



# Visitors' Guide



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## Places to Visit

East Bergholt is a large village with a good general shop just a couple of miles from Coral's Barn. The Church has an unusual bell cage, instead of conventional church bells. <http://www.eastbergholt-bells.org.uk>



In the early 1970s, a large Franciscan Friary still existed in the centre of the village, and Old Hall is now the earliest surviving commune in the country. The building's centre dates to when East Anglia was an important part of England and Old Hall housed its senate.

Flatford Mill and Willy Lott's Cottage are on your doorstep (National Trust) and have an excellent teasop. Guided walks will take you to the spots where John Constable painted some of his most famous works, and you will see that little has changed. Both Dedham and Flatford Mill have boat hire and many lazy hours can be spent rowing gently along the river Stour.

<http://www.field-studies-council.org/flatfordmill>

Dedham is just four miles from Coral's Barn. It has a 16<sup>th</sup> Century church, which appears in John Constable's paintings, and it boasts a 131 feet high tower. Dedham is a beautiful village with timber-framed and early Georgian buildings, with excellent walking on footpaths (you can find where Constable painted The Leaping Horse), a good Craft Centre, tearooms and pleasant shops. Sir Alfred Munnings Art Museum, Castle House, is well worth a visit.

<http://www.siralfredmunnings.co.uk/the-house.html>

Two miles from Coral's Barn is Thorington Hall (National Trust). It only opens one day per year, but if you are lucky enough for this to coincide with your holiday, it is an oak-framed, plastered and gabled early 17<sup>th</sup> century house, which has hardly changed since it was built c.1600.



## Colchester – Britain's oldest recorded Roman town

In AD77 a Roman writer by the name of Pliny the Elder described the location of the Isle of Anglesey as being 'about 200 miles from Camulodunum, a town in Britain'. This was the Roman name for Colchester and is the earliest known reference to a fixed settlement in Britain, hence the claim to be Britain's oldest recorded town. For football fans, Colchester United's new 10,000 seater stadium to the north of Colchester has opened for business in time for the 2009/10 season.

Jumbo, England's largest Victorian water tower sits just off the main street, although there are plans to convert it to luxury apartments and restaurant.



Colchester Castle & Museum runs guided Castle tours. You can also visit Hollytrees Museum, the Natural History Museum, and Tymperleys, 15<sup>th</sup>

Century house and Clock Museum – check out their websites

<http://www.colchestermuseums.org.uk>

Colchester Zoo is popular for the children. <http://www.colchester-zoo.co.uk>

Or why not treat yourselves to some culture at the Mercury Theatre?

<http://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk>

Both Colchester and Ipswich have 8 screen cinemas

[http://www.odeon.co.uk/fanatic/cinema\\_information/s80/](http://www.odeon.co.uk/fanatic/cinema_information/s80/)

<http://www.cineworld.co.uk>

There are Open Top Bus Tours, starting from Cowdray Crescent. The tours run every 60 mins. On Sat/Sun, daily July-Aug, 01708 866000

If you're feeling creepy, Colchester has a Ghost Pub tour, from outside the Town Hall, 7.30pm every Thursday (over 18s only), 01206 513249

Firstsite Minorities Art Gallery is a Georgian townhouse, situated close to Colchester Castle. <http://www.culture24.org.uk/mw1313>

Bourne Mill, Bourne Road, (National Trust) is an interesting fishing lodge, built in 1591, featuring stepped 'Dutch' gables. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was converted into a mill for fulling (a cloth manufacture process) and later for flour milling. The waterwheel is in working order.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-bournemill>

Beth Chatto gardens, Elmstead Market, featured many times on television, has gardens based on a Mediterranean theme <http://www.bethchatto.co.uk>

Abberton Reservoir Wildfowl and Visitor Centre

<http://www.essexwt.org.uk/centres/Abberton.htm>

Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve, Fingringhoe, 01206 863236

<http://www.essexwt.org.uk/sites/Fingringhoe%20Wick.htm>

A short distance from Colchester is the pretty timber-framed village of

**Coggeshall**, which was famous for its lace. Here you can find Paycocke's (National Trust), a fine half-timbered Merchant's house dating from c.1500, which is evidence of the wealth generated by the East Anglian wool trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It contains unusually rich paneling and wood-carving.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-paycockes>



Also in Coggeshall is Coggeshall Grange Barn

(National Trust). This majestic building is one of the oldest surviving timber-framed barns in Europe and was originally part of a Cistercian monastery. It was restored in the 1980s and we are proud to say that our own builder, who renovated Coral's Barn, was one of the tradesmen who restored Grange Barn.

