

# Rural sites and seaside delights

## Southend-on-Sea and the Roach Valley

Total distance of main route is 40.5km/25miles



- Short walks**
- A** 17.4km/10.8miles
  - B** 10.9km/6.7miles
  - C** 15.3km/9.5miles
  - D** 20.3km/12.6miles
  - E** 7.6km/4.7miles
  - F** 2.9km/1.8miles
  - G** 10.7km/6.6miles

- Attractions along this route**
- 1 Adventure Island Southend
  - 2 Southend Cliffs Pavilion
  - 3 Palace Theatre
  - 4 Pritlewell Priory Museum
  - 5 Central Museum and Planetarium
  - 6 Southchurch Hall Museum
  - 7 Southend Marine Activities Centre
  - 8 Sea-Life Adventure
  - 9 Southend Planetarium
  - 10 Southend Pier Museum
  - 11 Southend Pier

- Accommodation**  
*for details see overleaf*
- 1 The Roslin Beach Hotel
  - 2 Pier View
  - 3 Beaches Guesthouse

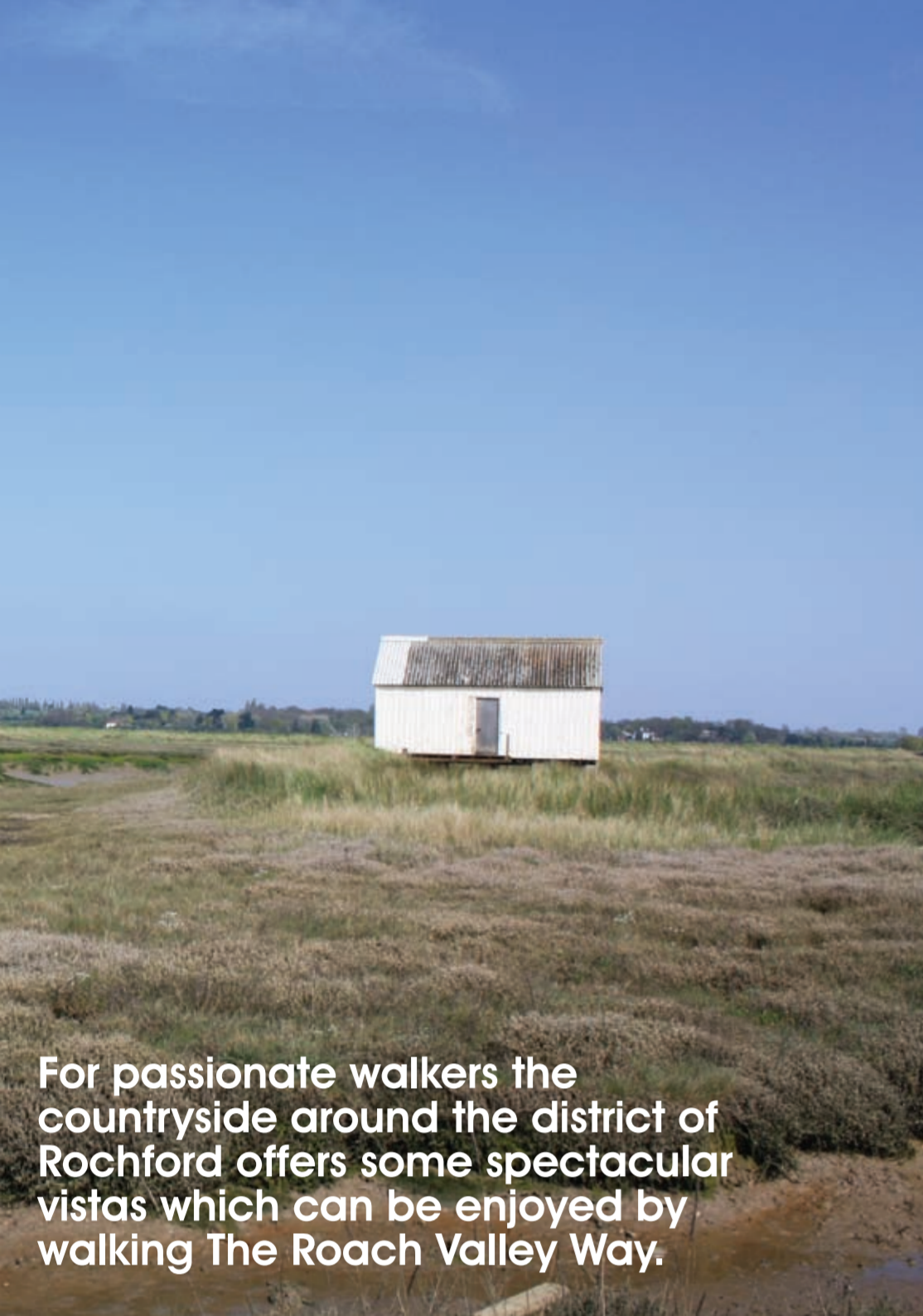
- Places to eat**
- 1 Azzuro  
Tel: 01 702 435845  
[www.azzurrosouthend.com](http://www.azzurrosouthend.com)
  - 2 Toulouse Restaurant, Bar & Bistro  
Tel: 01 702 333731  
[www.toulouserestaurant.co.uk](http://www.toulouserestaurant.co.uk)
  - 3 Zabrano  
Tel: 01 702 476999  
[www.zabrano.co.uk](http://www.zabrano.co.uk)
  - 4 Simply Seafood  
Tel: 01 702 716645  
[www.simplyseafood.co.uk](http://www.simplyseafood.co.uk)
  - 5 The Dining Room  
Tel: 01 702 477499  
[www.thediningroomsouthend.co.uk](http://www.thediningroomsouthend.co.uk)
  - 6 The Bull Inn  
Tel: 01 702 203122
  - 7 The Punch Bowl  
Tel: 01 702 258376
  - 8 The Plough and Sail  
Tel: 01 702 258242  
[www.theploughandsail.co.uk](http://www.theploughandsail.co.uk)

