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Cley next the Sea to Blakeney

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Free car park at Cley next the Sea (TG 047437)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 251 – Norfolk Coast Central
Distance	4.2 miles
Date of Walk	16 May 2023
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This is a very easy short level walk from Cley next the Sea to Blakeney for which directions are hardly necessary. It gives you views over the unusual landscape of flat marshes. Cley and Blakeney are in the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), so designated because (in brief) of its marshlands, intertidal flats and ecosystem.

Cley (clearly named in the pre spell check days!) was once an important trading port but is now more famous for its marshes and bird life. It is a pleasant little place with a nice river frontage.

Blakeney is a charming little town with again a nice river frontage. It has some attractive streets of flint cottages which you can wander through on your way back to Cley. Boat trips run from Blakeney and nearby Morston Quay to see a huge seal colony at Blakeney Point.

The River Glaven runs close to both places which is unusual in one respect. In 2005/6, the Environment Agency actually moved it two hundred metres inland. This was to reduce the flood risk to Cley and nearby Wiverton. The old course used to get blocked by shingle during high tides/storms. Sluices were also introduced to allow quicker drainage of the marshes if they became flooded by the sea. The work changed the nature of the marshes from fresh to salt water.

The walk starts from a free car park on Church Lane in Cley next the Sea. To get there, turn south off the A149 at the sharp bend on the southern end of the town, signposted for Holt. After about 150 yards, turn left on Town Yard then left again. It is clearly signposted.

Start: From the car park on Church Lane, turn right along the road. Follow it along and fork left just after passing a fingerpost for the Coast Path. Follow the footpath down to the High Street and walk left, through the village.

After the last house on the right, look out for some steps on the right and climb them to the sea defence embankment, crossing over the river (TG 045437).

The footpath follows the top of the embankment towards the sea.

The embankment and path swing sharp left by a notice board (TG 044450). There is a turn off here towards the marshes but unless you are a keen bird spotter, there is not much future in following this. Blakeney Chapel remains are marked on the map

but I understand there is nothing there now and in any case, I did not consider it practical/sensible to try to cross the River Glaven (I did have a look!).

Continue to follow the obvious path around the embankment. As it turns inland again, opposite a walkers' gate there is a footpath on the right (TG 037452). I did investigate this but again, unless you are a keen bird watcher, I would not bother. You will come up against a water channel with no way across. The walkers' gate provides another route into Blakeney but you get a better view by staying on the embankment.

On arrival at the town, a right turn will take you to High Street which you follow to the main road (A149). Turn left along it back to Cley Next the Sea. This is not as grim as it sounds and there is a footpath all the way. You pass St. Nicholas' Church.

When you get to the turn off to Wiverton, you get some respite via a footpath under trees parallel with the road.

As you arrive back at Cley, you can either retrace your steps to the car park or at the sharp bend, turn right along Holt Road and left along a footpath between the houses at TG 046437.

