

TOLLESBURY WICK MARSHES

COASTAL WALK



CIRCULAR WALK

Shorter walk: uneven or muddy ground. Walking boots recommended.
Longer walk: Isolated walk with difficult terrain.



START
TOLLESBURY



2 HOURS 45 MINS OR
4 HOURS 30 MINS



5.8 MILES OR
8.9 MILES



OVERVIEW

Tollesbury Wick Marshes is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); this leaflet offers a short and long walk around the spectacular reserve, which is today managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. Both routes make for superb walks as they provide plenty of interest; there are good views of the Blackwater Estuary and Mersea Island, as well as excellent opportunities for bird-watching. Tollesbury is now renowned as a yachting centre; once upon a time the marshes were the haunt of smugglers.

HOW TO GET HERE

Location for the start of the walk:

The Kings Head Public House

OS Explorer Map No:

176 covers the land south of Tollesbury
184 covers the land north of Tollesbury inc.
Old Hall Marshes

OS Grid Reference: TL 956 104

Parking:

In the village square (Church Street), CM9 8QU

Public Transport:

Bus No. 95 – Maldon to Tollesbury
(www.traveline.info)

M A L D O N D I S T R I C T



VISITMALDONDISTRICT.CO.UK



TOURISM@MALDON.GOV.UK

Tell us what you think of the walk & send us your photos:



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THE SAIL LOFTS

The Sail Lofts were built at the turn of the 20th century to house the sails of J class racing yachts during the winter months. Several J class yachts from Tollesbury took part in the America's Cup between the wars, including "Endeavour" and "Flying". The restored lofts now house small offices and a tea room.

THE TOLLESBURY WICK MARSHES

The Tollesbury Wick Marshes reserve covers 600 acres of coastal marsh, sea wall and saltings. It is designed to show how traditional coastal farming can encourage a superb variety of wildlife. In winter, flocks of brent geese and wigeon feed on the pasture. Lapwings, redshanks, meadow pipits, grey plovers, curlews, oystercatchers and dunlins frequent the marshes. Short-eared owls, hen harriers, barn owls and kestrels regularly hunt the reserve.



KELVEDON & TOLLESBURY LIGHT RAILWAY

The Kelvedon and Tollesbury Light Railway, more affectionately known as the "Crab and Winkle" Railway, opened in 1902. It ran from Kelvedon to Tollesbury, with stations along the way at Feering, Tiptree and Tolleshunt D'Arcy. The deck of Tollesbury Pier was removed in 1940 to prevent an enemy landing. Sadly, in 1951 British Railways decided that the line was unprofitable and it was closed to both passenger and freight traffic.

THE LIGHTSHIP

This floating centre is a unique place for adventure, relaxation and exploring the environment. Based on a converted lightvessel, it's an activity venue for youth clubs, schools, churches, special needs groups and those wishing to gain sailing and power boating qualifications.



REFRESHMENTS



KING'S HEAD, 1 High Street, Tollesbury, CM9 8RG - Tel: 01621 869203

BARRETT'S BAKERY, 10 High Street, Tollesbury, CM9 8RG - Tel: 01621 869317

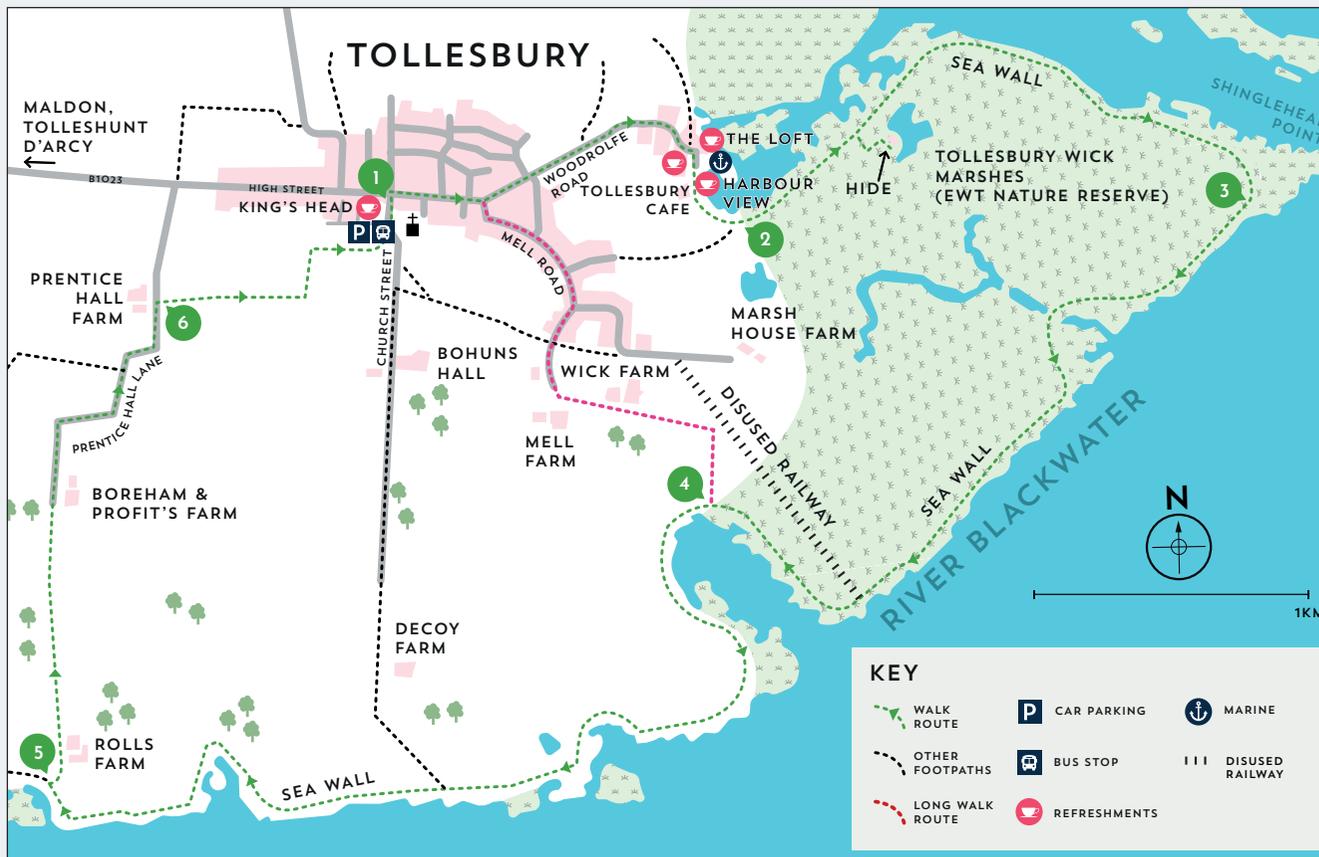
MCCOLLS (GENERAL STORE), 2 High Street, Tollesbury, CM9 8RG - Tel: 01621 868684

