

Colchester oyster fishery

This is the main centre for oyster fishing in the Colchester area. Mersea Island has a tradition of farming oysters since Roman times. In recent years there has been a decline due to a variety of adverse environmental factors.

Pyefleet Channel

This Channel separates Mersea Island from the mainland to the north. On the north side of the Pyefleet is Langenhoe Marsh. This is an extensive army firing range so keep your head down!

View across the Colne

Looking across the River Colne to Brightlingsea you will see many different types of boats including the majestic Thames Sailing Barges and large cargo vessels. The Colne is one of the busiest waterways in East Anglia with many ships importing timber, coal, fishmeal and soya from our European neighbours.

Old Fort

The faint remains of an old blockhouse are just visible behind the sea wall. This was built in 1547 to guard the Colne and saw action in 1648 when it was used to starve the Royalists in Colchester for 70 days. After the Civil War it fell into ruins.

Old bones

Erosion of the cliff has exposed sand and gravels which were laid down by the River Thames nearly 300,000 years ago. Bones dating to the same period showed that monkey, bison, beaver, wolf and bear used to live in East Mersea. The cliff is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Polder scheme

A polder scheme has been constructed on the mudflats using brushwood breakwaters. These will hopefully trap sediment floating in the sea. Once this sediment settles, salt marsh vegetation will colonise on the raised mud and thereby slow the force of the waves hitting the cliff and beach. This will hopefully slow down the process of erosion.

Brent Geese

These fields are managed by Essex County Council as a safe area for Brent geese to graze in the winter. This is to discourage them from grazing neighbouring crops. Cattle usually graze the field during the summer.



Distance and time taken

3.5 miles (5.6km) – 2.5 hours.

Going

Wear strong boots or Wellingtons as the sea wall can be muddy. Some road work is involved

Habitat types

Grassland, saltmarsh, beach, mudflats, dykes, sea walls and woodland.

Ordnance Survey Map

Explorer Map 184.

Refreshments

Dog and Pheasant pub and Hasten's Halt café – both on East Road.

Dogs

If you take your dog with you, please keep it under control, preferably on a lead.

Country Walking in Essex Cudmore Grove