

Islington u3a Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Laindon to Tilbury	Walk No.	585
Area	Essex	Type	Linear
Date	Thursday, 10 th September, 2026		
Distance	15.0 miles (24 km). But with two drop out points.		
Timing	6 hours walking time + travel + lunch stop. If doing the whole thing, allow 8 hours in total. Expect to be back in Islington by 5:30pm (depending on trains).		
Meeting up & travel	We'll start from Fenchurch Station. Meet at the Bank entrance (at the upstairs information desk) – not the Tower Gateway end! We'll get the 9:36am train to Laindon on the Shoeburyness line. Return from East Tilbury back to Fenchurch Street. With Senior Railcard: ticket from Zone 6 (Upminster) to Laindon Off-peak Single = £3.55. Return journey, single, East Tilbury to Zone 6 (Rainham) = £3.55. Or a day Rover ticket for £8.00.		
Route	Last walked in September, 2019. (10:08am, 0km) Alight from the train in Laindon [IF1] and leave the station through the exit. Turn left then left up a footbridge going right across it. At the road turn left along the road bridge pavement. Turn left on the other side of the road bridge down some steps to turn right at the bottom then fork right immediately along a signposted bridleway. Follow the bridleway round to the right and into Marks Hill Nature Reserve [IF3]. Follow a clear path up through the clearing & at the junction cross the track and continue broadly in the same direction uphill into the wood (up Gladstone Rd). Continue in the same direction through a few clearings and eventually curve right uphill until you walk through a barrier, where another path joins from the right. You walk through a bike barrier and turn left at a T-junction with a wider forest path and continue in the same direction on a tarmac drive. Go straight across the road (by a 'Bridleway 247 Langdon Nature Reserve' [IF2] signpost pointing backwards) continuing down the path to the Post Box at the end. Then turn left down the lane. Just at a small car park on your left and just before some metal field gates — fork right through a wooden horse-blocking barrier to the right of a metal field gate. Immediately almost turn right, along an unmarked indistinct footpath through a wood. Go over a stile into a large grassy field and continue up the middle of it - between farm buildings (Westley Hall Farm) on the left and a house on the right. Leave the field at the top over a stile and turn left along a lane (with splendid views over the estuary). Just after the stables turn right, continue up an earth footpath, and go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate - into a park (Westley Heights). Keep straight ahead, over a wide gravel path, onto the grass, up to the top of the bank. Veer slightly left on the top walking down parallel with, on your left hand side, a line of trees. Ahead in the dip you'll see a wide gravel track – pick this up at a hairpin bend. Turn right on it. Shortly as the road veers right,		

continue straight through a wooden kissing gate along a narrow grassy path between hedges to reach a T-junction with a road.

Turn left on the road down past the houses, then turn right along a car wide farm track right through the middle of **Northlands Farm**. Close the gates! Out the other side keep straight down a car wide earth track (ignore the left fork), now with far views into the Thames Valley including oil refinery / terminal, some quayside cranes at the new London Gateway deep water container port, other industrial units, and to Kent beyond (around the Hoo Peninsula).

Just before a double metal field gate at the bottom corner of this field — turn right through a metal kissing gate into a large grassy field (divided into paddocks) with some farm buildings on the right. Follow the left hand boundary of it round - to the bottom then veering right up the hill (with **Great Sutton Wood** on your left). At the top left corner exit the field through a metal kissing gate and up on to the track. Turn left. Then shortly (before the track drops downhill) turn right up **Old Hill** along a broader path. This is Old Hill Mile (11:30am, 6½ km).

The path starts to run parallel to a track. Just before the path turns right, leave the path turn left through an easily missed squeeze gate, cross the track and enter a large arable field through a hedge gap. Straight across the field towards the left hand corner of a wood. There you'll find a 3-way signpost. Turn right into the wood (Footpath 86). Follow a meandering path through the wood at a four-way footpath signpost keep on Footpath 86. Cross a stile into open fields.

Continue straight on along various field boundaries. Then you join up with a track. Follow the track for a bit but cut left on to the parallel path at some stage (before you get to Wrens Park farm) but keep in the same direction. At the field end follow it round to the right briefly then cross the plank bridge. Cut diagonally across the grass field to another planked bridge with stile. Then slightly right, cut up through this field to the hedge on the roadside. Cross the stile and cross the road. On the other side you can cut through the hedge and onto the field or to dodge it, just turn left for a bit on the roadside then left up the track (old road). This brings you out on to **Horndon-on-the-Hill** [IF4] High Road. You'll walk past the Bell Inn [IF5].

(12:15pm, 10km) Time to visit the church [IF6]?

Continue down the road, down the hill. Before you reach the Gables turn left on to a path (Path 37) out along the side of a field. Follow this all the way to the A13. Use the steps up the bank, cross over first slip way, then over the A13, then over the other slip round, veering right down this slip road. You'll see the path signpost. Down the steps and the track will lead to a footbridge under the railway and into the heart of Stanford-le-Hope. Keep going straight over roads and the path will lead to a road with the church opposite. (1:00pm, 11km, 7miles). This is the lunch stop (turn left for Inn on the Green). Drop out 1: turn right down the road to the train station.

