

# Alton Water Park

## Explorer Guide



Enjoy two fascinating walks starting from the Alton Water Park Visitor Centre.



Alton Water Park includes the largest expanse of inland water in Suffolk and is a popular destination for walkers, birdwatchers and water sports enthusiasts. The beautiful River Stour and the villages of Stutton, Tattingstone and Holbrook await discovery nearby!

- The Royal Hospital School** is the huge building on the horizon. The school was founded in Greenwich in 1712, moving to its present site in 1933. The impressive 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 now co-educational, the maritime links are proudly maintained. For example, students wear naval uniform on formal occasions.

- The village of Stutton** contains many fine buildings. St Peter's Church dates from the 1300s. Look for the beautiful flint work on the walls. Next door is Quarhams, a fine medieval timber framed house dating from the 1400s. In the centre of the village is the Ancient House, which features decorative plaster work, known as 'pargetting'.



- The Tattingstone Wonder** is an illusion! In the 1700s, the local squire, Edward White, wanted to improve the view from his house, Tattingstone 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.



Images: Front cover: Alton Water Reservoir - Anglian Water. A. Alton Water Park - nature has colonised the banks of the reservoir - Anglian Water. B. Rose Hips - important winter food for birds. C. Holbrook Creek - mudflats and saltmarsh. D. St. Peter's Church - tucked away in the trees. E. The Tattingstone Wonder - designed to deceive!

## Highlights of the Walks

- Alton Water Park reservoir** was created between 1974 and 1987 to supply water to Ipswich and Felixstowe. It 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 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.



- 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. The river was once an important trade route, carrying goods to and from the port of Mistley.

## Suffolk Coast & Heaths *Explorer Guide*

## 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 north to Kessingland. The AONB covers 403 square kilometres, including wildlife rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

## Visiting Alton Water Park

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

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

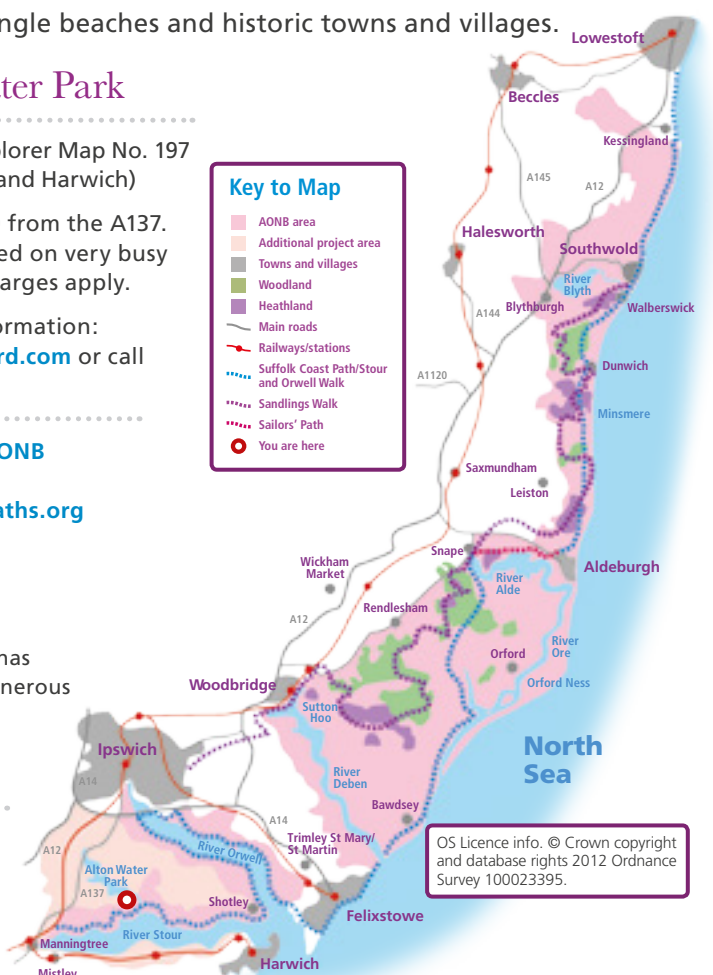
- Public transport information: [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) or call 0845 606 6171

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

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Alton Water Park Explorer has been produced with the generous support of Anglian Water.  
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Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is a partner of the BALANCE project, part-financed by the European Union through the Interreg IV A 2 Seas Cross-border Programme.



