

North Fambridge to Burnham-on-Crouch		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
05 th September 2012	15 th October 2017	
Current status	Document last updated Sunday, 12 th January 2020	
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North Fambridge to Burnham-on-Crouch

Start: North Fambridge station

Finish: Burnham-on-Crouch station

North Fambridge Station, map reference TQ 855 977, is 5 km east of South Woodham Ferrers and 7m above sea level. Burnham- on-Crouch Station, map reference TQ 984 965, is 9 km east of North Fambridge and 14m above sea level. Both are **in Essex**.

Length: 20.9 km (13.0 mi), of which 4.4 km (2.7 mi) on tarmac or pavements.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 126/120m.

For a shorter walk, *see below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 2 out of 10

Time: 4 hours 30 minutes walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ½ hours.

Transport: North Fambridge and Burnham-on-Crouch Stations are on the single-track Crouch Valley Line from Wickford to Southminster, with one train every 40 minutes Mon-Sat, and hourly trains Sun. Trains to Wickford depart from Liverpool Street (journey time to Fambridge 55 mins Mon-Sat, 66 mins Sun).

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.30 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 168 (Colchester)

OS Explorer Map: 176 (Blackwater Estuary)

Walk Notes:

Serenity, tranquillity, solitude: you'll find lots of it on this walk on the Dengie Peninsula in Essex, which largely follows the tidal River Crouch eastwards towards the North Sea, on a wide grassy path atop the sea wall, and with the prevailing wind in the back. Far away from any conurbations, you'll experience wide open and scenic countryside, stark but beautiful, with constantly changing river views, salt marshes, reed ponds, mudflats, creeks, rich bird life, sailing boats and marinas, to then end along the promenade in charming Burnham-on-Crouch, with its plethora of tea options. Flat throughout (apart from the diversion inland for lunch at the good value pub The Three Horseshoes in Althorne), and with exceptionally easy route finding.

Walk options:

Shortcuts:

- It is possible to shorten the walk by taking the train back from Althorne, right before or after lunch, or to take a bus from the lunch pub in Althorne to South Woodham Ferrers.
- You can also cut short the approach to the river from Fambridge station in the morning by using a more direct route (cuts 1.4 km/0.9 mi) or cut the Burnham ending short by using a more direct route to the station (cuts 2.1 km/1.3 mi).
- Taking both shortcuts therefore reduces the length of the walk to 17.4 km (10.9 mi), with a rating of **1/10**.
- If you bring your own lunch (there are no shops along the route) for a picnic by the river, you can cut out the walk inland to the lunch pub, reducing the walk by 2.9 km/1.8 mi and cutting 43m of ascent/descent.
- An Extension near the end, further along the Crouch towards the Sea, then turning back inland through the saltmarshes and along farm tracks, adds 6.0 km (3.7 mi). This is currently map-led.

Lunch (details last updated 12/01/2020)

The Three Horseshoes, Lower Burnham Road, Althorne, Essex, CM3 6DP (01621 740 307, <http://www.grayandsons.co.uk/ThreeHS.htm>). Open Mon 18.00-22.00, Tue-Wed 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-23.30, Thu-Sat 12.00-23.30, Sun 12.00-22.30. Food served Tue-Thu 12.00-14.30 and 17.00-21.00, Fri-Sat 12.00-21.00, Sun 12.00-19.00. Located 11.5 km into the walk, the Three Horseshoes provides good value, freshly prepared food, from a wide-ranging menu. It has two bars and a large garden at the side.

The Huntsman and Hounds, Green Lane, Althorne, Essex, CM3 6BJ (01621 741 126, <http://huntsmanandhounds.co.uk/>). Open all day every day. Lunch served Mon-Sat 12.30- 14.30 and Sun 12.30-16.00. Located off route in Althorne, should the Three Horseshoes be closed or full.

Swallowtail Restaurant Foundry Lane, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8BL (01621 785 505, <http://www.swallowtailrestaurant.co.uk/>). Open all day. Food served 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00 Mon-Fri, 12.00-21.00 Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun. Located 9.2 km into the walk. Located 14.6 km/9.1 mi into the walk, if avoiding the inland diversion to the Three Horseshoes.

Tea (details last updated 12/01/2020)

Swallowtail Restaurant As above. Located 3.3 km/2.1 mi from the end of the walk.

Harbour Antiques/Georgian Tea Garden 7 High Street, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AG (01621 786 412).

The Cabin Dairy 17 High Street, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AG (01621 782 404)

Sauda Village Oyster Pit 19 High Street, Quayside, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AS (01621 785 337, <http://saudavillage.co.uk/>).

The Star Inn 29-31 High Street, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AG (01621 782 010)

The Ground Coffee House Temperance House, 22 High Street, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AA

Peaberries Coffee 41 High Street, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AG (01621 784 559, <https://www.peaberriescoffee.co.uk/>).

