



Sunday 10 May 2026 Route Guide

Emergency Event
Mobile Number

**07866
935496**

24KM ROUTE

Heybridge Basin to Chelmsford via Paper Mill Lock

- You'll start your trek along the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, on a quiet path alongside the river. The waterway was constructed in 1793 as a major route from the port at Maldon to Chelmsford, then a small market town.
- After 3km nearby to Tesco, please keep to the concrete path and cross over the blue bridge. You'll continue walking and then head under the A414 before walking alongside Maldon Golf Club. The club was founded in 1891 making it one of the oldest in the country!
- You'll now reach Beeleigh Lock, your first water stop. Cross a bridge over a huge weir, where the freshwater river Chelmer and tidal river Blackwater meet. As you stand on the bridge, the canal is in front and behind you. After the bridge you'll cross the canal again before continuing with the canal on your left.
- After 2km you'll pass Rickett's Lock, continue with the canal on your left.
- Another 2.3km on, you'll reach Hoe Mill Lock. You'll find water refills here and some friendly faces to cheer you on! Take care when crossing the road. You're now going to be walking with the canal on your right.
- After a further 1km you'll see All Saints Church, Ulting on the opposite side of the river. It dates to 1150 AD and is built on the highest piece of land for miles. After 1km you'll pass Rashes Lock.
- You now have a pleasant 2km stretch of walking along the canal path before your next stop at Paper Mill Lock. As you approach Paper Mill Lock, you'll see some tall 'Salix Alba' willow trees. These trees are harvested to produce some of the finest cricket bats in the country!
- You've arrived at Paper Mill Lock! Half way there! It used to take two days for a barge to make the journey from Heybridge to Chelmsford! Paper Mill lock was the ideal half way resting point, where workers would sleep in the bothy and stable their horses.
- Enjoy a rest, some snacks and water refills here, as well as a toilet stop, before continuing on. The 12km walkers will be joining you at this point, so give them a friendly welcome! Continue with your route guide below.

12KM ROUTE

Paper Mill Lock to Chelmsford

- Welcome to Paper Mill Lock! In 1702 there were two mills on the "Island" just below the lock and to the north of it. One mill was engaged in grinding corn and the other in making paper. Paper making seems to have been started at this site by one John Livermore and the mill was most likely used in the first part of the process by reducing rags to pulp.
- In its heyday in the mid 19th century up to 60,000 tons of freight was carried along the 14 miles of the Chelmer & Blackwater navigation, rising 77ft via 12 locks between Heybridge Basin, on the Blackwater Estuary, and Springfield Basin, close to the heart of Chelmsford.
- You'll walk for 2km along the river before reaching a bridge crossing – take care when crossing the road. You'll be joining the North side of the canal and will soon pass pretty Little Baddow Lock.
- After a further 4km of peaceful canalside walking you'll reach Sandford Mill Lock – your water stop. You'll find toilets and a water refill point here. This was originally a water mill, and then home to Chelmsford Waterworks. Now it is Chelmsford Museum's Industrial collections store and home to 'Susan', the last surviving wooden Chelmer barge.
- 1.5km from Sandford Mill Lock you'll pass Barnes Mill lock and a further 1km along you'll reach the outskirts of Chelmsford at Springfield Lock. This is the end of the Chelmer & Blackwater navigation canal and you'll cross over a bridge and along the river. With the river to your left, you will pass the Essex Record Office on your right, passing beneath the newly constructed Bow Bridge Road. After another 100m or so you will cross a green footbridge over the river and walk around the edge of a car park and into Chelmsford town centre.
- You'll continue along the river through central Chelmsford – take care at the various road crossings. At M&S, cross the road and continue into Bell Meadow Park. Continue towards the underpass and on the other side of the underpass you'll be in Central Park – one of Chelmsford's oldest parks. You're almost there now!
- After the café, cross the bridge over the river Can and turn immediately right under the viaduct. This was built in 1843 when the line between Brentwood and Colchester opened. Keep to the left after the viaduct and walk a further 200m to a small gateway on your right into the Teledyne e2v car park.

