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Magazine

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Welcome...

To the 2023 spring 'waterside' edition of Essex Explorer magazine. In this edition we celebrate our county's rivers, lakes and coastline and bring you the chance to win a fantastic 'On the Water Sailing Experience Day' courtesy of Essex Outdoors Bradwell, that's worth £190.

As part of the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of The Great Flood, we discover how flood alleviation schemes, such as leaky dams and wetlands, are helping to manage water flow, encourage nature and help combat climate change.

Read about INSTAR's 'ARKADE' exhibition at Jaywick Martello Tower which aims to 'create deeper connections to the natural world through contemporary art', and further fascinating features including the history of Layer Marney Tower and a waterside walk that takes you back in time.

Finally, you can discover all the latest news from our parks, as well as finding out more about all the events, exhibitions, productions and more taking place throughout the county, that are for suitable for all ages, thanks to Visit Essex members.

So, embrace the warmer weather as we enter the spring and summer months and explore the Essex Country Parks, coastline and countryside with us.



This magazine is available as an accessible PDF.
To request a copy email Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk

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ADVERTISING: MARKETING.EXPLORESSEX@ESSEX.GOV.UK

THIS INFORMATION IS ISSUED BY ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL, HERITAGE, CULTURE AND GREEN SPACES.

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ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, CM1 1QH

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About us

Explore Essex brings together a unique group of green spaces and heritage places owned and managed by Essex County Council. Our mission is to provide a range of facilities and activities for the people of Essex to enjoy. Conservation is also at the heart of what we do, and any money spent with the Explore Essex group of places is ultimately reinvested to maintain and develop our sites for the benefit of visitors and to protect the flora and fauna within.

Get Connected

Keep up-to-date with our news, activities and competitions.

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Grassland and grazing

Work is underway to restore rare plants, flowers and encourage new growth on part of the Benfleet and Southend marshes at Hadleigh Country Park.

This area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and was once a well-established grassland. During the last 25 years almost two million acres of grassland in the UK have been lost. The removal of scrub is part of a management plan agreed with Natural England, the government's statutory body responsible for natural green infrastructure.

Starting this year, the team at Marsh Farm Country Park are introducing grazing with rare breed sheep, Hampshire Downs, the first 10 ewes arrived at the site in January.

By using rare, native breeds, such as Hampshire Downs, the country parks team are helping to ensure the conservation of the genetic diversity of the breed and prevent its extinction.



New at Essex Outdoors for kids and families

Essex Outdoors are developing their offer for kids and families across their centres.

At Harlow discover the pay and play High Ropes Hexagon (more on page 38) as well as firm favourites, Paddle Club and Stand-up Paddle Board taster sessions, not forgetting the Monday night Multi-Activity Club.

At Bradwell-on-Sea discover Powerboat courses and Sailing Experience Days – read more on pages 34 and 35 and discover how to enter the prize draw to win a sailing day worth £190.



Art and Cultural Fund events in Essex

A range of exciting culture exhibitions and art activities are coming in 2023 due to the Essex County Council (ECC) Arts and Cultural Fund.



Following on from last year's successful festivals, exhibitions and workshops, 2023 will see more art and cultural events taking place throughout the county for residents and communities to enjoy.

The 2023 fund, which was open to small and large organisations, grassroots community groups, charities and start-ups and many more, will back art and cultural projects that support economic regeneration and help alleviate mental and physical health issues as part of ECC's Everyone's Essex and Levelling-Up initiatives.

Essex residents and visitors can enjoy a range of free and low-cost festivals, events and exhibitions through organisations like the Essex Book Festival, Thaxted Festival and Harlow Art Trust - along with many more - while schemes delivered by individual artists will interact with communities across the county.

The projects will also highlight the importance of climate change action to the county's residents, support those in both rural and urban areas who feel isolated and vulnerable and work with ethnic minority artists and creative groups.

Andrew Ward, ECC Cultural Development Lead, said: "Art and culture is of vital importance to the county, and I'm pleased that through the ECC Arts and Cultural Fund we are able to support activity across a wide range of artistic, cultural and creative disciplines.

"The fact that we had so many high-quality applications to the fund again this year is testament to the amount of highly skilled and creative art and cultural practitioners we have in Essex.

"Be it from countryside to coast, these Arts and Cultural Fund funded projects will enrich the lives of the county's residents."

