



The old Anchor Hotel on the Hard (1902)



*Thorrington Mill
(built c. 1831)*



The Colne Yacht Club



Bateman's Tower (c. 1880)



Jacobus Hall (c. 1475)



The Start of Walk Three



THE BRIGHTLINGSEA SOCIETY



SIX WALKS AROUND BRIGHTLINGSEA



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INTRODUCTION

“Six Walks Around Brightlingsea” has always been a popular book, and it was now felt that due to changing circumstances that it now needs updating. We have now introduced several new walks to this revised booklet.

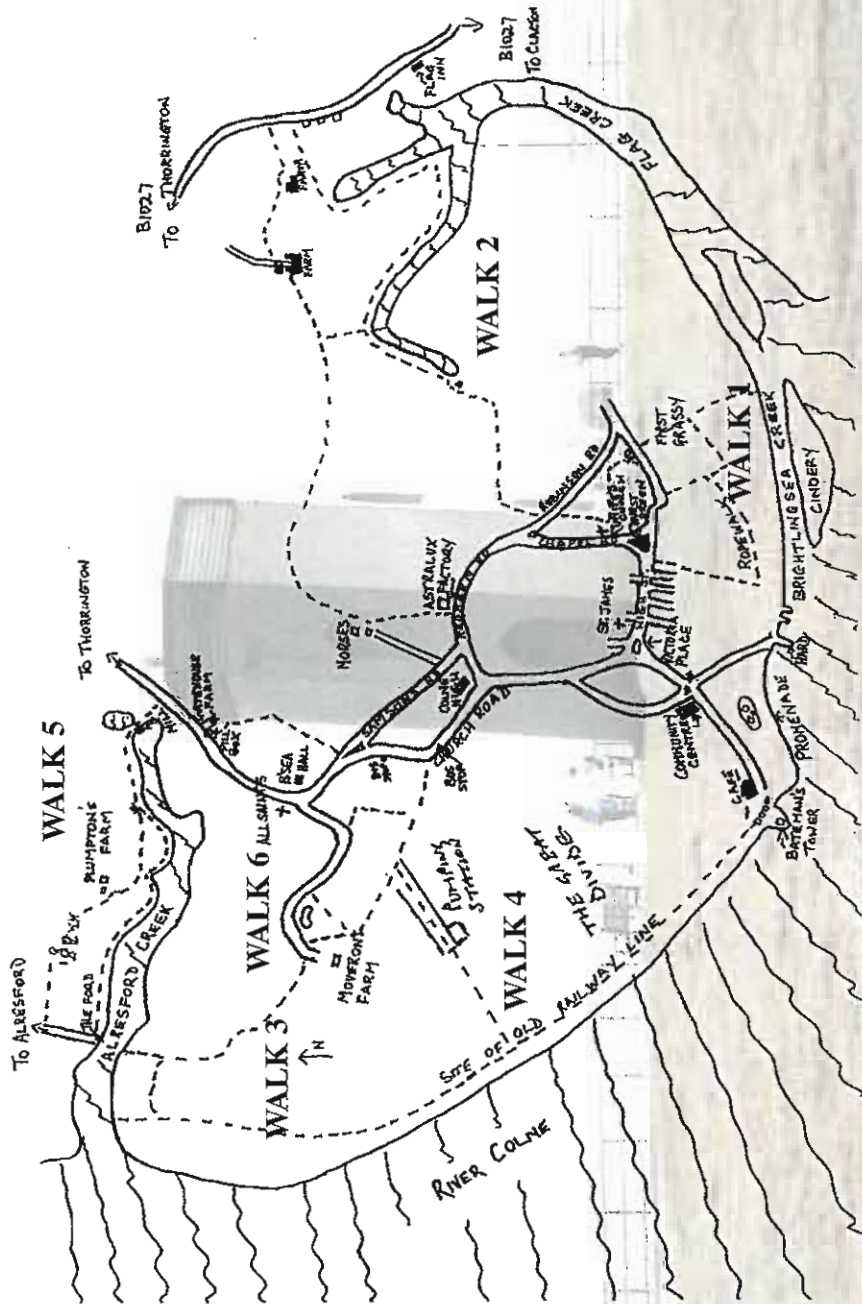
“Six Walks Around Brightlingsea” covers an interesting selection of countryside and coastal features to be found in this part of Essex. The walks are neither arduous or long. They start and finish within easy reach of the Town Centre or convenient places from which to ‘park and walk’. The abundance of wildfowl and waders makes it worthwhile carrying binoculars at all times.

