



Title: Essex Way: White Notley to Great Waltham

Distance: just over 11 miles

Time taken: 5 hours

Start Point: White Notley ford

OS Explorer Map: 183

Grid Ref.: TL 787 185

Transport: Train to White Notley (Braintree - Witham line).

Bus 42A (every 30mins) or 52 (hourly) from Great Waltham to Chelmsford

Refreshment: The Beehive, Great Waltham

The Square and Compasses, Fuller Street

## Walk Description

This section of the Essex Way is lovely. The walk takes you through languid meadows, over gently rolling fields, into unspoilt woodlands and through several quiet villages.

In particular, the village of Terling, with its ford and windmill, is very pretty. The water runs quite fast under the footbridge making a lovely splashy sound, but then forms a wide pool, bringing a feeling of tranquillity to the area. Later in the walk, as you stroll down the hill from Fuller Street you can see Lyons Hall Church tower rising up above the trees. Just as you come to the roadside near the church, look out for the spring – cold, fresh water straight from the earth. It's a very refreshing spot to stop and wash your hands!

Towards the end of the walk you will pass Langleys, a magnificent house in its own parkland. The bridges over the river and the weir, with the decaying farm buildings in the background, make a lovely feature to finish this section of the Essex Way.

## Directions

- A. From White Notley station, turn right to walk down to White Notley village. Rejoin the Essex Way just before the ford, and turn left to walk south east along a tree lined lane beside a pumping station (1). After 250 yards you will come to a stile: continue straight ahead for another 250 yards through a meadow alongside the River Brain, to a footbridge (2).
- B. Cross the river here, and walk up the slope south west between the fields. Continue straight on to the left of the hedge, to a house. As you pass the building you will see a row of trees running along the drive; walk along the grass verge, then along the driveway until you come to Church Hill.
- C. At the roadside turn left for about 50 yards, then cross the road and walk up the track heading westwards immediately before Maltings Farm. In front of you is an enclosed green lane, with a concrete farm track to the left of it (3). The Essex Way goes along the green lane, under the tree canopy. Sadly, this lane is sometimes unpassable due to overgrown vegetation, meaning we have had to use the concrete track instead. After about 500 yards the Essex Way emerges from the tree canopy and joins the track.
- D. Continue along the track – known as 'Pink Lane' - for a further 500 yards until you come to a field edge. At this point the track turns right, heading towards some trees. As you reach the trees you will see that this is another green lane, heading south west through the trees (4).
- E. Follow the lane as it twists and turns, passing Troys Hall, until you reach Fairstead Road. Turn right up the hill, then left into the sleepy village of Fairstead. Walk westwards along the road towards St Mary's Church; the footpath goes south through the trees on the left, just before the church. Go past the graves, then go to the right through a gap in the hedge.
- F. With the hedge now on your left, continue walking south over grass to the facing hedge. Go through this and out into the fields, with wide open views to either side. Continue south for about a quarter of a mile until you come to a tall facing hedge, just past a dead oak tree (5). Turn right at the hedge line.
- G. Walk alongside the hedge until you come to a wooded area. The Essex Way turns left into these woods, emerging about 150 yards later slightly south east of the entry point. Cross the field in front of you to facing hedge, and turn right to walk south west along the field edge until you come to a gap in the hedge (6).
- H. Turn left through this gap, then right through a gap in the perpendicular hedge. You

should be walking in a south easterly direction with a hedge on your left. At the facing hedge, turn to the right heading towards Sandypits Farm. Walk past the farmhouse to Braintree Road.

I. At the roadside turn left in front of the white gate, then turn right (7), into River Hill. Cross the river using the footbridge and walk up Norman Hill to the junction where you turn right in front of the post box to walk towards Great Waltham (8).

J. Walk along Hull Lane (you will see the windmill on a side road to your right), going straight on until, about 250 yards past the telephone box, the road turns to the left just by a small pond. The way ahead, past a black cottage, is marked 'Private Road'. Walk along this private road, past the cottage and bear left.

K. After about 150 yards you will pass a farm, then still heading west go over a stile into a field, then 50 yards later over another stile. Then the route continues west along a track bisecting a field towards Sandy Wood (9).

