



Essex & South Suffolk  
Community Rail Partnership

[esscrp.org.uk](http://esscrp.org.uk)

# Essex and South Suffolk Railway Walks

Volume 2



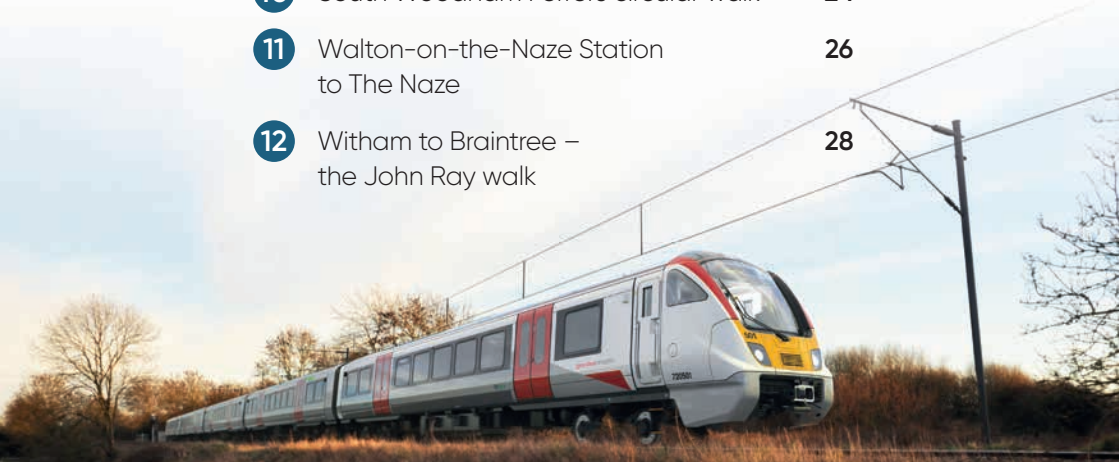
Travel by Train

**Safer | Greener | Healthier**

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Individual walks available with larger print. Download a printable version of each individual walk with larger print. Also handy if you want to carry less on your walk, go to [esscrp.org.uk](https://www.esscrp.org.uk) walks page

# Introduction

Welcome to the second volume of railway walks produced by the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP). As with the first volume, these walks are all designed to start from a railway station and either end at a different railway station or return via a circular walk. They offer the opportunity to explore some of the most beautiful scenery in Essex covered by the six branch lines on the Greater Anglia network which the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership promotes. A lasting impact of the pandemic is the need to value our open spaces, which have been so important in maintaining both physical and mental health.

Taking the train and walking is a great way to visit some of these beautiful locations – sit back, relax and enjoy the views as you travel and avoid the congestion, pollution and parking issues that go with driving your car.

This booklet includes twelve walks of between 2.5 miles and 9 miles. We have

tried to include walks for everyone – families, people new to walking and those who regularly walk.

The 'Planning Your Walk' section gives you the information needed to complete your walk successfully with a suggested time the walk will take, a map reference, useful information and of course where to find refreshments on your walk!

For details of train times call **03457 48 49 50** or visit **[nationalrail.co.uk](https://nationalrail.co.uk)**

For Greater Anglia visit **[greateranglia.co.uk](https://greateranglia.co.uk)**



# Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP) was formed in 1998, with the aim of promoting the six branch lines within Essex.

It sits under a larger umbrella of The Community Rail Network and is fully supported by the Department for Transport, who see community rail as a vital link between the railway and the local community. Community Rail is a growing, unique grassroots movement, connecting people with their railways and stations, delivering social, environmental, and economic benefit.

In the road to recovery from the pandemic this is seen as more important than ever before. Community rail is in a unique position to help communities and transport 'build back better' from the Covid-19 pandemic. Community rail partnerships and groups are eager to do as much as they can to help communities, rail, government and partners to cope with the challenges and seize opportunities.

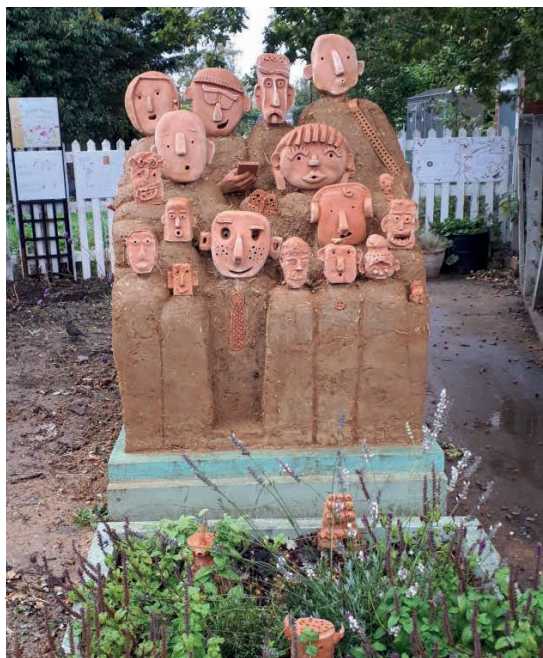
ESSCRP works with Greater Anglia (GA) and helps support GA's Station Adoption initiative, which has become very successful, with most of the 42 branch line stations having one or more station adopters. Many of these stations are unmanned so the station adopters not only improve the station environment but are also the 'eyes and ears' for their station – a vital link for GA and ESSCRP.

Making the stations as welcoming as possible with the assistance of our

amazing volunteers is key to making rail travel attractive once more.

The impact on the environment of car usage was clearly demonstrated during the pandemic when many of us appreciated the quieter roads and the move to more walking and cycling.

Environmental initiatives which ESSCRP have developed include wildflower gardens at stations and the provision of bird boxes and bug boxes. We have also worked in partnership with the Bee Friendly Trust, in particular installing a sculpture at Alresford Station made of cobnuts and covered by a living roof to encourage insect life.







## Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

The Tourism industry suffered hugely during the pandemic and supporting it is vitally important to the economy. Promoting rail use for leisure and tourism is likely to be especially important, with increased homeworking and opportunities to tap into demand for staycationing and healthy outdoor leisure.

Promoting the branch lines entails producing publicity material, promoting the lines on social media and organising special events trains – such as the very successful ‘Bucket and Spade’ trains which take lots of excited families from Colchester to Walton-on-the-Naze to enjoy the coast for the day. The annual ‘Sea Shanty’ train on the Harwich Line is full of swash buckling fun. Other event trains include music trains and Cockney Sing-Along trains.

The Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership is funded by Greater Anglia, Essex County Council, Suffolk County Council, Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Braintree District Council, working together to promote and improve the branch lines. For more information visit our website [www.esscrp.org.uk](http://www.esscrp.org.uk)



# 1 Alresford via Wivenhoe circular walk

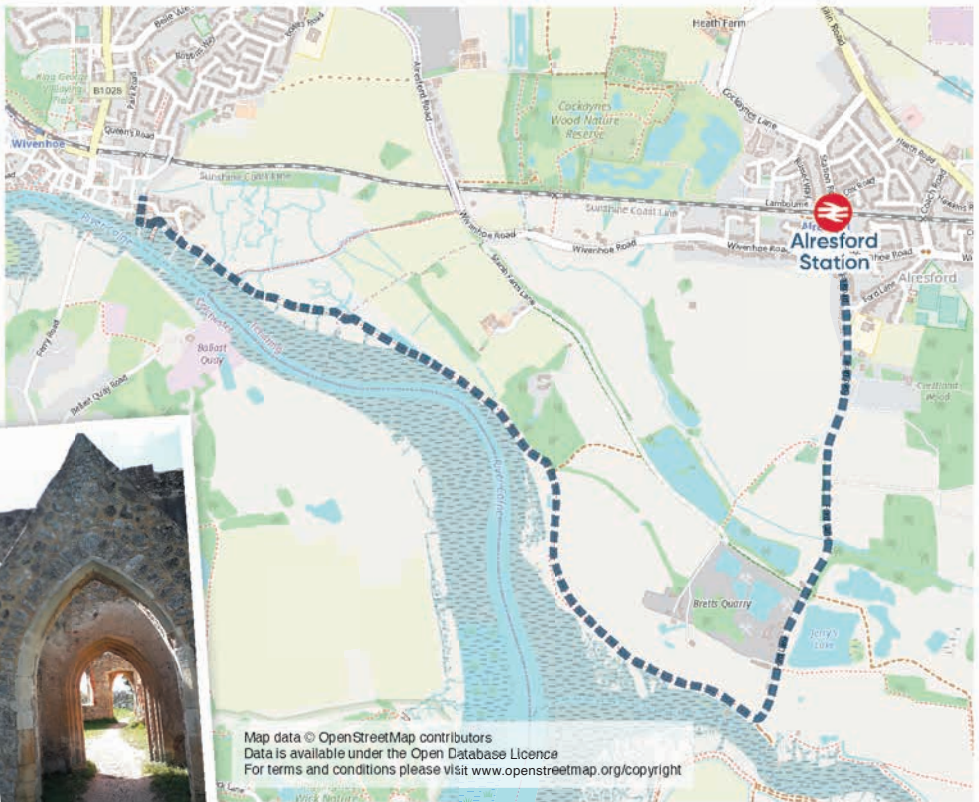
This walk has wonderful views of Alresford Creek and the River Colne. It's a magnificent place for bird watching and is also an opportunity to visit the small attractive riverside town of Wivenhoe with its history of fishing and boat building.