The Ship Inn 52 High Street, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AA (01621 785 057, <http://www.theshipinnburnham.co.uk/>).

Ye Olde White Hart Hotel The Quay, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AG (01621 782 106, <http://www.whitehartburnham.co.uk/>).

The Anchor Hotel The Quay, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AT (01621 782 117, <http://www.theanchorburnham.co.uk/>).

The Quayside Café Restaurant The Quay, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AT (01621 783 350).

Victoria Inn Belvedere Road, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AJ (01621 783 585, <http://thevictoriahotelburnhamonseas.co.uk/>).

Bella's Italian Bistro 80 High Street, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AA (01621 782 686, <http://bellas-bistro.com/>).

The Queen's Head 26 Providence, Burnham on Crouch, Essex CM0 8JU (01621 784 852, <http://grayandsons.co.uk/QueensHBurnham.htm>).

The Oyster Smack Inn 112 Station Road, Burnham on Crouch, Essex CM0 8HR (01621 782 141, <http://www.theoystersmackinn.co.uk/>).

The New Welcome Sailor 74 Station Road, Burnham on Crouch, Essex CM0 8HF (01621 784 778, <http://www.grayandsons.co.uk/NewWelcome.htm>).

Sauda Village Fish & Chips 40 Station Road, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8BQ (01621 785 337, <http://saudavillage.co.uk/>).

Notes:

Crouch Valley Railway Line

The 26.6 km (16.5 mi) branch line from Wickford to Southminster was first opened to goods traffic on 1 June, 1889, and to passengers on 1 July, 1889 by the Great Eastern Railway. It was reduced to single track in the 1960s as part of the Beeching railway closures, with a passing loop at North Fambridge station (the mid-point). With a journey time of 31mins, this normally restricts capacity to one train every 40mins.

North Fambridge/Dengie Peninsula

North Fambridge is a village on the Dengie peninsula on the north bank of the River Crouch opposite South Fambridge. The Dengie Peninsula (pronounced /'dɛndʒi:/) is formed by the River Crouch to the south, the Blackwater to the north, both of which are tidal, and the North Sea to the east. The eastern part of the peninsula is marshy and forms the Dengie Marshes. Dengie (sometimes spelled Dengy) once formed a hundred of the same name, and its western boundary ran from North Fambridge to west of Maldon.

River Crouch/Crouch Valley

The Crouch rises in Little Burstead. It runs parallel with the A 176 for approximately 2.1 km (1.3 mi) and then follows a generally easterly course, passing by, near or through: Crays Hill, Ramsden Bellhouse, the centre of Wickford (where it flows along a concrete culvert), Runwell, Battlesbridge (the head of the 17½ mile 'River Crouch Navigation'), South Woodham Ferrers, Althorne and Burnham-on-Crouch. The river flows into the North Sea between Holliwell Point (grid reference TR026963) and Foulness Point (TR048954).

Blue House Farm Nature Reserve

This 600-acre farm is situated on the River Crouch and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It has been managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust since 1998. The Flat Fields have been grassland for the last 100 years and are used as a feeding ground for Brent Geese. Around 2,000 geese come to the area during the winter. The remainder of the farm comprises of coastal grazing marsh with ancient creeks and hollows betraying its salt marsh origins. The farm has been improved to allow water voles to thrive. A 50-acre field is surface-flooded during the winter months bringing in huge numbers of wildfowl and wading birds. A permissive path passes around the farm, giving access to the three bird hides – this links up with the sea wall footpath creating a 4 km circular route around the farm.

Clayhill Vineyard

Established in 2006 and situated near the village of Althorne, Clayhill Vineyard sits on the south facing slopes of the Crouch Valley with its clay soils running down to the river. Being on a coastal peninsula, gives the vineyard the advantage of a mesoclimate, with mild winters and hot dry summers, which help to produce quality grapes for quality wines. Now with its own café. <http://www.clayhillvineyard.co.uk/>

Creeksea Place

Originally built in 1569, this Tudor mansion in tranquil surroundings retains many original features, with a walled-garden and untouched orchard. Creeksea Place was reputed to have been the home of Anne Boleyn. Henry Mildmay, Keeper of the Crown Jewels for Charles I married into the Harris family and eventually became the owner. Following brief occupation by Lindisfarne College, it was used by British military units during World War II but since that time, the main building has been uninhabited. Only recently an effort has begun to restore the house by creating a variety of useful purposes for the buildings. The funds deriving from these activities will, allow a gradual restoration of Creeksea Place and its surroundings. These days it is specialising as a wedding venue and in hosting corporate events, but is not generally open to the public. It has been utilised in the BBC's adaptation of 'Great Expectations'. <http://www.creekseaplace.co.uk/>

Burnham-on-Crouch

The town in the Maldon District lies on the north bank of the River Crouch and is one of Britain's leading places to go yachting. Although the town has a population of only a little over 7,500, it is the principal settlement in the wider Dengie peninsula area (population 20,000), meaning it has facilities that are uncommon in small towns, such as a cinema and 22 licensed drinking establishments.

