

# Battlesbridge to East Hanningfield

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Start	Maltings Road, Battlesbridge — <b>SS11 7RE</b>
Finish	Main Road at school, East Hanningfield — <b>CM3 8AE</b>
Distance	9.47km
Duration	2 hours 06 minutes
Ascent	128m
Access	Bus and train at start of section. Bus at end of section
Facilities	Pub and café at start of section. Restaurant and shop at end of section

3.1	Battlesbridge	0m
3.2	Pass between pond and maltings Rd; up path almost to rly; R, L under rly, R and L; Over A132; half-R across two fields to Woodham Rd.	1430m
3.3	R, then L on Farm Cres; ahead on path; L and R, then ahead through woods and across field; R to follow path to Churchgate House; L to Mark's Farm.	1460m
3.4	Ahead to Potter's Farm.	1550m
3.5	Ahead to Buckhatch Lane; R, and L at Willow Tree Farm to Hillview Cottages.	1680m
3.6	W to top of hill; R with hedge on R; keep L of overgrown lane with hedge on R to rd, where half-R; follow rd past entrance to E Hanningfield Hall.	1600m
3.7	R into field; R and L to top corner of wood; NE across field and through hedge-gap; R on R side of fields almost to rd; L; R into pasture; half-L across fields; R onto rd; L to East Hanningfield to bus stop opp rd to school/shop.	1750m



*Sign at Battlesbridge station*

*Path from Farm Crescent*



**3.1** This section starts in Battlesbridge at the junction of Chelmsford Road and Maltings Road, and ends in East Hanningfield at the access road for the school and shop. The route is mainly on field paths and farm tracks with few problems as far as Hillview Cottage. Careful navigation is needed to avoid brambles and nettles to East Hanningfield Hall, and to follow the path onwards to East Hanningfield, where it has been obliterated and covertly re-routed in places.

There are bus stops here for the minibus service from stations at Rayleigh, Southend and Chelmsford: this is a roughly two-hourly service, six days a week. Battlesbridge station (trains from Wickford every 40 minutes) is 500m distant (down the station approach road and left along Chelmsford Road).

The Barge and the Hawk provide the usual pub facilities within the village, and there is a tea-room in the building next to the Barge Inn. There is another café outlet behind the pond at the Maltings Road junction which may be pressed into service in an emergency.

**3.2** Head away from Chelmsford Road between the pond and Maltings Road to pick up a footpath which rises past a plant nursery: just before reaching the railway, turn left along a path with a field on the right and a hedge on the left. Turn left to cross the railway by a bridge, then turn right and left to follow the right-hand side of a field. Bear slightly right on a path to reach and cross the busy A132. Press on ahead to cross two fields on the diagonal, and emerge from the corner of the field onto Woodham Road. Turn right along the road.

**3.3** Turn left into Farm Crescent: where the roadway turns left, continue ahead on an enclosed track: a Saffron Trail waymark is positioned on a pole in such a way that it is invisible on the approach until you are up against it.

After negotiating a left-and-right zigzag, follow a pathway through woodland and up to the top of a field, where turn right to follow an enclosed path out to Rectory Lane, with the entrance to Churchgate House on your left.

Turn left up Rectory Lane, and continue past farm buildings on both sides of the track to reach Mark's Farm.

**3.4** Continue ahead from Mark's Farm. About 600m along the way, the path has been diverted from the route on the map to follow the enclosed (and liberally brambled) track to left and then right, before descending to cross Fenn Creek and advancing to Potter's Farm.



**3.5** As Potter's Farm is passed, the

path starts to rise before descending to Buckhatch Lane. Turn right along the tarmac lane and ascend to Willow Tree Farm. Just before a house on the left, turn left on an enclosed track which leads to East Hanningfield Road at a pair of bus stops. Turn right on the road, passing the bus stop on the left, to reach a path on the left just before Hillview Cottage.

These stops are served by the two-hourly minibus service between Southend and Chelmsford.

**3.6** Take the path on the left to reach a paddock with a metal horse-sculpture over to the left. Cross a stile on the right, then continue along the left-hand edge of a field, climbing to the top of a rise, where there is a prominent fingerpost. Go through the gap, and turn right as directed by the fingerpost, with the hedge on your right. After 160m, you will be presented with an enclosed track ahead. **Do not take this track**, but rather choose the path down the right-hand side of the field to its left.

On the first attempt to walk this section, the author did go down the enclosed track, only to be met with impenetrable brambles and nettles. The vegetation at floor level was thick, trapping the ankles. After falling, the only way to get up was to roll in the floor brambles and push up to the vertical; by now the limbs and hands were cut, stung and scratched and the bootlaces had been undone, wrested by being hooked in the vegetation. Of course there was no helpful waymark.

Continue down the side of the field to reach a road at a gate.

There is a public footpath which runs in a south-south-westerly direction from here, up past industrial units

*Do not be tempted into the enclosed lane: follow the edge of the field on its left*

*Do not be deterred by these notices on a public footpath*





*On the approach to  
East Hanningfield*

(and on to reach Southend Road), so the thuggish notices on the gate might easily be perceived as illegal acts of deterrence. Walk ahead, with the gate behind you, and continue past East Hanningfield Hall on your right.

**3.7** Just where the road bends left, turn right into a field, keeping to its right-hand edge through a right turn and then a left turn. At the corner of the wood on the right, do not take a right turn to follow it, but strike off half-left across the field on a bearing of  $050^\circ$ , making for a hedge-gap. Go through the gap and (ignoring the green dashes on the map, keep to the right-hand side of the field. At the corner of the field, bear half-right to follow the path with an occasional hedge on the right (again, ignoring the route on the map).

Just after the path turns left through  $90^\circ$ , go through the hedge on the right by a stile and go half-left across paddocks before emerging onto a road. Cross the road and turn left, passing Willis Farm on your right. Go ahead at the road junction, following a narrow tarmac footway. Pass a bus stop, then the

church, to reach another bus stop, just before an Italian restaurant and opposite the road access to the village school and shop.

This stop is on the route of the two-hourly minibus service between Chelmsford, Rayleigh and Southend.

This bus stop is called “Three Horseshoes” in the timetable and on the sign: that was the name of the pub which has become the Italian restaurant, though the driver affects not to know of the pub-based stop name. He also affects not to know of the stop at Hillview Cottages, and will surely deny knowledge of the Windmill stop (passed on the way through the village), since the Windmill pub has become a bistro. Perhaps the bus company might suggest the pleasures of retirement to him: he certainly qualifies.

As well as the two restaurants, the village shop (down the lane past the school) may offer sustenance.