

OARE MARSHES CIRCULAR

WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE

5 MILES (8KM)



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Explore a tranquil nature reserve on this North Kent circular walk. Leave behind the quaint village of Oare, where boatbuilding and fishing have been a way of life for centuries. Follow the creek towards the coast to discover the wildness of the marshes.

OVERVIEW

LOCATION: Start at the footpath next to The Castle Inn, Faversham ME13 0PY.

DISTANCE: 5 miles (8km)

TIME: Allow 2.5 hours

EXPLORER MAP: 149

ACCESSIBILITY: No stiles, multiple gates, narrow footbridges, a few sets of 4/5 steps.

PARKING: On the roadside in Oare.

REFRESHMENTS AND FACILITIES:

The Castle and The Three Mariners public houses in Oare, as well as The Café By The Creek for coffees and snacks (open Wed-Sun).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: From Faversham train station, catch the Number 3 bus from Faversham Railway Station stop F towards Oare. Get off at The Castle stop. Approx. 12-minute bus journey.

Oare Marshes Nature Reserve

The Oare Marshes Nature Reserve is owned and managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust. It is an area of over 200 acres, with freshwater dykes, open water 'scrapes', sea-wall and salt-marshes. It is part of the Swale Site of Special Scientific Interest and is an internationally important wetland because of the migratory, overwintering and breeding wetland birds it supports.



WALK DESCRIPTION

Your walk begins at **The Castle Inn** **1** public house, pass through a wooden kissing gate into a field to the left of the creek. The footpath is marked King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIIECP). Follow the path to the end of the meadow, up a couple of steps and through a gate, keeping the creek on your right.

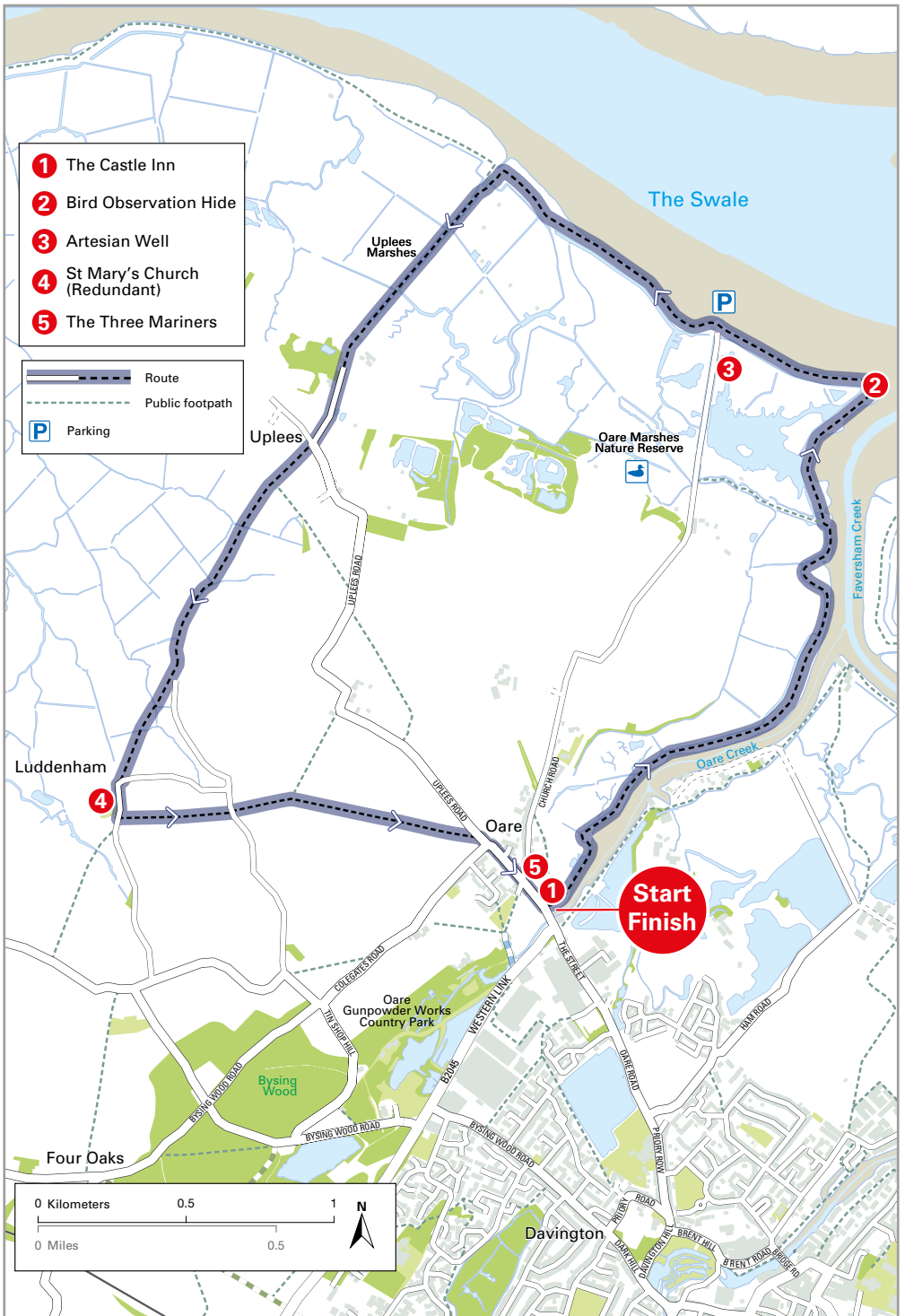
Stay on this path as you walk North towards the coast, following the creek as it twists and turns. Watch out for the muddy terrain if the weather has been wet. Look out for a couple of small boats that have been shipwrecked on the muddy shores. Pass through a kissing gate and into the Oare Marshes, managed by Kent Wildlife Trust. Continue straight and cross over a narrow footbridge.

