

Kelvedon Circular		
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Kelvedon Circular

Start: Kelvedon Station

Finish: Kelvedon station

Kelvedon station, map reference TL 862 192, is 19 km north east of Chelmsford, 26m above sea level and in **Essex**.

Length: 23.2 km (14.4 mi), of which 8.9 km (5.5 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 190m. For a shorter walk, see *below* **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 4 out of 10

Time: 5 hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ³/₄ hours.

Transport: Kelvedon station is on the London Liverpool Street to Norwich Main Line. Journey times are 49 minutes Mondays to Saturdays (two trains per hour), and 51 minutes on Sundays (hourly service).

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.30 hours for the full walk, or 10.00 hours for a short walk option.

OS Landranger Map: 168 (Colchester)

OS Explorer Map: 183 (Chelmsford & The Rodings) and 195 (Braintree & Saffron Walden)

Walk Notes:

This walk is centred on the gentle landscape of the Blackwater Valley, close to Constable Country, and includes some very tranquil and scenic stretches along the river itself, interspersed with long stretches along country lanes, green lanes or field boundaries with wide and extensive views across the rolling Essex countryside of fields and woods.

A pre-lunch north westerly loop explores the valley cut by Robin's Brook, leading to Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum, with its atmospheric early lunch stop in a converted barn.

There are a several other recommended lunch stops in Coggeshall itself.

Coggeshall is one of Britain's most historic market towns. It has 300 listed buildings, amongst the ones passed on the walk are Britain's oldest barn and one its finest medieval buildings, built on the remnants of a 12th century abbey, an impressive carved timber-framed Wool Merchant's house as well as a couple of photogenic watermills and an outsized church.

A much shorter walk of 16.3 km length enables extended visits to the NT properties en route.

A scenic extension in Coggeshall leads west from Grange Barn along the Essex Way, across the Blackwater over the listed Nunn's Bridge and back along the wooded valley, closely following the river.

Walk Options:

A frequent **bus service** running through the lunch location of Coggeshall gets you to Chelmsford station (closer to London than Kelvedon and on the same line).

Two **shortcuts** – cutting out all or parts of an outer loop just before lunch – reduce the walk by 6.9 km and 84m ascent/descent or by 3.9 km and 49m ascent/descent respectively.

They are rated **1/10** and **2/10** respectively.

An **Extension** in Coggeshall adds 2.5 km/1.6 mi.

Lunch (details last updated 01/10/2021)

West Street Vineyard West Street, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1NB (01376 563 303, <http://www.weststreetvineyard.co.uk/>)*. West Street Vineyard is 7.0 km (4.3 mi) into the walk and a 30-year-old vineyard, bought by the current owners in 2009 and also offers wine walking tours and tastings.

Orchard Kitchen Café Bouchier's Barn, Marks Hall, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1TG (01376 563 796, <https://www.markshall.org.uk/plan-your-visit/cafe/>)*. The Orchard Kitchen Café is located 11.1 km (6.9 mi) into the walk in a beautifully restored 15th Century barn, which was moved to its current spot timber by timber from a site close by. It offers morning coffee, light lunches and teas, with homemade cakes available all day. Open Tue-Sun apart from a few weeks around year end. Cooked food 12.00-14.30.

Ranfield's Brasserie 4-6 Stoneham Street, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1TT (01376 561 453, <https://ranfieldsbrasserie.co.uk/>)*. Ranfield's is located 14.4 km (8.9 mi) into the main walk, and 7.5 km into the short walk. The 16th Century half-timbered building was originally converted into a restaurant in 1986 by Peter Langan, of Langan's Brasserie in Mayfair. Open Wed-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-22.00 and Sun 12.00-17.00.

Bakes and Blooms 10-12 Market Hill, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1TS (01376 563 060)*. Bakes is located 14.4 km (8.9 mi) into the main walk, and 7.5 km into the short walk. Open 09.00-17.00.

