

guiding you through essex



# The Essex Way



Essex County Council

# welcome to The Essex Way

Total Distance **81** miles.



**The route** is clearly signposted and waymarked in both directions. Using this booklet should make your experience enjoyable and easy to follow.

If you do experience any problems on the Essex Way please call us so we can act. Our telephone number is **01245 437103**

Public Transport Information is available from the Essex Traffic Control Centre:  
**0845 6000 110**

An Accommodation List is available from the Public Rights of Way Team:  
**01245 437291**

Produced by: The Public Rights of Way Team

Photographs by: Robert Hallman

## KEY



Pub/Refreshments



Telephone



Underground station



Parking



Footpath



Bridleway



Byway



Footbridge



Stile or gate



Viewpoint



“ The deepest Essex few explore  
where steepest thatch is sunk in flowers  
and out of elm and sycamore  
rise flinty fifteenth-century towers ”

Sir John Betjeman (1954)

**Walk** the Essex Way and celebrate some of the finest countryside in the county!

**The path** will lead you through ancient woodlands, open farmland, tree-lined river valleys and leafy green lanes, visiting historic towns and villages along the way.

**The Essex Way** is a long-distance path stretching from Epping to Harwich a distance of 81 miles. You can walk it in stages, or make a holiday of it staying in accommodation along the way.

**This booklet** is intended to guide and entertain you whilst you enjoy the best of Essex countryside. Along the route there are waymarks posts to help you. The Essex Way is maintained with the help of volunteers who survey the route and the funds raised from the sale of this booklet are used to improve the standard of the paths.

**The Essex Way** was conceived as the result of a competition funded by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) in 1972. It has quickly been accepted into the fabric of the county and become folklore for future generations.

## Epping

Epping is the last stop on the Central Line of the London Underground system which makes it ideal for beginning the Essex Way from London. Epping became the last 'port of call' for travellers before entering Epping Forest to reach the city of London. As daylight faded the threat from highwaymen such as Dick Turpin meant that by the early 19th century, Epping had 26 inns.



## Dick Turpin

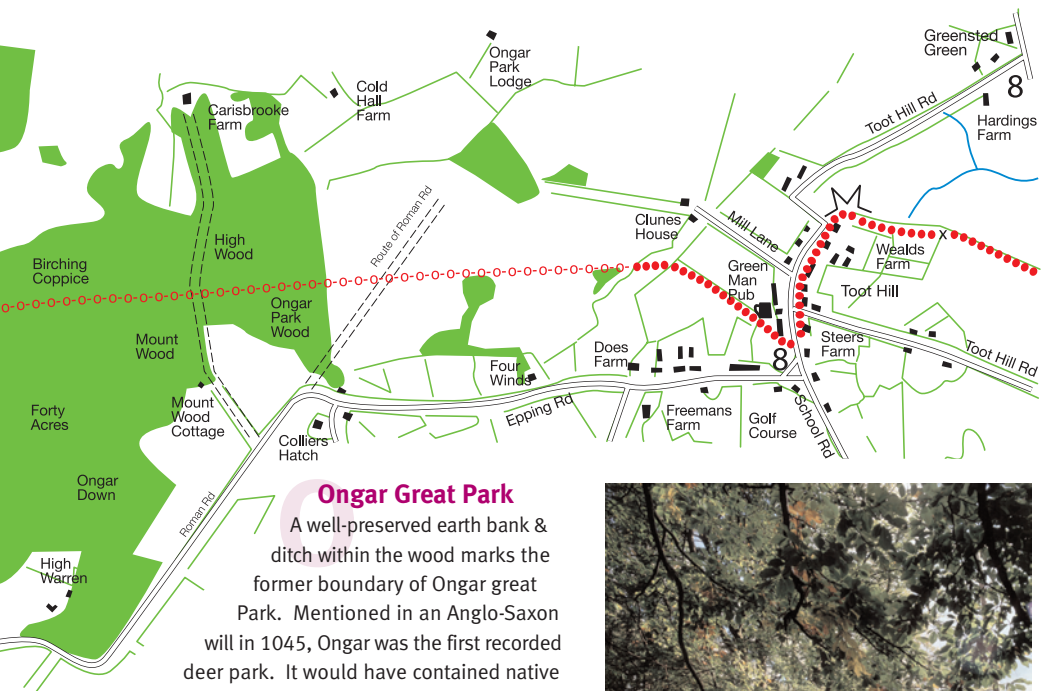
Has been immortalised in folklore for the fluttering of hearts amongst lady travellers. Also famous is Turpin's horse Black Bess who carried her master on an epic ride from London to York to escape the constabulary. In truth, Turpin was a ruthless villain who terrorised the district, robbing local landowners and rustling cattle and horses. His final act of bravery was on York racecourse where in his finest suit, he entertained the crowds, bowed, waved and threw himself from the gibbet, denying the hangman the satisfaction!

## Toot Hill

It is no surprise to find that Toot Hill means 'lookout post'. The pub at Toot Hill is the Green Man. The face in the leaves is also known as Jack in the Green, the Old Man in the Woods, or Green George. He has been a symbol of fertility and renewal since pagan times, appearing in churches and cathedrals. He is the central character in traditional Morris dances.



Dick Turpin, photo courtesy of BBC



### Ongar Great Park

A well-preserved earth bank & ditch within the wood marks the former boundary of Ongar great Park. Mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon will in 1045, Ongar was the first recorded deer park. It would have contained native red deer and fallow deer after the Norman Conquest, confined by a special oak fence called a 'park pale'. Besides providing hunting sport for the Lord of the Manor, the park ensured a supply of fresh meat for his household throughout the year.

### Gernon Bushes

79 acres of ancient woodland containing hornbeam pollards and mossy bogs managed by Essex Wildlife Trust. Pollarding has been practised since at least Anglo-Saxon times. About every 15 years the trees would be cut to a height of 2 - 5 metres. The lopped-off branches would be used for fencing and fuel, and new shoots would sprout beyond the reach of grazing cattle and deer.



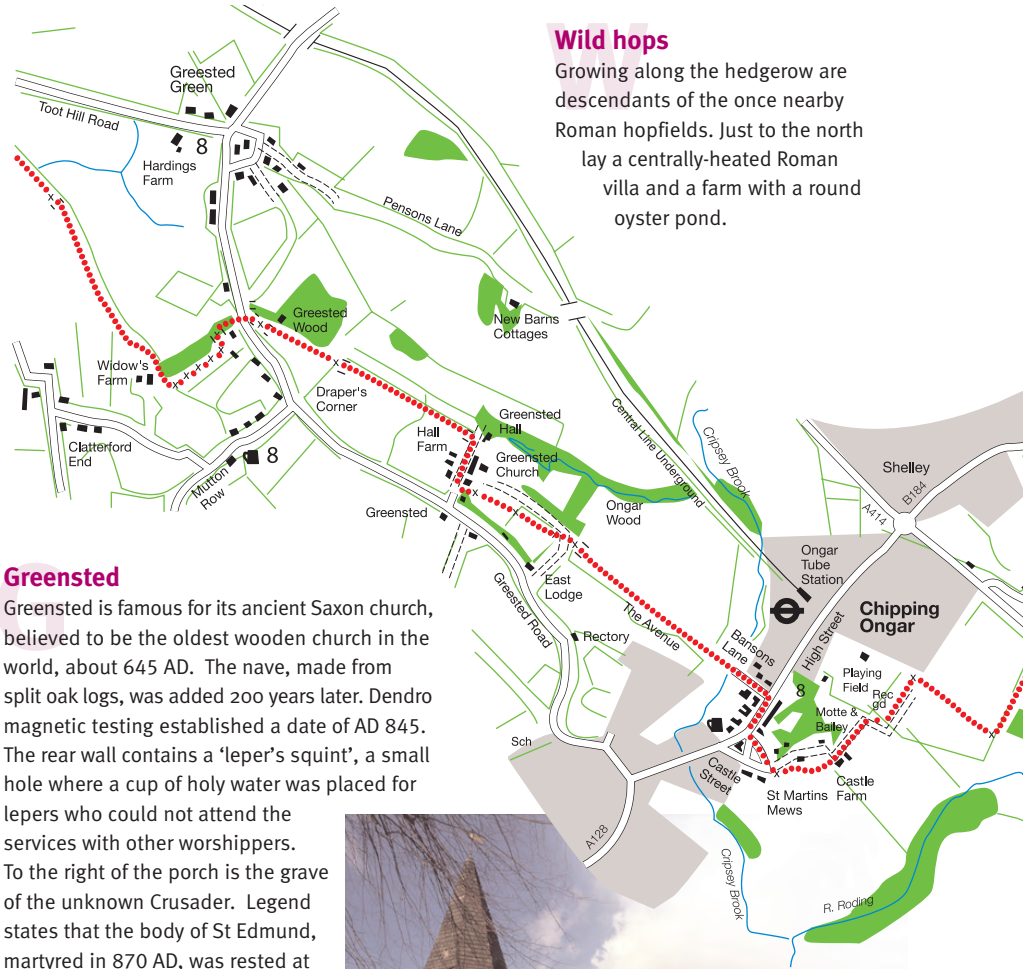
Pollarded Hornbeams

### Roman Road

The Essex Way crosses the line of the Roman Road from London to Colchester. The techniques used by Roman soldiers to build these roads from AD 49 are still used by today's highway engineers.

## Wild hops

Growing along the hedgerow are descendants of the once nearby Roman hopfields. Just to the north lay a centrally-heated Roman villa and a farm with a round oyster pond.



## Greensted

Greensted is famous for its ancient Saxon church, believed to be the oldest wooden church in the world, about 645 AD. The nave, made from split oak logs, was added 200 years later. Dendro magnetic testing established a date of AD 845. The rear wall contains a 'leper's squint', a small hole where a cup of holy water was placed for lepers who could not attend the services with other worshippers. To the right of the porch is the grave of the unknown Crusader. Legend states that the body of St Edmund, martyred in 870 AD, was rested at Greensted Church while being transported from London back to Bury in 1013. His body had been taken to London to keep it safe from the Danes. In 1836 several of the 'Tolpudde Martyrs' were temporarily settled in Greensted following their full pardon and rescue from transportation to Australia. Two of them were married in Greensted Church. Distrusted by farmers as troublemakers, the 'Martyrs' soon left to start new lives in Canada.

