

The Great Eastern Main Line opened between Colchester and Ipswich in 1843 with the section to London open in 1849.

The first short section of the Sunshine Coast Line was built by the Colchester, Stour Valley, Sudbury and Halstead Railway linking Colchester to the port of Hythe, and opened for goods on 31 March 1847. In 1859 the Tending Hundred Railway Company was formed to extend the line from Hythe to Wivenhoe which opened on 8 May 1863 for both passenger and goods services from Colchester. By the time the Wivenhoe extension opened the line was operated by the GER Great Eastern Railway.

The line was then extended to Weeley on 8 January 1866, to Kirby Cross on 28 July 1866, and on to its terminus at Walton-on-the-Naze on 17 May 1867. In the meantime, a short branch to a new, more central station at Colchester St Botolphs (now Colchester Town) opened on 1 March 1866.

A second company, the Wivenhoe & Brightlingsea Railway, had been incorporated in 1861 to build a line from Wivenhoe to Brightlingsea which opened on 17 April 1866. There were also proposals to build a line to Clacton-on-Sea as early as 1866, but nothing came of them until 1877, when the Clacton-on-Sea Railway was formed. The connection from Thorpe-le-Soken to Clacton opened on 4 July 1882, also operated by the GER.

The GER soon negotiated the purchase of the Tending Hundred Railway and the Clacton-on-Sea Railway, and both became part of the GER on 1 July 1883. The Wivenhoe & Brightlingsea was absorbed by the GER on 9 June 1893. Electrification of the line was on-going in 1959 and by January the line was electrified as far as Great Bentley. The first trial train to run on the newly electrified section departed Colchester on 18 January 1959 and terminated at Great Bentley. The line was the first to be electrified at 25 kV AC, using overhead wires, with electrified services inaugurated on 13 April 1959.

### History of The Sunshine Coast Line



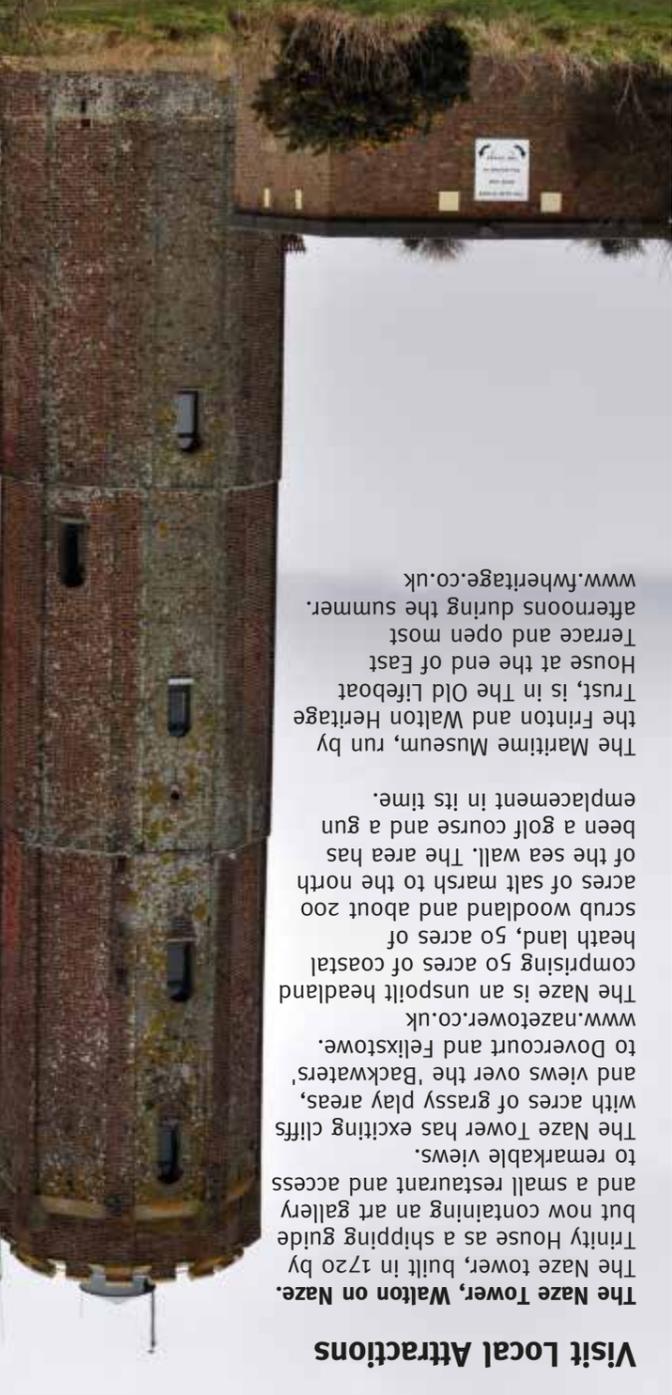
### The Sunshine Coast Line

The Naze Tower, Walton on Naze. Trinity House as a shipping guide but now containing an art gallery and a small restaurant and access to remarkable views. The Naze Tower has exciting cliffs with acres of grassy play areas, and views over the 'Backwaters' to Dovercourt and Felixstowe. www.nazetower.co.uk

The Naze is an unspoilt headland comprising 50 acres of coastal scrub woodland and about 200 acres of salt marsh to the north of the sea wall. The area has been a golf course and a gun emplacement in its time.

