Begin the walk from Butt Lane car park; walk towards the High Street, through Wenlock Way, passing the Tourist Office on your left. On reaching the High Street turn right, passing the 18th century Plume Library. Cross over Market Hill on the zebra crossing. Continue up the High Street, past the 15th century Moot Hall and the 13th century All Saints’ Church. At the church turn right along Silver Street, passing the Blue Boar on your left. Silver Street curves left. Continue straight ahead into Beeleigh Road. Continue ahead; where the road ends, keep ahead along a track. You soon bear slightly left to continue along a parallel, fenced path. After 50 yards you come to the Leech Memorial Garden on the left.

After visiting the garden, continue along the tree-lined footpath downhill. To avoid having to dodge the traffic on the busy A414 ahead, turn right onto a tarmac path before you reach the steps down to the river Chelmer. By the river, the path turns left to pass under the River Blackwater. This elaborate system of weirs controls the point where the rivers Chelmer and Blackwater meet the sea. Cross the long wooden footbridge, then take the path to the right, which goes around the edge of the weir. On reaching the path by the navigation and Beeleigh Lock, turn right. Follow the navigation footpath for 1/2 mile, with the Maldon Golf Club on your right. On reaching a red-brick bridge over the navigation, cross over to the opposite bank.

4. Turn right along the navigation footpath. After 300 yards (shortly after passing large sluice gates), the path goes under the A414 road bridge. Continue ahead on the footpath which runs alongside the navigation for 2 miles. Along the way, you will pass (on the opposite bank of the canal) a Tesco’s supermarket and typical canal side buildings, such as the old mills and warehouses, which was built in 1863.

5. You will eventually reach Heybridge Basin, where there are interesting 18th and early 19th century houses and pubs, and pleasure craft of all shapes and sizes. The sea lock (alongside the Old Ship pub) connects the canal to the Blackwater Estuary. Cross over the gates of the sea lock and head up the embankment opposite. Continue along the seawall footpath, taking in the views of Northey Island (a Site of Special Scientific Interest, which can only be reached at low tide via a causeway). As you round the point, there are good views ahead of Maldon and Promenade Basin. 1/2 mile after leaving Heybridge Basin, you will reach a junction of paths.

6. Turn left here; after 75 yards, turn right, where the path runs adjacent to an industrial estate. Follow this grassy path for 400 yards until it comes out onto Bates Road. Walk along Bates Road for 250 yards, then turn left onto the B1018 (The Causeway). Continue over two roundabouts, then cross over the River Chelmer at Fullbridge.

7. Immediately after crossing Fullbridge, turn left onto Anchorage Hill, continuing ahead on Chanders Quay. As you reach the end of the modern waterside housing development on Chanders Quay, look out on your right for an enclosed footpath heading diagonally uphill. Take this path, which emerges onto Butt Lane. At Butt Lane turn right to follow the same footpath to the car park, the starting point of our walk.
This most enjoyable waterside walk provides the perfect introduction to Maldon's countryside and riverside. You will explore the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, see the scenic Beeleigh Falls and walk along the seawall beside the Blackwater Estuary, with fine views of Maldon. Heybridge Basin (near the halfway point) has a number of opportunities for refreshments.

Refreshments on (or close to) the walk

- Tea Room at Maldon Golf Club, Beeleigh, CM9 4SS
  Tel: 01621 853212
- Jolly Sailor, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin, CM9 4RS
  Tel: 01621 854210
- Old Ship, Lock Hill, Heybridge Basin, CM9 4RX
  Tel: 01621 854150
- The Lock Tea Room, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin, CM9 4RS
  Tel: 01621 854466
- Sunny Sailor, 1 Fullbridge, Maldon, CM9 4LE
  Tel: 01621 858704
- The Kiosk on the towpath (adjacent to Daisy Meadow Car Park) CM9 4RP
  Tel: 07835 657462

WALKING IN THE MALDON DISTRICT CIRCULAR COUNTRYSIDE WALK Beeleigh Falls and Heybridge Basin Walk

In 1974, Edna and Joan Leech, who lived in Lodge Road, Maldon, were killed in a plane crash. In their will they gave their garden to the residents of, and visitors to, Maldon and money was provided for the care of the garden. Their actions secured the garden's future for generations to come. This tranquil, hidden garden is a haven for wildlife and offers magnificent views over water meadows and the reed beds of the River Blackwater.

Heaybridge Basin marks the eastern end of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. As early as 1746 a sawyer, Richard Tovee, bought land by the basin, and Thomas Malden also purchased a plot to receive coal. A granary was built by the Navigation Company and service industries such as rope-makers and boat-builders were also soon established. Since 1859, the Basin has hosted an annual summer regatta, with yacht races and various land-based activities.