village. This Grade II Listed Building is a 16th Century former Hall House of timber construction, built at the time of the Spanish Armada. The bar is in the open hall. It acquired the name "The Star" in the 19th Century, when it was a "Beer House".

Continue along The Street. On the left is the Village Hall, built in 1835 and originally the village school. Continue past Suffolk House on the right.

Dating from 16th century, Suffolk House like Street Farm further along The Street, is a Hall House, probably the homes of wealthy merchants. That Suffolk House and other high-status houses were built here during the time when the village was in decline for many years, is something of a mystery. The stepped gable end shows Flemish influence and there are still traces of the original orange coloured paint which covered the bricks.

Note the blue plaque on the building alongside Suffolk House. Lidgate was the home of John de Lydgate (1370-1451). He was admitted to the

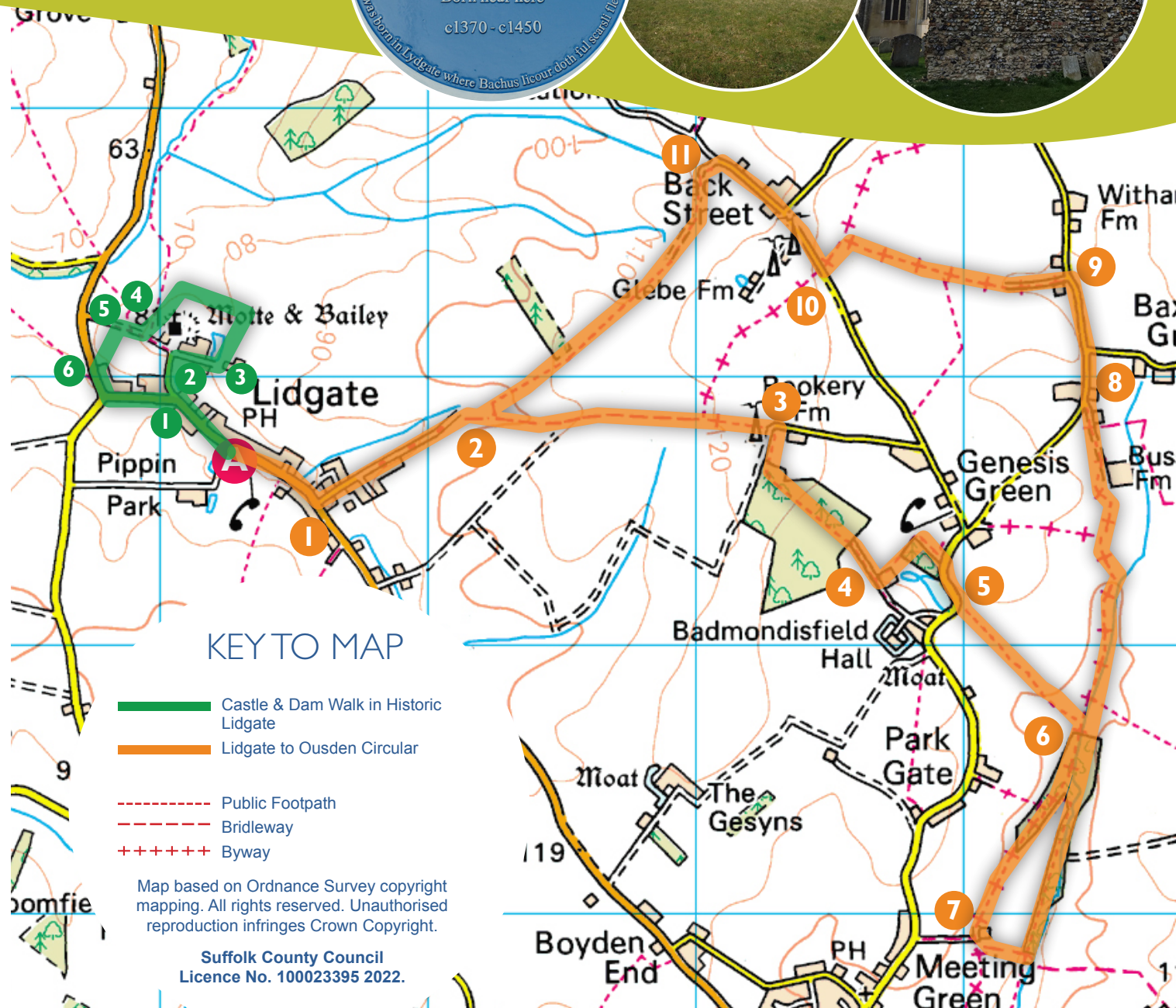
JOHN
DE LYDGATE

Court Poet
Monk of Bury Abbey

Born near here

c1370 - c1450

I was born in Lidgate where Bachus licour doth full ceaseth these



KEY TO MAP

- Castle & Dam Walk in Historic Lidgate
- Lidgate to Ousden Circular
- Public Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway

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Benedictine monastery of Bury St Edmunds at the age of fifteen, where he later became a monk. Regarded as one of the most important and prolific medieval English writers, John de Lydgate is credited with some 140,000 lines of poetry, many more than his friend Geoffrey Chaucer! John de Lydgate wrote verse for royalty, including Henry V. One of his inscriptions in St Mary's Church alludes to Henry's wife Catherine de Valois, where he also left his signature and coded message in graffiti on its wall. The village has honoured him with this blue plaque.

Continue till you reach the Bailey Pond.

The Bailey Pond is all that remains of the original mere which served the castle with fish in the outer bailey of Lidgate Castle.

Bear right and continue up Church Hill ❶

Little is known of the history of Lidgate Castle whose design does not conform to the circular motte design of the immediate post-Conquest period. It was probably built around 1143 during the reign of King Stephen (AD1136-53) when the second phase of castle building was triggered by civil war. The castle would have been active in 1266 when the manor was seized from Henry de Hastings and granted to Gilbert de Clare on behalf of the King. As the settlement's importance and population grew with those garrisoned within it, Lidgate was granted a weekly market and Lidgate's fortunes were closely associated with the castle. After the castle was abandoned in the 14th century, the town suffered economic decline and by the mid-15th century the market ceased to be held.

At the top of the rise turn left to visit St Mary's Church.

To the right of the church is the remaining section of the castle entrance wall, and an information board.

St Mary's Church stands on a hill above the village and can be seen from miles around. Built on the site of the old motte and bailey castle some parts of the ancient flint walls, including part of the castle gate leading from the inner bailey, stands in the

churchyard. There are many headstones in the churchyard which lies in the outer bailey with the moat still visible beyond.

Most of the church is 13th and 14th century, apart from the nave walls which are Norman, and could have been the castle chapel. There is an unusually large rear extension, and the porch was added on later. The benches and rood screen are medieval and the extraordinary graffiti on the walls inside includes John de Lydgate's inscriptions and coded messages. There are also 14th century fragments of music, the head of a Madonna, and a small brass of Thomas Atwelle, one of only four in Suffolk, showing a priest wearing Eucharistic vestments.

The church is open Sundays or by request www.bansfieldbenefice.org.uk

Retrace your steps to the top of Church Hill and walk towards the farm buildings ❷. Just after the long cart lodge turn left onto a Permissive Path at the bottom of the old castle moat ❸. After about 50m bear right to follow a field edge.

To the right is Lidgate Hall which sits within a ditched enclosure, an extension to the castle defences during manorial remodelling. Now two separate dwellings, this 16th century timber-framed house is a Grade II Listed building and was probably developed from the medieval house that succeeded the residence at the castle.

Follow the Permissive Path anti-clockwise beside the course of the castle moat.

Look down the valley of the River Kennett towards Dalham. Note how the gentle Suffolk hills fold into the valley. To the left of the river, the land rises to Croypley Grove which was once the site of an ancient hunting forest for the occupants of the castle.

To the west side of the castle site, you can find the second information board illustrating the extent of the site and its history.

Turn right onto the track ❹. After 90 metres, go through an oak gate up a rise on the left side of the track ❺. Follow the

Permissive Path along the top of the ancient mere dam. Pass through the second gate to find the third information board illustrating the dam and mere.

The mere was thought to originate from the Norman era when the castle was built, circa 1138 AD. It was created by damming the stream at the west end of the valley which was within the outer bailey and diverting from its original course to create the mere. The dam was built from local chalk bedrock which is clearly visible on this section of the walk. By standing on the footbridge, the riverbed shows a carved out circular section in the chalk bedrock, created by the water overflowing the dam!

Descend the steps and cross the bridge to reach the B1063

❻

Turn left and continue to reach The Street and return to Ⓐ.

Lidgate Parish Council wishes to thank the Wills Trust who have made available the Permissive Paths which makes this walk possible.

The HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust was originally created by the late Sir David Wills MBE. The Trust is an independent grant-making charity that supports general, environmental and wildlife charities. The grants they make are made possible by the assets put into the Trusts by its founder Sir David Wills (1917 – 1999) and his son Martin Wills (1953 – 1992).

The assets include farming and property interests. The farming operations are carried out on estates at Ditchley in Oxfordshire and Ousden in Suffolk. On both estates the highest standards of environmental and wildlife stewardship and conservation are sought. www.hdswills.org