<http://www.coggeshall-barn.org.uk>

Chappel Railway Museum is close to Colchester and worth a visit for children and railway enthusiasts alike. <http://www.earm.co.uk>

**Lavenham** is about 16 miles from Coral's Barn and no visitor should miss it. It is a remarkably preserved small medieval town, which became wealthy as a result of the woolen cloth trade. There are attractive tea shops, pubs, gift shops, art galleries and The Guildhall, an early 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building which dominates the town's market place (National Trust)

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-lavenham>

**Kersey**, on the way to Lavenham, is a small, picturesque medieval village with a water splash, said to be famous for its cloth called 'Kersey', used for army uniforms. The Elizabethan buildings are very beautiful and the large windows on the first floors of the houses were designed to give as much light as possible to the cloth weavers.

[http://norfolkcoast.co.uk/location\\_suffolk/vp\\_kersey.htm](http://norfolkcoast.co.uk/location_suffolk/vp_kersey.htm)

**Long Melford**, a close neighbour of Lavenham is another must for visitors. As its name suggests, it is a settlement on a long road, with many beautiful buildings to either side. There are many interesting shops, including antique shops and restaurants. Melford Hall (National Trust) is a romantic turreted brick Tudor mansion, which has changed little externally since 1578 when Queen Elizabeth I was entertained here. It retains its original panelled banqueting hall and has been the home of the Hyde Parker family since 1786. The family is related to Beatrix Potter.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-melfordhall>

Kentwell Hall, also in Long Melford, holds Tudor re-creations and many interesting events which are particularly fun for children. We once attended an outdoor performance of Bizet's Carmen which cleverly fed the opera around the Hall. Their resident ginger cat was quite unperturbed and made several guest appearances, only finding it too much during Escamillo and José's fight.

<http://www.kentwell.co.uk>

A short distance from Lavenham and Long Melford are the chocolate box villages of Cavendish, Clare, with its lovely country park, and Stoke by Clare, all with beautiful Tudor houses. Keep your eyes open for some extraordinary pargetting on the ancient houses. All of this area was very active in the days of The Witchfinder General.

Bury St Edmunds with its ruined abbey and pleasant shops is delightful town, well worth a visit. It is about half an hour by car from the barn. Angel Corner, 8 Angel Hill (National Trust) is a fine Queen Anne house and the newly renovated Theatre Royal (National Trust) in Westgate Street, is a rare and outstanding example of a late Georgian playhouse. Built in 1819, the theatre offers a year-round programme of drama, comedy, dance and music 01284 769505 (box office) <http://secure.theatreroyal.org/PEO/site/home/index.php> Ickworth House, park and its 'Capability' Brown gardens and park is close to Bury St Edmunds. It is an unusual Georgian house with a central rotunda and curved corridors, built to house paintings by Titian, Gainsborough and Velázquez.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-ickworthhouseparkandgarden>

Visit Moyses's Hall museum which tells of a grisly Suffolk crime – The Red Barn Murder – which happened about four miles from Coral's Barn, in Polstead. Friends of ours live in the victim, Maria Marten's tiny thatched cottage.

<http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/visit/moyeses-hall.cfm>

**Cambridge** is about one hour's drive from the barn and is of course worth visiting. With its beautiful colleges and shops, a whole day can be spent ambling around the city. There is a good park and ride service to the city centre.

Wimpole Hall, Arrington, Royston (National Trust), is a magnificent 18<sup>th</sup> century house <http://www.wimpole.org>

Anglesey Abbey gardens (National Trust) comprise a Jacobean-style country house in fine gardens. If your visit coincides with Spring, the gardens are crammed with hellebores and snowdrops. <http://www.angleseyabbey.org>

For the dads and the boys, why not treat yourselves to a day at the Imperial War Museum, **Duxford** – there's lots to see and it makes a good day out for the family. <http://duxford.iwm.org.uk>

Hedingham Castle offers a great day out for the children and adults alike <http://www.hedinghamcastle.co.uk> with archery, jousting and re-enactment battles.

St Osyth's Priory is a fine building worth a visit <http://www.stosyth.gov.uk/default.asp?calltype=about>

Heading towards Ipswich and beyond to the Heritage Coast Pin Mill is a quiet beauty spot, not far from the Orwell bridge, heading towards Shotley. This is the home of the famous barge race featuring old vessels with dark red sails <http://www.thamesbargeracing.co.uk>.

If you are lucky enough that your holiday coincides with the event, visit Pin Mill's Butt and Oyster for lunch and watch the world go by, but you'll have to get there early as the event is very popular!

**Ipswich** has the beautiful Christchurch Mansion. It houses a collection of pottery and glass, a contemporary art gallery and a collection of paintings by artists including John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough, and if you fancy a day shopping in the town, the Mansion is just a short walk from the main shops.

<http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/Services/Museums+and+Mansion/Christchurch+Mansion>

From Ipswich, continuing along the A12, you will reach Woodbridge, a pretty small town with a strong sailing connection, next to the river Deben. Tucked away, you can find both the Tide Mill and the Windmill.