## Directions

1. From Alresford Station, turn right and walk along Station Road. At the crossroads, cross straight over onto Church Road. At the crossroads on your right is a pub called The Pointer which serves food.
2. Carry on down Church Road – you will walk past Alresford Primary School on your left just before the school there is a white brick house which was the original Primary School. The flint building next to it was also part of the old Primary School.
3. As you continue your walk on the left is the old Vicarage.
4. On the right you will see a turning with a gravel path and a memorial cross. Wander down and you'll come to St. Peter's Church which was circa 1320 and destroyed by fire in 1971. Take a while to read the information board and to wander through the Church and its grounds.
5. Walk back out of the Church and continue right down Church Lane (at the church there are other footpath signs which you may choose to walk another day).
6. As you're walking down Church Lane on the left you'll see the entrance to Alresford Hall and next to that is the old lodge belonging to the Hall.
7. On your left you'll see a campsite, Plumton Farm and holiday lodges with a lake.
8. On the right you'll see the working quarry which is a hive of activity, and in front of you you'll see the wonderful view of Alresford Creek and the River Colne ahead (This is about 25 minutes from the start of the walk).
9. Opposite the quarry there's a footpath opposite 1 Ford Cottages which will take you towards Alresford Mill and Brightlingsea Church.
10. When you're at the creek look left and in the distance you'll see Brightlingsea Church with a footpath that takes you there (not part of this walk). There's a seat to your right with an information board about Alresford Creek and the surrounding area, you need to follow the footpath on the right.
11. A few metres along the footpath you can see the old quarry workings where they used to load the barges with sand and ballast, and to your left there would have been a road that would have taken you to a ford where horses and carts would have travelled across the bridge to Brightlingsea.
12. You will see two small pylons about 6 feet tall, which is part of the bridge where the railway track used to go across the river to Brightlingsea.
13. After 10 minutes there's another seat where you can look across to the River Colne looking at the estuary birds and to your right is Wivenhoe. The path to the left would have been the old railway line. Continue along the footpath and at this point you are literally on the path of the old railway line. The path is a single track path with plenty of opportunities to leave it to sit by the river.
14. As you wander along the footpath to your right is another path that will eventually take you back to the Church (mentioned earlier). Ignore that path and continue straight towards Wivenhoe.
15. The footpath from Alresford Creek to Wivenhoe will take you a leisurely 30 minutes. As you approach Wivenhoe look across the river and in the distance you will see Rowhedge and the flood barriers in front of you.

## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 3 miles.
  - Hilly in places, and public footpaths can be muddy if the weather has been wet.
  - All paths are also cyclist routes. The initial part of the route is on the road so be aware of vehicles.
  - The footpath is narrow in places and you need warm clothes because there can be cold winds from the river.
  - Food is available at The Pointer pub. There are also pubs and cafes in Wivenhoe.
16. The walk along the footpath by the river is a magnificent walk for birdwatchers so you can look out for seasonal and migratory birds.
17. You arrive into Wivenhoe through Old Wivenhoe and on the right you'll pass Wivenhoe Sailing Club. Walk past the Sailing Club and you'll see houses in front of you which were originally Cooks shipyard. Take a moment to read the information boards that tell you the history of the area.
18. At this point it's your opportunity to meander through the lanes in Wivenhoe and walk back the way you came, or perhaps explore the other footpaths you passed on your way. There are pubs, cafes and seating areas looking over the river. There is a railway station in Wivenhoe where you can get a train back to Alresford or back into Colchester.



## 2 Battlesbridge Station walk

An enjoyable walk with the added benefit of visiting Battlesbridge Antique Centre, with lots of things to see and lots of places to eat. Grab a cup of tea or coffee and a cake of course.

With over 80 dealers housed in a variety of old buildings and courtyards, the centre is open 7 days a week from 10am to 5pm. The area is picturesque and the bridge in the middle of the area is a good place to look over the tidal River Crouch.

It takes its name from the Battaille family; it was mentioned in a 1351 document as the settlement of Bataillesbregge. This confirms that there was a bridge as far back as the 14th Century, although the present-day iron structure is much later, dating back to 1872. It was the second iron bridge, the first was struck and damaged by a passing steam traction engine.

A great place to travel to by train especially as the car parks get full rather quickly and by midday it is hard to park. Enjoy the stress free visit and a nice walk, a wander around the centre and a cup of tea/coffee.

### Directions

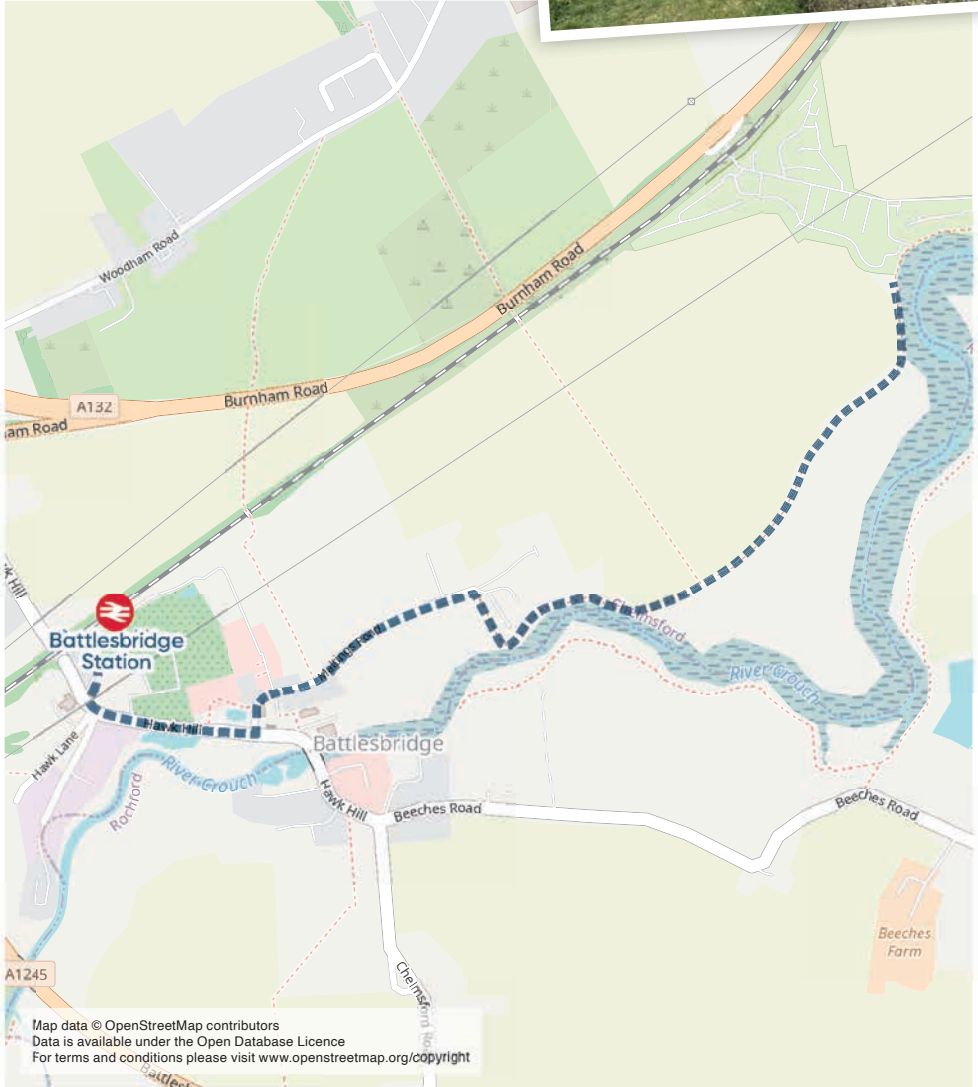
1. Leave the station and at the end of the road turn left walking towards the Antique Centre, so decisions have to be made as to whether you stop for refreshments before or after your walk!
2. Take the next road on the left called Maltings Road, follow this road which turns into a country lane with no pavements so watch out for traffic on this road.
3. When you get to the end of the lane you come to Gosses Farm directly in front of you, look to the right and you will see the public rights of way sign and the steps up to the walk.
4. Follow this path following the river for the first 100 metres where you find to your left a bench on a higher level, here you take the higher path, slightly away from the river.
5. Follow the path along the field edge right up to Hayes Caravan path, here you will have to turn back on yourself and retrace your steps.





## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately a 3 mile walk taking you 2 hours at a leisurely stroll.
- Not suitable for buggies so good mobility needed with good walking shoes.
- Refreshments available in Battlesbridge Antique Centre.



## 3

## Billericay Station to Norsey Wood Nature Reserve

This is an interesting and enjoyable walk with lots to see along the way. Norsey Wood Nature Reserve has a wide variety of plants and animal life and provides suitable homes for some threatened and rare species like the dormouse and pipistrelle bat.

