

1. 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.

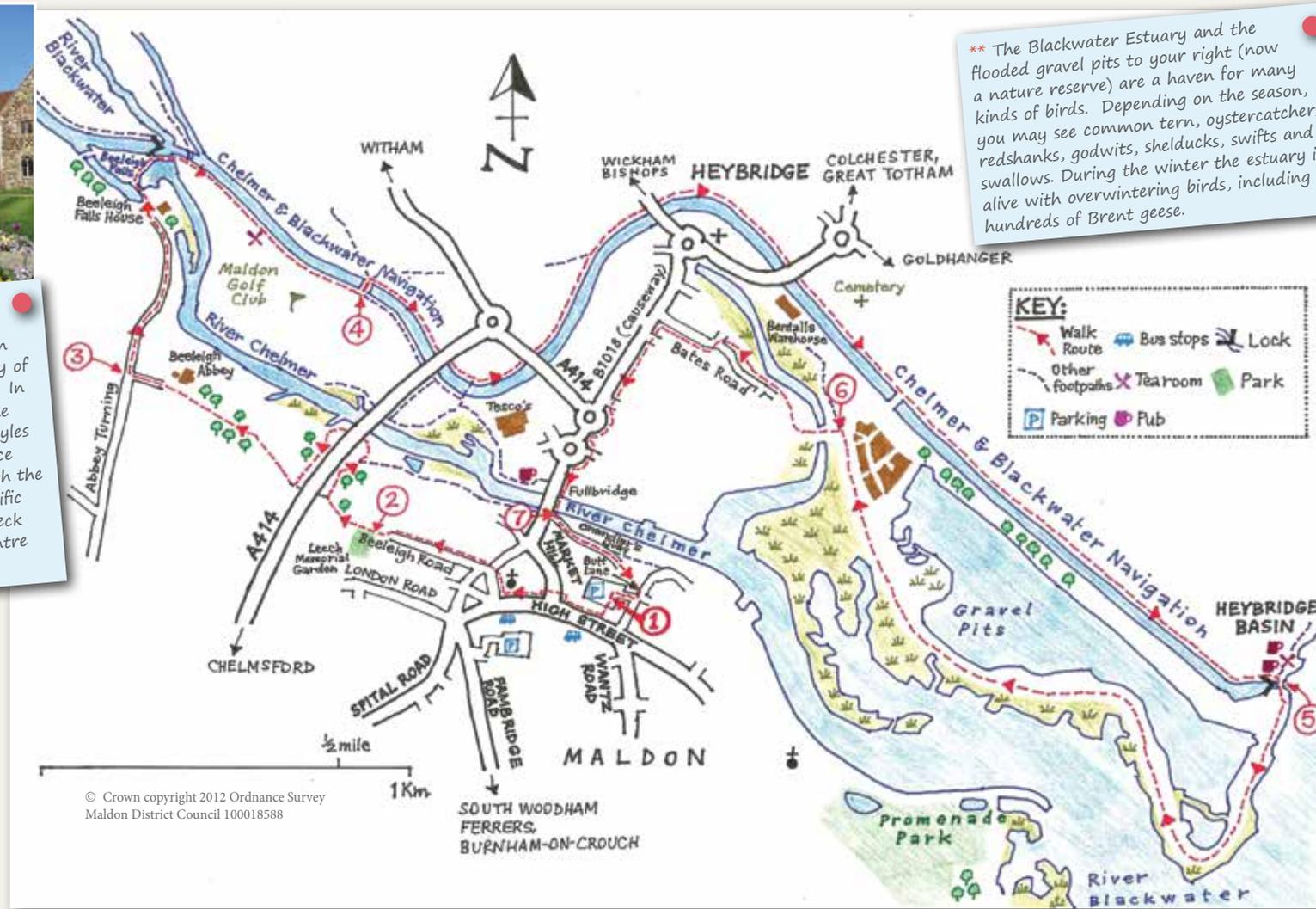


Beeleigh Abbey was a monastery constructed in 1180 for the White Canons. After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, many of the abbey buildings were pulled down. In 1943, the Abbey was purchased by the Foyle family, owners of the famous Foyles bookshop. It is now a private residence and is not open to the public, although the spectacular gardens are open on specific days during the summer months (check with Maldon Tourist Information Centre for details).

