

Digital Editions

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This digital guide to Essex is published in PDF format which means that you can browse the guide page by page or simply search for specific villages or towns (see pages 4 and 5). You can also print off individual pages of your choice if you are planning a visit to a particular area of Essex or, alternatively, the whole of the digital guide.

If you want more information on the places to see, stay, eat, drink or shop advertised in this guide all you need to do is click on the relevant website or e-mail address contained in the advertisement.

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Guide to Rural England

ESSEX



WHERE TO GO | WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO
WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHERE TO BUY

Fully illustrated with detailed directions and maps



LOCATOR MAP



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Essex

Bordering the north bank of the River Thames, Essex has long been a gateway to London, and while it contains much heavy industry and urban development, it also encompasses some lovely countryside, coastal attractions and important wildlife habitats. Northeast Essex has the true feel of East Anglia, particularly around the outstanding villages of the Stour Valley - which has come to be known as Constable Country, a title it shares with neighbouring Suffolk. The inland villages and small towns here are notably historic and picturesque, offering very good touring and walking opportunities. A plethora of half-timbered medieval buildings, farms and churches mark this region out as of particular historical interest. Monuments to engineering feats past and present include Hedingham Castle, Chappel Viaduct and the Post Mill at Bocking Church Street. There are also many lovely gardens to visit, and the region's principal town, Colchester, is a mine of interesting sights and experiences.

The north Essex coast has a distinguished history and a strong maritime heritage, as exemplified in towns like Harwich, Manningtree and Mistley. Further examples are the fine Martello Towers - circular brick edifices built to provide a coastal defence against Napoleon's armies - along the Tendring coast at Walton, Clacton, Jaywick and Point Clear. The Tendring Coast contains an interesting mix of extensive tidal inlets, sandy beaches and low cliffs, and the Tendring District Council publishes a series of Tendring Trails beginning at Mistley, Manningtree, Debenham, Ardleigh and other places along the North Essex Coast.

The Stour Estuary, Hamford Water and Colne Estuary are all renowned for seabirds and other wildlife. Many areas are protected nature reserves. In the part of the county known as 'the sunshine holiday coast', resorts, both boisterous and more tranquil, dot the landscape: Clacton-on-Sea, Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze offer many opportunities for relaxation and recreation.

The small northwest Essex towns of Saffron Walden, Thaxted, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfichet are among the most beautiful and

interesting in the nation. This area is also home to a wealth of picturesque villages boasting weatherboarded houses and pargetting. This area also retains three beautiful and historic windmills, at Stansted Mountfichet, Aythorpe Roding and Thaxted. Visitors to southwest Essex and Epping Forest will find a treasure-trove of woodland, nature reserves, superb gardens and rural delights. Epping Forest dominates much of the far western corner, but all this part of Essex is rich in countryside, forests and parks. Southwest Essex also has major attractions in Audley End House and Waltham Abbey.

The borough of Thurrock includes huge swathes of greenbelt country, and along its 18 miles of Thames frontage there are many important marshland wildlife habitats. History, too, abounds in this part of the county. Henry VIII built riverside block houses at East and West Tilbury, which later became Coalhouse Fort and Tilbury Fort. It was at West Tilbury that Queen Elizabeth I gave her most famous speech delivered to her troops, gathered to meet the threat of the Spanish Armada. At the extreme south-east of the county, Southend is a popular and friendly seaside resort with a wealth of sights and amenities. There are also smaller seaside communities that repay a visit.

The area surrounding the Rivers Blackwater and Crouch contains a wealth of ancient woodland and other natural beauties, particularly along the estuaries and the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal.

There are hundreds of acres of ancient woodland, much of it coppiced, which is the traditional woodland-management technique that encourages a vast array of natural flora and fauna. This stretch of Essex affords some marvellous walking, cycling, birdwatching and other treats for anyone who loves the great outdoors.

The Essex-Jiangsu Culture Festival is a celebration of the 20-year link between Essex County Council and the Jiangsu Province in China. Events will take place between the summer of 2008 and March 2009, including cultural programmes, performances and exhibitions. See www.realessex.co.uk for details.

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Colchester

	Castle		Castle Museum		
	Hollytrees Museum		Natural History Museum		
	Tymerleys Clock Museum		St Botolph's Priory		
	Bourne Mill		Colchester Arts Centre		
	First Site		Zoo		High Woods Country Park

This ancient market town and garrison stands in the midst of rolling East Anglian countryside. Britain's oldest recorded town, it has over 2,000 years of history, much of it there to be discovered by visitors. It was first established during the 7th century BC, and to the west of town are the remains of the massive earthworks built to protect it in pre-Roman times. During the 1st century, Colchester's prime location made it an obvious target for invading Romans. The Roman



Colchester Castle, Colchester

Emperor Claudius accepted the surrender of 11 British Kings in Colchester (Camolodunum). In AD60, Queen Boudicca helped to establish her place in history by taking revenge on the Romans and burning the town to the ground, before going on to destroy London and St Albans. Here in this town that was once capital of Roman Britain, Roman walls - the oldest in Britain - still surround the oldest part of town. Balcerne Gate, west gate of the original Roman town, is the largest surviving Roman gateway in the country, and remains magnificent to this day.

Today the town is presided over by its lofty town hall and enormous Victorian water tower, nicknamed Jumbo after London Zoo's first African elephant, an animal sold to P T Barnum (causing some controversy) in 1882. The tower has four massive pillars made up of one-and-a-quarter million bricks, 369 tons of stone and 142 tons of iron, all working to support the 230,000-gallon tank.

There are a number of guided town walks available, as well as bus tours. The Visitor Information Centre on Queen Street has details of the many places that are worth a visit. Market days in this thriving town are Friday and Saturday.

A good place to start any exploration of the town is **Colchester Castle** and its museum. When the Normans arrived, Colchester (a name given the town by the Saxons) was an important borough. The Normans built their castle on the foundations of the Roman temple of Claudius. Having used many of the Roman bricks in its construction, it boasts the largest Norman keep ever built in Europe - the only part still left standing. The keep houses the **Castle Museum**, one of the most exciting hands-on



THE LEMON TREE

48 St Johns Street, Colchester,
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e-mail: pm@the-lemon-tree.com
website: www.the-lemon-tree.com

Great food and informal dining in excellent company and unique surroundings await visitors to **The Lemon Tree**, a fine bistro-style restaurant that has taken its place among the very best in the county. The restaurant encases part of Colchester's original Roman walls, providing a memorable, stunning setting for delicious meals based on premium produce. Owners Patrik and Joanna Minder and their chefs are very much committed to providing their customers with the best-quality seasonal produce, which has been sympathetically and humanely farmed wherever possible, and use commodities that have been locally produced and reared to support the local community.

The menus showcase the pick of this produce in many of their signature dishes: St Botolph's Directors sausages and mash; the marvellous Mersea oysters; Dedham Vale fillet steak or rump steak with garlic butter, slow-roasted mushrooms and chunky chips; rack of Fingringhoe lamb with a garlic & herb crust and a sweet redcurrant jus. The chefs at The Lemon Tree also take their inspiration from the world's cuisines, as shown by butternut & leek squash with toasted pumpkin seeds; tiger prawns with coconut, chilli & lime; seared king scallops with a crab, ginger & spring onion broth; tuna & sea-spiced aubergine with pak choy & crispy rice noodles; and smoked chicken & duck terrine with a Seville orange jelly. The enjoyment level remains sky high to the end, with dessert such as iced strawberry & champagne bombe or pistachio & white chocolate cheesecake with raspberry coulis. The outstanding food is complemented by affable, efficient service and an extensive wine list from local wine merchants Lay & Wheeler.

The Lemon Tree is open at 10.30am Monday to Saturday for morning coffee, from midday to 5pm for lunch, and then until last orders 9.30am (Friday and Saturday 10pm) for a luxurious candlelit dinner. The choice includes daily specials, great-value set price menus and the superb full à la carte menu, and the restaurant hosts regular gourmet, themed and jazz and piano evenings. Parties of up to 26 guests can be held in the amazing surroundings of the Roman Cavern, a separate dining area underneath the Roman wall – a venue like no other for a sit-down meal or champagne and canapés. For larger parties the main restaurant, with seats for up to 80, can be booked, with space for 100 more in a marquee on the terrace. Bookings can be made online, and The Lemon Tree sells hampers and gift vouchers in units from £5. For an extra special treat, The Lemon Tree offer a Gourmet Home Dining Experience, where they send along a Lemon Tree head chef to prepare in your kitchen a specially devised bespoke menu, and provide an experienced butler for your dining room to serve your guests – and the duo will even do the washing-up afterwards!



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historical attractions in the county. Its fascinating collection of Iron Age, Roman and medieval relics is one of the most important in the county. There are tombstones carved in intricate detail and exquisite examples of Roman glass and jewellery. Visitors can try on Roman togas and helmets, touch some of the 2,000-year-old pottery unearthed nearby, and experience the town's murkier past by visiting the castle prisons, where witches were interrogated by the notorious Witchfinder General Matthew Hopkins. A key can be obtained at the Museum to St Martin's Church, a redundant 14th-century church with recycled Roman brickwork in its fabric. **Hollytrees Museum**, in the High Street, is located in a fine Georgian housedating back to 1718. This award-winning museum can be found on the

edge of Castle Park and houses a wonderful collection of toys, costumes, curios and antiquities from the past two centuries, and a number of fine paintings including a view of Colchester by Pissarro. Also nearby, housed in the former All Saints' Church, is the **Natural History Museum**, with exhibits and many hands-on displays illustrating the natural history of Essex from the Ice Age right up to the present day.

Housed in the Minories Art Gallery, **First Site** will be a new addition to Colchester's fine choice of cultural attractions when it opens in Spring 2009. It will feature changing exhibitions of contemporary visual art. An arch in Trinity Street leads to **Tymperleys Clock Museum**, the 15th-century timber-framed home of William Gilbert, who entertained Elizabeth I with experiments in

TRADERS OF THE EAST

9 Short Wyre Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1LN
Tel: 01206 579961
e-mail: tradersoftheeast@hotmail.co.uk

A huge and tempting window display in the red-painted shopfront gives just a hint of the colourful array of ethnic goods on sale at **Traders of the East**. The shop is located in an old timber-framed building on top of part of the town's Roman wall, in the centre of town close to the main railway station.

Owner Gill Snodgrass, who worked in a similar outlet before opening her own shop, has assembled over two floors a lovely selection of clothes, fabrics, textiles, homeware and giftware hand-picked from goods imported from India, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan and other Asian countries, and also from North Africa. There are clothes made in India for the Western market, semi-precious stones from India and Nepal, lapis lazuli and beautiful kelims from Afghanistan, ceramics and glass lanterns from Morocco, wall hangings, cushions, throws, lamps and lampshades, curtains, wooden ornaments, candles, incense, henna... and much, much more.

A browser's delight, with the stock constantly changing, Traders of the East is open from 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Saturday, and Sundays in December.



TOWN & COUNTRY LIGHTING

61-65 North Station Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 1RQ

Tel: 01206 572152 Fax: 01206 547163

e-mail: sales@townandcountrylighting.co.uk

Town & Country Lighting has been established for more than 30 years, trading from bright, airy premises on one of the main roads into Colchester and just two minutes' walk from Colchester's North Station.

This thriving business has been run since February 2008 by Adam and Emma, a switched-on couple who, with their staff, are ready with help and advice for all their customers. If it's one light or a thousand, this is the place to come for both trade and private customers (the former can be registered with trade terms and special offers). Town & Country Lighting is among the biggest modern lighting showrooms in Essex, with an extensive range of original, classic and contemporary lighting. Pendants, table lights, floor lamps, standard lamps, outdoor lighting for the garden, patio or porch, spotlights, picture lights, ceiling lights, chandeliers – if it goes by the name of light or lamp the chances are you'll find it here. A new shade can transform an old lamp, and here there are lampshades by the hundred on display, with access to thousands more – classic, modern or plain bizarre, and the staff can help you to find the right colour, shape, design and texture for every individual lamp. Town & Country Lighting also stocks a wide range of other things to enhance a home, including brass and wrought iron pieces, Waterford crystal, Italian glass, ceiling fans, hand-made silk shades, mirrors and occasional furniture.

They've opened a second branch of Town & Country Lighting:

9-11 Ongar Road, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9AU Tel: 01277 219889

Both premises are open from 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday. There's customer parking on site at the Colchester branch, nearby parking at the Brentwood branch.



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electricity. Today, this fine example of architectural splendour houses a magnificent collection of 18th- and 19th-century Colchester-made clocks. The **Colchester Arts Centre**, not far from Balmerne Gate, features a regular programme of visual arts, drama, music, poetry and dance; the Mercury Theatre is the town's premier site for stage dramas, comedies and musical theatre.

Dutch Protestants arrived in Colchester in the 16th century, fleeing Spanish rule in the Netherlands, and revitalised the local cloth industry. The houses of these Flemish weavers in the Dutch Quarter to the west of the castle, and the Civil War scars on the walls of Siege House in East Street, bear testimony to their place in the town's history. The Dutch Quarter west of the castle remains a charming and relatively quiet corner of this bustling town.

Close to the railway station are the ruins of **St Botolph's Priory**, the oldest Augustinian priory in the country. Its remains are a potent reminder of the bitterness of Civil War times, as it was here that Royalists held out for 11 weeks during the siege of Colchester, before finally being starved into submission.

On Bourne Road, south of the town centre just off the B1025, there's a striking stepped-and-curved gabled building known as **Bourne Mill**, now owned by the National Trust. Built in 1591 from stone taken from the nearby St John's Abbeygate, this delightful, restored building near a lovely millpond was originally a fishing lodge, later converted (in the 19th century) into a mill - and still in working order.



Bourne Mill, Colchester

Colchester Zoo, just off the A12 outside the town, stands in the 40-acre park of Stanway Hall, with its 16th-century mansion and church dating from the 14th century. Founded in 1963, the Zoo has a wide and exciting variety of attractions, and has gained a well-deserved reputation as one of the best in Europe. Its award-winning enclosures allow visitors to get close to the animals and provides naturalistic environments for the 170 species. There are 15 unique daily displays, including opportunities to feed an African elephant, bear, chimp or alligator, stroke a snake and watch a penguin parade. Among major new attractions are the sea lion pool with an underwater tunnel and 'Tiger Taiga' featuring the endangered Siberian tiger.

Colchester has been famous in its time for both oysters and roses. Colchester oysters are still cultivated on beds in the lower reaches of the River Colne, which skirts the northern edge of the town. A visit to the Oyster Fisheries on Mersea Island is a fascinating experience, and the tour includes complimentary fresh oysters and a glass of wine.

BUTTERFLY LODGE FARMSHOP & DAIRY

Mersea Road, Abberton, Colchester, Essex CO5 7LG

Tel: 01206 736121

e-mail: info@butterflylodge.co.uk

website: www.butterflylodge.co.uk

Butterfly Lodge Farmshop and Dairy is situated in Abberton, a beautiful rural village just five miles south of Colchester on the Mersea Road. The Farm and Dairy is run by husband and wife team, Warren and Ellie, and is respected as one of the finest producers of goats milk and goats milk products in the South-East. They were runners up 'Food Producers of Great Britain' at last year's BBC Food & Farming Awards.

As you drive up the long driveway surrounded by the forty-two acres of tranquil farmland, you may be surprised to see what appears to be quite a small farm shop by today's standards at the end, although appearances can be deceptive. The family run Farmshop has a Tardis-like quality about it. As you step in you will notice a varied selection of high quality locally sourced food and drink, local arts and crafts, a small café area and ice-cream parlour, a local post office and outside, a pleasant picnic area – it is really quite amazing.

The meat on sale is produced on the farm and reared traditionally on grass. The animals are allowed to graze freely on the chemical free land and are fed upon the highest quality cereals and hay; allowing for naturally matured meat with a fabulous taste and texture. You can purchase top quality highland/Dexter beef cuts, Shetland lamb, free range chicken, delicious Kune Kune pork, sausages and superb kid goat meat & 'Chilli Billy' Burgers, amongst the fabulous choice available.

Many people have probably not sampled goat meat, or if they have, the most likely dish to have tried this lean and tasty meat in, is a curry. Goat is widely consumed and much favoured across the world, although for some reason it is not so prevalent within the UK. Its taste can be likened to a cross between lamb and beef, so it is certainly acceptable to the palette. In addition, it is a very healthy meat, being low in cholesterol, high in iron and ounce for ounce has less fat than chicken and about the same amount of calories.

Butterfly Lodge Farm is also a large producer and supplier of fresh goat milk to the trade and public. The milk is deliciously sweet, lightly creamy and again very healthy because of the lower fat, lactose and cholesterol content. Their milk is also used to make their own 'Boudicca' soft, melt in the mouth goat's cheese, the creamy 'Monach Wyvern' semi-hard goat's cheese, as well as the highly awarded, sumptuous 'Caprilatte' goat-milk ice cream.

As well as some wonderful local condiments, oils, juices, eggs, fruit, biscuits, cakes and preserves, Butterfly Lodge has a very good and varied range of gluten free produce, which proves very popular - you can even buy gluten-free sausages! Other than the array of quality produce on sale, what really stands out about Butterfly Lodge is that it is such a warm and welcoming place to visit, take a look around, feed the animals and enjoy some wonderful home-made produce and hospitality; children just love the place and are made to feel extremely welcome.



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Just north of the centre of town, **High Woods Country Park** offers 330 acres of woodland, grassland, scrub and farmland. A central lake is fed by a small tributary of the River Colne. The land originated as three ancient farms, and forms part of a Royal hunting forest. Large numbers of musket balls dating from the Civil War period have been unearthed, indicating that the woods served as a base for the Roundheads.

Around Colchester

WIVENHOE

4 miles SE of Colchester off the A133

This riverside town on the banks of the River Colne was once renowned as a smugglers' haunt, and its pretty quayside is steeped in maritime history. There are still strong connections with the sea, with boat-building having replaced fishing as the main industry. The lovely church, with its distinctive cupola atop a sturdy tower, stands on the site of the former Saxon church and retains some impressive 16th-century brasses.

The small streets lead into each other and end at the picturesque waterfront, where fishing boats and small sailing craft bob at their moorings. On the Quay visitors will find the Nottage Institute, the River Colne's nautical academy; classes here teach students about knots, skippering and even how to build a boat. It is open to visitors on Sundays in summer. The Wivenhoe Trail, by the river, is an interesting cycle track starting at the railway station and continuing along the river to Colchester Hythe. Wivenhoe Woods is dotted with grassy glades set with tables, the perfect place for a picnic.

East of the Quay, the public footpath takes

visitors to the Tidal Surge Barrier, one of only two in the country. Volunteers run a ferry service operating across the River Colne between the Quay at Wivenhoe, Fingringhoe and Rowhedge. Nearby Wivenhoe Park has been the site of the campus for the University of Essex since 1962. Visitors are welcome to stroll around the grounds.

ABBERTON

3 miles S of Colchester off the B1026

Abberton Reservoir Nature Reserve

Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve

Two natural beauties are within reach of this village. **Abberton Reservoir Nature Reserve** is a 1,200-acre reservoir and wildlife centre, ideal for bird-watching. A site of international importance, home to goldeneye, wigeon, gadwall and shovellers, as well as a resting colony of cormorants, the site features a conservation room, shop, toilets and hides.

Four miles further east, **Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve** offers visitors 125 acres of woodland and lakes by the Colne estuary. Bird-watchers and nature lovers will happily explore the grassland, heathland, estuarine and freshwater habitats. Open all year round except on Mondays, the reserve hosts a full programme of events including children's activity days.

COPFORD

3 1/2 miles SW of Colchester off the B1022

Church of St Michael & All Angels

Copford is home to the wonderful Norman **Church of St Michael and All Angels**, with its magnificent, well-restored medieval wall paintings, while Copford Green is a lovely and peaceful village. The Church of St Mary the Virgin also repays a visit.

Layer Breton

Contributor: *Brian and Anne Sandland*

The walk starts in the car park of Layer Breton church.

Layer Marney Tower was built around 1520 for Henry VIII's Privy Seal, it is the tallest Tudor Tower and has a magnificent residence, farm and gardens attached.

Following field paths and country lanes this walk takes you through three small, out-of-the-way settlements, past two

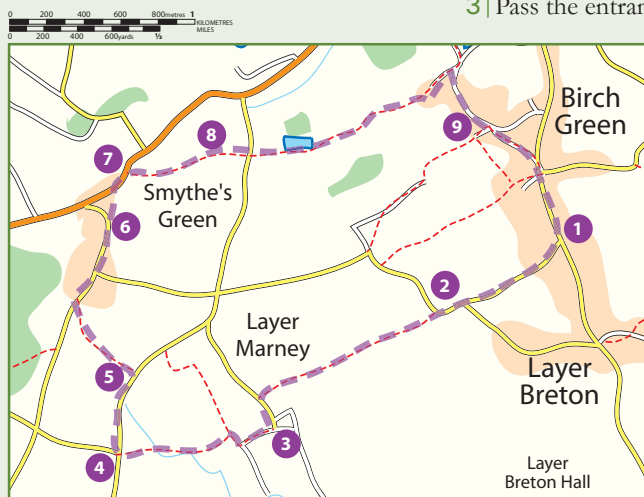
churches, a deer compound and a magnificent Tower.

Toilets, Museum, Play Area, Church,
Wildlife, Birds, Flowers, Butterflies, Good
for Kids, Mostly Flat, Ancient
Monument.

1 | From Layer Breton church car park take the road south, then the first road right (signposted Layer Marney and Tiptree). Follow Shatters Road past a pond and then a junction left. Where the road goes sharp right, take a signposted footpath left.

2 | Follow the path, which bends right then follows the right hand edge of a field and heads in a dead straight line to the right of Layer Marney Tower and Church. When you reach a road go left. At the entrance to Layer Marney Tower car park go right.

3 | Pass the entrance to the Tower, then the Church (right) and continue on a broad grass track, which bends left then right (signposted) beside a deer compound, carrying on ahead when the wire fence bends left to pass through a hedge and cross a ditch by a footbridge. Continue along the right hand edge of another huge field to a gap in the



hedge (right), then pass a garage (left) and use the drive of a house to reach the road at a junction where you go right.

4 | Just after the road bends right, and before houses on the right, take a footpath left.

5 | Cross the stile and head straight across the field to a gap in the hedge between two telegraph poles. Bear half right to head for a stile next to a gate with houses beyond. At the road, go right then continue ahead (signposted Messing, Kelvedon and Colchester). Continue to a path off right through trees where the road begins a sharp left hand bend.

6 | Follow the path to the B1022 and turn right. When this road goes sharp left take a signposted footpath right (through a lay-by) to keep a hedge on your right.

7 | Continue to a stile through the hedge on the right. Cross this, turn left and carry on to another stile, which you cross to reach a road.

8 | Cross the road and take a signposted footpath over a stile. Cross a small field and another signposted stile and footbridge, and follow a clear path ahead to a track on a bend where you continue ahead passing a reservoir on your left. Ignore a track off left. Your track passes two lonely oak trees then heads towards houses. Just beyond Briar Cottage turn right on a tarmac lane past housing on both sides.

9 | You pass houses on your left and trees and a tall hedge on your right, then when you reach another road you turn right to return to the Church car park at Layer Breton.

LAYER BRETON

5½ miles SW of Colchester off the B1026

On the right side of Layer Breton Heath is Stamps and Crows, a must for gardening enthusiasts. Two-and-a-half acres of moated garden surrounding a 15th-century farmhouse. The farmhouse is not open to the public, but the gardens boast herbaceous borders, mixed shrubs, old roses and good ground cover. There is also a recently created bog garden and dovecote.

LAYER MARNEY

6 miles SW of Colchester off the B1022

 Layer Marney Tower  Church of St Mary

The palace, which was planned to rival Hampton Court, was never completed, but its massive eight-storey Tudor gatehouse, known as Layer Marney Tower, is very impressive. Built between 1515 and 1525, it is one of the most striking examples of 16th-century architecture in Britain. Its magnificent four red brick towers, covered in 16th-century Italianate design, were built by Lord Marney, Henry VIII's Lord Privy Seal. As well as spectacular views from the top of the towers, they are surrounded by formal gardens designed at the turn of the century, with lovely roses, yew hedges and herbaceous borders. Also on site is a rare breeds farm, farm shop and tea room. The **Church of St Mary**, which was built behind the site of the palace, is one of the finest in the county, with a chapel with many monuments to the Marney family and a charming mural of St Christopher.

Off the B1026 a couple of miles southwest of Layer Marney is the village of Great Wigborough, which saw an early visit from a German airship. Zeppelin L33, which was hit



Layer Marney Tower, Layer Marney

over Bromley, crashed here in September 1916; a contemporary record of the event is in St Stephen's Church, framed by aluminium taken from the wreck.

ALDHAM

4 miles W of Colchester off the A604

This picturesque village was, for a time, home to the famous Essex historian Philip Morant, who held the post of vicar here. He is buried in the local churchyard. Old Hill House in Aldham is a one-acre garden with mixed shrubs, herbaceous borders and formal herb garden for year-round interest.

