

## Stowmarket to Sizewell (A1120 & B1119)

One of my favourite rides in Suffolk is from Stowmarket to the sea at Sizewell. It always seems right to start in Stowmarket and ride east towards the sea but I suppose it's just as good starting in Sizewell. Or better still why not ride to the sea, turn around and then head back, retracing your wheel tracks?

The Tesco store near where the A14 meets the A1120 is as good a place as any to start as you can fill your tank at the petrol station and perhaps grab a coffee in the café. If you are meeting as a group, it's perhaps best to meet at the far end of the car park to avoid the shoppers, who are often too busy looking for a parking space near the store to look out for bikes!

Leave Tesco and turn left at the larger roundabout along the A1120 heading under the A14 and towards the village of Stowupland. The village has a long 30 m.p.h. speed limit and for good reason. Two schools can be found on this road and it's best to avoid passing here between 8.30 and 9.00 and 3.00 and 4.00 pm on a school day! At the schools there is a "20's plenty" school safety zone.

Once clear of Stowupland the national speed limit begins and good views can be had of the bends ahead across the hedgeless fields. Beware however on windy days as buffeting winds can unsettle the bike on entry into the corners.

There is another long 30 m.p.h. limit at Forward Green before the road drops and winds down towards the crossing of the A140 (at Earl Stonham). This junction has seen some nasty accidents in the past so take care. Once crossed however the road starts to climb (and twist) again towards Stonham Aspal.

As you leave Stonham Aspal you will see Stonham Barns (<http://www.stonhambarns.co.uk/>) on your right. Here you can find craft shops, a garden centre, golf range, restaurant and even a birds of prey centre.

Beyond Stonham Aspal the road widens for a while before entering a series of bends. It is here that you can find Village Motorcycles (<http://www.village-motorcycles.co.uk/>) a member of the Suffolkrider network.

At the junction in Pettaugh turn right and continue along the A1120. When the 30 and 40m.p.h. speed limits end the road really starts to twist and turn, drop and climb just like a roller coaster between the thick hedgerows. The plentiful warning signs are there for a good reason!

For the next few miles the road continues along like this. With careful planning there are places where safe overtakes of slower vehicles can be made on a motorcycle, although perhaps not for most car drivers.

Just beyond the village of Earl Soham on your left is the magnificent Saxstead Post Mill ([www.english-heritage.org.uk/show-conProperty.42](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/show-conProperty.42)). It is often open to the public and it is possible to climb a narrow ladder to the top of the mill!

At the mill we turn off the A1120 and head into the town of Framlingham along the B1119. However it is still possible to continue along the A1120 and still join our route later on.

Framlingham itself is a real jewel of a town. Head for the centre of town, park up and you can find several excellent places to eat. Just be careful parking your bike on Market Hill as there is quite a slope! What really makes Framlingham special is the castle. It may not be huge and spectacular but it is in superb condition and well worth a visit. (<http://www.castles-abbey.co.uk/Framlingham-Castle.html>)

On leaving Framlingham it is necessary to find the B1119 to Saxmundham. Although perhaps a little narrower (and twistier!) than the A1120, this road



also has a lot to keep the average motorcyclist occupied! There are many bends and it is rare to find a straight bit of road more than a few hundred metres long. Also it's fair to point out that you should take care early in the morning or at dusk in particular as deer are often seen in this part of the county and have been known to dash across the road in front of unwary road users.

The route continues this like this until the A12 is encountered at Saxmundham. Cross the main Lowestoft to Ipswich road and continue into the town of Saxmundham. The road turns off to the right and down hill and over the railway line, before eventually leaving the town after passing the Rainbow supermarket (on your right).

Once again the road twists delightfully up and down the gently rolling hills. Visibility is usually good across the fields as there are few hedgerows in this part of Suffolk. (We are encountering the area known as the Sandlings, former heathland). However be ever vigilant for slow moving agricultural vehicles and the ever present mud on the road surface!

The road can never really be described as busy but during the summer months the area does get a lot of visitors. Not all of them are fully concentrating on the road!

In the winter (and at other times) you can almost have the road to yourself. However there is still a lot to look out for from mud, standing water, agricultural vehicles and wild animals. (Remember the deer?)

**Finally the road enters the town of Leiston with it's Long Shop Museum (<http://www.longshop.care4free.net/>), which is well worth a stop. Or continue along the new road towards the white dome of Sizewell B powerstation. Just beyond the station is a car park overlooking the sea and a café to provide a much needed hot drink and snack before heading back to Stowmarket.**



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bends that can be found!**