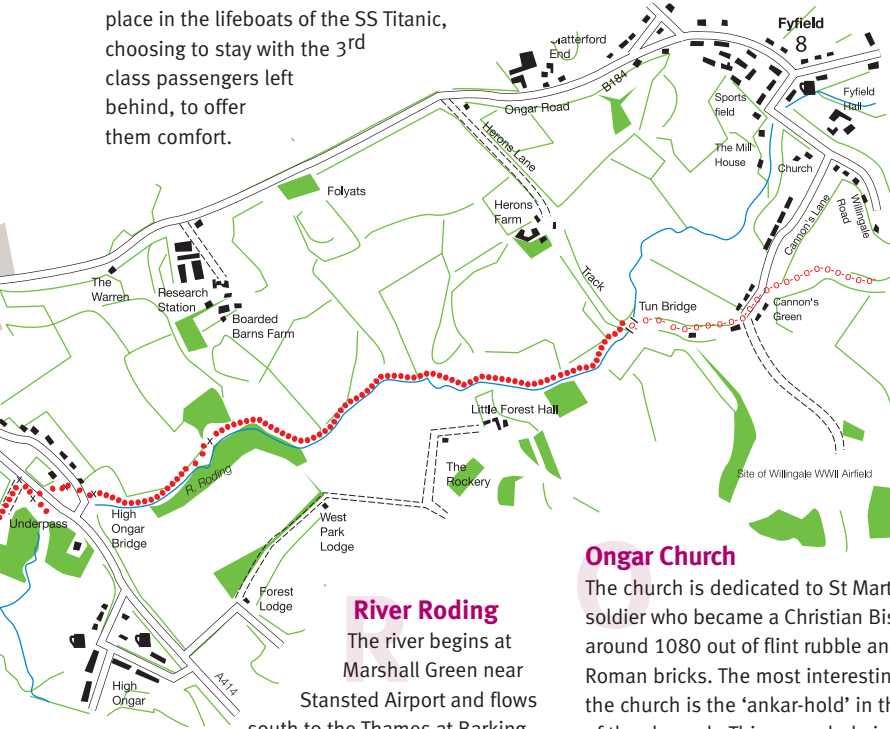


Greensted Church, Ongar

## Titanic Memorial

On the night of 15<sup>th</sup> April 1912, Father Thomas Byles of St Helen's Church Ongar, was a passenger on his way to officiate at his brother's wedding in New York. Father Thomas refused to take a place in the lifeboats of the SS Titanic, choosing to stay with the 3<sup>rd</sup> class passengers left behind, to offer them comfort.

the castle for the people of Ongar. The impressive castle mound (motte) is about 55 feet high and would have had a wooden tower on top. The town would also have been protected by an outer earthwork.



## River Roding

The river begins at Marshall Green near Stansted Airport and flows south to the Thames at Barking Creek, 3 miles downstream of the Thames Barrier at Greenwich – a journey of 43 miles.

## Willingale Airfield

Between June 1943 and July 1944 Willingale was home for 2000 American airforce personnel attached 287<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group which flew B26 Martin Marauder bombers against targets in occupied France. All that remains today are the Operations Block and Nissen huts.

## Ongar Castle

Ongar Castle is thought to have been constructed by Richard de Lucy in 1155 after he inherited the Manor of Ongar from King Stephen's estate. He secured a 'chipping' (a market) surrounding

## Ongar Church

The church is dedicated to St Martin, a Roman soldier who became a Christian Bishop. Built around 1080 out of flint rubble and re-used Roman bricks. The most interesting feature of the church is the 'ankar-hold' in the north wall of the chancel. This was a hole in the outside wall where a hermit could take part in the church services without being seen.

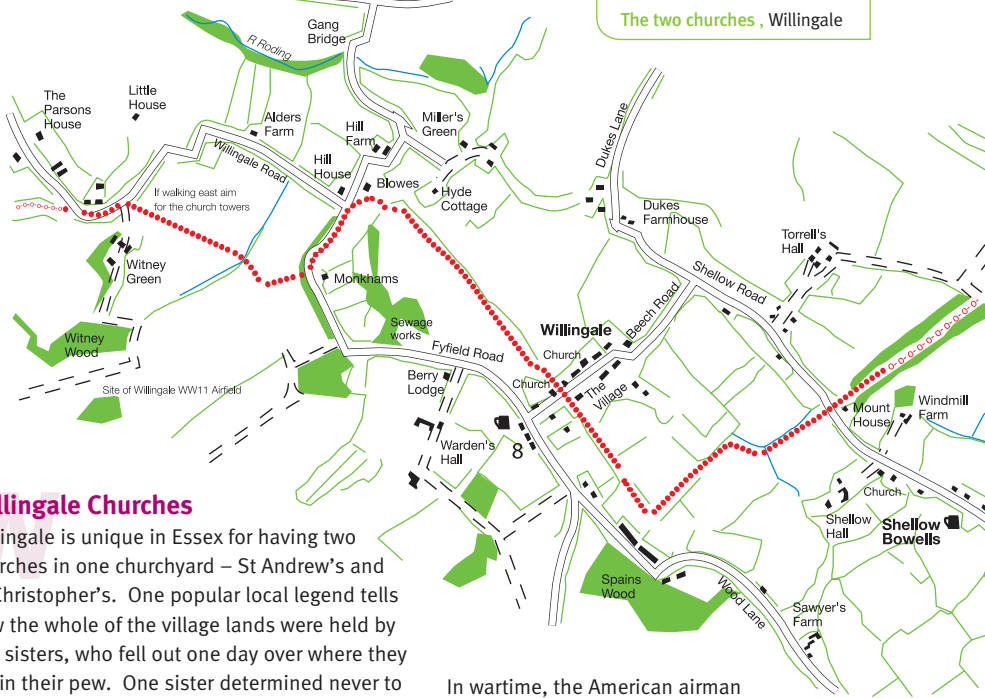
Look out for the **thatched caravan** at Cannon's Green.



Thatched Caravan , Greensted



The two churches, Willingale



## Willingale Churches

Willingale is unique in Essex for having two churches in one churchyard – St Andrew's and St Christopher's. One popular local legend tells how the whole of the village lands were held by two sisters, who fell out one day over where they sat in their pew. One sister determined never to sit near the other again, so, being very rich, she built her own church next door. This tale is undermined somewhat by the fact that there is 200 years age difference between the churches. The churches were actually built in two separate parishes, Willingale Doe and Willingale Spain.

In wartime, the American airman and crew used St Andrews as their chapel. The Bell pub (now a private house) would ring with the sounds of American dance music when the young airmen enjoyed a few hours relaxation between missions at dances and parties held by locals (girls probably!)



## Salt's Green 'special verge'

Verges which are especially rich in wild plants are designated as 'special verges'. Mowing regimes are practised by Essex County Council and the Essex Wildlife Trust to encourage the diversity of plants growing in the verges.

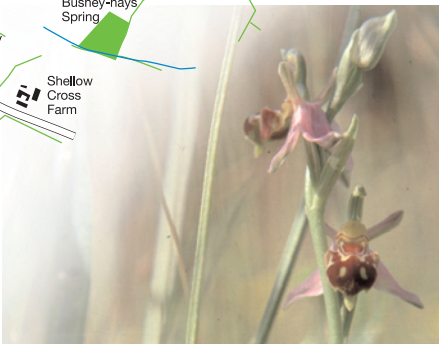
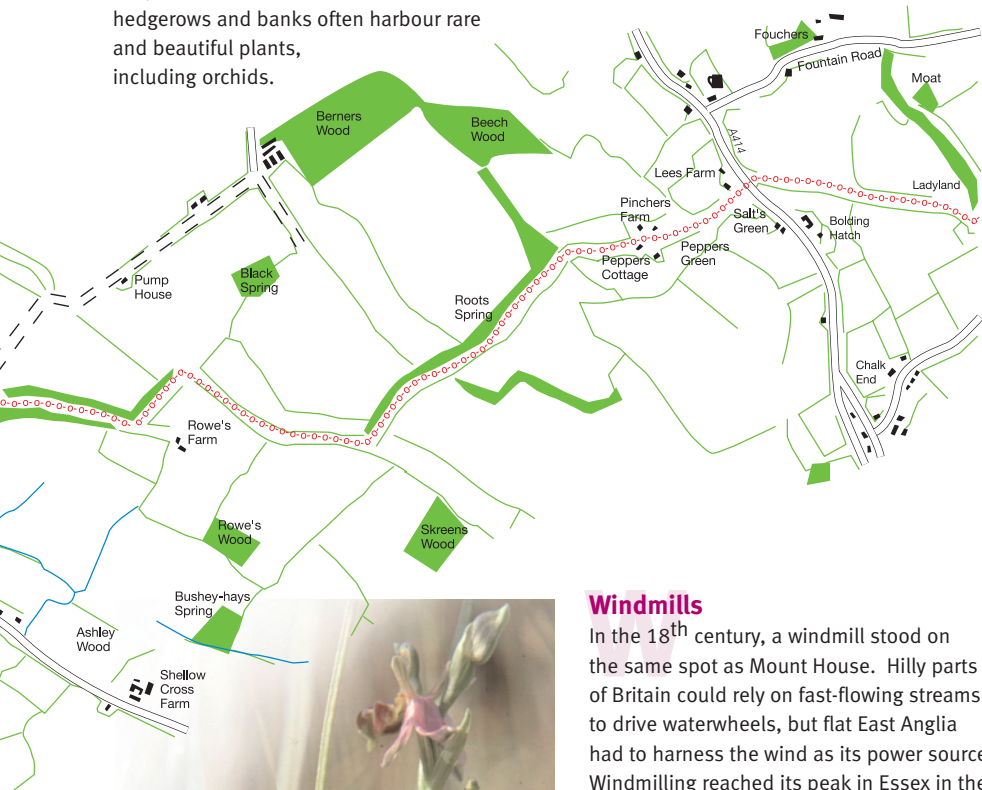
## Green Lanes

The Essex Way passes along many green lanes, the remnants of a once vast network of minor roads dating back to Saxon times and beyond. They are a valuable refuge for wildlife, and their hedgerows and banks often harbour rare and beautiful plants, including orchids.

## Ponds

Once a common feature of villages, farms and roadsides, many have now disappeared, largely because less farms keep livestock.

Our surviving ponds are important habitats for many wildlife species which depend on water, such as frogs, newts and dragonflies.



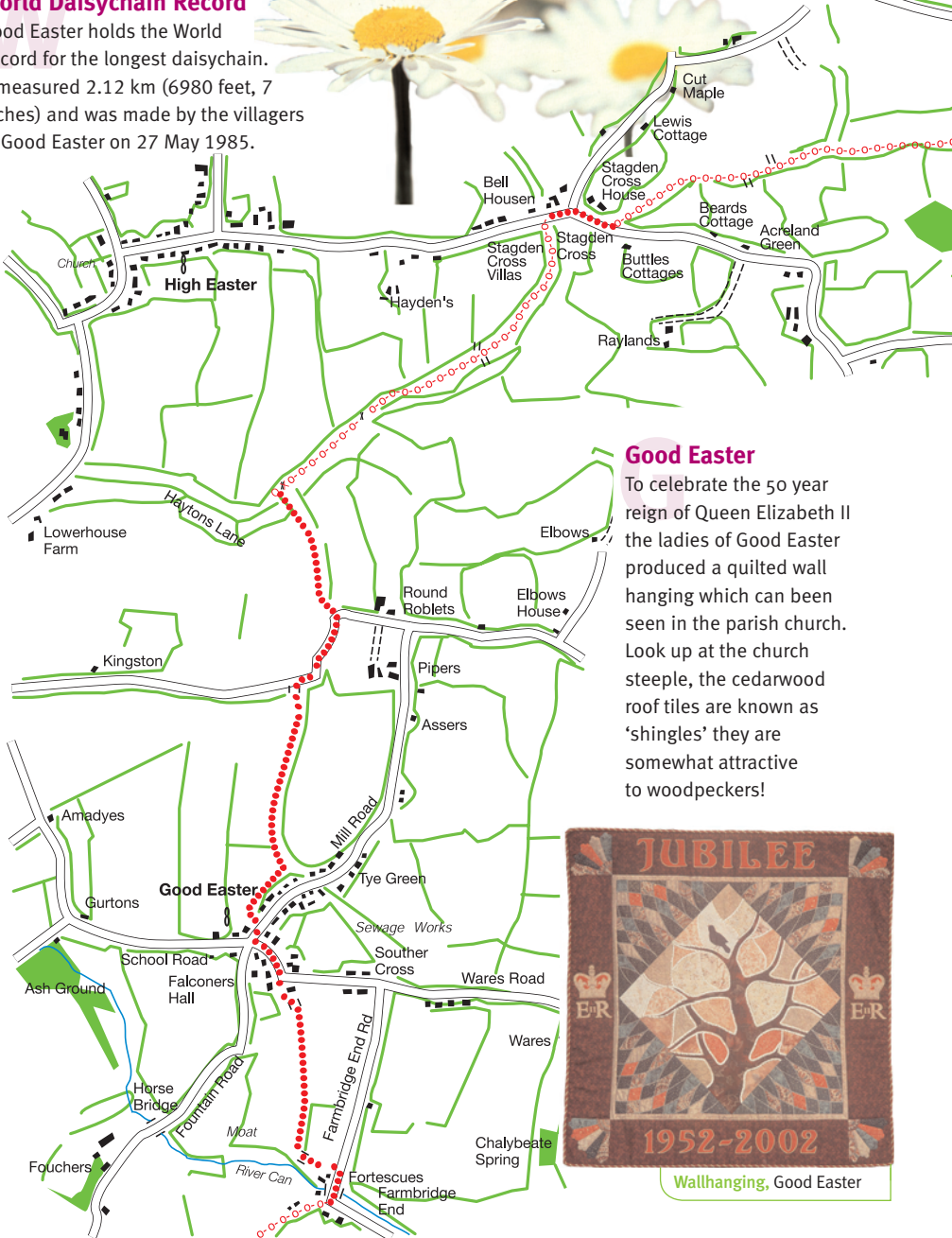
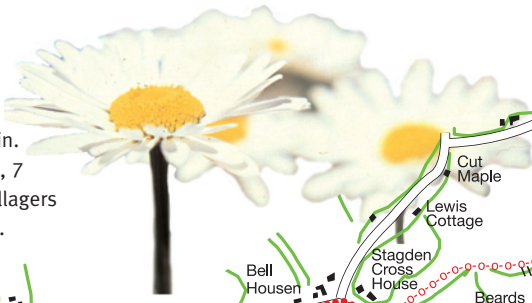
Bee Orchid