<http://woodbridgesuffolk.info/Woodbridge/Attractions/TideMill>

A short distance further on is Sutton Hoo, (National Trust) – the famous Anglo-Saxon royal burial site, with its strange burial mounds, treasures and newly created maze. <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-suttonhoo>

## The Heritage Coast

...or to steal the title of Michael Palin's classic drama 'East of Ipswich'. The A12 snakes along to Southwold, and this area is unspoilt, largely due to the absence of road improvements leading to the coast.

The Suffolk coast is one of low marshes and reed beds interspersed with beaches of sand and shingle. Several long estuaries serve to keep the major roads well inland and preserve a sense of unhurried calm along the coast.

There are RSPB nature reserves at Aldeburgh, Orford, and Minsmere, where you will see avocet, bitterns, and marsh harriers, in addition to numerous butterflies and wildflowers.

Nowhere is the effect of sea erosion more noticeable than at Dunwich. The town was once one of the leading ports on the east coast, but the sea crept in, and much of the village, including 6 churches, a



monastery, and 3 chapels, is now underwater. Legend has it that if you listen carefully you can hear the sound of the church bells ringing under the waves. Nearby Dunwich Heath is an expanse of 215 acres of sandy cliffs and beach owned by the National Trust. There are strange open places like Shingle Street with its Martello Tower built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to repel invasions by Napoleon. [http://www.suffolkcam.co.uk/shingle\\_street18102003.htm](http://www.suffolkcam.co.uk/shingle_street18102003.htm)

**Orford** is another town that has seen changing fortunes due to its seaside location. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Henry II built a castle here, in recognition of its strategic importance as a port. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orford\\_Castle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orford_Castle) The long shingle of Orford Ness gradually cut off the town from the sea, and today it survives as a small fishing village and holiday centre on the Orford Ness Nature Reserve (National Trust) – the largest shingle spit in Europe, with a fascinating 20<sup>th</sup> century military history and bird reserve.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-orfordness.htm>. You can book a cruise along the Deben on the Lady Florence, which offers lunch for parties of twelve – a perfect way to spend a day out. <http://www.lady-florence.co.uk>

**Aldeburgh** is most famous for its international music festival, but the town has more to offer than music. The most northerly of the Martello Towers built to protect this coast during the Napoleonic era squats heavily on the shore to the south of the town, and fishermen sell fresh fish from their boats drawn up on the beach.

Snape Maltings <http://www.snapemaltings.co.uk> and Aldeburgh <http://www.visit-aldeburgh.co.uk> are a short distance from Orford and are lovely places to visit and spend a few relaxing hours. Snape is home of the famous concert hall associated with Benjamin Britten, <http://www.aldeburgh.co.uk/smch/smch.cfm>



with its superb programme of concerts, and Aldeburgh is home to small shops, galleries, fresh caught fish on the shingle beach, and Maggi Hambling's extraordinary statue on the coast. Look out for the House in the Clouds at Thorpeness.

Moving further along the A12 you will find the impressive Glemham Hall <http://www.glemhamhall.co.uk>

and the Airfield Museum, <http://www.aeroflight.co.uk/mus/uk/n-r/parham.htm> Framlingham with its impressive castle (English Heritage), <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.12586>

which sometimes holds outdoor Shakespeare productions, Easton Farm Park for the children, <http://www.eastonfarmpark.co.uk> and the romantic ruins of Leiston Abbey.

<http://www.leistonabbey.co.uk/history.php>

You can bird-watch at the country's finest bird sanctuary, Minsmere, home of the RSPB logo, the avocet

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/m/minsmere/index.asp>

visit the strange ruins of Dunwich (National Trust, Dunwich Heath), where the sea has taken much of the coast and monastery, or eat fish and chips on the shore.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-dunwichheathandminsmerebeach>

<http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/dunwichas.html>

Walberswick, <http://www.explorewalberswick.co.uk>

home of many artists and the Crabbing Championship! is a tiny hamlet with little more than a good tearoom and gift shop and a footbridge which links to **Southwold** – a lovely town which seems frozen in time, with its colourful beachhuts and striking lighthouse. The attractive fishing and sailing centre of Southwold boasts more excellent bathing beaches. It has been called 'Full of character and interest both to the holidaymaker and the historian, Southwold is one of the most popular resorts on the East coast. But be warned you won't find much in the way of candyfloss or "kiss me quick" hats. Perhaps it is its virtual island status - Southwold is surrounded by creeks, marshes and reed beds and flanked to the south by the Blyth estuary - but to enter Southwold is to enter a seaside resort reminiscent of the 1920s.' You can also visit Southwold's galleries, its Sole Bay Inn, lovely Amber Shop or eat at the Swan Hotel in the centre of the town. <http://www.visitsouthwold.co.uk>



...This coast offers more than a day out; you'll need a couple at least!

Finally, if it's beaches that you want, you have Frinton, Clacton or Felixstowe, which also has Martello Towers and its old boatyard – Felixstowe Ferry.

