

Railway days out

Stanford-le-Hope to Pitsea

Start	Stanford-le-Hope station (SFO) — SS17 0JX
Finish	Pitsea station (PSE) — SS16 4UD
Distance	14.6km
Duration	3 hours 05 minutes
Ascent	97m
Transport and ticketing	Train from Fenchurch Street; buses at Corringham; day return to Pitsea
Facilities	All facilities in Stanford-le-Hope; pubs at Corringham and Fobbing; supermarket at Pitsea

1	Stanford-le-Hope stn.	0m
2	R on London Rd; ahead on Church Hill; R on The Green; L on Corringham Rd; fork R on Billet Lane to Rainbow Lane.	1470m
3	R on Rainbow Lane to reach and cross fb.	1790m
4	L along field-edge (N); follow signage (generally NE) to Manorway; cross, then R and L; R on Rookery Hill; R through churchyard to pub in Corringham.	1900m
5	Path to R of pub; pass schools; at the end, L to rd where R to corner in Fobbing..	1020m
6	R past church to end of rd; half-L on path through pasture, then follow signage N then R along edge of field; L across field and on (N) to end of Marsh Lane.	1400m
7	R on track between fields; E, then L beneath second power line to Parting Gut.	1470m
8	Beyond dike, R with sea wall on R for about 1.6km; L over ditch at sign.	1660m
9	R along R field-edge; L (W) at corner; follow vehicle track R to Marsh Fm track.	1180m
10	Ahead to rly where R; at end of second field, R then L; beyond bldgs, L to rly then R; at end of these bldgs, R along field-edge to corner of bldgs.	1320m
11	L with inlet on R; L to rly, R, then R to keep to side of inlet; L to follow path which bears L to cross rly; R to follow roadway to main road at Pitsea stn.	1410m

1 This walk begins at Stanford-le-Hope station, at the exit on London Road next to the level crossing.

Stanford-le-Hope has been a settlement for many centuries, clustered around the 800-year-old church. Joseph Conrad lived in the town while writing *Heart of Darkness*.

This walk has a long section without facilities (the full route beyond the pubs at Corringham and Fobbing): essentially, the only easy breakpoint is at Corringham. The turn-back-or-go-on breakpoint between Corringham and Pitsea is Parting Gut.

In poor weather, the marshes may be very morale-sapping; if the forecast is wet or foggy, put the outing off to another day. Choose a good day for this walk and you will be rewarded with huge skies, plentiful wildlife, and hours of silence — it is likely that you will not meet anyone else.

2 From the station entrance, turn right onto London Road. This flows seamlessly into Church Hill. Just beyond the church, bear right at a roundabout onto The Green, then left onto Corringham Road. At the fork in the road, bear right onto Billet Lane to keep the recreation ground immediately on your right. Follow Billet Lane to its end at Rainbow Lane.

3 Turn right onto Rainbow Lane, and follow it to reach and cross the modern footbridge, picking up the Thames Estuary Path route (and its occasional signage). Cross the main port access road by the bridge, and come down on the other side.

Here, the “official” Thames Estuary Path route runs north-west alongside the road to High Road, where it turns right; after turning left onto Springhouse Lane and crossing the Manorway, it turns to the right to take the quieter Thames Haven Road, rejoining the Manorway briefly before turning left on Rookery Hill to reach Corringham. There is a signed alternative to the closed route which may well establish itself as the main Thames Estuary Path route, and this is described below.

4 From the bottom of the exit ramp off the bridge, turn left and follow the signage: there are Thames Estuary Path signs, and there are yellow signs from DP World (the company which operates the port) hectoring walkers to keep to the bridleway. The latter will help you through the twists and turns, since they are so obtrusively visible from far away.

Pick up a path along the right-hand edge of a field, taking you in a generally northerly direction. The path, as signposted, takes you round the field edges. On two occasions, you will reach a point where there seems to be an option to approach a building up on your left, but in each case, the path avoids that option. You will be travelling generally in a north-easterly direction (but with many twists and turns), and will come out onto Manorway just to the left of a road junction opposite.

Cross the road and turn right, then left at the junction, to take a road with a timber business on your left: this comes out onto Rookery Lane. Turn right here, and take a path through the churchyard on the right, at the other side of which is the Bull Inn at Corringham.

The inn serves food and drink during normal hours.

Off to the left, you may follow Church Road to its junction with Gifford's Cross Road (passing bus stops for local routes). Continue ahead to the bus stop at the Social Club for the frequent bus service (number 100). This runs between Chelmsford and Lakeside, calling at railway stations at Billericay, Basildon, Stanford-le-Hope and Grays (amongst other connection points).

5 Take the narrow footpath which runs down the right-hand side of the inn. This passes two schools, one on either side of a crossing road. The path continues in the same direction, then descends to cross a field: Fobbing Church is visible ahead. The path then turns left to come out onto a road.

Turn right onto the road, and climb the hill to a road junction in Fobbing, with the White Horse Inn on your left.

You will see the date of 1381 on the pub sign: a plaque explains the connection to the Peasants' Revolt of that year.

The church dates from the fourteenth century, largely unaltered, and is said to have had close links to the smuggling trade, especially when the sea came right up to the village.

The pub serves food and drink during normal opening hours.

There are bus stops nearby, with local services. However, a breakpoint at Corringham is generally to be preferred (*see above*).