The wood covers 165 acres of ancient mixed coppiced woodland. It is a designated local nature reserve and site of special scientific interest.

The wood has some notable historical features, a prehistoric track, a Bronze Age burial mound, a Medieval Deerbank and WW1 training trenches.

There is a managed tree felling programme within the woods which you can see in the clearings. This is called coppicing, a system where areas of the woodland are felled on a regular basis, the timber is then sold as crop. The cutting does not kill the tree but encourages the stumps, or stools, to produce numerous young shoots which mature to form many trunks per stool instead of the original single trunk from the uncoppiced tree.

The wood has information boards, toilets and a picnic area.



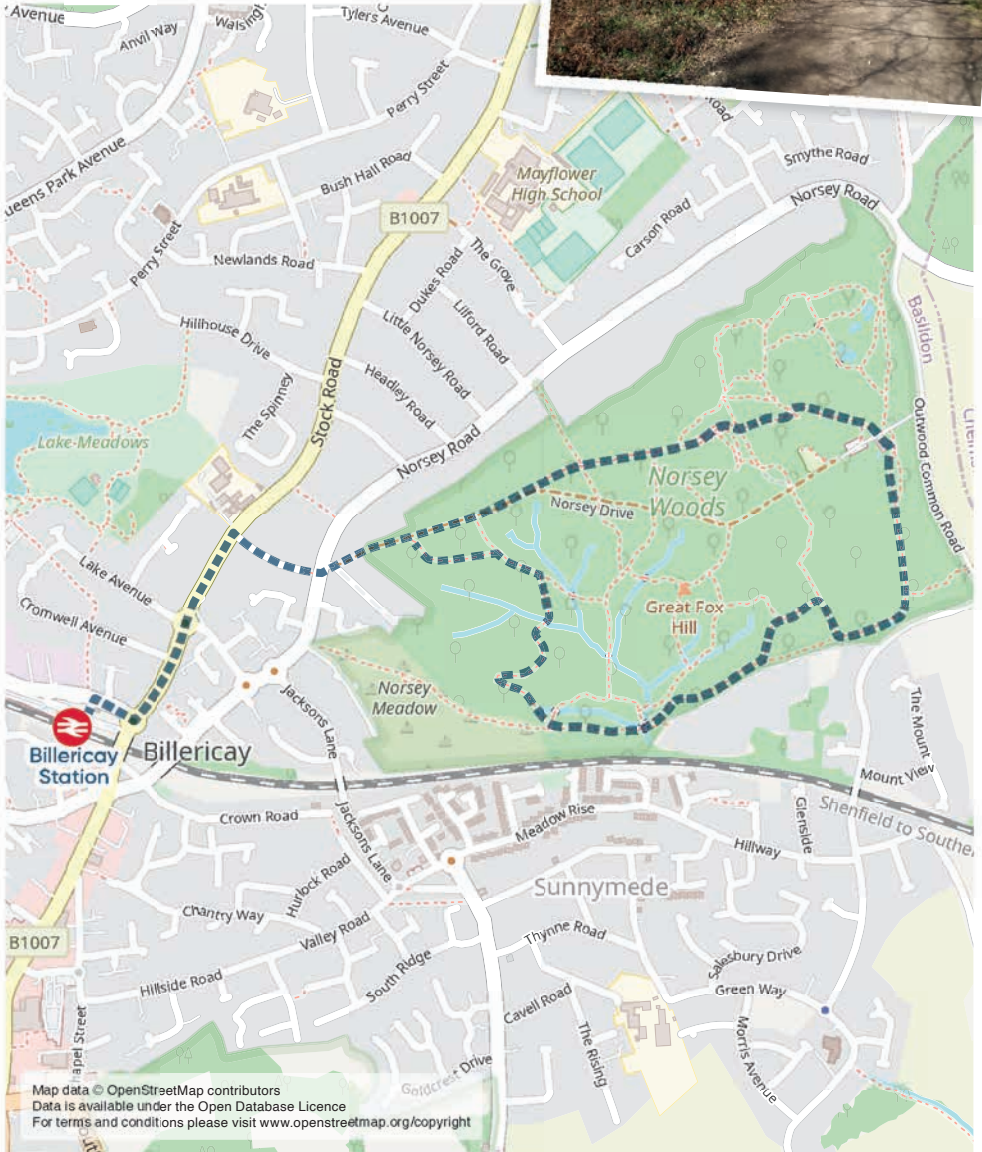
### Directions

1. Leave Billericay Station from the front door and turn right. Walk out of the forecourt and turn right on to Radford Way. Use the crossing and walk up to the roundabout.
2. At the roundabout turn left on to Stock Road. Walk along and cross the road, using the crossing, just after the mini roundabout.
3. Take the third right hand road, which is St John's Road.
4. At the end of this road is a short footpath which takes you through to Norsey Road. You need to cross this road and almost immediately, take the road, directly opposite, which is Deerbank Road.
5. Approximately 50 feet down this road, you will find an open area leading to the gate to Norsey Wood clearly marked.
6. Once in the wood you will find a map along the path, showing the longer trail or a shortened more accessible trail.
7. For the long walk follow the red marker signs which will lead you to the information area, toilets and picnic area.
8. Within the walk you will find an area with ready-made wigwams, which is a great area for kids to play.



## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 3 miles.
- Allow 2 hours to complete this walk.
- Not suitable for a buggy from this entrance to Norsey Wood.



# 4

## Witham to Maldon – Blackwater Rail Trail

A circular walk with a difference! Catch the train to Witham, then follow the Blackwater Rail Trail to Maldon and catch the bus back to Witham for your journey home. The track closely follows the former railway line between Witham and Maldon. Some sections have to deviate from the former line and occasionally have to follow the road.

### Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 8 miles, allow 4 hours.
- Most of the track is straight easy terrain, dog-friendly.
- Please check the bus timetables before travelling. At time of writing they are circa every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday but no Sunday service. The bus service is the number 90 from Tesco Store Stop 1 at Maldon to Witham train station Albert Road entrance.

### Directions

For the first stage of the walk there are two options:

EITHER

1. From Witham railway station exit the car park along Easton Road.
2. At end of Easton Road turn left into Collingwood Road
3. At the roundabout take the first exit onto The Avenue
4. Turn left into Avenue Road
5. At the end cross over into Chess Lane
6. Turn right into Blackwater Rail Trail. Follow the Rail Trail path to Bridge Street

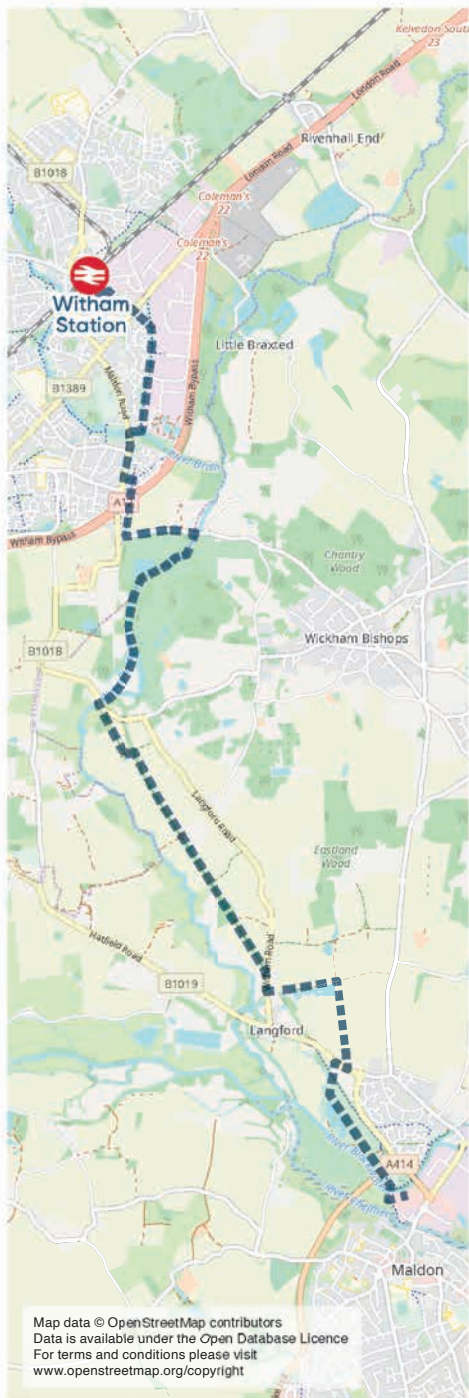
OR

7. From Witham railway station exit the car park along Easton Road.
8. Go straight over the roundabout into Guithavon Valley.
9. Cross the road (Bridge Street) where the path continues.

10. The path passes a large tree with several tree stumps around it. The main path then bends left with a bridge over the river but don't take this, keep straight with the river on your left hand side.
11. The River Walk ends on Bridge Street.
12. From Bridge Street you cross over the road to turn right along the road for a while before turning left into Laurence Avenue.
13. Turn right into Maldon Road.
14. Turn left into Constance Close.
15. Turn left on to Blue Mills Hill. Walk along Blue Mills Hill. The public footpath is on the right shortly after the humpbacked bridge – take care when crossing it.
16. The public footpath skirts along the golf course alongside the river. At the end of the golf course keep going straight on alongside the river. (This can be muddy in wet weather). You will pass a wooden trestle viaduct, the only remaining wooden viaduct in the country which is a 'Scheduled Monument'. Take a moment to read the information boards there.



