

The Langdon Nature Reserve covers 460 acres of woodlands, flower meadows and old Plotland gardens, making it the Essex Wildlife Trust's largest inland nature reserve. The Langdon Nature Reserve has four main areas, each with its own special character. These are Dunton, Lincewood, Marks Hill and Willow Park.

Dunton is where you will find most of the remains of the Plotland homes and gardens. Nature has taken over again, but you can still see garden plants and orchard trees such as apple, pear, plum and damson. Adders like to sunbathe in the old bungalow foundations. They are shy creatures, so keep away if you see one – the adder is the only British snake with a poisonous bite!

On a clear day you get a really good view of London.

You too can step back to the Plotlands heyday. 'The Haven' was built by Frederick Mills in the mid-1930s and was his family's home for more than 40 years. The bungalow has been restored to its original condition.

You can visit the museum by arrangement with staff on 01268 419103.

Lincewood has some wide Plotland roads for you to ride along. There are roses and sweet peas from the old gardens. Ponds are home to newts, frogs and toads. During May and June you can admire the purple flowers of thousands of green-winged orchids growing on the neighbouring recreation ground.

Don't be surprised to hear the tapping sound of a woodpecker at work as you ride through the woodlands of Marks Hill. All three kinds of woodpecker live here – green, great spotted and lesser spotted. The wild service tree, one of Britain's rarest native trees, grows here.

The hay meadows and rough grassland of Willow Park are a haven for many wild plants and flowers. The meadows are perfect for butterflies and as feeding grounds for the dragonflies and damselflies which hover over Willow Park's nine ponds.

**You can contact staff at the Langdon Visitor Centre on 01268 419103.**

**Terrain** Undulating, some rough and muddy terrain

**Ordnance Survey Map Ref** Explorer Map No. 175 Southend-on-Sea and Basildon  
[www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/mapshop](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/mapshop)

**Parking Horseboxes** Parking by agreement

**Langdon Nature Reserve Car Park**, Lower Dunton Road. Tel: 01268 419103

**Langdon Hills Country Park**, (Westley Heights).

**Refreshments** *The Crown (Harvester) Pub*, High Road, Langdon Hill

**Langdon Visitor Centre**, 9-5pm Tuesday – Sunday & Bank Holiday Mondays

**Tesco supermarket**

**Transport** Cycling by Train - A footbridge links Laindon Railway Station to High Road bridge. Bikes could be pushed directly from High Road onto the Country Ride on the south side of Mandeville Way. There is an alternative, rideable route between Laindon Station and the Country Ride via Station Approach, High Road and

Florence Way. Telephone the Essex Traveline on 0870 6082608 daily between 7 am and 10 pm

**Vets House & Jackson Veterinary Centre**, Chevers Pawn, Rookery Road, Blackmore, Essex  
Tel: 01277 823858

**Places to visit** *Hadleigh Castle Country Park, Hadleigh (8.6 miles/13.8km)* Woodland and meadows with views over the Thames Estuary. Castle ruins nearby. Horseride and footpaths. Free admission (car parking charge)  
Tel: 01702 551072

**The Dutch Cottage, (9.4 miles/15.1km)** Crown Hill, Rayleigh Eight-sided cottage based on the design of 17th century Dutch settlers  
Free admission. Tel: 1702 318150

**National Motor Boat Museum, (3.2 miles/5.1km)** Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea  
The world's only museum devoted entirely to the history of motor boats. Free admission  
Tel: 01268 550077.  
[www.motorboatmuseum.org.uk/home/index.php](http://www.motorboatmuseum.org.uk/home/index.php)



## Country Rides

### BASILDON

6.18 miles/11 km

Riding along these tracks today you may have only birdsong for company, but in the 1930s you would have found yourself in the middle of a bustling community. Children playing in the lanes, mothers hanging out washing in the garden and the sound of hammering and sawing echoing through the tree-tops. These were the Plotlands, where London families built hundreds of bungalows and chalets as their weekend homes in the country.