This map is intended as a guide only. Please refer to relevant OS Explorer maps for specific details.

**Key**

- Walking Route 5
- - - Short walks
- Place of worship
- Telephone in rural area
- Public House
- National Rail
- Accommodation
- Restaurants

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For passionate walkers the countryside around the district of Rochford offers some spectacular vistas which can be enjoyed by walking The Roach Valley Way.



The trail is using Southend-on-Sea as a base where you and your family can enjoy a variety of activities. The town remains a magnet for people wishing to get away for some fun, relaxation and culture. It has it all – from the thrilling rides to clean, safe beaches (3 Blue Flags and 7 Quality Coast Awards) to beautiful parks and gardens, exciting festival events, museums and galleries, theatres, nightclubs, and more than 300 places to eat. Plus, of course, the world's longest pleasure Pier stretching 1.33 miles out to sea. With a glorious seven-mile stretch of coastline, it would be easy to think that Southend-on-Sea is just about beautiful beaches, exhilarating watersports and stunning views – but that is just the tip of the iceberg.

Turn to Pedal Power on the Essential Estuary Cycle Trail. Not only does being on two wheels give you a sense of freedom and a refreshing form of exercise, but you can also take in the sights at your leisure – and you're sure not to miss a thing! Southend is the ideal place to turn to pedal power with convenient park and ride facilities available and some of the most breathtaking views along the Thames. Not to be missed is a journey of discovery to Old Leigh, a town full of unique character, rich with local history. It is the place to visit if you want to discover incredible art or sample the UK's finest seafood. Old Leigh is highly regarded for its cockles – they have a fine flavour that is difficult to beat and have become a 'must-try' experience.

For passionate walkers the countryside around the district of Rochford offers some spectacular vistas which can be enjoyed by walking The Roach Valley Way. This 23 mile circular waymarked walk passes through a variety of landscapes, from the ancient woodlands of Hockley in the west to the coastal margins of the Roach and Crouch estuaries in the south and north. Christopher Somerville, author of 'Coast', the accompanying book of the BBC series describes the coastal area of the winding creeks and windswept marshes as moody and of subtle shapes and colours, where the sea creeps up on the land and the land melts down into the sea, a place of shifting margins and hauntingly beautiful cloudscapes.

Start in Rochford, a medieval market town boasting a large number of listed buildings, including Rochford Hall, one time home of the Boleyn family (now a golf club) and The Old House in South Street, built in 1270 and allegedly haunted!