CHAPPEL

5 miles W of Colchester off the A604

East Anglian Railway Museum Chappel Viaduct

Here, on a four-acre site beside Chappel and Wakes Colne Station, is the **East Anglian Railway Museum**, a comprehensive collection spanning 150 years of railway history, with

period railway architecture, engineering and memorabilia in beautifully restored station buildings. For every railway buff, young or old, this is the place to try your hand at being a signaller and admire the handsome restored engines and carriages. There is also a delightful miniature railway. Special steam days and other events are held throughout the year. Platform One is still used by One Great Eastern services between Marks Tey and Sudbury.

The dramatic 32-arched **Chappel Viaduct** standing 75 feet above the Colne Valley, a designated European Monument, was begun in 1846 and opened in 1849.

ARDLEIGH

3 miles NE of Colchester off the A137

The westernmost village in the district known as Tendingr comprises an attractive group of 16th- and 17th-century cottages grouped around the fine 15th-century Butterfield Church. Spring Valley Mill, a now privately owned 18th-century timber-framed and weatherboarded edifice, was once a working watermill, later adapted to steam. Day and half-day canoeing and sailing lessons can be taken at the Ardleigh Outdoor Education Centre.

Nearby is Ardleigh Reservoir, offering up many opportunities for water sports and trout fishing.

DEDHAM

6 miles NE of Colchester off the A14

Toy Museum Bridge Cottage

Sir Alfred Munnings Art Museum

Dedham Vale Family Farm

This is true Constable country, along the border with Suffolk, the county's prettiest area. The village has several fine old buildings, especially the 15th-century flint church, its pinnacled tower familiar from so many

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DEDHAM BOATHOUSE RESTAURANT

Mill Lane, Dedham, nr Colchester,
Essex CO7 6DH
Tel: 01206 323153 Fax: 01206 322232
e-mail: dedhamboathouse@aol.com
website: www.dedhamboathouse.com

The Boathouse in Dedham has long been known to locals and visitors as the place to hire a rowing boat or enjoy an ice cream down by the river. Those facilities still exist, but since Cameron and Claire Marshall bought the business in 2002, there have been many changes. After completing their first summer in Dedham they closed the café and turned it into the **Dedham Boathouse Restaurant**. They built a bar and a new kitchen and transformed the place into a warm, inviting and contemporary setting in which to enjoy a relaxing meal.

Cameron and his team produce a fusion of style and flavours on regularly changing menus, complemented by friendly, efficient service by Claire and her front-of-house team. The main menu is as up-to-date and appealing as the surroundings. Starters might include grilled goat's cheese, watercress and shaved fennel salad; shredded duck with sweet chilli noodles and toasted sesame seeds; and butterflied sardine fillets with gremolata, aioli and a new potato salad. Typical main courses could be chump of lamb with braised red cabbage and rösti; fillet of cod with herb crust and dauphinoise potatoes; sea bass with coriander rice and a ginger and coconut broth; chargrilled ribeye steak; and farfalle pasta with marinated artichokes, sweet vine tomatoes and fresh basil. The enjoyment level remains sky-high to the end with St Clements mousse with mandarin jam, warm Bakewell tart or chocolate granache cake with rum & raisin mascarpone – and superb Illy coffee to round things off. This menu is served lunchtime and evenings Tuesday to Saturday and for Sunday lunch.

A Summer Specials menu, available Tuesday to Saturday lunchtime and Tuesday to Thursday evening, includes open sandwiches and main dishes such as chicken Caesar salad or Cumberland sausage with buttered mash and red onion confit. A Taster menu in similar style operates out of season for lunch and dinner Tuesday to Thursday and lunch Friday. The superb food is complemented by wines from Old and New Worlds, with many available by the glass.

The tradition of hiring out rowing boats remains as strong as ever at Dedham Boathouse. Twenty-six clinker-built boats can be hired by the half-hour, hour or longer periods between April and September for a leisurely row along the River Stour; those feeling more energetic can head for Flatford Mill about a mile and a half away. The boats can hold four adults or two/three adults and two children (depending on age and size).



Constable paintings. There's also the school Constable went to, and good walks through the protected riverside meadows of Dedham Vale to Flatford, where **Bridge Cottage**, a restored thatched 16th-century building, houses a display about Constable, who featured this cottage in several of his paintings (his father's mill is across the river lock in Dedham).

Dedham Vale Family Farm on Mill Street is a traditional 16-acre farm boasting a comprehensive collection of British farm animals, including many different breeds of livestock such as pigs, sheep, cattle, Suffolk horses, goats and poultry. Children may enter some of the paddocks to stroke and feed the animals (bags of feed provided).

The Art & Craft Centre on Dedham's High Street is well worth a visit. Marlborough Head, a wool merchant's house dating back to 1475, is now a pub. The **Toy Museum** has a fascinating collection of dolls, teddies, toys, games, dolls' houses and other artefacts of childhoods past.

At Castle House, approximately three-quarters of a mile from the village centre on the corner of East Lane and Castle Hill, the **Sir Alfred Munnings Art Museum** is housed in the former home, studios and grounds of the famous painter, who lived here between 1898 and 1920. The museum prides itself on the diversity of paintings and sculptures on

view. The house itself is a mixture of Tudor and Georgian periods, carefully restored. Munnings' original furniture is still in place. The spacious grounds boast well-maintained gardens.

Braintree

Museum

The twin towns of Braintree and Bocking are sited at the crossroads of two Roman roads, and Braintree in particular was a Roman market town with evidence of metal industries and farming. However, it is the establishment of the wool industry in the 14th century, with many of the original timber framed buildings from this era still surviving in Bradford Street, which led to the spreading fame of the towns. Flemish weavers settled in the District bringing their weaving skills, and by the 17th century the bay cloth trade was well established. It was the sudden demise of the wool trade at the end of the 18th century that attracted the Huguenot family of Courtauld to settle in the district and establish a silk weaving industry. Courtaulds developed mechanised weaving of silk and by the 1860s employed over 3,000 local workers. The company became a worldwide success after the artificial silk industry revolutionised fashion and household textiles in the 20th century.

The **Braintree District Museum**, housed in a Victorian school on Manor Street, tells the story of the fascinating industrial heritage of the district and the Warner Textile



Flatford Birdge Cottage, Dedham

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THE OLD HOUSE GUEST HOUSE

11 Bradford Street, Bocking, Braintree, Essex CM7 9AS
Tel: 01376 550457 Fax: 01376 343863
e-mail: old_house@talk21.com
website: www.theoldhousebraintree.co.uk

The Old House Guest House is a Grade II* listed building standing in half an acre of quiet, mature grounds in a street of timber-framed houses. Sue and Rob Hughes first opened their family home to Bed & Breakfast guests in 1988, since when it has gained an enviable reputation as a peaceful, civilised retreat for both leisure and business guests. The oldest part of the building dates from the 16th century, and the architectural features of interest include fine octagonal Tudor chimneys and handsome panelling.

The accommodation comprises single, double, twin and family rooms, all with central heating, television, hairdryer, beverage tray and en-suite or private bathroom. One room is on the ground floor and one room has a four-poster bed. The lovely panelled lounge is a perfect spot to relax with a quiet drink, and a superb panelled Jacobean room is a popular and characterful venue for small gatherings (up to 30). A hearty English breakfast (cooked on the Aga) or a lighter Continental version starts the day, and packed lunches and evening meals can be provided with a little notice.



Archive, part of the Museum's collection, is housed in the Warner's Mills in Silks Way, Samuel Courtauld's original Mill, which was sold to Daniel Walters and later Warner & Son. The Warner Textile Collection is the second largest archive in Britain and has examples of the many leading 19th- and 20th-century designers who worked for the Company.

The magnificent Town Hall Centre is one of the many Courtauld legacies in the town. It was built in 1928 with panelled walls, murals by Grieffenhagen showing scenes of local history, and a grand central tower with a striking clock. Another fascinating reminder of the Courtaulds' generosity is the 1930s bronze fountain portraying a young boy with dolphins near St Michaels Church, which itself was founded in 1199.

A Market Charter was awarded by King John, also in 1199, and a colourful street market is still held to this day every Wednesday and Saturday.

Around Braintree

FAIRSTEAD

4 miles S of Braintree off the A131

Church of St Mary & St Peter

Fairstead (or Fairsted) is an undulating parish about three miles east of the A131, some four miles northwest of Witham. The **Church of St Mary and St Peter** is an ancient building of flint, in the Norman style, consisting of chancel, nave, north porch and a western tower with a lofty shingled spire with four bells, one of which dates back to before the

ALLWOOD INTERIORS

Unit 3, Banters Lane Business Park, Main Street,
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Tel: 01245 362994 Fax: 01245 362995
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Great Leighs has been hitting the headlines in 2008 as the site of the first new racecourse in the UK for more than 80 years. But since 1992 Great Leighs has had the winner in the Bespoke Furniture Stakes in the shape of **Allwood Interiors**, founded and run by Tony and Sonia Bundock. Tony, an engineer by trade, has long had a passion for making pieces of furniture and, self-taught, has built up a fine reputation for the quality of his work. He makes his traditional hand-built furniture from oak, ash, maple, tulip and other woods both soft and hard, for the kitchen, the bedroom and the living room, fitted or freestanding, with polished, painted or distressed finish.

Tony will make home visits to take dimensions for pieces designed to individual customer's specifications, and the clients can visit the workshop to watch their pieces being made and other pieces at various stages of manufacture, as well as admiring finished pieces in the showroom. Allwood Interiors, located in a business park on the main street of Great Leighs, off the A131 between Chelmsford and Braintree, can be visited between 10am and 4pm (10am to 2pm on Sunday).



Reformation. During restoration in the late 1800s various handsome mural paintings were discovered, including, over the chancel arch, those entitled *Our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, The Last Supper, The Betrayal, Our Lord Being Crowned with Thorns, and Incidents on the way to Calvary*.

CRESSING

4 miles SE of Braintree off the B1018

Cressing Temple Barns

Cressing Temple Barns, set in the centre of an ancient farmstead, are two splendid medieval timber barns commissioned in the 12th century by the Knights Templar. They contain the timber of over 1,000 oak trees; an interpretive exhibition explains to visitors how the barns were made, as a special viewing platform brings visitors up into the roof of

the magnificent Wheat Barn for a closer look. There's also a beautiful walled garden re-creating the Tudor style, with an arbour, fount and physic garden. Special events are held throughout the year.

COGGESHALL

5 miles E of Braintree on the A120

Paycocke's House Grange Barn

Marks Hall

This medieval hamlet, a pleasant old cloth and lace town, has some very fine timbered buildings. **Paycocke's House** on West Street, a delightful timber-framed medieval merchant's home dating from about 1500, boasts unusually rich panelling and wood carvings, and is owned by the National Trust. Inside there's a superb carved ceiling and a display of Coggeshall lace. Outdoors there's a

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lovely garden. The village also has some good antique shops and a working pottery.

Located in Stoneham Street, Coggeshall Heritage Centre displays items of local interest and features changing exhibitions on themes relating to the past of this historic wool town. There's an authentic, working wool loom on site.

The National Trust also owns the restored **Coggeshall Grange Barn**, which dates from around 1140 and is the oldest surviving timber-framed barn in Europe. Built for the monks of the nearby Cistercian Abbey, it is a magnificent example of this type of architecture.

Marks Hall is an historic estate and arboretum that began life in Saxon times, and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. In the 15th century, then-owner Sir Thomas Honywood was a leading Parliamentarian who commanded the Essex Regiment during the Civil War. Local legend has it that the two artificial lakes on the grounds were dug by Parliamentary troops during the siege of Colchester in 1648. In 1758, one of his successors, General Philip Honywood, forbade (under the terms of his will) any of his

successors to fell timber - thus his lasting legacy of avenues of mature oaks, limes and horse chestnuts, surrounded by one of the largest continuous areas of ancient woodland in the county.

The estate fell on hard times in the 19th and early 20th century, but owner Thomas Phillips Price began an association with Kew Gardens and left the estate to

be held and used for 'advancement in the National interest of Agriculture, Aborigiculture and Forestry'. The Thomas Phillips Price Trust was formed and registered as a charity in 1971, and a major programme of revitalisation and restoration began. The estate now flourishes with native plants and wildlife, ornamental lakes, a 17th-century walled garden, cascades, Coach House and Information Centre. This last is housed in a painstakingly refurbished 15th-century barn, and features informative displays as well as a gift shop and tea room.

Plans for the on-site arboretum were first drawn up in the late 1980s, to cover 120 acres. Still being established, it will contain a collection of trees from all over the world, laid out in geographical themes - Europe, Asia, America, and the southern hemisphere.

FEERING

6 miles E of Braintree off the A12

Feeringbury Manor near Feering has a fine, extensive riverside garden with ponds, streams, a little waterwheel, old-fashioned plants and bog gardens, and fascinating sculpture by artist Ben Coode-Adams.

Boydells Dairy Farm

Wethersfield, Braintree, Essex CM7 4AQ

Tel: 01371 850481

e-mail: visits@boydellsdairy.co.uk

website: www.boydellsdairy.co.uk

Boydells Dairy Farm is no ordinary animal attraction; it is a small family farm specialising in commercial sheep milking. Visitors are given a fun and informative guided tour based on the normal, everyday routine of the farm, with plenty of chance to ask questions. You will experience lamb feeding and egg collecting; you can watch the sheep being milked and you might even try your hand at milking a cow!

Most farm animals can be found at Boydells Dairy Farm – cattle, pigs, goats, ponies, poultry, even llamas, but it is the flock of milking sheep that is the main enterprise.

Sheep's milk (wonderful for those who suffer from cow's milk intolerance) is used to produce delicious cheese, yogurt and our famous Yoggipops – a yogurt ice lolly. All of these are for sale in the shop, together with eggs, honey, drinks and pocket money souvenirs.

Boydells Dairy Farm is between Shalford and Wethersfield on the B1053 (Saffron Walden to Braintree road) about five miles north of Braintree.



BLAKE END

3 miles W of Braintree off the A120

Craft Centre The Great Maze

The **Great Maze** at Blake End is one of the most challenging in the world. Set in over 10 acres of lovely North Essex farmland, it is grown every year from over half a million individual maize and sunflower seeds, and is open every summer. Continuing innovations bring with them extra twists and turns, making this wonderful maze, with more than five miles of pathways, even more of a brain teaser. A viewing platform makes it easy to help anyone hopelessly lost! Ten per cent of all profits go to the Essex Air Ambulance service.

Blake House Craft Centre comprises carefully preserved farm buildings centred round a courtyard. One of the county's prettiest craft centres, visitors will find a fine array of craft shops and a restaurant serving breakfast and morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea.

GREAT SALING

4 miles NW of Braintree off the A120

Saling Hall Garden is a 12-acre garden including a walled garden dating from 1698. The small park boasts a collection of fine trees, and there are ponds, a water garden and an extensive collection of unusual plants with an emphasis on rare trees.

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WETHERSFIELD

5 miles NW of Braintree on the B1053

Boydells Dairy Farm (see panel opposite) is a working farm where visitors are welcome to join in with tasks such as milking, feeding and more. A guided tour mixes fun with education, and all questions are most welcome. From bees to llamas, just about every kind of farm animal can be found here. Goat rides and donkey cart rides, a lovely picnic area and refreshments made on site, make for a most enjoyable day out. Open to the public April to September.

FINCHINGFIELD

6 miles NW of Braintree off the B1053

Church of St John the Baptist Guildhall

This charming village is graced with thatched cottages spread generously around a sloping village green that dips to a stream and duck pond at the centre of the village. Nearby stands an attractive small 18th-century Post Mill with one pair of stones and tailpole winding. Extensively restored, visitors can climb up the first two floors.

Just up the hill, visitors will find the Norman **Church of St John the Baptist**, and

the **Guildhall** (mentioned in the *Domesday Book*), which has a small museum open on Sundays and houses a local heritage centre with displays of artwork, paintings, pottery, sewing and weaving.

Finchingfield is easily one of the most picturesque and photographed villages in Essex, it has featured in many TV programmes and is the home of the series *Lovejoy*. Here visitors will also find the privately owned Tudor stately home, Spains Hall, which has a lovely flower garden containing a huge Cedar of Lebanon planted in 1670 and an Adams sundial. Many good roses surround the kitchen garden, which contains an ancient Paulonia tree and a bougainvillea in the greenhouse. The garden is generally open on Sunday afternoons in summer.

Finchingfield also has an easily followed path along the Finchingfield Brook leading from the village to Great Bardfield.

GREAT BARDFIELD

6 miles NW of Braintree off the B1053

Museum

This old market town on a hill above the River Pant is a pleasant mixture of cottages and shops, nicely complemented by the 14th-

century Church of St Mary the Virgin. Perhaps Great Bardfield's most notable feature is, however, a restored windmill that goes by the unusual name of Gibraltar.

Here in one of the prettiest villages in all of Essex, the **Great Bardfield Museum** occupies a 16th-century charity cottage and 19th-century village lockup, and features exhibits of mainly 19th- and 20th-century



Spain's Hall, Finchingfield

domestic and agricultural artefacts and some fine examples of rural crafts such as corn-dollies and straw-plaiting.

GOSFIELD

4 miles N of Braintree off the A1017

 Gosfield Lake Leisure Resort

Gosfield Lake Leisure Resort, the county's largest freshwater lake, lies in the grounds of Gosfield Hall. This Tudor mansion was remodelled in the 19th century by its owner Samuel Courtauld. He also built the attractive mock-Tudor houses in the village.

Halstead

 Townsford Mill

The name Halstead comes from the Anglo-Saxon for healthy place. Like Braintree and Coggeshall, Halstead was an important

weaving centre. **Townsford Mill** is certainly the most picturesque reminder of Halstead's industrial heritage. Built in the 1700s, it remains one of the most handsome buildings in a town with a number of historic buildings. This white, weatherboarded three-storey mill across the River Colne at the Causeway, was once a landmark site for the Courtauld empire, producing both the famous funerary crepe and rayon. Today, the Mill is an antiques centre, one of the largest in Essex, with thousands of items of furniture, porcelain, collectables, stamps, coins, books, dolls, postcards, costumes, paintings, glass and ceramics, old lace and clocks.

There are several historic buildings in the shopping centre of Halstead, which is part of a designated conservation area.

Though it may now seem somewhat improbable, Halstead's most famous product

MARMALADE

35 High Street, Halstead, Essex CO9 2AA
Tel: 01787 473217

e-mail: marmalademarmalade@hotmail.com

Kate Mroz always wanted her own shop and opened Marmalade in 2005. On the main street of the old weaving town of Halstead, this super shop sells seasonal ranges of women's, children's and baby clothes, along with accessories, giftware and things for the home. J J Park, Bohemia and Sara Sanskara are among the featured brands of fashionware, and among the accessories are hand-made slippers and babies' bonnets, winter hats, funky shower caps, leather belts, rings and Jonny Loves Rosie bags and jewellery. Also in stock are Orchid enamelled jewelled boxes and mirrors, magnifying glasses, photo frames, cushions, McCall candles, Gel Gems window ornaments, bookmarks, lampshades, Friendship tea bags and 100% vegetable oil soap from France. Browsers are welcome, Kate and her assistants are on hand with help and advice and this busy, friendly shop is open from 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Saturday. Halstead is a place filled with interesting, historic buildings and needs plenty of time for a stroll. But no visit is complete without looking in at Marmalade.



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Hedingham Castle

Bayley Street, Castle Hedingham, Halstead, Essex CO9 3DJ

Tel: 01787 460261

website: www.hedinghamcastle.co.uk

Hedingham Castle's Norman keep, 110 feet high, was built c1140 by Aubrey de Vere and is still owned by one of his descendants, The Honourable Thomas Lindsay and his wife Virginia. There are four floors to explore, including a magnificent Banqueting Hall spanned by a remarkable 28-foot arch, one of the largest Norman arches in England. A good view of this splendid room can be obtained from the Minstrels' Gallery, built within the thickness of the 12-foot walls. A visit to the castle and its beautiful grounds is ideal for a family outing, and during the summer there are a variety of special events, which bring its colourful history alive. Come and enjoy one of our exciting Jousting Tournaments or other entertainments.

The castle and the Queen Anne house (private) are surrounded by well-kept grounds and woods. At the head of the beautiful lake is a pretty 18th-century dovecote in the Bog Garden which was planted in the 1920s and contains camellias and azaleas, water-loving plants and the huge leaves of giant gunnera. There are delightful walks around the lake and through the shady woodland under the steep ramparts of the castle defences. This Valley Walk is famous for its spectacular snowdrops in February, followed by a carpet of bluebells in May, and the castle's peaceful grounds and many fine trees are home to a large variety of birds and animals.



was once mechanical elephants. Life-sized and weighing half a ton, they were built by one W Hunwicks. Each one consisted of 9,000 parts and could carry a load of eight adults and four children at speeds of up to 12 miles per hour. Rather less unusual is the Tortoise Foundry Company, remembered for its warm tortoise stoves.

(see panel above), which dominates the landscape. One of England's strongest fortresses in the 11th century, even now it is impossible not to feel its power and strength. The impressive stone keep is one of the tallest in Europe, with four floors and rising over 100 feet, with 12-foot thick walls. The banqueting hall and minstrels' gallery can still be seen. It was owned by the Earls of Oxford, the powerful de Veres family, one of whom was among the barons who forced King John to accept the Magna Carta. Amongst those entertained at the castle were Henry VII and Elizabeth I.

Around Halstead

CASTLE HEDINGHAM

3 miles NW of Halstead off the B1058

 Castle  Colne Valley Railway Museum

 Colne Valley Farm Park

This town is named after its Norman **Castle**

The village itself is a maze of narrow streets radiating from Falcon Square, named after the half-timbered Falcon Inn. Attractive

buildings include many Georgian and 15th-century houses comfortably vying for space, and the Church of St Nicholas, built by the de Veres, which avoided Victorian 'restoration' and is virtually completely Norman, with grand masonry and interestingly carved choir seats. There is a working pottery in St James' Street.

At the **Colne Valley Railway and Museum**, a mile of the Colne Valley and Halstead line between Castle Hedingham and Great Yeldham has been restored and now runs steam trains operated by enthusiasts. These lovingly restored Victorian railway buildings feature a collection of vintage engines and carriages; short steam train trips are available. **Colne Valley Farm Park**, set in 30 acres of traditional river meadows, is open from April to September.

The B1058 towards Sudbury, then left through Gestingthorpe and the Belchamps, makes for a pleasant excursion.

SIBLE HEDINGHAM

3 miles NW of Halstead off the A1017

Mentioned in the Domesday Book as the largest parish in England, Sible Hedingham was the birthplace of Sir John Hawkwood, one of the 14th century's most famous soldiers of fortune. He led a band of mercenaries to Italy, where he was paid to defend Florence, which is where he died. Hawkwood was buried in Florence Cathedral, where he is commemorated with a fresco by Uccello. It is thought that his body was returned to Essex and lies beneath the monument to him in Sible Hedingham's Church of St Stephen, decorated with hawks and various other beasts.

Swan Street is the main artery of this charming village, boasting several delightful

establishments devoted to providing visitors and natives of the town with places to shop, dine, enjoy a quiet drink and even stay for the night.

GESTINGTHORP

5 miles N of Halstead off the A131

 Church of St Mary the Virgin

The **Church of St Mary the Virgin** in Gestingthorpe is distinctive in many respects. Witness to centuries of Christian worship, the Domesday Book of 1086 tells that 'Ghestingetorp' was held by Ledmer the priest before 1066. The oldest part extant of the existing building is the blocked-up lancet window in the north wall of the chancel, which dates back to the 1200s. Apart from this, most of the chancel, nave and south aisle dates from the 14th century. The tower, constructed in about 1500, is 66 feet high. Of the six bells hung in the tower, four were cast in 1658-9 by Miles Gray, a Colchester bellfounder. The 16th century fifth and sixth bells were cast in Bury St Edmunds, and recast in 1901. The west door, set in a stepped brick arch, is the original. The unusual tracery in the East window consists of arches placed atop the apexes of the arches beneath them. The late 15th-century/early 16th-century nave roof is of the double hammer-beam type, and one of the finest in Essex. The font is late 14th century. One of the church's handsome memorials commemorates Captain L E G Oates, who died in an attempt to save the lives of his companions on an ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic in 1912.

The North Essex Coast

The Essex Sunshine Coast has 36 miles of clean, sandy beaches, including two European

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Blue Flag beaches (Brightlingsea and Dovercourt Bay) and five Seaside award winning beaches at Clacton, Frinton, Walton, Brightlingsea and Dovercourt Bay.

Clacton-on-Sea

 Jaywick Sands

Clacton is a traditional sun-and-sand family resort with a south-facing, long sandy beach, lovely gardens on the seafront and a wide variety of shops and places to explore. It also boasts a wide variety of special events and entertainments taking place throughout the year.

Settled by hunters during the Stone Age - borne witness to by the wealth of flint implements and the fossilised bones of the cave lion, straight-tusked elephant and wild ox unearthed on the Clacton foreshore and at Lion Point - the town grew over the centuries from a small village into a prosperous seaside resort in the 1800s, when the craze for the health benefits of coastal air and bathing was at its peak. The Pier was constructed in 1871; at first paddle steamers provided the only mode of transport to the resort, the railway arriving in 1882. The Pier was widened from 30 to over 300 feet in the 1930s. On the pier, apart from the traditional sideshows, big wheel, restaurants and fairground rides, there is the fascinating Seaquarium and Reptile Safari.

