



Title: Essex Way: Great Horkesley to Coggeshall

Distance: about 11.5 miles

Time taken: 5 hours

Start Point: Half Butt Inn, Great Horkesley

OS Explorer Map: 196

Grid Ref.: TL 981 291

Transport: Bus 2 or 84 from Colchester Railway Station; Bus 70 from Coggeshall to Marks Tey and Colchester

Refreshment: Shoulder of Mutton, Ford Street

Chequers, Great Tey

Woolpack, Coggeshall

Walk Description

This section of the Essex way is very pleasant. The villages are quiet although not particularly quaint, and the section alongside the River Colne near Ford Street is beautiful. The main feature of the route is the wide open farmland, and the huge Essex sky overhead, giving a real sense of space and freedom.

When we walked this section we also had plenty of animal life to enjoy, from the horned cattle in the water meadows to the new born lambs at Bacon's Farm; from friendly horses wandering over to us from nearby paddocks to shy elusive foxes sharing the same footpaths. There was constant birdsong all around, and outside the villages, very few other people, meaning we had the countryside all to ourselves.

Directions

A. From the Half Butt Inn, head south along Nayland Road then turn right into Brick Kiln Road (1). Follow this road south west for about 600 yards past the houses and straight on to the end of the track, where you will see an orchard to your left.

B. Walk south with the fence on your left, along the eastern side of the orchard until the

well established trees give way to a newly planted area. At this point a waymarker points diagonally south west across the newer orchard towards a gap in the hedge opposite; you can see the footpath snaking across the hills in the distance (2).

C. Follow this footpath through the hedge and across the next field, down into a valley, over a footbridge and up the other side, maintaining a roughly south westerly direction across the fields until you come to a facing hedge.

D. Turn right at this hedge, heading west, and walk to the end of the field, then bear left along an enclosed footpath (3), which opens out as you pass Armoury Farm. At the paddock opposite the farmhouse, turn right onto Armoury Road, following the road round to the left just before the junction with the B1508 Colchester Road, where you turn right towards the West Bergholt village sign. Walk along the road for about 50 yards to the mini roundabout, at the junction with Chapel Road.

E. Walk west along Chapel Road for about 250 yards and then, opposite the Co-op, turn right to walk north west up New Church Road. Continue along this past the Church and the school to the T-junction at the end of the road. In front of you, on the opposite side of the road, you will see the start of an alleyway footpath behind a metal railing. (4). Follow this.

F. After a few yards the track opens out as it crosses farmland. Continue heading west along a strip of grass between two fields, then bear slightly right, to keep the hedge on your left, until you reach a farm on your right and the now closed old St Marys Church, half hidden by trees (5), straight ahead of you. As you pass the farm you will see a footpath crossroads. Turn left, walking roughly south.

G. About half a mile south of the church, you will see a footpath over a stile on your right, a farm track to your left and a driveway straight ahead – don't take any of these. Instead, bear right by the telegraph pole.

H. 100 yards later you will see a house to your left, a well marked footpath straight ahead leading south to a stream, and a farmyard on your right. The Essex Way goes west through the farmyard, to the north of the barn. If you walk past the pretty green water tank you have gone too far south. If you see a lumbering great Howard slurry store, you're heading in the right direction (6)!

I. Exit the farm onto a track with hedges on either side which takes you gently downhill still going west. After about a third of a mile you will come to a stile near an attractive ruin; keep going west with the ruin on your left, across the meadow. In the next field the footpath diverges, with 2 exits through the far western hedgerow: take the more southerly path, to the left of the oak tree (7).

J. The path continues west with a hedge on your right, through a gate, past some trees to the left, over a bridge but always heading west, until you can see Mill House in the

distance. Approach the road to the left of Mill House (8).

K. When you reach Mill Road, cross straight across and continue walking west. You will see brightly coloured hand made way markers guiding you along the route. The last few yards of this section of the Essex Way go along the banks of the Colne before crossing the grounds of the Shoulder of Mutton pub (9) en route to the A1124 main road through Fordstreet.