The way passes through many historic villages. As you follow the waymarked route eastwards you come to Paglesham. Its origins go back to Saxon times when its inhabitants mainly reared sheep on the fertile lands of the marshlands. Today the land has been drained and is used

to grow crops. Marvelling at this butter-wouldn't-melt-in-its-mouth place today, you'd never believe that Paglesham was once a nest of smugglers who would sail up the river bringing in their ill-gotten gains. William Blyth, also known as Hard-Apple Blyth, was considered to be the most notorious smuggler. He died in 1830, aged 74, and was buried at Paglesham church.

Two pubs provide great food and a smuggler's inn atmosphere; the Plough and Sail Inn at Paglesham Eastend or the Punch Bowl Inn at Paglesham Church End.

The oyster has throughout history played an important role in the diet and economy of this coastal area. Oyster farming peaked here in the mid-19th century at a time when they were considered common food for Londoners who couldn't get enough of them.

Continuing north towards Lion Creek you can see Wallasea Island on your right. Like much of the Essex coast, Wallasea Island has been flooded many times. The Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project is now underway. With the aid of tidal waters several hundred acres of mudflats, salt marsh and creeks will be created which will be a paradise for wildlife and one of Europe's largest coastal wetlands.



As you walk along the seawall from Lion Creek to Lower Raypits Farm it may seem quite remote and isolated but you are not alone. The patchwork of saltmarsh, sea walls, mudflats and grazing marsh supports an abundance of wildlife, as a result, both the Roach and Crouch Estuaries have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest by English Nature. Continue your journey along the coastal path past Lower Raypit's Nature Reserve. As you climb the hill above Upper Raypits Farm, pause to look back across the estuary to the hills of the Dengie Peninsula and Bridgemarksh Island. The views are spectacular. After a number of floodings the Bridgemarksh Island is now developing fast into saltmarsh providing a rich feeding ground for wildlife.

Next stop is Canewdon. The name is believed to come from Canute the Great and nearby earthworks suggest that this is where he made camp before his victorious battles during his invasion of Essex in 1013. There is much superstition around the village, believed to be a centre of witchcraft. Some believe that six witches still live in the village and claim that whenever a stone falls from the tower a witch dies, only to be replaced immediately by another. Local folklore also has it that if you walk anticlockwise around the church seven times on Halloween you will see a witch, and thirteen times you will disappear.

The impressive church tower is said to have been erected by Henry V in thanksgiving for his victory at Agincourt, and local legend has it that as long as the tower stands, there will be witches found in Canewdon. St Andrews church in Ashingdon, the next village along the route, is said to have been built in honour of the souls slain during the 1016 battle fought between King Canute and Edmond Ironside. The church houses a Danish flag and a model of a Viking ship – both gifts from the Danish Embassy. An unusual old sundial carved into its wall by the south entrance commemorates King Edward VII.

The last leg of the Roach Valley walk passes Hockley Woods, over 280 acres of ancient woodland, the largest in Essex and a site of Special Scientific Interest. The woods are a complex mosaic of different trees, each species growing where conditions are most favourable. Oak and sweet chestnut grow on the higher ground; birch on the most acidic soils; hornbeam on the wet clays; willow, hazel and ash along the streams. There are various pathways through the woods. For the bird watcher the best place to see birds in the woods is the area surrounding the public car park.



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Southend-on-Sea and the Roach Valley

www.visitessex.com



Essex County Council

### Getting to Southend-on-Sea

#### Arriving by Road

If you are travelling from London or the south, leave the M25 at junction 29 and take the A127 towards Southend.