Amusement centres include the arcades and Clacton Pavilion. The two theatres, Princes Theatre and West Cliff, are open all year. Clacton Pavilion boasts a range of attractions, including crazy golf and dodgems. The Clifftop Public Gardens are worth a visit.

Great Clacton is the oldest part of town,

comprising an attractive grouping of shops, pubs and restaurants within the shadow of the 12th-century parish church.

A walk round the town rewards the visitor with some very handsome sights. There are three Martello Towers along this bit of the Essex coast. Just south of the town, **Jaywick Sands** is the ideal spot for a picnic by the sea, boasting one of the finest natural sandy beaches in the county.

Around Clacton-on-Sea

LITTLE CLACTON

3 miles NW of Clacton off the A133

 Church of St James

Though it shares its name with its near neighbour, this is a town apart. Quiet and secluded, multiple-winner of the Best Kept Village Award, Little Clacton features a lovely Jubilee Oak, planted to celebrate Victoria's 50th year on the throne.

The fine **Church of St James** has been described as one of the most beautiful medieval churches in Essex, and sits at the heart of the village.

Oakwood Crafts Resource Centre in Little Clacton provides an environment for people with learning disabilities to learn and develop work skills, motivation, responsibility, team spirit, self-esteem and confidence through horticulture, woodwork, ceramics, crafts and catering. Set in three acres of land, it opened in 1975 and, as a horticultural centre, sells a wide range of bedding plants, shrubs and hanging baskets seasonally, along with a selection of wooden garden implements, furnishings and other items, and ceramics. Teas and coffees are available.

WEELEY

5 miles NW of Clacton off the A133

St Andrew's is the handsome parish church just south of the centre of this picturesque village. There is a lovely tree-lined path that passes Weeleyhall Wood and Weeley Lodge, with its beautifully kept gardens. Here visitors will also pass a navigational beacon that forms part of Aircraft Flight Operations for both civil and military flights.

A mile south, off the B1411, Weeley Heath is a small and attractive community boasting a lovely village green and stunning surrounding countryside.

TENDRING

7 miles NW of Clacton off the A133

This village that gives its name to both the peninsula and the district council contains the handsome Church of St Edmund with its elegant spire that can be seen for miles around. The church is dedicated to the last King of independent East Anglia, martyred by the Danes in the 9th century.

BEAUMONT-CUM-MOZE

7 miles NW of Clacton off the B114

This small village once had a quay originally constructed for loading and unloading the vessels plying the Walton backwaters. The disused Trading Quay was rebuilt in 1832 using stone from the old London Bridge. The 11th-century parish Church of St Leonard contains the grave of Viscount Byng of Vimy, one-time Governor General of Canada.

HOLLAND-ON-SEA

1½ miles NE of Clacton off the B1032

 Holland Haven Country Park

This attractive community is home to

Holland Haven Country Park, 100 acres of open space near the seashore, ideal for watching the marine birds and other wildlife of the region. Throughout the area there are a number of attractive walks, which take full advantage of the varied coastal scenery.

FRINTON-ON-SEA

3 miles NE of Clacton off the B1032

Once a quiet fishing village, this town was developed as a select resort by Sir Richard Cooper, and expanded in the 1880s to the genteel family resort it is today. Situated on a long stretch of sandy beach, Frinton remains peaceful and unspoilt. The tree-lined residential avenues sweep elegantly down to the Esplanade and extensive clifftop greensward. Along its main shopping street in Connaught Avenue, the Bond Street of the East Coast, shopkeepers maintain a tradition of friendly and courteous service. Summer theatre and other open-air events take place throughout the season, and there are also some excellent tennis and golf clubs in the town. The grace and elegance of this sophisticated resort is evidenced all around, as are hints of its distinguished past: Victorian beach huts still dot the extensive beach.

The area south of Frinton Gates has a unique local character, being laid out with detached houses set along broad tree-lined avenues.

The Church of Old St Mary in the town contains some panels of stained glass in the East window designed by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Burne Jones.

A good example of 20th-century English vernacular architecture is The Homestead at the corner of Second Avenue and Holland Road, built in 1905 by C F Voysey.

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PARK FRUIT FARM

Pork Lane, Great Holland, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 0ES

Tel: 01255 674621

e-mail: s.elsworth@farmline.com

website: www.parkfruitfarm.co.uk



Park Fruit Farm and the associated shop are owned by Stephen Elsworth, whose father started the commercial side in the early 1970s and whose grandfather planted the first orchard here in 1935. The 60 acres in Great Holland, on the B1032 between Frinton and Clacton, produce an impressive 40 varieties of apples, 10 varieties of plums and damsons, and four varieties of pear, along with raspberries and blackberries.

The shop is part of the pack house and visitors can see the grader being worked and the apples being pressed for juice. As well as most of the fruit grown on the farm, the shop sells its award-winning pure, untreated apple juice, cider and cider vinegar, home-baked sweet and savoury dishes and meat, eggs, vegetables, preserves and chutneys from local farms.

Pick Your Own is available for plums between mid-July and October, and for cane fruit from August to November. Rose makes a variety of cakes with fruits from the orchard and sells them in the shop and in the tea room, where sweet and savoury snacks and hot and cold drinks are served. The shop is open Monday to Saturday from January to July, and every day from August to Christmas. It is closed during the week from Christmas to New Year.

**KIRBY-LE-SOKEN**

5 miles NE of Clacton off the B1034

There is a footpath in this attractive village that begins to the west of the 14th century Ship Inn and affords views of the backwaters of Hamford Water, with views of Horsey and Hedge End Islands in the middle distance.

WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE

8 miles NE of Clacton on the B1034

 Old Lifeboat House Museum  The Naze

 Naze Tower

Walton is all the fun of the fair. It is a cheerful, traditional resort that focuses on the pier and all its attractions, including a 10-pin bowling alley. The gardens at the seafront are colourful and the beach has good sand. The

Backwaters to the rear of Walton are made up of a series of small harbours and saltings, which lead into Harwich harbour. Walton has an outstanding sandy beach. The town's seafront was developed in 1825 and provides a fine insight into the character of an early Victorian seaside resort. The charming narrow streets of the town contain numerous shops, restaurants and pubs overlooking the second longest pier in the country. Marine Parade, originally called The Crescent, was built in 1832. The Pier, first built in 1830, was originally constructed of wood and measured 330 feet in length. It was extended to its present length of 2,610 feet in 1898.

The wind-blown expanse of **The Naze**, just north of Walton, is an extensive coastal recreation and picnic area, pleasant for

walking, especially out of season when the visitor is unlikely to have to share the 150 acres, with great views out over the water. The shape of the Naze is constantly changing, eroded by wind, water and tide.

The year 1796 saw the demise of the medieval church, and somewhere beyond the 800-foot pier lies medieval Walton. The sandstone cliffs are internationally important for their shell fossil deposits. Inhabitants have been enjoying the bracing sea air at Walton since before Neolithic times: flint-shaping instruments have been found here, and the fossil teeth and the ears of sharks and whales have been discovered in the Naze's red crag cliffs. The **Naze Tower** is brick-built and octagonal in shape. Originally built as a beacon in 1720 to warn seamen of the West Rocks off-shore, it includes a roof viewing platform, an art gallery, tea rooms and a museum tel: 01255 852519. A nature trail has been created nearby, and the Essex Skipper butterfly and Emperor moth can be seen here. The John

Weston Nature Reserve provides important habitats for migrant birds.

The **Old Lifeboat House Museum** at East Terrace, in a building over 100 years old, houses an interpretive museum of local history and development, rural and maritime, covering Walton, Frinton and the Sokens.

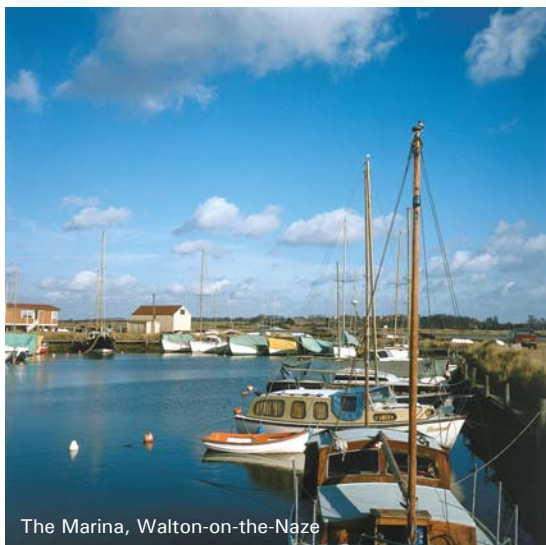
Brightlingsea

 All Saints Church  Jacobes Hall  Museum

Brightlingsea enjoys a long tradition of shipbuilding and seafaring. In 1347, 51 men and five ships were sent to the siege of Calais. Among the crew members of Sir Francis Drake's fleet, which vanquished the Spanish Armada, was one William of Brightlingsea. Brightlingsea has the distinction of being the only limb of the Cinque Ports outside Kent and Sussex.

The 13th-century **Jacobes Hall** in the town centre is one of the oldest occupied buildings in Essex. It is timber-framed with an undulating tile roof and an external staircase. Used as a meeting hall during the reign of Henry III, its name originates from its first owner, Edmund, Vicar of Brightlingsea, who was known locally as Jacob le Clerk.

All Saints Church, which occupies the highest point of the town on a hill about a mile from the centre, is mainly 13th century. Here are to be found some Roman brickwork and a frieze of ceramic tiles commemorating local residents whose lives were lost at sea. Its 97-foot tower can be seen from 17 miles out to sea. A light was once placed in the tower to guide the



The Marina, Walton-on-the-Naze

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town's fishermen home.

The Town Hard is where you can see all the waterfront comings and goings, including the activities of the Colne Smack Preservation Society, which maintains a seagoing link with the past.

Brightlingsea Museum in Duke Street offers an insight into the lives, customs and traditions of the area, housing a collection of exhibits relating to the town's maritime connections and the oyster industry.

There are plenty of superb walks along Brightlingsea Creek and the River Colne, which offer a chance to watch the birdlife on the saltings and the plethora of boats on the water. Today the town is a haven for the yachting fraternity and is the home of national and international sailing championships, with one of the best stretches of sailing on the East Coast. Day and half-day sailing and canoeing sessions are held at the Brightlingsea Outdoor Education Centre. From the new pier visitors can board the ferry for trips to

point Clear and East Mersea, providing a unique view of the Colne estuary.

Around Brightlingsea

GREAT BENTLEY

4 miles N of Brightlingsea off the A133

Reputed to have the largest village green in England, this lovely village has a number of shops, a pub with a restaurant, a beautiful church and a chapel.

ELMSTEAD MARKET

6 miles N of Brightlingsea off the A120

 Beth Chatto Gardens

The Church of St Anne and St Lawrence to the north of this village has a rare carved oak, recumbent effigy of a knight in armour.

Elmstead Market is perhaps best known as the location of **Beth Chatto Gardens** (see panel below), at White Barn House, renowned the world over. Here visitors will

Beth Chatto Gardens

*Elmstead Market, Elmstead, Essex CO7 7DB
Tel: 01206 822007*

e-mail: info@bethchatto.fsnet.co.uk website: www.bethchatto.co.uk

The **Beth Chatto Gardens** began in 1960. From an overgrown wasteland with poor gravel soil and boggy hollows, it has been transformed into an informal garden harmonising with the surrounding countryside.

In the gravel garden, areas have been filled with drought-loving plants, emulating a winding dried-up river bed. Star performers include alliums providing jewel rich colours, whilst kniphofias, verbascums and flowering grasses add strong verticals amongst the bold groupings of ballota, lavandula and santolina. The dramatic water gardens include five large ponds where, from early summer until late autumn, the impact of lush green growth is almost overpowering. Huge upturned parasols of *Gunnera tinctoria* tower above a hundred shades of green, creating a scene of harmony and tranquillity. In autumn tall grasses shimmer with ribbon-like leaves, punctuating this green landscape with their rich tones.



find five acres of landscaped gardens including extensive water gardens, shady walks and a Mediterranean-style gravel garden where aromatic drought-loving plants thrive. The adjoining nursery contains a wide variety of plants for sale. Close by is the Rolts Nursery Butterfly Farm.

THORRINGTON

3 miles NW of Brightlingsea off the A1027

Thorrington Tide Mill, built in the early 19th century, is the only remaining Tide Mill in Essex, and one of very few left in East Anglia. It has been fully restored, and although no longer in use, the Wheel can be run for guided groups. There is a public footpath, which runs along the creek.

China Maroc Bonsai is a specialist nursery, part of which is devoted to a peaceful Japanese garden with a waterfall and pool, where one can enjoy the tranquil atmosphere and the many fascinating outdoor bonsai. Crossing the bridge over the pool, one enters a tropical tunnel containing hundreds of indoor bonsai, many of which are imported from the hotter regions of the world, as well as bonsai and seedlings grown and cultivated on the premises.

POINT CLEAR

2 miles SE of Brightlingsea off the B1027

 East Essex Aviation Society & Museum

The **East Essex Aviation Society & Museum**, located in the Martello Tower (1810) at Point Clear, not only retains its original flooring and roof, but today contains interesting displays of wartime aviation, military and naval photographs, uniforms and other memorabilia with local and US Air Force connections. There are artefacts on show from

the crash sites of wartime aircraft in the Tendring area, including the engine and fuselage section of a recovered P51D Mustang fighter as a memorial to its pilot Flight Officer Ray King of the 479th Fighter group. The museum also explores civil and military history from both World Wars. There are very good views from the tower over the Colne Estuary and Brightlingsea.

ST OSYTH

3 miles SE of Brightlingsea off the B1027

 Priory

This pretty little village has a fascinating history and centres around its Norman church and the ancient ruins of **St Osyth Priory**, founded in the 12th century. The village and Priory were named by Augustinian Canons after St Osyth, martyred daughter of Frithenwald, first Christian King of the East Angles, who was beheaded by Dicean pirates in AD653. Little of the original Priory remains, except for the magnificent late 15th-century flint gatehouse, complete with battlements.

The village is centred on a crossroads and



St Osyth's Priory, St Osyth

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THE MERSEA DELICATESSEN

42 High Street, West Mersea, Essex CO5 8QA
Tel: 01206 384753

Mersea Island has much to attract the visitor, but for food-lovers the place to head for is the **Mersea Delicatessen** on West Mersea's High Street. Friendly owners Carol and Maureen have long been passionate about food, a passion shared by their many regular customers. They are also environmentally very aware and try to keep packaging to a minimum. Home-made pies – chicken & leek, chicken & mushroom, steak & kidney, steak & mushroom – are among the specialities, along with quiches and a range of frozen meals, including lasagne, spaghetti bolognese, sausages & mash, cottage pie and hearty casseroles.

They also stock a wide variety of delicatessen items – cooked and cured meats, cheeses, olives, pickles and chutneys. Sandwiches are made to order and there's always a selection of breads and cakes, biscuits, chocolates (Feeding Your Imagination from Devon), ice creams, jams and marmalades, coffee beans, fruit juices, wines and beers.

The Mersea Deli is open from 9am to 5pm, half day Wednesday, closed Sunday. In the same street, Mersea Island Museum tells the story of the Island's social and natural history, archaeology and the fishing industry. Mersea is a haven for birdwatchers, and most of the Island is a designated National Nature Reserve.



contains an attractive group of shops and restaurants. The Church of St Peter and St Paul in the village centre has unusual internal red brick piers and arches. The nearby creek has a small boatyard and water-skiing lake.

MERSEA ISLAND

2 miles SW of Brightlingsea off the B1025

 Mersea Island Museum  Nature Reserve

 Cudmore Grove Country Park

Much of this island is a **National Nature Reserve**, home to its teeming shorelife. The island is linked to the mainland by a narrow causeway, which is covered over at high tide. The towns of both East and West Mersea have excellent facilities for sailing enthusiasts. On the High Street, West Mersea, **Mersea Island Museum** has exhibits of Mersea's

social and natural history, archaeology and the fishing industry, including a fisherman's cottage display. Visitors to Mersea Island Vineyard at East Mersea can take a conducted tour followed by wine tasting and a seafood platter. East Mersea is also a haven for birdwatchers. The best-known vicar of East Mersea was the Rev Sabine Baring-Gould, father of 13 children and writer of the much-loved hymn, *Onward Christian Soldiers*.

Cudmore Grove Country Park on Bromans Lane, East Mersea, boasts fine views across the Colne and Blackwater estuaries. Grassland adjoining a sandy beach, it's an ideal spot for shore walks and picnics. A pathway on the sea wall leads to a birdwatching hide.

Harwich

-  Maritime Museum  Lifeboat Museum
-  National Museum of Wireless & Television
-  The Redoubt

Harwich's name probably originates from the time of King Alfred, when 'hare' meant army, and 'wic' a camp. This attractive old town was built in the 13th century by the Earls of Norfolk to exploit its strategic position on the Stour and Orwell estuary; the town has an important and fascinating maritime history, the legacy of which continues into the present.

During the 14th- and 15th-century French campaigns, Harwich was an important naval base. The famous Elizabethan seafarers Hawkins, Frobisher and Drake sailed from Harwich on various expeditions; in 1561 Queen Elizabeth I visited the town, describing

it 'a pretty place and want[ing] for nothing'. Christopher Newport, leader of the *Goodspeed* expedition which founded Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, and Christopher Jones, master of the Pilgrim ship *The Mayflower*, lived in Harwich (the latter just off the quay in King's Head Street), as did Jones' kinsman John Alden, who sailed to America in 1620. The diarist Samuel Pepys was MP for the town in the 1660s, at a time when it was the headquarters for the King's Navy. Charles II took the first pleasure cruise from Harwich's shores. Other notable visitors included Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, who are reputed to have stayed at The Three Cups in Church Street.

Harwich remains popular as a vantage point for watching incoming and outgoing shipping in the harbour and across the waters to Felixstowe. Nowadays, lightships, buoys and

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miles of strong chain are stored along the front, and passengers arriving on North Sea ferries at Harwich International Port see the 90-foot high, six-sided High Lighthouse as the first landmark. Now housing the **National Museum of Wireless & Television**, it was built in 1818 along with the Low Lighthouse. When the two lighthouses were in line they could indicate a safe shipping

channel into the harbour. Each had replaced earlier wooden structures, and were themselves replaced by cast iron structures (both of which still stand on the front in nearby Dovercourt) in 1863 when the shifting sandbanks altered the channel. Shipping now relies on light buoys to find its way. The Low lighthouse is now the town's **Maritime Museum**, with specialist displays on the Royal Navy and commercial shipping. Harwich is a very busy lifeboat station with about 100 call-outs a year. Many of the all-weather lifeboat calls are well out into the North Sea, while the inshore lifeboat attends the rivers and coastal areas. The **Lifeboat Museum** (see panel opposite), off Wellington Road, contains an Oakley class lifeboat and a history from 1876 of the lifeboat service in Harwich; the Ha'penny Pier Visitor Centre on the Quay has information on everything in Harwich and a small heritage exhibition. Throughout the summer, there are guided walking tours starting at the visitor centre.

The Treadwheel Crane now stands on Harwich Green, but for over 250 years it was sited in the Naval Shipyard. It is worked by two people walking in two 16-foot diameter



The Redoubt, Harwich

wheels, and is the only known British example of its kind. Amazingly, it was operational up until the 1920s. Another fascinating piece of the town's history is the Electric Palace Cinema, built in 1911 and now the oldest unaltered purpose-built cinema in Britain. It was restored by a trust and re-opened in 1981.

The importance of Harwich's port during the 19th century is confirmed by **The Redoubt**, a huge grey fort built between 1808 and 1810. Its design is an enlarged version of the Martello towers that dotted the English coast awaiting a Napoleonic invasion that never came (some of these towers, of course, still exist). Today the Harwich Society has largely restored it and opened the fort as a small museum.

The old town also contains many ancient buildings, including the Guildhall, which was rebuilt in 1769 and is located in Church Street. The Council chamber, Mayor's Parlour and other rooms may be viewed. The former gaol contains unique graffiti of ships, probably carved by prisoners, and is well worth putting aside a morning to explore (by appointment only).

Harwich Lifeboat Museum

Timberfields, Wellington Road, Harwich, Essex CO12 3EJ
Tel: 01255 503429
e-mail: info@harwich-society.co.uk
website: www.harwich-society.co.uk

The first lifeboat at Harwich was named the *Braybrooke* and was on station between 1821-1825. It was owned by the Essex Lifeboat Association. Following a large loss of life after the vessel *Deutschland* was lost, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) opened its first station in Harwich in 1876 when the lifeboat *Springwell* was put on station. *Springwell* was a 35ft 9in long, self-righting, pulling and sailing type lifeboat and cost £432.

The RNLI presence remained until 1917, the Harwich lifeboats launched 276 times and saved 333 lives. An increase in incidents resulted in the RNLI opening a lifeboat station at Harwich again in 1965 using a 16ft inflatable. The station became operational all year round the following year and the arrival of the 44ft Waveney class *Margaret Graham* in 1967 ensured the station could function in all weathers.

The Harwich Society runs a lifeboat museum in the old Victorian lifeboat shed at Timberfields. As well as numerous exhibits, the 37ft Oakley class lifeboat *Valentine Wyndham-Quin* can be seen. This lifeboat saw service at Clacton-on-Sea from 1968 to 1984. Visitors to the museum have a rare hands-on opportunity to see a lifeboat at close quarters. The Museum is open from 11am – 3pm daily from 1st May till the end of August.



Around Harwich

DOVERCOURT

1 mile S of Harwich off the A120

This residential and holiday suburb of Harwich has Market Day on Fridays. With its attractive cliffs and beach, it also boasts the Iron Lighthouse or Leading Lights located just off lower Marine Parade. The town has been settled from prehistoric times, as attested to by the late Bronze Age axe-heads found here (now in Colchester Museum). The Romans found the town a useful source of the stone Septaria, taken from the cliffs and used in building. The town that visitors see today developed primarily in Victorian times as a fashionable resort.

MISTLEY

7 miles W of Harwich off the B1352

 Mistley Towers  Mistley Place Park

 Mistley Quay Workshops

Here at the gateway to Constable Country, local 18th-century landowner and MP Richard Rigby had grand designs to develop Mistley into a fashionable spa to rival Harrogate and Bath, adopting the swan as its symbol. Sadly, all that remains of Rigby's ambitious scheme is the Swan Fountain, a small number of attractive Georgian houses and **Mistley Towers**, the remains of a church (otherwise demolished in 1870) designed by the flamboyant architect Robert Adams. From the waterfront, noted for its colony of swans, there are very pleasant views across the estuary to Suffolk. Mistley was once an important port and shipbuilding centre – Nelson's huge flagship *Amphion* was built here. Traditional crafts are still carried on in **Mistley Quay Workshops**, including a pottery workshop,

lute/cello maker, harpsichord maker, wood worker, bookbinder, and stained-glass window maker and restorer. There is also a tea shop on the premises (the key to Mistley Towers can be obtained from the Workshops).

Mistley Place Park Animal Rescue Centre is 25 acres of parkland affording country walks, wildlife habitats, lake, farm animals and great views across the Stour Estuary. Over 2,000 rescued animals, including rabbits, Vietnamese pigs and horses, roam freely.

MANNINGTREE

9 miles W of Harwich off the B1352

 Museum  The Walls

The Walls, on the approach to Manningtree along the B1352, offer unrivalled views of the Stour estuary and the Suffolk coast, and the swans for which the area is famous. Lying on the River Stour amid beautiful rolling countryside, the scene has oft been depicted by artists over the centuries.

Back in Tudor times, Manningtree was the centre of the cloth trade, and later a port filled with barges carrying their various cargoes along the coast to London. Water still dominates today and the town is a centre of leisure sailing.

Manningtree has been a market town since 1238, and is still a busy shopping centre. It is the smallest town in Britain, and a stroll through the streets reveals the diversity of its past. There are still traditional (and mainly Georgian) restaurants, pubs and shops, as well as handcraft and specialist outlets. The views over the river are well known to birdspotters, sailors and ramblers. The town has an intriguing past – as a river crossing, market, smugglers' haven and home of Matthew Hopkins, the reviled and self-styled

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ANGEL PAVEMENT LTD

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Lanford, Manningtree,
Essex CO11 1UR
Tel: 01206 393020
e-mail: sonia@angelpavement.net
website: www.angelpavement.net

Angel Pavement Ltd is based in a modern warehouse on the Essex/Suffolk border, in the village of Lawford, a five-minute walk from Manningtree Station and just a ten-minute drive from the A12. The main stock in trade is high-quality 19th and 20th century furnishings. The spacious, easy-to-view displays also include a wide variety of clocks, decorative items and collectables, from lighting and mirrors to costume jewellery, decorative glass, vintage perfume bottles, handbags and prints. Furniture stock includes pieces large and small, from dining chairs to wardrobes, tables, chests, cabinets, luggage racks, plant stands and much more.