The Chapel Inn 4 Market Hill, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1TS (01376 561 655, www.thechapelinn.com)*. The Chapel Inn is located 14.4 km (8.9 mi) into the main walk, and 7.5 km into the short walk. It was built on the site of an earlier chapel on the old Roman Military Road from Colchester to St Albans via Bishops Stortford. Remains of the Roman road with its drainage aqueducts can still be seen in the beer cellar. Open all day Wed-Sat and 10.30-15.00 Sun.

The White Hart Hotel Market End, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1NH (01376 561 654, <https://www.greenekinginns.co.uk/hotels/white-hart-coggeshall/>)*. The White Hart is located 14.5 km (9.0 mi) into the main walk, and 7.6 km into the short walk, and it is set in a building that dates back to the 15th Century and still has a wealth of original features, notably its attractive timbered room.

The Woolpack Inn 91 Church Street, *Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1UB (01376 561 235)*. Open Mon-Sun 11.00-23.00. Food served Wed-Sun 12.00-14.00 and 18.00-21.00. The Woolpack Inn is located 14.9 km (9.2 mi) into the main walk, and 8.0 km into the short walk. The Woolpack was built in the 15th Century and became an Inn in 1708. It is now Grade I-listed.

Tea (details last updated 01/10/2021)

Bell Inn The Street, *Feering, Essex, CO5 9QQ (01376 570 375)*. The Bell Inn is located 2.0 km from the end of the walk and is a 16th Century inn. Under new management from 12/10/2021.

The Sun Inn 3 Feering Hill, *Feering, Essex, CO5 9NH (01376 570 442, <http://suninnfeering.co.uk/>)*. The Sun Inn is located 0.5 km from the end of the walk. Open 12.00-15.00 and 17.30-23.00 Tue-Fri and all-day Sat-Sun.

The Tavern on the River 182 High Street, *Kelvedon, Essex, CO5 9JD (01376 570 293, <http://www.thetavernkelvedon.co.uk/>)*. The Tavern is located 0.4 km from the end of the walk on the banks of the Blackwater River. It includes a restaurant, a snug area, a bar area and al fresco riverside seating.

Kelvedon King 201 High Street, *Kelvedon, Essex, CO5 9JD (01376 570 565)*.

Notes:

Kelvedon

Originally a Belgic settlement on the banks of the River Blackwater (the Belgae were a group of Gallo-Germanic tribes living in northern Gaul, between the Channel and the west bank of the Rhine, from at least the 3rd century BC and were also found in Britain), the Romans knew it as Canonium, an important staging point on the route linking London to East Anglia via Colchester.

Blackwater River

The Blackwater runs for 64 kilometres from the northwest of Essex near the edge of Debden Airfield (where it is known as the River Pant) through Bocking, near Braintree. The water volume in the Pant increases courtesy of an outlet of water piped from the River Ouse in Fenland. Downstream from Bocking the river is known as the Blackwater as it continues its course via Coggeshall to near Witham where it is joined by the River Brain. Passing Maldon it reaches the North Sea at West Mersea in one of the largest estuaries on the east coast of England. Despite that it is a comparatively small stream along most of its length suitable for watermills rather than navigation. The River Chelmer meets the Blackwater near Langford, together those two rivers drain two thirds of Essex.

Pointwell Mill

A grade I-listed house dating from ca. 1600, while the associated water-mill ceased working 1902, became derelict, and was converted into a dwelling in 1960.

Coggeshall (Cistercian) Abbey

Coggeshall Abbey was founded in 1140 on the banks of the river Blackwater by King Stephen of England and Matilda of Boulogne, as a Savigniac abbey with 12 monks from Savigny in France, the last to be established before the order was absorbed by the Cistercians in 1147. The monks used the oldest post-Roman bricks in Britain, locally made in Tilkey.