2. 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 A414 crossing. This path heads down towards the River Chelmer. By the river, the path turns left to pass under the road bridge, then turns left again to head up through trees to a T-junction. Turn right here. Maintain direction along this canopied green lane, and cross the stile. Follow the waymark along the grassy path, keeping left to emerge onto a gravel path. You soon pass Beeleigh Abbey on your right. At the end of the road turn right onto a lane (Abbey Turning).

3. The lane heads past Beeleigh Grange Farm, Kingfisher Cottage and Beeleigh Falls House. Once you pass Beeleigh Falls House on the right, look out for the kissing gate ahead. Go through this and head for Beeleigh Falls.

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 Blackwater Estuary and the flooded gravel pits to your right (now a nature reserve) are a haven for many kinds of birds. Depending on the season, you may see common tern, oystercatchers, redshanks, godwits, shelducks, swifts and swallows. During the winter the estuary is alive with overwintering birds, including hundreds of Brent geese.

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 canalside buildings, such as the Bentalls warehouse, 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 Park. 1 1/2 miles 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 Chandlers Quay. As you reach the end of the modern waterside housing development on Chandlers 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 find the entrance to the car park, the starting point of our walk.

The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation was designed by the famous canal architect John Rennie. It opened in 1793, with the last working traffic using the navigation in the early 1970s. Nowadays it is the preserve of recreational users. The Navigation runs for 14 miles (with 13 locks) through a largely unspoilt part of rural Essex and connects the county town of Chelmsford with the tidal estuary of the River Blackwater.



Heybridge Basin marks the eastern end of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. As early as 1796 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.



This walk was kindly developed by Chris Harvey for the Maldon District Tourist Information Centre © 2015.

50p to cover printing costs

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**Refreshments on (or close to) the walk**

**Tee 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

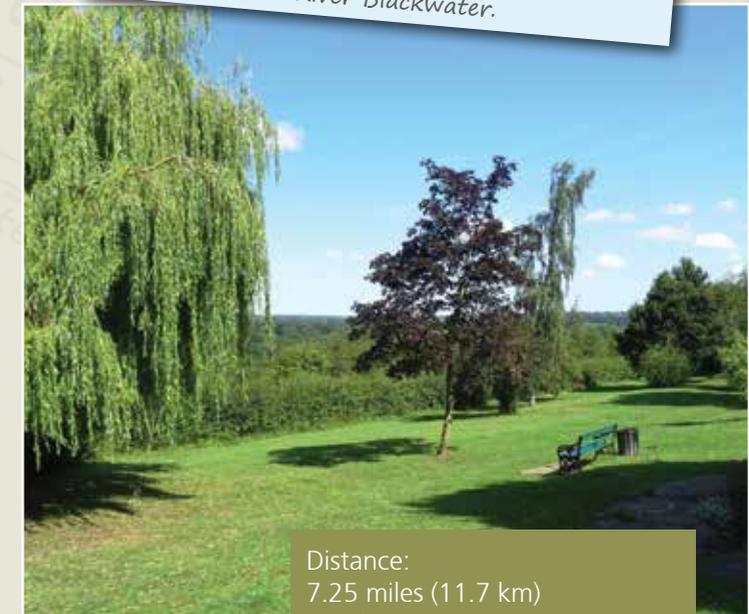
**The Kiosk on the towpath (adjacent to Daisy Meadow Car Park) CM9 4RP.** Tel: 07835 657462

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.



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.

Distance:  
 7.25 miles (11.7 km)  
 circular walk

Time taken: 3¼ hours

Location for start of walk:  
 Maldon town centre

**OS Explorer Map No: 183**  
**(Chelmsford & The Rodings)**

OS Grid Reference: TL 852 070

Parking:  
 Butt Lane Car Park, off Maldon High Street (CM9 5HD)

Public Transport:  
 Regular buses from Chelmsford, Colchester, Witham and surrounding villages (nearest bus stops in Maldon High Street)