Director and Company Secretary Sonia Oakden has had a passion for antiques, vintage clothing and accessories since she was a teenager, and she now shares that passion with her customers, seeking out quality items throughout the UK and beyond.

Angel Pavement offers its furniture in original, unrestored condition as well as fully restored pieces. A full furniture restoration service is available. Ashley Warren, a master of his trade with over 20 years experience, knows exactly how to bring out the best in a neglected piece of furniture. Major and minor repairs are undertaken; veneer work, marquetry and traditional methods of oil, wax and French polishing are a speciality.

At Angel Pavement they offer very competitive prices and don't expect to keep anything in stock for a long period, so on every visit the client is assured of finding something interesting and different. Their comprehensive website gives a good idea of the type of furniture and services that are on offer. Angel Pavement also regularly exhibits at major antiques fairs around the country.

Angel Pavement is open on weekdays 10am to 5pm and from 10am – 1pm on Saturday (phone first, as times can vary).



Witchfinder General who struck terror into the local community during the 17th century. Some of his victims were hanged on Manningtree's small village green. Hopkins is buried on Mistley Heath.

It is believed that the reference in Shakespeare's Henry IV to Falstaff as 'that roasted Manningtree ox' relates to the practice of roasting an entire ox, as was done at that time at the town's annual fair.

Manningtree Museum in the High Street opened in the late 1980s and mounts two exhibitions a year, together with permanent photographs and pieces relating to the heritage of Manningtree, Lawford, Mistley and the district.

Saffron Walden

Audley End house Museum War Memorial
 Common Fry Public Art Gallery

Named after the Saffron crocus - grown in the area to make dyestuffs and fulfil a variety of other uses in the Middle Ages - Saffron Walden has retained much of its original street plan, as well as hundreds of fine old buildings, many of which are timbered and have overhanging upper floors and decorative plastering (also known as pargeting). Gog and Magog (or, in some versions, folk-hero Tom Hickathrift and the Wisbech Giant) battle forever in plaster on the gable of the Old Sun Inn, where, legend has it, Oliver Cromwell and General Fairfax both lodged during the Civil War.

A typical market town, Saffron Walden's centrepiece is its magnificent church. **Saffron Walden Museum** first opened to the public at



Re-enactment of Battle of Nasby, Saffron Walden

its present location in 1835, and was founded 'to gratify the inclination of all who value natural history'. It remains faithful to this credo, while widening the museum's scope in the ensuing years. The museum has won numerous awards, including joint winner of the Museum of the Year Award for best museum of Industrial or Social History in 1997. At this friendly, family-sized museum visitors can try their hand at corn grinding with a Romano-British quern, see how a medieval timber house would have been built, admire the displays of Native American and West African embroidery, and come face to face with Wallace the Lion, the museum's faithful guardian. Over two floors, exhibits focus on town and country (with a wealth of wooden ploughs and other agricultural artefacts), furniture and woodwork, costumes, ancient Egyptian and Roman artefacts, geology exhibits, and ceramics and glass. In the Ages of Man gallery, the history of northwest Essex is traced from the Ice Age to the Middle Ages. The ruins of historic Walden Castle are also on-site.

On the local **Common**, once known as

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Castle Green, is the largest surviving Turf Maze in England. Only eight ancient turf mazes survive in England: though there were many more in the Middle Ages, if they are not looked after they soon become overgrown and are lost. This one is believed to be some 800 years old.

Though many miles from the sea, it was here that Henry Winstanley - inventor, engineer and engraver, and designer of the first Eddystone Lighthouse at Plymouth - was born in 1644. He is said to have held lighthouse trials with a wooden lantern in the lavishly decorated 15th- to 16th-century church. The Lighthouse, and Winstanley with it, was swept away in a fierce storm in 1703.

The town was also famous for its resident Cockatrice, which was reputed to have hatched from a cock's egg by a toad or serpent and

could, it was said, kill its victims with a glance. The Cockatrice was blamed for any inexplicable disaster in the town. Like Perseus and Medusa the Gorgon, a Cockatrice could be destroyed by making it see its own reflection, thereby turning it to stone. The Saffron Walden Cockatrice's slayer was said to be a knight in a coat of 'cristal glass'.

To the north of the town is Bridge End Garden, a wonderfully restored example of early Victorian garden, complete with a Hedge Maze (for opening times of the Maze call the TTC tel: 01799 524002). A viewing platform was reinstated in 2000 to enhance visitors' enjoyment of these lovely gardens.

Next to the gardens is the **Fry Public Art Gallery**, with a unique collection of work by 20th-century artists and designers who lived in and around Saffron Walden, such as

MODISH

15 George Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1EW
Tel: 01799 528852

e-mail: sarab@modishonline.co.uk

website: www.modishonline.co.uk

A passion for gorgeous shoes and bags led Sarah Decent to share that passion by opening **Modish**, a beautiful boutique in a handsome Edwardian building. But Sarah's shoes aren't just lovely to look at; as a sample size 37 she tests each shoe personally, and if they're not comfortable they don't make it into the shop. Many of the shoes are made in Spain or Italy, and some of the most beautiful bags are in Italian leather. Behind the white-painted shopfront the well-lit display space showcases court shoes, evening shoes, day shoes, boots, pumps, trainers, sandals, both day and evening/occasion bags and fashion jewellery. The shop features both established designers and up-and-coming new talent and offers something to suit all ages and pockets with no compromise on quality and style.

Among the brand names, many of them not easily found outside London, are Ash, Audley, Blowfish, Bronx, Geox, Keds, Manas, Tamaris and Vanilla Moon (shoes) and Abro, Matt & Nat, Urban Code and Yoshi (bags). Sarah and her staff are always ready with help and advice; Modish is open from 9.30am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday.



SOMETHING ELEGANT

8 Market Lane, Saffron Walden,
Essex CB10 1JZ

Tel: 01799 516669

e-mail: sales@something-elegant.co.uk

website: www.something-elegant.co.uk

Contemporary jewellery is the main stock-in-trade of **Something Elegant**, founded and owned by Richard Ketterdige. He started with a website specialising in modern silverware, and responded to the success of that enterprise by adding a retail outlet here in the lovely market town of Saffron Walden. Behind the double-fronted, double-door exterior there's plenty of space to browse at leisure among the well-lit display cabinets and choose from the impressive range of high-quality jewellery, charm jewellery and giftware for adults and children.

Generic jewellery, much of it made locally includes rings, necklaces, chokers, chains, cords, pendants, bracelets, bangles, earrings and, for men, cuff links and tie pins. Among the other featured collections are Sheila Fleet based in Orkney, Fusion from Cornwall, Ortak pens, watches by Axcent (Scandinavia) and Nooka (New York), Gallery, Rocks, Murano Glass jewellery, Fiorelli, Something Amber and children's jewellery Scribble and Little Diamonds. The shop is every day except Sunday and customers who can't get to the shop can use the website to order for themselves or for someone special a gift-wrapped present to treasure.



Edward Bawden, Michael Rothenstein, Eric Ravilious, Kenneth Rowntree, Michael Ayrton, John Aldridge and Sheila Robinson. It also exhibits work by contemporary artists working in Essex today, demonstrating the area's continuing artistic tradition. The gallery was purpose-designed and opened in 1856 to house the collection of Francis Gibson, a Quaker banker. The gallery also houses the Lewis George Fry RBA, RWA (1860-1933) Collection, which is exhibited each summer, along with works by Robert Fry (1866-1934) and Anthony Fry.

Close to Bridge End is the **Anglo-**

American War Memorial dedicated by Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein in 1953 to the memory of all the American flyers of the 65th Fighter Wing who lost their lives in the Second World War.

Audley End House was the home of the first Earl of Suffolk, and was at one time lived in by King Charles II. The original early 17th-century house, with its two large courtyards, had a magnificence claimed to match that of Hampton Court. Remodelled in the 18th century by Robert Adam, unfortunately the subsequent earls lacked their forebears' financial acumen, and much

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of the house was demolished as it fell into disrepair. Nevertheless it remains today one of England's most impressive Jacobean mansions; its distinguished stone façade set off perfectly by Capability Brown's lake. The remaining state rooms retain their palatial magnificence and the exquisite state bed in the Howard Room is hung with the original embroidered drapes. The collection of silver, the Jacobean Screen and Robert Adam's painted Drawing Room are among the many treasures. The natural history collection features more than 1,000 stuffed animals and birds. To complement this, there are paintings by Holbein, Lely and Canaletto. Fascinating introductory talks help visitors get the most from any visit to this, one of the most magnificent houses in England. This jewel also has a kitchen garden and grounds landscaped by Capability Brown, including the Temple of Concord, which Brown dedicated to George III. There is a lovely parterre, lake and Pond Garden. Circular walks help visitors make the most of all there is to see. The organic kitchen garden was recently opened to the public for the first time in 250 years. The gardens are managed by the Henry Doubleday Research Association, who grow and sell a wide range of organic produce in the shop, which also features a restaurant. The Audley End Miniature Railway (separate admission charge) is 1.5 miles long and takes visitors along Lord Braybrooke's private 10¼ inch gauge railway through the beautiful private woods of the house.

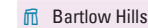
Within the rolling parkland of the grounds there are several elegant outbuildings, some of which were designed by Robert Adam. Among these are an icehouse, a circular temple and a Springwood Column (the last

two can be seen from the road but are not open to the public).

Around Saffron Walden

BARTLOW

5 miles NE of Saffron Walden off the B1052



Bartlow Hills are reputed to be the largest burial mounds in Europe dating from Roman times. Fifteen metres high, they date back to the 2nd century.

HADSTOCK

4 miles N of Saffron Walden off the B1052

As well as claiming to have the oldest church door in England, at the parish Church of St Botolph, Hadstock also has a macabre tale to tell. The church's north door was once covered with a piece of skin, now to be seen in Saffron Walden Museum. Local legend says it is a Daneskin, from a Viking flayed alive.

Lining doors with animal leather was common in the Middle Ages, and many so-called Daneskins are just that. However, the skins at Hadstock - and at Copford, in northeast Essex - are almost certainly human; the poor wretch at Hadstock undoubtedly having his hide nailed there as a warning to others. The door itself is Saxon, as are the 11th-century carvings, windows and arches, rare survivors that predate the Norman Conquest.

Linton Zoo near the village is a privately owned collection of wild animals set in 10½ acres of gardens. There is a free car park, children's play area, picnic areas and a café on site.

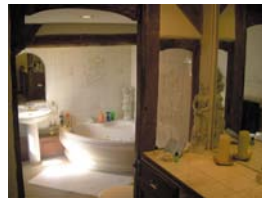
BUSH FARM

Bush Road, Little Sampford, nr Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2RY
 Tel: 01799 586636
 e-mail: angelabushfarm@yahoo.co.uk

Entertaining comes naturally to Angela Freeman, and as soon as she walked through the door at **Bush Farm** she knew that she was destined to share her house with Bed & Breakfast guests. Meeting, greeting and dispensing outstanding hospitality, at first part-time, soon became a full-time enterprise, and Angela welcomes many repeat visitors to her lovely 15th-century house.

The accommodation comprises three bedrooms beautifully appointed in traditional style, a double with en-suite facilities and two doubles with private bathrooms. An excellent breakfast is served in the dining room, and guests can enjoy tea and cakes in the comfortable lounge. The house has great character and atmosphere, with original exposed brickwork, oak beams and log fires that keep things cosy on cooler evenings.

The village of Little Sampford, which lies just off the B1053 southeast of Saffron Walden, is an ideal base from which to explore some of the most delightful and historic villages and towns in the region, including Thaxted, Finchingfield, Wethersfield, Radwinter and Great Bardfield, with many castles, museums and other historic buildings. It's also a great base for a walking or cycling holiday.



RADWINTER

4 miles E of Saffron Walden off the B1053

Radwinter boasts a fine church, which was largely renovated and rebuilt in the 19th century by architect Eden Nesfield and has a fine 14th-century porch. The village also has cottages and almshouses designed by Nesfield.

HEMPSTEAD

5 miles E of Saffron Walden off the B1054

The highwayman, Dick Turpin, was born here in 1705, where his parents kept an inn. The young Dick trained as a butcher in Whitechapel before turning to cattle stealing, smuggling and robbery at the head of his gang. When capture seemed imminent he fled to Yorkshire, where he continued his life of crime under the name of John Palmer. He was eventually caught while horse stealing and was

hanged in York in 1739.

Inside the 14th to 15th-century village church, an impressively life-like bust carved by Edward Marshall recalls the town's rather worthier son, William Harvey (1578-1657). Harvey was chief physician to Charles I and the discoverer of the circulation of blood, as recorded in his *De Motu Cordis* of 1628.

Like many other villages, Hempstead once boasted a village cockpit; its faint outline can still be traced, though the steep banks are now crowned with trees.

THAXTED

7 miles SE of Saffron Walden on the B184

Church of St John the Baptist Guildhall

Tower Windmill

This small country town has a recorded history that dates back to before the *Domesday Book*.

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Originally a Saxon settlement, it developed around a Roman road. The town's many beautiful old buildings contribute to its unique character and charm. To its credit, Thaxted has no need of artificial tourist attractions, and is today what it has been for the past 10 centuries: a thriving and beautiful town.

Thaxted has numerous attractively pargetted and timber-framed houses, and a magnificent **Guildhall**, built as a meeting-place for cutlers around 1390. The demise of the cutlery industry in this part of Essex in the 1500s led it to becoming the administrative centre of the town. Restored in Georgian times, it became the town's Grammar School, as well as remaining a centre of administration. Once more restored in 1975, it houses a permanent exhibition of old photographs and objects relating to the history of Thaxted.

The town's famous **Tower Windmill** was built in 1804 by John Webb, a local farmer. In working order until 1907, it had fallen into disuse and disrepair but has now been returned to full working order. It contains a rural life museum, well worth a visit (open 2.30pm to 5pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter to September). Close to the windmill are the town's Almshouses, which continue to provide homes for the elderly 250 years after they were built for that purpose.

The **Church of St John the Baptist** stands on a hill and soars cathedral-like over the town's streets. Begun in 1340 and completed some 170 years later, it has been described as the finest parish church in the country and, though many towns may protest long and loud at this claim, it certainly is magnificent. It was also the somewhat unlikely setting for a pitched battle in 1921. The rather colourful vicar and secretary of the



Windmill & St Johns Church, Thaxted

Church Socialist League, one Conrad Noel, hoisted the red flag of communism and the Sinn Féin flag in the church. Incensed Cambridge students tore them down and put up the Union Jack; Noel in turn ripped that down and, with his friends, slashed the tyres of the students' cars and motorbikes. A fine bronze in the church celebrates this adventurous man of the cloth.

Conrad Noel's wife is remembered for encouraging Morris dancing in the town. Today, the famous Morris Ring is held annually (in late May or early June), attracting over 300 dancers from all over the country, who dance through the streets. Dancing can also be seen around the town on most Bank Holiday Mondays, usually in the vicinity of a pub!

The composer Gustav Holst, best known for his *Planets Suite*, lived in Thaxted from 1914 to 1925, and often played the church organ. To celebrate his connection with the

DEBDEN ANTIQUES

Elder Street, Debden, nr Saffron Walden,
Essex CB11 3JY

Tel: 01799 543007

e-mail: info@debden-antiques.co.uk

website: www.debden-antiques.co.uk

A stylishly converted 17th-century Essex barn is the home of **Debden Antiques & Interiors**, providing a wonderfully relaxed setting to browse the large selection of furniture and accessories for the home and garden. Furniture includes period oak, fine mahogany, Victorian pine, painted European and Chinese furniture.

To compliment the antiques there is a wide selection of luxury modern accessories including lamps, candlesticks, mirrors and glass.

For those hunting for presents, there are many wonderful gifts for both young and old. Outside is the **Courtyard Garden**, filled with antique statues, urns, wrought iron furniture and ornamental stone. Visit the **Courtyard Cafe** for a relaxing drink and a bite to eat. Debden Antiques is situated between Saffron Walden and Thaxted, just follow the brown signs.

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 5.30pm, Sunday & Bank Holidays 11am - 4pm.



THE CHAFF HOUSE

Ash Grove Barns, Littlebury Green,
Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4XB

Tel/Fax: 01763 836278

e-mail: thechaffhouse@googlemail.com

For a true taste of traditional country farmhouse living, **The Chaff House** offers guests a beautifully appointed bedroom with exposed beamwork and an enormous bed. Light, bright and airy, the room is comfortably and tastefully furnished.

In addition, there are two more guest bedrooms in a separate building that also has a kitchen and can therefore be let on a self-catering basis. It is set in a courtyard with patio seating and a lovely selection of plants in pots and tubs, making for a really delightful outdoor space.

Owner Diana Duke, who lives next door, takes great pride in providing her guests with the very best – everything from the linen and towels to the excellent food is of the very highest quality. This warm, comfortable, sympathetically restored barn conversion is set in 900 acres of beautiful countryside.

Convenient for the M11, Stansted Airport and the marvellous city of Cambridge, it makes an excellent base for discovering the many sights and attractions of the region.



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town, a summer music festival attracts performers of international repute.

WIDDINGTON

4 miles S of Saffron Walden off the B1383

Mole Hall Wildlife Park

Covering over 20 acres of grounds and deer meadow, **Mole Hall Wildlife Park** offers visitors the chance to come close to a range of wild and domesticated animals. With the private fully-moated 13th-century manor house as a backdrop, the wide variety of animals in this excellent park include South American llamas, flamingos, Formosa sika deer (which are extinct in the wild), chimpanzees, muntjac, Arctic fox, wallabies, red squirrels and much more. Mole Hall is also home to two species of North American otter: short-clawed and North American. Domesticated animals such as guinea pigs, rabbits, goats, pigs and sheep can also be seen.

The Butterfly Pavilion offers a tropical experience where brilliantly coloured butterflies flit about freely. Within the tropical pavilion you can also find lovebirds and small monkeys, along with a variety of snakes, spiders and insects (safe behind glass). The pools are inhabited by goldfish, toads and terrapins among other creatures.

Widdington is also home to Priors Hall Barn, one of the finest surviving medieval 'aisled' barns in all of southeast England, and owned by English Heritage.

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

8 miles SW of Saffron Walden off the B1383

Castle House on the Hill Norman Village

Though rather close to Stansted Airport, there are plenty of reasons to visit this village. Certainly pilots approaching the airport may be surprised at the sight of a **Norman Village**, complete with domestic animals and the

WILKINSON & CO

Unit 2, Brices Yard, Butts Green, Clavering,
Essex CB11 4RT

Tel: 01799 550828 Fax: 01799 550995

e-mail: sales@wilkys.co.uk

website: www.wilkys.co.uk

Wilkinson & Co is a double-fronted country store set in the Essex countryside at Butts Green, on the minor road that leads up from the B1038 at Clavering towards Langley Upper Green. Its main business is essentials for horses and riders, from feed and bedding supplies to saddles, rugs, tack, head collars, whips, gloves, boots, herbs, supplements, wormers and a wide variety of veterinary products.

Wilkinson & Co buy and sell second-hand items, including saddles and rugs, and offer a rug cleaning service. Director Mark Wilkinson and his team are on hand to provide help and advice to all their customers. They also sell food for cats, dogs, poultry and wild birds and are major stockists of electric fencing supplies, tools, locks and a variety of DIY products.

The other side of the business, in the same location, is **Ground Crew**, specialising in garden and paddock maintenance, fencing, topping, top dressing, paddock sweeping and spraying. The range of products of Wilkinson & Co can be viewed, and ordered, by consulting the excellent website.



Stansted Mountfitchet

Distance: 3.1 miles (4.8 kilometres)

Typical time: 60 mins

Height gain: 15 metres

Map: Explorer 195

Walk: www.walkingworld.com ID:1835

Contributor: Brian and Anne Sandland

ACCESS INFORMATION:

Stansted Mountfitchet is close to the M11, the A120 and Stansted Airport. To reach the car park from which the walk begins follow signs for Mountfitchet Castle - or use the train; the station is adjacent to the car park.

DESCRIPTION:

This walk starts from the car park serving the station and visitors to the castle. It takes in one of the main streets of Stansted Mountfitchet before emerging into field paths and continuing to Ugley Green (which certainly deserves a better name!) The return is on more field and farmland paths via Aubrey Buxton (which was once the pleasure park to Norman House). This delightful woodland section passes a number of small lakes before rejoining the outward route.

FEATURES:

Lake/Loch, Pub, Toilets, Play Area, Castle, Wildlife, Birds, Flowers, Great Views, Butterflies, Food Shop, Woodland.

WALK DIRECTIONS:

1 | From the car park head right past the Queen's Head (left). Take a left fork (signposted Quendon and Saffron Walden), then a right

fork by the Dog and Duck and continue along Gall End. Take the path to the left of North End House.

2 | Continue following the left edge of a field. Bear right, then go left through the hedge.

3 | Continue on the left of another field, climbing briefly to enter and follow the right edge of another field reaching a road. Turn right, then at a signposted footpath turn left over a stile.

4 | Continue in the same general direction bearing right and left through a gate.

5 | Cross a track, then bear one-third right across a field. Pass through a hedge at the far side (signpost), then cross the field ahead to reach a gate. Follow the path to the right of a thatched cottage then, using its drive, arrive at a road and turn right. Bear left at a junction, then take a signposted footpath right.

6 | At the far side of the first field go through a gap, then right and left through a metal hurdle barrier. Continue between a hedge left and a wire fence right, then cross a stile and

continue ahead, ignoring a signposted footpath left and another right. Soon the path bears right and left to a narrow lane. Go right and left to reach the edge of Aubrey Buxton.

7 | Pass through the gate and follow the earth track, passing lakes on either side, ignoring turns off and bearing right, left and right again. Ignore a way out left into a field and turn right (slightly downhill).

8 | Join another path and turn left past tall willows, then clumps of bamboo (right). Cross a stream, climb slightly, then go left to leave the woodland through a wooden fence.

9 | Follow the left-hand edge of the field, left and right to a T-junction with another path.

10 | Turn left on this path (which is part of your outward route) and retrace your steps back to your car.

reconstructed motte-and-bailey **Mountfitchet Castle**, standing just two miles from the end of the runway. The original castle was built after 1066 by the Duke of Boulogne, a cousin of the Conqueror. Siege weapons on show include two giant catapults. Visitors can take a trip to the top of the siege tower and tiptoe into the baron's bed chamber while he sleeps!

Next door to the castle is **The House on the Hill Museum Adventure**, where there are three museums for the price of one. The Toy Museum is the largest of its kind in the world, with some 80,000 items on show, and children of every age are treated to a unique and nostalgic display.

There is every toy imaginable here, many of them now highly prized collectors' items. There is a shop selling new toys and a collectors' shop with many old toys and books to choose from. The Rock 'n' Roll, Film and Theatre Experience and the End-of-the-Pier Amuse-ment machine displays also contribute to a grand day out here

in Stansted Mountfitchet.

Stansted Windmill is one of the best-preserved tower mills in the country. Dating back to 1787 and in use until 1910, most of the original machinery has survived. It is open on the first Sunday of each month from April to October; every Sunday in August, and on Bank Holiday Sundays and Mondays from 2pm to 6pm.

Great Dunmow

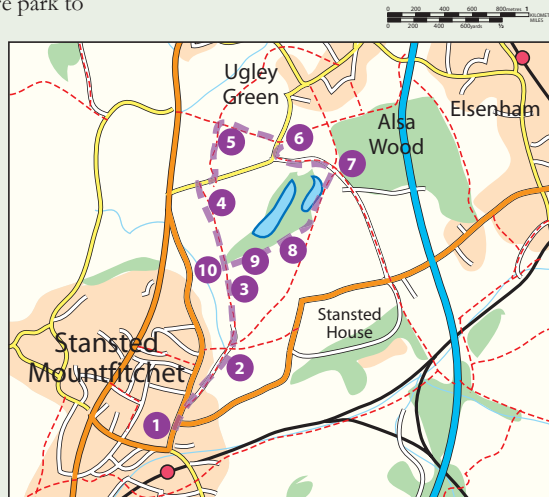
[Great Dunmow Maltings](#) [Flitch Way](#)

The town is famous for the Flitch of Bacon, an ancient ceremony that dates back as far as the early 12th century. A prize of a flitch, or side, of bacon was awarded to the local man who, in the words of then-Lord Mayor Robert Fitzwalter:

*'does not repent of his marriage nor quarrel,
differ or dispute with his wife within a year
and a day after the marriage.'*

Amidst great ceremony, the winning couple would be seated and presented with their prize. The first recorded winner was Richard Wright in 1445, the last (genuine) in 1751 were Thomas and Anne Shakeshaft. The custom had lapsed on the Dissolution of the Monasteries, was briefly revived in the 18th century, and became established again after 1885. Trials to test the truth are all in good fun, and carried out every leap year. The successful couple are carried through the streets on chairs and then presented with the Flitch. The 'bacon chair' can be seen in Little Dunmow parish church.

