



Title: Saffron Trail: Southend to Hockley

Distance: 12½ miles

Time taken: 5 hours

Start Point: Pier Hill, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2EQ

OS Explorer Map: 175

Grid Ref.: TQ 884 852

Transport:

Southend: Liverpool St trains to Southend Central or Southend Victoria

Hockley: Liverpool St line

Refreshment: Several pubs in Old Leigh, and The Bull, Hockley

## Walk Description

The starting point of the Saffron Trail starts at top of Pier Hill with a sea-view over the burnt out pier. The Royals multi-storey car park is nearby (SS1 1DG).

There are some pleasant parts of this section along the way, including a long coastal walk, some hilly climbs through Hadleigh Castle Country Park, an easy stroll over farm land and a couple of nice sections through some extensive and rather lovely woods. Along the route, there is also a fair amount of trudging along residential roads and through soulless recreation grounds, amidst the seemingly endless urban sprawl of Hadleigh and Rayleigh.

This 12½ mile section can be split in half at Hadleigh when you reach the A13: a variety of buses from the stop at Morrisons (SMS ID: esxdwtgp) will take you back to Southend.

## Directions

### Southend to Hadleigh

**A.** From either train station, walk south down the High Street to the top of Pier Hill (1), where the Saffron Trail begins.

**B.** Turn right to walk west along Royal Terrace with the Georgian terrace on your right and the gardens on your left. Continue into Clifftown Parade, passing the Cliff Lift and later, the war memorial, still with the gardens on your left. After almost two thirds of a mile, as you get close to the Cliffs Pavilion, turn left opposite the Westcliffe Hotel (2) to descend through the park to the promenade. Carry on heading west for a further mile, beside the sea (3). You will pass a number of cafes, ice cream parlours and public toilets along the way.

**C.** At Chalkwell Station the promenade stops and is replaced by a narrow track, between the railway line and the beach. Continue west along here (4), initially with a brick wall on your right and later, railings. Carry on along the seashore to Old Leigh.

**D.** Continue west along the High Street (5), then along the sea wall to the left of the overpass. Turn right briefly, under the overpass, then continue west walking beside the cocklesheds and then past another boatyard (6), from where you can see Leigh Station.

**E.** Go up the steps towards the station, and follow the road north to the junction with Belton Way. You will see a flight of steps up the bank opposite. Climb these. After 41 steps, at a junction with another footpath (7), turn left heading west, and follow the path to the top of the cliff.

**F.** Turn left on Marine Parade for about 50 yards then bear left again to descend to a track (8) which runs parallel to the road in an apparently pointless diversion for about 400 yards before returning to Marine Parade. Should you instead choose to stay at street level on the wide greensward, you would be rewarded with some magnificent views across the estuary.

**G.** Continue west along Marine Parade, across a road junction, to the end of the road. Go down a steep path on the left descending towards the coast (9). At the bottom of the slope, at a T junction, turn right to continue west, with a hedge on your right. After about 300 yards you will come to a stile on the right, cross this into Hadleigh Castle Country Park (10). Walk through the trees and up the crest of the hill to the castle.

**H.** Enter the castle grounds by way of a kissing gate and climb up to the top of the mound. Bear right to head north west through the ruins and along a narrow track, exiting via a gate on to another track (11). Turn left immediately, and climb over the stile, towards the estuary. At the end of this track, just before the gate, turn right over a stile and walk west for about 200 yards.

**I.** Footpath Diversion: because of the use of Hadleigh Park for the Olympic mountain biking event, footpaths in this area have been diverted and do not match those on OS maps. At the Temporary Footpath Diversion sign turn right through the hedge, walking north along the hedgeline with a pond on your left, to recently erected wooden fencing in the facing hedge (12). At the time of our walk, this was not a stile or gate - you have to climb over - and continue north up the hill: the path goes between two trees, following the waymarkers (13). You can see the Olympic track, off to your left, from here.

**J.** Pass through a gap in the hedge, where you have a magnificent view across the estuary behind you. Continue across the field and then into a lane. After a few yards, in front of a gate, (14) turn right through a gap in the hedge then left to walk along a track heading north west for about 500 yards.

**K.** As you emerge onto a newly built access road (15), turn right and follow the road to the London Road (A13) junction and cross over. This is a half-way point - buses to Southend at stop id: esxdwtgp near Morrisons run frequently from here.

