

## The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It extends from the Stour estuary in the south to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and then north to Kessingland. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife-rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

### How to get to Alton Water Park main car park

Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No.197 (Ipswich, Felixstowe & Harwich).

Access via the B1080 from the A137. Parking can be limited on very busy days. Car parking charges apply

Sat Nav postcode IP9 2RY

Public transport information: [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) or call 0845 606 6171

Ipswich Tourist Information: [www.allaboutipswich.com](http://www.allaboutipswich.com) or call 01473 258070

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB 01394 445225 [www.suffolcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolcoastandheaths.org)



The Alton Water & Pin Mill Cycle Explorer Guide has been produced with the generous support of Adnams. They also sponsor a number of cycling events across the region. Cycling is a fun, inclusive and healthy way to enjoy the beautiful county we live in, and it's made even better by a refreshing drink in one of the Adnams' pubs at the end of your adventure.

Research, text and some images by Simon Peachey. Printed on Recycled, FSC, ECF, Carbon Balanced paper.

# Alton Water Park & Pin Mill

## Cycle Explorer Guide

In partnership with



Follow quiet roads from Alton Water Park to the beautiful riverside hamlet of Pin Mill.



## Alton Water Park & Pin Mill

Suffolk Coast & Heaths *Cycle Explorer Guide*

### Route Highlights

**1 Alton Water Park.** The reservoir was created between 1974 and 1987 to supply water to Ipswich and Felixstowe. Alton Water Park is owned and managed by Anglian Water. Before the reservoir was built, several farms and a watermill nestled in the valley. To preserve local heritage, Alton Watermill was dismantled and relocated to the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. Today, Alton Water Park provides a home for many plants and animals. Thousands of water birds such as wigeon, pochard and teal spend the winter here. Summer visitors include chiffchaff and common tern. Anglian Water has created nature reserve areas to encourage more wildlife.

**2 The Royal Hospital School** occupies the buildings on either side of the B1080 road in Holbrook. The school was founded in Greenwich in 1712, moving to its present site in 1933. The distinctive buildings were designed by Arts and Crafts architect Herbert Tudor Buckland. The bell tower is a local landmark and the bells toll throughout the day. Until recently, entry to the school was limited to boys from seafaring families. Although this requirement no longer applies and the school is co-educational, the maritime links are proudly maintained.



**3 Holbrook Creek** is one of many tidal inlets on the River Stour. The reed beds and salt marshes are a great habitat for wildlife, particularly birds. Avocet, ringed plover and redshank are year-round residents, whilst reed warblers arrive in the spring. Migrating birds, including geese, sandpipers and greenshank can be spotted in the spring and autumn as they stop to rest and feed. The nearby mudflats also provide a magic, sticky habitat for plants and animals.

**4 Pin Mill** is a beautiful waterside hamlet. It was once the centre of a thriving barge-building industry, supplying vessels to transport goods to and from Ipswich and beyond. Barges still anchor off the village and boat-building continues on a smaller scale. Arthur Ransome, the famous children's author, lived in the village in the 1930s. His novel, *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*, begins at Pin Mill. Ransome was a keen sailor and his yacht, *Nancy Blackett*, has been saved by the Nancy Blackett Trust.



**5 The Tattingsstone Wonder** is an illusion! In the 1700s, the local squire, Edward White, wanted to improve the view from his house, Tattingsstone Place. He did this by building a false tower on a row of cottages to create the outline of a church. The tower only has three sides and is open at the back.

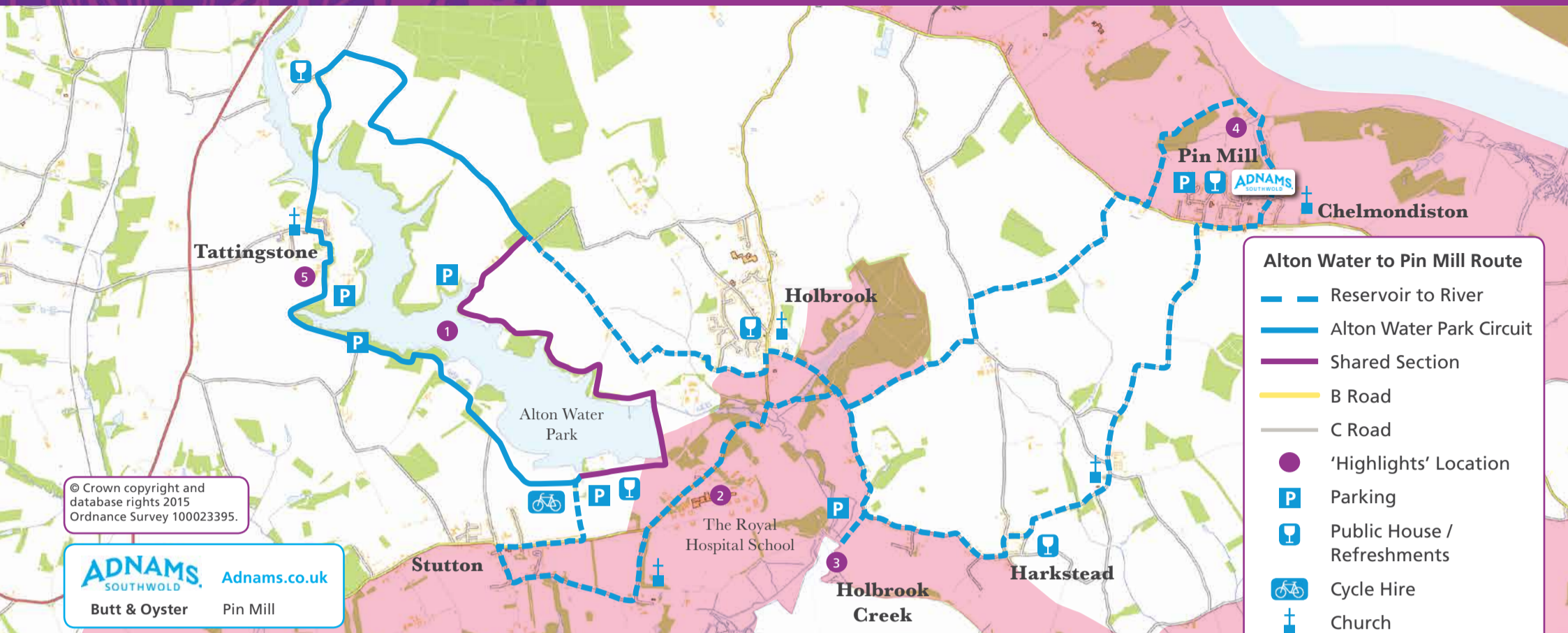
(Alton Water Park route only)