Other places of historical interest include the parish church of St Mary at Church End, Great Dunmow, dating back to 1322. The Clock House, a private residence built in 1589, was the home of St Anne Line, martyred



for sheltering a Jesuit priest. The **Great Dunmow Maltings**, opened to the public in 2000 after restoration costing £750,000, is the most complete example of a medieval timber-framed building of its type in the United Kingdom, and a focal point for local history in the shape of Great Dunmow Museum, with changing displays illustrating the history of the town from Roman times to the present day. H G Wells lived at Brick House in Great Dunmow, overlooking the Doctor's Pond, where in 1784 Lionel Lukin is reputed to have tested the first unsinkable lifeboat.

The **Flitc Way** is a 15-mile country walk along the former Bishop's Stortford-to-Braintree railway, taking in Victorian stations, impressive views, and a wealth of woodland wildlife.

THE GRANARY

Moor End Farm, Broxted, nr Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2EL

Tel: 01371 870821 Fax: 01371 870170

e-mail: moorendfarm@btconnect.com

website: www.moorendfarm.com

Dating from Victorian times, **The Granary** at Moor End Farm has been sympathetically converted into spacious, comfortable self-catering cottages. They have all been tastefully furnished and decorated. The Arches and The Willows, which sleep four, have a double and twin bedroom and a bathroom upstairs, while the open plan downstairs floor has dining, sitting and fully-fitted kitchen areas. The Dairy is similar but slightly larger, it sleeps six and has two en-suite bathrooms.

There are also two smaller cottages, The Byre and The Stable. These are one bedroom and sleep two, but are just as comfortable and well fitted out.

All the cottages surround a quiet courtyard and there is ample parking. Behind them is a large communal garden with tables and chairs. There is a barbeque available if required.

Moor End is a 420-acre arable farm, which has been in the Burton family since 1935. In an area of Special Landscape Value, the farm is at the centre of an extensive network of paths and trails. It provides an ideal base for exploring East Anglia.



Around Great Dunmow

CHICKNEY

6 miles NW of Great Dunmow off the B1051

Here can be found the rustic and remote little Saxon Church of St Mary's, with 1,000 years of history. Delightfully unspoilt inside, it retains its 14th-century tower with pyramid spire. Craftsmanship on display includes the rare pre-Reformation altar.

BROXTED

6 miles NW of Great Dunmow off the B1051

Parish Church

Church Hall Farm Antique & Craft Centre

The parish **Church of St Mary the Virgin** here in the handsome village of Broxted has

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two remarkably lovely stained glass windows commemorating the captivity and release of John McCarthy and the other Beirut hostages, dedicated in January 1993. Though just a few minutes' drive from Stansted Airport off the M11, it is a welcoming haven of rural tranquillity.

Church Hall Farm Antique and Craft Centre in Broxted is housed in a magnificent Grade II listed barn flanked by a willow-lined pond with its own resident ducks! The building itself is a miracle of medieval craftsmanship, located just a few yards from Broxted parish church.

LITTLE EASTON

2 miles NW of Great Dunmow off the B184

Church

The charming 12th-century **Church** in this small village is rich in historic features. Its Maynard Chapel features some outstanding marble monuments of the family that gives the chapel its name, as well as some famous brasses. The church's oldest treasures are, however, a well-preserved and priceless 12th-century wall painting and several 15th-century frescoes. Two more recent additions, a pair of stained glass windows, were unveiled in 1990. The Window of the Crusaders and the Window of Friendship and Peace are a lasting memorial to the American 386th Bomb Group. Known as The Marauders, they were stationed nearby for 13 months during the Second World War and lost over 200 of their number in battle overseas during that short time.

Little Easton Manor boasts extensive gardens, lakes and fountains. The ancient Barn Theatre at Little Easton Manor is one of the finest and oldest tithe barns in the country, with magnificent oak timbers and an ancient tiled roof. Host to performances by many of

the most distinguished names over the years - including Ellen Terry, Hermione Baddeley, Charlie Chaplin, George Formby and many others - the sympathetic restoration of the facilities has meant its continued use as a setting for special events. Both the Barn Theatre and the Turkey Barn within the grounds are available for private hire. Day-ticket angling can also be arranged.

GREAT EASTON

3 miles NW of Great Dunmow off the B184

Great Easton boasts a wealth of cottages and farmhouses with ornamental plasterwork, clustered Tudor chimneys and half-timbering. Great Easton's well-known and very popular Green Man pub occupies a handsome building dating back to the 15th century.

TAKELEY

4 miles W of Great Dunmow off the A120

The village is built on the line of the old Roman Stane Street. There are plenty of pretty 17th-century timbered houses and barns to be seen in the village, and the church still has many of its original Norman features along with some Roman masonry. Rather unusually, it has a modern font that is surrounded by a six-foot-high medieval cover.

HATFIELD BROAD OAK

3 miles SW of Great Dunmow off the B184

Hatfield Forest

This very pretty village has many notable buildings for visitors to enjoy, including a church dating from Norman times, some delightful 18th-century almshouses and several distinctive Georgian houses.

Nearby **Hatfield Forest** is a rare surviving example of a medieval Royal hunting forest. It has wonderful 400-year-old pollarded trees,

THE LION & LAMB

Stortford Road, Little Canfield, nr Takeley, Dunmow, Essex CM6 1SR

Tel: 01279 870257

Fax: 01279 870423

email: mike@lionandlamb.co.uk

website: www.lionandlamb.co.uk

Hospitality is in generous supply at **The Lion & Lamb**, which stands on the B1256 (previously the A120) at Little Canfield. The new A120 has taken much of the passing traffic away, giving this picture-postcard inn a much more tranquil feel. It is run by Mike Shields, whose belief in traditional pub values has made the place such a success. The immaculate interior – a further tribute to Mike and his staff – has a delightfully old-world appeal, with masses of oak beams, open fires, red brick features and rustic furniture.

In this cosy, inviting atmosphere, a good selection of real ales are kept in perfect condition, and an outstanding selection of wines from around the world can be enjoyed on their own or with a meal. An excellent chef sets the standard for cooking hereabouts, and his menus, which are available all day long, highlight prime produce, much of it local. Salads and quiches provide wholesome light meals, and other choices run from pasta to daily fish specials, meat dishes both plain and sauced, and the popular Sunday roasts. The restaurant is divided into intimate areas, and a self-contained room with access to the garden is an ideal venue for a private party. The inn has a large car park, and there are plenty of seats in the beer garden for fair-weather sipping. Mike has recently acquired a nearby house offering Bed & Breakfast accommodation 1½ miles from Stansted Airport. The White House, at Smiths Green, Dunmow Road, Takeley, has three available rooms, with another 10 planned. The White House has now been awarded AA 4 Gold Stars Highly Commended.

Open 7 days a week 10.00am to 5.30pm. Getting to the Lion & Lamb is very simple, leave the new A120 Stanstead Airport to Braintree road at Dunmow West junction, and drive for about a mile on the B1256 towards Takeley. The inn is on your right.



two lakes (fishing for pike, tench, roach, rudd, perch and carp) and an 18th-century shell house built as a rustic grotto. Guided tours can be arranged. Once covering a great deal more land, the remaining 400 hectares are now protected by the National Trust and offer splendid woodland walks along with good chases and rides.

AYTHORPE RODING

4 miles SW of Great Dunmow off the B184

Aythorpe Roding Windmill is the largest remaining post mill in Essex. Four storeys high, it was built around 1760 and remained in use up until 1935. It was fitted in the 1800s with a fantail which kept the sails pointing into the wind. It is open to the public on the last Sunday of each month from April to September, 2-5 p.m.

PLESHEY

5 miles SE of Great Dunmow off the A130

Pleshey, midway between Chelmsford and Great Dunmow, is surrounded by a mile-long earthen rampart protecting the remains of its castle, of which only the motte with its moat and two baileys survive. There are good views from the mound, which – although only 60 feet high – is one of the highest points in Essex. The village is truly delightful, with a number of thatched cottages, and the area is excellent for walkers and ramblers.

Waltham Abbey

- Waltham Abbey Lee Navigation Canal
- Epping Forest District Museum
- Royal Gunpowder Mills Dragonfly Sanctuary
- Myddleton House Gardens
- Lee Valley Regional Park

The town of Waltham began as a small Roman

settlement on the site of the present-day Market Square. The early Saxon kings maintained a hunting lodge here; a town formed round this, and the first church was built in the 6th century. By the 8th, during the reign of Cnut, the town had a stone minster church with a great stone crucifix that had been brought from Somerset, were it had been found buried in land owned by Tovi, a trusted servant of the king. This cross became the focus of pilgrims seeking healing. One of those cured of a serious illness, Harold Godwinson, built a new church, the third on the site, which was dedicated in 1060 – and it was this self-same Harold who became King and was killed at the battle of Hastings six years later. Harold's body was brought back to Waltham to be buried in his church. The church that exists today was built in the first quarter of the 12th century. It was once three times its present length, and incorporated an Augustinian Abbey, built in 1177 by Henry II. The town became known as **Waltham Abbey**, as the Abbey was one of the largest in the country and the last to be the victim of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540.

The Abbey's Crypt Centre houses an interesting exhibition explaining the history of both the Abbey and the town, highlighting the religious significance of the site. Some visible remains of the Augustinian Abbey include the chapter house and precinct walls, and cloister entry and gateway in the surrounding Abbey Gardens. The Abbey Gardens are also host to a Sensory Trail exploring the highlights of hundreds of years of the site's history; there's also a delightful Rose Garden.

Along the Cornhill Stream, crossed by the impressive stone bridge, the town's **Dragonfly Sanctuary** is home to over half the native British species of dragonflies and damselflies. It is noted as the best single site for seeing

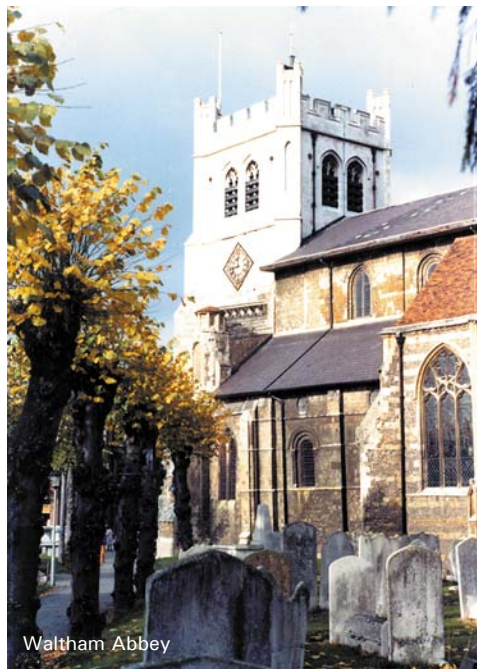
these species in Greater London, Essex and Hertfordshire.

A Tudor timber-framed house forms part of the **Epping Forest District Museum** in Sun Street. The wide range of displays includes exhibits covering the history of the Epping Forest District from the Stone Age to the present day. Tudor and Victorian times are particularly well represented, with some magnificent oak panelling dating from the reign of Henry VIII, and re-creations of Victorian rooms and shops. There is also an archaeological display and temporary exhibitions covering such subjects as contemporary arts and crafts. The museum has several hands-on displays that help to bring history to life, and features special events and adult workshops throughout the year.

Sun Street, the town's main thoroughfare, is pedestrianised. It contains many buildings from the 16th century onwards. The Greenwich Meridian (0 degrees longitude) runs through the street, marked out on the pavement and through the Abbey Gardens.

In spite of its proximity to London and more recent development, the town retains a peaceful, traditional character, with its timber-framed buildings and small traditional market, which has been held here since the early 12th century (now every Tuesday and Saturday – there is also a Farmers' Market held every third Thursday of the month, when farm-fresh produce is offered for sale). The whole of the town centre has been designated a conservation area. The Market Square boasts many fine and interesting buildings such as the Lych-gate and The Welsh Harp, dating from the 17th and 16th centuries respectively.

The Town Hall offers a fine example of Art



Waltham Abbey

Nouveau design, and houses the Waltham Abbey Town Council Offices and Epping Forest District Council Information Desk. The Tourist Information Centre is in Highbridge Street, opposite the entrance to the Abbey Church.

To the west of town, the **Lee Navigation Canal** offers opportunities for anglers, walkers, birdwatching and pleasure craft. Once used for transporting corn and other commercial goods to the growing City of London, and having associations with the town's important gunpowder industry for centuries, the canal remains a vital part of town life.

Gunpowder production became established in Waltham as early as the 1660s; by the 19th century the **Royal Gunpowder Mills** (see panel opposite) employed 500 workers, and production did not cease until 1943, after

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which time the factory became a research facility. In the spring of 2000, however, all this changed and the site was opened to the public for the first time. Of the 175 acres the site occupies, approximately 80 have been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, as the ecology of the site offers a rare opportunity for study. With two-thirds of the site a Scheduled Ancient Monument, there are some 21 listed buildings to be found here, some of which date from the Napoleonic Wars. The site also contains some of the finest examples of industrial archaeology in the world. Regular events and activities include costumed living history. Call 01992 707370 for opening times.

Lee Valley Regional Park is a leisure area stretching for 26 miles along the River Lea (sometimes also spelled Lee) from East India Dock Basin, on the north bank of the River

Thames in East London, to Hertfordshire. There's a range of facilities ideal for anglers, walkers and birdwatchers. The Lee Valley is an important area of high biodiversity, sustaining a large range of wildlife and birds. Two hundred species of birds, including internationally important populations of Gadwall and Shoveler ducks, can be seen each year on the wetlands and water bodies along the Lea.

Lee Valley Park Farms, along Stubbins Hall Lane, boasts two farms on site: Hayes Hill and Holyfield Hall. At Hayes Hill Farm, visitors can interact with the animals, visit the children's adventure playground and enjoy a picnic. This traditional farm also boasts old-fashioned tools and equipment, an exhibition in the medieval barn and occasional craft demonstrations. The entry fee to Hayes Hill Farm also covers a visit to Holyfield Hall

Royal Gunpowder Mills

Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1JY

Tel: 01992 707370 Fax: 01992 707372

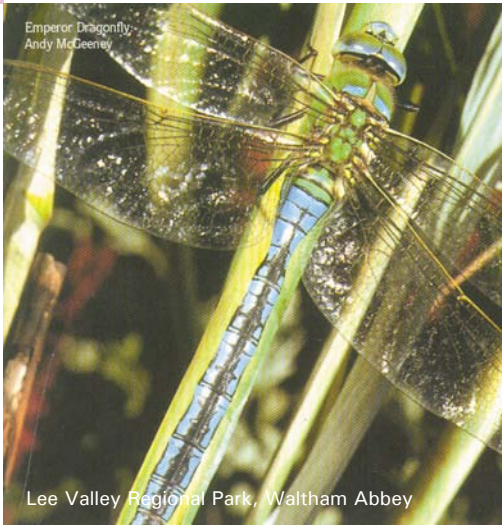
website: www.royalgunpowdermills.com

The **Royal Gunpowder Mills** in Waltham Abbey is open to the general public thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Ministry of Defence. This secret site, which was home to gunpowder and explosive production and research for more than three centuries, has been developed to offer visitors a truly unique day out.

Gunpowder production began at Waltham Abbey in the mid 1660s on the site of a late medieval fulling mill. The gunpowder mills remained in private hands until 1787, when they were purchased by the crown. From this date, the Royal Gunpowder Mills developed into the pre-eminent powder works in Britain and one of the most important in Europe.

Set in 175 acres of natural parkland, and boasting 21 important historic buildings, the regenerated site will offer visitors a unique mixture of fascinating history, exciting science and beautiful surroundings. Approximately 70 acres of the site, containing some of the oldest buildings and much of the canal network, will be open for visitors to explore freely. The remaining area of the site, including the largest heronry in Essex, has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and will be accessible to the public by way of special guided tours. Open April to September.





Lee Valley Regional Park, Waltham Abbey

Farm, a working farm and dairy where visitors can see milking and learn about modern farming methods. Seasonal events such as sheep-shearing and harvesting are held, and there's an attractive farm tea room and a toy shop. A farm trail is another of the site's attractions, offering wonderful views of the Valley, an expanse of open countryside dotted with lakes and wildflower meadows attracting a wide range of wildlife including otters, bats, dragonfly, kingfisher, great-crested grebe and little-ringed plover. The area is ideal for walking or fishing, and the bird hides are open to all at weekends; permits available for daily access. Guided tours by arrangement. The Visitor Information centre is also here. At the southern end of Lee Valley Park, The House Mill, one of two tidal mills still standing at this site, has been restored by the River Lea Tidal Mill Trust. It was built in 1776 in the Dutch style, and was used to grind grain for gin distilling.

Myddleton House Gardens within Lee Valley Park is the place to see the work of the

famous plantsman who created them - EA Bowles, the greatest amateur gardener of his time. Breathtaking colours and interesting plantings - such as the National Collection of award-winning bearded iris, the Tulip Terrace and the Lunatic Asylum (home to unusual plants) - are offset by a beautiful carp lake, two conservatories and a rock garden.

Around Waltham Abbey

EPPING

4 miles E of Waltham Abbey off the B182

Just off the B1391, on the outskirts of Epping town centre towards Waltham Abbey, this town's handsome St John's Church was designed over 100 years ago by G F Bodley.

LOUGHTON

5 miles SE of Waltham Abbey off the A121

Epping Forest

Corbett Theatre in Rectory Lane in Loughton is a beautiful Grade I listed converted medieval tithe barn, where classical, modern and musical theatre productions are performed. The theatre is set in a five-acre site with lovely gardens.

Loughton borders **Epping Forest**, a magnificent and expansive tract of ancient hornbeam coppice, mainly tucked between the M25 and London. There are miles of leafy walks and rides (horses can be hired locally), with some rough grazing and occasional distant views. Epping Forest Visitor Centre: 020 8508 0028; e-mail: epping.forest@cityoflondon.co.uk

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ARTFUL EXPERIENCE CREATIVE CAFÉ

*26 Lindsey Street, Epping, Essex CM16 6RD
Tel: 01992 5717749*

A wealth of fun is guaranteed for visitors to Artful Experience Creative Café!

While young children play in the play area provided, carers can enjoy light snacks and beverages. Or take the opportunity to develop your creative side and create unique masterpieces to give to friends or keep for yourself.

This popular venture in the heart of Epping, owned by June Hooke, has a wide selection of bisque pottery, wooden items and silk ties to paint. There are also soft toys and cards to make.

Artful Experience is open from 10am to 6pm Monday to Saturday and 11am to 4pm on Bank Holidays.

A creative after-school club operates on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Service includes collection from school, drinks, snacks and a structured creative activity and evening meal.

Workshops and events are held throughout the year. Please call for further information.



ABRIDGE

7 miles SE of Waltham Abbey off the A113

The BBC Essex Garden at Crowther Nurseries, Ongar Road, is a working garden consisting of a vegetable plot, two small greenhouses, lawns and herbaceous and shrub borders. Sheila Chapman, clematis expert, is also on site, as the garden boasts 600 varieties of clematis. The garden is also home to a range of farmyard animals which visitors are welcome to see and interact with, and there's a delightful tea shop filled with homemade cakes.

CHIGWELL

8 miles SE of Waltham Abbey off the A113

Hainault Forest Country Park

Hainault Forest Country Park is an ancient woodland covering 600 acres, with a lake and rare breeds farm, managed by the London Borough of Redbridge and the Woodland Trust for Essex County Council.



Hainault Forest Country Park, Chigwell

Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge

Rangers Road, Chingford, Essex E4 7RH
Tel: 02085296681

Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge was originally called the Great Standing. It was built in 1543 for Henry VIII and was used as a grandstand to watch the hunting of deer or possibly to shoot from.



CHINGFORD

6 miles S of Waltham Abbey off the A11

Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge

Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge (see panel above) in Rangers Road, Chingford, is a timber-framed hunting grandstand first built for Henry VIII. This unique Tudor-era survivor boasts exceptional carpentry, and is situated in a beautiful part of Epping Forest with ancient oaks and fine views. At one time the Lodge was the destination for hundreds of day-trippers who came by bus from the East End and other parts of London to spend a day enjoying the open spaces and the fresh air.

BROXBOURNE

5 miles N of Waltham Abbey off the A10

At Broxbourne Old Mill and Millpool, the remains of the old watermill can be seen, the waterwheel of which has been restored to working order.

HODDESDON

6 miles N of Waltham Abbey off the A10

Rye House Gatehouse

Rye House Gatehouse in Rye Road was built by Sir Andre Ogard, a Danish nobleman, in 1443. It is a moated building and a fine example of early English brickwork. Now restored, visitors can climb up to the battlements. A permanent exhibition covers

the architecture and history of the Rye House Plot to assassinate Charles II in 1683. Guided tours by prior arrangement. The building lies adjacent to a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reserve. Other features include an information centre, shop, and circular walks around the site.

HARLOW

10 miles NE of Waltham Abbey on the A114

Museum Gibberd Garden

Gibberd Collection

Parndon Wood Nature Reserve

The New Town of Harlow sometimes gets short shrift, but it is in fact a lively and vibrant place with a great deal more than excellent shopping facilities. There are some very good museums and several sites of historic interest. The **Gibberd Collection** in Harlow Town Hall offers a delightful collection of British watercolours featuring works by Elizabeth Blackadder, Sutherland, Frink, Nash and Sir Frederick Gibberd, Harlow's master planner and the founder of the collection.

The **Museum of Harlow** occupies a Georgian manor house set in picturesque gardens, which includes a lovely pond and is home to several species of butterfly. The museum has extensive and important Roman, post-medieval and early 20th-century collections, as well as a full programme of

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FRIARS FARM

Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7AP
Tel: 01279 730244 Fax: 01279 730244
e-mail: enquires@friarsfarmbedandbreakfast.co.uk
website: www.friarsfarmbedandbreakfast.co.uk

Friars Farm is a working arable farm offering bed & breakfast lodgings, with a warmth & friendliness that can't be matched. The ivy clad 19th century farmhouse has been home to the Hockley family for five generations and is situated on a quiet country lane just outside Hatfield Heath equi-distant from Bishop's Stortford and Harlow with stunning views over farmland yet convenient for Stansted Airport.

Countryside and fresh air enthusiasts will relish the numerous footpaths throughout the surrounding farmland or can cycle through the country lanes. Take time to explore the wealth of beautiful places in this area with its ancient market towns, medieval churches and castles. Browse in specialist antique shops, craft and garden centres. A peaceful ambience pervades this award winning Victorian house with an attractive open log fireplace where guests can warm themselves from October to March. The accommodation consists of two double rooms with en-suite facilities and a twin room with private shower. The house is non-smoking throughout but guests may smoke in the garden or on the terrace.

When your thoughts turn to food you can be sure of finding a delightful country pub, tea room (you can enjoy the home-made fare, or can savour from a wide range of excellent restaurants for that special occasion. Come and experience the peace, tranquillity and fresh air of this corner of Essex and Hertfordshire.



temporary exhibitions. It also incorporates the Mark Hall Cycle Museum and Gardens, a unique collection of cycles and cycling accessories illustrating the history of the bicycle from 1818 to the present day, including one made of plastic, one that folds, and one where the seat tips forward and throws its rider over the handlebars if the brakes are applied too hard.

Gibberd Garden, on the eastern outskirts of Harlow in Marsh Lane, Gilden Way, is well worth a visit, reflecting as it does the taste of Sir Frederick Gibberd, the famous architect. This seven-acre garden was designed by Sir Frederick on the side of a small valley, with terraces, wild garden, landscaped vistas, pools and streams and some 80 sculptures. Marsh Lane is a turning off the B183.

Harlow Study and Visitors Centre in

Netteswellbury Farm is set in a medieval tithe barn and 13th-century church. The site has displays outlining the story of Harlow New Town.

Parndon Wood Nature Reserve, Parndon Wood Road, recorded as a woodland for at least 900 years, is a haven for flora, fungi, birds, mini-beasts, small mammals and deer. Visitors can follow the guided trail around the wood and use the observation hides and the fully accessible conservation centre. With over 50 acres of oak and hornbeam woodland, this is a beautiful, peaceful place to wander (tel: 01279 430005). Other nature reserves in and around the town, each with its own appeal, include Parndon Moat Marsh, Maymeads Marsh, Marshgate Springs and Hawkenbury Meadow.

CHIPPING ONGAR

8 miles SE of Harlow on the A414

 Church of St Martin of Tours

 Epping Ongar Railway Volunteer Society

Today firmly gripped in the commuter belt of London, Chipping Ongar began as a Saxon market town protected beneath the walls of a Norman castle. The motte and bailey were built by Richard de Lucy in 1155. Indeed, the town's name comes from 'cheaping', meaning market. Only the mound and moat of the castle remain, but the contemporary **Church of St Martin of Tours** still stands. Built in 1080, it has fine Norman flint walls and an anchorite's recess. There are several other interesting buildings in the town, some dating from Elizabethan times. Station House, on the High Street, is the headquarters of the **Epping Ongar Railway Volunteer Society**. It runs a heritage railway on the five-mile journey between Ongar and Coopersale over the former end of the London Transport Central Line. Original Great Eastern stations; heritage diesel trains (tel: 01277 365200).

Explorer David Livingstone was a pupil pastor of the town's 19th century United Reform Church, and lived in what are now called Livingstone Cottages before his missionary work in Africa began.

