

The Pocket Guide to LEISTON

Take a closer look at Leiston-cum-Sizewell

Abbeys & Industrial Heritage • Town, Countryside & Coast
Walks & Cycle Rides • Nature Reserves & Beaches
Independent Shopping • Entertainment, Activities & Events



A legacy like no other

When Melton lad Richard Garrett I arrived in 1778, the area now known as Leiston-cum-Sizewell was home to poorly paid farmhands, fishermen and spinners, many of whom turned to smuggling contraband tea and tobacco to keep themselves from starvation. Within decades, the enterprising metal worker had founded an engineering dynasty and was fast developing a concept most unusual for Suffolk, but quite commonplace in England's industrial north - a company town. You could almost call it 'Garretts-ville'.

Suffolk's Industrial Revolution in microcosm, Leiston was to be dominated by Garrett & Sons agricultural engineering business for nearly 200 years, with its influence pervading every aspect of Leiston life. Remarkably, as well as much of the workers' housing and infrastructure, a sizeable amount of the original Victorian Works still survive today, preserved as a museum.

Don't miss Leiston's very own 'cathedral'

At the heart of the 'Town' Works, just a traction engine's puff from the site of Garrett's first forge near High Green and Suffolk's deepest well (148m!), is 'The Cathedral' - the Grade II* listed Long Shop, the UK's first ever assembly line building. The idea came from Richard Garrett III's meeting with Samuel Colt of US revolver fame at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Soon with enhanced production capabilities, Leiston was exporting engines and agricultural machinery worldwide. Today Leiston's 'Cathedral' is home to engines and exhibits and is a popular venue for concerts and events. longshopmuseum.co.uk



Be sure to pop in to mighty St Margaret's

By 1901 Leiston had around 4000 residents and 700 houses. The town had grown fast together with its church congregations. In the 1860s, a Congregational Church, Wesleyan Chapel and new Quaker Meeting House were built, and soon after, the Church of St Margaret of Antioch was significantly rebuilt. Almost another Leiston cathedral, its medieval tower from 1360 remains, but inside the Victorian building it is open and impressive, with Garrett family memorials including the unusual east window where the saints' faces are all Anne Garrett at different stages of her life.



The Pocket Guide to Leiston is produced in association with Leiston Together & Leiston Town Council with thanks to funding partners East Suffolk Council.



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DISCOVER LEISTON

Leiston may have been shaped by the past, but it's not from the usual Suffolk mould. As Leiston-cum-Sizewell it encompasses the nature-rich shingle stretches of the heritage coast; first-class farming country on the well-drained soils of the Sandlings and has its own crop of monastic, medieval and wartime memories to share.

Yet Leiston is not just another Suffolk market town with independent shops trading for generations. Its past and present are something for all of Suffolk to be proud of. The legacies of its pioneers and philanthropic heroes are in evidence everywhere, from the Long Shop Museum and beautifully restored Edwardian-era cinema to its fine parks, sports and leisure facilities.

Take time for a closer look at Leiston - you'll soon be lovin' it like a local.

Fun Facts

Population: c. 6,000
Fairtrade Town: since 2009
Park Run: Saturdays (Sizewell)
US Connections: 358th then 357th Fighter Groups (The Yoxford Boys) at Leiston Airfield 1942-45
Famous People: The Garrett Family; A.S Neill; Paxton Chadwick
Location (miles): Ipswich 25 > Norwich 37
London 109 > Coast 2.5



Don't forget to pop into the **Visitor Information Point**

PICNIC & PLAY

Leiston's hidden gem, **Haylings Pond**, is not just great for anglers, but perfect for picnics too! Find tasty treats in the independent shops. The kids will love letting off steam en route near the old Garrett Works. And wouldn't a matinee in the historic cinema just make the day complete?