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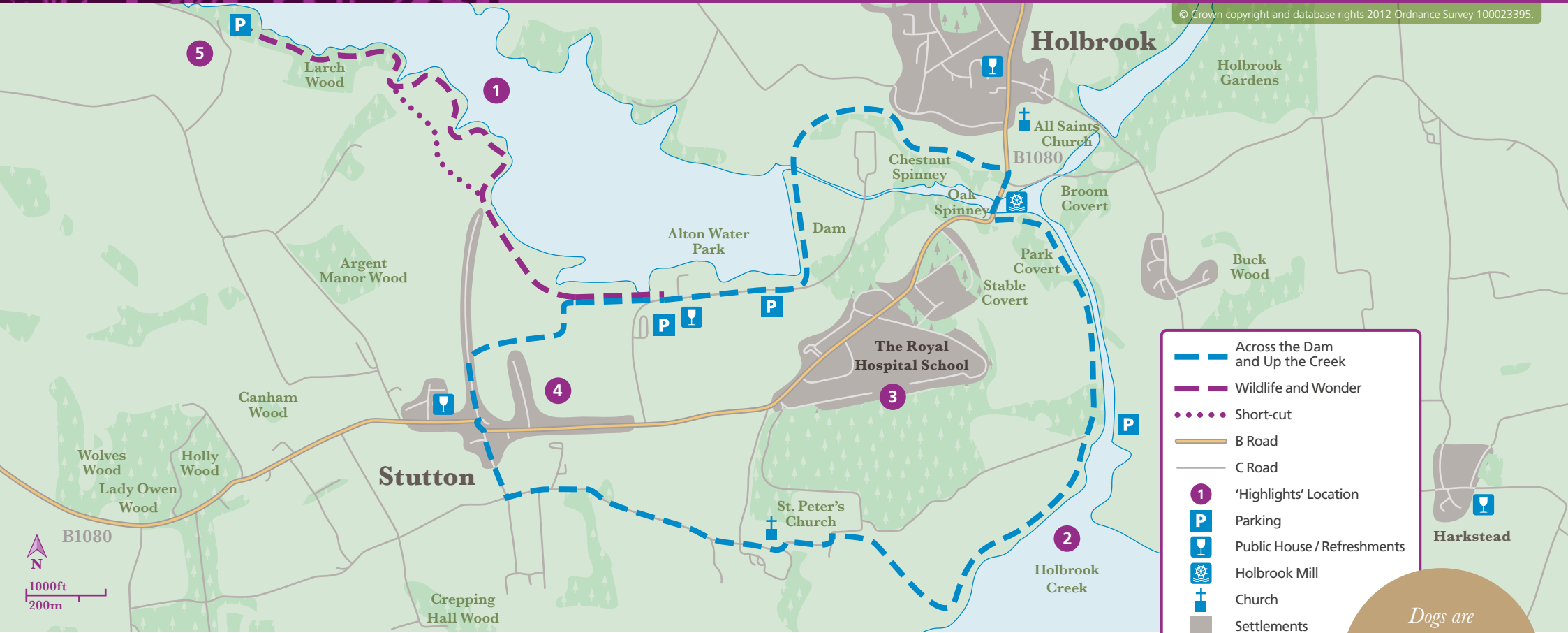




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*These two walks give fantastic views over Alton Water Park. The longer walk leads you to Holbrook Creek and passes through the pretty village of Stutton. A shorter walk visits a nature reserve and the Tattingstone Wonder, a building designed to deceive!*



## ‘Across the Dam and Up the Creek’

Distance  
5 miles (8 km)

**Time:** 2 hours 30 mins

**Terrain:** Ground uneven in places. Some sloping ground. Some parts may be muddy. One stile on route. Some sections beside deep water. Look out for cyclists on reservoir paths. Part of route on public roads. Please be aware of traffic. We recommend high visibility clothing.



Leave Alton Water Park car park, walk past café and turn right alongside road. Turn left over dam and take path that veers right on far side. Follow path downhill into woodland. Ignore path on left and continue straight, crossing open area with trees.

When road is reached, turn right along pavement. Pass Holbrook Mill and walk across wooden walkway over pond. At end of walkway, carefully cross road. Turn left and take track beside house with tall chimneys. Follow track until right bend and then take path that leads off right.

Follow winding path beside stream. Cross farm track and continue along path beside stream.



When you reach track and river wall at Holbrook Creek, turn right, go through gate and follow path around to left. Pass Holbrook Boathouse and follow track left along river wall.

Follow river wall until you reach fence, turn right down steps and follow path beside paddocks. On far side of paddocks, go through gap in hedge and turn left. Keep on path past ponds and buildings. At top of grassy area, follow path left as it joins road.

Walk along road past church. Keep straight on through countryside to village.

Follow road through village and around sharp right bend.

**Images:** A. The Dam - a feat of construction. B. Holbrook Mill - now a private house. C. Boats at Holbrook Creek - resting on the mudflats at low tide. D. Stutton Village - one of many pretty buildings. E. Alton Water Park - beautiful throughout the year. F. Sails on Alton Water Park - a great place for sail training and watery fun - Alton Water Sports Centre.

At main road, carefully cross and continue straight along Alton Hall Lane. Shortly after row of houses, take path right along field edge. Follow this path, ignoring right turn, until it reaches track alongside reservoir. Turn right and walk back to car park.



## ‘Wildlife and Wonder’

Distance  
3 miles (4.8 km)

**Time:** 1 hour 30 mins

**Terrain:** Easy – Ground under foot mainly flat. Paths and tracks can be muddy. Some sections beside deep water. Look out for cyclists on reservoir paths.

Leave Alton Water Park car park, walk past café, turn left and cross road, following signs for ‘Tattingstone Wonder’. Follow track until you reach large information board showing nature trails.

Turn right and follow grass path, keeping reservoir on right. When path splits, keep right. Follow path into trees. When you reach clearing, follow path to left of pond. Keep on this path until junction with track. (Turn left here for short cut back to car park).

Turn right and follow track to The Wonder car park. The Tattingstone Wonder (private property) is across the road from the car park entrance. Retrace steps and follow track back to start.

