

River Crouch Canoe Trail

Woodham Ferrers to Battlesbridge and back Canoe Trail– on the tide!



General Information

This is a great family trip when the tides fall right. It is a very suitable trip for touring kayaks and open canoes. The lower part of the river is quite exposed, so watch the wind and check the tides before you set off.

The River Crouch is a very popular area for yachts. Racing boats can be seen, especially during the well known Burnham Week.

Distance

Around five miles in total.

Maps

- OS 168 Colchester

Start/Finish

From South Woodham Ferrers follow the signs to the country park (thorough a housing estate). Marsh Farm Country Park is on the left – keep ahead to the car park beside the estuary and launch either from the shingle or from the slipway. The trip works on neap tides but is best on Springs. Aim to leave Woodham Ferrers an hour before high water (Dover + 1 hour 22 minutes).



Paddle upstream with the rising tide. There is a yacht and motor boat club on the right bank to avoid, but otherwise the trip is very peaceful, with lots of wetland birds to observe on the way. You'll also see a number of old moored sailing barges in various states of repair (and decay) before you eventually come to the old tidal mill at Battlesbridge. The water flowed into the pool as the tide rose, and then when the tide ebbed the lock gates closed and the water flowed out through the water wheel, driving the machinery. Now the gates are chained open and the rising and falling tide produces a jet or even a wave (If you live in East Anglia, then any moving water is worth getting excited about!).

You can carry on up the River Crouch <http://www.burnham.org.uk/rivercrouch.htm> on the rising tide until the tide turns; the river gets very narrow, but it is fun to explore.

Even more fun is to explore the Barge Inn (draught beers include Adnams Broadside, Courage Directors and Charles Wells Bombardier) and the antiques warehouse at Battlesbridge (the largest in Essex). The view across the salt marshes from the restaurant at the top of the antiques warehouse is really spectacular.

When the tide turns, paddle back to Woodham Ferrers. <http://www.wfandbpc.org.uk/> Don't leave it much more than 45 minutes after high water at Battlesbridge to return, or you will have a muddy get-out!