It is hoped that users of this booklet will get as much pleasure from the walks as the compilers have done.

The Brightlingsea Society, publishers of this booklet, aim to make the residents aware of the advantages and amenities found in Brightlingsea, and to encourage their conservation and enhancement. Anyone who is interested in joining the Society or in its work should ask the Footpath Secretary, for details of its programme and activities

The Brightlingsea Society would like to thank John Hewitt (Chairman), Jo Grant (Secretary), Mike Holding (Footpaths) and members who helped to prepare and publish this revised booklet based on the original by Tony Atkinson and Pamela Campbell.

Published by: The Brightlingsea Society
Printed by: Newsprint, 96 Oxford Road, Clacton-on-Sea
4th Edition 2003
Footpath Secretary: Mike Holding, 4 Well Street,
Brightlingsea (01206 308761)



WALK 1 – THE ROPE WALK

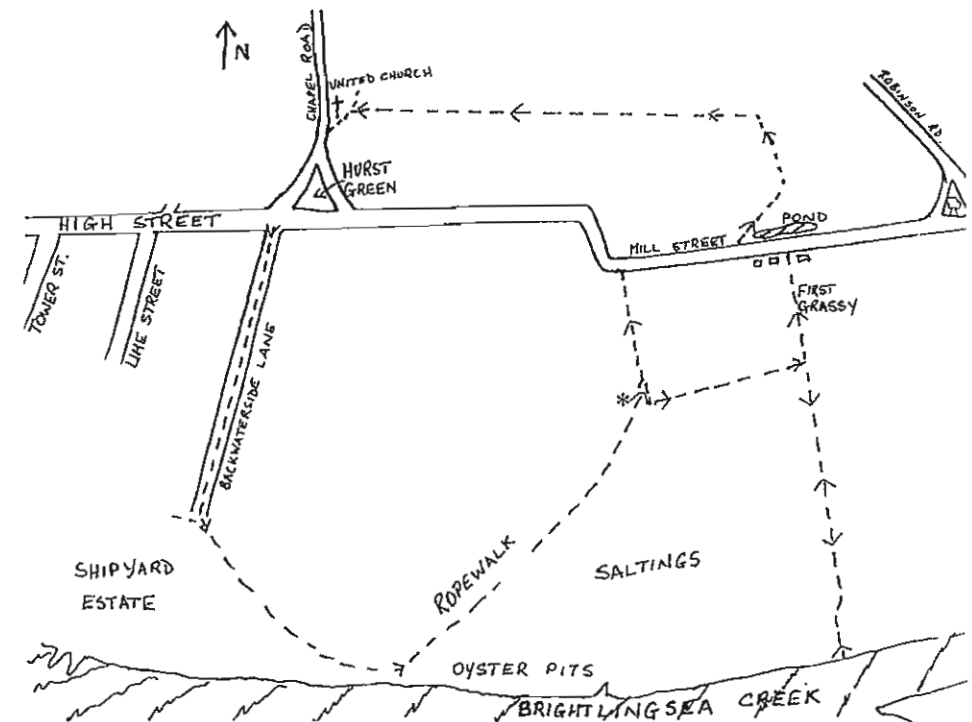
START: Where the High Street reaches Hurst Green. (MAP REF. 090 167). Walk down Backwaterside Lane which descends gradually in the direction of the sea. Pleasant country lane, but it can be wet. After 350 yards (322m) turn left at T junction along the boundary of the Shipyard Estate (wire fence) to join the sea wall. The sea wall runs along the creek for some distance and gives good views across to St Osyth. At low tide the oyster layings either side of the channel show up clearly. Look for curlews and oystercatchers. Beyond is Cindery Island, originally one long island it was divided in two in the early 19th century by “The Folly” to allow the owner of St. Osyth Priory to take a short cut to his yacht. After 300 yards (276m) the path bears left, and the 300 yard (276m) straight stretch ahead is the early 19th century Ropewalk. It passes, on the right, some saltings honeycombed with oyster pits dating from the mid-17th century and the rise of Brightlingsea’s most profitable industry. Easy walking, then the path turns left* and climbs to Mill Street. Turn left along Mill Street to return to Hurst Green.