L. Cross the A1124 and turn left. Once over the bridge you will see a footpath on your right between two houses, heading west. Follow this path. Once past the houses, walk along the banks of the river behind a nursery (10) until you come to a small boating club, after which the path and river diverge for half a mile, before joining up again near Bacon's Farm with its giant St George's flag. Carry on, walking west along the river bank to the facing hedgerow.

M. At the hedge, there is a bridge to the right across the river. Just to the left of the bridge is a gate marked up with many, many footpath choices— none of which points out the Essex Way! Turn left in front of this gate, heading south west up the hill with the hedge on your right (11). Go through the gate into Bacon's Farm yard, turning right then left to go around the barn before heading away from the farm up Bacon's Lane towards a railway bridge.

N. A few yards after the railway bridge the lane turns hard right but the Essex Way continues heading south west along a field edge, slightly to the left on the opposite side of the road, behind a telegraph pole (12).

O. Continue along the edge of the field for about a quarter of a mile to a footpath junction where you turn left then 100 yards later, turn left again to follow a green lane heading roughly south east. After about 300 yards the green lane emerges into a field: cross this field still going south east with the hedge at your left.

P. There is a gap in the facing hedge (13): go through this then turn hard right. You should be able to see rooftops in the distance: go towards the village with the hedge on your right, walking west. As you get closer to Great Tey you will see a path between 2 houses heading to the road.

Q. Turn left on Chappel Road, heading south. Cross over the junction with Moor road and continue south until you come to St Barnabas' Church, then turn right into The Street (14). Walk along this lane to the Chequers pub.

R. The Essex Way goes south down a path between the church and the pub, into playing fields. Continue across the playing fields staying close to the hedge on the right until, nearly at the end of the fields, you see to a path wandering into the woods on your right (15).

S. Continue on this path as it meanders through the woods, until you come out onto a concrete access road. Head straight across this road towards another patch of woodland, still going roughly south. This takes you past a water works and out into farmland.

T. There is a fence on your left, continue on for about a quarter of a mile until you come to a surprisingly big metal gate on the left (16): turn left here, walking between woods and fields. At the next massive gate, turn right walking inside the field with the fence to your left.

U. Follow the field edge as it turns left and right again, until you come to another kissing gate, which takes you over a bridge to a second kissing gate into another field (17) and then go right for 75 yards to cross a footbridge in the hedgerow. Continue south west through this field with the hedge to your right, for about a third of a mile.

V. The facing hedge at the end of this field has 2 gaps: take the most southerly gap on the left (18), farthest from the stream, continuing south west. This brings you to the tiny village of East Gores. Turn right on East Gores Lane to head west along the lane for just over 100 yards, until you see a footpath on your left, adjacent to a house. Walk south west along this to the left of the hedgerow.

W. After roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ mile you will see in front of you a very impressive hedge sweeping around to the right (19): the footpath goes to the right of this hedge. Follow the hedge, after a while you see a raised reservoir on the right. Continue past this then follow the footpath signs out onto the access lane to Houchin's Farm. Cross the lane and continue heading westwards with the hedge to your left for about 300 yards, then cross over a footbridge in the hedge, and continue, now walking south west, with the hedge to your right.

X. As you approach the A120 east of Coggeshall you will see some steps taking you up to the road (20). These bring you out right on to the verge of a very busy road. You need to cross this road and go down the steps opposite.

Y. From the bottom of the steps continue south west towards a clump of trees (21). There is a footpath through these trees, which brings you out onto St Peters Road; turn right to head uphill until you see Church Green on your left. Turn into Church Green and continue until you see the Church on your right: opposite this on the left is the footpath for the next section of the Essex Way: or a few yards further on is the welcoming sight of The Woolpack, purveyors of cold drinks and open all day!

Z. The bus stop for Marks Tey Railway Station is a few yards up Church Green from the church, on the same side as the Church.