By 1370 the monastery was very poor, partly due to excessive spending and other mismanagement. During the so-called Peasants Revolt of 1381 the abbey was broken into and raided. It was heavily indebted by the time of its closure in 1538, following which the site was sold to Sir Thomas Seymour, brother of King Henry VIII's favourite wife Jane. The abbey church was rapidly ransacked and demolished. A house was built in 1581 on part of the monastery site and still survives as one of the finest medieval buildings in Britain. Later owners included the Paycocke family who were wool merchants. The abbey gate chapel also survives, restored as a church, and some other structures of uncertain purpose also remain. Recent owners have undertaken an extensive staggered restoration project, and the grounds are open for visits several times a year. <https://www.historichouses.org/house/the-abbey/tours/>

St. Nicholas' Chapel

Built around 1220 it is the oldest surviving example of a post-Roman brick-building and served as the gatehouse chapel to the nearby Cistercian Abbey until the dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s. Later it was used as an agricultural building, but was restored to sacred use in the late 19th Century. Today it is part of the Parish of St. Peter ad Vincula.

Essex Way

The Essex Way is a 130 km (81 mi) waymarked Long Distance Footpath. The trail starts in Epping in the southwest, crosses Dedham Vale and Constable Country to finish at the port of Harwich on the Stour estuary. It leads through ancient woodlands, open farmland, tree-lined river valleys and leafy green lanes, through historic towns and villages.

Coggeshall Grange Barn

A monastic barn, it is the oldest surviving timber-frame barn in Britain and one of the oldest agricultural buildings in Europe. The earliest timbers probably date from the beginning of the 13th Century, but the barn was extensively re-modelled in the late 14th Century and at this time clay tiles were used to replace the thatch. It underwent extensive restoration works after a compulsory purchase from its neglectful owner in the 1980s and is now NT-owned.

Combined tickets for Paycocke's House & Garden and the Grange Barn are available.

Opening times in 2021: late March until end October, Sundays only 11.00-15.30.

Coggeshall

Coggeshall is a small market town, situated between Colchester and Braintree on the Roman road of Stane Street, and intersected by the River Blackwater. It is known for its almost 300 listed buildings and formerly extensive antique trade. An early Mesolithic settlement is believed to have sprung up near a ford across the river. The recorded history of Coggeshall begins around 1140 when King Stephen and Queen Matilda founded a large abbey. The monks farmed sheep, and their skilled husbandry developed high-quality wool that formed the foundation of the town's prosperous cloth trade during the 15th to mid-18th Centuries, when it was particularly renowned for its fine Coggeshall White cloth. A market has been run every week on Market Hill since 1256, when a charter was granted by Henry III.

Coggeshall is believed by some to be located at a crossing of ley lines, supposedly powerful beams of energy linked to the Earth's magnetic pull, creating "friction" and leading to an emergence of ghost stories creating the image of one of the most haunted towns in England. It is also one of several places claiming to be Warrior Queen Boudica's burial place.

Paycocke's House & Garden

A timber-framed Tudor merchant's house built around 1500 for Thomas Paycocke, the house is a grand example of the wealth generated in East Anglia by the cloth trade in the 16th Century. Stunning woodcarving and elaborate panelling mean this wealthy merchant's house was built to impress. Now NT owned, an exhibition tells the story of its riches to rags decline as well as of the Edwardian 20-year restoration.

Combined tickets for Paycocke's House & Garden and the Grange Barn are available.

Opening times in 2021: late March until end October, Fri-Sun & Bank Holiday Mondays 11.00-15.30.

Robin's Brook

The brook is named after a 16th Century wood cutter, who is said to have carved a beautiful image, called the "Angel of the Christmas Mysteries", which was hidden during the Reformation and has never reappeared. Robin's ghost has been reported near the brook, and his axe has been heard at a distance.

Cradle House

...is a 16th Century Grade II-listed building of uncertain purpose. Supposedly it was once a haven for monks who held meetings in secret rooms within the building (and who are rumoured to occasionally return to dance in the garden).