DISTANCE: approximately 1 mile

Extended Version: At point * above, turn right (WAYMARK) along the sea wall. Turn left almost at once. Path skirts gardens to the left. Where last fenced garden ends the path divides. Turn right to cross marsh by a series of five bridges to the edge of the creek, **at the time of printing these 5 bridges are broken.** The path is waymarked and ends at a uniquely-sited finger post. Return to the main path. Turn left off main path along First Grassy, which is an overgrown path leading to East End Green. The path up the slope runs by a mudstone wall, one of the few now remaining in Brightlingsea. This is one of three sites where the sea wall turns sharply inland to allow Thames barges to take out hay and bring in London muck for the farms.

In the Spring nightingales can be heard from the woods on the triangle on the right. Turn left along Mill Street past the pond, after 100 yards (92m) turn right (Footpath Sign) over stile and the path is straight ahead for about 40 yards (36m) then bear slightly left to stile at the top of rise (by hard-standing base). Look back for fine views of Brightlingsea Creek. Cross stile, path ahead through fields to housing estate where it runs along rear of gardens to the United Reform Church. Hurst Green is then ahead.

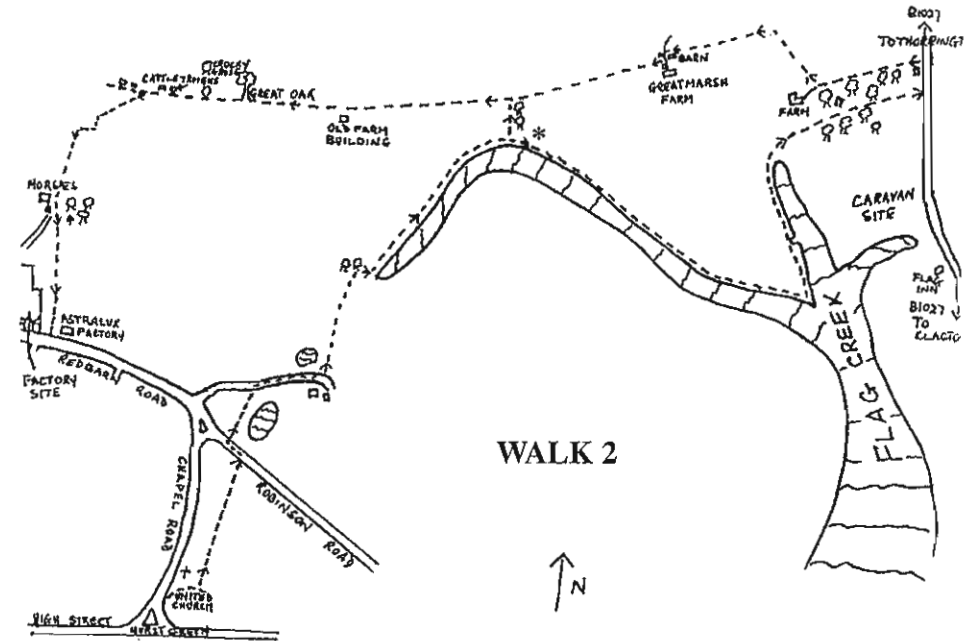
WALK 1



WALK 2 – CREEK AND COUNTRY

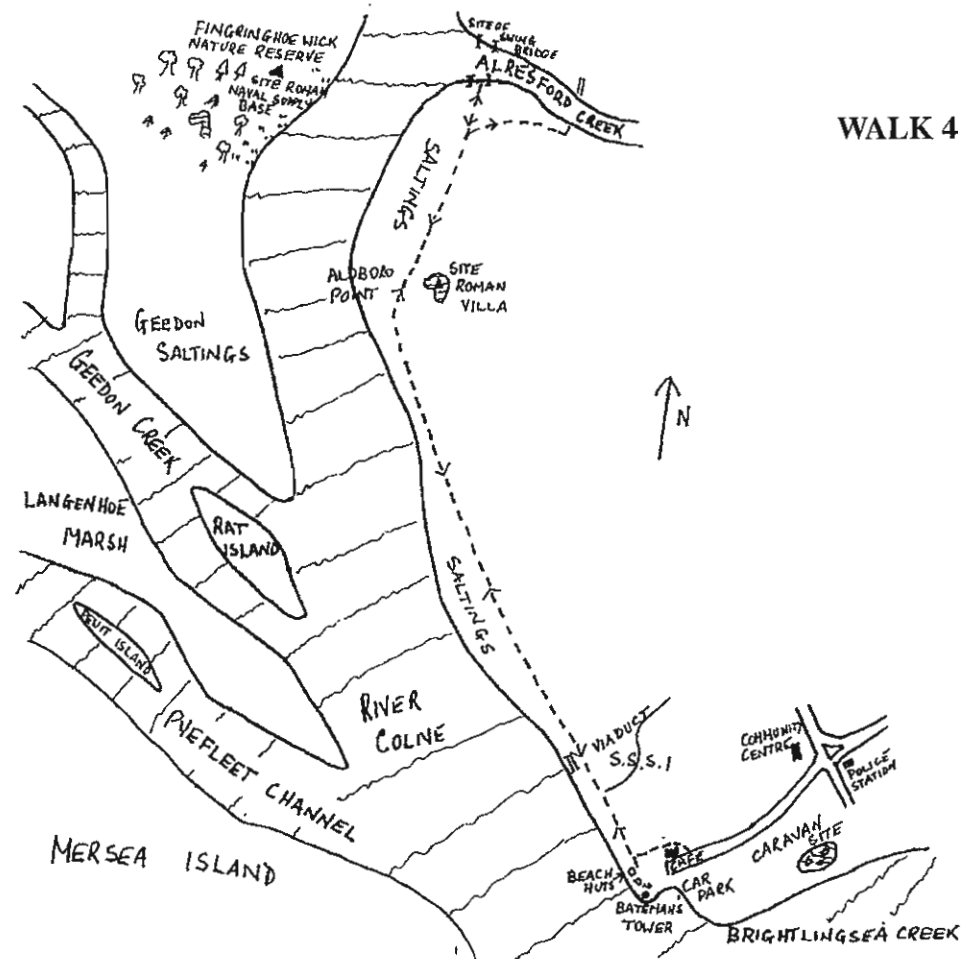
START: Hurst Green. (MAP REF. 091 168). Take Chapel Road which leaves Hurst Green at the top. After 100 yards (92m) turn right along path (**Footpath Sign**) by United Reform Church. After a short distance the path bends to right; take path to left and follow fence of housing estate to Robinson Road (**Footpath Sign**). Turn left along road; after 60 