17. At the end of this path turn left and cross the road. Walk along the road until you pick up the path again on the right. Follow this until the end (it can be flooded when it has been raining) and then cross over the main road (Witham Road).
18. The path then takes you around Conag's Farm (the signpost is at the entrance to the farm, slightly further down the road).
19. Follow the path until you see the reservoir and turn right after you pass it. Follow the path and at the bottom of the path turn right onto the road.
20. Turn left, crossing the road just before the humpback bridge and the road sign for Langford, to join the public footpath. (you will see the signpost). This is now open green space. Turn left into the dip in the green space and follow alongside the railway path until you reach the entrance to it.
21. The railway path eventually comes out at the edge of Oak Tree Meadow Park. From there, follow the public footpath following the canal under the road bridge.
22. From there you will see the edge of Tesco's carpark. Cross over the green bridge to reach it.

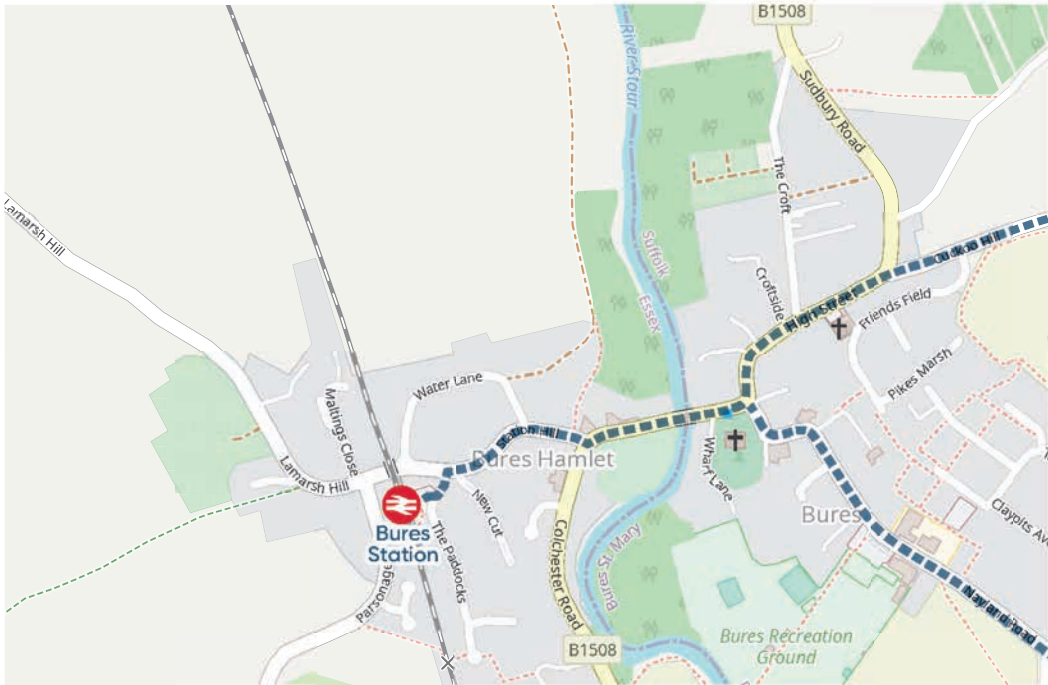


# 5 Bures Dragon walk

This is definitely a walk with a difference! Enjoy the rolling hills of the Suffolk countryside from the benches which are sited at a great vantage point behind a disused church. And as if that wasn't attraction enough already, view the Bures Dragon on the side of the hill in front of you! Created as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the chalk outline commemorates an ancient Bures legend, when a dragon terrorised the village, and the servants of the local knight, Sir Richard Waldegrave, were unable to kill it. The dragon is on private land but can be viewed from behind St. Stephen's Chapel. This walk is circular, along roads and public footpaths.

## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 2.5 miles.
- Allow 2 hours.
- Refreshments available in Bures.



## Directions

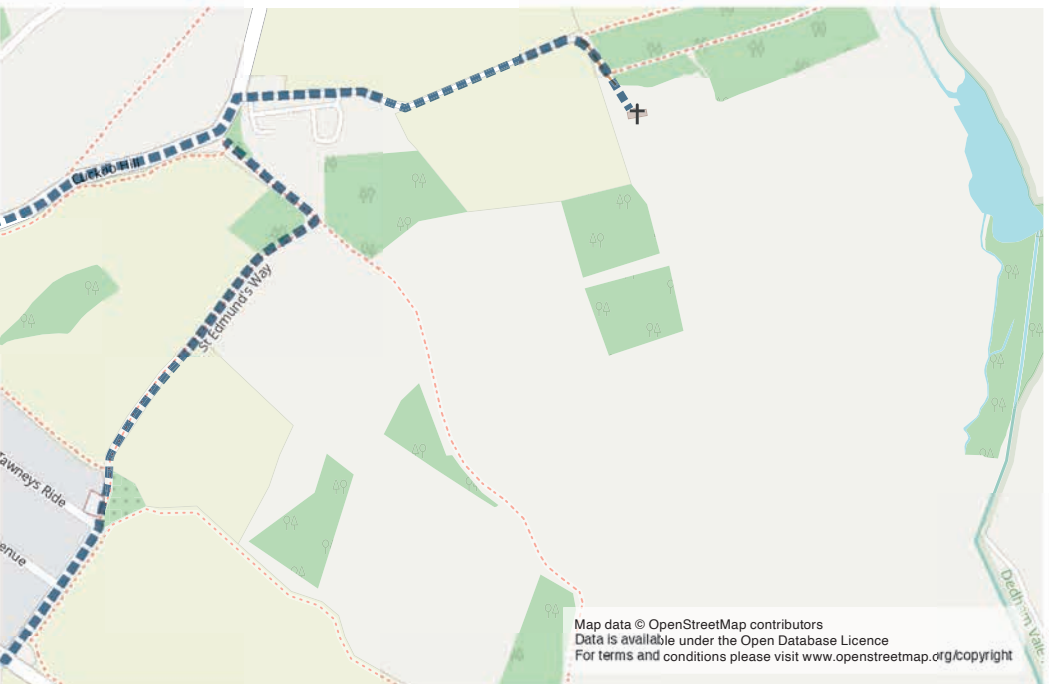
1. From Bures station, walk down Station Hill and turn left into Bridge Street. At the end of Bridge Street, after crossing the river, turn left into the High Street (notice the pretty Tudor decorations on the building opposite the Old Bakery).
2. Walk along the High Street and when it bends to the left carry straight on up Cuckoo Hill.
3. Keep walking up the hill until you reach Fysh House Farm. Turn right into the farm along the public footpath, which is signposted. There is a sign from the road to St Stephen's Chapel.
4. Keep on the public footpath until you reach the chapel. Walk around the back to enjoy the view of the dragon.

EITHER

5. Retrace your steps to return to the station.

OR

6. Make it a circular walk by taking a different route.
7. Walk back along the public footpath to Cuckoo Hill. Turn left onto Cuckoo Hill and then take the first left onto another public footpath.
8. Follow the footpath to Daisy's Wood where you turn right and follow the footpath down. At the bottom of the footpath carry straight along the road until you reach Nayland Road. Turn right onto Nayland Road.
9. Follow the road along until you reach Bridge Street where you turn left. Carry on past Bures Common until you turn right up Station Hill. You will see the station car park ahead of you.



## 6 Bures to Sudbury

This is a beautiful walk on the wonderfully well way-marked Stour Valley Path through the quintessentially English scenery which inspired Gainsborough and Constable.

