

Local Adnams pub



**THE EEL'S FOOT INN** Tel: 01728 830154  
Leiston Road, Eastbridge, Leiston, IP16 4SN

Location: <b>Village</b>	Restaurant/dining room	<b>Yes</b>
Garden/courtyard	Bar meals	<b>Yes</b>
Children welcome	Accommodation	<b>Yes</b>
Disabled access	Dogs welcome	<b>Yes</b>
Parking available	Credit cards welcome	<b>Yes</b>



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.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the walk (and the pub!), please upload your comments and photos to our website [adnams.co.uk](http://adnams.co.uk)."

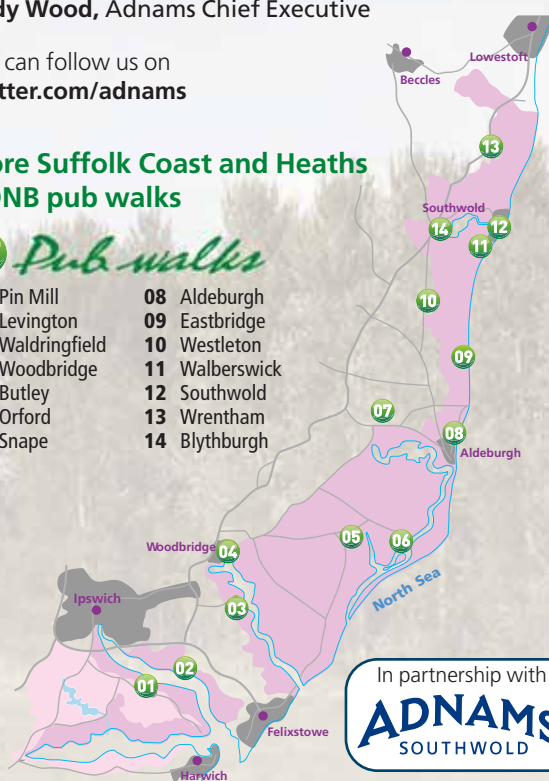
**Andy Wood**, Adnams Chief Executive

You can follow us on [twitter.com/adnams](https://twitter.com/adnams)

More Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB pub walks



- 01 Pin Mill
- 02 Levington
- 03 Waldringfield
- 04 Woodbridge
- 05 Butley
- 06 Orford
- 07 Snape
- 08 Aldeburgh
- 09 Eastbridge
- 10 Westleton
- 11 Walberswick
- 12 Southwold
- 13 Wrentham
- 14 Blythburgh



# Eastbridge



## Eastbridge Route overview

This 5 mile walk encircles the RSPB Minsmere reserve, keeping mainly on the slightly higher ground of the heath and the edge of the marshes. It's a flat or gently undulating walk, taking in woodland, heath, beach and marshland in a beautiful part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. You also have the intriguing experience of crossing a river mouth on foot.

Only the first 500m or so is on a public highway, and the paths are well-marked and dry, though the route back from the beach to Eastbridge may be muddy after rain. In the unlikely event that the shingle beach has been overtopped or breached by the sea, and the route cannot be walked, this should be apparent from the Coastguard Cottages.

### Further information

#### Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB

Tel: 01394 384948 [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

**Public Transport** [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com), 0845 606 6171

#### National Trust Dunwich Heath

Tel: 01728 648501 [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**RSPB Minsmere** Tel: 01728 648281

[www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/m/minsmere/index.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/m/minsmere/index.aspx)

The walk starts from the Eel's Foot Inn. The pub has a car park, but check before leaving your car there, especially if you plan to walk first, and visit the pub later. Alternatively you can park at National Trust Dunwich Heath (pay and display, about £4.50) and make the Eel's Foot your half-way house. Dogs are welcome, but take note of any specific instructions displayed.