(2:00pm) Come out of the pub turn left, at the junction cross over to carry straight on, following the smaller road, toward the cemetery. Follow it right to the railway line, go underneath, then take the path (Footpath No. 38) backwards on the right (to Mucking). This will

	take you across some reed beds. When the path comes out on a road at a few houses, turn left down the road round a couple of bends. Then go right into the car park. Here on the right there is a fenced path – signed Thames Estuary Path. Follow this for some time. At times it's by the side of the railway line and snakes between old gravel pits. The path meets a large pit and a signed junction (2:40pm, 16 km, 10miles). Drop out 2: Take the right path if wanting the direct route to East Tilbury station (1 mile). Otherwise follow the sign to Coalhouse Fort / Tilbury). This will lead you toward the disused Sewage Works – cut the corner, veer right over the field to the flood wall. Great views up & down the river. Cross the flood wall so you can walk along the sea side path. The path goes right along the river, passed East Tilbury Marshes. Keep going until you reach Coalhouse Fort [IF7]. After exploring around the fort we'll take the main road out heading for East Tilbury. Keep on the main road to the station (5:00pm, 24km, 15miles). Trains at 4.58pm, 5:27pm, 5:42pm.
Lunch	Food is available all day in the Inn On The Green pub, Stanford-le-Hope (01375 400010). Or there are shops.
Dropping out	Trains from: Stanford-le-Hope (lunch stop): 7.0miles. Before Coalhouse Fort (walk to East Tilbury): 12.0miles.
Suitability	Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. There are no particular difficulties. Terrain: mostly field paths. Last section after Coalhouse Fort is 2miles on a quiet road. Possible obstacles: 4 stiles. Comfortable waterproof walking shoes/ boots. Waterproof jacket. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain. Wear, or carry, an extra layer. Members should advise the Walk Leader of their 'ICE' (in case of emergency) phone number if they have any health concerns.
Facilities	There are toilets at the beginning at Fenchurch and Laindon stations; at the pub in the middle; on route at Coalhouse Fort. Not at the end at Tilbury Station.
Walk source	Saturday Walkers Club. Walk 114 (Laidon to Stanford) then Leader's creation.
Map & other references	OS Explorer 175 & 163 or OS Landranger 177 Links: http://www.walkingclub.org.uk/book_3/walk_114/index.shtml
Leader & contact details	<u>Walk Leader:</u> Derek Harwood <u>Contact Details:</u> mobile: 077 5931 4096 e-mail: derek.harwood@live.co.uk
Interesting facts	Interesting Fact 1: Laindon: is an Ancient Parish in Essex, England. The oldest known name for it is Ligeandune, probably meaning 'hill settlement by a stream called Lea' (Celtic, meaning 'light river'). It was based on the (probably smaller) Manor of the same name and now lies mostly within the urban area of Basildon. It is north of Laindon railway station on the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway.

IF2: Marks Hill Nature Reserve: Ancient and secondary woodland, much of it restored to the coppice cycle, part of Langdon Nature Reserve.

IF3: Willow Park Nature Reserve: At 220 acres, the largest part of Langdon Nature Reserve with the greatest variety of habitats. An ancient hedge is part of the boundary of a former deer park.

IF3: Langdon Hills Country Park: Langdon is of Saxon origin, meaning 'Long Hill'. The Country Park and the adjoining Nature Reserve sit on a crescent shaped hilly ridge extending from Dunton in the West to Vange in the East, giving panoramic views over the Thames Estuary and across to Kent and London. The hills were saved from major housing development when they were bought by the County Council in the 1930s under the 'Greenbelt scheme'. In 1949 the decision to build Basildon New Town was to lead to an ever increasing number of local visitors to the park. The needs of 150,000 local residents for peaceful countryside make the hills more important than ever. In 1973 the Langdon Hills Open Spaces were declared as a Country Park. It now consists of a mixture of meadows, farmland and modern and ancient woodland and is split into two sections known as Westley Heights and One Tree Hill.

http://www.healthylifeessex.co.uk/pages/outdoor-life/Langdon_Hills.html

IF4: Horndon-on-the-Hill: appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Horninduna, meaning 'horn-shaped hill'. A wool market was established in the village in the early 16th Century, the building later became a shelter for the poor people of the area and still exists. Several other old buildings line High Road.

IF5: The Bell Inn: is a 15th Century Coaching Inn run by the same family for over 75 years and features two busy bars, an open fire, numerous ales on hand pump and a top-class wine-by-the-glass list. The menu changes daily, using seasonal and local produce where possible. Upstairs, and in the Georgian properties next door but one, are 27 individually styled bedrooms. Should you wish to stop over.....

IF6: St. Peter & St. Paul: The church dates from the 13th century and is Grade I listed, although a proportion of the flint, rubble & Kentish ragstone construction material are from the Roman area. An interesting detail is the timber-and-peg jointed structure of the belfry. The church is open most Saturday mornings for visitors.

IF7: Coldharbour Fort:

Coalhouse Fort

Opposite Cliffe Fort, just where the river turns north, there are the stark, rusting remains of what is still marked on many maps as a water tower, but was in fact a secret early radar tower operated during WWII from COALHOUSE FORT, which squats low, massive and solid, a little further on behind a crescent lake. Coalhouse is considered to be THE BEST EXAMPLE OF AN ARMoured CASEMENT FORT LEFT IN BRITAIN and was one of a series of forts built in the 1860s by General Gordon of Khartoum as part of the Coastal Defence network. Inde-

structable but decaying, Coalhouse is being slowly restored by volunteers.

Watching over Coalhouse Fort from on top of a nearby hill, where St Cedd founded a minster in the 7th century, is a little Norman church that lost its tower to the Dutch in 1667.