## Hadleigh to Hockley

**L.** To continue, carry on north east along New Road, (16) for about 400 yards. At the end of the row of houses on the left go through a hedge gap into the Recreation Ground (17). Exit to the left of the white pavilion into Daws Heath Road and turn left to the junction with Poors Lane (18).

**M.** Walk the length of Poors Lane and continue straight on north east into Dodds Grove and Great Wood (19) along the bridleway for about a third of a mile, then leaving the woods along another lane. Turn left at a road junction before The Grange, with a fence and reservoir on your right (20). Follow the road for 220 yards until it bears to the right.

**N.** 180 yards later, the road turns left, but go straight ahead here through a wooden gate (21). Walk north east along the enclosed path, then bear left and continue walking north, until you exit onto Eastwood Old Road. Turn right to walk south east for about 500 yards to a post box.

**O.** Turn left along Rothwell Close immediately before the post box, and walk to the end of the road. Continue along the path ahead. Turn right at the end, along the greensward adjacent to the Southend Arterial Road (A127) (22). Continue across the end of The Fairway, then cross the A127 and keep walking east for a further 60 yards.

**P.** Turn left into an access road with recreation grounds to your right. Just as the road turns left, go through a hedge into the Oak Wood recreation ground. Head for the exit at the north east end, where you emerge onto the residential street Leighfields Road. (23). Walk north along Leighfields Road and straight on into Flamboro Close, and continue along the enclosed path leading to Rayleigh Road.

**Q.** Cross the road and turn left for about 100 yards and then right up another enclosed path adjacent to a funeral parlour. This leads you into Macmurdo road; continue north then cross the junction with Wren Road and go along Green Lane for a further 100 yards. Look for the enclosed footpath in the corner heading north (24). Follow this path as it veers to the left. At the junction with an access road to Edwards Hall Park, turn right and walk to the park entrance.

**R.** Enter the park by the notice board, and head east towards a communications mast in the distance (25). Go through a gap in the facing hedge and continue east until you reach a lane, then turn left to walk downhill towards Flemings Farm. Go straight ahead past the metal gate, following the byway as it turns to the right, then a few yards later at a footpath junction, turn left (26).

**S.** Walk uphill along the by-way and then through the woods until, near the crest of the hill, you emerge from the woods onto Gusted Hall Lane with wide open views all the way to Canewdon to your right. Continue north for a third of a mile, then at the T-junction turn left to walk up hill towards Mount Bovers (27).

**T.** After about 200 yards turn right at the end of the hedge to walk along a field edge path (FP 32) heading roughly north towards some trees. As you approach the trees bear right following the tree line to a small residential cul-de-sac, and cross this to an enclosed path to the right of a hedge, just left of a black building (28).

**U.** Follow the path round to the right and downhill. At the bottom of the hill turn right in front of a tree and walk east for a little over 50 yards until, just before a bungalow, you turn hard left around a hairpin bend, to walk alongside a white fence enclosing a small paddock and stable block (29), towards Hockley Woods.

**V.** At the entrance to the woods turn right by the chainlink fence and follow the path as it turns left a few yards later. Stay on the main path heading north west for about 400 yards passing a bench with a wooden wind break, until you come to a large junction.

**W.** Turn right across a wide wooden bridge (30) and follow the path northwards. After about 300 yards turn right at the Y junction to approach the fences at the rear of some houses, then bear left to walk north east for a further 250 yards to the Hockley Woods car park. This section of the Saffron Trail ends here.

**X.** The Bull pub is approximately 50 yards to the left of the entrance to Hockley Woods. Hockley Station is an additional  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to the east: turn right out of the car park to head up Main Road then bear left at the Y junction with Spa Road to walk past the shops to the station.

### [ROUTE DIRECTIONS at www.essexwalks.com](http://www.essexwalks.com)

The ROUTE MAP and ROUTE PHOTOS **also** need to be downloaded and saved on your computer for printing.



The Route Map PDF can be downloaded from this page: [Description & Map](#)



The Route Photos PDF can be downloaded from this page: [Photos](#)

This route description is not meant to be used in isolation, it is one piece of a three part guide to the walk. The other two pieces are the route map, and the numbered photographs. The walks work best when the description, map and the photos PDF are printed off and used in conjunction with each other.

The numbers in brackets in the description refer to specific points along the route, marked with numbered symbols and these in turn are matched to illustrative photographs which show you the lie of the land.



These symbols are shown at strategic points along the route, overlaid on a 1:50K Ordnance Survey map: [Online OS Map at www.essexwalks.com](#).