L. As you approach the wood, bear left so that you are walking along the field edge with the woods to your right. Walk on to the end of the woods, until you come to an open field on your right, just before a pylon. Turn right into this field (10) and walk downhill with the woods to your right, towards the stream.

M. Cross over the stream using the footbridge and turn right to follow the field edge. At the end of the field turn left following the hedge to walk uphill towards the road. Keeping to the field edges, turn right again, then left, crossing through the hedge line just before you reach the rear of the houses, and exit onto the road.

N. Once on the road turn left and walk past some houses and a small garage until you come to a junction. The nearby telephone box has been converted into an Essex Way Information Centre, and contains leaflets, bus timetables and other useful information about the route. Opposite the telephone box is the Square and Compasses pub.

O. Continue north west along the lane, and turn left past the house on your left. As you come into the field, head westwards up the slope (11). After about 200 yards turn left in front of an earthen bank, towards a pylon, then right to continue west along a line of trees. After 150 yards the path bears left, heading downhill towards a lane, with the tower of Lyons Hall Church visible through the trees to your left. Just to your right at the side of the road, is a piped spring.

P. Cross over Cole Hill and continue west through the meadows opposite. At the end of the first field, cross through the hedge using the stile and footbridge on the right (12), then walk along the field edge with a hedge on your left, over another stile, then through a gap into the last field. In the far left corner, there is a final stile leading to a few steps down to Poulk Hall Lane.

Q. At the lane turn right and walk uphill for about 50 yards before turning left into another field. Walk across this, past a telegraph pole, to the fence then bear right, heading northwards. Just before the fence becomes a hedge, there is a stile. Cross over this and walk with the hedge on your right to the end of the field (13).

R. Cross over a stile into the next field walking with woodland on your left, until you come to the facing hedge, where the path turns left into the woodland. After a few yards you come to a junction: turn right.

S. Cross over the access road and continue along the footpath as it meanders through trees, before crossing a footbridge and coming out into the open. Go up the slope onto Great Leighs Main Road. Cross this road into the small access road opposite, and from there follow the slope onto the underpass, alongside a stream.

T. As you emerge from the underpass, stay on the path heading north west for about a quarter of a mile. After a few yards there is confusing signage which seems to suggest turning right, back towards the main road, but instead keep to the left, walking between bollards along the concrete roadway, heading north west (14)

U. When you come to the road junction, turn left towards Little Leighs Church, past some cottages and over the bridge. Turn left again at the T-junction. Go past the church and turn right 50 yards later. Go past a small car park and lake, heading south. As the path reaches an open field, turn left to walk along the field edge (15), then right to follow the hedge 300 yards in a SW direction.

V. In the south east corner of the field the path descends sharply through trees into the next field. Head across this field towards some woodland on the opposite side of the field and slightly to your right. The path continues south along the easterly edge of this patch of woodland; keep going until after passing several houses on your left you reach Whitbreads Farm Lane.

W. Cross the road and walk straight ahead along the lane opposite, heading south towards Chatham Green. After about a quarter of a mile the lane turns a sharp left, and as it does so there is a triangular grassy area on the right. Turn right into the footpath between this green and a house with a dovecot, heading southwest with hedges on both sides. (16).

X. The path emerges into a field: continue for about a mile and a quarter, always heading south west and with a hedge to your right. You will cross the Essex Regiment Way and then Chatham Hall Road along the way (17), and will increasingly be walking downhill.

When you come to a white gate, turn right on the track ahead, to the beautiful grounds of Langleys.

Y. Cross over both bridges towards the outbuildings, then as you pass the pet cemetery on your left, walk west slightly uphill along a metalled track between fences (18). Continue almost to the road, until you see a white kissing gate giving access to the park on the left. This takes you through a series of kissing gates, across a drive and down the slope to Great Waltham.

Z. Turn left for the village pubs and bus stops. The bus for Chelmsford stops just by the war memorial, which can be found by walking through the churchyard keeping to the left of the church; as you emerge from the churchyard the bus stop is straight ahead of you.

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