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THE COLCHESTER ORBITAL

The Colchester Orbital is a 14-15-mile circular route around town, connecting some of our loveliest green spaces. The route is mapped in 3 sections (East, South and West). Route guides and information on route accessibility are downloadable from the Orbital website: www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-orbital

COLCHESTER ORBITAL (EAST)

High Woods Country Park to Wivenhoe Park (University of Essex), via Welsh Wood (East A) or Crockleford (East B) and Salary Brook Nature Reserve.

About this route...

Start point: High Woods Country Park Visitor Centre, Turner Road
Grid ref: TL 99900 27078

End point: Meadows Shop/Café, Annan Road (University of Essex).

Distance: East A: 5.4 miles;
East B: 6.5 miles

Bus routes (start point):
8, 61, 65, 68

Facilities at start: car park; café; toilets; children's play areas.



1

THE ORBITAL EAST STARTS HERE

Take the main path into the woods heading east from the Visitor Centre, past the climbing wall & children's play areas. At the junction of woodland paths, just before Lake Field, head right along the edge of the woods, until the junction with the cycle path (National Route 1). Head left here across the valley. At the waymark at the top of the hill, signposted 'Chanterelle & Hillridge', go right. Continue until Chanterelle car park, then go left to leave the park.

2

Follow Chanterelle for 130m, then go right onto Myland Hall cycle path. Continue as it winds through the backs of houses to join the Ipswich Rd at the BP garage. Go right here, & cross at the traffic lights. On the far side, go right then head off almost immediately left onto a further footpath, signposted to 'St. John's'.

3

Continue, crossing Chalfont Rd & St Cyrus Rd. At St John's Rd, go left & cross over. After approx. 170m, go right onto Bullace Close. Follow until it merges with a footpath running through a short stretch of woodland ending at a grassy triangle. Go left & take the headland path around the field (hedgerow to the left). At a junction of footpaths at the end of the field, go right, & follow the farm track until it reaches the Harwich Rd at a small farmstead.

4

At the Harwich Rd look left for a lane entrance on the far side approx. 30m along signposted 'Private Lane' & 'Public Footpath - Crockleford'. Cross carefully. Follow the lane over a railway bridge, & along to a junction of footpaths at Shaw's Farm. Here the Orbital East A & B routes divide.

5A

THE ORBITAL EAST A (Shaw's Farm to Salary Brook, via Welsh Wood)

At Shaw's Farm, at the junction of paths, go right past the pond & along the headland (hedgerow to the right) to the end of the field. Just before the next field, take a short footpath (right) at a red litter bin, then go left onto Woodlands Rd. Follow it gently downhill, then at the right-hand bend at the bottom, go left into Welsh Wood Nature Reserve.

6A

Follow the main path through Welsh Wood, finally exiting on to Barbel Rd. Bear left, following the road upwards, & left again at Salary Close. At the junction with the busy Bromley Road (initially Bromley Heights), go left & cross over. Head downhill, crossing Longridge, until the Beehive Pub (left). Take the footpath (right, opposite) signposted to Salary Brook Nature Reserve.

7A

Follow the Salary Brook Trail along the full length of the valley at the foot of Greenstead (open greensward to the left & views of farmland). In the mid-section of the trail, the Orbital East A & B routes merge again, just before Pickford Walk (right).

5B

THE ORBITAL EAST B (Shaw's Farm to Salary Brook, via Churn Wood and Crockleford).

At Shaw's Farm, go left. At the farmyard, cross to the far-right corner & take the headland path around the field. Pass a waymark & short bridge leading to a kissing gate (left); do not take! At a 2nd waymark, just after the next right-hand corner, look for a gap in deep hedgerow (left) with a metal kissing gate. Take this and follow a foot-worn path across the next open field, sloping downwards to woodland on the far side. Enter via another kissing gate.

6B

In the woods continue over a wooden footbridge & a decked area. Head straight on, as the path slopes upwards & finally opens into a yard with buildings, a gravel track ahead & gate marked 'Do not enter' (right). Look for a waymark on the right & take the headland footpath here. Continue to a wooden footbridge with guardrail. Cross and go right around the edge of the next field, until it meets the Bromley Rd. Go right & walk with caution (no pavement at first). Pass Colchester Cat Rescue & Blenheim Garden Centre. After approx. 400m, cross & take a footpath signposted left into the shared entrance to 2 fields with tree-line between them directly ahead. Take the path along the right side of the tree-line. At the far corner of the field, bear right & look for a wooden stile with a pull-up dog gate (left). Cross into woodland.

7B

Follow a narrow path through woodland. At a wide gate with buildings beyond, continue straight on a shingle path and take a short grassy path coming out on to a field. Go right & follow the headland. At the corner of the field, head slightly right through trees downhill for approx. 100m to a wooden bridge. Cross and enter the field beyond via a gate. Continue uphill along the field's edge. At a gravel track, go right and follow as it meanders onwards (approx. 600m). The track slopes down to a farmhouse. Go left at the house & after approx. 100m, turn right on to a grassy path that runs between a meadow (left) & hedgerow (right). Shortly beyond is a wooden stile to a field on the right.

8B

Cross into the field (may be grazed by cows) & turn left along the headland. At a further stile & gate, cross into the next field & continue along the path-line as it begins to head diagonally downhill towards the far right-hand corner. Cross a final stile onto a metaled path and then a footbridge. Continue straight on until a T-junction with the main footpath of the Salary Brook Trail, with walled back gardens directly ahead. Turn left here to rejoin the Orbital East A route.

9

THE FINAL SECTION

The Orbital now continues again as a single route. At the end of the valley, at Clingoe Hill (A133), take the path bearing right just before the underpass, and head up to the road, Turn left on Clingoe Hill, continue to the traffic lights and cross over to enter the University of Essex (Wivenhoe Park) on Boundary Road. Shortly afterwards, at the roundabout, go right onto Capon Road. Head downhill, then turn left onto Annan Road at the bottom.

10

The Meadows Pavilion shop & café is immediately on your left.
THE ORBITAL EAST ENDS HERE