

1. If you have parked in Top Road, walk to the main street running through the village (Rectory Road) and turn left. After 80 yards (having passed the village stores and primary school), turn right onto the signed footpath. On entering a wooded area, ignore the footpath going right. In 10 yards, after crossing a footbridge, turn left onto a footpath. Eventually, this footpath will reach a lane (Blue Mill Lane); turn right and walk along the lane. 300 yards down the lane, you will pass the Cats pub; turn left onto the footpath 50 yards after the pub. After another 50 yards, the footpath turns right to follow the edge of a field. After 250 yards, the path reaches another lane (Hop Gardens Lane) by some cottages; turn left along the lane.

2. After 1/3 mile, you reach a T junction; turn right along Manor Road, passing Guy's Farm. After 100 yards, turn left onto a footpath (in a gap in the high hedge) and take the path across a field. After passing Woodlands House, then skirting a wooded area and crossing two fields (the path is generally going in an easterly direction), you will reach a field edge where the path meets a track. Turn left here, then after 60 yards, the footpath turns right into a field; take this well-defined path which heads through the middle of the field. After nearly 200 yards, the path enters another field. Follow the path until it reaches a lane (Abbey Turning).

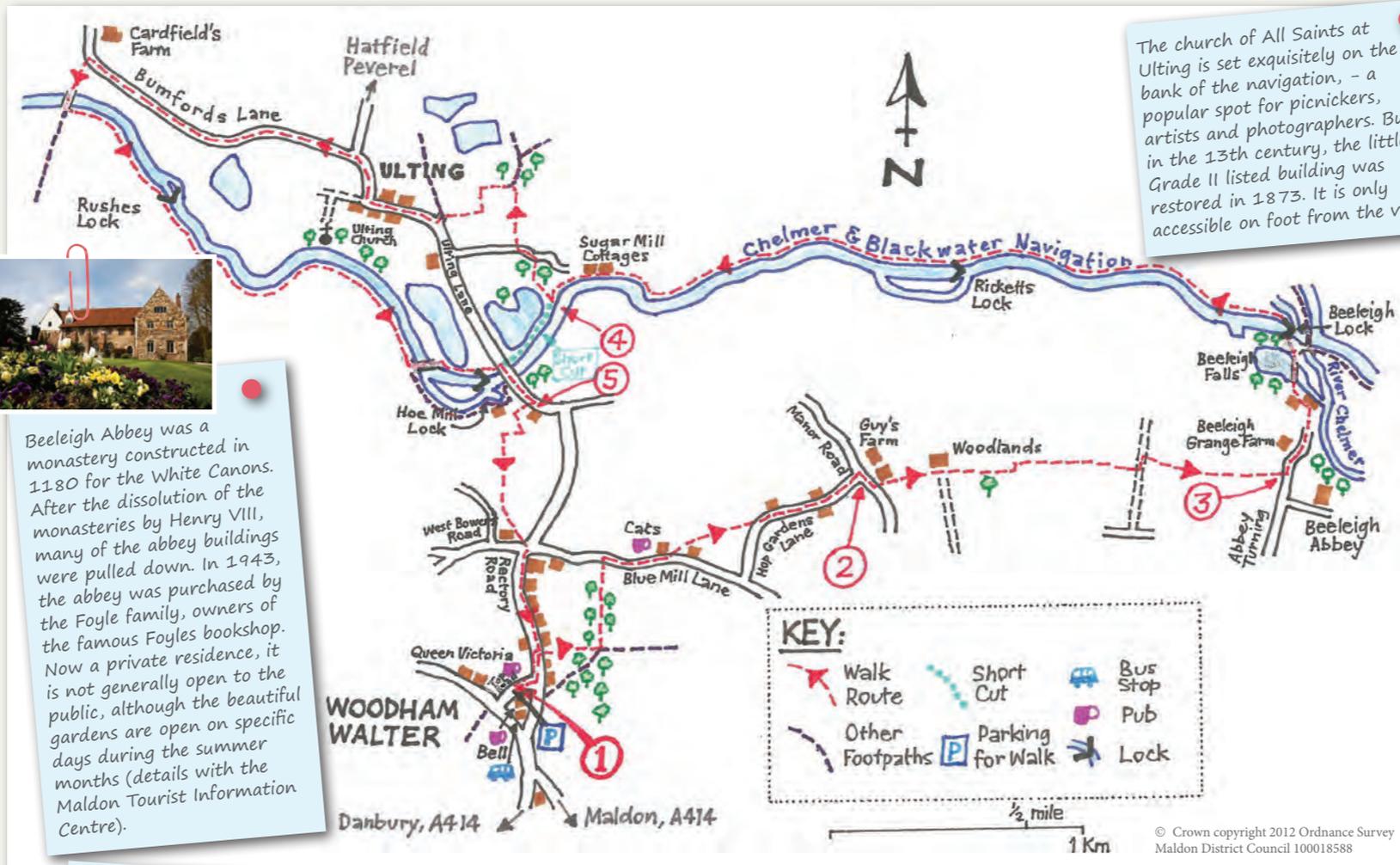
3. The walk turns left here; however, a short detour to the right into the next lane on your left brings you to the front entrance of Beeleigh Abbey, originally a 12th century monastery. Continuing on the walk, the lane heads past Beeleigh Grange Farm, Kingfisher Cottage and Beeleigh Falls House. Once past Beeleigh Falls House, look out for the kissing gate ahead of you. 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 follow the path around the edge of the weir. On reaching the path by the navigation, cross the footbridge by Beeleigh Lock and then turn left here to follow the navigation footpath for 2 miles. You will pass Ricketts Lock and Sugar Mill Cottages along the way.