## Windmills

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a windmill stood on the same spot as Mount House. Hilly parts of Britain could rely on fast-flowing streams to drive waterwheels, but flat East Anglia had to harness the wind as its power source. Windmilling reached its peak in Essex in the early 1830's when there were some 285 mills in the county. Within a century there was only a handful of working windmills left.

## World Daisychain Record

Good Easter holds the World Record for the longest daisychain. It measured 2.12 km (6980 feet, 7 inches) and was made by the villagers of Good Easter on 27 May 1985.

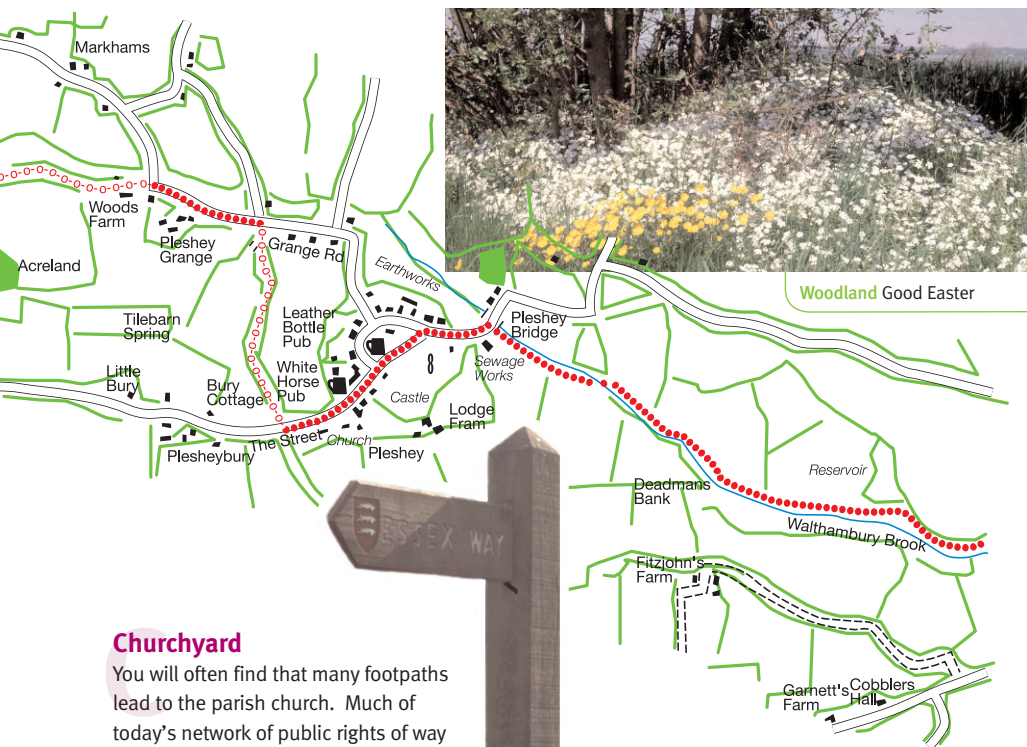


## Good Easter

To celebrate the 50 year reign of Queen Elizabeth II the ladies of Good Easter produced a quilted wall hanging which can be seen in the parish church. Look up at the church steeple, the cedarwood roof tiles are known as 'shingles' they are somewhat attractive to woodpeckers!



Wallhanging, Good Easter



## Churchyard

You will often find that many footpaths lead to the parish church. Much of today's network of public rights of way used to be well-worn paths to the place of worship, or to work or school. Churchyards are often havens for wildlife.

## Pleshey

Has one of the finest Norman castle earthworks in England, the greater outer rampart and ditch still enclosing the entire village of about 40 acres. In 1397 the Duke of Gloucester was lured away from his castle at Pleshey to Calais, where he was murdered on the orders of Richard II. Thus Pleshey earned its mention by Shakespeare in Act 1, Scene 2 of 'Richard II'. The earthworks are not generally open to the public but viewing can be arranged by appointment. Details are given on site.

## Deadman's Bank

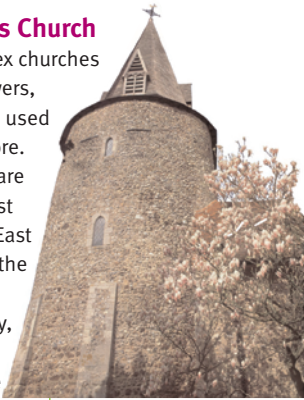
This is a mill dam, and is probably the site of Pleshey Castle Mill. A spooky little spot, legend has it that Deadman's Bank takes its name from the outcome of a fuel fought there.

## Bury

Have you noticed how many place names end in 'bury'? The old English word 'bury' or 'burg' comes from the Saxon 'burge' or 'byrh'. It means 'a fortified manor' and may in many cases refer to a Roman fort or Saxon defensive ditch. The English used this word to describe all kinds of fortified places, large or small.

## Great Leighs Church

One of six Essex churches with round towers, although there used to be many more. Round towers are confined almost exclusively to East Anglia. Notice the Norman arch on the doorway, it a classic example of the first decorative stone carving techniques brought to this country.



St. Mary's Church, Gt. Leighs

## Little Leighs Church

'Body-snatching' was once common practice, its most infamous exponents being Burke & Hare. Newly buried corpses were stolen and sold to medical students or hospitals for research. In 1823 Samuel Clarke of Little Leighs was convicted and sentenced to be transported for 7 years, not for stealing a body but for the theft of the clothes in which the body had been buried!

**Cricket Bat Willows** (*Salix caerulea*) are found growing in regimented plantations alongside many Essex riverbanks. Wright's timber yard in Great Leighs is the world's largest producer of raw cricket bat blades. 4 year old trees are sold to the grower who will mature them for 15 – 20 years and then sell them back to the timber yard. Only the trunk is used and cut into rolls. The rolls are then marked across like the segments of an orange and split into clefts. For every tree that is cut down 3 are planted in its place – *Howzat!*



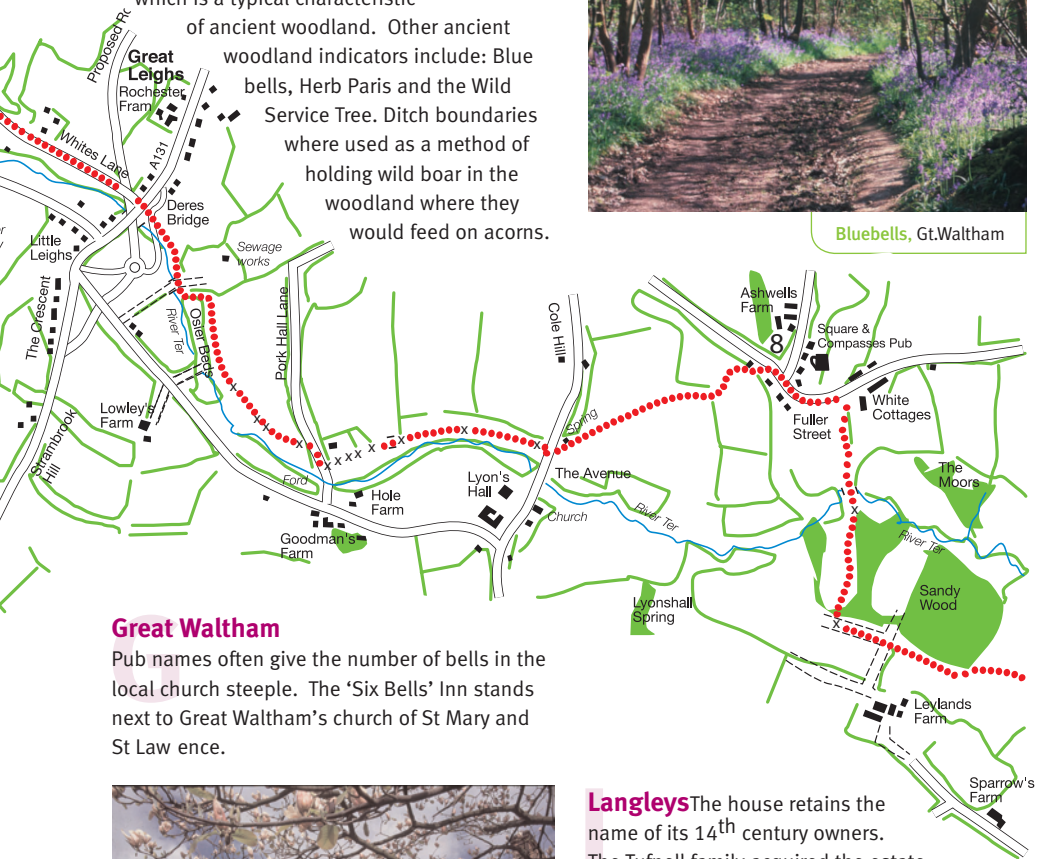
## Sandy Wood

is an Ancient Woodland which existed in medieval times. Notice its deep boundary ditch which is a typical characteristic

of ancient woodland. Other ancient woodland indicators include: Blue bells, Herb Paris and the Wild Service Tree. Ditch boundaries were used as a method of holding wild boar in the woodland where they would feed on acorns.



Bluebells, Gt.Waltham



## Great Waltham

Pub names often give the number of bells in the local church steeple. The 'Six Bells' Inn stands next to Great Waltham's church of St Mary and St Law ence.