The Old Rectory

Wrongly shown as "Rectory" on OS maps, it is a Grade II-listed building (ca. 1837) in four acres of landscaped gardens, now serving as an exclusive wedding venue incl. hotel accommodation. It has eleven bedrooms and seats 150 guests.

Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum

Known as Mercheshala in Saxon times, Marks Hall was occupied after the Norman Conquest by the Merkshall family who took their name from the Estate. It was sold at auction in 1897 to Thomas Phillips Price, who left the Estate to the nation for the advancement of agriculture, arboriculture and forestry on his death in 1932. His third wife was left a 'life interest', the bequest to the nation not taking place until she died in 1966. After the war the Estate was greatly neglected though, the buildings and lakes falling into disrepair. In 1971 the Thomas Phillips Price Trust, a registered Charity, was formed and it has worked to restore the property and create an Arboretum of national significance. The Estate was opened to the public in 1993 and hosts a tree collection from all the temperate areas of the world set in more than 200 acres of historic landscape. The 18th Century Walled Garden consists of five individual gardens and combines contemporary and traditional design, with a double border 150m long. <http://www.markshall.org.uk/>

The Clock House and Clock Tower

Only some parts of the house date from the 14th Century, most parts are from ca. 1600, the hexagonal clock tower though was only built in 1787 to replace a clock on the Corn Market House, which formerly stood in the middle of Market Hill. The tower was restored in 1887 to mark Queen Victoria's golden jubilee.

St. Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall

One of a group of oversized churches built following the success of the early wool-trade in the East Anglia area. Saxon and Norman churches stood on the ground of the present building, which was built by wealthy wool merchants in the first quarter of the 15th Century. It is one of the few churches in the country dedicated to St. Peter ad Vincula (St. Peter in chains) and is Grade I listed. www.st-peter-ad-vincula.org.uk

Brockwell Meadows Nature Reserve

Brockwell Meadows is a local nature reserve on the flood plain of the Blackwater. The land was donated in 1976 by a local farmer and is now owned and managed by Kelvedon Parish Council in conjunction with the Brockwell Group using a management regime agreed with English Nature. It is about 4.5 hectares of water meadow, hedgerow, woodland and a pond. The reserve is accessible at all times.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Kelvedon Station** on platform 2 and walk down some steps into the car park, where you *turn right* and down towards a road. *Turn left* along the road's pavement, in 60m crossing **Kings Meadow Court** to continue along the road. In 75m *turn right* across the road at a bend and walk through a gap to the left of a metal field gate with a footpath signpost and along a car wide track with a field on the left and a willow grove and the **Blackwater River** on the right (25°). In 160m in the corner of the field continue in the same direction through a gap in the boundary hedge, [!] but in 35m *turn left* with a marker post along a narrower grassy path into a field (345°).

Continue in this direction for about 1.5 km, first through the field, then along either grassy paths or gravel farm tracks through some more fields, past **Coggeshall Hall** (a farm) and then past more fields (most of these fields seem to have blackcurrants planted in them). In 420m after the farm you emerge into a large arable field with a row of poplars on the left, and where the farm track turns right. *Ignore* the obvious footpath veering half left across the field (310°) and *turn left* along a grassy margin with the poplars on the left towards some houses (260°). In 235m in the far-left field corner emerge onto a road through a gap in the boundary hedge opposite a restaurant: The George & Dragon. Continue in the same direction to the left of the restaurant with a concrete signpost, gently uphill along a wide right-hand field margin.