The Maritime Museum, run by the Frinton and Walton Heritage Trust, is in The Old Lifeboat House at the end of East Terrace and open most afternoons during the summer. www.fwheritage.co.uk

### Visit Local Attractions



# The Sunshine Coast Line

Your guide for the Colchester to Clacton / Walton-on-the-Naze branch line and surrounding area for a great day out by train.



### Tickets and Travel Information

Latest information on train times and fares for any rail operator in the UK can be obtained from National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950 or via the website [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**Tickets & Fares**  
Tickets can be purchased from ticket offices, or ticket machines (where available) or from the conductor on the Sunshine Coast Line. If travelling from a station with ticket selling facilities you must purchase your ticket before you board. For certain ticket types it is cheaper to book in advance online.

**Off Peak Tickets**  
Travel after 8.45 on weekdays. Off-Peak Day tickets do not have evening peak restrictions so the return journey can be made at any time, including from London.

**Super Off-Peak Day Tickets**  
When travelling to London or Stratford these tickets are valid on the first train that arrives in London after 12.00 on Mondays to Fridays. The return journey from London may not be made between 16.00 and 19.00 inclusive. On local journeys, Super Off-Peak tickets may be used at any time after 12.00. No return restrictions apply from stations outside London. At weekends Super off-peak tickets may be used at any time of day so are the best value option.

**Group Save Tickets**  
Groups of three or four travelling together can travel for the price of two to any station in the local area (including London Liverpool Street).

**Duo Tickets**  
Save 25% with Duo, Greater Anglia's great value weekend ticket. When two adults travel together, the second person receives 50% off Terms and conditions apply to this offer.

**Child Tickets**  
Children aged 5-15 travel for half price and children under 5 travel free.

**Railcards**  
Various railcards are available where you can get up to a third off the price of off-peak tickets.  
16 - 25 Railcard - for anyone aged 16 - 25  
Senior Railcard - for anyone aged 60 and over.  
Friends and Family Railcard - for family groups.  
Network Card - Anyone aged 16+ travelling in the South East (minimum fare applies weekdays).

### Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

Established in 1998, the Partnership brings together 8 partners with the aim of promoting train travel and securing the future of our 5 branch lines. The Sunshine Coast Line from Colchester to Clacton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze, has 11 stations along the line. Each station has dedicated station adopters who work with the train operator and the CRP under the **Greater Anglia Station Adoption Scheme**.

Lots of great work is happening along the line, like the revamped station garden at Kirby Cross. See the before and after pictures below.



For more information on the ESSCRP work Please look at our website [www.esscrp.org.uk](http://www.esscrp.org.uk)



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## Colchester

Colchester is Britain's oldest recorded town and has over 2,000 years of fascinating history and heritage for you to discover, involving the Romans, the Saxons and the Normans. It has two train stations, Colchester Town and Colchester. Colchester is on the Main line between Norwich and London, and Colchester Town is situated near to the town centre.

Colchester has many attractions which include a zoo, castle and park, and excellent shopping which makes Colchester a great place to visit by train. Lots more information on [www.visitcolchester.com](http://www.visitcolchester.com)



## Hythe

Hythe station was opened on 2 July 1849, it underwent major rebuilding in 2008 and 2009 which included extension of the platforms to accommodate 12-car trains. Hythe Station now hosts a bright entrance with a mural, commissioned by Colchester Council.

Hythe Station serves the world class University of Essex and the Knowledge gateway research park, as well as the old port which is undergoing major regeneration.



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## Alresford

Alresford lies to the east of Wivenhoe and has a population of just over two thousand. In 2012 it won the Royal Community Council of Essex Village of the Year Award.

The railway came to Alresford in the 1860s. In the 1960s the additional railway line to Brightlingsea which crossed Alresford Creek by a swing bridge was closed. Alresford has some of the finest country walks in Essex. See our website for details. [www.esscrp.org.uk](http://www.esscrp.org.uk)



## Great Bentley

The village has, at its heart, a 43 acre green reputed to be the largest in the country. It has won Best Kept Village Awards on several occasions and in 2000 won the prestigious award of National Village of the Year. There are many walks that can be accessed from the centre of the village. With Restaurant 43, on The Green and the Plough Inn at Aingers Green, the Barn Café and Royal Fusiliers Pub there are plenty of places to eat and drink. A village show incorporating a dog show is held every year in August.



