This leaflet has been produced with the generous support of Adnams to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

“Adnams has been proud to work with Suffolk Coast and Heaths for many years on a variety of projects. We are based in Southwold, just inside the AONB and it is with this beautiful location in mind that we have great respect for the built, social and natural environment around us. Over several years we have been working hard to make our impact on the environment a positive one. Please visit our website to discover some of the things we’ve been up to.

We often talk about that “ah, that’s better” moment, and what better way to celebrate that than walking one of these routes and stopping off at an Adnams pub for some well-earned refreshment.

If you take this leaflet along to The Butt & Oyster they’ll be happy to offer you 10% off your meal before, during or after your walk.”

Andy Wood, Adnams Chief Executive

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More Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB pub walks
Pin Mill Route overview

The Butt and Oyster pub is right on the western shore of the River Orwell at Pin Mill, just north of Chelmondiston, and accessible via a minor road. There is a pay-and-display car park on the left, a few hundred metres down, and limited parking at the pub itself, at the end of the road. This little road can become very congested at busy times, and it may be better to park near the Post Office in Chelmondiston, just opposite the butcher’s shop.

Both walks begin from the Butt and Oyster. The short walk goes east from Pin Mill (down river) taking in foreshore, woodland and heath. Terrain: mostly easy walking on grassy and sandy paths. Some steps on route, and a steep dip. Use alternative route indicated if tide is high on foreshore. The long walk goes in the opposite direction, across some farmland, through a marina, and circles back around Woolverstone Hall. Terrain: ranges from metalled tracks to footpaths that may well be muddy in wet weather.

Dogs will enjoy both routes but they should be on a lead or under close control. It is especially important not to allow your dog to run onto the foreshore to disturb the bird life. Stock may be grazed in some of the fields. Please follow any advisory signs. Look out for areas of ‘Open Access’: you do not have to keep to footpaths, but dogs MUST be on a lead between 1 March and 31 July, to protect breeding ground-nesting birds (check information boards for any additional information).

On the saltmarsh you may see some of the bird life for which these estuaries are famous. Avocets breed on these rivers in summer, but in the winter, geese, ducks and other waders are in residence. The nearby farmland provides roost sites for the visiting bird populations. Birds’ habitats are constantly under pressure...
from commerce, recreation and agricultural uses. Activity in this estuary is overseen by the Stour and Orwell Estuary Management Group, a partnership of local authorities and other agencies, to promote sustainable use.

**Woolverstone Marina and Orwell Bridge** will soon be visible ahead. At the Marina pass in front of the Royal Harwich Yacht Club Race Control 9, following the Stour and Orwell Walkway sign, then turn left onto a concrete road.

On the right is the **Cat House**, built 1793. It is said that the owner, who was sympathetic to smugglers, would place a stuffed white cat in the window to indicate that no customs boats were patrolling. The east coast has a long (and ongoing) history of smuggling, in which **Pin Mill**, and the **Butt and Oyster** pub, allegedly played key parts.

After 50 metres turn left 10, at end of club car park (waymarked), then bear right into wood, and continue, to emerge by the church of St Michael 11.

Follow the fence around churchyard as far as the church porch, then turn right on the metalled road opposite – you will see two stiles.

Cross the second stile on the left 12, signed Chelmondiston. Cross the pasture diagonally to a pair of stiles. Cross the metalled road 12, and enjoy the view of the front of Woolverstone Hall.

**Woolverstone Hall**: Grade 1 listed building, built in 1776 by William Berners, in Palladian style. Requisitioned in WWII, it was taken over by the London County Council as a boys’ boarding school. Since 1992, it has been the home of Ipswich High School.

Go straight on to a further stile and follow the path alongside an old iron fence. The green dome across the river is the observatory at Orwell Park School.

Cross a metalled road onto a rough vehicle track, past cottages. Track goes into a dip, and soon after it starts to climb, turn left onto a bridleway (Church Lane) opposite a cycle route sign 14. Follow this path all the way back into Chelmondiston, crossing Collimer Close, to emerge on a road with the church to your right 15. Before the T- junction, turn left down a bridleway signed Pin Mill.

Cross a stile and paddock then two further stiles into a rough pasture. Path leads down towards the boatyard.