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. Now a private residence, it is not generally open to the public, although the beautiful gardens are open on specific days during the summer months (details with the Maldon Tourist Information Centre).

The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation was designed by the famous canal architect John Rennie. Opened in 1793, the last working traffic using the navigation was 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 city of Chelmsford with the tidal estuary of the River Blackwater at Heybridge Basin.

4. 350 yards after Sugar Mill Cottages, you will see a footpath heading away from the canal to the right. **FOR THE SHORT VERSION OF THE WALK** ignore this path, continuing ahead on the towpath for 300 yards, until you reach a gate by the road bridge (Hoe Mill Bridge). Turn left to go over the bridge. Continue from point 5.



The church of All Saints at Ulting is set exquisitely on the bank of the navigation, - a popular spot for picnickers, artists and photographers. Built in the 13th century, the little Grade II listed building was restored in 1873. It is only accessible on foot from the village.

**FOR THE FULL WALK** turn right onto this footpath away from the navigation. This becomes a grassy track and soon skirts around the edge of a lake (once a quarry). 250 yards after leaving the navigation towpath, there is a fork in the track. Look to your right (over to the line of trees and heading away from the lake); 40 yards away, you should see a yellow footpath marker and a written notice saying 'public footpath'. Head for these signs and follow the path into the trees. Shortly after crossing a footbridge, you will reach a lane (Ulting Lane). Cross over the lane, taking the footpath opposite (to the right of the entrance to the house called 'The Paddock'). After 300 yards the path reaches the far left-hand corner of a field; there is a junction of paths here. Cross the footbridge, then take the footpath to your left.

Follow the ill-defined path which zigzags around the field edge, until you reach the point where power lines head across the field. Cross the field, heading for a gap in the fence just to the right of the power lines. After going across the section of lowered fence, turn left on the track, going around the green metal gate to reach a road. Turn right along the road and go through the hamlet of Ulting, ignoring the lane which leads to the church. After nearly 1/3 mile, where the main road takes a sharp left and right bend, take Bumfords Lane off to the left. Follow this lane for 3/4 mile, then turn left onto the footpath where Bumfords Lane takes a sharp right bend towards Cardfield's Farm; this footpath heads back towards the navigation. Cross the footbridge which spans the navigation, turning left onto the towpath. Continue on this path for 1 1/4 miles, passing Rushes Lock and Ulting Church. When you reach the line of moored boats at the end of weir for Hoe Mill Lock, cross the footbridge and continue on the towpath to reach Hoe Mill Lock. Go through the metal kissing gate and turn right along the road.