Along High Street to traffic lights. Either detour right for more shops/supermarket 3, or continue left via Cross Street to Victory Road Recreation Ground/play areas 18/A. Victory Road becomes footpath. Pass travelling fair overwintering site. Left at path junction. View to The Cupola 17 (right). Footpath goes alongside Leiston Town Athletic Association grounds. Left into Lime Tree Ave. Straight ahead (path between houses) to Ashfield Drive, then Haylings Road. Cross just before Fridays Orchard (right) for footpath to Haylings Pond 19. Retrace steps to Haylings Road. Turn right. Third right (King's Road). Left into High Street opposite church 20 to High Street and Leiston Film Theatre 1.



Find the odd one out

Key

- 1 Leiston Film Theatre (1914) & **vip**
- 2 United Church (1867)
- 3 Supermarket (Co-op here since 1887!)
- 4 Angel Cottage (early 1800s)
- 5 Former Wesleyan Chapel (1860)
- 6 High Green
- 7 Long Shop (Museum) (1852)
- 8 Water Tower (c.1850s)
- 9 Library/Town Council Offices
- 10 White Horse Hotel (c.1768)
- 11 Quakers' Meeting House (1860)
- 12 Colonial House (1969)
- 13 Former Station Buildings (1859)
- 14 Summerhill School (est.1927)
- 15 Leiston Hall (c.1650)
- 16 Church of St Margaret of Antioch (1360/1860)
- 17 The Cupola (c.1700s+)
- 18 A Victory Road Recreation Ground
- 19 Haylings Pond
- 20 All Saints' Catholic Church (c.1960s)
- 21 The David Silver Honda Collection
- 22 C Leiston Leisure Centre
- 23 Post Office 24 Chemist

WC Public Toilets

P Parking

F Petrol Station

BS Bus stop

B King George's Avenue Recreation Ground
D Waterloo Centre

LEISTON TOWN HERITAGE STROLL

WALK 2 miles / 3 kms

Start/ Finish: **vip**

1 Leiston Film Theatre, also nearby - site of J. Balls & Sons Blacksmith's forge (sign). By United Church 2 take path past gallery. Cross supermarket 3 carpark to view listed cottage (Gr. II) 4. Via Urban Road to Crown Street. Opposite No.39, take narrow lane to Prospect Place and Old Chapel House 5. Opposite High Green 6 and Garrett 'Town' Works site 7/8, note former rectory (bank) on Old Post Office Square. Detour up Dinsdale Road (flint cottages/cast-iron street name plates). Note picture-railings by library 9; Engineers Arms' sign shows 'Rob Roy', last Garrett traction produced (1931). At listed (Gr. II) hotel 10, view Meeting House 11 and Constitutional Club (right). Colonial House 12 is on Garrett 'Top' ('Station') Works site, created on former demonstration farm to relocate woodworking away from foundry after 'Town' Works fire (1913). Pass Greyshot House (Gr. II) (right), to old station 13 and Summerhill School 14. Opposite Geaters Nurseries, take footpath over railway. At Waterloo Ave, old sign on railings stipulates exact location of 'Top' Works boundary. View timber-framed, brick-encased Leiston Hall (now flats) 15 from end of drive. Take footpath (left of hedge) to church 16. Exit churchyard onto Church Road to footpath. By King Edward Road, detour (path right) to spot The Cupola (Georgian, Gr. II) 17. Victory Road park 18/A was former Garrett Athletic Club site. Cross Street edges rear of 'Town' Works. Right onto High Street.

Public Play Areas & Sports Facilities

Recreation Grounds		A	B
Playing field		✓	✓
Play equipment		✓	✓
Toddler play		✓	✓
Basket Ball		✓	✓
Outdoor Gym		✓	✓
Zip wire		✓	✓
Pump Track		✓	✓
Boules/Pétanque		✓	✓

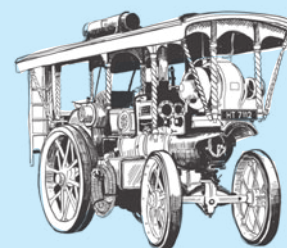
Sports & Leisure		C	D
Multi-use All-weather Games Area (for tennis/football etc.)		✓	✓
Sports Fields		✓	✓
Swimming Pools		✓	✓
Fitness Gym		✓	✓
Sauna & Steam Room		✓	✓
Sports Hall - Badminton, Netball, Football etc.		✓	✓
Table Tennis		✓	✓
Squash Courts		✓	✓
Studio		✓	✓
Children's Indoor Soft Play (up to age 7)		✓	✓

Leiston Town Athletic Association (off Victory Road IP16 4DQ) also has sports grounds incl. multi-use games area and bowling. This is the home of Leiston FC. Leiston St Margaret's FC (Abbey Road IP16 4RE) also has sports grounds for football. Community Orchard also at B.