In 610m in the top-right field corner pass through a wide gap in the hedge, ignore a footpath straight across the field ahead, and *turn right* along a grassy field margin, towards a large farm (345°). In 550m cross a concrete track and continue with a footpath marker post along a fence on the right. Follow the fence around to the right and eventually emerge into the tarmac yard of **Scrip's Farm** and continue to the left of a large corrugated iron barn. In 50m pass **Scrip's Cottage** to continue along a tarmac lane around to the left. In 200m at a T-junction (with a house called **Hylands** on the left) *turn down right*. In 130m *turn left* at another T-junction (with a triangular green in the middle). The lane curves right and downhill as you pass a cricket ground on the left behind trees before reaching a T-junction with a main road in **Coggeshall Hamlet**.

Cross the road and continue downhill a little to the right along a tarmac lane (Pointwell Lane). In 150m you walk through a wooden gate into the grounds of **Pointwell Mill** fronted by weeping willows, and with a sluicing millstream underneath. In 30m *turn left* around the mill house with a yellow marker on a cottage and head for a wooden plank bridge over the **Blackwater** 40m away. Walk through a metal gate and continue along an initially wide grassy spit of river meadows between the millstream and an overflow channel (the original course of the **Blackwater**), a very tranquil stretch. In 400m you cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over the overflow weir and a stile into a grassy field. The river splits, the left arm being a mill stream that used to serve another mill.

Keep the river to your left, cross a couple of stiles and 250m from the weir *turn left* with the river towards an arched stone bridge over the **Blackwater**, ignoring footpaths turning right and ahead. [The path to the bridge can be dangerously flooded, in which case: take the footpath ahead with horse paddocks on the right, in 310m veer left, ignoring a path turning up right, in another 310m reach a road and *turn left* into Coggeshall; in 800m reach Paycocke's House & Gardens.] Cross this bridge and one over the millstream 35m further along, with the mill on the left. Follow a farm track turning right, past the front of the Elizabethan house built on the foundations – and incorporating remnants – of the original 1140 **Cistercian Abbey**.

About 150m from the buildings pass a bench on the right with a dedication to some local Long Distance Walkers in front of **St. Nicholas' Chapel**, the former gatehouse chapel to the Abbey. Notice the **Essex Way**-milestone to the left of the entrance gate to the

chapel. In 440m cross a main road and walk along a farm lane to have a close view of **Coggeshall Grange Barn**, Britain's oldest surviving barn, in 60m.

Here you have a choice:

For a scenic Extension (adds 2.5 km), out along the Essex Way, across the listed Nunn's Bridge and back along the wooded Blackwater Valley, (with the barn in your back) *turn right* along the farm lane and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension in Coggeshall**.

For the main walk retrace your steps to the main road and *turn down left* into **Coggeshall** towards an arched stone bridge across the **Blackwater**. In 175m cross **Long Bridge** (possibly the oldest brick bridge in England) and pass **Rood House** on the right (16th century, a crucifix is said to have stood at the site previously, marking the entrance to the Abbey Outer Precinct). Pass the **Riverside Maltings** and in 40m a private driveway on the right leading to the buildings of the former **Little Coggeshall Brewery** (18th century, last brew 1941). In 35m cross a bridge over a stream and *turn left* at a fork in the road. In 90m *turn left along the opposite pavement* at a junction with **West Street** – the main road through **Coggeshall** (on the course of a Roman Road) – with a memorial garden on the left. In 130m pass the stunning **Paycocke's House & Gardens** (the garden and coffee shop are accessible without a ticket).

In 30m *turn right* – with a well-hidden footpath sign by a telegraph pole – into a car park to the left of a former school building (now a veterinary clinic, 345°). [**West Street Vineyard** and its recommended restaurant though are a further 500m along the road]. In 45m continue in the same direction along a grassy path and in 35m walk through a gap to the right of a wooden field gate and continue ahead at a four-way footpath junction along a grassy field margin with trees on the right.

*) In 200m leave the field through a gap in the boundary hedge and *veer right* along a grassy field boundary. In 80m reach a road at a T-junction, where – on the right and after heavy rain – the road fords **Robin's Brook** (**Robin's Bridge** on the OS map).