Langleys, Gt.Waltham

**Langleys** The house retains the name of its 14<sup>th</sup> century owners. The Tufnell family acquired the estate in 1710 and created today's impressive Queen Anne residence. Great Waltham's older residents remember as children collecting acorns and beechnuts to sell to the keeper for the deer in Langleys deer park. There is a large pet cemetery at the end of the main driveway. The building beside the bridge over the River Chelmer housed a lace-making workshop run by the squire's daughter at the turn of the century. From this seed a small lace-making industry grew, and the 'Lace Cottages' still stand on the edge of the village.





fairstead, Wall Painting

### Fairstead Church

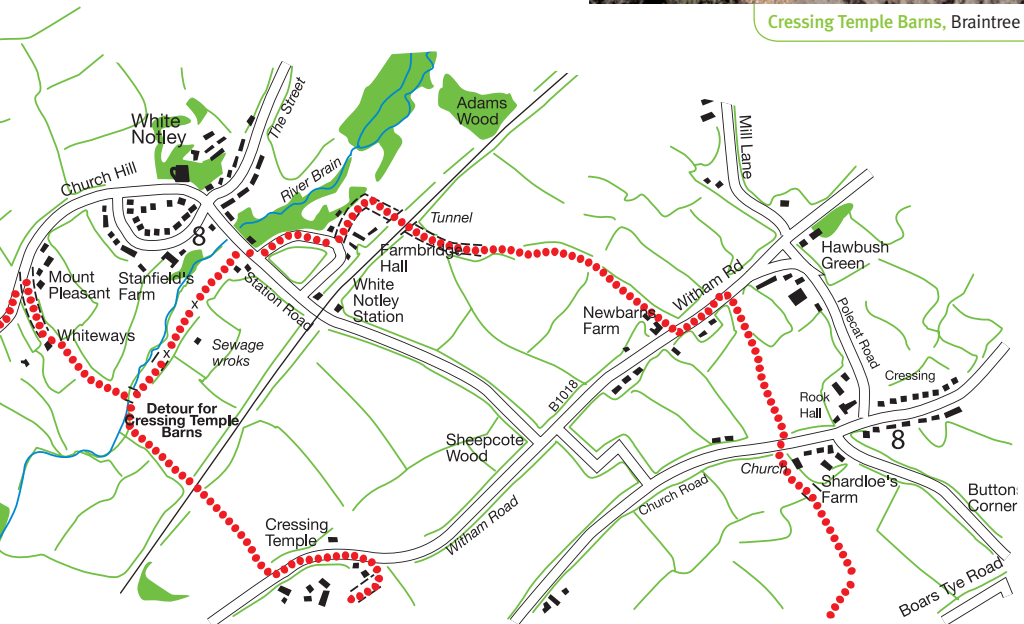
Some of the bricks are from the Roman villa which once stood nearby. In 1890 during restoration work, 13<sup>th</sup> century wall-paintings were discovered. The oldest of these being the Passion above the Chancel arch.

### Crissing Temple

was the earliest English settlement of the Knights Templar, the legendary Order of warrior-monks. They were given the Manor of Crissing in 1137. Two remarkable barns survive; the barley barn and the wheat barn. This internationally important site was purchased by Essex County Council in 1987. The Tudor walled garden has now been restored.



Crissing Temple Barns, Braintree

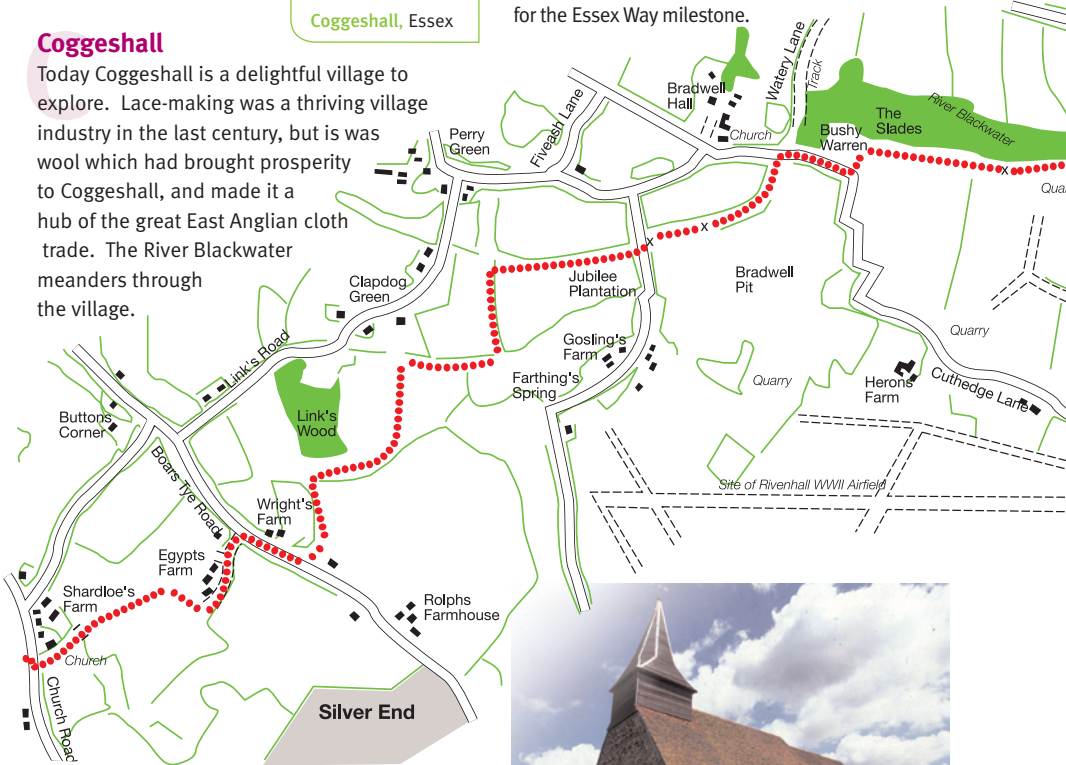




Coggeshall, Essex

## Coggeshall

Today Coggeshall is a delightful village to explore. Lace-making was a thriving village industry in the last century, but it was wool which had brought prosperity to Coggeshall, and made it a hub of the great East Anglian cloth trade. The River Blackwater meanders through the village.



Bradwell Church, Coggeshall

## Coggeshall Abbey

Lying idyllically beside the River Blackwater are the ruins of a Cistercian Abbey, founded by King Stephen in 1140. The Abbey church was destroyed during the Reformation, but there are some remains of the monastic buildings. These include the gate-chapel of St Nicholas, a small guest house, parts of the dormitory and the Abbot's lodging which is connected by a corridor to another Paycocke family house built within the Abbey grounds. The tranquil setting is completed by the nearby weatherboarded water-mill with its golden fish weathervane. Look out for the Essex Way milestone.

## Bradwell Church

Have a look for the 12<sup>th</sup> century oak 'put-log' hole covers and horizontal lines on the walls outside which show where scaffolding was erected when the church was being built. Inside there are some beautiful 14<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings.

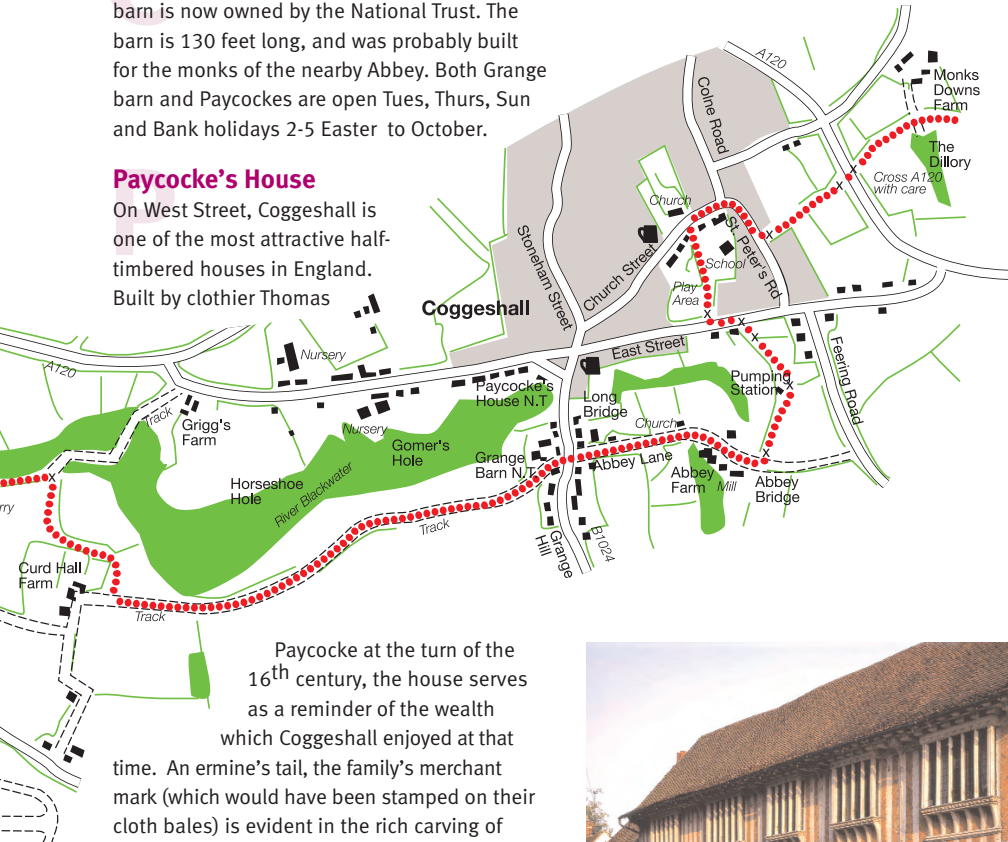


## Coggeshall Grange Barn

This magnificent 13th century timber-framed barn is now owned by the National Trust. The barn is 130 feet long, and was probably built for the monks of the nearby Abbey. Both Grange barn and Paycocks are open Tues, Thurs, Sun and Bank holidays 2-5 Easter to October.

## Paycocke's House

On West Street, Coggeshall is one of the most attractive half-timbered houses in England. Built by clothier Thomas



Paycocke at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the house serves as a reminder of the wealth which Coggeshall enjoyed at that time. An ermine's tail, the family's merchant mark (which would have been stamped on their cloth bales) is evident in the rich carving of Paycocke's House both inside and out. There is evidence to suggest that Paycocke's may once have had three storeys. Paycocke's is owned by the National Trust and open to the public as is Grange Barns.

## 'Coggeshall Jobs'

Coggeshall folk have gained for themselves a legendary reputation for odd behaviour. These eccentricities have become known as 'Coggeshall Jobs'. Books of Coggeshall Jobs can be found in the village shops.



Paycocks, Coggeshall

## Houchins Farm

Built around 1600, this timber-framed house has a rather top-heavy appearance. It has three storeys, with each overhanging the one below.

## Reservoirs

Essex is one of the driest parts of Britain, with an average yearly rainfall of only 60cm (24 inches). Unusually, most of this falls during the summer. Dryness increases towards the coast. Combined with the average summer temperature which Essex experiences – the highest in Britain – water reservoirs are essential for ensuring that an adequate water supply is available for agriculture in the county.

## World War II Pillboxes

The small concrete pillboxes dotted along the Colne Valley are the remains of a World War II ‘stop-line’ which was hurriedly constructed after the evacuation from Dunkirk in June 1940. Using the river as a natural barrier, fortified by pillboxes, it was hoped to hold back a German advance from the East Coast.