### BOTH ROUTES

5. 100 yards after the bridge over the navigation (where the road bends sharply to the left), turn right onto the gravel track leading up to Hoe Mill House. Take the footpath to the left just before the main gates to the house. The path zigzags around the grounds of Hoe Mill House, then heads southwards along the left-hand edge of a large field. At the far left-hand corner of the field, go over the stile and turn right. After 15 yards, turn left (ignoring a path which goes straight ahead) along the footpath between fences. After 200 yards, and after crossing another stile, the path comes to a lane (West Bowers Road). Turn left up to the junction with Rectory Road; turn right here to head back towards Woodham Walter. There is a footpath on the left-hand side of the road all the way back into the village. After passing the school you will soon see the "Queen Victoria" pub and Top Road on your right, where you started the walk.

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

50p

to cover printing costs

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MALDON DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

### Refreshments

on (or close to) the walk

Bell, The Street, Woodham Walter,  
CM9 6RF - Tel: 01245 222176

Cats, Blue Mill Lane, Woodham Walter,  
CM9 6LS

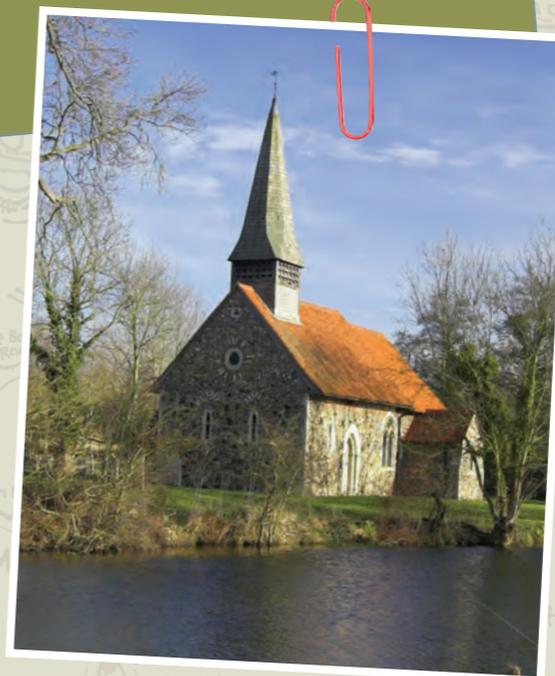
Old Chapel Stores, The Street, Woodham  
Walter, CM9 6RF

Queen Victoria, The Street, Woodham  
Walter, CM9 6RF - Tel: 01245 223437

### Useful web links

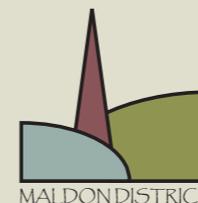
Essex Waterways  
[www.waterways.org.uk/essexwaterways](http://www.waterways.org.uk/essexwaterways)  
Beeleigh Abbey  
[www.visitmaldon.co.uk/beeleigh-abbey](http://www.visitmaldon.co.uk/beeleigh-abbey)

## WALKING IN THE MALDON DISTRICT CIRCULAR COUNTRYSIDE WALK The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation



This very attractive walk provides a good opportunity to sample some of the delights of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, such as the scenic Beeleigh Falls and Hoe Mill Lock. The full version of this walk allows you to pass the beautifully situated 13th century church at Ulting.

[visitmaldondistrict.co.uk](http://visitmaldondistrict.co.uk)



MALDON DISTRICT

### PLEASE NOTE:

The navigation towpath can be very muddy after rain and during the winter, so stout walking footwear is usually essential.



Distance:

Full walk: 8.9 miles (14.4 km).

Short walk: 5.9 miles (9.5 km)

Time taken: Full walk: 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hours.

Short walk: 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours

Location: Woodham Walter,  
3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles west of Maldon.

The village is signposted from the A414 (the main road from Maldon to Chelmsford).

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

OS Grid Ref: TL 808 070

Parking:

Roadside - Top Road/Rectory  
Road, Woodham Walter  
(CM9 6RF)

Public Transport:

Buses No. 5, 31A – Maldon to  
Chelmsford via Woodham Walter  
(very limited service)