Butley long walk

Long walk - 5 miles / 8.7 km

Butley Priory – Butley Church – Butley Mills

This aera is underlned by the crummy shell sands known as the 'red crag'. Some is hard enough for building stone, but it was also used for fertilizer, thanks to its high phosphate content. In the 17th century, cottages, local nodules high in phosphate, were extracted and shipped away to be processed to produce a concentrated fertilizer, providing an important source of income for the area.

Many old cag posts still exist in this area, often providing homes for sand martins. At Newall Farm at the end of this walk, the cag post has been declared a SSNIO of Special Scientific Interest – for its geological importance.

Check out the Priory for the remains of the Augustinian Priory, founded here in 1171, is the 14th century gatehouse, renowned for its flushwork facade with armoir decoration. French limestone for building the Priory, and Purbeck marble, was transported from Butley Creek via a canal cut by the monks.

The Priory was a popular hunting resort for the nobility in the 16th century, and in 1538, was surrendered to Henry VIII. The Gatehouse has been restored (an ongoing process since 1737), and once again offers accommodation, and a venue for arts, business and entertainment events.

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.
The Butley Oyster pub is the start for both walks. The pub has a car park, but that is often very busy; alternatively, if you plan to walk both, find and visit the pub later.

Both of these walks reach into The Sandlings, once an area of sandy heathlands, of which little now is visible. The area was a hunting park even in Domesday times, and some of this ancient woodland remains. Today’s landscape shows the huge change agriculture has brought, bringing the upland heathlands into high productivity with the help of intensive rigging.

Both walks follow some stretches of road, tradeable if there is no alternative, although the roads are mostly quiet, they are well-used by farm vehicles. On bridleways, unsurprisingly, you may meet horse traffic.

The paths are generally well-maintained, bringing the busy upland heathlands into high productivity with the help of intensive rigging.

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Beyond a rise of cottages on the right, the meadows that run down towards Butley Creek are a popular hunting ground for barn owl and kestrel.

The paths are generally well-maintained, and dry in good weather.

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