yards (55m) take path off to right (**Footpath Sign**) by edge of gravel pit, now wildfowl habitat. Path joins Stoney Lane; turn right and continue along lane, path bearing left, past a house on right. Take stile by metal gate on left. Take path downhill across small paddock to another stile; path continues towards trees; turn right across another stile and on to the sea wall. Walk along sea wall, leaving the creek to your right. Good views; look for curlew and oyster catchers. (At second bend take path to left away from sea wall for shortened version of walk passing through gate/stile, and follow hedge towards small clump of oak trees and rejoin at * below). Path continues along sea wall to right arm of creek and to its head (moored houseboats). Path now joins a track up hill through woodlands; bear left where track divides, and up to the Clacton Road (**B1027**) – **this is a busy road– take care!** Turn left; after 100 yards (92m) take track on left (at bungalow “Hill-Top”). Continue downhill, where track turns left to house and turn right across stile. Path bears slightly right to stile and footbridge and then ahead to a third stile. Track now runs between hedges to farm. Walk through farmyard past Dutch barn, turn left towards farmhouse; After a short distance turn right and leave the farmyard through a gap between farm buildings and continue along path straight ahead. After one field you come to an oak clump * mentioned earlier. This ancient path continues ahead, and ignoring farm path to right, continue past old farm building to stile and into a meadow. Path ahead past great oak tree and two galvanised cattle troughs on right. At next stile turn left and take path diagonally across field crossing two plank bridges to stile and bridge.