## The Dillory

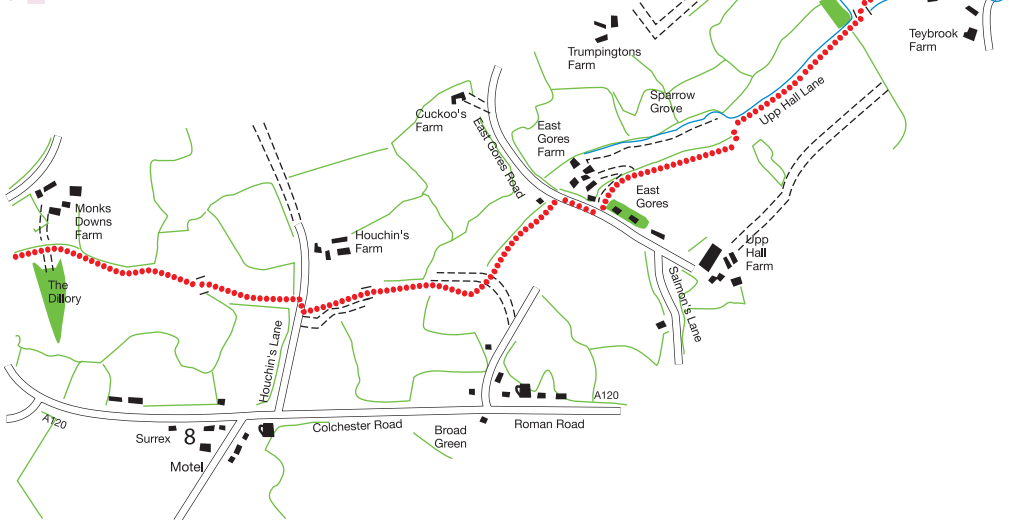
The place where dill – a strongly aromatic yellow-flowered herb – was grown.

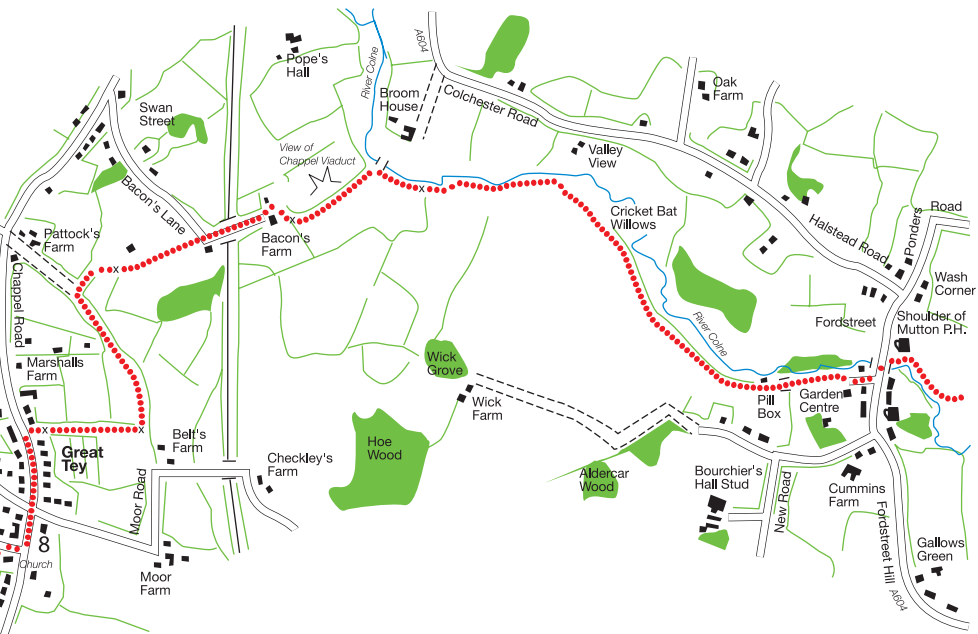
## Chappel Viaduct

Spanning the Colne valley is the massive Chappel Railway Viaduct. Made with over 7 million bricks, it is probably the largest feat of engineering in Essex. At 1066 feet long, its 32 arches carry the Gainsborough line to Sudbury 80 feet above the Colne Valley floor. The viaduct was built in 1947-49 at the cost of £32,000. You may be lucky enough to see a steam train crossing the viaduct. Wakes Colne station, on the far side of the valley, is the home of the East Anglian Railway Museum.



Chappel Viaduct, Chappel





## The Poppy

The Poppy has been adopted as the County flower for Essex.

## Great Tey Church

The massive Norman central tower of St Barnabas' Church, dressed with red Roman brick, has the appearance more of a castle keep. The church would once have been even more imposing, but in 1829 the parish decided to demolish the west nave and north and south transepts. This unfortunate decision was based on unaffordable estimated renovation costs of £700; the demolition bill came to £1400! Notice the little sign on the bell-tower door. Opposite the church is the Parish Pump, restored by the Parish Council in 1994 to celebrate it's centenary.



Wild Poppies, Essex

## River Colne

At 39 miles it is the longest all-Essex river.

## St Mary's Old Church

Now disused, St Mary's in West Bergholt is one of only three churches in Essex maintained by the Redundant Churches Fund, also known as the Friends of Friendless Churches!

## Great Horkesley

Be sure to keep to the paths in the parish of Great Horkesley. In 1896 farm labourer Sander Southernwood was charged with causing 'malicious damage to growing grass' at Great Horkesley. He had walked over a field contending that there was a right of way. Found guilty, Southernwood was fined 25 shillings – more than a week's wages!

## Brick Kiln Lane

There was a kiln in the grounds of Kiln House in Tudor times. Many villages in Essex would have their own brickworks in the past.

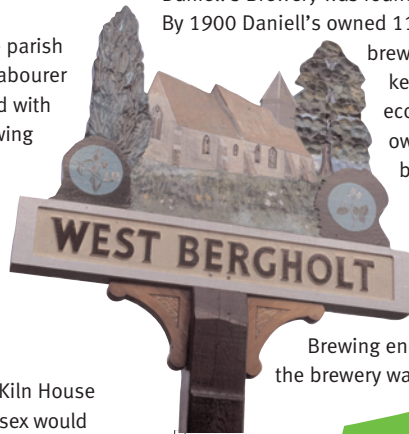
## Armoury Farm

The name is thought to come from 'Almonry'. An almonry was a place where charity or 'alms' was distributed to the poor and needy.

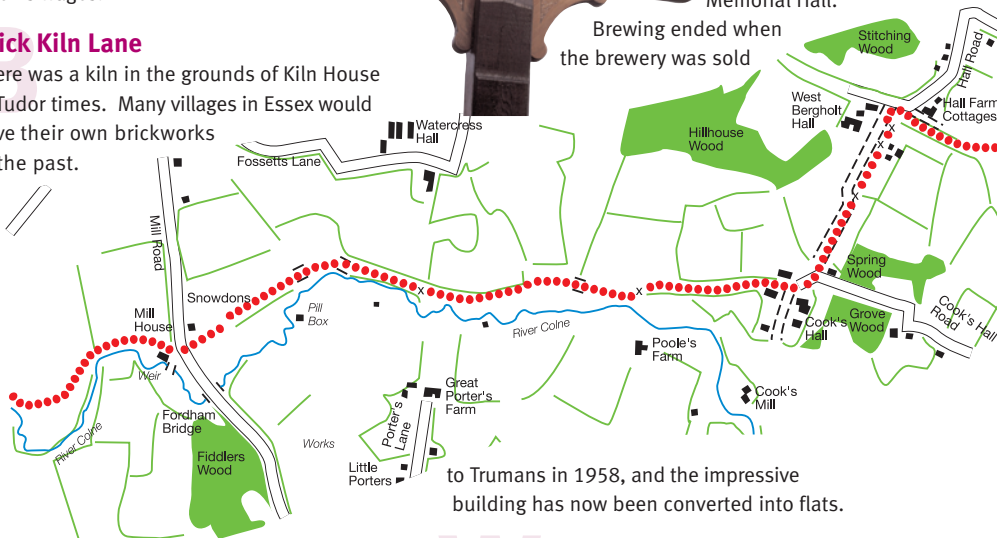
## West Bergholt Brewery

Thomas Shepard Daniell began brewing ale for the farm labourers at Armoury Farm in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The beer's reputation spread, and Daniell's Brewery was founded in about 1820. By 1900 Daniell's owned 113 inns, and the

brewery had become a keystone in the local economy. The brewery owners were generous benefactors to the village, donating land and money for, amongst other things, the Orpen Memorial Hall.



Brewing ended when the brewery was sold



to Trumans in 1958, and the impressive building has now been converted into flats.

## West Bergholt Heath

Heathlands School is surrounded by the remnants of the Heath which once covered more than 300 acres. It became the centre of interest in the 1840s when poorly-paid farm labourers began a campaign of fire-raising in protest

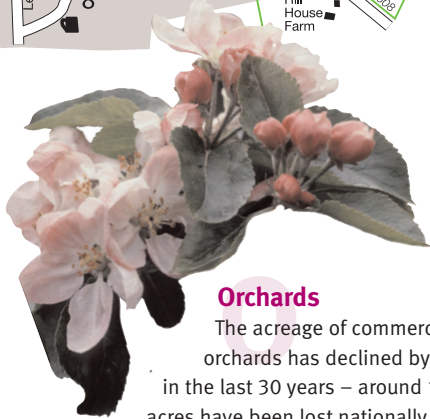
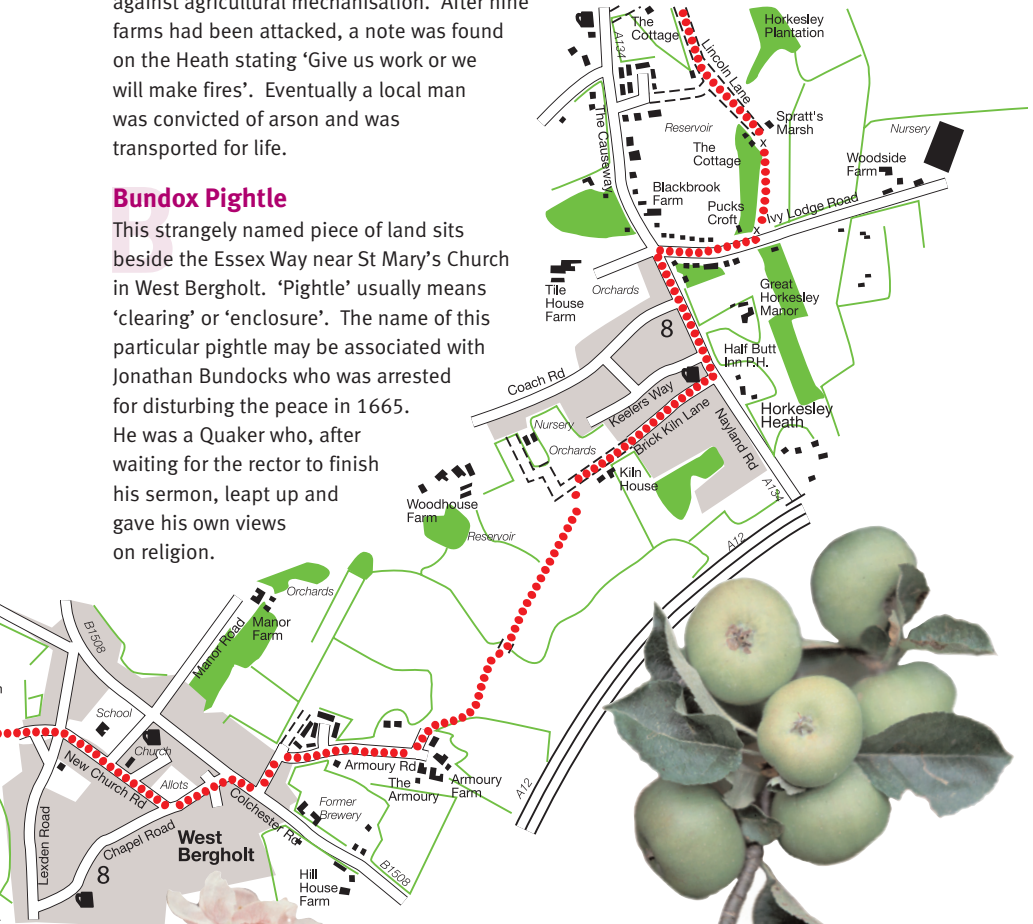
## The Causeway

Possibly the route of a Roman Road. Known locally as the 'Corsey' or 'Carsey', it provided a raised route through the quagmire once found at Horkesley Heath.

against agricultural mechanisation. After nine farms had been attacked, a note was found on the Heath stating ‘Give us work or we will make fires’. Eventually a local man was convicted of arson and was transported for life.