Images: Front Cover – Cyclist at Pin Mill (image: Esther Wilkinson). A. Alton Water Park – Hard to believe it is man-made! B. Holbrook Creek – A beautiful backwater. C. Pin Mill – Boats in front of the famous Butt and Oyster Inn. D. Barges at Pin Mill – Barge-building used to be an important industry. E. The Tattingsstone Wonder – Not what it seems!

# Alton Water Park & Pin Mill

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Cycle Explorer Guide

These two cycle rides start at Alton Water Park main car park. The first follows lanes across the Shotley Peninsula to the riverside hamlet of Pin Mill. The second circumnavigates Alton Water Park, providing ever changing views of landscape and water.



## Reservoir to River

Distance:  
 • 13.5 miles (22km)  
 • 16 miles (26km) if Alton Water Circuit followed

## Alton Water Park Circuit

Distance:  
 7 miles (11km)

**Time:** 3 hours (3.5 hours if Alton Water Park extension followed).

**Terrain:** Route mainly follows minor roads. Several short sections on B roads with 30mph speed limits. One short section on B road with 60mph speed limit. Section beside reservoir on gravel track. Some short, but steep, hills.



Start from Alton Water Park main car park. Follow access road back to road junction and turn right. Continue through Stutton village and take first left into Church Road. Follow road straight and then left. Continue through village and then open country until just before Church, then take left turn. Continue until main road, then turn right. Pass buildings of Royal Hospital School.

At bottom of hill, just after sharp left bend, turn right. Follow road up hill and turn right again. In Lower Holbrook, turn right along short track to Holbrook Creek. Return to road, turn right and continue to Harkstead. Take second left in village, signposted Chelmondiston. Keep on lane, ignoring all exits until main road (T Junction). Turn right and continue through Chelmondiston. Take fourth left, signposted Pin Mill. Follow lane downhill to river.

Continue away from Butt and Oyster Inn along river front. Occasionally this section of the route floods at high tide. If this happens, retrace route to main road, turn right and continue until turning left into Bylam Lane – pick up route at point marked ♦ right).

Follow track between houses, signposted South Suffolk Cycle Route B. Continue on narrow winding track up hill, following Cycle Route signs. At T junction with main road, turn right.

♦ After short distance, turn left into Bylam Lane, still following Cycle Route. Follow road until junction, then turn left.



After short distance, turn right. When T junction reached, turn right and continue downhill, passing lake. When Holbrook reached, turn left at T junction. Just after Fire Station, turn right. Follow road for almost 2 miles.

(Continue on this road if you want to extend the route as explained right under 'Alton Water Park Circuit' – from point marked ★). At woodland, take left turn signposted Alton Water Cycle Path. Continue to end of lane and small car park. Turn left onto winding track beside reservoir and continue to dam. Cycle across dam and bear right back to start.

Start from Alton Water Park main car park and turn right (keeping reservoir to your left). Continue on road and then turn left across dam to far side of reservoir. Turn left and follow winding track beside reservoir until you reach Birchwood House car park. Turn right and follow narrow lane until road. Turn left at T junction.

★ Continue on road, ignoring all exits. At T junction, turn left. Enter village and take next left. Cross bridge over reservoir. Turn left at T junction (Tattlingstone Church). Follow winding road until just beyond village and Pond Hall Farm, then slip left at bend onto track with gate and opening alongside. Take first right (Alton Water perimeter track). Continue through car park and follow track back to start point.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Terrain:** Route follows quiet roads and tracks. Some short hills.

### Safe Cycling Guidance

- Make sure your bicycle is safe to use
- Wear a hi-vis jacket and a helmet that comply with current standards
- Obey the rules of the road and follow the Highway Code
- Be courteous and acknowledge people who give way to you
- Ride in single file to let vehicles overtake if the road is busy or narrow
- Don't assume everyone can see or hear you
- Give way to pedestrians, wheelchair users and horse riders
- Ring your bell or call out to warn others of your approach
- Please cycle on roads, byways, cycle paths – not on public footpaths
- Try to reach the start of your ride using bike or public transport

### Thank You



Images: A. Harkstead – here the route provides stunning views of the River Stour. B. Pin Mill – boat building. C. Spindle Berries – Alton Water Park provides a great habitat for many plants and animals. D. Alton Water Park Dam – a distinctive feature of the reservoir.