### Directions

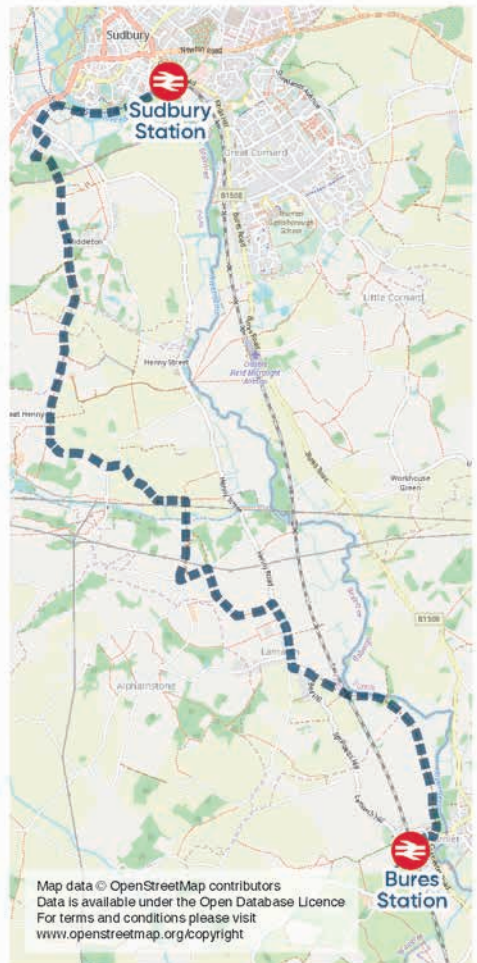
1. Start at Bures Railway Station. Turn left out of Bures Railway Station. Go right down Station Hill.
2. Just before the T-junction with Colchester Road, take the footpath left down a wide drive by a house (chimney with door in it!), waymarked St Edmund's Way and Stour Valley Path (SVP). This leads along a wall, then turns right to become a broad track with meadows (left). Where the track bends sharp right, follow footpath straight ahead. Walk alongside the Stour, but don't be tempted to go over the bridge.
3. The path leads up the slope past a WWII pill box to the single-track railway line.
4. Cross with care. Join the small lane, down past thatched cottages to a junction. Bear right along road signposted for Sudbury. Go past the Lamarsh Lion community pub (left) and turn right at junction to head through the village to reach Holy Innocents Church.
5. Soon after the church, follow SVP way-markers on the left to go steeply uphill, stopping to enjoy views back to the church. The path bears right at top of incline, where there is a bench. Follow it to meet a lane at a gate. Turn left. Walk along to next footpath (right) opposite a road junction.
6. Admire the views towards Sudbury before going through the gate and heading diagonally across the bumpy field to another gate in bottom righthand corner. Turn left at farm track, past paddocks and Valley Farm. Follow the track straight ahead to footpath in the left-hand corner which goes first to a footbridge (left), then turns right to follow the field edge before going across the field very much uphill to steps which lead through a hedge-gap.
7. Turn left (ie. Ignore the footpath straight ahead) to meet a track at Great Hickbush. Turn right and enjoy the magnificent views towards Sudbury by the pair of great oaks and of Henry church spire from Little Hickbush before reaching the road.
8. At road junction go straight ahead, taking the road until you reach the footpath to the church (right – still SVP).
9. The path leads through the churchyard, crosses a lane, goes down alongside garages belonging to The Old Hatchery and finally opens out into a field. Follow the field-margin path straight on, cross a footbridge and continue straight uphill (hedge on left). At the top of the hill, at the junction between two fields, ignore the path that crosses and proceed straight on downhill along a wide track, so that the hedge is on your right. At the bottom, pass large farm buildings on your right and continue straight ahead across the field up to the brow of the hill and crossroads of paths.



## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 7 miles, allow 4 hours.
- The walk is on Green lanes/byways, field-edge and cross-meadow paths, some tarmac roads or pavement. Steps, gates, stiles. Waymarked – (St Edmunds Way) Stour Valley Path.
- Refreshments at Bures and Sudbury.

10. Go straight ahead, first downhill along a slightly sunken path then up across a field and follow path through a wooded area, high above Sudbury. Take care – path is narrow with tree roots and potential drops. It eventually comes out in housing. Bear right along a road with a play area to your right. Turn left at the junction and then almost immediately right, briefly downhill to the next T-junction. Turn right and you will see a fenced alley across the road with a small sign indicating a public footpath. Follow downhill emerging through a flight of steps to the road at the bottom of the valley. Cross the road and turn left, walking with a meadow on your right partly hidden by a fringe of trees. After a few hundred metres, you come to the entrance to Kone Vale Park on your right. Enter and follow the path through the park.
11. Walk some distance through the park along the path. Finally, you reach an old railway embankment. The path swings round to the right to continue towards some water meadows but instead go left to climb up the path, with metal handrails, to reach a broad path along the old railway embankment.
12. Turn right along the path for views across the water meadows and town. You cross above the River Stour with bucolic views, before reaching a small canal which connects some original commercial wharfs with the River Stour and which now also houses Sudbury Canoe Club. Continue onwards soon arriving at the leisure centre and railway station to your left.

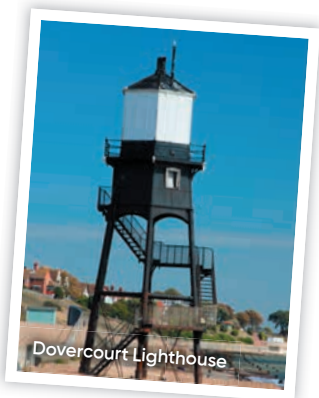


# 7 Dovercourt Station to Dovercourt Bay

Dovercourt Bay is a tranquil family seaside resort with gentle shelving sand and shingle beaches near Harwich. A wide range of family activities are available along the promenade.

## Directions

1. As you leave Dovercourt Station there is the station garden to your left which has benches and is looked after by Dovercourt Station volunteers. Across the road you will see a finger post, take the right hand fork (fingerpost sign to the beach) and walk up Kingsway. You will pass a coffee shop, a bakery and food shops. Cross over the High Street, continuing straight on up Kingsway and you will see a statue of Queen Victoria ahead of you which is a ten minute walk from the station.
2. Interesting features in Kingsway are the Kingsway mural on the left which depicts people having fun on the sandy beach and was completed in 2020. After the mural is Kingsway Hall which has a history as a non-conformist Church and is now a Community Arts Centre.
3. On the right is The Bottle Kiln, a pub and eatery situated in the old Co-op building which has an art deco style facade. Much of Kingsway was given over to brickworks and kilns – in 1881 it had 12 cement kilns and drying flues as well as 14 bottle kilns.
4. When you get to the statue of Queen Victoria you will have a brilliant view of the North Sea, the promenade and beach which stretches to Harwich on the left and around Dovercourt Bay to the right. Take a minute to read the information board next to the statue.
5. Look left and you will see the vast cranes of Felixstowe Docks and Landguard Fort. Look right and you will see two low lighthouses in the distance which are often photographed at sunset and look stunning when the tide is in or out. This is the direction you are heading.
6. There are several routes down to the promenade and beach, some more accessible than others.
7. The most accessible and recommended route is reached by walking left for less than a minute in the direction of Felixstowe cranes. You will see a covered seating area, and just beyond a sloping walkway to the right down to the promenade. Before making your way to the promenade take a moment to sit and watch the containers sailing past on their way to the Docks. There are plenty of other benches on the grass area on the left where you can sit and admire the view.
8. When you reach the lower promenade turn right towards the low lighthouses (if you turn left it would take you via the promenade into Harwich).
9. It takes about 20 minutes to walk to the low lighthouses, walking along a wide, flat promenade with benches to rest on the way, or you may wish to walk along the sandy beach depending on the tide. There are plenty of interesting things to look for on the beach including, the dark



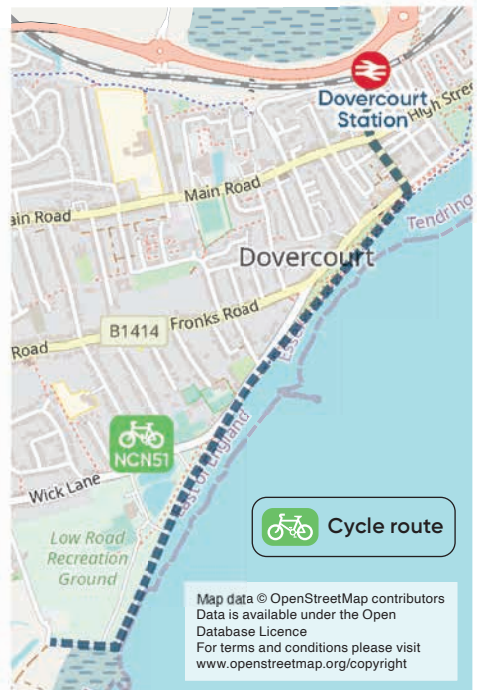
## Planning Your Walk

- Approximate length: minimum of 2 miles circular walk or an option of a longer walk to take in Harwich.
- This walk is part of the North Sea Cycle Route (51) and shares the wide promenade with cycles. Suitable for families and children's buggies. Wheelchair accessibility may be limited to using the pavement running parallel to, and above the promenade.
- Cafes near Dovercourt Station and also on the promenade.

and leathery mermaids purses which are the used egg cases of sharks and skates created to develop and protect their babies. You will also see interesting shells and stones. Don't forget to look back at the changing views of the Docks. On a clear day look across the horizon to see Walton-on-the-Naze tower.

10. When you reach the lighthouses you'll find a small information plaque on the wall on the right. These lighthouses consist of a high light and a low light which formed a pair of leading lights so that ships could see one light above another and steer a safe course to the harbour.
11. At this point across the road on the right there are toilets, a café, a roller skating rink and seating areas.
12. Continue along the promenade where you will see lots of colourful beach huts. Behind the beach huts there is a lake where you can hire boats, seated picnic areas, a skateboard park and a leisure centre with a swimming pool. These can be accessed through a path between the beach huts.
13. There was a Warners Holiday camp in Dovercourt and between 1979 and 1987 it was known as Maplins Holiday Camp and was used to film "Hi de Hi."
14. On your return to the station you can either meander back the way you came or use the upper path.

15. Once back at your starting point on the promenade you can continue for about 15 minutes to Harwich. Here you can visit the Ha'penny Pier which is one of the UK's only surviving working wooden piers. You'll also find cafes and toilets and an information centre on the Pier. There are also a number of historic attractions. You can also get the train back from Harwich Station which is a two minute ride from Dovercourt Station.



