

## Points of interest

### Church of St Michael the Archangel

The Grade II\* listed church of St Michael the Archangel in Woodham Walter is believed to have been the first purpose-built Anglican church in the country. Built in 1563, just five years after the accession of Elizabeth I, this mellow red-brick place of worship is the only Elizabethan church in Essex and one of only six built in Elizabeth's reign.



### Historic pubs

Woodham Walter has two Grade II listed pubs. The Bell, an oak-beamed pub with a distinctive black and white frontage, dates back to 1563. The Cats (with its delightful garden) is 18th century. It was originally a double cottage, but by the 1870s, was used as a beer house. The current landlord, Wally Hicks, has run the pub for over 40 years!

### Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation

Designed by the famous canal architect John Rennie, the navigation opened in 1793. The last working traffic was in the early 1970s, today it is the preserve of recreational users. The Navigation runs for 14 miles (with 13 locks) and connects the county town of Chelmsford with the tidal estuary of the River Blackwater at Heybridge Basin.



### Hoe Mill Lock

Hoe Mill Lock is the deepest lock on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, with a fall of 8 feet 3 inches. The lock was built at the end of the artificial canal cut which made a detour around Hoe Mill, a corn mill that stood nearby until 1914, when it was demolished. There's a campsite there now if you fancy a long weekend of walking.

## Refreshments

The Bell  
The Cats  
Freddies Bar & Cafe

01245 223437  
No phone, cash only  
01245 223258

@bellwoodhamwalter  
@catswoodhamwalter  
thewarrenestate.co.uk

More locations available at [visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/food-and-drink](http://visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/food-and-drink)

## WOODHAM WALTER WILDERNESS

### Short Walk

This undulating walk explores the pretty village of Woodham Walter and its nearby woodland, known as The Wilderness, plus a visit to Hoe Mill Lock



A mix of pavements and field paths, which can be muddy.  
Two stiles on the route



65 minutes to 80 minutes



2.7 miles



### How to get here



Bell Meadow, The Street, Woodham Walter CM96RF



DaRT 99A and D6. Must be pre-booked at least 2 hours ahead on 01621 874411



Explorer 183

[prettiest.whisk.headings](http://prettiest.whisk.headings)



