

TEN HISTORIC FACTS

1. Opened to goods trains 1st June/passengers 1st July 1889 by Great Eastern Railway.
 2. It was required to open before the Southend Line by act of parliament, because people felt it would not be completed had the main line been opened first.
 3. The entire line was built with two tracks.
 4. The first time a railway to Southminster was proposed was in 1865, from Billericay.
 5. There were two private sidings opened in 1889, at Hogwell (between Woodham and Fambridge) and at Creeksea (between Althorne and Burnham). Both had closed by 1954.
 6. Became part of LNER in 1923.
 7. Maldon West branch line closed on 10th September 1939, closing as a through route in 1941 and was dismantled in 1953.
 8. Steam finished on passenger services in 1956, replaced by diesel. The line was electrified in 1986.
 9. 1962 saw the last steam trains on goods services.
 10. In 1962 the nuclear flask traffic began using the line, finishing in 2006.
- Sunday 16 September 1956**
The last day of steam-hauled passenger services
A Class B12 (4-6-0) locomotive



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. Community Rail is a growing, unique grassroots movement, connecting people with their railways and station, delivering social, environmental and economic benefits.

ESSCRP works with Greater Anglia (GA) and helps support GA's Station Adoption Initiatives, which has become very successful, with most of the 40 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.

Promoting the branch lines entails producing publicity material, promoting the lines on social media, and organising special event trains – with multiple themes, such as trains to the Sea Shanty Festival in Harwich, to Christmas train events and music trains. To find out about the many events throughout the year please visit www.esscrp.org.uk/events



SUSTAINABILITY

Why take the train? With everyone trying to do their bit to cut their carbon footprint and create a healthier future, using the train rather than getting in the car is a great way to get started.

Did you know that rail is one of the greenest form of transport? Only cycling and walking are better for the environment!

Brand new trains that are greener than ever before were introduced in 2021 and now cover the whole East Anglia network and booking your train ticket in advance often gets you the best deal, plus using e-tickets saves miles and miles of paper every year. A busy commuter train which people travel on from home to work daily can take up to 500 cars off the road.

ACCESSIBILITY

The train operator has several options if you need help travelling. For immediate travel you can request help from a member of staff at any staffed station. At an unstaffed station you can use the help button on the Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) to request assistance. This live helpline connects to a member of staff in the Norwich office. They will be happy to help arrange assistance for you or alternative transport if they can't get a member of staff to meet you.

For all planned journeys you can use Passenger Assist, which is part of the national Passenger Assist arrangement which gives our disabled and older customers the opportunity to plan and pre-book assistance for their journey. If you know when you are travelling you can book assistance by Free phone **0800 028 2878** or Text **18001 0800 028 2878** or on-line at www.bookings.passengerassistance.com

Greater Anglia's new trains are wheelchair friendly

RAIL SAFETY

- Keep Safe, Stay Safe when travelling by train, and teach children to follow the three key messages.
1. Stand behind the Yellow Line away from the platform edge.
 2. When getting to your platform, always follow the passenger walkways around the station and use the footbridges, underpasses, or foot crossing.
 3. If you drop something on the track – leave it and report it to a station staff or if at an unmanned station, use the help point and they will tell you what to do.



WALKS AROUND THE CROUCH VALLEY LINE

Useful phone contact numbers

Samartians call on **116123**
Alcoholics Anonymous call on **0800 9177 650**
Refuge Domestic Violence call **0808 2000 247**
Childline call **0800 1111**
Missing People call or text **116 000**
Streetlink for rough sleepers call **0300 500 0914**
British Transport Police call **0800 40 50 40**

Useful websites

www.allionboard.co.uk
www.hubofhope.co.uk
www.railisulicidprevention.co.uk
www.btp.police.uk