Turn left skirting field to concrete bridge on left, continue along hedge to gate and path “Cow Lane” up to Morses Farm. Bear left at farm. After 100 yards (92m) take path (**Footpath Sign**) on left. Path crosses field (**WAYMARKED**) to distant hedge and along track to Redbarn Road. From there turn left and return to Chapel Road.



WALK 4 – COLNE ESTUARY

START: The Promenade by Bateman’s Tower (MAP REF. 077 163). A path leads off to the right of the café to the bottom of the sea wall. Alternatively, walk to the end of the promenade to beyond the last beach hut, cross stile and walk along top of sea wall. Pyefleet Channel, the fattening ground of the Colne Oyster Fishery, can be seen to your left across the Colne Estuary. The walk follows the River Colne; the mud flats and salt marshes attract many wildfowl and waders - the Brent geese in winter, redshanks, lapwing, shelduck, crested grebe, oystercatchers and cormorants. The land to the right has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The path follows throughout the course of the old Brightlingsea Branch railway line, affectionately known locally as “the Crab and Winkle”. You then pass a timber railway viaduct of interesting construction built about 1865. Some 450 yards (414m) after leaving the viaduct there is a viewpoint from which it is said you can see three church towers: All Saints’ on the hill to the right facing the river, East Mersea ahead and Peldon at “two o’clock to your right. In the breeding season you can see and hear gulls on Rat Island. Heron can sometimes be seen to the right, and owls on Autumn evenings. The lake on the right was the site of a Roman villa. Views across the river to the Essex Wildlife Trust Reserve at Fingringhoe, and the site of a naval base associated with the Roman invasion of Britain. The path ends at the point where the railway crossed Alresford Creek by a swing bridge. Fine views : stoats can be seen here. Shortly before the path ends another path curves off on the sea wall to the right to join Walk 3. Return along path on which you came. The history of the Brightlingsea Line has been described in the books by Paul Brown, ‘The Fighting Branch’ and ‘The Brightlingsea and Wivenhoe Railway’. The line opened in 1866 and ran until the days of Dr Beeching when it was closed in June 1964.