### Bundox Pightle

This strangely named piece of land sits beside the Essex Way near St Mary’s Church in West Bergholt. ‘Pightle’ usually means ‘clearing’ or ‘enclosure’. The name of this particular pightle may be associated with Jonathan Bundocks who was arrested for disturbing the peace in 1665. He was a Quaker who, after waiting for the rector to finish his sermon, leapt up and gave his own views on religion.



### Orchards

The acreage of commercial orchards has declined by two thirds in the last 30 years – around 150,000 acres have been lost nationally. This is

due partly to competition from abroad, but also because the intensification of fruit production has enabled more fruit to be produced on less land. Many old orchards have undergone regular grazing and hay-making for hundreds of years, and have become havens for rare plants and animals.

## The 'Dumb Animals Humble Petition'

Before the A12 was built, all the traffic had to negotiate the steep and dangerous bends on Gun Hill. A cast-iron sign was put up on the toll-gate which was written from the point-of-view of a horse hauling a heavy load up the hill. Credited to a 19<sup>th</sup> century Langham parson, the sign now hangs in the south porch of St Mary's Church. It reads:

The Dumb Animals Humble Petition  
 Rest Drivers on this steep hill,  
 Dumb Beasts pray use  
 with all good will.  
 Goad not, scourge not,  
 with thronged whips,  
 Let not one curse  
 escape your lips.  
 God sees and hears

## Discovery Apple (Dummer's Delight)

This hard red apple – the only important August apple to be grown in this country – is the third most widely grown apple after Cox and Bramley. The original

tree still stands in Langham where it grew from a seed planted by George Dummer in the early 1950's.

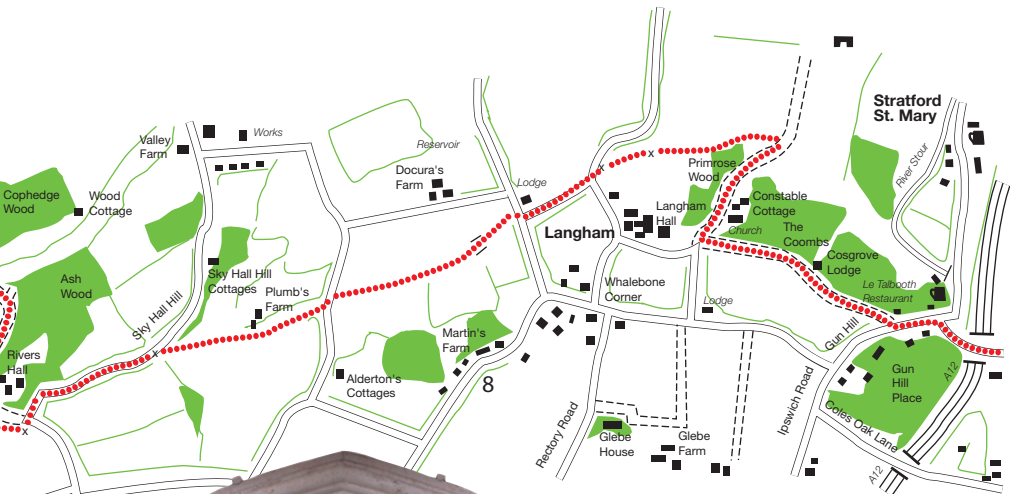
## Langham Church and the Hurlock Schoolroom

St Mary's Church is depicted in several of the paintings of John Constable, whose talent was encouraged from an early age by Dr Fisher the local rector. The church either appears in, or is the viewpoint for, several of Constables's most well-known paintings. The little building in



Church porch, Langham





Old Schoolhouse,

the corner of the churchyard is the Hurlock Schoolroom. It was built in 1832 by Dr Hurlock, the rector, to serve as a girls' school on weekdays and a resting place for the old and poor between church services on Sundays. St Mary's contains the oldest church chest in Essex, and one of the oldest in the country. This 'dug-out' chest, hewn from oak, was probably used to store money raised to finance the Crusades in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## Langham Hall

The original manor was held by Sir Walter Tyrell who is suspected of having killed King William II whilst hunting in the New Forest in 1100. A more recent resident was Squire William Nocton who was High Sheriff of Essex in 1908-09. The squire was a flamboyant character who rode in a 6-horse coach, the excessive length of which prompted him to construct the wide turning at the South Lodge entrance. The driveway between Langham Hall and Gun Hill is lined by a magnificent Lime Tree Avenue.

## Carters Farm

The free-draining gravel soil is ideal for the vineyard planted in 1991. Wind and solar energy is being harnessed to provide electricity. Wild flower meadows have been sown near the two lakes, and 14 acres of new woodland have been planted.

## Dedham Vale AONB

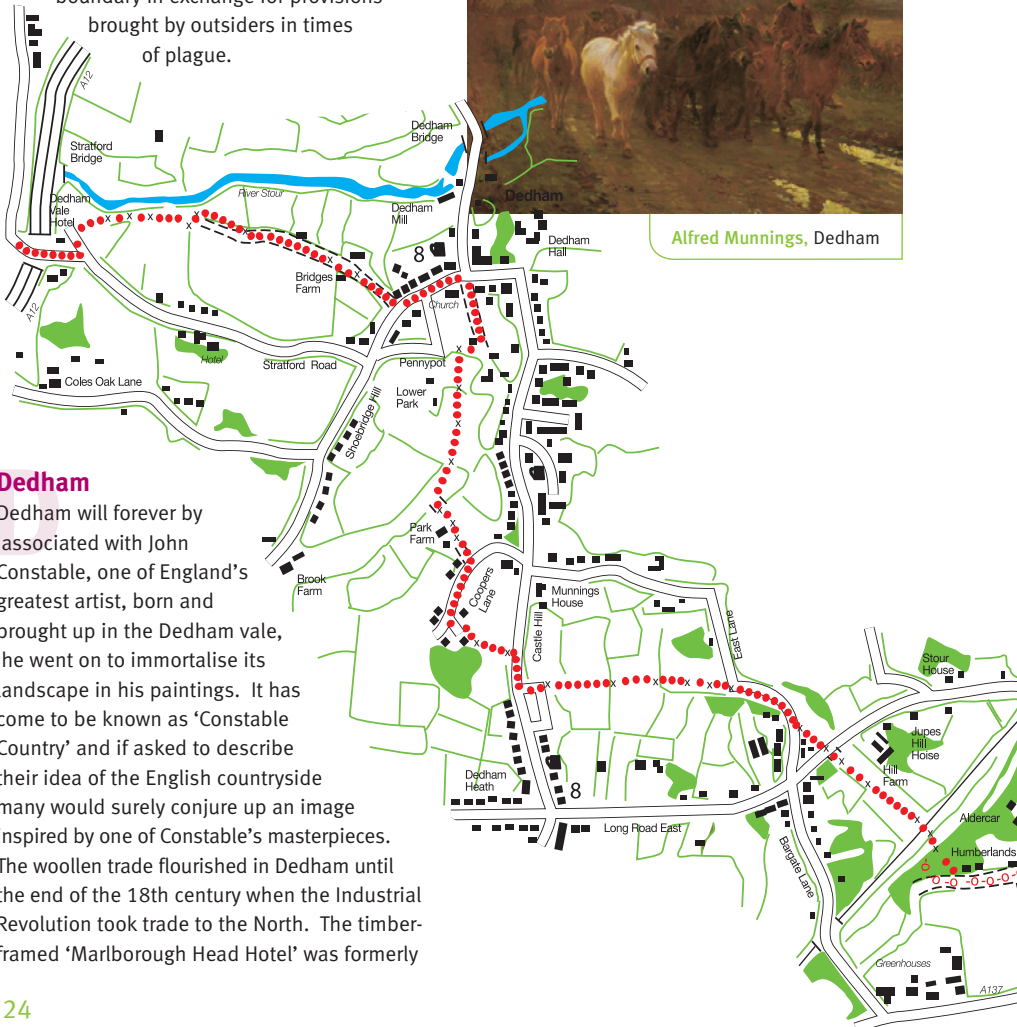
The lower Stour Valley was designated as the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1970. AONB status formally recognises the national importance of this landscape in order to conserve its beauty and character and to help the public to enjoy it.

## Lawford

The present Lawford Hall was built by Edward Waldegrave in 1583. His wife Joan was a private secretary to Katherine Howard, Henry VIII's fifth wife. Not such a good career move for Joan – she spent several years imprisoned in the Tower of London.

## 'Pennypot'

This footpath once led to a pest-house on the edge of the village. Its name comes from the custom of leaving money in a jar at the village boundary in exchange for provisions brought by outsiders in times of plague.



the wool exchange, probably with an open ground floor.

## Munnings' House

The former home and studio of celebrated painter Sir Alfred Munnings is kept just as it was in the artist's heyday. Munnings was President of the Royal Academy for five years from 1944 and is most famous for his painting of horses and rural life.

## Dedham

Dedham will forever be associated with John Constable, one of England's greatest artists, born and brought up in the Dedham vale, he went on to immortalise its landscape in his paintings. It has come to be known as 'Constable Country' and if asked to describe their idea of the English countryside many would surely conjure up an image inspired by one of Constable's masterpieces. The woollen trade flourished in Dedham until the end of the 18th century when the Industrial Revolution took trade to the North. The timber-framed 'Marlborough Head Hotel' was formerly



## Lawford Church

The Chancel in St Mary's is an exquisite example of ornate Gothic art. The church is noted for its exuberant 14<sup>th</sup> century carving. Stone has been formed into thick foliage from which birds and animals peep, and into writhing lines of little men, tumbling and dancing while some of them make music on a variety of instruments. This is a must see!