For train times, tickets and service information see www.greateranglia.co.uk

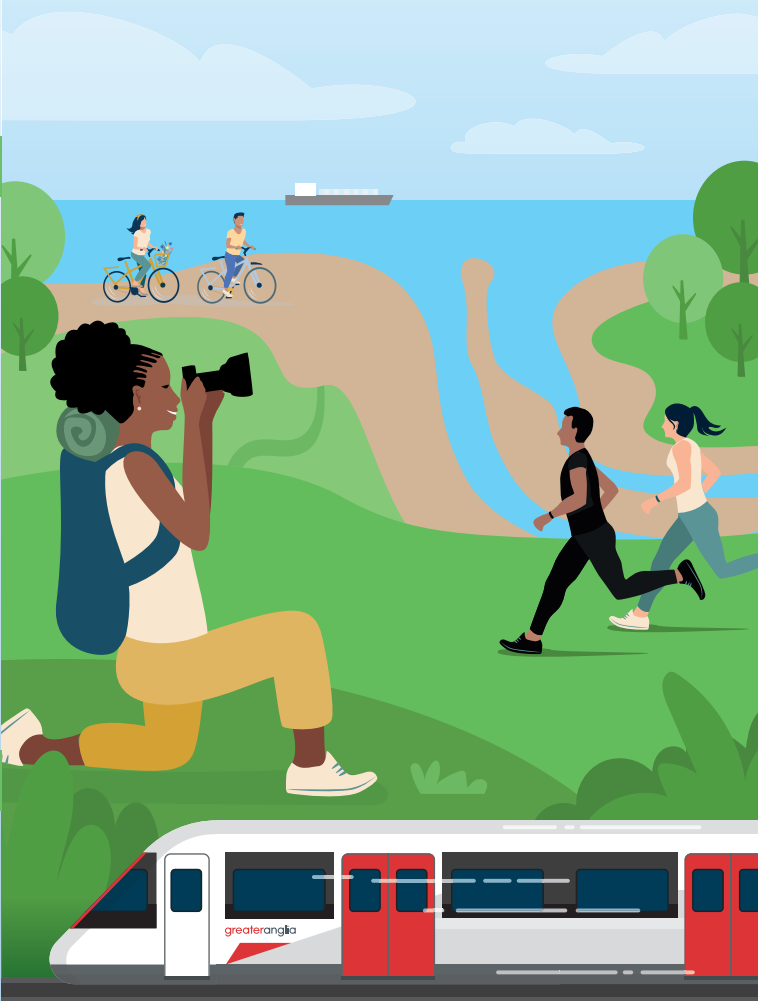
Latest information on train times and fares for any rail operator in the UK can be obtained from National Rail Enquiries on **08457 484950** or via the website www.nationalrail.co.uk

SERVICE INFORMATION

TRAIN TIMES, TICKETS AND

THE CROUCH VALLEY LINE

Your guide to the Wickford – Southminster and surrounding areas for a great day out by train.





Attractions on the Crouch Valley Line, Wickford to Southminster

The Crouch Valley Line has something for everyone, from beautiful scenery to history, food and drink, and a variety of places to explore all within easy reach of the line's stations. With such a variety of activities there is plenty of opportunities for days out by train to explore the Crouch Valley area.

The Crouch Valley Line offers a beautiful scenic journey, with views along the River Crouch changing depending on the time of day and tide. It can be spectacular as the setting sun glistens on the water creating sparkling waterways which meander through the marshland.

The historic influence of the river is keenly seen in beautiful merchant houses and fisherman cottages at Burnham-on-Crouch. As well as the industrial buildings, wharfs and mill congregated around the river bridge at Battlesbridge, the farthest tidal reaches of the river.

The predominantly flat rural landscape with weather boarded villages, winding country lanes, coastal paths and sailing hamlets of the Dengie Peninsular; offers beautiful walks and cycle routes. The Two Rivers Way is a circular cycling route which can be started from either Southminster or Burnham-on-Crouch Stations.

Both ESSCRP and Visit Maldon District websites have detailed walking routes that can be joined from the stations along the line. www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/things-to-do/walking



Near Althorne Station where the Crouch Valley's south facing bank gently slopes upwards – rows of grape vines can be seen. This location is fast establishing itself as a wine producing area offering several opportunities to taste the wares. For those who prefer beer, the Crouch Valley Ale Trail offers a selection of CAMRA recommended pubs and brewers within walking distance of the Crouch Valley Line stations.

WICKFORD

The Crouch Valley Line starts at Wickford, where services connect with the main line and enable onward connections to London or Southend.

Wickford station is centrally located next to the town's busy high street. Within easy reach of the station is the town's Memorial Park and Gardens – established in 1949 the site now covers 110 acres incorporating formal gardens, woodlands and wildflower meadows. As well as a playground, café and tennis courts and outdoor gym.

BATTLESBRIDGE

Battlesbridge village grew up around the river bridge and its ancient port. Many of the historic industrial buildings remain and today house the Battlesbridge Antiques and Craft Centre. Established in 1967 the Antiques Centre hosts over 80 dealers selling their wares in a variety of old buildings and courtyards all within walking distance of the station. Whether your interest is jewellery, furniture, music memorabilia, collectibles, antiquities, or vehicle related there is something for everyone. Why not complete your visit with a meal at one of the eateries within the village or Antique Centre.