WALK 4



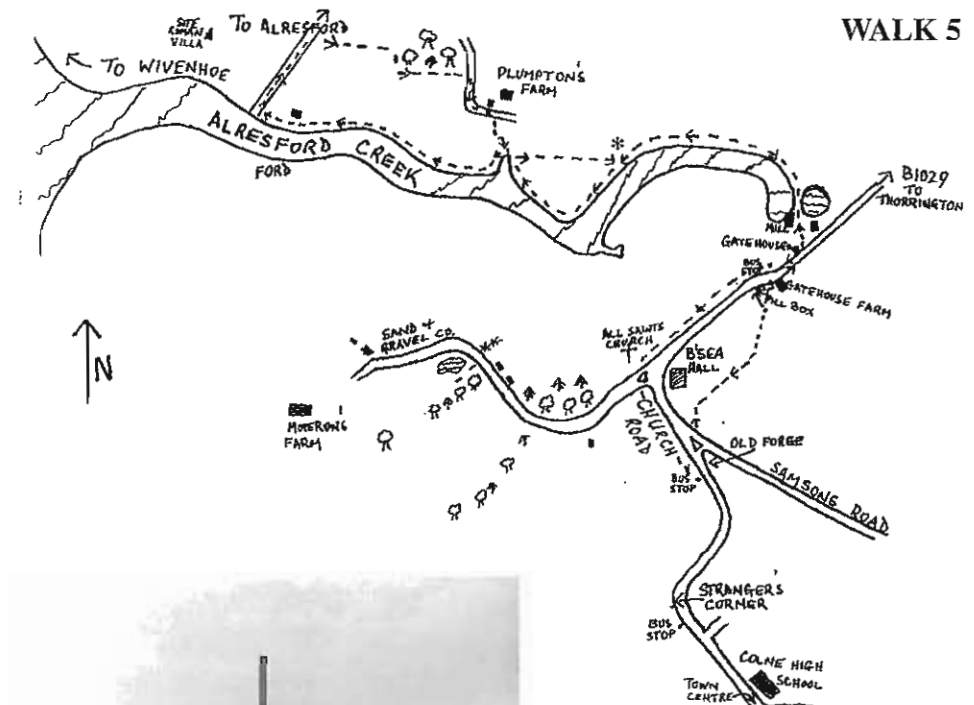
WALK 5 – ALRESFORD CREEK

START: From the Old Forge (junction of Church Road and Samsons Road), (MAP REF. 080184). Bus from Victoria Place stops in Church Road a few yards before the junction. Take path (**FOOTPATH SIGN**) and follow fence down first field, path then turns to a mid-field grassy strip down an arable slope; it then goes diagonally across the next field to the far hedge. Turn left and follow hedge to stile and footbridge, then to pillbox. Follow path sign on the far side of pill box, turn left and follow hedge to left, to the B1029. **Great care should be taken on this busy Road.** Cross road to new footpath/cycleway and turn right towards Thorrington. Walk 300 yards turn left at small white gatehouse (with gothic windows) (**FOOTPATH SIGN**), path goes down past house to Thorrington Tidemill. The Mill was rebuilt in 1831 on much older foundations, possibly 14th century and worked until circa 1926. Restoration work has recently been completed. The Mill is opened and operated by Brightlingsea Society on the last Sunday in the months between March to September including bank holidays, between the hours of 2-5 p.m. The position of the waterwheel on the side of the Tidemill is unusual. Cross the weir by path to right and continue, passing the mill pond with its wildfowl on right. After a short distance the path turns left (**WAYMARK**) to follow creek, muddy in places. Path borders creek but divides at spot where fields begin on left *. Climb onto seawall. Good views across creek to All Saints Church. Continue along seawall for half a mile, path turns right, then left, around sluice, and continues along sea wall, past house on right, to Alresford Ford. On reaching ford take metalled road to right, after 200 yards (184m), take path (**FOOTPATH SIGN**) on right. Path follows fence of gravel workings to small wood, turn right, then left, leaving woods to left, until path meets a sanded road. Turn right, follow road which bears left to farm buildings and take path to right. Path forks shortly after, take left fork to sea wall.

Return along path ahead to meet at * mentioned earlier. **Care should be taken on B1029.** Cross the road at bus stop opposite Gatehouse Farm, use new footpath/cyclepath before the blind corner. Re-cross road back onto new footpath/cyclepath continuing past All Saints' Church which is well worth visiting as it contains items of local and maritime historical significance. During the summer months the church is open at week-ends and some week-days between 2-5 p.m. Continue along new footpath/cyclepath to starting point, the Old Forge.