The town was mentioned in the song "Billericay Dickie", by Ian Dury and the Blockheads, which alludes to Burnham's somewhat upmarket status in the county.

The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club

The club was founded on the Thames at Erith, Kent in 1872, but moved to Burnham in 1892, and opened its award-winning Clubhouse in 1931. The Grade II* listed building is one of the few examples of the International Style of architecture in Britain and represented Britain at the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1932.

Members of The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club have been the innovators of many ideas, now accepted as standard. Its challenge to the London Sailing Club in 1893 was the forerunner of the internationally famous Burnham Week, an annual regatta week at the end of August.

The Club provided the crew for the Endeavour in Thomas Sopwith's America's Cup Challenge in 1934 after a strike of the original crew, and also the British Team for the 1936 Olympics.

<https://www.royalcorinthian.co.uk/>

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **North Fambridge** on platform 2, ignore the footbridge and *leave the platform at its rear end*, veering right up a tarmac track between a hedge on the left and garden fences on the right. In 55m you reach a road.

Here you have a choice:

For a Shortcut, *turn left*. For details see the end of the main walk directions under **Shortcut I**.

For the full walk, continue ahead. [!] In 20m, *turn left* to cross the road by a wooden footpath signpost onto a tarmac track (due W). In 45m a road joins from the right. In 150m the tarmac ends, you are now on a gravel-and-earth track. In 90m pass **Ruxley Cottage**, now on a car wide grassy path. In 240m, at the end of the metal fence on your left and almost level with the large white farm buildings 300m to your right, [!] *turn left* at a footpath cross paths, by a low wooden pole with footpath markers on the left. In 50m cross the railway line through wooden kissing gates either side. Continue in the same direction along a right-hand grassy field margin.

Stay in this direction for 600m, with sailing ship masts occasionally visible to the right through the boundary hedge, until you come out on the tarmac approach lane to **Fambridge Yacht Haven's West Wick Marina**. *Turn left* along the road and in 65m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road at a concrete footpath marker stone towards **North Fambridge Hall** and **Holy Trinity Church**. In 90m *turn left* through a gate by a wooden footpath signpost and head right towards the rear entrance to the redbrick church (usually open). *Turn left* around the church and – with a memorial away on the left – exit the church yard in the south east corner by a yellow footpath marker post along a grassy path between garden fence and hedge.

In 175m reach **Ferry Road** and *turn right* along it. In 300m pass **The Ferry Boat Inn**. Continue along the road or on the raised sea wall beside it. Ignore the left turning approach lane to **Fambridge Yacht Haven's Yacht Station**. Reach the **River Crouch** and a slipway, with the houses of **South Fambridge** visible across the water, to *turn left* by a wooden footpath marker and to stay on the sea wall. The path swings right in 150m. In 50m you walk through a metal gate with a sign for **Blue House Farm Nature Reserve**. In 165m shortcut I joins from the left up some steps.

[*] Stay on the raised sea wall, following first along the river then along a creek. In 5.4 km the sea wall and path *turn sharply left* to circumvent a water inlet, with several cottages in the village of **Althorne** visible on the other side of the inlet. (**Clayhill Vineyard** is visible up left inland on top of the slope). Walk around the inlet, ignoring a couple of ways off the sea wall through the cottages, until you reach the creek side again. *Turn left* with the path. In 180m walk down a few steps and cross the approach lane to **Bridgemarsh Marina** on the right. In 280m keep ahead, when a lane crosses left to right. [But turn left along this lane to **Althorne Station**, for a shortcut home avoiding the lunch pub.] In 500m, where the sea wall veers left, follow the path straight ahead down onto a lower sea wall, which soon swings around left as well. Rise again onto the higher sea wall and continue ahead.

[!] In 65m *ignore a footpath turning right* (the post-lunch onwards route), to stay on this car wide grassy path, with a wooded area on the left. [But for a **picnic with river views**, the best spot will be a few hundred meters further along the path turning right, where it is running along the river again.] Cross the railway line, walking through a wooden gate on either side and continue uphill on a wide path with fence and field on the left, trees and bushes on the right. 810m from the railway line you walk through a

metal kissing gate to join an earth-and-gravel track in the same direction. In 200m reach **Lower Burnham Road**, the main road through **Althorne**, and *turn right*. In 200m you reach the recommended lunch pub **The Three Horseshoes** on the left. [If you want to return home early after lunch, *turn right* out of the pub and follow the road for 900m, then *turn left* along **Station Road** and in 850m reach **Althorne Station**.]

