

Nature's Harvest walk... 2 miles

Pin Mill, Suffolk

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

Discover a peaceful woodland and heathland alive with the colours and fruits of autumn. Take in the tranquillity of the wooded foreshore and savour the spectacular views of the River Orwell on this seasonal ramble at Pin Mill, near Ipswich.

Start: Car park (not NT) **Grid ref:** TM205378 **Maps:** OS Landranger 169 or Explorer 197

How to get here

By foot: Stour & Orwell Walk, a way-marked footpath. See www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

By bike: South Suffolk Cycle route B

By bus: Ipswich Buses 202, Ipswich to Shortley, daily. Alight Chelmondiston, then 15 minute walk to Pin Mill. Please check bus times at www.transportdirect.info

By train: Ipswich station (7 miles). Visit www.thetrainline.co.uk

By road: 6 miles SE of A14 near Ipswich. From A14 take A137 towards Ipswich, turn right onto B1456 to Chelmondiston. Turn left in village (sign-posted Pin Mill), car park is on right (pay & display, not NT). Pin Mill can get very busy at peak times, please do not park on the road. Alternative parking is available in Chelmondiston village (½ mile)

Public WC and pub in Pin Mill, local shops and pubs in Chelmondiston (not NT)

Things to look out for...

Wrecks and houseboats

Look out for boats beached along the foreshore of the River Orwell, which were once sailing cargo vessels. Some boats are lived in as houseboats, but others have been abandoned as dramatic wrecks and are slowly being reclaimed by the forces of nature.

Pin Mill hamlet

Pin Mill hamlet is well known to east coast sailors for its charming 17th century waterside pub, the Butt and Oyster. It is also the setting for the opening chapters of two of Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons series of children's books, 'We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea' and 'Secret Water'.

Heathland colours

See purple blooms of the last flowering heather and the bright splash of yellow gorse flowers. Twenty-five years ago the heathland was the site of a conifer plantation, but during the storms of 1987 many trees were uprooted. The fallen trees and stumps were removed and the land was re-sewn with wild flower seeds from Dunwich Heath, further up the Suffolk coast. The result is the fantastic wildlife-rich heathland you see today.



The wooded cliff top path offers breathtaking views of the River Orwell. Look out for a large ferry on its way from Ipswich to Ostend or a Thames barge in full sail.

© NT / Martin Atkinson



The beautiful woodland is full of autumn seeds and fruits, many scattered on the woodland floor. This is a great spot for collecting fallen pine cones to make natural Christmas decorations from. Look out for the prickly cases of Sweet Chestnuts (pictured), which are a tasty snack roasted or raw.

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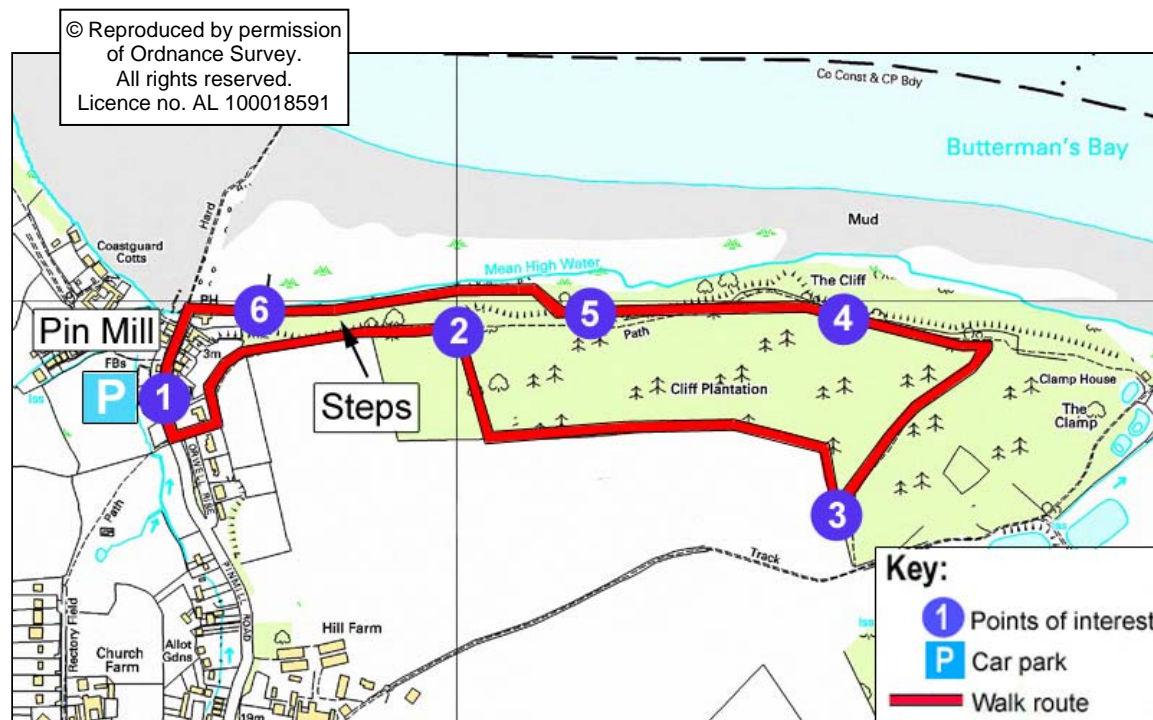
Heather and gorse flowers were once used as a substitute for tea, and both are excellent sources of food for bees and other insects. For a more potent brew why not try making gorse flower wine!

© NT / David Piper

Directions

1. From the car park turn right along the lane for 40m, then left up a set of concrete steps. Follow the footpath up the slope and along the back of the gardens to enter Pin Mill woods via a kissing gate.
2. Continue past a pine plantation, this is a good spot to hunt for pine cones. Turn left at a junction, keeping the plantation on your right. The track turns to the left and after 350 metres opens out into the first heathland area. Look out for the purple blooms of later flowering heather.
3. Take the first left hand path by some tall gorse bushes blooming with yellow flowers, great for making tea and wine. The path then leads to another area of heath, which is more grassy than the earlier heather heathland. Follow the path into a woodland and see what autumn fruits and seeds you can forage from the woodland floor. At the T-junction, turn left.
4. To the right, the 'cliff top' path here offers some wonderful views through the trees down to the River Orwell. Follow the path and descend a steep slope, (the cliff top path, although elevated, is not a traditional cliff, but is considered a cliff top for Suffolk!).
5. At the bottom of the slope turn right at a path junction to follow the route along the shore. Keep an eye out for shipwrecks and houseboats along the foreshore.
6. The path leaves Pin Mill woods and descends a few steps to the foreshore in front of the Butt & Oyster pub. Follow the foreshore to pass in front of the pub. Turn left on the lane to return to the car park.

Alternative route at point 6 - if there is a high tide and it is not safe to walk along the foreshore in front of the pub, retrace your steps 150m to the steps and follow them back up to the top path. Turn right and return to the car park.



Distance, terrain & accessibility

2 mile (3.2km) circular walk, mostly easy walking on grassy and sandy paths. There are steps along the route and one steep slope to descend between points 4 & 5.

Please be aware of high tides along the foreshore at point 6, where an alternate path is recommended when the route is impassable. Dogs are welcome, please keep under control.

Contact us

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