The beach is backed by a sandy cliff: this is the red crag, that supports the natural dry heathland. The crag also yields coprolites, fossils which when processed with sulphuric acid can be used as a phosphate rich fertiliser. Local farmers dug pits, extracted the coprolites, and shipped them out from Waldringfield – a welcome income boost in the late 1800s. There is little evidence of this short-lived but lucrative trade other than depressions in the landscape where pits have been filled.

Before the very last beach hut, follow path right, through the trees and over a stream. Waldringfield Wildlife Group has built a raft on one of these reservoirs to give a safe nesting site for common tern, helping to make up for loss and disturbance to its usual habitats – wetlands and coastal margins.

Follow bridleway between reservoirs, then up to open farm land with stunning views across salt marshes and the Deben.

The low-lying edges of the river, many of them then grazing marshes, flooded extensively in 1953, when river walls in some places were barely above normal high water level. In 2009, the Deben Estuary Partnership was formed to draw together local interests and work with national agencies to sustain this estuary – its habitats, farming, recreation and more – in the face of economic pressures, climate change, sea level rise, and storm surge flooding.

The impressive quay at the boatyard to your left is a relic of Mason’s Cement Works, which operated in Waldringfield from 1870 to 1909. Mud from the river was mixed with chalk imported from the Medway. A hundred barges a month served the industry. The pier and two brick kilns are now demolished, but next to the pub stands a row of cement workers’ cottages, their walls constructed of solid cast concrete.

Turn right along the beach, and take path in front of sailing club.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain’s finest landscapes. Located on the coast of East Anglia and covering 403 square kilometres, the AONB extends from the Stour estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich, and to Kessingland in the north.
Turn left into the top end of the pub (Newbourne Fox) car park, and take track past Crop Cottage, echoing the cockpit trade of the past. Cross a stile into the Newbourne Springs Nature Reserve.

Until the 1980’s, the Springs area provided water for Newbourne. The water emerges at the junction of the confluence Red Crag and the impermeable London Clay beneath. The area is now managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Reedbed and fen have replaced grazing meadows at the lower end of the valley, and the swampy areas also favor the wild cam woodland. Drier slopes support tall oak and ash trees, above which there is heathland.

The different habitats here support a huge range of wildlife:

- waterfowl and wading birds
- dragonflies, newts, and sticklebacks
- bluebells and primroses, nectar-loving insects, woodpeckers and tree creepers on the dry slopes
- watercress and mint, damselflies in the pond, siskins, redcurrants and sticklebacks and dragonflies in the stream
- butterflies, crickets and nightingales on the heath

Keep straight on (don’t take footpath to right). Pass through a kissing gate then take a right hand footpath through woods. A wooden walkway carries you over the swampy ground, leading to the end of the nature reserve, out and over a stile to your left.

The path runs along the edge of a motor cross track - keep straight on until you meet open farmland and then the Newbourne Road.

Turn right along the road for 400m, then take footpath left through fields, to junction with track turn right, past farm buildings and houses.

Just beyond Waldringfield Village Hall, take footpath, then left through field, and past a cream-coloured bungalow. Continue through hedgegate and across road to continuation of footpath through playing field and a further field, then left along a track that takes you back to a road. Turn right for the Maybush.

Optional extra: for a final treat, a fabulous view over the River Deben, take the next footpath right, then turn left to reach the car park and the Maybush.