*placesleisure.org/centres/leiston-leisure-centre.
**visit-leiston.co.uk/waterloo-centre; leistontowncouncil.gov.uk

Leiston is an exceptional Suffolk town.

A community with history at its heart like no other. A place forged by pioneers and philanthropists, whose legacies live on and on.



Discover a world-class industrial heritage site, edged by ancient lands and abbey ruins, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, by one of Suffolk's best-loved secret beaches.

Enjoy Leiston-cum-Sizewell.

Engineers & entrepreneurs

The spirit of Garrett & Sons engineering company lives on today in more than just Leiston's bricks and mortar...

Leiston Film Theatre is proudly Suffolk's oldest working purpose-built cinema and a firm favourite with locals and visitors alike. Lovingly restored, yet now incorporating those digital and 3D cinema mod-cons, it was established in 1914 as the 'Leiston Picture House Limited' by senior Garrett employee, Frank - E. Walker who had spotted the success of travelling film shows. The pioneering picture palace was saved from closure in the 1970s by Leiston's enterprising Town Council. leistonfilmtheatre.co.uk

Today, Leiston has a real treat in store for motorbike enthusiasts. The David Silver Honda Collection, located on Garrett's old 'Top' Works site (now Masterlord Industrial Estate), shares its owner's passion for the engineering prowess of Japan's Soichiro Honda, with 150 models from the 1950s to 1990s. davidsilverhondacollection.co.uk

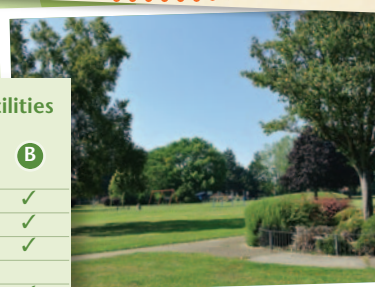
Sizewell B Power Station Visitor Centre provides a unique insight into the technology which supports the UK's only Pressured Water Reactor (PWR). Why not take a tour?

Education, sport & music were all on the Garretts' agenda too...

Originally, a Mechanics Institute provided a reading room and library. There were schools for the workers families and several members of the Garrett family were involved in establishing the Prince Albert Memorial College in the nearby market town of Framlingham. In 1969 mock-Georgian Colonial House (now flats) was built as an apprentice centre. Little wonder that A.S. Neill later chose Leiston as the new location for his ground-breaking progressive 'free school' - Summerhill School, still located in Richard Garrett's former residence 'New Haven' on Westward Ho was established in 1927.

Royal British Legion Band Leiston - a much-loved sight and sound at community events - was probably a military life and drum band until Frank Garrett gave £110 towards a set of brass instruments in 1886 in readiness for Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations!

In 1880, Garretts & Sons employees enjoyed their own football ground, but had to get changed in the Works or at the White Horse Inn opposite. Over time the Leiston Works Athletic Association developed into an 8 acre site and club house offering tennis, cricket, bowling, billiards and of course, football. The Leiston Town Athletic Association is just one of many excellent sports and leisure facilities in the very heart of Leiston. It has a strong reputation for league football and encouraging young players.



LEISTON-CUM-SIZEWELL

Coast & country that's yours to discover

ABBEY ROADS

Linear Route to Leiston Abbey 4 miles (7 kms) return

Enjoy this linear stroll down pilgrim paths to the fine ruins of Leiston Abbey (free entry). Or download directions for a longer circular walk (7-10 miles/11-16 kms) to take in Leiston's earlier monastic sites - a great way to explore the Sandlings countryside and do a spot of birdwatching near the Minsmere coast.