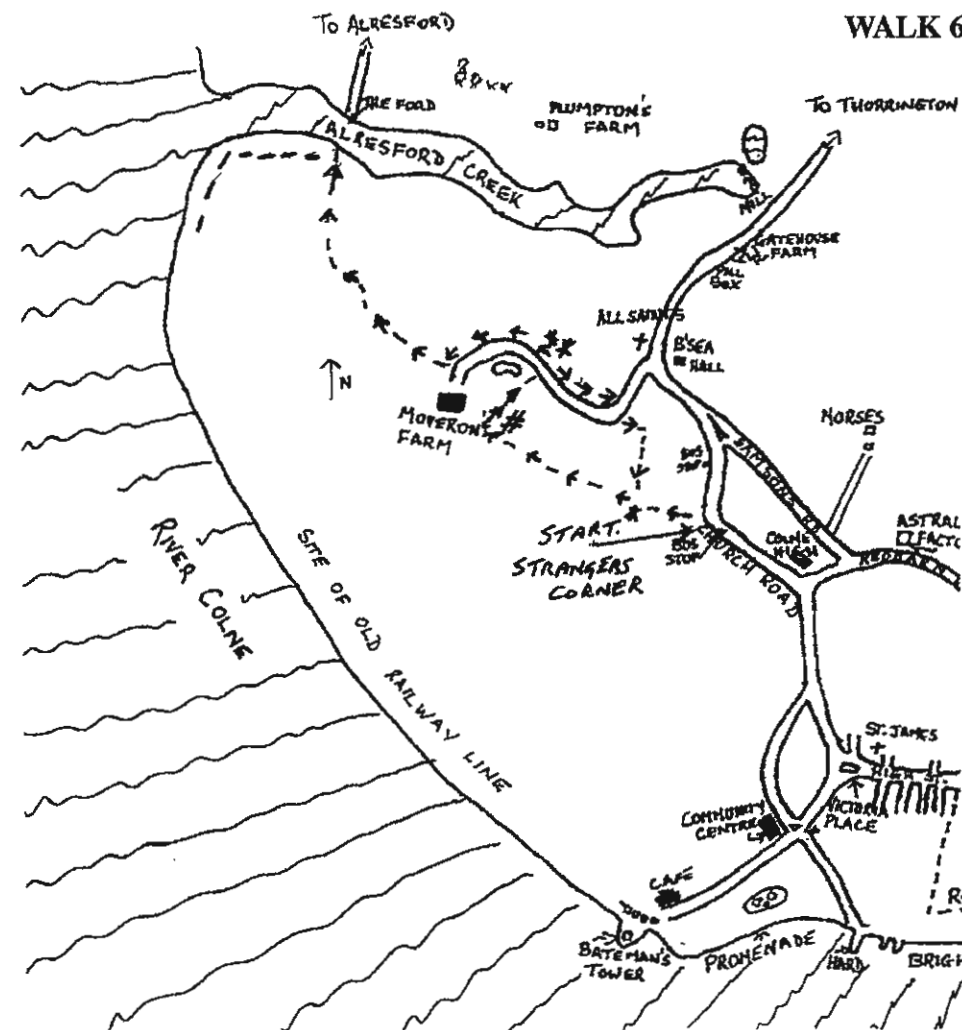
DISTANCE: 5 miles

WALK 5



WALK 6 – MOVERONS LANE AND FORD

START: Strangers Corner, Church Road (bus from Victoria Place stops 50 yards before corner). (MAP REF. 080180) Path (**FOOTPATH SIGN**) leads through gate down metalled road. Playing fields on left. After a slight bend path enters from the right. * Continue along metalled road to within 12 yards (11m) of gate and take track to the right through a belt of trees, turn right and after 40 yards (37m) turn left, take path ahead, leaving sandpit to left. Fine views to the left across the river Colne to Mersey. On reaching belt of trees # take track ahead to wire fence, turn right, the footpath has been diverted alongside the fence and below the trees. The path is narrow until it reaches a metalled road (no sign). **, turn left along Moverons Lane, then bear left, with a fishing lake on the left and gravel company on the right, bear right past the entrance to Moverons Farm (two houses on right). Path descends (moderately steep in places, bending first right then left. Good views and blackberries. Path ends at ford, which is muddy, but it is alleged that one can still wade across at very low tide. Return along the lane to point marked **. After this, continue on metalled road past Ford Farm until a sharp left-hand bend with bungalow on right. Leave metalled road (**FOOTPATH SIGN**). Footpath continues straight ahead, then turns right. Rejoin metalled road at *. # This belt of trees is one of several planted by John Bateman, the local Victorian benefactor, as a windbreak. He hoped to improve the local climate and so promote Brightlingsea as a health resort. It still contains eucalyptus which he popularised in England.



WALK 6