To find out more visit: www.explore-essex.com/culture/arts-culture-fund

Enjoy waterfalls and weirs on a wonderful waterside walk

As this is a circular walk you can start from Butt Lane car park in Maldon high street, and enjoy refreshments in Heybridge half way round, before returning to where you started.

If you're looking for a tranquil walk around Maldon's countryside and along the Rivers Blackwater and Chelmer, then the Beeleigh Falls and Heybridge trail is perfect for all ages.

M A L D O N DISTRICT
WWW.VISITMALDONDISTRICT.CO.UK





Image credit: Crisp Photography

The walk – which is just over seven miles in length and will take three hours or more to complete – is along uneven and muddy ground. There are no paved sections, although there are some road segments, but the walk takes you through some picturesque countryside, along a seawall and riverbank where you can spot a wealth of wildlife, and past a historic mill and listed buildings.

This circular walk takes you to the man-made Beeleigh Falls, an elaborate system that's home to water falls, locks and weirs which control the point where the rivers Blackwater and Chelmer meet the sea.

Beeleigh Falls is a unique environmental area as the freshwater rivers feed into the tidal salt water below the weir, which provides Maldon with its famous sea salt. Much loved by chefs around the world, Maldon Sea Salt has been hand harvested since 1882 and the time-honoured techniques and traditional methods are still used today.

On your walk you'll see Beeleigh Steam Mill, which was rebuilt in 1795 and was five storeys high, with ten millstones and two water wheels. In fact, there have been water mills recorded at Beeleigh since 1066, including in the Domesday Book. Along the way you'll also see the privately owned Beeleigh Abbey, which was built in 1180, and Beeleigh Mill house, both can be seen when walking the footpaths nearby.

Beeleigh Falls and the walk itself will take you along the 14-mile Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, which can be walked in full or as sections. Designed by the famous canal architect, John Rennie, and opened in 1797 to move grain, timber and much more by horse drawn barge, the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation has 13 locks in total and connects Chelmsford with the tidal estuary of the River Blackwater at Heybridge Basin.



Image credit: Crisp Photography



At the time, there was local opposition to building the canal which led to it being cut by hand from the Falls to bypass Maldon and lead to Heybridge Basin. While working traffic was still using it until the 1970's, today the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation is mostly used for recreation by paddle boarders, canoeists, kayakers and canal boat trips.

So as the days get warmer and longer, take a trip to the past and explore how the rivers and weirs of the Blackwater and Chelmer played a part in shaping the present.

To find out more about the Beeleigh Falls walk and to download a PDF which provides a full route description as well as fascinating facts about the area, along with parking, refreshments, useful websites, and the wildlife you might see visit: www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/beeleigh

For more information and the history of Beeleigh Steam Mill visit: www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/find-whats-near-me/beeleigh-steam-mill

Essex Country Parks: Waterside spotlight

The Essex Country Parks contain a multitude of stunning and diverse landscapes, flora and fauna. In this edition, we shine a spotlight on our favourite waterside places. Whether it's the sea, river or estuary, sometimes there is nothing better than being by the water. Each has its own magic.

Explore Cudmore Grove and its hidden beach on Mersea Island, take a scenic riverside ramble at Marsh Fam Country Park, or stroll along the sea wall at Hadleigh and Benfleet Creek. Let the peace and beauty wash over you.



Get coastal at Cudmore Grove Country Park

Cudmore Grove Country Park, a nature reserve of unique coastal habitats, is situated on the Blackwater and Colne Estuaries, providing an excellent place for bird watching.

You can often see wildfowl, as well as foxes and rabbits, all year-round from the hide overlooking the pond, which is close to the car park.

The low-lying meadow is managed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) nature reserve, attracting wading birds and ducks throughout the year. Winter is the best season for birdwatching with sea duck and grebes in the Colne Estuary, up to 15 types of wader on the rich mudflats and maybe a glimpse of a hunting bird of prey like a peregrine or marsh harrier. On the grazing fields in winter, lots of wigeon and teal can be seen as well as large flocks of brent geese, while in the summer lapwings and avocet often breed.

Spring and autumn bring migrant birds such as warblers, wheatear and whinchat. Grass is left long throughout the year as it attracts small mammals, skylarks, lizards and insects while kestrels and barn owls hunt overhead.