Walk to visit Leiston's second abbey, built under the patronage of Robert de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk following severe flooding of the Abbey's original site on the Minsmere marshes in 1362. Rannulf de Glanville had founded the Premonstratensian monastery of austere and frugal 'white' monks on receipt of the manor of Leiston from Henry II in 1173. At the Reformation (1537), some of the Abbey escaped demolition - the Lady Chapel was used as a farm granary and other walls protected the animals. Subsequently some ruins were converted to dwellings. Restoration work over the last century has made Leiston Abbey one of Suffolk's best kept secrets - especially when you approach it across the fields!

Start VIP: Turn left (High Street). Left at traffic lights (Cross Street). Straight ahead at crossroads (Victory Road). Road becomes footpath, bearing right to Church Road. Enter St Margaret's churchyard (left). Keep right in front of church to gate (marked 'private') by old Leiston Hall. Stay in churchyard, following hedge-side footpath to Waterloo Avenue. Cross road. Turn right. After St Margaret's Crescent, take footpath (left) by iron railings.

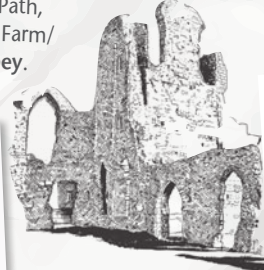
Cross railway line to reach Westward Ho. Turn right, past Geater Nurseries. Take footpath (immediately left) between wall and hedge of Summerhill School (signed 'Hill Farm'). As it opens out to concrete hard-standing, keep straight ahead. Track (Neave's Path, named after Leiston Quakers), becomes cross-field path to Aldhurst Farm/Abbey Lane. Turn right down road to footpath (left) to Leiston Abbey.

Leiston Abbey is now home to chamber music charity, Pro Corda. Look out for regular concerts in the restored Lady Chapel and Tithe Barn.

The 'Garden of Suffolk'

Garretts' Leiston Works was well placed to serve one of the UK's greatest farming areas, East Anglia. Today the Long Shop Museum helps stage 'Harvest Past', an annual reenactment of bygone rural times and small scale country show at an organic farm in Theberton. Long dubbed the 'Garden of Suffolk', the area produces all sorts of fruit and veg - look out for roadside stalls selling fresh asparagus, strawberries, apples and courgettes. No wonder Leiston is home to two sets of popular allotments! Fresh fish and chips are very much on the menu in town too, but there are oysters and an annual September food festival down the road at Snape Maltings - itself another Garrett family legacy.

Circular 7-10 mile walk also available at visit-leiston.co.uk



Engineering the coast

In 1859, when Richard Garrett III's Long Shop was in its infancy, another enterprising engineer arrived in the Leiston area, this time from Scotland. Wealthy railway man Alexander Ogilvie bought Sizewell House as a holiday home and extended his Suffolk estate to 6,000 around Sizewell, Aldringham and the coast. The family were great local benefactors, still with two sets of almshouses to their name. Alexander's heir, Glencairn Stuart Ogilvie, combined principles of social idealism with pioneering concrete-machines imported from Australia to create the high class Edwardian 'merrie England' holiday resort of Thorpeness.

Inspired by nature

Fergus Montieth Ogilvie, a sportsman-naturalist, was fascinated by the birdlife on the Leiston-cum-Sizewell coast. The Ogilvie collection of British birds (taxidermy scenes) residing in Ipswich Museum is considered to be one of the most important and complete in the country.

Paxton Chadwick, on the other hand, preferred to capture nature through his art. The Summerhill School teacher and Communist Leiston councillor of note who lived by Leiston Common was a first class artist and produced nature drawings for 'Penguin' books (1949-1961).



Don't forget to pop into the Visitor Information Point

Don't forget your binoculars!

WOODS & WAVES

5 miles (8 kms)

Enjoy a coast and country walk of many colours as you follow the Sandlings Way via Kenton Hills, and Sizewell Beach, returning via Leiston Common. Walk past pines and reedy marshes, tree belts and shingle stretches, sea greens and heathland purples. Listen up for booming bitterns. Look out for lizards, Dartar dragonflies or a flash of kingfisher or Silver Studded Blue.