After lunch retrace your steps to cross the railway line and head towards the creek side, **[!]** *but turn left* 200m from the railway line and go through a metal kissing gate to follow the path atop the sea wall, soon along the **Crouch** again. In 1 km, just after passing 'Stokes Hall Sluice 1', the path swings first left through bushes and then right around an area called "**Buff's Cliff**", on a slight rise. Views from the top include **Southend's** higher buildings in the distance on the right, and the **Crouch Valley** upriver, all the way back to **Battlesbridge**. Half left ahead on a rise: **Creeksea Hall** and **Burnham Golf Club**. Re-join the riverside path a bit further along through bushes.

In 900m *turn left* with the path upon approaching another water inlet. In 60m *turn right* at a right angle, and in 110m, as you reach a wooden fence, *turn left* down a few steps at a wooden footpath sign off the sea wall. Walk through a wooden gate into a pasture and *turn right* along its edge. In 220m exit the field through a wooden gate onto a road, where you *turn right*. [**Creeksea Place** is hidden behind trees up on the left]. Pass **Creeksea Sailing Club** and head straight on at the end of the road in a turning circle, following a metal footpath signpost to continue along the river. At a footpath T-junction in 400m, *turn right*. In 570m, as you reach a large marina, *turn left* and around it, staying to the right of a line of large trees. At the end of the water basin *veer right* through boats perched on trailers, towards the marina building.

At the end of the building with its Swallowtail Restaurant you have a choice:

For the afternoon Shortcut, heading directly to **Burnham-on-Crouch Station**, *turn left* here. For details see the end of the main walk directions under **Shortcut II**.

For the full walk, *turn right* to continue around the marina and re-join a riverside tarmac track, with a public park on the left. The large white building in the distance (**The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club**) is your aim. On this stretch lie the District Museum, several sailing clubs and cafes, restaurants and pubs, mostly with their front entrance on High Street and their gardens at the back towards the river. In order they are: **Harbour Antiques Shop/Georgian Tea Garden**, **The Cabin Dairy**, **The Sauda Village Oyster Pit**, **The Star Inn**, **The Ground Coffee House & Peaberries Coffee** (for these two, just past the Star Inn, *turn left* to the High Street), **The Ship Inn**, **Ye Olde White Hart Hotel**, **The Anchor Hotel**, **The Quayside Café Restaurant**.

After passing **The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club**, the riverside footpath continues, as the estuary widens out towards the North Sea, **this is the optional** (and currently map-led) **Extension**, **[!]** *but our route takes us back*.

Turn back around towards town and *turn right* down **Belvedere Road**, by a house called **The Crowsnest**. In 140m pass the **Victoria Inn** at the junction with **High Street**, where you *turn left*. Pass **Bella's Italian Bistro** and **The Ship Inn**. The High Street would lead you all the way to the station, but as it gets progressively busier with traffic further along, *do turn right* between houses in 100m, down **Providence**. Pass **The Queen's Head** on the left. *Turn left* at a junction with **Orchard Road** (later Western Road). In 470m at a T-junction *turn right*. In 50m pass **The Oyster Smack Inn** on the right. Pass **The New Welcome Sailor** on the right, then **Sauda Village Fish & Chips**. Cross the road at a zebra crossing. Shortcut II joins from the left. Pass **The Clockwork Hotel** and *veer left* down a lane to **Burnham-on-Crouch** station.

Shortcut I

(direct to river: cut the morning route by 1.4 km and 6m ascent/descent)

Follow **Fambridge Road** over the railway track. In 600m continue ahead along a gravel-and-earth lane (**Blue House Farm Chase**) where the road turns right. In 200m pass the car park of **Blue House Farm Nature Reserve** on the left. Go through a wooden gate onto a farm yard. *Veer right* in 20m to go through another wooden gate by a small wooden barn. Walk between a barbed wire fence on the right and the barn on the left. In 140m a path joins from the right across a four-plank wooden bridge. In 50m *veer right* following a yellow arrow. In 315m pass a wooden field gate into another grassy field. Follow the boundary hedge towards a wooden gate 200m away. Go through the gate and cross a creek on a wide grass bank. Scale the sea wall up steps with metal railings by a yellow marker. *Turn left* on the sea wall.

Re-join the main route directions at the asterisk [*].

Shortcut II

(direct to Burnham station: cut 2.1 km, 11m ascent/descent and the tarmac count by 1.6 km)

Turn left along the marina approach lane (**Foundry Lane**), to join **Springfield Road** and follow it all the way to **High Street** (the main walk joins from the right), where you *turn left*. Pass **The Clockwork Hotel** and *veer left* down a lane to **Burnham-on-Crouch** station.