# 8

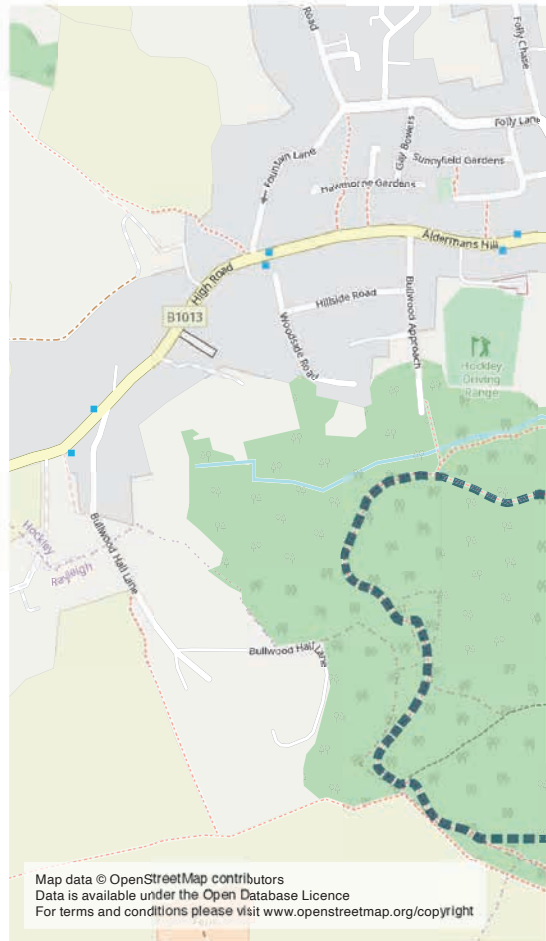
## Hockley Station to Hockley Woods Circular and return to Hockley Station

A wonderful walk only ten minutes from Hockley Station. Covering over 130 hectares, Hockley Woods are the largest remaining area of the wild wood which covered Essex after the Ice Age 10,000 years ago. The woods have lots of different trees, Oak and Sweet Chestnut, Birch; Hornbeam; Willow, Hazel and Ash. Many of the plants in the wood, such as the Wild Service Tree, Wood Anemone, Wood Spurge and Cow-wheat will only grow on the undisturbed soils of ancient woods.

Hockley Woods have survived because they have been coppice managed as a valuable resource.

### Directions

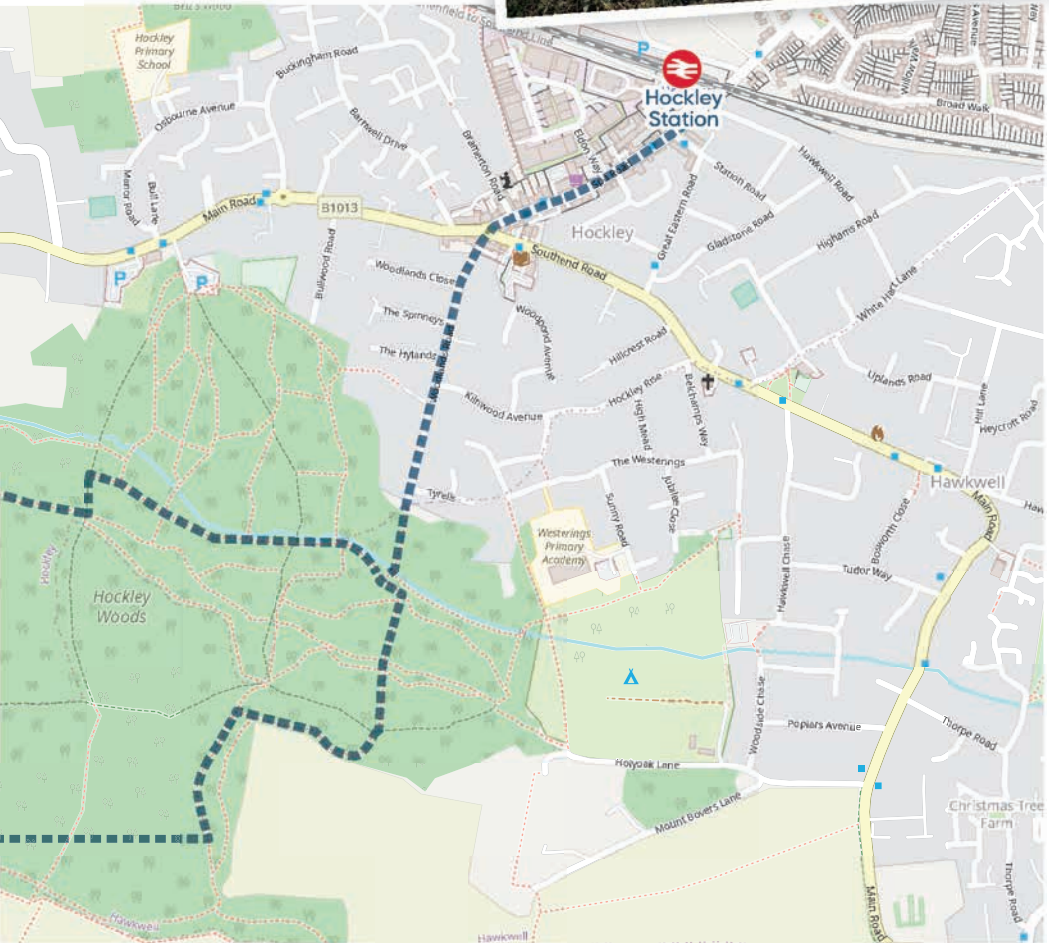
1. Leave the station and walk towards the main road and turn left
2. Walk up the High Street as far as the Spar roundabout
3. Cross the road on the crossing just outside the shop Potters.
4. Take the road directly in front of you once you cross the road, which is Woodlands Road.
5. Walk along this road until you get to the very end where you will see a pathway into the woods directly in front of you.
6. Join the main pathway once inside the wood.
7. This is a circular path which will take you around the wood, although there are lots of paths across the woods.
8. Children can enjoy the woods where there are areas that children can build dens with branches laying around. Also, the different trees are great for tree rubbings.
9. Make your way back to the path that takes you back to Woodlands Road.
10. You can then retrace your steps back to the station.





## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 3.5 miles, allow 3 hours.
- The walk will not be suitable for a pushchair.
- Dogs allowed.
- Hockley Woods opens at 7am and close at 6.30pm.



# 9

## Mistley – Manningtree walk and return

A walk in this striking coastal town with stunning views of the River Stour, an area steeped in history. Mistley is the village where Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General, was reputed to have lived and according to legend owning the Mistley Inn.

### Directions

1. Walk out of Mistley Station and turn left down the hill. On your right you'll have amazing views of the River Stour and the banks beyond. The boundary line for Suffolk is half way across the estuary so you are in Essex looking across to Suffolk. If the tide is out you'll see an old wreck in the estuary.
2. As you walk down the hill you'll see the Edme Malt Extract works which has been in Mistley for many years and you'll smell the malt which changes depending on what they are brewing. You will notice the tall iconic tower with Edme on it.
3. You'll pass a public footpath sign on the left which goes straight through the Edme factory which you may want to explore, however for this walk continue walking until you get to The Thorn eatery on your left.
4. On the right you'll see a water fountain known as "the swan on the pond". If you cross over at this point you can walk down to the water front and admire the views.
5. Cross back across the road to The Thorn and turn left down The Green and on the side of The Thorn there is an information board about the Witchfinder General. Continue walking down The Green to the green on the right. Walk diagonally across the green and this will take you to the footpath which you walk down for about 10 minutes to St Mary and St Michael Church. On your left is Mistley Cricket Club where you'll see cricket being played on a Saturday afternoon or evening.
6. At the end of the footpath look back and you'll see the Edme tower behind you.
7. Turn right down the hill towards Mistley Towers English Heritage buildings, which have an information board in front of them.
8. After looking at the towers turn right and walk along The Walls with the River Stour on your right with lots of swans which is what Mistley is famous for. If you are a keen bird watcher there are lots of migratory birds.
9. On the left you'll see Mistley Farm Park. At the end of The Walls (about ½ mile) there's a small beach and when the tide is out you'll often see children paddling and playing in the sand.



## Planning Your Walk

- This is an accessible walk with lots of seating areas.
- Approximately 2 miles depending on what areas you choose to explore.
- It is a walk on the level, without climbing or ascents (apart from the footpath at The Green. However when you are at The Thorn you can continue to Mistley Towers rather than take the footpath).
- Public toilets are in Manningtree. There are no toilets at Mistley Station.

10. You approach Manningtree Town just beyond the sea wall, follow the road as it bends to the left and you enter the town past The Crown pub which has a garden overlooking the estuary. The town has cafes and local shops. Meander through the town and when you come to the crossroads at South Street the choice is yours go left and explore the side streets or right back to the water front. Half a mile ahead is Manningtree train station.