## Sherman's

Amongst the elegant Georgian houses in Dedham High Street is Sherman's, which was owned by the ancestors of the American



Shermans House, Dedham

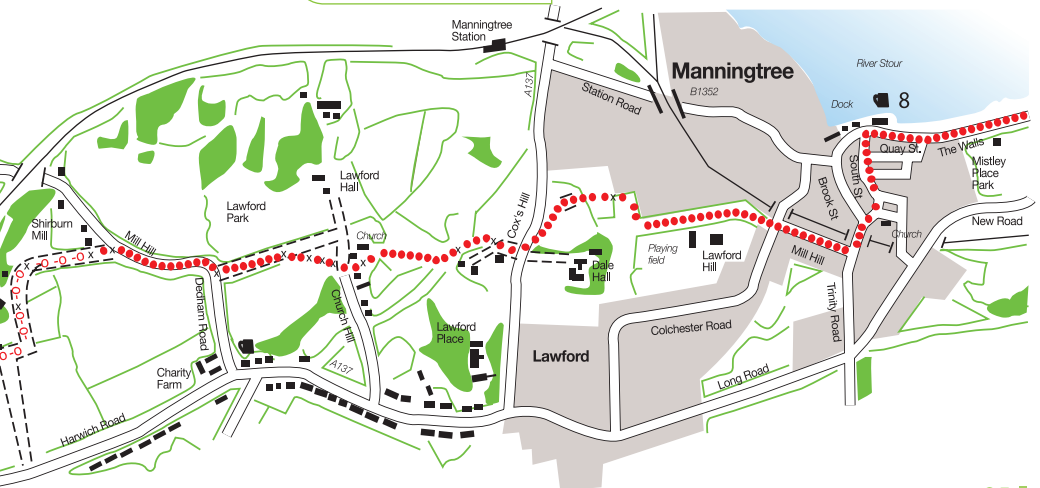
Civil War general and the Second World War tank! Notice the house's unusual sun-dial high up above. Standing against the south wall of St Mary's Church is a boulder which is roughly inscribed 'Edward Ward, Martha his wife'. The story goes that ploughman Edward Ward was turning a field when his plough struck a large object. On discovering it to be a boulder he decided that he would have it as his tombstone. Some say it is a meteorite.

## Manningtree

Manningtree is one of the smallest parishes in the country, covering only 22 acres at low tide and even less at high tide.

The cattle fair at Manningtree was famous in Shakespeare's day. In 'Henry IV' Prince Hal calls Falstaff 'That roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly'.

Manningtree's most famous – or infamous – resident was Matthew Hopkins, the notorious 17<sup>th</sup> century 'Witchfinder General'. Hopkins began his career with the discovery of 'seven humble witches at Manningtree'. He was commissioned by Parliament in 1644 to seek out witches and was paid a guinea for each one. Over the next three years Hopkins sent 194 'witches' to the gallows, their guilt 'proved' by a variety of ridiculous ordeals.



## Mistley

Richard Rigby made a fortune in the 'South Sea Bubble' and built the now demolished Mistley Hall and a new village. His son, appointed Paymaster-General by George III, planned to turn Mistley into a seawater spa but lost his lucrative job and his fortune before the project was little more than started. Rigby had commissioned architect Robert Adam for this scheme, but of his work only the Swan Fountain and the two Classical towers of the church remain. Richard Rigby opened a shipyard at Mistley in



Mistley Towers



Mistley Quay

1753 where giant men-of-war were built, such as the 'Amphion' which was Lord Nelson's flagship for a time. Mistley, along with Manningtree, had become a thriving port because of its

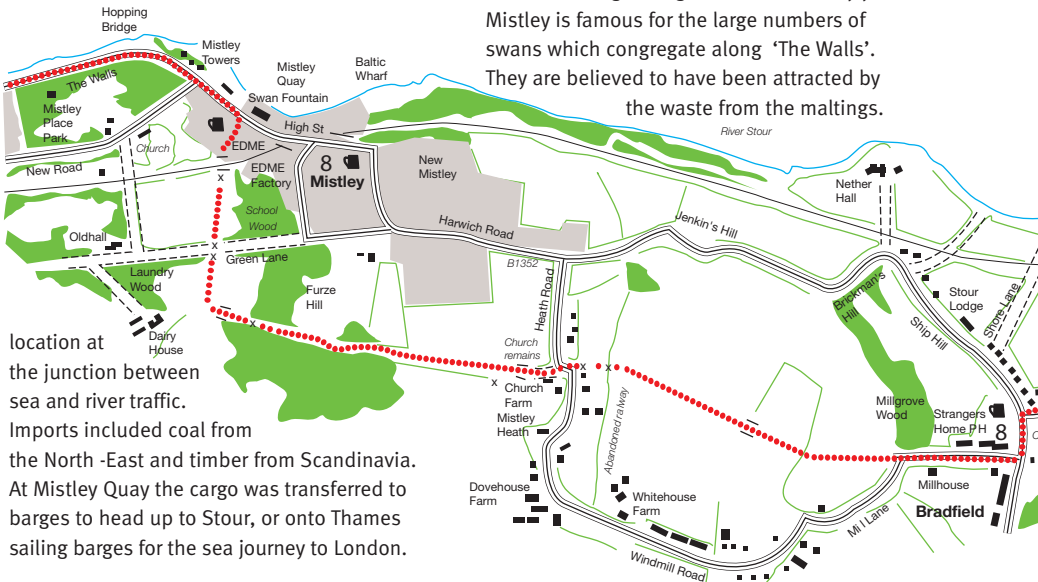
Grain, bricks, chalk and flour, and hay for the London cab horses, were brought downriver to be shipped to the capital. Mistley's decline was heralded by the arrival of the railway in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Stour was navigable as far as Sudbury, but the barges could not compete economically with the railway.

## Mistley Place Park

The park contains a Giant Redwood Tree, the largest tree species in the world.

## Malting

is Mistley's oldest industry, having its roots in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and expanding rapidly once the Mistley Quay was built. Barley (the raw material for malting) was brought to Mistley's quayside granary by barge and horse-drawn wagon. Malt was subsequently exported to the breweries in London and Dublin. The English Diastatic Malt Extract Company, was established in 1881, and today they are the largest producers of malt and malt extract in the country. EDME annually produces malt-based ingredients for the food industry. It goes to breweries, bakeries, and breakfast cereal manufacturers. Please be careful walking through the EDME factory yard. Mistley is famous for the large numbers of swans which congregate along 'The Walls'. They are believed to have been attracted by the waste from the maltings.



location at the junction between sea and river traffic. Imports included coal from the North-East and timber from Scandinavia. At Mistley Quay the cargo was transferred to barges to head up to Stour, or onto Thames sailing barges for the sea journey to London.



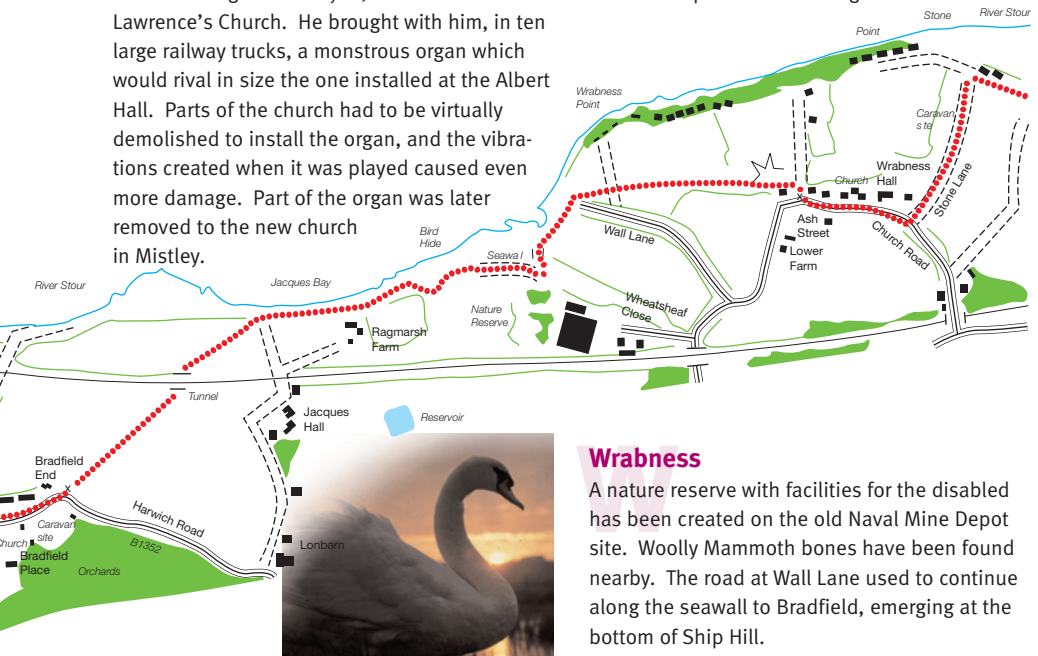
Bell Cage, Wrabness

## Bradfield

The apt pub-sign at the 'Stranger's Home' Inn depicts a cuckoo, which is renowned for making its home in the nests of other birds. Into the peaceful village of Bradfield in 1871 arrived the Reverend Leighton G Hayne, the new rector of St Lawrence's Church. He brought with him, in ten large railway trucks, a monstrous organ which would rival in size the one installed at the Albert Hall. Parts of the church had to be virtually demolished to install the organ, and the vibrations created when it was played caused even more damage. Part of the organ was later removed to the new church in Mistley.

## Wrabness Bell-Cage

This quaint little structure in the churchyard houses the church bell, the tower having burnt down a couple of centuries ago.



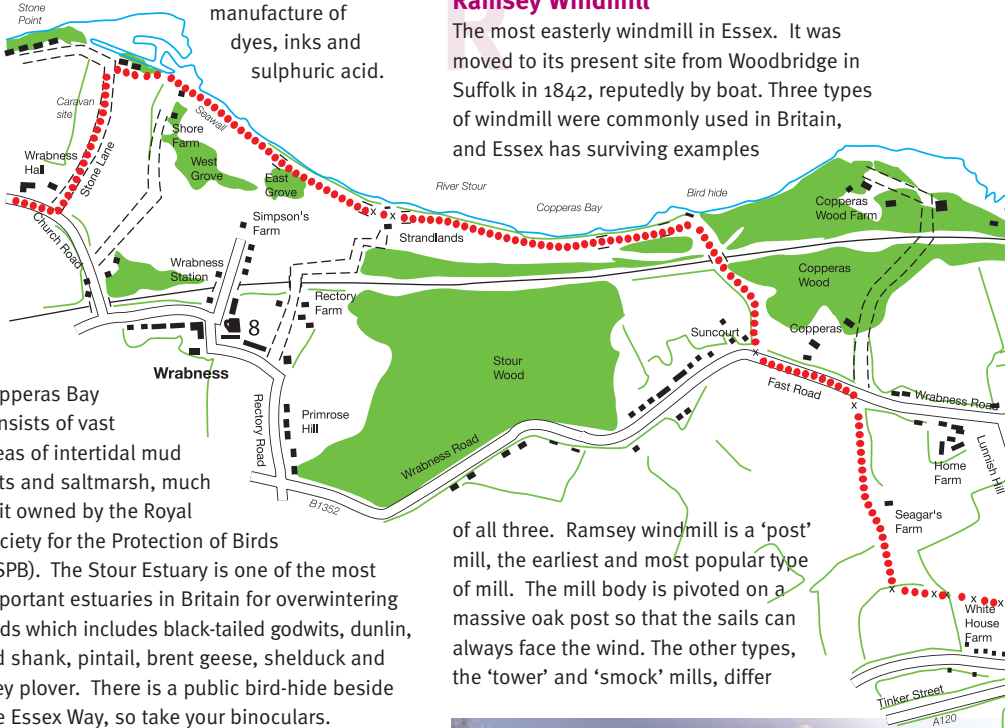
## Wrabness

A nature reserve with facilities for the disabled has been created on the old Naval Mine Depot site. Woolly Mammoth bones have been found nearby. The road at Wall Lane used to continue along the seawall to Bradfield, emerging at the bottom of Ship Hill.

## Copperas Bay

Takes its name from the old industry of copperas gathering which took place in the bay until the 1870's. Copperas (bisulphide of iron) was dredged from the mud and taken to Harwich

to be used in the manufacture of dyes, inks and sulphuric acid.