Here you have a choice:

For a Shortcut, cutting out the outer loop of this walk, you *turn right* across the ford and follow the directions at the end of the main walk directions under **Shortcut I**.

For the main walk, *turn left* along a tarmac track (310°, blocked for motorised traffic, gently rising; Ambridge Road on the OS map). In 570m cross the **A120** Bypass-Road and continue along a tarmac lane. In 220m pass a house on the left (Squirrel's Hall). In 450m *turn right* along a concrete farm track with a footpath signpost on the left, in 250m following the track through the grounds of **Gatehouse Farm**. At the far end of the farmyard ignore a footpath joining from the right. In 180m pass **Cradle House** on the left. In 50m reach a wooden plank bridge across **Robin's Brook**.

Here you have a choice:

For a Shortcut (cut 3.9 km and 49m ascent/descent), cutting out a part of the rest of the outer loop of this walk, cross the bridge and continue along a narrow earthen path. In 60m *turn right* at a three-way path junction. Pick up the directions below at the double asterisk **).

For the main walk, *turn left [!]* before the bridge and in 15m – at the end of a red brick wall on the left – continue with the brook on the right through the garden of **Cradle House**. In 75m walk through a metal kissing gate and continue along the brook

through a grassy paddock. On the other side of the brook is **The Old Rectory**, passed later along the other side (notice the unusual garden feature: a stream cascading down the slope and under a gazebo). In 60m cross a stile in the far corner of the paddock and *veer left* uphill through a hard-to-spot gap in bushes (260°) to find a path bearing right to the upper right hand corner of this sloping field.

Leave it through a metal kissing gate and across a stream and some growth into a field. *Veer left* with a marker post uphill across the field on a usually well-cleared path (310°), in 480m reaching the left-hand end of a row of trees. Continue in the same direction with a marker post along a grassy field boundary with trees on the right. In 100m at the end of the wooded area reach the far field boundary and continue into the next field. The right-of-way leads across this field on a usually well-cleared path (340°). In 340m continue in the same direction with a marker post along a grassy margin and in 60m enter the next field through a boundary gap across an un-railed plank bridge. Continue along the left hand boundary with **Bungate Wood** on the left and in 270m cross into the next grassy field. In 100m pass under a line of large pylons, in another 190m **[!]** *turn right*, just inside the next field.

Walk along a grassy field margin, which soon continues as a concrete farm track (80°). In 400m *turn right* at a concrete farm track T-junction, now with a wire fence on the left and **Marks Hall Gardens and Arboretum** behind it. In 20m ignore a right fork, keeping the fence on the left. In 210m reach the recommended early lunch option **Orchard Kitchen Café** in Bouchier's Barn in the **Marks Hall Visitor Centre** (but speak to ticket office staff upon entry to not get charged the park entry fee when you re-join the footpath). *Turn left* across the arched 18th Century **Iron Bridge** over **Robin's Brook** and continue along a gravel-and-earth path. In 170m *turn right* along a tree-lined tarmac lane.

In 320m ignore a tarmac drive joining from the right, in 120m pass a house (**Marygolds**) on the left and in 380m cross a stream. Re-ascend and in 90m **[!]** *fork right* (165°, signposted 'Old Rectory') along a tarmac drive, with the main lane turning left. In 320m pass the entrance to **The Old Rectory** (seen earlier from the other side), in 65m pass through a gap to the left of a wooden field gate. [This stretch is mud-prone; a better path runs to the left at higher level through the trees; return back past the gate to find its start.] In 75m a footpath joins from the right through a wooded area by a marker post. This is Shortcut II. *Veer left*.

****)** In 275m go under the **A120 Coggeshall bypass**-road and continue on a clear path through a grassy area with a field on the left towards houses.