Follow this path until you reach the corner of the marshes and a well-positioned **bird observation hide** **2**. On the edge of the marshes, take a moment to rest inside the sea wall hide, peer out onto the Swale and here you will have plenty of opportunity to spot sea birds and migrating birds.

The path becomes a gravelled path as you continue onwards. The Swale will be on your right, a tidal channel between the mainland and the Isle of Sheppey. Here you have fantastic views across the Isle of Harty.



Redshanks can be seen at Oare Marshes.



- 1** The Castle Inn
- 2** Bird Observation Hide
- 3** Artesian Well
- 4** St Mary's Church (Redundant)
- 5** The Three Mariners

Route
 Public footpath
P Parking

**Start
Finish**

0 Kilometers 0.5 1 N
 0 Miles 0.5



Enjoy the views across the marshes.

As you pass through the next gate, you will now be on Harty Ferry road. Look out for the **artesian well** ③ near the car park, one of several drilled for the explosives factories. The water, naturally filtered through chalk, is cool, delicious and highly refreshing for the weary walker. As the name suggests, there was once a ferry crossing here to the island. The noticeboards by the car park are a useful guide to the birds that make their home here. Cross the road and climb up a few steps through another gate and back onto the grassy KCIIECP.

The path bends sharply to the left at Dan's Dock, through a kissing gate. Leave the KCIIECP and the reserve and head inland. Pass through a closed gate and continue straight, now following a restricted byway through grazing fields.

Keep going past Gate House Bungalows, following the purple restricted byway signs, and bear left along a dirt track with Forge Cottage on your right and farm buildings on your left.

At the end of the track, you will now be on Upluss road. Cross the road and pass through the gate opposite into an orchard. Cross the orchard, heading for the kissing gate in front of you. Continue along a narrow path with fields on either side. At the end of this path cross straight over, through a kissing gate into an open field and head for the wooden footbridge ahead, halfway across the field.

Cross the bridge and walk towards the trees ahead, to reach and pass through a kissing gate. Continue straight passing by a farming estate, the path turns into a paved single-track lane.

Continue down the lane until you reach a kissing gate on your right. Go through the gate and head diagonally across the field towards farm buildings. Cross a wooden bridge halfway across this field and walk towards a culvert (typically an embedded pipe that allows water to flow under a road or ground) with a kissing gate on the left. Go through this gate and head towards another kissing gate to the left of the farm buildings ahead.

Turn right through the kissing gate and head along the lane to **Luddenham Church** ④. Admire the 12th century Luddenham Church. Turn left through the kissing gate in front of the pigsties and walk across the field heading for the kissing gate to the right of a farm building. Keeping the fence line to your left, leave the field via the kissing gate.

Cross the road and enter the field opposite through the gate. Continue ahead. When the path bends left, take the right-hand path uphill across the field.

At the kissing gate at the end of this field turn right and walk down The Street into Oare. Continue past The **Three Mariners pub** ⑤ towards the Castle Inn to return to where you began.



Boats moored up in the creek.

Explore Kent, Kent County Council, Invicta House,
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<https://explorekent.org/activities>

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Photography: John Miller