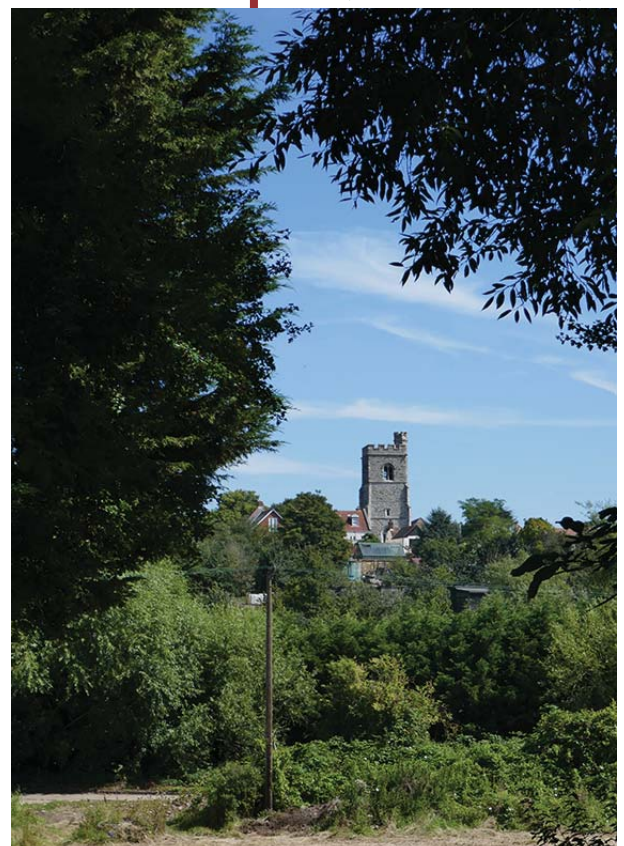
Warning — walkers should note that there are no facilities whatsoever for refreshment between Fobbing and Pitsea station, and only the most basic options when you reach the station. The distance is almost 8.5km. However, there is a large supermarket 600m distant from the end of the section.

6 Turn right at the junction and walk past the church. Follow the street round three bends, right to its end, ignoring footpaths which go off to the right.

At the end of the street, go through a gate and cross the pasture. Beyond the gate on the far side



Path from Corringham to Fobbing



Fobbing church takes its place in the landscape



Pasture on exit from Fobbing

of the pasture, follow a path ahead across a field, making for a stile on the left into the next field, where turn right along its right-hand edge, through a slight left bend.

Where the hedge on the right bends slightly to the right, strike out diagonally left across the field. At the far side, follow a path to the end of Marsh Lane where it comes in from the left.

Do not follow Marsh Lane,

but keep ahead for a few metres, until the Thames Estuary Path signpost directs you off to the right.

7 Follow the path ahead, round the left side of the field, until another signpost directs you to the left. Take the path, now bearing in an easterly direction, passing beneath one power line and reaching a second, where turn left on the path beneath the power line.

This path will lead you to a section of sea-dike, with Parting Gut (inlet) on your right. At the signpost, come down off the dike to your left.

This is the point of no return: up to this point, it is a shorter walk to retrace your steps to Corringham, beyond, it is shorter to press on to Pitsea.

Here, there is a path diversion (and, alas, elongation) from that shown on the maps. The Thames Estuary Path signs will lead you.

8 Turn to the right to follow the sea wall round three sides of a large area for about 1.6km: there is a ditch on your left all the way. Look out for a fingerpost which directs you to the left over the ditch — do not attempt to cross the ditch before you reach the fingerpost.

9 After you have crossed the ditch and gone into the next field, follow the path near the right-hand side of the field, bearing

East of Marsh Lane





left at the far end to keep the hedge on your right. When you come up to a gravel track, follow it to the right until you reach a crossing track: that track leads to Marsh Farm.

*Looking westwards towards
Langdon Hills from the path
SE of Marsh House*

10 Carry on ahead, keeping a hedge on your left, to reach the railway. Turn right to keep the railway on your left; at the end of the second field, turn right, then left, with a hedge on your left. Pass some farm buildings on the left, then turn left down a narrow path to return to the side of the railway. Turn right to keep between the railway and industrial buildings.

Do not take the level crossing on the left, but at the end of the buildings, turn right to reach the other end of the building on your right.

11 Turn left (as signposted) to follow a path with the sea wall on your right. This leads to a short return to the railway, where turn right to cross a stream, then right and left to keep a field between you and the railway. In the next field, the path gradually returns to the railway at a level crossing, which you will cross.

Railway crossing near Pitsea

This is the passenger railway between Tilbury and Pitsea: it also carries freight, so the trains come by at a fairly high frequency, as well as at high speed. If you are in any way tired, take a breather until full focus returns (don't worry about missing a connection, there are plenty of trains stopping at the station ahead). Cross in groups of one or two, having scanned and listened in both directions to ensure that there is no train nearby.

On the other side of the crossing, continue ahead, then turn right just before you reach the main road, and pick up a rough road with industry on your right. At the far end, continue straight ahead through the entrance to the site to reach Pitsea Hall Lane. Turn left: the entrance to Pitsea station is on the right.



Pitsea is served by trains to and from Southend-on-Sea and London Fenchurch Street. Westbound, some trains go via Basildon (the slightly faster route) from platform 2, while others go via Tilbury from platform 4. Check the station displays to make sure that you board the correct train.

If you are in urgent need of sustenance, you may find what you need in the rather basic facilities at the station. However, there is a large supermarket 600m away on the left beyond the railway bridge. That's another 1.2km on the end of your day, though.