11. At these crossroads look back and you'll see the Manningtree Ox high on the wall with a Shakespearian quote "that roasted Manningtree ox with a pudding in his belly."
12. Wander back to Mistley Station along the sea wall or take time to explore the footpaths around Manningtree and Mistley.



# 10 South Woodham Ferrers circular walk

A fabulous walk taking in views over the River Crouch, also passing through the Woodham Fenn.

Divided by the railway line, the southern side of the reserve is saltmarsh that transitions into rough grassland. The land was originally donated in the 12th century by the Lord of the Manor to the community to graze animals. Now, Essex Wildlife Trust works in partnership with South Woodham Town Council to manage the nature reserve, which lies within a much larger area of common land.

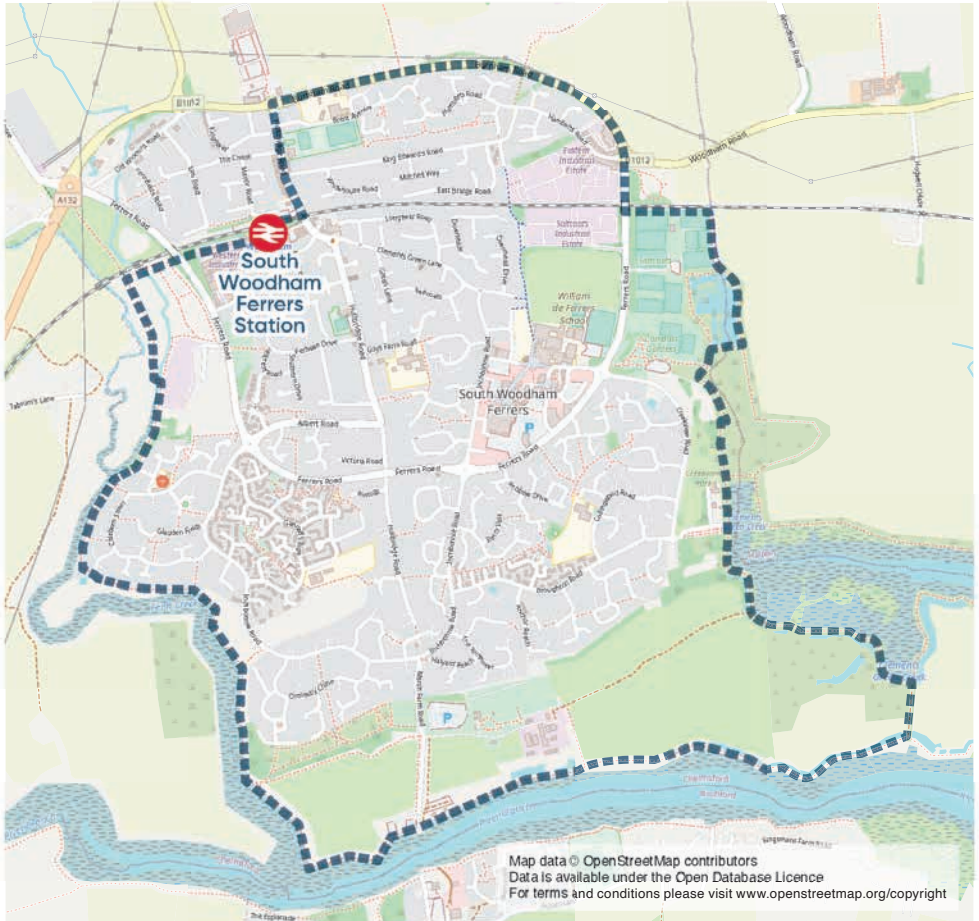
## Directions

1. From the station car park turn left and walk along Hullbridge Road, past the village hall and at the top of the road you come to the roundabout. Cross the road and turn right to walk along the path on the Burnham Road.
2. This part of the walk is walking along a busy B road and is noisy, but once you get past this part of the walk which should take you no longer than 15 minutes you start walking along some beautiful countryside which is well worth the noisy walk.
3. You will come to another roundabout which you cross straight over. You are now on Ferrers Road. You are now walking towards the road bridge where you are going to cross the road. Look for the public footpath sign leading down to concrete steps – this is where you leave the traffic behind.
4. You are now walking along side the railway line on your left and the Saltcoats Park on your right.
5. When you reach the embankment turn right and follow the path. You are now walking alongside Clements Creek.
6. On this walk which winds around inlets from the River Crouch you will enjoy beautiful views over some fantastic countryside. Watch out for several bird species. At different times of the year you will see Bullfinches, Small Teal Ducks, Rock Pipits and Common Snipe.
7. The path eventually joins the sea wall here you turn right in a westerly direction, further along you will walk past the South Woodham Yacht Club
8. Keep following the path which ends up on a gravel path at the back of residential houses. This will lead you to a wider path at this point, turn right out on to the road but then immediately turn left on to the public footpath which is clearly marked.
9. Follow this path alongside the Fenn Creek, turning left over the metal bridge and go through the metal gate where you will find yourself in a Site for Scientific interest.
10. You will eventually come to a crossing over the railway line, take care crossing here as it's a live railway line with trains passing regularly.
11. Once you have crossed, immediately turn right over the metal bridge. Walk round the mound and head for the concrete subway where you walk underneath, immediately turn right and walk straight along the public footpath, ignore the housing estate entrance.
12. This footpath will come out to Station Approach. Continue walking straight along the path and you will find the entrance to the side of the station car park.



## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 6.5 miles, allow 3.5 hours.
- On a Wednesday / Saturday and Sunday just after the Yacht Club you will find Phoebes a mobile catering van where you can purchase teas, coffees and snacks.
- It does not affect the walk but you may like to choose to take the walk when the water is in although it is enjoyable at all times of the day.



# Walton-on-the-Naze Station to The Naze

The Hanoverian tower, more commonly known as the Naze Tower, was built in 1720 and is situated at the start of the open area of The Naze, which is an unspoilt headland of heath, saltmarshes and sandy beaches – its 70 foot high cliffs are sadly being eroded away. It originally housed a beacon and was a navigational tower, constructed to assist ships on this part of the coast. It is a Grade II listed building of unique architectural and historic interest and is the only one of its kind in existence. It has been considered as being in the top five per cent of heritage buildings and one of the top twenty listed lighthouses in the country.

Visitors can climb the 111-step spiral staircase to the top of the 86-foot (26m) tower for a 360 degree view of the beach and countryside. The Naze Tower features a museum with exhibits about the tower, the ecology and geology of The Naze, and the coastal erosion problem. The tower also features a private art gallery on six floors with changing exhibits several times a year and a tea room. A great treat after your walk.



## Directions

1. Leaving the station turn right and follow the path, you will cross the road on the right and carry on walking you will see a brown tourist sign with an arrow highlighting the way to the pier, beach and town centre.
2. The pavement disappears for a short while. You may need to cross the road or take special care walking on the road. The pavement resumes continue walking and when you round the corner you will see the sea.
3. Basically, you will be following the path with the sea to your right. You can either walk on the promenade, or higher up on the road level. If walking with a buggy, this maybe more accessible as the promenade twists and turns.
4. The promenade and road level pavement will turn right on to East Terrace, you continue the walk.
5. When you get to the end of East Terrace, you have two options:
  - Option 1: to follow the promenade which has you walking along the line of beach huts. You continue walking and ahead of you see a bend. Follow this and take the slope up and curve round on the higher level. Continue walking along the sea wall until you get to some steep concrete steps. Take these steps up to the open greenswards and The Naze.
  - Option 2: which is a more accessible route and can easily take a buggy. When you get to the end of East Terrace, take the footpath that joins you to Cliff Parade. Walk along this road which leads you on to an area of grass. Carry on the walk and when you get to the end of this grass area, take the road Naze Park Road. You will then come to a junction at which, take the road on the right named Sunny Point. This takes you the greensward area where you find The Naze.
6. You can go up The Naze which is open daily from 10am to 5pm. The area has three different cafes and public toilets are available.

## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 3 miles.
- Approximate time 2 hours return trip.
- Tea room in The Naze Tower.



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# 12

## Witham to Braintree – the John Ray walk

This walk was established to commemorate the life of John Ray, born in Braintree and a pioneer in English natural history. It is a 9 mile linear walk joining Witham and Braintree stations, making it ideal to use the train to complete.