## Discover the Maldon District

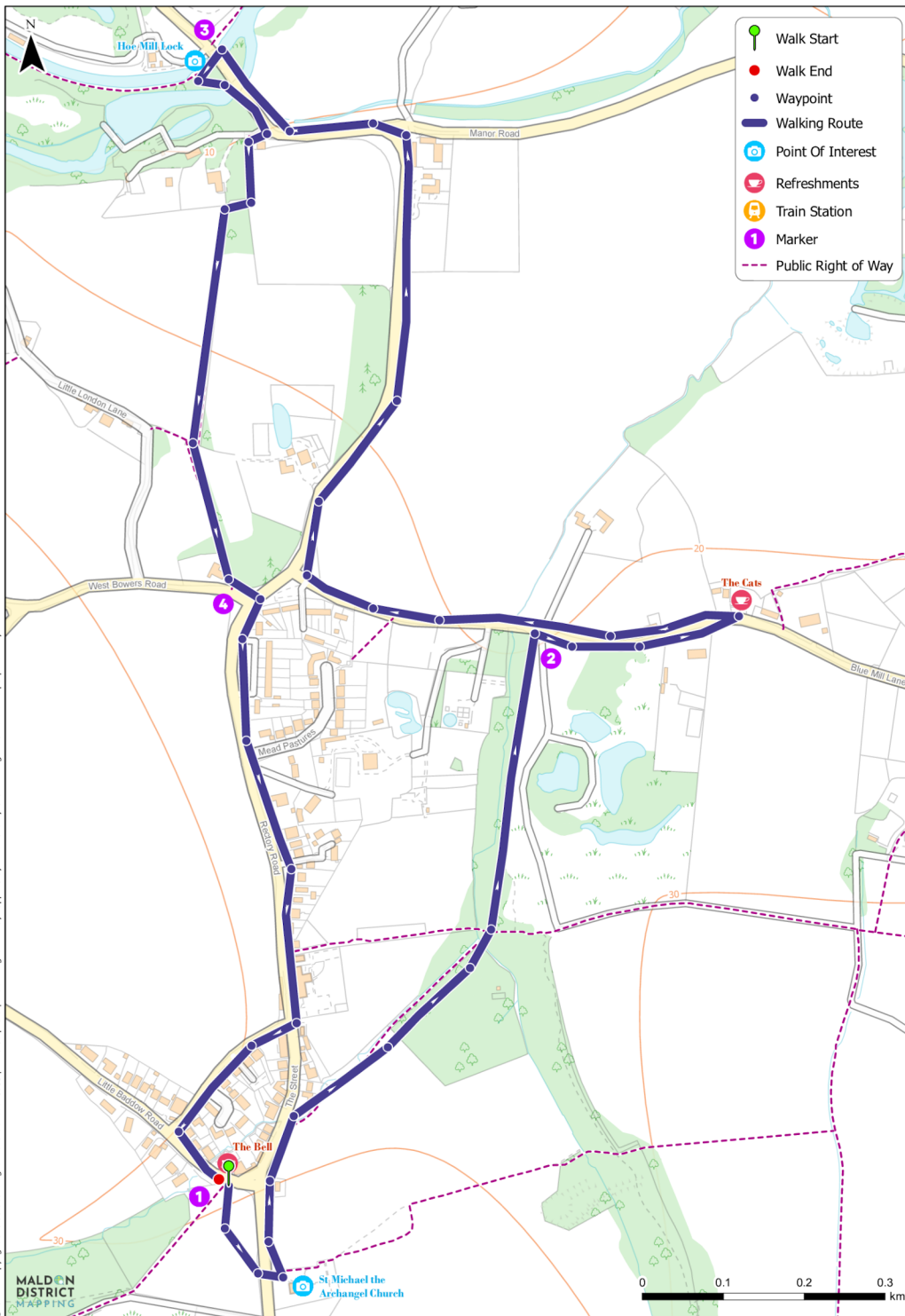


[visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/walks](http://visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/walks)



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## Route



**1.** Enter **Bell Meadow** through the entrance opposite **The Bell** pub. Ascend the hill, heading in the direction of the church spire. In 120 yards, exit the Meadow through the gate and cross Church Hill. The church and churchyard of **St Michael the Archangel** are worth exploring. On leaving the churchyard, turn right and head down Church Hill back towards the village. After 200 yards, turn right onto the signposted footpath (the road sign showing there is a school ahead is on the opposite side of The Street at this point). Go ahead on the path, which initially is on the left-hand edge of a large field, but soon enters woodland, with a stream to your left. This is **The Wilderness**. Cross the **footbridge** and take the path heading uphill (ignore the other footbridge off to the left). In a few yards, on reaching the short finger post showing the junction of paths, turn left. Follow this woodland path for 400 yards until you reach Blue Mill Lane.

**2.** To visit the attractively rustic **The Cats** pub, turn right onto the lane. The Georgian house with its long garden to the left is **Blue Mill**. In 300 yards you will reach **The Cats** on the left. Retrace your steps along Blue Mill Lane, passing the footpath on your left where you exited the woodland earlier. At the T-junction with Rectory Road and Hoe Mill Road, turn right to walk along the road. There is a grass verge for much of this half-mile section of the route but take care as there are a couple of sharp bends in the road (left then right) after you have passed the house called **Hoe Mill Barns** on the right. If you would prefer not to walk along this fairly busy road, you have the option of using the footpath described in point 3 below, in the opposite direction. After crossing the bridge over the river bypass to the weir (where the one-way traffic system starts), look out for the blue metal **kissing gate** on the left next to **Hoe Mill Lock** on the **Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation**. Go through the gate to the **towpath**.

**3.** After you've explored Hoe Mill Lock and the Navigation, retrace your steps back over the river bypass bridge. Turn right into the short access road for **Hoe Mill House** (where the road takes a sharp left bend). Just after the **gatehouse** on the left and to the left of the main gates to the main house, there is a signposted footpath. Take this path, which soon follows the left-hand edge of a large field. In the far left-hand corner of this field, go over the stile and turn right onto the enclosed path. In 15 yards, turn left onto the enclosed path. After 150 yards, go over the stile following the fenced path behind the house; this soon exits onto West Bowers Road.

**4.** Turn left and cross Rectory Road, turning right into the village. In a third of a mile (after the school), cross the road and turn right into Top Road. In 200 yards, turn left into Little Baddow Road. You will soon reach **The Bell**, opposite the starting point.