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## Clacton-on-Sea

Known as the Essex Sunshine Coast. Clacton-on-Sea has lovely sandy beaches and safe sea bathing. The railway station is located to the north of Clacton town center, and approximately 8 minutes walk from the sea and pier.

Clacton Pier has many new fairground rides with a fully renovated undercover fairground. The Pier which is Victorian, was built by Peter Schuyler Bruff and opened in July 1877. There are many shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants in Clacton-on-Sea making it a great place to visit by train. Average journey time by train to London is 1 hour 20 minutes.



## Kirby Cross

Kirby Cross is a village with a population of just over 4000. With its sister villages Great Holland and Kirby Le Soken they form an inland boundary to Frinton On Sea and Walton On The Naze stretching from Hamford Water to the coastline at Holland Haven.

Many walks are available from the station granting views out to sea to the south or over to Horsey Island to the north. Boat trips on the waters near the Naze are available in the summer. Walkers can also alight at Kirby Cross to walk a clockwise circuit of the Naze and coast line taking in the wonderful Naze Tower. Climb the tower and on a clear day you can see Orford in Suffolk and Margate in Kent.

The villages are mainly residential with the nearest pubs being in either Kirby Le Soken or Great Holland. The Ship pub at Gt Holland is just over a mile from the station, a bakery, chemist, convenience store and an Indian restaurant are all within a mile.

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## Wivenhoe

Wivenhoe has plenty of delights to charm residents and visitors alike including a vibrant music, literary, performing and visual art scene. Its history involves fishing, sailing and smuggling. A long line of artists, writers, farmers, shopkeepers and sailing folk have lived here and there is a strong sense of community. There is an attractive park, many wonderful gardens and several places for refreshments. A pretty church stands on the site of the first church built in Saxon times.

The small winding streets of the old village comes to an end at the picturesque quayside where fishing and sailing boats bob at their moorings. The station has an arts, literature and garden project, called Off the Rails, which also runs a free book scheme for travellers to take and exchange.



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## Weeley

The station is about to be revitalised by a new station adopter, plans to create a garden with shrubs and flowers, and pots along the platform, with art work on the old station building.

Weeley is a small village with an eclectic mix of nineteenth century and modern housing. The village pond, now a picture of calm, has a more sinister history as a site where suspected witches were drowned during the famous witch hunts in the sixteenth century.

The village was probably better known for Weeley Hall Wood which is one of the largest ancient woodlands in the county. The Woods belong to the Essex Wildlife Trust who, during the first weekend of May each year, open up to the public, so that they may enjoy the carpet of bluebells which covers almost half the area of wood.

Weeley is also home to two caravan parks which are within easy reach of the railway station and only 10 minutes by train to Clacton-on-Sea.

A large and popular car boot sale takes place just outside the village every Saturday and the Black Boy pub in the village is a very popular choice amongst diners and is rumoured to have been a resting place of choice for Dick Turpin.

Weeley became national news in 1971 with Weeley Rock Festival which attracted 100,000 music fans and bands such as Status Quo, Mungo Jerry and The Pretty Things to the village!

## Thorpe-le-Soken

Thorpe-le-Soken is a crossroads village with an impressive number of high quality shops, restaurants and pubs set amongst an attractive mix of historic buildings including a fine parish church. The railway came to Thorpe late in the 19th century. Thorpe-le-Soken is where the Colchester railway line forks to either Clacton-on-Sea or Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze

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## Frinton-on-Sea

Frinton-on-Sea is probably best known for its magnificent seafront greensward and sandy beach. Here you can escape the stresses of life. Holidaymakers and day-trippers return year after year to this oasis of peace and relaxation. Inside the Trevors line Gates (the area between the railway and the sea) there is just one pub and one fish and chip shop. Yet it hasn't missed the thrust of 21st century development and offers activities for visitors and residents alike.

Crossing Cottage Gardens and Railway Museum adjacent to the station, is a small museum run by Frinton and Walton Heritage Trust showing the life of the crossing keeper and a collection of railway memorabilia from the line. It is usually open on Tuesday mornings. [www.fwheritage.co.uk](http://www.fwheritage.co.uk)

## Walton-on-the-Naze

Walton-on-the-Naze is the final destination on the line. The original station still stands and has been converted into flats. Walton has the second longest pier in Britain which is home to Ten Pin bowling, amusements, thrilling rides, stalls and a good berth for excursion steamers, [www.waltonpier.co.uk](http://www.waltonpier.co.uk).

The old village of Walton is now about nine miles out to sea on the west rocks, its old church having finally fallen into the sea in 1798. The new town grew with the early fad for sea bathing as a way to good health, and today Walton is still a popular holiday resort with miles of clean sandy beaches.



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