The ‘Pin’ in Pin Mill may be derived from ‘pynd’ - meaning pen or pond. Grain was indeed milled here, and the mill pond may have been in this low area of pasture, though a tide mill is also a possibility. Other interpretations refer to the production of round wooden pins for ships, and to a mill owner by the name of Pynne...

**Cross the final stile into the boatyard where you can go either left-then-right or right-then-left, back to the pub.**

Pin Mill will, for many, always recall the author Arthur Ransome. In his book “We Didn’t Mean to Go To Sea”, the young adventurers were staying at Alma Cottage, just by the pub. The author had his own boats built at Harry King’s yard here, though he himself lived for some time on the opposite side of the Orwell, at Levington.

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.

www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org
Begin at Butt and Oyster pub, and take one of the following alternative routes parallel to the river to Clamp House:

Either: walk along foreshore in front of pub. (At high tide, use ladder from pub car park down to the foreshore - with care.) Continue past houseboats. The path then turns right, up and away from river, and joins the Stour & Orwell Walk at a T-junction: turn left and continue parallel to river until path descends to Clamp House.

Or: go 200m back up the road from pub, take footpath to left, up a flight of steps, past some bungalows and through a kissing gate. Keep straight along this path (part of the Stour and Orwell Walk), through Pin Mill Plantation to Clamp House.

The steep slope here has been cut back by the river. Trees stabilise the slope, and it is protected from further undercutting by a wooden revetment.

This area is managed by the National Trust. Large areas of coniferous woodland were damaged in the 1987 gales, and have been replanted with a mix of conifers and deciduous trees. Goldcrest particularly like conifer woodland, and in winter join in flocks with Blue Tits and Great Tits. Look (and listen) out for woodpeckers here too.

In the 19th century, Pin Mill was a stopping point on the river for coastal vessels to offload to shallower barges. Barges were also used to collect produce from local farms. By Clamp House, Buttermans Bay (named after fast schooners carrying dairy produce from the Channel Islands) would have been full of ships at anchor. There is still an annual Thames Barge Match held here.

The Orwell has been a prime trading route serving Ipswich from early times. In the Middle Ages, wool was the main export, then grain in the 17th century; imports included coal, iron, timber and hemp. The 19th century was a boom time for the port, and for Ipswich’s industries – brewing, printing, engineering, cement, bricks and more.

The Port of Ipswich, under Associated British Ports, continues to thrive, still in a key position deep in the agricultural heartland but within easy reach of the North Sea. Side by side with commerce, many enjoy the river for sailing, and moorings compete for space in the sometimes narrow channel.

A short diversion (left, just before the house) to a small sandy beach has wonderful views of the river and the observatory at Orwell Park School on the opposite shore.

The Observatory was built in 1872 for Colonel George Tomline, who owned the Orwell Park estate. It was a cutting-edge facility of its time, but suffered periods of neglect in later years. It has been restored, since 1967, by the Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich).

The Stour and Orwell estuaries are often considered together in terms of a protected area for wildlife, especially birds. They contain a wide range of habitat, and because of their position on our east coast, are a vital stopover or wintering site for many migrant species. The area has the European designation of Special Protection Area (SPA) as “a wetland of international importance”.

Walk back past Clamp House and straight on up through the woods, and through a kissing gate. Continue up this track, with a wood on the right.

At the end of the wood, turn right, and follow the path through the gorse, keeping a field to your left.

You’ll find a map on a board here showing that you are now in ‘Open Access’ land.

The natural habitat here is sandy heathland, where gorse can thrive. It flowers from mid-winter to early spring, and can be spectacular. It is an important source of nectar for invertebrates at this time, but can be invasive if not controlled. Its dense clumps offer winter protection and cover for nesting birds. Linnets - once valued as a caged songbird - are quite common here, supported by the seeds and insects of the heath, though they are rare in some parts of the country and are a protected species.

Follow the path as it bears right, then straight on into the wood.

Turn left at a T-junction of paths, heading through woods, with river just visible to the right. N.B. If you started out on the alternative ‘high’ route, you are now retracing it.

Leave Plantation at a kissing gate, and follow path past bungalows down some steps down to road (take care – no pavement). Turn right – back to the Butt and Oyster.