Copperas Bay consists of vast areas of intertidal mud flats and saltmarsh, much of it owned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). The Stour Estuary is one of the most important estuaries in Britain for overwintering birds which includes black-tailed godwits, dunlin, red shank, pintail, brent geese, shelduck and grey plover. There is a public bird-hide beside the Essex Way, so take your binoculars. The best time to bird-watch is about 2 hours before high tide when the feeding birds are forced to congregate nearer the shore.

## Stour Wood

is an ancient woodland owned by the Woodland Trust and managed by the RSPB. Sweet Chestnut is the main tree species and the wood has a long history of Coppicing. Trees are cut close to the ground every 8-25 years depending on the type of tree and the timber required. The stump sends up fresh shoots which are eventually harvested for fencing, charcoal and other products. You can see coppiced

tree stumps in East Grove.

In case you're wondering, the impressive building across the estuary is the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook – a school for the children of Royal Navy personnel.

## Ramsey Windmill

The most easterly windmill in Essex. It was moved to its present site from Woodbridge in Suffolk in 1842, reputedly by boat. Three types of windmill were commonly used in Britain, and Essex has surviving examples

of all three. Ramsey windmill is a 'post' mill, the earliest and most popular type of mill. The mill body is pivoted on a massive oak post so that the sails can always face the wind. The other types, the 'tower' and 'smock' mills, differ



Ramsey Windmill, Suffolk

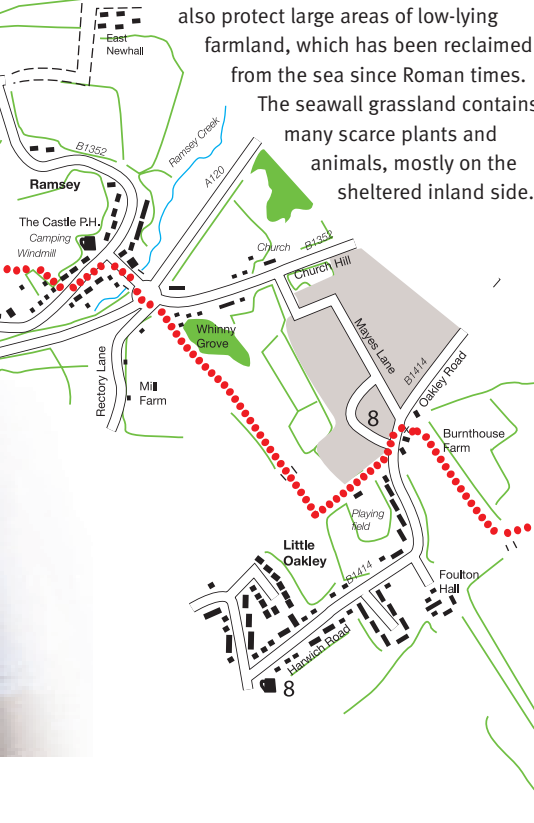
from the post mill in that only the cap at the very top revolves to face the wind. The tower mill is built of brick or stone, whilst the smock mill has a wooden tower, usually octagonal, on a masonry base. The smock mill (of which Terling mill is a fine example) took its name from its resemblance to the old countryman's garment.

## Seawalls

South-East England is slowly sinking and the Essex coast is under constant attack from the waves. 113 Essex people perished in the Great Flood of 1953. At Harwich several people were drowned when the Bathside seawall collapsed, and a quarter of the town's population lost their homes beneath 12 feet of water. The seawalls were subsequently raised, and not only do they serve to prevent another disaster, but they

also protect large areas of low-lying farmland, which has been reclaimed from the sea since Roman times.

The seawall grassland contains many scarce plants and animals, mostly on the sheltered inland side.

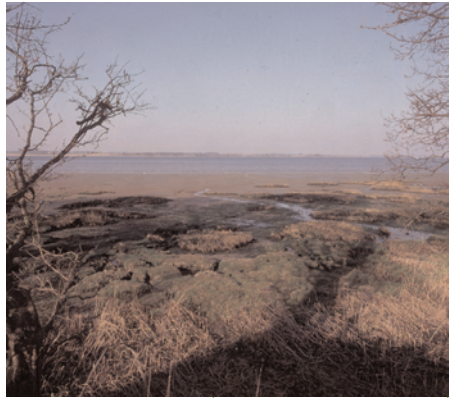


## Wrabness

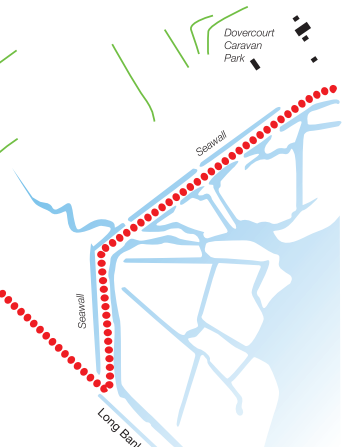
The rough grass of the seawall is good for insect life in the summer, attracting the Meadow Brown and Essex Skipper butterflies, and Roesel's Bush Cricket.

## Saltmarshes

Saltmarshes are the most natural wildlife habitats in Essex. Amongst their rare species are the Essex Emerald Moth and Sea Purslane, a plant thought extinct in Britain for 50 years before it was rediscovered in Essex in 1987.



Wrabness saltmarshes



## Dovercourt Bay

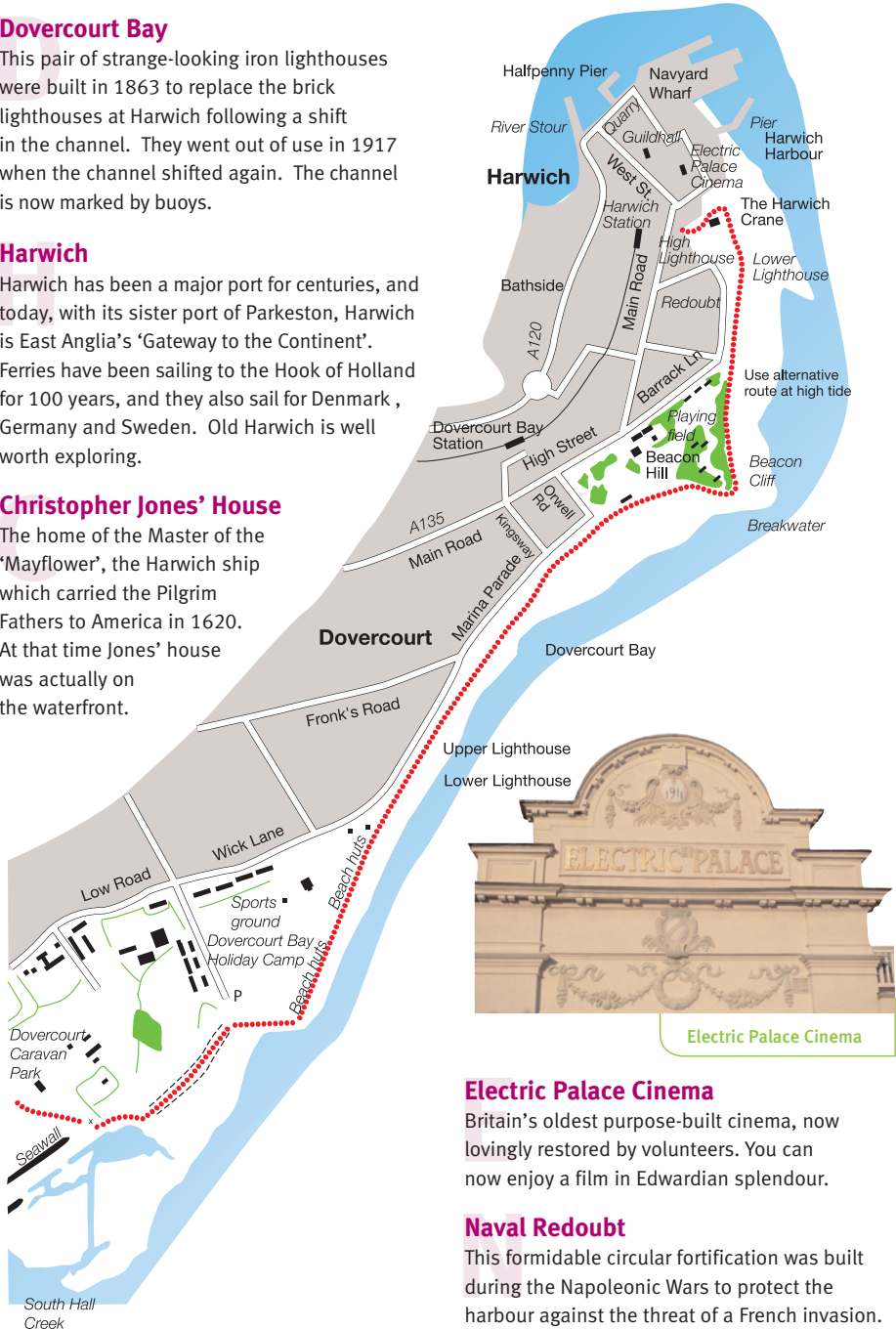
This pair of strange-looking iron lighthouses were built in 1863 to replace the brick lighthouses at Harwich following a shift in the channel. They went out of use in 1917 when the channel shifted again. The channel is now marked by buoys.

## Harwich

Harwich has been a major port for centuries, and today, with its sister port of Parkeston, Harwich is East Anglia's 'Gateway to the Continent'. Ferries have been sailing to the Hook of Holland for 100 years, and they also sail for Denmark, Germany and Sweden. Old Harwich is well worth exploring.

## Christopher Jones' House

The home of the Master of the 'Mayflower', the Harwich ship which carried the Pilgrim Fathers to America in 1620. At that time Jones' house was actually on the waterfront.



Electric Palace Cinema

## Electric Palace Cinema

Britain's oldest purpose-built cinema, now lovingly restored by volunteers. You can now enjoy a film in Edwardian splendour.

## Naval Redoubt

This formidable circular fortification was built during the Napoleonic Wars to protect the harbour against the threat of a French invasion.

## Half Penny Pier

With its charming 19th century ticket office, this used to be the departure point for steamships to the Continent. Today, there are ferry trips across the harbour mouth to Felixstowe, and along the Rivers Stour and Orwell.

## Treadwheel Crane

The unique 17th century treadwheel crane, preserved on Harwich Green, was used in the naval shipyard until early this century. It was operated by two men walking inside twin wooden treadwheels.



Halfpenny Pier, Harwich Harbour

## High & Low Lighthouses

Built in 1818 by General Slater Rebow of Wivenhoe Park. He was stung by criticism over the vast profits he was reaping from the lighthouses (all shipping using the port could be charged a fee for this important service). The High & Low Lighthouses were built in alignment to act as a pair of leading lights. Because of shifts in the channel outside the harbour the lights became known as 'misleading lights'. The Low Lighthouse now houses a Maritime Museum, whilst the High Lighthouse marks the end of the Essex Way.



Treadwheel Crane, Harwich Green

## Dovercourt Bay

This pair of strange-looking iron lighthouses were built in 1863 to replace the brick lighthouses at Harwich following a shift in the channel. They went out of use in 1917 when the channel shifted again. The channel is now marked by buoys.

## Beacon Hill Fort

Beacon Cliff has been fortified since Roman times, but the present defences date mainly from the First and Second World Wars. The cliff headland originally extended into the harbour beyond the end of Stone Pier breakwater.



The end of The Essex Way

# For further information

You can contact Essex County Council in a number of ways:

**By telephone:** 01245 437291

**By post:** Essex County Council,  
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Chelmsford CM1 1QH

**By email:** [prow.web@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:prow.web@essexcc.gov.uk)

**Internet:** [www.essexcc.gov.uk](http://www.essexcc.gov.uk)

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