Walk this circular route along woodland footpaths, boardwalks; sandy tracks, shingle beach; tarmac roads. Tearoom and pub at Sizewell.

Download full details: visit-leiston.co.uk



Sizewell beach, its tearoom and pub can be reached via roads and cycle way

BIKE TO THE BEACH

4.5 miles (7 kms) return

With its tufty dunes and shingle banks, Sizewell is a wonderful wide beach to explore. It's a great place for a splash, for dog walks, birdwatching, fishing and spotting spikey sea holly, sea kale or yellow horned poppies. Sizewell Beach, its tearoom and pub can be reached via roads and cycle way.

Start VIP: Right along High Street. Left by All Saints Catholic Church into Seaward Ave. Third left into Sylvester Road. Right onto King George's Ave towards Sizewell. Just after railway line, road has cycle path (right hand side) all the way to Sizewell village and the beach.

GO EXPLORE!

With its extensive network of signed footpaths, bridleways and byways, plus its bike path to Sizewell, setting out from Leiston's bustling town centre to track down coast and countryside gems couldn't be easier. Bike to the beach. Go for a gander up to Goose Hill. Follow pilgrims' paths alongside abbey ruins or pedal back in time to savour wartime memories. What mini-adventure will you choose first?

We've included just a taster of the walks, bike rides and itineraries to enjoy around Leiston-cum-Sizewell. All start from the town centre (see overleaf for car parks). Some offer an alternative start at Kenton Hills Nature Reserve (IP16 4UP).

Full route info with detailed directions: visit-leiston.co.uk

Leiston's Public Transport

Buses: To nearby towns/villages/ the coast
Main bus stop: Library
Timetables: The Library, VIP/ suffolkonboard.com
Trains: Regular service to Ipswich/ London & Lowestoft
Nearest station: Saxmundham
Timetables: nationalrail.co.uk

Did you know?

In wartime, a pill box was built into the remains of Leiston Old Abbey on the Minsmere Levels as part of the civil defence line.

WHY NOT STAY A WHILE?

Historic hotels and smugglers' inns; B&Bs in town - or in the country; self-catering cottages near the coast; camping, caravans, pods and lodges. From silvery vintage airstream caravans to characterful guest houses just a stone's throw from colourful heathery heathlands, come and stay by Leiston's Suffolk Sandlings - there's so much to see and do.



A ROUTE TO REMEMBER

8.5 miles (14 kms) return

From the American WWII airbase at Leiston Airfield to the wreckage of a WWI German Zeppelin in the porch of St Peter's Theberton, the area in and around Leiston holds many wartime memories. The Sizewell Tea House, Theberton House and The Cupola in Leiston were all wartime HQs. The Garrett Works had its own battalions and also produced munitions and naval guns. Capt. Stephen Garrett, killed at Neuve Chapelle, is remembered in St Margaret's church. Sculptures and memorials recall the USAAF 358th/357th Fighter Group spirit and Mustangs of Station F373. Pill boxes and anti-tank defences still stand firm on marshland and the coast.

Ride or drive this circular route along rural lanes and roads via Theberton and Eastbridge. Both villages have historic inns.

Download full details: visit-leiston.co.uk

HEY, KIDS!

Which of these Leiston-cum-Sizewell activities will you enjoy with your family and friends?

- ☒ Discover coloured pebbles on Sizewell Beach
- ☐ Watch a cool new film in Leiston's historic picture palace
- ☐ Make a splash at Leiston Leisure Centre
- ☐ Play hide and seek amongst the ruins of Leiston Abbey
- ☐ Find out just how long Leiston's Long Shop really is
- ☐ Enjoy a picnic at Haylings Pond
- ☐ Climb the wartime anti-tank defences by Sizewell Beach
- ☐ Go pond-dipping at Kenton Hills
- ☐ Track down Sirapite, the rare Leiston Works shunting engine
- ☐ Spot an avocet at RSPB Minsmere
- ☐ Discover how Sizewell Belts got their name
- ☐ Ride the zip wire in the park

The information in this guide is provided in good faith and is correct to the best of the publishers' knowledge at the time of going to press, but is subject to alteration.

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