Battlesbridge weir



SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

The town has a very welcoming feel, built as a new town focused around its centrally located shopping area. Surrounding the southern boundary of the town is the River Crouch with its waterways and creaks offering beautiful views along the river. To the west of the town, crossing the rail line is the Essex Wildlife Trust Woodham Fen nature reserve which consists of rough grass land transitioning to salt marsh. The two visitor attractions within the town are:

- **Marsh Farm** – is a farm based attraction which aims to educate and entertain through a variety of activity and fun experiences.
- **Call of the Wild Zoo** – welcomes guests to learn about their species through the displays and demonstrations with the aim to inspire conservation.

NORTH FAMBRIDGE

North Fambridge is a small village on the north bank of the River Crouch. The Ferry Boat Inn has buildings dating back to 1600's when it supported the river ferry service. The site has been an inn since 1807.

Blue House Farm Nature Reserve is managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust and covers 287 hectares consisting of farmland, grass and wetland habitats. It is a fantastic place to visit at any time of year and see the different wildlife each season brings. The farm is located between the River Crouch and the railway line and can be walked to from North Fambridge Station. Once at Blue House Farm Nature Reserve there is a permissive path (no dogs) that passes through the site, giving access to the three bird hides. The route then links with the sea wall footpath which if followed right/westerly creates a 4km circular route around the farm.

In winter the site is visited by 2000 dark bellied brent geese who have travelled from Siberia to graze on the marshes along with a wide variety of other wildfowl and wading birds. In Spring, the grassland and waterways become home to reed warblers, lapwings, yellow wagtails and skylarks. Summer is the time for the buzz of insects, butterflies and dragonflies. Before Autumn sees the reserve used by birds stopping to feast before their long onward migrations.

More information about Blue House Farm and the other nature reserves can be found on the Essex Wildlife Trust's website www.essexwt.org.uk



A day's walking and wildlife watching.

An alternative if you prefer a longer walk, rather than returning to North Fambridge Station, is to head to Althorne Station. Once you have walked through the reserve along the permissive paths and reached the sea wall – turn left/easterly! Continue along the sea wall footpath as it passes the saltmarsh island of Bridgemarsh. The island was inhabited and farmed until the great flood of 1953 breached its sea wall. Stay on the sea wall as it loops around an inlet of Bridgemarsh creek. Now look for Bridgmarsh Marina. Once there turn inland and follow the road to Althorne Station.

ALTHORNE STATION

Althorne is a small village on the ridge overlooking the River Crouch. The main village is a mile up the hill and to the right. Within the historic centre are many traditional examples of weather boarded buildings. As well as the vineyards, the landscape offers natural interest with areas by the river designated as a Special Landscape Area and four conservation areas – two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (one a site of geological special scientific interest), a Special Protection Area (a Ramsar wild bird site), and a Special Area of Conservation (for plants).

A circular walk of just over 5 miles takes you along the seawall and by footpath through the village and back to the station via the churchyard of the 14th century St Andrew's Church. There is a shorter nature walk through Bass Wood and along the seawall and past the old oyster pits; during this walk you can spot birds and salt marsh flowers. Full details of walks can be downloaded from our website www.esscrp.org.uk



BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH

Burnham-on-Crouch is a small historic fishing town situated on the banks of the River Crouch. With the coming of the railway the area soon became known for its sailing opportunities and this tradition continues today. Home to several sailing clubs the annual Burnham Week competition at the end of August attracts visiting yachts and dinghies to race on the River. The historic buildings of the town centre with its clock tower built in 1877 is a must see and the town's history can be explored at Burnham Museum. Whilst the Quayside offers an opportunity for a relaxing stroll past the boats, fisherman cottages and moorings to take in the sights and sounds of a coastal estuary. Throughout the town are many independent retailers, food and drink establishments to browse.



If you wish to go on a boat trip to view the town from the water, then the Burnham Ferry, operating from April to September, offers a dial on demand service between Essex Marina, Wallasea Island and Burnham Yacht Harbour. Wallasea Island is a unique RSPB reserve significantly enlarged with spoil from the Crossrail tunnels to create lagoons, mudflats, saltmarshes and wetland habitat, a haven for birds and insects alike. Or why not enjoy a seal watching cruise which take place during March and September with one of the operators located along the Quayside.

To the north of the town is Mangapps Railway Mususm, open February to October. The museum features ¾ mile of standard guage passenger carrying track for the many trains within the collection. As well as restored station buildings, signalling boxes and other items covering every aspect of railway operation.

SOUTHMINSTER

To the centre of Southminster's high street is St Leonards Church. Enlarged in the 16th century, it is an imposing heavily built church in cruciform structure, with a small tower housing the only peal of eight bells in the Dengie Peninsula. The Revd Dr Alexander Scott (Rector 1803 – 1840) was Chaplain and Private Secretary to Lord Nelson and cradled the dying Admiral at the Battle of Trafalgar.