Further information at: [https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/john\\_ray\\_walk.pdf](https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/john_ray_walk.pdf)



### Directions

1. Exit Witham railway station onto Albert Road, turning right. At the bottom of the road you will see Cut Throat Lane to the right, and a John Ray (JR) sign. Cross the pedestrian crossing over the railway. The Cut Throat Lane allotments are on the right. Turn right at the end of the path, waymarked JR.
2. At the end of the path take the first left alongside the hedge, also waymarked (ignore the path immediately by the railway).
3. Cross the field and take the path at the far right side, following some pipes at the edge. Turn left after the pipes and climb up to the field.
4. Go to the left hand corner of the field. Exit by number 46 Holly Walk (you can't see a street sign here).
5. At the end of Holly Walk turn right. Pass shops on the right (ignoring a path to the right before the shops).
6. Cross the road into Flemming Way. Make a slight right passing number 27 Evans Way. Keep the new houses (Brown Close then Driver Way) on your left. On your right there is a playground then a field.
7. Turn right into Rectory Lane, designated a Quiet Road. At the end cross Rickstones Road and pick up the public footpath.
8. Follow the public footpath to Temple Lane, Silver End. Turn left along Temple Lane, skirting behind the Visitor Centre and Café at Cressing Temple. The footpath emerges on the B1018 Witham Road (busy). Cross the road and the footpath picks up in front. Cross the railway. (The footpath may be ploughed, as when we walked).
9. Turn right at the end of the footpath and over the footbridge. Follow the footpath to Station Road, White Notley, then turn right. (White Notley railway station is further along the road; out of sight).
12. Turn left onto Essex Way at a sign for "Fambridge Hall". The JR walk is signposted to the left after passing the Hall, then there is another left turn, also signposted.
13. Arrive at fork. Take the left path (not signposted). Keep left and cross a footbridge with a stile. Follow the path through willows with trees in protective casings. You are aiming for another footbridge, signposted John Ray. Cross over towards Pennett's Farm. Turn left, keeping the farm to your right.
17. Turn right at the end of the road. Turn left into Pole Lane (no pavements but a quiet road).

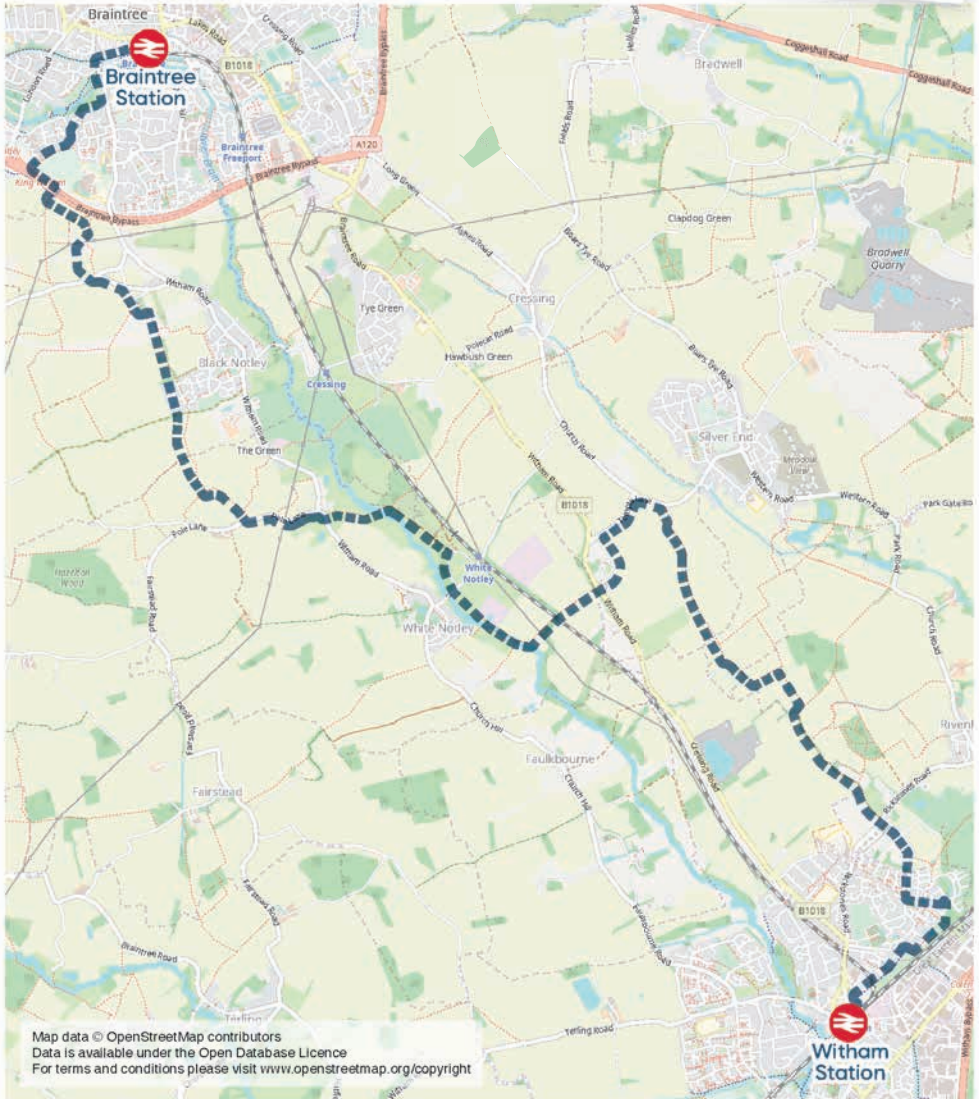


15. Take the second public footpath on your right, signposted JR way. Go straight on passing another JR sign. Keep left of the hedge and round a large field to the hill brow.
  16. Turn right – there is a JR sign but paths go in two directions so direction is not clear. Follow the hedge and go straight on through a gap in the hedge, where there is a JR sign.
  17. At the end of the field the path passes the edge of housing. It is signposted and goes between trees and a fence alongside the housing. Arrive at Rose Walk. Go straight ahead, you will see a JR waymark sign.
  18. Follow the path through an empty gate, signposted John Ray.
  19. Go straight down the field, down steps and over a bridge then go up steps. Follow the path to the right of the church and through the churchyard. It is signposted on entry and again for a right turn (N.B. benches in the churchyard if you need a rest). Exit the churchyard opposite the side you entered and turn right along a private road.
  20. At the end turn left on to Church Road. There are no pavements and the road can be busy. Turn left when Church Road meets Buck Hill. Turn right at the green signpost saying “Public Footpath to Notley Road and London Road” with a JR sign on the post. NOTE –John Ray’s birthplace is a few yards further along Buck Hill.
  21. Go straight across the field. There is a JR signpost two thirds of the way over. Turn right onto the brideway. After approximately 50 yards there is a JR sign. Turn left (NOTE –doing this walk in reverse it might be difficult to spot the marker post for the walk, a third of the way up the slope. Walking along the brideway it is next to the third tree on the left.)
  22. Go straight along the path, passing a farm to your left. There is a wooden bridge with a JR sign. Follow the path across the field. Come to a JR sign and pick up the footpath to the left, running alongside the A120.
  23. Take the bridge over the A120. The path continues alongside until it enters a housing estate, at 51 Gatekeeper Close. From here, you will not see any signs for the JR walk until you reach the station.
  24. Turn right on Gatekeeper Close and follow the road around. At number 19, take the path to its right hand side. This takes you to Hoppit Mead, turn right at the end of the path. Walk to the end. Alternatively take the path across the nature reserve. Turn left onto Rifle Hill, which becomes Notley Road but you cannot see the name. You will see a sign for Hillside Gardens opposite.
  25. Take a righthand path to join the Flich Way (not signposted) directly after you pass under a footbridge.
  26. Turn left when you join the Flich Way, and follow to the end. The station is immediately ahead of you.
- N.B: If starting at Braintree Station there are signs from the station car park to both the John Ray walk and the Flich Way. Take the Flich Way and turn right just before you get to a footbridge. Go down the slope and turn left at the bottom to join Notley Road. Turn right into Hoppit Mead. Either take the path across or walk around to number 21 at the end. Take the path to its right 21 leading to Gatekeeper Close. You will find the start of the JR walk with a sign to the right of 51 Gatekeeper Close (ignore the path to its left).

Please turn overleaf for map

## Planning Your Walk

- Approximately 9 miles, allow 4 hours.
- Café at Cressing Temple (check opening times).
- Pubs available at Braintree, Black Notley, White Notley, Silver End and Witham but none are directly on the route.
- Few seats available on the route apart from in the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul.



# Acknowledgements

## Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

[www.esscrp.org.uk](http://www.esscrp.org.uk)

Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership (ESSCRP) was formed in 1998, with the aim of promoting the six branch lines within Essex. It sits under a larger umbrella of the Community Rail Network and is fully supported by the Department for Transport, who see community rail as a vital link between the railway and the local community. Greater Anglia provide funding.

## Greater Anglia

[www.greateranglia.co.uk](http://www.greateranglia.co.uk)

Greater Anglia is the train operating company who run the six branch lines and provide support to ESSCRP in terms of funding and resources. They work with Community Rail Partnerships to embed rail into the heart of local communities to help them grow the rail market and make local lines and stations a stronger part of their local communities.

## Essex County Council

[www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)

Essex County Council is the local government body for the County of Essex. They provide funding and accommodation to the ESSCRP. Other local government stakeholders include:

- Braintree District Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Tendring District Council

## Community Rail Network

[www.communityrail.org.uk](http://www.communityrail.org.uk)

ESSCRP is an accredited member of this organisation whose mission is to “engage communities and help people get the most from their railways, promoting social inclusion and sustainable travel, working alongside train operators to bring about improvements, and bringing stations back to life.”

## Disclaimer

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- Marks Tey to Sudbury
- Manningtree to Harwich Town
- Colchester to Clacton-on-Sea/Walton-on-the-Naze
- Witham to Braintree
- Wickford to Southend Victoria
- Wickford to Southminster

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