BOBBINGWORTH

2 miles NW of Chipping Ongar off the A414

Blake Hall Gardens at Bobbingworth near Chipping Ongar incorporate a Tropical House, an Ice House, bog garden, wild gardens, herbaceous borders, rose garden, sunken garden, duck pond and an ornamental wood. The south wing of Blake Hall itself houses the Airscene Aviation Museum run by local RAF enthusiasts.

FYFIELD

2 miles N of Chipping Ongar off the B184

 Fyfield Hall

The name 'Fyfield' means five river meadows. Originally a Saxon enclave, the village church of St Nicholas is Norman. There's a beautiful mill house with flood gates in the village. **Fyfield Hall**, opposite the church, is said to be the oldest inhabited timber frame building in England (it dates from AD870).

HIGH LAVER

3 miles N of Chipping Ongar off the B184

The philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) is buried in the churchyard of All Saints, and an inscription that he himself wrote is set in the inner south wall.

WILLINGALE

3 miles NE of Chipping Ongar off the B184

St Christopher's and St Andrew's, churches of the respective parishes of Willingale Doe and Willingale Spain, stand side by side in the same churchyard in the heart of this lovely village. St Andrew's is the older, dating back to the 12th century; it is protected by the Churches Conservation Trust.

BEAUCHAMP RODING

3 miles NE of Chipping Ongar off the B184

One of the eight Rodings, it was at Beauchamp Roding that a local farm labourer, Isaac Mead, worked and saved enough to become a farmer himself in 1882. To show his gratitude to the land that made him his fortune, he had a corner of the field consecrated as an eternal resting place for himself and his family. Their graves can still be seen in the undergrowth.

Beauchamp's Church of St Botolph stands alone in the fields, marked by a tall 15th-century tower and reached by a track off the B184.

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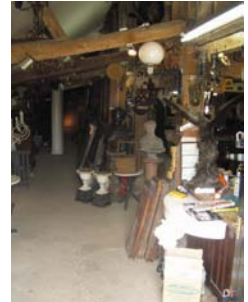
THE MALTINGS RECLAMATION

The Maltings, Chelmsford Road (A414), Norton Heath, nr Ongar, Essex CM4 0LN
e-mail: themaltingsreclamation@hotmail.com
website: www.maltingsreclamation.com

East of Ongar on the A414 Chelmsford road, **The Maltings Reclamation** is a leading dealer in architectural antiques and period fixtures and fittings. Owner Chris Hussey had been involved in reclamation and roofing supplies for 30 years when he saw the chance to branch out on his own; he bought The Maltings, an extensive acreage of buildings and grounds that includes a two-acre lake with carp fishing.

Chris and his team are on hand with a warm welcome, help and advice for customers who can spend many hours browsing through the vast array of reclaimed goods, curios, collectables and objects large and small for the house and garden that fill an interesting building – worth a visit in its own right with some splendid original oak and elm beams – and an extensive outdoor space.

The stock includes beams, flooring and floorboards, York stone, bricks, setts, flagstones, fireplaces and fireside accessories, slates, railings, lamp posts, cast-iron tables, chairs and baths, urns, planters, statuary, stone seats, fountains, columns, garden ornaments and much, much more. The goods on display change constantly, so every visit to this intriguing place will unearth something interesting – practical, decorative and very often both.



Inside, the raised pews at the west end have clever space-saving wooden steps, pulled out of slots by means of iron rings.

GOOD EASTER AND HIGH EASTER

5 miles NE of Chipping Ongar off the B184

A quiet farming village, now in the commuter belt for London, Good Easter's claim to fame is the making of a world-record daisy chain (6,980 feet 7 inches) in 1985. The village's interesting name is probably derived from 'Easter', the Old English for 'sheepfolds' and 'Good' from a Saxon lady named Godiva.

Close to Good Easter, and thus named because it stands on higher ground than its neighbour, High Easter is a quiet and very picturesque village not far from the impressive Aythorpe Post Mill.

KELVEDON HATCH

4 miles S of Chipping Ongar off the A128

 Nuclear Bunker

An unremarkable 1950s bungalow in the rural Essex village of Kelvedon Hatch is the deceptively simple exterior for the **Kelvedon Hatch Nuclear Bunker**.

In 1952, 40,000 tons of concrete were used to create a base some 80 feet underground for up to 600 top government and civilian personnel in the event of nuclear war. Visitors can pass through blast doors made of tank metal to explore room after room to see communications equipment, a BBC studio, sick bay, massive kitchens and dormitories, power and filtration plant, government administration room and the scientists' room, where nuclear

fall-out patterns would have been measured (tel: 01277 364883).

GREENSTED

1½ miles SW of Chipping Ongar off the A414

 St Andrew's Church

St Andrew's Church in Greensted is said to be the world's oldest wooden church, dating from the 9th to the 11th centuries, with a later Tudor chancel. It is famous as the only surviving example of a Saxon log church extant in the world, built from split oak logs held together with dowels. Over the centuries the church has been enlarged and restored; later additions include the simple weatherboarded tower, Norman flint walls, the Tudor tiled roof, Victorian stone coping, porch and stained glass



St Andrew's Church, Greensted

windows. The body of King Edmund (later canonised a saint) is believed to have rested here in 1013.

The village also has associations with the Tolpuddle Martyrs - six Dorset farm labourers who were taken to court on a legal technicality because they agitated for better conditions and wages, and formed a Trade Union. After their conviction in 1834 they were condemned to transportation to Australia for seven years. There was a public outcry for their release, and their sentences were commuted in 1837. Unable to return to Dorset, they were granted tenancies in Greensted and High Laver.

One of the martyrs, James Brine, of New House Farm (now Tudor Cottage, on Greensted Green), married Elizabeth Standfield, daughter of one of his fellow victims - the record of their marriage in 1839 can be seen in the parish register.

NORTH WEALD

3 miles W of Chipping Ongar off the A414

 Airfield Museum

North Weald Airfield Museum and Memorial at Ad Astra House, Hurricane Way, North Weald Bassett is a small, meticulously detailed House of Memories displaying the history of the famous airfield and all who served at RAF North Weald from 1916 to 1964. Collections of photos and artefacts such as uniforms and the detailed records of all flying operations are on display. There is also a video exhibit recounting a day-to-day account of North Weald history. Guided tours of the airfield can be arranged for large groups.

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Brentwood

 Cathedral  Museum

 Thorndon Country Park

Brentwood is a very pleasant shopping and entertainment centre, with quite a distinguished past. It was on the old pilgrim and coaching routes to and from London.

Brentwood Cathedral on Ingrave Road was built in 1991. This classically-styled church incorporates the original Victorian church that stood on this spot. It was designed by the much-admired architect Quinlan Terry, with roundels by Raphael Maklout (who also created the relief of the Queen's head used on current coins).

Brentwood Centre on Doddinghurst Road is one of the top entertainment venues in the UK, with an extensive programme of concerts, shows, bands and top comedy names. Sport and fitness facilities include pool, health suite and sunbeds.

Brentwood Museum at Cemetery Lode in Lorne Road, in the Warley Hill area of

Brentwood, is a small and picturesque cottage museum concentrating on local and social interests during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is set in an attractive disused cemetery, which is in itself of unique interest and is open on the first Sunday of every month from 2.30pm to 4.30pm and throughout the summer months.

Thorndon Country Park boasts historic parkland, lakes and woods. The site, formerly a Royal deer park, also features a wildlife exhibition and attractive gift shop. Fishing is also available.

Around Brentwood

MOUNTNESSING

6 miles SE of Chipping Ongar off the A12

This village has a beautifully restored early 19th-century windmill as its main landmark, though the isolated church also has a massive beamed belfry. Mountnessing Post Mill in Roman Road is open to the public. This traditional weatherboarded post mill was built in 1807 and

Ingatestone Hall

Ingatestone, Essex: CM4 9NR

Tel: 01277 353010 Fax: 01245 248979

Ingatestone Hall is a 16th-century mansion and grounds, built by Sir William Petre, Secretary of State to four Tudor monarchs, and still occupied by his descendants. The house substantially retains its original form and appearance (including two priests' hiding places) and contains furniture, pictures and family memorabilia accumulated over the centuries.

A programme of special events is available on request and there is a gift shop and a tea room in the grounds. A picnic area is sited in Car Park Meadow. The house and/or grounds are available to hire for a variety of events including fairs, exhibitions, concerts, lectures and location filming. Open Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday afternoons from Easter to the end of September, plus Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in the school summer holidays.



BARLEYLANDS FARM

Barleylands Road, Billericay, Essex CM11 2UD
Tel: 01268 290229 Fax: 01268 290222
e-mail: info@barleylands.co.uk

There's plenty to see and do for all the family at **Barleylands Farm**, which combines a Farm Centre, Craft Village and Showground.

In the farm centre, children can explore the bale maze and adventure playground, bounce on the giant bouncy pillow, play in the sandpit, race their parents in the dinocar paddock and meet the friendly farm animals, including sheep, lambs, pigs, goats, donkeys, ponies and furry friends in the pets corner. Other amusements include a tractor and trailer ride and a trip on the miniature train. The latest attraction is the new Discovery Centre, with exhibitions themed around the past, present and future.

Beyond Barleylands Central Station is the Craft Village, home to over 60 fantastic craft shops including glasswork, pottery, painting, textiles, paper crafts, homeopathy, toys, dancing lessons, photography, cake making, dress hire, bridge playing, hairdressing, a tea room and a restaurant. The showground is home to the Essex Country Show and numerous other events, including farmers' markets and car boot sales. Activities, tours and workshops linked to the National Curriculum are held throughout the year. Call 01268 290213 for more information on educational visits.



BILLERICAY COOKSHOP

100 High Street, Billericay, Essex CM12 9BY
Tel: 01277 633403
Website: www.billericaycookshop.co.uk

If you're bored with the monotony of cloned shops in cloned high streets offering the same products in exactly the same way then you need to visit **The Billericay Cookshop** and its sister shop **The Emporium**. Together the two outlets offer West End Wow with Country Charm.

The Cookshop offers an incredible choice of cookware and tableware to suit every taste and every pocket from a potato peeler to the latest food processor. Whether you're a gourmet cook or just looking for something to serve the take away on, you will find it here - and if you can't, please ask, and we will endeavor to track it down for you.

Moving away from the kitchen, **The Emporium** is an opportunity to add a little something to the rest of the home whether it's the bedroom, bathroom, lounge or even the garden. You will find towels, bed linens and table linens, vases and candles. We also have a seductive selection of perfumeries and glamorous gifts for ladies and men.

We are passionate about our products and our customer service is paramount. We offer carry to car, free home delivery in the local area and provide a wedding and gift list service. We are lucky and proud to have been voted Britain's Best Cookshop and Britain's Best New Retailer in the 2006 national Retail Awards. Come and see what you think!



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restored to working order in 1983. Visitors can see the huge wooden and iron gears; a pair of stones have been opened up for viewing.

INGATESTONE

6 miles E of Chipping Ongar off the B1002

Ingatestone Hall

Ingatestone Hall (see panel on page 275) on Hall Lane is a 16th-century mansion set in 11 acres of grounds. It was built by Sir William Petre, Secretary of State to four monarchs, whose family continue to reside here. Open to the public in summer, the Hall contains family portraits, furniture and memorabilia accumulated over the centuries. Guided tours by prior arrangement.

BILLERICAY

6 miles E of Brentwood off the A129

Chantry House Barleylands Farm

Norsey Wood

There was a settlement here as far back as the Bronze Age, though there is to date no conclusive explanation of Billericay's name. There is no question about the attraction of the High Street, though, with its timber weatherboarding and Georgian brick buildings. The **Chantry House**, built in 1510, was the home of Christopher Martin, treasurer to the Pilgrim Fathers.

The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 saw the massacre of hundreds of rebels just northeast of the town, at **Norsey Wood**. Today, this area of ancient woodland is a country park, managed by coppicing (the traditional way of ensuring the timber supply), which also encourages plant- and birdlife.

Barleylands Farm (see panel opposite) and Visitors' Centre features a glass-blowing studio, blacksmith's and other craft shops, a

wealth of farm animals, chick hatchery, duck pond and one of the largest collections of vintage farm machinery in the country, together with a play area, picnic area and, on Sunday afternoons, a steam railway.

STOCK

6 miles NE of Brentwood off the B1007

Stock boasts a fine early 19th-century tower windmill on five floors, with superb late 19th-century machinery that has been restored to working order. Stock's delightful church has a traditional Essex-style wooden belfry and spire, lending character to this pleasant village of well-kept houses.

GREAT WARLEY

1 mile S of Brentwood on the B186

Warley Place was formerly home to one of the most famous women gardeners, Ellen Willmott, who died in 1934. She introduced to Warley - and to Britain - many exotic plants. A trail takes visitors through what is now Warley Place Nature Reserve, with 16 acres of what was once domesticated garden but has now reverted to woodland. A fascinating selection of trees, shrubs and wildlife make this well worth a visit.

SOUTH WEALD

2 miles W of Brentwood off the A12

Old Macdonald's Educational Farm Park

Weald Country Park

This very attractive village has, at its outskirts, **Weald Country Park**, a former estate with medieval deer park, partially landscaped in the 1700s. Featuring lake and woodland, visitors' centre, landscapes exhibition and gift shop, with facilities for fishing and horse-riding, there are guided events and activities programmes held throughout the year.

Another good day out in the open air can be had at **Old Macdonald's Educational Farm Park**, where visitors can see the largest selection of pure-bred British farm animals and poultry in the southeast of England. Specialising in native rare-breeds, with nine breeds of pig, 23 of sheep, six of cattle, 30 of poultry and 30 of rabbit to see and learn about, as well as shire horses, deer, owls, otters, goats, ferrets, red squirrels and much more. The farm boasts informative breed labelling and excellent facilities.

GRAYS

4 miles E of Brentwood off the M25

 **Thurrock Museum**

Thurrock Museum is in the Thameside Complex in Grays. It collects, conserves and displays items of archaeology and local history from prehistoric times to the end of the 20th century. The archaeological items include flint and metal tools of people who lived in prehistoric Thurrock and pottery, jewellery and coins from the Roman and Saxon period.

WEST THURROCK

1½ miles SW of Grays off the A13

Immortalised by the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, little St Clement's Church occupies a striking location and is one of a number of picturesque ancient churches in the borough. Although this 12th century church is now deconsecrated, it was in its day a stopping point for pilgrims; visitors can see the remains of its original round tower. There is also a mass grave to the boys of the reformatory ship *Cornwall* who were drowned in an accident off Purfleet.

Arena Essex Raceway is the chief venue for motorsports in the area. Regular 'banger racing' takes place at the track in West Thurrock, near Lakeside Shopping Centre and

Retail Park. The Centre attracts many millions of visitors a year, and boasts over 300 shops, a food court and multiplex cinema. The Retail Park features more shops, as well as restaurants, a cinema, a leisure bingo complex and a watersports centre at the lake.

PURFLEET

3 miles W of Grays off the M25/A13

 **Heritage Military Centre**

Fans of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* will know that the famous vampire buys a house called Carfax in Purfleet. The town's esteemed Royal Hotel, by the Thames, is said to have played host to Edward VII, while still Prince of Wales in the 1880s and 1890s, at which time the hotel was called Wingrove's. The Purfleet **Heritage and Military Centre** is a heritage and military museum featuring displays of many items of interest and memorabilia in the setting of the No 5 Gunpowder Magazine on Centurion Way. This remaining magazine was built in the 1770s for testing and issuing gun powder to the army and navy.

Purfleet Conservation Area includes several buildings that were part of a planned village built by the one-time owners of the chalk quarry, the Whitbread family.

AVELEY

3 miles NW of Grays off the M25/A13

 **Mardyke Valley**

Mardyke Valley is an important wildlife corridor running from Ship Lane in Aveley to Orsett Fen. Many pleasant views can be had along the seven-mile stretch of footpaths and bridleways. Davy Down within Mardyke Valley consists of riverside meadows, ponds and wetland. The Visitors Centre is in the well-preserved water pumping station on the

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B186 near South Ockendon. Aveley's 12th-century St Michael's Church features many Flemish brasses and other items of historical interest.

SOUTH OCKENDON

3 miles N of Grays off the A13/A1306

 **Belhus Woods Country Park**

 **Grangewater Country Park**

Belhus Woods Country Park (see panel below) covers approximately 250 acres and contains an interesting variety of habitats, including woodland, two lakes and the remains of a pond designed by 'Capability' Brown. The

Visitors Centre to this superb park can be found at the main entrance off Romford Road. Belhus Park Golf Course is a well-established 18-hole course set within this beautiful parkland.

Grangewaters Country Park, also in South Ockendon, has two lakes. Managed by Thurrock Environmental and Outdoor Education Centre, it offers watersports such as windsurfing, sailing and canoeing, as well as off-road biking, climbing and other outdoor pursuits. Brannetts Wood is one of the oldest recorded ancient woodlands in South Essex. It can be reached from the Mardyke Way, or

Belhus Wood Country Park

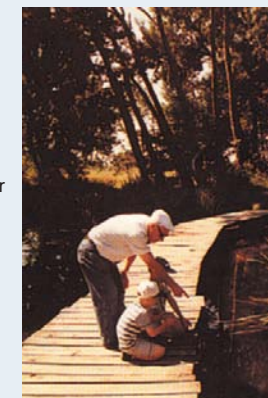
Romford Road, Aveley, Essex RM15 4XJ
Tel: 01708 865628

Belhus Woods Country Park has a diverse landscape of woodlands, grasslands and lakes. You can fish, play games, fly kites, have a picnic or ride your horse here. You may prefer to just sit by tranquil waters feeding the birds or, in spring, to quietly wander through a woodland carpet of bluebells.

The estate was once owned by the Barrett-Lennard family. Capability Brown and Richard Woods laid out an 18th-century park for Lord Dacre over earlier more formal gardens. The Shrubbery and Long Pond were created by Woods in 1770 and are now cut by the M25.

A stench pipe disguised as a Tudor chimney, also survives in the south of the Park. The ancient woodlands have changed little in shape and size since their mapping in 1777 by Chapman and Andre, although there has been significant extra planting since. The woodlands are home to rich communities of wildlife. An observant birdwatcher may see green, greater or lesser spotted woodpeckers and numerous creepy crawlies can be spotted by an enthusiastic child. The Ranger Service manages the woods according to their timber content and wildlife value. Timber from Running Water Wood is used for thatching and hurdle making, with the hazel plots cut on a regular eight year cycle. This traditional management practice, called coppicing, benefits the wildlife by increasing light penetration allowing seeds to germinate and plants to thrive. You can now experience the splendour of plants, once common in traditional coppiced woodlands, such as early purple orchids and graceful ragged robins in a sea of bluebells.

The Visitor Centre has a shop and education facilities where light refreshments, gifts and information can be obtained. The Essex Ranger Service also offers guided walks, volunteer tasks, assisted school visits and a variety of events throughout the year.



from South Road here in South Ockendon.

The village Church of St Nicholas has one of only six round church towers in Essex. This one was built in the 13th century and used to have a spire, which was sadly destroyed by lightning in the 17th century.

HORNDON-ON-THE HILL

6 miles NE of Grays off the B1007/A13

 Langdon Hills

Listed in the Domesday Book as Horninduna, a name which also appears on a Saxon coin of Edward the Confessor, it is said to have once been the site of a Royal Anglo-Saxon mint. The town's 16th-century Woolmarket indicates the importance of the wool trade to the region, and is one of the area's historical treasures. The upper room served as Horndon's manor courtroom, while the lower, open area was used for trading in woollen cloth.

The main entrance and Visitors Centre for **Langdon Hills Conservation Centre and Nature Reserve** are located off the Lower Dunton Road north of Horndon-on-the-Hill. A bridleway and footpaths lead visitors to meadows, a pond and outstanding ancient woods. Also within the reserve is the Plotlands Museum, housed in an original 1930s plotland bungalow known as the Haven.

LINFORD

3 miles NE of Grays off the A13/A1013

 Walton Hall Museum

Walton Hall Museum on Walton Hall Road has a large collection of historic farm machinery in a 17th-century barn. It affords visitors the opportunity to watch traditional craftsmen, such as a blacksmith, saddlemaker, printer and wheelwright, together with a



Walton Hall Museum, Linford

printing shop, baker's, dairy and nursery.

STANFORD-LE-HOPE

4 miles NE of Grays off the A1014

 Stanford Marshes

Stanford Marshes cover an area to the south of Stanford-le-Hope, next to the Thames. The Marshes are home to a variety of wildlife and are an ideal location for birdwatching. Grove House Wood in Stanford-le-Hope is a nature reserve managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and the local Girl Guides. A footpath here leads to reed beds, a pond and a brook as well as an area of woodland.

The graveyard of St Margaret's Church has an unusual half-barrelled tomb, of one James Adams (d. 1765), that is decorated with gruesome stone-carved symbols of death.

CORRINGHAM

7 miles NE of Grays off the A13/A1014

 Langdon Hills Country Park

Corringham has a picturesque cluster of timber-framed houses in the old village, leading up to its medieval church, which retains some Saxon and Norman features. **Langdon Hills Country Park** north of Corringham is 400 acres of ancient woodland and meadows. It has many rare trees and spectacular views of the Essex countryside.

CANVEY ISLAND

10 miles NE of Grays off the A130

 Dutch Cottage Museum

 Castle Point Transport Museum

Canvey Island is a peaceful and picturesque stretch of land overlooking the Thames estuary with views to neighbouring Kent. The island boasts two unusual museums. **Dutch Cottage Museum** (see panel below) is an early 17th-century eight-sided cottage built by

one of Vermuyden's Dutch workmen and boasting many traditional Flemish features.

Castle Point Transport Museum is housed in a 1930s bus garage. It contains an interesting collection of Eastern National buses and coaches and various other commercial vehicles mainly from the period 1944 to 1981. The Canvey Miniature Railway at the Waterside Farm Centre has two steam miniature railways guaranteed to delight the child in all of us. The Island's most famous

Dutch Cottage Museum

Canvey Road, Canvey Island,
Essex SS7 3PB
Tel: 01268 794005

The Dutch Cottage Museum is housed in an ancient dwelling, which dates from 1618. It was most probably used as a workman's cottage at the time when it was decided to reclaim land from the sea and to unite the five islands of Canvey into one island.

Cornelius Vermuyden was the Dutch engineer invited to take charge of this work in the time of James I, and he brought over many Dutch workmen who laboured under his direction, and for his services he was later knighted. You can see a copy of his portrait in the living room of the cottage.

The Dutchmen were not paid but they received one acre out of every three they reclaimed. There are still families on the Island who have Dutch surnames and are probably descendants of the original Dutchmen.

At first the cottage had a floor of beaten earth and shells, but successive generations have improved it, for there are five separate layers to the present floor. This is why the ceiling of the living room is so low, the most recent of rough brick. These floor bricks are of a different size from the bricks of today, thus showing that they must be of great age.

At some period a kitchen was added to the original structure and the cottage was inhabited until it was made into a Museum. The door and window frames are replicas of the originals and the building is decorated in colours known to have been used by the original Dutch reclaimers. Many of the beams are the original ones but have had to be supported by steel plates on either side. The fireplace was bricked round at some unknown date.

The New Exhibition Hall was provided by the (then) Canvey Council to house the many exhibits that could no longer find a place in the cottage. Here you will find a fine collection of corn dollies from Essex and many other counties; embanking tools, which were used in the old days for keeping the sea-walls and ditches in good order, and equipment brought from the old smithy in the Long Road.



son is Dean Macey, the recently retired world-class decathlete.

WEST TILBURY

3 miles E of Grays off the A1089

West Tilbury was the site chosen for the Camp Royal in 1588, to prepare for the threatened Spanish invasion. Queen Elizabeth I visited the army here, and made her famous speech,

'I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman: but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too.'

Hidden away in rural tranquillity overlooking the Thames estuary, West Tilbury remains unspoilt in spite of its proximity to busy, industrial Tilbury. The former local church (now a private dwelling) in this quaint little village is a nautical landmark used for navigation. The list of Rectors of the church, dating from 1279-1978, when the church was disestablished, can be seen in The King's Head Pub.

EAST TILBURY

5 miles E of Grays off the A13

 Thameside Aviation Museum  Coalhouse Fort

Coalhouse Fort is considered to be one of the best surviving examples of a Victorian Casement fortress in the country. As such it is a protected Scheduled Ancient Monument. Built between 1861 and 1874 as a first line of defence to protect the Thames area against invasion, it stands on the site of other defensive works and fortifications dating back to around 1400. Even before the Middle Ages, this was an important site.

Part of the construction work on the Fort was overseen by Gordon of Khartoum. It was constructed to be a dedicated Artillery

casement fortress, which meant that the guns were housed in large vaulted rooms with armour-plated frontages. Beneath these rooms lies an extensive magazine tunnel system to service the artillery.

Over the years many alterations were made to the Fort to accommodate new artillery. The Fort was manned during both World Wars, and is now owned by Thurrock Borough Council and administered by The Coalhouse Fort Project, a registered charity run entirely by volunteers. Open to the public, it contains reconstructions of period guns and other displays, and also houses the **Thameside Aviation Museum**, with a large collection of local finds and other aviation material. In the two parade grounds visitors will find various artillery pieces and military vehicles. One recent addition to the many pieces of historical military equipment is a Bofor Anti-Aircraft Gun of the Second World War. The site also offers visitors the chance to handle period equipment or try on a period uniform.