In 150m you reach a tarmac lane and in 140m *turn right* down a grassy path between fences with a concrete footpath signpost (due S). In 100m pass a sloped grassy area with benches on the left. In another 110m the path *turns left*. In 25m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road (**Hitcham Road**). In 120m *turn right* at a junction with **Buxton Road**. In 180m (just after passing number 46 and before the last house on the right) **[!]** *turn right* along a narrow path. In 30m *turn left* through trees into a small private car parking area 20m away, with a road on the other side of it. A footpath joins from the right, this is Shortcut I. **[!]** **Do not turn to the right along the earthen path!**

*****)** Continue ahead to cross a road and *continue in the same direction* (165°) through a residential car park at Prail Court (by curving left around three car park spaces) and along a narrow concrete path. In 65m cross a road and continue in the same direction along **Knights Road**. In another 65m *turn left* with the road, in 30m *turn right* along a cul-de-sac, in 25m continue along a tarmac path across a green. In 80m *turn left* along a lane. In 60m *turn right* at a T-junction, with **Coggeshall Library** on the right and

Christ Church on the left. In 90m pass **Ranfield's Brasserie** on the left and in 10m **The Clock House and Clock Tower**.

In 25m you reach a T-junction, with **Bakes and Blooms** on the left, **The Chapel Inn** on the right, and **The White Hart Hotel** a further 50m along across a road. *Turn left* along **Church Street** and in 470m pass the recommended pub lunch stop **The Woolpack Inn** on the left, then **St. Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall**. In 200m *turn right* at a road junction along **St. Peter's Road**. In 200m, at the bottom of the drop, *turn left* with a footpath signpost through a wooden gate. Continue with a stream on the left and in 100m cross a small field in the same direction and in 80m go along a grassy field margin. In 170m ascend some steps and cross the raised **A120 Bypass-road** a little to the left. Descend some steps on the other side to cross a stile and continue along a grassy field margin with the stream again on the left. In 260m pass a wood on the right.

[!] 560m from the wood *turn left* with footpath and **Essex Way** marker posts down some steps through the boundary trees and across a railed wooden plank bridge over a stream. *Turn right* along a grassy field margin, in 290m leaving the field through a gap in the hedge onto a lane. *Turn right*, in 360m reaching a T-junction with the **A120** to *turn right* along the pavement. In 105m *turn left* along **Old Road**, just before a bus stop. In 240m, where the road turns left, *fork right* along a bridleway **green lane** (230°, a footpath joins from the right through a metal kissing gate along a field boundary). In 320m pass a low-lying area that can be deep under water after prolonged rain, and then continue ahead at a four-way junction (footpath right, field boundary left). In 570m emerge onto a road and *turn left* through **Skye Green**. In 430m *turn right* at a T-junction with another road (signed 'Feering & Kelvedon'). In 60m ignore **Mill Lane** on the left. In 450m ignore a road turning left to **Marks Tey**.

[!] In 25m, just after passing a row of cottages on the right, *turn right* off the road with a footpath signpost along a field margin, with a ditch and a hedge on the left (230°). In 230m *turn left* across an un-railed wooden plank bridge over the ditch and continue with a yellow marker right along the field boundary. In 130m *turn half left* across the field on a usually well-cleared path with another marker post (175°), heading for the left-hand end of the opposite boundary hedge. In 370m *turn right* along a grassy path between fields (a footpath joins from left along it). In 250m enter the next field through a hedge gap and *veer left* across it towards its far left corner (190°). In 240m leave the field and *bear right* along a wide grassy path towards a field corner. In 130m *turn left* with a low marker post along a grassy field boundary. Pass a large white building and in 200m exit the field through a gap to the right of a metal field gate. *Turn right* along a road through **Feering**. In 50m a driveway turns right towards **All Saints Church, Feering** (usually locked, meaning the altarpiece, a replica of a Constable painting, is off-view, but not the terracotta bas-relief in the brick porch). In 50m pass **The Bell Inn**, a possible tea stop.