## Eastbridge

Route length – 4.9 miles/7.9 km

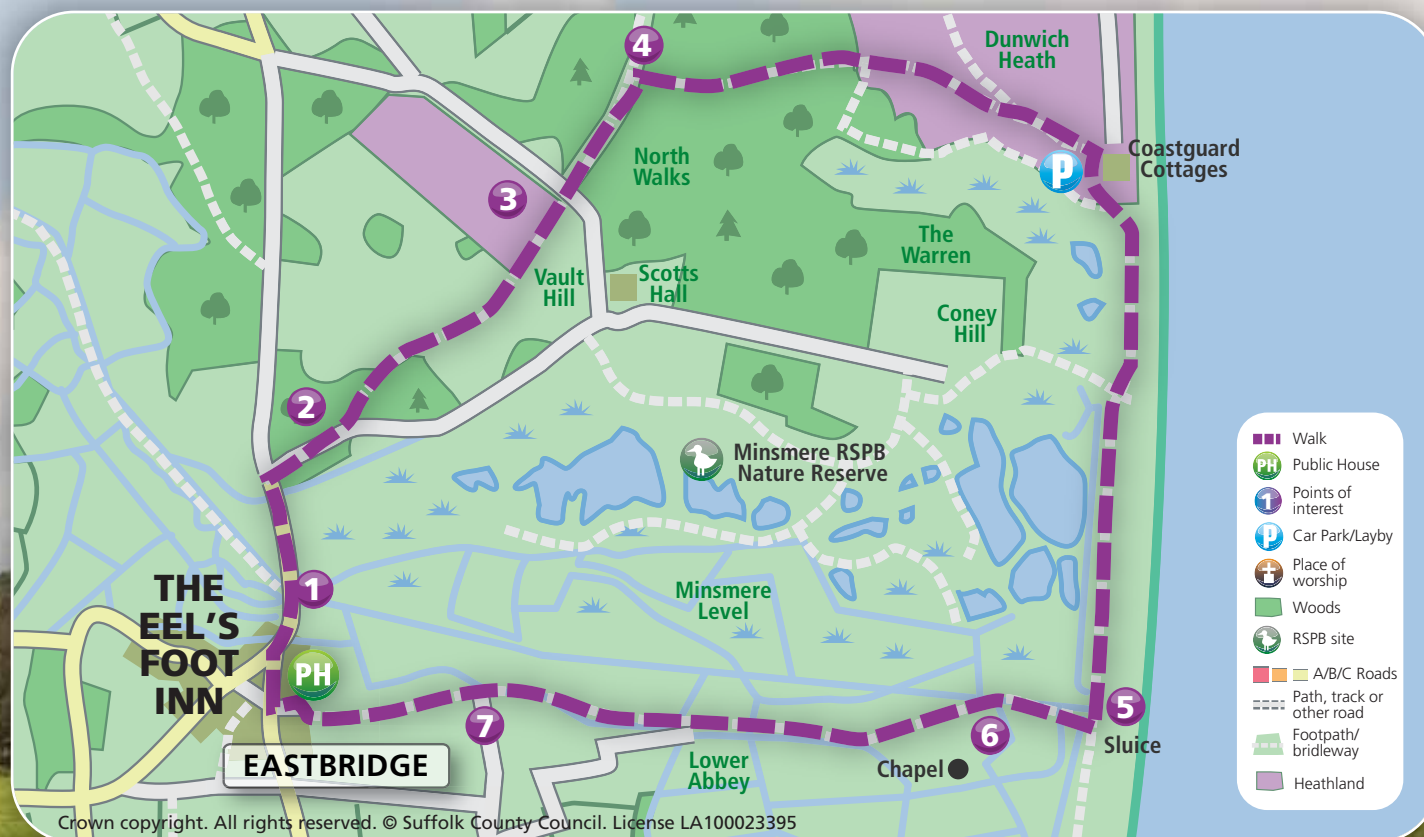


Turn right out of the Eel's Foot Inn car park and follow lane northwards across the marsh, crossing the bridge over Minsmere New Cut.

Just before this bridge, the course of the **Minsmere Old River** joins the **New Cut** from the left, then winds away to the right after the bridge, eventually to fizzle out in branching channels, lagoons and marsh cut off from the sea behind the shingle beach.

The marsh is criss-crossed with old water courses and drainage ditches. In the 19th century, the marshes were used for grazing, and the **Minsmere River** was straightened and embanked to improve drainage. The New Cut, constructed approx. 1812, carries most of the river water clear of the marshes, along the southern edge, to discharge into the sea at **The Sluice**, which also serves a cut from Leiston.

Today the area is the **RSPB's Minsmere Nature Reserve** and is especially renowned for its freshwater habitats.





Continue on the lane and follow it as it bears right after about 300m, through Hangman's New Wood toward the Minsmere Nature Reserve.

The track bends right at a gate into the Reserve, but your route carries straight on ②, on a bridleway taking you up and over Saunders Hill. You will have good views to the right over the Minsmere Reserve towards the coast and Sizewell Nuclear Power Station.