#### Arriving by Train

Southend Victoria and Rochford are served by a frequent National Express East Anglia rail service directly from London Liverpool Street. For more information please call 0845 600 7245 or visit [www.nationalexpresseastanglia.com](http://www.nationalexpresseastanglia.com). Southend Central is served by a regular service from London Fenchurch Street with C2C. For more information on this service, please call 08457 48 49 50 or visit [www.c2c-online.co.uk](http://www.c2c-online.co.uk)

Travel information can also be obtained by calling 0871 200 2233 or visiting [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)



### Accommodation

#### 1 The Roslin Beach Hotel

★★★ Hotel  
Thorpe Esplanade, Thorpe Bay,  
Southend-on-Sea SS1 3BG  
Tel: 01702 586375  
[www.roslinhotel.com](http://www.roslinhotel.com)

#### 2 Pier View

★★★★ Silver Award  
5 Royal Terrace, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 1DY  
Tel: 01702 437900  
[www.pierviewguesthouse.co.uk](http://www.pierviewguesthouse.co.uk)

#### Beaches Guesthouse

★★★★ Silver Award  
192 Eastern Esplanade  
Thorpe Bay, Southend SS1 3AA  
Tel: 01702 586124  
[www.beachsguesthouse.co.uk](http://www.beachsguesthouse.co.uk)

### Tourist information

#### Southend-on-Sea Visitor Information Centre

Telephone 01702 215120  
Email: [vic@southend.gov.uk](mailto:vic@southend.gov.uk)  
[www.visitsouthend.co.uk](http://www.visitsouthend.co.uk)



### Attractions in Southend:

#### 1. Adventure Island Southend

One of the best value 'theme parks' in the South East with over 60 great rides and attractions for all ages. No admission charge you only 'pay if you play'.  
Tel: 01702 443400  
[www.adventureisland.co.uk](http://www.adventureisland.co.uk)

#### 2. Southend Cliffs Pavilion

The largest purpose-built performing arts venue in Essex. Shows include touring West End musicals, comedians, classical, rock and jazz concerts, pantomime, etc. Station Road, Southend On Sea, Essex  
Tel: 01702 390472  
[www.thecliffspavilion.co.uk](http://www.thecliffspavilion.co.uk)

#### 3. Palace Theatre

A truly unique building, the Palace always offers a vibrant mix of comedy, music, drama and shows.  
Tel: 01702 351135  
[www.palacetheatresouthend.co.uk](http://www.palacetheatresouthend.co.uk)

#### 4. Prittlewell Priory Museum

Well preserved 12th Century Priory housing a museum of the Priory's history. At some time during 2008 the museum will close for building work.  
Tel: 01702 342878  
[www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk)



#### 5. Central Museum and Planetarium

An Edwardian building housing displays of archaeology, natural history, social and local history. Hands-on discovery centre. Planetarium.  
Tel: 01702 434449  
[www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk)

#### 6. Southchurch Hall Museum

13th-14th century timber-framed moated manor house with Tudor additions. Period room settings from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Exhibition of history of house and manor.  
Tel: 01702 467671  
[www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk)

#### 7. Southend Marine Activities Centre

Southend Marine Activities Centre or 'SMAC' as it is known locally, located on Thorpe Bay beach is a haven for anyone looking to enjoy all manner of maritime sports. SMAC is a Royal Yachting Association Training Centre and the only 'Fast Forward' windsurfing instruction centre in the region. Taster 'Try-a-Sport' sessions are available in sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, kayaking, jet skiing and powerboat driving.  
Tel: 01702 612770  
[www.southendmarineactivitiescentre.co.uk](http://www.southendmarineactivitiescentre.co.uk)

#### 8. Sea-Life Adventure

With more than 30 display tanks and tunnels to explore, there are loads of fishy residents to discover at Sea-Life Adventure.  
Tel: 01702 442211  
[www.sealifeadventure.co.uk](http://www.sealifeadventure.co.uk)

#### 9. Southend Planetarium

Displays of archaeology, wildlife and local history. The only planetarium in Essex that provides a striking illusion of the night sky. Exciting hands-on Discovery Centre.  
Tel: 01702 434449  
[www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk)

#### 10. Southend Pier Museum

Brings to life the fascinating past of the longest pleasure pier in the world. Artefacts, pictorial displays of pier's entertainment, disasters, staff, boats, illuminations and railway.  
Tel: 01702 614553  
[www.southendpiermuseum.co.uk](http://www.southendpiermuseum.co.uk)

#### 11. Southend Pier

The longest pleasure pier in the world stretching 1.33 miles out to sea. Walkway or railway service to Pier head. Pier Museum and lifeboat, café and gift shop.  
Tel: 01702 215620  
[www.southendpier.co.uk](http://www.southendpier.co.uk)



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