During the year the Fort hosts a range of shows, including an historic artillery rally when various big guns are fired by crews in the uniforms of the period, including a Second World War crew firing a 1940 25pdr field gun. A guided tour (included in the price of admission) allows visitors to see the magazine tunnels beneath the gun casements and offer a feel for the work and conditions of a Victorian gunner. The tour also takes in the roof of the Fort, from which you will be able to judge for yourself the value of a fortification at this point along the Thames. The view from here is outstanding, taking in the two sister forts in Kent and, on a clear day, Southend.

The Fort is set in a lovely riverside park with walks and a children's play area, as well as other

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items of military history including a Quick Fire Battery and Minefield Control box. You can also follow the old railway tracks from the Fort to the side of the old jetty, where many of the armaments and supplies for the fort were shipped in.

It is possible that East Tilbury's St Catherine's Church occupies the site of one of the first Christian monasteries in the 7th century. Its half-built tower was constructed by the First World War Garrison of Coalhouse Fort.

The Bata Estate is a conservation area of architectural and historical interest. Established in 1933, the British Bata Shoe Company was the creation of Czech-born Thomas Bata, who also developed a housing estate for his workforce. This range of uniform flat-roofed houses can still be seen on site.

TILBURY

3 miles SE of Grays off the A1089

 Tilbury Fort

Tilbury Fort (see panel below) is a well-preserved and unusual 17th-century structure with double moat. The largest and best

example of military engineering in England at that time, the fort also affords tremendous views of the Thames estuary. The most violent episode in the fort's history occurred in 1776, during a particularly vociferous cricket match that left three people dead. For a small fee visitors to the fort can fire a 1943 3.7mm anti-aircraft gun - a prospect most children and many adults find irresistible! Owned by English Heritage, the site was used as a military Block House during the reign of Henry VIII and was rebuilt in the 17th century. It remains one of Britain's finest examples of a star-shaped bastion fortress. Extensions were made in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the Fort was still being used in the Second World War.

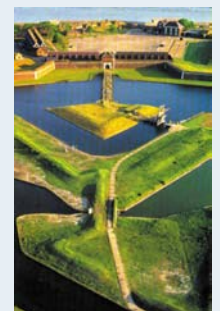
Tilbury Festival is held every year in July in the field near the fort, and features arena events, craft and food stalls, and living history re-enactments. Tilbury Energy and Environment Centre at Tilbury Power Station provides a nature reserve and study centre for schools and community education. There is a flat two-mile nature trail leading to and from the Centre.

Tilbury Fort

Tilbury, Essex RM18 7NR
Tel: 01375 858489

Ever wanted to fire a real anti-aircraft gun? Come to Tilbury Fort and you can. Discover the history of this most impressive of English artillery forts, from Henry VIII's time right up to World War II. Walk through Charles II's imposing Water Gate, noticing the mighty gun emplacements that protected London against attack by warships. Tour the ramparts and inspect the guns, while enjoying the panoramic views across the Thames, near the place where Queen Elizabeth I made her famous Armada Speech.

The audio tour leads you round the site step by step. In the museum and exhibition housed in the East Gunpowder Magazine, you can follow the fortunes of Tilbury, from the creation of its first fortifications in the 16th century, to the two World Wars.



Southend-on-Sea

-  Central Museum  Prittlewell Pirory Museum
-  Saxon Cemetery  Pier & Museum
-  Beecroft Art Gallery  Sealife Adventure
-  Kursaal

To be beside the seaside at Southend-on-Sea means that there is always plenty to do and see, with many events throughout the year to ensure its continuing appeal and popularity. The town is one of the best loved and friendliest resorts in Britain, featuring the very best ingredients for a day or a break at the seaside. With seven miles of beaches and a European Blue Flag Award, this treasure trove boasts Adventure Island theme park, Cliffs Pavilion (the largest purpose-built performing arts venue in Essex), a distinguished art gallery and several interesting museums.

Southend Pier and Museum brings to life the fascinating past of the longest Pleasure Pier in the world. The Pier itself (Pier of the Year 2007) is 1.33 miles long; visitors can either enjoy a leisurely walk along its length or take advantage of the regular train service that plies up and down the pier. One of the trains is named after Sir John Betjeman, a frequent visitor to the town; he once said, (perhaps



underestimating the town's many other attractions?): 'The Pier is Southend, Southend is the Pier'. **Beecroft Art Gallery** boasts the work of four centuries of artistic endeavour, with some 2,000 works including those by Lear, Molenaer, Seago and Constable.

Sealife Adventure employs the most

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advanced technology to bring visitors incredibly close to the wonders of British marine life, offering fun ways of exploring life under the waves, with concave bubble windows helping to make it seem that you're actually part of the sea-creatures' environment. Another exhibit features a walk-through tunnel along a reconstructed seabed. The Shark Exhibition is not to be missed.

A floral trail guided tour around the parks and gardens will reveal why Southend has won the Britain in Bloom Awards every year since 1993, as well as medals at the Chelsea Flower Show.

The **Kursaal** on the Eastern Esplanade is an indoor entertainment complex, one of the largest in the country, with indoor bowling, a casino, snooker and pool and theme restaurants.

Boat trips in summer include occasional outings on a vintage paddle steamer.

In Victoria Avenue, the **Southend Central Museum, Planetarium and Discovery Centre** has displays of archaeology, wildlife and local history. The only planetarium in Essex provides a striking illusion of the night sky, and there's an exciting new hands-on Discovery centre (tel: 01702 434449).

Prittlewell Priory Museum, slightly north of Southend town centre in Priory Park, is a well-preserved 12th-century Cluniac Priory set in lovely grounds and housing collections of the Priory's history, natural history and the Caten collection of radios and communications equipment. Southend's award-winning coastline supports a number of

important habitats, and the foreshore is an international SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

Long before the name of Southend existed, Prittlewell was established as a Saxon settlement between 500 and 850, and the first signs of its Saxon past were unearthed in 1923. By far the most important discovery came in 2004, when a wood-lined chamber in a Saxon Cemetery came to light filled with gold and bronze ornaments, glass vessels, weapons and other treasures. The chief archaeologist at English Heritage described the find as 'a discovery of international importance which stunningly illuminates the rich and complex world of the so-called Dark Ages'. Many of the finds are on display in the British Museum, but there are plans to bring them to a special site in Southend.

Around Southend-on-Sea

LEIGH-ON-SEA

2 miles W of Southend off the A13

Leigh-on-Sea has a character quite different

BISHOP BROTHERS

172 London Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 1PH
Tel/Fax: 01702 330336
e-mail: S.Bishop53@gmail.com
website: www.bishop-brothers.com

Quality, consistency and attention to detail have long been hallmarks of **Bishop Brothers**, silversmiths and jewellers occupying characterful premises on London Road (A13) just west of its junction with the A127. Satisfied customers from all over the world are a justifiable source of pride to the owner, who specialise in antique repairs, rings, bracelets, brooches, antique jewellery and top-quality models and pieces in silver, gold and platinum. In the workshop he creates commissioned pieces after discussion and exchange of ideas with clients. The workshop is open 10am - 6pm Monday to Friday.



OLD LEIGH STUDIOS

61 High Street, The Old Town, Leigh-on-Sea,
Essex SS9 2EP

Tel: 01702 470490

websites: www.richardbaxter.com or www.sheila-appleton.co.uk

With splendid views of the Thames estuary and just 5 minutes stroll from Leigh-on-Sea railway station, you will find **Old Leigh Studios** run by three talented artists - Sheila Appleton, Richard Baxter and Kate Baxter. All the paintings and ceramics displayed in this stylish, well-lit gallery are created in the artists' studios and working pottery behind. Enjoy browsing through Sheila's paintings depicting the familiar buildings, boats and characters of this charming fishing village in works brimming with colour and life. Sheila has painted Leigh for many years and is equally at home using watercolours, oils and acrylics. She delights in making people smile with her humorous comments on life and has appeared on radio and television.

Richard Baxter shares the larger studio with wife Kate where he makes all his unique pottery. Whilst he sells in many galleries and is a well-known British potter, this is the best place to see the full breadth of his output, from stylishly functional terracotta to beautifully glazed fluid porcelain bowls and ceramic designs inspired by the waves on the sea.

Kate's distinctive and collectable ceramics and paintings take you to a colourful world of coral reefs, lost cities and enchanted forests. She decorates tile panels to enhance any kitchen or bathroom. You will receive a warm welcome at this friendly gallery and find beautiful art to suit every taste and pocket. Open 11am–5pm Tuesday to Sunday.



from Southend, being more intimate and serene, with wood-clad buildings and shrimp boats in the working harbour. The shellfish stall on the harbourside is justly famous. The Leigh Heritage Centre, housed in an ancient former smithy in the waterside High Street of the Old Town, is now home to historical artefacts and a photographic display of the history of Leigh-on-Sea.

The unspoilt fishing village of Old Leigh has a long and distinguished history. It is picturesque, with seafront houses and narrow winding alleys. It has also earned its place in history: the pilgrim ship *The Mayflower*

restocked here en route to the New World of America back in the mid-17th century, and the Dunkirk rescue embarked from here, as commemorated by plaques, flags and a memorial at St Clements Church.

ROCHFORD

3 miles N of Southend off the B1013

The Old House, at 17 South Street, is an elegant, lovingly restored house originally built in 1270. The twisting corridors and handsome rooms of this fine structure offer a glimpse into the past; the building now houses some District Council offices, and is said to be haunted.

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HADLEIGH

5 miles NW of Southend off the A13

Castle Country Park

Hadleigh Castle, built originally for Edward III, is owned by English Heritage and once belonged to Anne of Cleves, Katherine of Aragon and Katherine Parr. The ruins were also immortalised in a painting by Constable. The remains of this once impressive castle can still be seen. The curtain walls towers, which survive almost to their full height, overlook the Essex marshes and the Thames estuary.

Hadleigh Castle Country Park offers a variety of woodland and coastal walks in grounds overlooking the Thames estuary. A Guided Events programme runs throughout the year.

HOCKLEY

6 miles NW of Southend off the A129

Hockley Woods

Hockley Woods is a 280-acre ancient woodland, managed for the benefit of wildlife and for the public. Traditional coppice management encourages a diverse array of flora and fauna,

including the nationally rare Heath Fritillary butterfly.

Volpaia in Woodlands Road is a lily specialist's small but beautiful woodside garden, with rare collected species and own-bred hybrid lilies, shade-loving shrubs and plants for sale.

RAYLEIGH

6 miles NW of Southend off the A1016

Dutch Cottage at Crown Hill in Rayleigh is a tiny traditional Flemish eight-sided cottage based on a 17th-century design created by Dutch settlers.

Rayleigh Mount is a prominent landmark in this part of the county. Once a motte-and-bailey castle built in the 11th century, it was abandoned some 200 years later. Rayleigh Windmill, in Bellingham Lane close to Rayleigh Mount, was built around 1809; the tower mill houses a fascinating collection of bygones mostly used in and around Rayleigh. Refreshments are available from the coffee shop adjacent to the Mill.

HULLBRIDGE

8 miles NW of Southend off the A132

Jakapeni Rare Breed Farm at Burlington

Gardens in Hullbridge is a pleasant small-holding set in 30 acres of rolling countryside. Specialising in sheep and pigs, with other pets and wildlife, there's also a fishing lake, country walk and pets corner. Snacks and light refreshments are available from the café, and there's an attractive shop.



Hadleigh Castle, Hadleigh

HATTERS

Moulsham Mill, Parkway, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7PX
Tel: 01245 351121
website: www.hattershathire.co.uk

Hats in all sizes, for all ages and all occasions, are the stock in trade of **Hatters**, which is located in a fine old mill building not far from the Cathedral in Chelmsford.

The shop is owned and run by Monica Smith, who was so used to seeing ladies wearing the 'wrong' hats that she decided to do something about it by opening Hatters. Monica and her staff offer a friendly, personal service in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere, and the shop is filled almost from floor to ceiling with hats for sale and hire for the races, weddings, formal events and other occasions that call for something a little bit special.

Designers usually in stock include Peter Bettley, Mad Hatters, Classics, Nigel Raymond, Victoria Ann among many others. Monica also offers a premier design service, with colour specifications to go with a special outfit.

In addition to the lovely hats, Hatters keeps a range of complementary accessories, including comfortable, stylish shoes, gloves, scarves and jewellery. The shop is open Monday to Friday (not Tuesday) from 10am to 4pm and Saturday from 10am to 1pm. Clients should book an appointment if possible before a visit.



BLUE LAWN & EDIBLE

17-19 Baddow Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0BX
Tel/Fax: 01245 250083
e-mail: claremoore3@btinternet.com
website: www.bluelawn.co.uk

Next to the Odeon cinema in the centre of town, **Blue Lawn & Edible** are cool, stylish, contemporary retreats from the hustle and bustle of the outside world. Behind its cream exterior with top-to-windows, Blue Lawn is a womenswear boutique that brings the sophistication of London stores to the area, with a feel that reflects owner Clare Moore's ethic of timeless, effortless style.

Aimed at stylish individuals whose aspirations reach far beyond a High Street wardrobe, Blue Lawn's three floors stock more than 50 European brands, including mainline collections from Vivienne Westwood, Chloë, Belstaff and John Rocha, along with shoes, jewellery and other accessories.

Its neighbour, Edible, is an attractive store with long windows in its duck-egg blue exterior that look in on the lifestyle and culinary treats within. On the ground floor is a modern café/coffee bar surrounded by beautiful homeware and giftware from France, Italy and Belgium. Upstairs is an apartment-style space with a long central table where shoppers can relax, chat, read or work surrounded by travel art and photography.



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Chelmsford

Cathedral Museum

Roman workmen cutting the great road linking London with Colchester built a fort at what is today called Chelmsford. Then called Caesaromagus, it stands at the confluence of the Rivers Chelmer and Can. The town has always been an important market centre and is now the bustling county town of Essex. It is also directly descended from a new town planned by the Bishop of London in 1199. At its centre are the principal inn, the Royal Saracen's Head, and the elegant Shire Hall of 1791. Three plaques situated high up on the eastern face of the Hall overlooking the High Street represent Wisdom, Justice and Mercy. The building now houses the town magistrates court.

Christianity came to Essex with the Romans and again, later, with St Cedd (AD654); in 1914 the diocese of Chelmsford was created.

Chelmsford Cathedral in New Street dates from the 15th century and is built on the site of a church constructed 800 years ago. The cathedral is noted for the harmony and unity of its perpendicular architecture. It was John Johnson, the distinguished local architect who designed both the Shire Hall and the 18th-century Stone Bridge over the River Can and who also rebuilt the Parish Church of St Mary when most of its 15th-century tower fell down. The church became a cathedral when the new diocese of Chelmsford was created. Since then it has been enlarged and re-organised inside. The cathedral boasts memorial windows dedicated to the USAAF airmen who were based in Essex between 1942 and 1945.

The Marconi Company, pioneers in the manufacture of wireless equipment, set up the

first radio company in the world here in the town, in 1899. Exhibits of those pioneering days of wireless can be seen in the **Chelmsford Museum** in Oaklands Park, Moulsham Street, as can interesting displays of Roman remains and local history. Fine and decorative arts (ceramics, costume, glass), coins, natural history (live beehive, animals, geological exhibits) rub shoulders with displays exploring the history of the distinguished Essex Regiment. The museum is set in a lovely park complete with children's play area.

Also in the town, at Parkway, is Moulsham Mill Business & Craft Centre, set in an early 18th-century water mill that has been renovated and now houses a variety of craft workshops and businesses. Crafts featured include jewellery, pottery, flowers, lace-making, dolls' houses and bears, and decoupage work. There is a charming picnic area nearby, and a good café.

Three modern technologies - electrical engineering, radio, and ball and roller bearings - began in Chelmsford. At the Engine House Project at Sandford Mill Waterworks, museum collections from the town's unique industrial story provide extra fun and a fascinating insight into the science of everyday things.

Around Chelmsford

GREAT BADDOW

1 mile S of Chelmsford off the A12/A130

Baddow Antiques Centre at The Brinky, Church Street, is one of the leading antiques centres in Essex. Here, 20 dealers offer a wide selection of silver, porcelain, glass, furniture, paintings and collectibles. There is also a

DESIGN COTTAGE

37 Beehive Lane, Great Baddow, nr Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9TQ

Tel: 01245 287435 Fax: 01245 355211

e-mail: chrisytodd@hotmail.co.uk

website: www.lomas-pigeon.co.uk

Chris Todd has been involved in interior design for 20 years, during which time she has built a far-reaching reputation with her unerring eye for design, colour and quality. A warm welcome and friendly, personal service are bywords at **Design Cottage**, where curtains, blinds, fabrics and wallpapers are the main areas of the business.

As well as selling goods from the shop they offer a complete service that can start with a visit to the customer's home with fabric and wallpaper books to choose the design and colour, to take measurements and to work out an estimate, and ends with the fitting of the curtains and blinds on poles and tracks (all the fittings and accessories included). Specialised offerings include tented ceilings and fabric-panelled walls.

The shop stocks fabrics and wallpapers from leading manufacturers such as Colefax & Fowler, Jane Churchill, Nina Campbell, Harlequin, Mulberry and Romo. It's always a pleasure to visit Design Cottage, which is located in Great Baddow, just ten minutes' drive from the centre of Chelmsford. The shop is open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday (closed Wednesday) and from 9am to 12noon on Saturday, otherwise by appointment – it's best to call before setting out.



collection of 300 Victorian brass and iron bedsteads on display.

SANDON

2 miles SE of Chelmsford off the A414

The village green here in Sandon has produced a notable Spanish oak tree, the biggest in the country, planted in the centre of the village green. This oak tree is remarkable, not so much for its height, as for the tremendous horizontal spread of its branches. Around the green are a fine church and a number of attractive old houses, some dating back to the 16th century when Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, was Lord of the Manor of Sandon.

SOUTH HANNINGFIELD

6 miles S of Chelmsford off the A130

The placid waters of nearby **Hanningfield**

Reservoir (see panel opposite) were created by damming Sandford Brook, and transformed the scattered rural settlement of Hanningfield into a lakeside village. Now on the shores of the lake, the 12th-century village church's belfry has been a local landmark in the flat Essex countryside for centuries. Some of the timbers in the belfry are said to have come from Spanish galleons, wrecked in the aftermath of Sir Francis Drake's defeat of the Armada.

The Visitor Centre at the Reservoir overlooks the 870-acre reservoir and the gateway to the 100-acre woodland beyond. The Centre also offers refreshments, a gift shop and toilet.

HIGHWOOD

3 miles SW of Chelmsford off the A414

Hylands House

Hylands House was built in 1728, a beautiful

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HANNINGFIELD RESERVOIR

Tel: 0870 2403549

website: www.eswater.co.uk

Hanningfield Reservoir, owned by Essex & Suffolk Water is the second largest in the country and is primarily an essential water source for homes and businesses in Essex. The reservoir, set in the picturesque part of Essex is a great place for a day out for all the family including anglers, walkers and wildlife enthusiasts.

The reservoir is one of the premier fisheries in the UK, you can enjoy some outstanding trout fishing by either bank or boat, set in a picturesque part of Essex.

The fishery stocks the highest quality of fin perfect trout throughout the season. Day permits and season permits are available along with fishing lessons for those who are new to the sport. It's a wonderful haven for nature, and is renowned for its nationally important populations of wildfowl, which can be viewed from the reservoir's four birdwatching hides.

The Essex Wildlife Trust visitor centre is set within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and in the shop you will find an extensive range of fishing tackle, clothing and gifts.

Located on the lakeside with spectacular views over the reservoir, Café On The Water is open all year round, serving hot and cold meals, snacks and beverages for all the family, with fantastic views across the water. For further information on Hanningfield Reservoir call 0870 240 3549 or visit www.eswater.co.uk.



neo-Classical Grade II listed villa set in over 500 acres of parkland landscaped by Repton. Pre-booked guided tours of the house and gardens are available (tel 01245 605500). The house is host to many events. Hylands Park features lawns, rhododendron bushes, woodland paths, ornamental ponds and Pleasure Gardens adjacent to the house.

WRITTLE

2 miles W of Chelmsford off the A414

From a tucked-away corner of St John's Green in this village came Britain's first regular

broadcasting service; an experimental 15-minute programme beamed out nightly by Marconi's engineers. Opposite the Green, the Cock & Bell is reputed to be haunted by a young woman who committed suicide on the railway. Further along this street is the Wheatsheaf, one of the smallest pubs in the country.

Writtle's parish Church of St John features a cross of charred timbers, a reminder of the fire that gutted the chancel in 1974. Ducks swim on the pond of the larger and quite idyllic main village green, which is surrounded by lovely Tudor and Georgian houses.

BYGONES OF WRITTLE

44 The Green, Writtle, nr Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3DU

Tel: 01245 421127

e-mail: sue@bygonesofwrittle.co.uk website: www.bygonesofwrittle.co.uk

Writtle is one of the most attractive villages in the land, with a lovely variety of Tudor and Georgian properties surrounding the picturesque village green and duck pond. Chelmsford is almost on the doorstep, but Writtle has managed to retain its rural charm and character. History has touched this delightful place down the years – Robert the Bruce was born here in 1274, and it was from a little hut in Lawford Lane that Britain's first regular broadcasting service was transmitted by Marconi's engineers (the little hut is now in the Chelmsford Science and Industry Museum at Sandford Mill). That was then and now is now, but one of the village's most appealing places to visit goes by the name of Bygones.

Bygones of Writtle is a splendid shop located in a 17th-century building overlooking the village green at the front, and a courtyard and walled garden at the back that now boasts a vast array of home-grown vegetables. Behind the Old Curiosity Shop frontage, the beautiful interior is an Aladdin's cave of splendid gifts for all occasions. Everything on display is chosen by owners Sue Field and Cindy Fisher for being just that little bit extra special. There are also further finds to be made in the Antiques Barn. Sue and Cindy are great supporters of local talent, which is in plentiful supply in and around Writtle, and a wide variety of local crafts and paintings can always be found at Bygones.

Every visit is guaranteed to uncover new delights, and when inspiration for a present runs out, gift vouchers come to the rescue. At the back of the shop, leading to the courtyard and large walled garden, is a delightful tea room serving scrumptious home-baked cakes and delicious authentic cream teas and speciality coffees. There are high chairs and the premises are wheelchair accessible. Bygones is open from 10am to 5 pm Tuesday through to Saturday.



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OLIVERS NURSERIES

Maldon Road, Witham, Essex CM8 3HY

Tel: 01376 513239 Fax: 01376 510728

website: www.oliversnurseries.co.uk

'Think Plants Think Olivers'

That's the motto of **Olivers Nurseries**, a working nursery, plant and garden centre and farm shop located on the B1018 south of Witham and just a short drive from the main A12. It was started on a small scale by

current owner Charles Willett's father in 1949, and Charles spent some years selling on a limited seasonal basis before opening the full enterprise in 2002, since when it has expanded into a friendly and welcoming Garden Centre.

The extensive stock of plants includes fruit trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, climbers, alpinists and conifers, roses, ferns and grasses, seeds and bulbs. In spring and early summer they specialise in supplying a large variety of bedding plants, many of them home-grown, and ready planted hanging baskets. In the summer they grow strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and other soft fruit on the nursery, with Pick Your Own available.

In the run-up to Christmas they sell a selection of real Christmas trees and decorative holly wreaths, and the Christmas Craft Fayre, held on the second weekend in December, is a popular annual occasion. There is easy access to all areas of the Garden Centre and ample parking.

Once inside, visitors will find everything to satisfy their gardening needs: gardening tools, trellis, stakes, netting and mesh, terracotta and glazed pots, bird food and feeders, fertilizers and pest control to name but a few.

Oriental Waters and Floral Expressions are two enterprises to be found within Oliver Nurseries. Oriental Waters stocks pre-formed ponds, pond-liners, pumps, filters and coldwater fish, while in the Floral Area they create lovely fresh flower displays and sell dried and silk flowers, baskets and oases for customers to make their own flower arrangements; there are also houseplants, cacti, ceramic pots and vases. The Farm Shop is stocked with prime meat and dairy products, fruit and vegetables, pickles and preserves, cakes, books, cards and gifts. Due to open towards the end of 2008 at this enterprising establishment is a Coffee Shop with home baking, sandwiches, hot and cold snacks and, in the summer, strawberry cream teas with home-grown fruit from their own 'pick-your-own' fruit crops, grown just 100 yards away in the field.

Qualified, experienced staff are always on hand to give assistance at Olivers, which is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday and from 10am to 4pm on Sunday.



WITHAM

6 miles NE of Chelmsford off the A12/B1018

 Dorothy L Sayers Centre

The River Brain flows through this delightful town; a continuous walk has been created along its length for a distance of about three miles. The settlement dates back to at least the 10th century; remains of a Roman temple have been found at Ivy Chimneys, off Hatfield

Road. Blackwater Lane leads to Whetmead, a nature reserve of 25 acres between the rivers Blackwater and Brain.