**Sizewell** is a primary site under consideration for a possible new power station. There are two here already, Sizewell A (square blocked building, commissioned in 1966; de-commissioning from 2006), and Sizewell B, with white dome, commissioned 1985.



**Westleton Walks** are on your left. The name derives from the mediaeval 'sheepwalks', grazing areas on the dry heath and acid grassland. Stone Curlews, rare wading birds that live on dry land, can sometimes be seen here in summer.

To the right is **Scott's Hall** – allegedly a smuggler's haunt, with extensive vaults for storage of goods.



Cross a tarmac lane ③ and continue on the bridleway through a wood – turn right onto a footpath just before a wooden gate ④. Continue through the woods. The path reaches a descending section, down some rough steps, and crosses a ditch with unusually steep sides.

The ditch was one of several dug here during the Second World War as **tank traps**.

This part of our coast was considered a particularly attractive point of entry for the enemy, and this and other fragments of the defence structures still remain.



Carry straight on through the gate up Bunker Hill onto Dunwich Heath.

Dartford Warbler (FLPA)



Marsh Harrier (FLPA)

**Dunwich Heath** is a beautiful rare heath habitat, with wonderful flowering heather from July to September. Species for which it is renowned include Dartford Warbler, Nightjar, Woodlark, Ant-lion, and Adders.




Follow this easy path to the coastguard cottages where there are toilets and café facilities (continued overleaf).

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](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org)

# Eastbridge

## Starting from Dunwich

 (Walkers starting from Dunwich Heath Coastguard Cottages – join in here...)

**Make your way down to the beach, and walk southwards - either on the beach, or on path running parallel, behind dunes.**

The area to the right, **Minsmere Nature Reserve**, is vulnerable to flooding from the sea, and in 2006, dunes at the north end of the beach were washed away. Sea flooding can damage special features of the reserve and contaminate freshwater habitats.

Fresh water flooding is also a risk here. **The Minsmere Sluice** helps to control this, but can become obstructed by beach shingle. It opens to allow water to flow out when the sea level falls, at low tide. A rise in sea level would make this less effective.

Bell Heather



The large concrete blocks you see to the right are another **WWII relic**, placed to obstruct the passage of invading tanks. Some of the Minsmere reserve area was flooded at this time, to hinder any enemy invasion attempt.



**At the Minsmere Sluice 5** turn right onto the public footpath, which is on the south side of the Minsmere New Cut.

Bird enthusiasts flock to Minsmere RSPB Reserve, for the wide range of coast, heath and wetland birds. Little Tern are a feature of the beach. Marsh Harriers are often hunting over these wetlands.

The rare Bittern breeds with some success at Minsmere: out of the British population of some 50 pairs, about a third of them are here. The national Bittern population fluctuates, being very vulnerable to availability of suitable reedbed habitat, and to flooding, which in the nesting season, may wash away the young or the nests.

Bitterns are small brown herons, more often heard than seen. In spring, you may hear the male booming: a similar sound to blowing across the top of an empty bottle. Estimates of Bittern population are based on counting 'booming males'.

You may also spot red deer enjoying the reed beds. Minsmere has the largest herd outside of Scotland.



**Just after a pair of wooden gateposts 6** bear left away from the Cut.

The ruined chapel, on the knoll just to your left, is a relic, probably late 12th century, of a religious community that founded an abbey here, moving on to build **Leiston Abbey** 200 years later.

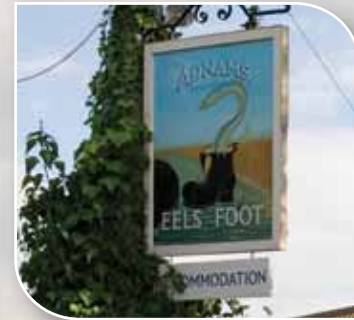


**Follow the wide path to another pair of posts – bear right here. Pass through a wooden kissing gate, carry straight on, to a farm track, turn left to cross dyke 7 then immediately right through a small gate into a field.**



**Cross field on this path, back into Eastbridge village, turning right at the tarmac lane to reach The Eel's Foot Inn.**

**The Eel's Foot Inn** played its part in the smuggling trade, apparently both serving the free-traders and acting as a billet for dragoons. An Old Bailey trial of 1748 indicates that tea and brandy were the favourite smuggled commodities at that time.



**Walkers starting from Dunwich – go back to beginning of walk directions!**