THE LOFT (TEA BY THE SEA), Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, CM9 8SE - Tel: 01621 869063

TOLLESBURY CAFÉ, Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury, CM9 8SB - Tel: 01621 869980

HARBOUR VIEW BISTRO & BAR, Tollesbury Marina, CM9 8SE - Tel: 01621 869561

- ESSEX BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY www.ebws.org.uk
- SALTMARSH 75 www.saltmarsh75.co.uk
- ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST www.essexwt.org.uk
- THE LIGHTSHIP www.fact.org.uk



WALK ROUTE

1. Both versions of the walk start in Church Street, where you can usually find parking spaces. By Roebuck House (opposite the "King's Head" pub), turn right into East Street. At a fork of roads (after 350 yards), keep left and continue ahead on Woodrolfe Road. After almost ½ mile, after passing the Tollesbury Sailing Club on the left, turn right and ascend the grassy bank to take the footpath along the sea wall. To your left are the beautifully restored Sail Lofts. Continue ahead, passing in front of the Tollesbury Marina clubhouse, with the marina to your left. After 300 yards, go through a gate to enter the Tollesbury Wick Marshes Reserve.

2. The walk continues along the sea wall, with views of Woodrolfe Creek and the lightship to your left. ¼ mile after entering the reserve, look out for a permissive path heading away from the sea wall. Turn right down the steps and follow the path to the hide which has recently been constructed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The hide provides an excellent opportunity to view plenty of birdlife in an adjacent area of marshland. After visiting the hide, return to the sea wall footpath by the same route.

Resume the walk along the sea wall, taking in the views of West Mersea. After another 1 mile, you will pass the Second World War pillbox at Shinglehead Point (between late April and early July, please do not venture onto the shingle itself because little terns, oystercatchers and ringed plovers will be nesting there). The shingle and shells here support the yellow-horned poppy.

3. There are now good views of the decommissioned nuclear power station at Bradwell across the Blackwater Estuary. After another 1½ miles, you will reach an information board about the Crab and Winkle railway line, which is situated near the remains of Tollesbury Pier (by another pill box). The terminus station for the railway line was just inside the sea wall; the level shows just how much the sea wall has had to be raised since the 1953 floods.

The sea wall now turns northwards to run alongside Mill Creek. Nearly ½ mile after passing the remains of Tollesbury Pier, go through a metal gate which marks the boundary of the nature reserve. The seawall path now curves to the left.

4. For the short walk: After another 75 yards, look out for an enclosed, hedged path on the right below the sea wall. Take this path, with a field to your right. After 220 yards, go over the stile and turn left onto the track. Ahead of you at the stile you will see in the distance the World War II naval watch tower erected in 1940 to control mines laid across the River Blackwater (now a residential property). After 400 yards, you pass Wick Farm farmhouse on your right; the track then narrows down into a footpath, with a field to your right. After a further 250 yards cross over a low stile, then go through a kissing gate and turn right onto a lane, heading uphill. Ignore the crossing footpath; the lane soon enters the village of Tollesbury, becoming Mell Road. Stay on Mell Road for just over ½ mile, then turn left onto East Street. After another 350 yards, turn left into Church Street to return to the starting point of our walk.

For the longer walk: continue ahead on the sea wall path for another 2½ miles.

5. As you approach Rolls Farm you will see a track leading up from the marshes to the left of the farm. Drop down from the sea wall and turn right to take this track (Prentice Hall Lane), soon passing the farmhouse on your right. Continue ahead on Prentice Hall Lane for another 1¼ miles; as it nears Prentice Hall Farm the lane twists right and left several times.

6. Just past the farmhouse, by the Ship Ahoy Quay marker, turn left on the footpath away from the sea wall, descending the steps down the bank. At the front gate of Old Hall Farm turn right along the track until you reach a junction of footpaths, at this point take the left path.

7. Immediately after passing two semi-detached houses on the right ("Strawberry Villas") and just before the farmhouse at Prentice Hall Farm, turn right onto the footpath, along a farm track. After ½ mile, the footpath goes ahead through some trees, whereas the farm track forks off to the right. Stay on the footpath, looking out for a footbridge on the left; cross this & follow the footpath which goes across a field towards the backs of some houses. Turn right on reaching the back gardens, continuing through a playground. Then take the route past the metal barrier on the left back into Church Street. Follow Church Street back to the village square, where we started the walk.