The **Dorothy L Sayers Centre** in Newland Street houses a collection of books by and about Sayers, the theologian, Dante scholar and novelist/creator of the Lord Peter Wimsey mysteries, who lived in Witham for many years.

MELLONS FABRICS

80 High Street, Witham, Essex CM8 1AH
Tel: 01376 512008

e-mail: mellonsltd@btconnect.com website: www.mellonsltd.co.uk

Mellons Fabrics... a coordinated approach for people who love their home! If you're looking for a fabulous range of soft furnishings, including luxury bespoke curtains and blinds – look no further! For over 40 years, Mellons Fabrics have been offering their expertise and experience to customers to help them develop their ideas and fuel their imagination. The highly experienced and friendly staff will visit your home to measure and estimate how much fabric you need, while giving advice on choosing fabrics, trimmings, blinds, pole and traces to suit your particular requirements, including making-up and fitting if you wish.

**UPSONS FARM SALES**

Ivy Barns Farm, Hatfield Peverel,
nr Chelmsford, Essex CM3 2JH
Tel: 01245 380274 Fax: 01245 380155
website: www.upsonsfarm.co.uk

John Upson, who runs **Upsons Farm**, has been in farming all his life and took over the business his father started some 40 years ago. The farm, which used to concentrate on growing vegetable crops for seed, is now given over to selling home-grown and locally sourced vegetables and other prime produce. The sales area is a modern brick and timber barn purpose-built for displaying and selling a wide range of foodstuffs and other goods. Besides the vegetables and fruit, the shop sells free-range eggs from the farm's own hens, dairy products, Maldon salt, chutneys, pickles, Tiptree jams, marmalade and honey, plus apple juice produced by John's cousin David. Also on sale are live hens, hen houses, poultry accessories and feed for horses, livestock and birds. A warm, welcoming team makes shopping a real pleasure, and the farm has ample parking. Shop hours are 9am to 6pm, Sunday 9am to midday.

Ivy Barns Farm is located close to the village green at Hatfield Peverel, a short drive from the A12 between Chelmsford and Witham (leave at J20a or 20b).



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LITTLE BRAXTED

6 miles NE of Chelmsford off the A12/
B1018

Little Braxted has been voted the best-kept village on a regular basis since 1973. St Mary's chapel was built in 1888, and can accommodate only 12 people at a time. Services are held every Wednesday. The village church of St Nicholas is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and is famous for its murals.

TIPTREE

11 miles NE of Chelmsford on the B1023

As all true jam-lovers will know, Tiptree is famed as the home of the Wilkin & Son Ltd jam factory, a Victorian establishment that

now boasts a fascinating visitors centre in the grounds of the original factory.

KELVEDON

11 miles NE of Chelmsford off the A12

 Museum

This village alongside the River Blackwater houses the **Feering and Kelvedon Museum**, which is dedicated to manorial history and houses artefacts from the Roman settlement of Canonium, agricultural tools through the ages and other interesting exhibits.

LITTLE BADDOW

5 miles E of Chelmsford off the A414

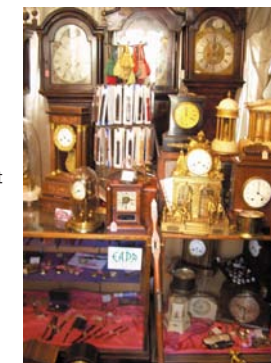
Blakes Wood is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, an ancient woodland of

KELVEDON CLOCKS

2 High Street, Kelvedon, nr Colchester, Essex CO5 9AG
Tel: 01376 573434

e-mail: chrislpapworth@btconnect.com
website: www.kelvedonclocks.co.uk

Kelvedon Clocks Ltd is a traditional clockmakers shop specialising in antique clocks and watches. Owner Chris Papworth has wide contacts throughout the trade and all the major antique fairs; he monitors auctions and has runners who buy for him on the Continent, which enables him to offer one of the best selections of antique clocks and watches in the country. As Chris says, a well-chosen antique clock will add the finishing touch to any home – a school clock for the kitchen, a bracket clock, a French mantle clock or one of the many wall clocks in the lounge or sitting room. A fine small longcase/grandfather clock will fit even a modern hall. The sight and sound of an antique clock not only makes a house a home but becomes part of the family – perhaps for generations to come. All the clocks are genuine, guaranteed, easily managed and come with advice to help their owners enjoy them. Chris, with over 45 years' experience, is a member of the British Watch & Clockmakers Guild, the British Horological Institute and the Essex Antique Dealers Association. Kelvedon Clocks is housed in part of what was the White Hart Inn, dating back to the late 1500s and Grade II listed. The shop is open from 9am to 5pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and from 10am to 5pm on Saturday; other times by appointment.



hornbeam and sweet chestnut renowned for its bluebells. There is a good circular way-marked one-and-a-half mile walk.

Cruising along the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal provides the visitor with a unique view of this part of rural Essex.

DANBURY

5 miles E of Chelmsford off the A414

 Common  Country Park

This village is said to take its name from the Danes who invaded this part of the country in the Dark Ages. In the fine church, under a rare 13th-century carved effigy, a crusader knight was found when the tomb was opened in 1779, perfectly preserved in the pickle that

filled his coffin. Fine carving is also a feature of the bench ends; the oldest among them have inspired modern craftsmen to continue the same style of carving on all the pews. In 1402, 'the devil appeared in the likeness of Firor Minor, who entered the church, raged insolently to the great terror of the parishioners ... the top of the steeple was broken down and half the chancel scattered abroad.' And, in 1941, another harbinger of disaster, a 500lb German bomb, reduced the east end to ruins.

At **Danbury Common**, acres of gorse flower in a blaze of golden colour for much of the year. Along with Lingwood Common, Danbury Common is at the highest point of

Danbury Country Park

Danbury, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 4AN
Tel: 01245 222350

website: www.essex.gov.uk/countryparks

Created in 1088, the park has had a long and interesting history. The formal garden is separated from the rest of the park by two ha-has. These structures stopped the deer and domestic animals that roamed the park from reaching the gardens, without spoiling the view from the house. The Park has changed much during its history. The estate has been referred to as Danbury Palace since the Ecclesiastical Commission bought it in 1845 for the Bishops of Rochester and, at other times, St Albans. The Park's character changed dramatically in the following years as nearly 1,000 trees were felled and the high brick wall was built along the north side of the palace garden. Essex County Council purchased half of the Norman deer park and Palace buildings after World War Two, this has been divided into three different parts, one of which is the Country Park.

Much of the site is covered by ancient woodland, boasting impressive specimens of beech, oak and even wild service trees: a rare native tree only found in ancient woods and hedgerows. The woods abound with wildlife, from the secretive mole and stealthy fox, to the majestic badger and shy muntjac deer. Rare insects hide in the crevices of the ancient oaks while a myriad of birds sing among their branches. Spring and summer see the woodland come alive with flowers like bluebells, foxgloves and Townhall clock. In autumn, all manner of fungi explode silently from soil, log and trunk, filling the woods with their gaudy colours and pungent smells.



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the gravel ridge between Maldon and Chelmsford. There is evidence here of Napoleonic defences and old reservoirs. Circular nature trails make exploring the area easily accessible. To the west, **Danbury Country Park** (see panel opposite) offers another pleasant stretch of open country, boasting woodland, a lake and ornamental gardens. Guide available by appointment.



St Gilles Leper Hospital, Maldon

WOODHAM WALTER

6 miles E of Chelmsford off the B1010

Woodham Walter is a small village that lies two-and-a-half miles west of the ancient market town and coastal port of Maldon. It is rumoured that Henry VIII hunted in Woodham Walter during his reign. During the troubled times after Henry's death, Mary Tudor was concealed in Woodham Walter Hall, from whence she was planning to escape from England in 1550. The church in Woodham, St Michael's, was consecrated in April 1564 and is said to be one of the oldest still standing in the world.

MALDON

10 miles E of Chelmsford on the A414

 Museums  Heritage Centre

Maldon's High Street has existed since medieval times, and the alleys and mews leading from it are full of intriguing shops, welcoming old inns and good places to eat. One of the most distinctive features of the High Street is the Moot Hall. Built in the 14th century for the D'Arcy family, this building passed into the hands of the town corporation

and was the seat of power in Maldon for over 400 years. The original brick spiral staircase (the best-preserved of its kind in England) and the 18th-century courtroom are of particular interest. Guided tours are available on Saturdays in summer and by appointment with Maldon Town Council (01621 857373) at other times.

A colourful applied embroidery made to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of the crucial Battle of Maldon (see Northey Island on page 299) is on display at the **Maeldune Heritage Centre** (see panel on page 298) Maeldune being the Saxon name for Maldon. The 42ft embroidery was designed by Humphrey Spender. The Centre is housed in the Grade I listed St Peter's Building, erected in the 17th century by a local benefactor when the nave of the church that had once stood on this site collapsed. It can be found at the junction of the High Street and the steep and architecturally interesting Market Hill. The benefactor, one Thomas Plume, erected the building to house his collection of 6,000 books and a school; The Plume Library in St Peter's Building is open to the public.

A few minutes' walk down one of the small

Maeldune Heritage Centre

St Peters Church, Market Hall, Maldon,
Essex CM9 5PZ
Tel: 01621 851628

The **Maeldune Centre** has its origins in a turbulent period of English History over 1,000 years ago when the fate of Anglo-Saxon England lay in the balance under the onslaught of the Danish invaders. In AD991, Eardorman Byrthnoth fought a ferocious battle at Maldon in an attempt to save his fellow countrymen from the Danes.

Although he was defeated and killed, his heroism lives on in a famous Anglo-Saxon poem and also in the Maldon Embroidery, which was created some thousand years later to celebrate this battle. Housed in the Maeldune Centre, the 42ft long embroidery depicts the history of Maldon, in stunning colour and detail. It has been justly praised nationally and has been exhibited at Olympia and featured on television.

Artefacts from an important Roman-British site, excavated at Heybridge near Maldon, are also on display. A recent acquisition is a photographic archive compiled by the Maldon Society. Nearly 3,000 photographs from 19th and 20th century Maldon and District can be seen on computer from which prints can be made available. Additionally, there are exhibitions of work by local artists that are changed ever month.



roads leading from the High Street brings you to the waterfront, where the old wharves and quays are still active. Moored at Hythe Quay are several Thames sailing barges, all over 100 years old and still boasting their traditional rigging and distinctive tan sails. The barges and quay are overlooked by two pubs, the Queen's Head and the Jolly Sailor. Maldon, famous for its sea salt, is the only place in England still making salt from sea water. Salt production in Maldon dates from Roman times and, from its current premises on the waterfront, has continued uninterrupted since 1882.

Promenade Park lies adjacent to Hythe Quay. This attractive park next to the River Blackwater opened in 1885, and the Edwardian-style gardens include an ornamental lake with an amphitheatre that provides a unique setting

for outdoor arts and drama productions. Children's attractions include a water splash park, galleon ship and sandy play area, and also in the park are a picnic site, amusement centre, tennis courts and mini-golf. A varied programme of events takes place in the park throughout the year, including the Mad Maldon Mud Race and the RNLJ Rowing Race, both held annually over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Housed in what was originally the park-keeper's lodge, by the park gates, **Maldon District Museum** looks back on the colourful history of the town through permanent and changing displays of exhibits and objects associated with the area and the people of Maldon. Closed November to March (tel: 01621 842688). On Station Road, the

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Combined Military Services Museum has collections of British military artifacts including items of national importance such as the only surviving MK2 'Cockle' Canoe as used in the Cockleshell Heroes raid (tel: 01621 841826).

Ruins are all that remain of the St Giles the Leper Hospital, founded by King Henry II in the 12th century. As with all monastic buildings, it fell into disuse after Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries, though it retained its roof and was used as a barn until the late 19th century. Many other buildings in the town, almost as old, fortunately remain - including two fine churches.

TOLLESBURY

9 miles NE of Maldon on the B1023

Located at the mouth of the River Blackwater is the marshland village of Tollesbury. Tollesbury Marina has been designed as a family leisure centre for the crews and passengers of visiting yachts. The Marina, with its tennis courts, heated covered swimming pool, bar and restaurant is ideally located for exploring the Blackwater and the neighbouring estuaries of the Crouch, Colne, Stour and Orwell. Guests arriving by land are welcome to use some Cruising Club facilities. Tollesbury Wick is a 600-acre nature reserve owned and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust.

LANGFORD

2 miles NW of Maldon off the B1019

Museum of Power

The **Museum of Power**, Hatfield Road, covers all aspects of power, from domestic batteries to the massive machines that powered British industry. It includes the steam-powered pumping-station machinery of

the redundant waterworks in which the museum is housed; other attractions include household by-gones, an Edwardian workshop, miniature steam railway rides, a model village, tea room and riverside nature trail (tel: 01621 843183).

NORTHEY ISLAND

1 mile SE of Maldon off the B1018

Northey Island

Northey Island, comprising mainly salt-marsh, is owned by the National Trust. Access to this nature reserve is on foot via a causeway passable at low tide. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, an important stopover for wintering birds.

The sea walls of the Island make for an interesting walk, and were used as the camp base for the Viking army in AD991, when Byrthnoth led the Saxons against the invading army. A fierce three-day battle took place, with Byrthnoth's head eventually being cut off and the Viking warriors retreating despite their victory, leaving the English King, Ethelred the Unready, to pay an annual tribute, danegold, to the Danes to prevent further incursions.

HEYBRIDGE BASIN

2 miles E of Maldon off the B1026

Here the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal meets the tidal estuary. The busy sea lock and the activities of crafts of all sizes provide an endlessly changing scene. A café and a shop selling local crafts occupy an old chandlery, and two pleasant inns overlook the water.

PURLEIGH

3 miles SW of Maldon on the B1010

The first recorded vineyard in Purleigh was planted in the early 12th century, only 400

FB ANTIQUES

*Rawlings Farm Buildings, Unit 7,
Main Road, Rettendon Common,
Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8DY
Tel: 01245 401210
e-mail: info@fjbantiques.co.uk
website: www.fjbantiques.com*

FB Antiques (established 1960) proudly bears the initials of its owner and founder Fred Bruschweiler, who has been in the antiques business for more than 50 years. After spending many years buying furniture and antiques in East Germany, he sold to the trade and the export market from his headquarters in Rayleigh. He was the first to export furniture to Australia and other far-flung places.

Now based in renovated farm buildings at Rettendon Common, FB Antiques is undoubtedly one of the most exciting sources of high-quality antique and revival furniture. It is the largest stockist in Essex, selling to the trade, the export market, the interior design market and the general public and further building up its extensive home and international clientele.

The two large warehouses are filled with a vast selection of the finest furniture (with the emphasis on the 18th century) for every room in the house, in oak, mahogany and walnut and a variety of other woods, along with an extensive range of home furnishings. The craftsmen employed at FB Antiques are masters of their trade, and visitors to the showroom will always find help and advice on hand. They offer a complete packing and shipping service and are always ready to buy quality antique furniture.

FB Antiques is a member of LAPADA, the largest and most prestigious association of professional art and antiques dealers in the United Kingdom. Among the many outstanding pieces handled by the company are bars of distinction and character made by craftsmen with the emphasis firmly on quality and authenticity. Suitable for hotels, restaurants and clubs, they would also be a stunning feature in a grand private house. Built in oak or mahogany, with an authentic old, rustic look, they can be built to individual requirements; they feature superb carving, tiles, ornate mirrors and stained-glass ceilings and canopies.

The showrooms, which can be visited between 10am and 5pm (11am to 2pm Saturday and Sunday), are located between the A12 and Rettendon Roundabout on the old A130 at Rettendon Common; between the Baddow Antiques Centre on the old A130 and Battlesbridge. Clients who are unable to visit the showroom in person can browse the virtual showroom on the excellent and comprehensive website.



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yards from the site of New Hall Vineyards in Chelmsford Road. It covered three acres of land next to Purleigh Church, where first US President George Washington's great-great-grandfather was the rector - until the time he was removed from this office for sampling too much of the local brew! Purleigh Vineyard became Crown property in 1163; subsequently the wines produced were taken each year to London to be presented to the monarch.

RETTENDON

6 miles SW of Maldon off the A130

RHS Garden

Highlights at the **Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Hyde Hall** include a 1,600 square metre Dry Garden with hundreds of species that show the fantastic range and style of plants that can be grown to cope with drought and exposure to high light levels; colour-themed herbaceous borders, an Australian & New Zealand garden; a rose garden; themed vegetable plots; and the Robinson Garden showcasing plants that love cool, shady, damp conditions. Meals and snacks are available in the attractive thatched barn; there is also a plant centre, and fine views can be had from this attractively landscaped hilltop garden.

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

5 miles SW of Maldon off the B1012

The empty marshland of the Crouch estuary, a yachtsman's paradise, was chosen by Essex County Council as the site for one of its most attractive new town schemes. At its centre, this successful 20th-century new town boasts a traditional market square surrounded by pleasant arcades and terraces built in the old Essex style with brick, tile and weatherboard.

Marsh Farm Country Park in South Woodham Ferrers (see panel on page 302), is a working farm and country park adjoining the River Crouch. Sheep, pigs, cattle and hens roam; visitors can also partake of the adventure play area, farm trail, visitors centre, gift shop and tea rooms. Guided tours are available by prior arrangement. Special events are held throughout the year.

BATTLESBRIDGE

7 miles SW of Maldon off the A132

Battlesbridge Antiques Centre at Hawk Hill in Battlesbridge is the largest in Essex. Housed in five period buildings, more than 70 dealers display and sell their wares. The heart of the Centre is Cromwell House, its ground floor dedicated to specialist dealers with individual units. They will advise, value and give an expert opinion free of charge. They offer a wide variety of old and interesting pieces and collectables.

The Centre's Haybarn Cottages were constructed as dwellings, while, alongside, The Bridgebarn began life as a barn with thatched roof and dates from the 19th century, at which time there were lime kilns nearby. It was converted to its present tiled roof in the 1930s. The building retains some fine oak beamwork, and houses a small 'penny arcade' with working model roundabout, fortune teller, and What The Butler Saw machine as well as a large collection of antiques for sale.

The Old Granary is nestled on the riverbank and houses five floors of dealers selling collectables, reproductions, antiques and crafts, including specialists in old phones, clocks, furniture, cigarette cards, jewellery, fireplaces, interior design, dried flowers and much more. There are superb views from the

Marsh Farm Country Park

Marsh Farm Road, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 5WP
Tel: 01245 321552

Marsh Farm Country Park overlooks the River Crouch and is surrounded by its creeks on three sides. The Park is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), as it is a good example of Essex grazing marshes, carrying such rare plants as sea barley and grass vetchling. It is also internationally important as an over-wintering site for brent geese. Over 150 species of bird have been seen around the Park. Every winter the marshes are invaded by droves of wildfowl, making Marsh Farm a popular birdwatching spot.

Marsh Farm Country Park has been many things during its history. Iron age settlers were attracted here by a river rich for fishing, hunting and salt. There is evidence of salt making scattered across the site in the form of saltpans and 'red hills': saltwater was evaporated by the sun or by using very hot stones, which left a red earth deposit. The sea salt left behind was a highly valued commodity. Over 300 years ago, the marshes were drained. A sea wall was built by the Dutch, transforming tidal creeks into the grazing marshes we see at Marsh Farm today.

In dry weather the sea wall offers a wide, level path; however, during the winter months it becomes very muddy. The Open Farm is fully accessible for wheelchairs.



top floor of the River Crouch and surrounding area, to be enjoyed as you take tea in the top-floor coffee shop.

This superb location is also the site of a Classic Motor Cycle Museum, with displays evoking the history of motorcycling through the ages and some interesting memorabilia. Open on Sundays or by appointment. Three classic vehicle events are held annually.

MUNDON

3 miles SE of Maldon off the B1018

Mundon and the surrounding area boast some excellent walking. St Peter's Way, a long-distance path from Ongar to St Peter's Chapel, Bradwell-on-Sea, leads through the village and past the disused Church of St Mary. This 14th-century church is maintained by the Friends of Friendless Churches and is

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open to the public. Tolstoy is known to have visited the village.

ALTHORNE

6 miles SE of Maldon on the B1012

Church of St Andrew

The **Church of St Andrew**, some 600 years old, has a fine flint-and-stone tower, built in the perpendicular style. Inside the church there's a 15th-century font, which retains its original carvings of saints and angels. A brass plaque dated 1508 records that William Hyklott 'Paide for the werkemanship of the wall'; an inscription over the west door remembers John Wylson and John Hyll, who probably paid for the tower.

To the south, where Station Road meets Burnham Road, stands the village's War Memorial. This solid structure of beams and tiles lends dignity and honour to the tragic roll-call of names listed on it.

To the north of the village is the golden-thatched and white-walled Huntsman and Hounds, an alehouse since around 1700.

STEEPLE AND ST LAWRENCE

8 miles SE of Maldon off the B1021

Public footpaths lead down to the water from the village of Steeple; the houses of St Lawrence stand close to the water. Several sailing clubs and some waterside caravan and camping parks ensure that there is plenty of activity on the adjacent stretch of the River Blackwater. The St Lawrence Rural Discovery Church, on high ground further inland, overlooks the villages and the River Blackwater to the north; it also offers views over the River Crouch to the south. Exhibitions with local themes are held in the church during the summer months.

BRADWELL-ON-SEA/BRADWELL WATERSIDE

12 miles E of Maldon off the B1021

St Peter's on the Wall Dengie Peninsula

A visit to Bradwell-on-Sea (the name derives from the Saxon words brad pall, meaning 'broad wall') is well worth the long drive for its sense of being right out on the edge of things – the timeless emptiness is if anything exaggerated by the distant views of buildings across the water on Mersea Island and the bulk of the nearby (now decommissioned) nuclear power station. A walk eastwards along the old Roman road across the marshes takes you to the site of their fort, 'Othona', on which the visitors of today will find the chapel of **St Peter's on the Wall**, built by St Cedd and his followers in AD654 using rubble from the ruined fort. In the 14th century the chapel was abandoned as a place of worship, and over the following centuries used at various times as a barn and a shipping beacon. Restored and re-consecrated in 1920, it is well worth the half-mile walk from the car park to reach it. It is the site of a pilgrimage each July.

There is an unusual war memorial marking the site of the Bradwell Bay Secret Airfield, used during the Second World War for aircraft unable to return to their original base.

Bradwell Lodge, in the village centre, is a part-Tudor former rectory that has known some famous visitors. Gainsborough, the Suffolk artist, used rooms as a studio, while the Irish writer Erskine Childers, who was shot by the Irish Free State in 1920 because he fought for the IRA, wrote *The Riddle of the Sands* here.

At Bradwell Waterside, a large marina has berths for 300 boats. The now-



St Peter's on the Wall, Bradwell-on-Sea

decommissioned nuclear power station has a waymarked nature trail.

To the south of the village lie the remote marshes of the **Dengie Peninsula**, parts of which are important nature reserves. The salty tang of sea air, brought inland on easterly winds, gives an exhilarating flavour to the marshlands. Like the Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire fens, this once-waterlogged corner of Essex was reclaimed from the sea by 17th-century Dutch engineers. The views across the marshes take in great sweeps of countryside inhabited only by wildfowl and seabirds.

BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH

12 miles SE of Maldon on the B1012

St Mary's Church Museum

Mangapps Railway Museum

Burnham-on-Crouch is attractively old-fashioned, and probably best known as a

yachting venue. It is lively in summer, especially at the end of August when the town hosts one of England's premier regattas, Burnham Week. This week of racing and shore events attracts many visiting craft and landlubbers alike. In winter many yachts are left to ride at anchor offshore, and the sound of the wind in their rigging is ever-present.

Behind the brightly coloured cottages along the Quay lies the High Street and the rest of the town, its streets lined with a delightful assortment of old cottages and Victorian and Georgian houses and shops.

In past times, working boats thronged the estuary where yachts now ply to and fro. Seafarers still come ashore to buy provisions, following a tradition that goes back to medieval times when Burnham was the market centre for the isolated inhabitants of Wallasea and Foulness Islands in the estuary. A ferry still links Burnham with Wallasea at weekends

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during the summer, and a programme of boat trips to see the seals on Foulness Sands operates from Burnham Quay.

Near the Yacht Harbour, west of the town and accessible along the sea wall path, is the Riverside Park. Also alongside the river can be found the Millfield Recreation Ground and a sports centre.

Burnham-on-Crouch & District Museum on The Quay features agricultural, maritime and social history exhibits relating to the Dengie Hundred. There is also a small archaeological collection. Special exhibitions are mounted periodically.

Mangapps Railway Museum on the edge of town offers an extensive collection of railway relics of all kinds, including steam and

diesel locos, carriages and wagons, relocated railway buildings, one of the largest collections of signalling equipment open to the public, a complete country station and items of East Anglian railway history. Train rides on a one-mile stretch of track are available at selected times (tel: 01621 784898).

St Mary's Church is constructed of Kentish ragstone that was transported to Burnham by sea. Construction was begun in the 12th century and was completed in the 14th, but since that time the nucleus of the town has moved closer to the waterfront. The arches and pillars are particularly fine examples of medieval craftsmanship, hence the church being known as The Cathedral of the Dengie.

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