In 75m *turn right* at a T-junction. In 25m you *turn down to the left* through a wooden gate left of a wooden field gate with a footpath signpost, through a grassy area and in 60m continue along a timber causeway across boggy ground. In 115m the **Blackwater** River joins on the right. In 310m you *turn left* with a gravel lane and in 150m go under the railway line to continue along road pavement. In 125m, at the corner of a school field on the left, *turn right* across the road and continue along a narrow tarmac path between hedges. In 280m the path swings left and in 50m it reaches the main road through **Feering & Kelvedon**. *Turn right* along the pavement. In 325m pass the recommended tea stop **The Sun Inn** ("6 Ales, no TV, no music") on the right.

In 30m an optional diversion forks left down **Worlds End Lane** to a nature reserve on a river island, with a beautifully restored brick **Packhorse Bridge**, the original course of the East Anglia to London road (and with a '**Listening Bench**', playing recordings from

the Essex Sound and Video Archive about the local area). In 90m you cross the **Blackwater** River and pass **The Tavern on the River** on the other side.

At a four-way road junction, you have a choice:

- *turn left* along **Swan Street** for another stretch of **riverside walking in a local nature reserve** (adds a minimum 1.5 km for the out-and-back): in 90m ignore a right turn and stay with the river, in 110m *turn right* along a walled gravel lane, in 135m cross a road and in another 100m *turn left* at a school boundary fence; in 50m *turn right* with the path; in 65m *turn left* through a hedge gap and along a tarmac lane (**Gadwall Reach**), in 70m cross a road into **Teal Way** and *veer left* across a grassy area, in 75m reaching an information board detailing a walk route through **Brockwell Meadows Nature Reserve**;
- *continue ahead* along **High Street** and in 100m on the right find **Kelvedon King** (kebabs and fish);
- *turn right* along **Station Road**, in 190m *turning up left* to **Kelvedon Station**.

Extension in Coggeshall (add 2.5 km)

You follow the farm track (initially gravel, then earthen) for 1.4 km, to a corner of the hedgerow on the right, and *turn down to the right* with a marker post along a field boundary. In 80m continue in the same direction across a two-railed plank bridge over a ditch into a wooded area along a clear path. In 120m cross the arched **Nunn's Bridge** (made in 1896 by a local rights-of-way campaigner) over the **Blackwater River** and *turn right* along the river (55°). In 280m, at a bend of the river, follow the winding river further. In 300m you *turn left* with the path away from the river towards a fenced sports field. In 50m walk up a stepped railed path to its right and continue through the car park of 'West Street', **Coggeshall Town FC's** football ground. In 150m you *turn right* along West Street and in 30m *turn left* to cross the road and continue through a gap by a concrete footpath signpost. (**West Street Vineyard** and its recommended restaurant are a further 150m along the road into Coggeshall).

Follow the fenced path around to the right and in a further 70m walk through a hedge gap to continue in the same direction along a field boundary. In 130m go through a wooden kissing gate and follow a narrow path with a redbrick wall on your right and some trees on your left. In 70m you cross a tarmac track and cross an arable field along a usually clear path. In 150m you enter trees by a marker post and *fork right* with the path along a copse on the right. In 240m you reach a four-way path junction at the corner of a wood ahead. The path from the right is the Main Walk and **Paycocke's House & Gardens** is just 100m along that path. *Turn left* along a field boundary and pick up the directions in the main walk text at the asterisk *).

Shortcut I (cut 6.9 km, 84m ascent/descent and 2.6 km of tarmac before lunch)

[!] *Turn left* immediately after fording the brook with a footpath marker post and the brook behind metal railings to the left along a grassy path with a house on the right. In 15m *turn right* with the path and up along a grassy path between fences. In 20m cross a lane and continue uphill through bike barriers. In 50m reach a small private car parking area with a road on the right. A path joins from left through a hedge 20m away. This is the main walk. *Turn right* and pick up the directions in the main walk text at the triple asterisk ***).