Enjoy wildlife while you walk at Marsh Farm Country Park

Surrounded on three sides by the River Crouch, Clements Green Creek and Fenn Creek, Marsh Farm Country Park is a great place for waterside walks with superb river views. Its 300 acres of grazing marsh offer wildlife spotting opportunities, as well as a chance to explore many scenic riverside paths.

Recognised as a SSSI because of its importance for overwintering dark bellied brent geese. It also provides an overwintering site for many species of waders and ducks in the autumn and winter, and several species breed here in the spring including sedge warblers, cuckoos and sky larks, making it the perfect spot for year round birdwatching.

The park also supports a fantastic population of water voles, an endangered species that can sometimes be seen in their borrows alongside the river.

Discover atmospheric creek views at Hadleigh Country Park

One of the largest green spaces in Essex, Hadleigh Country Park in the south of county offers idyllic countryside and magnificent views over the Thames Estuary. You can also choose to take a walk along the sea wall for a flat and level stroll and enjoy excellent vistas over Benfleet Downs.

Start the walk from Benfleet to Leigh-on-Sea by entering through Benfleet Moorings (near Benfleet railway station) and head to the golf driving range near Leigh-on-Sea station.

Explore more: www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/coastal-rivers-and-lakes

Hadleigh Country Park

New Weald wetlands

Weald Country Park staff have been working with the Essex County Council Floods team to carry out natural flood management – an environmentally friendly way of handling water flow to prevent flooding.



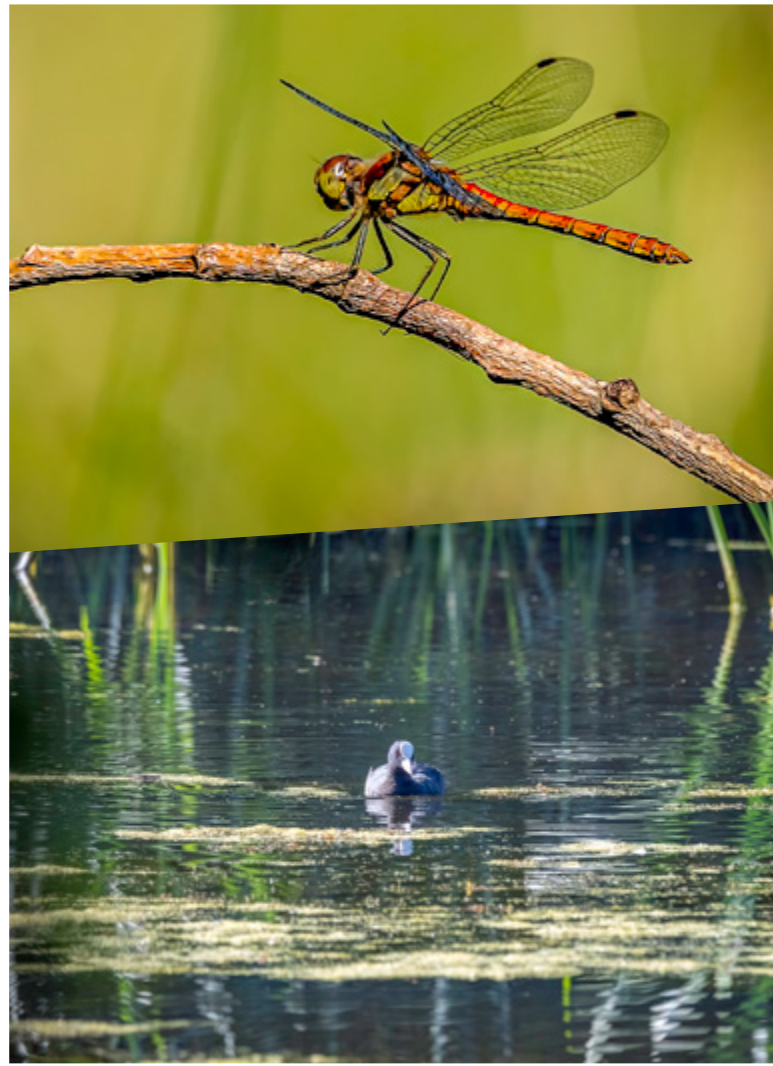


Leaky Dams

Leaky dams are inspired by beaver dams and help slow the flow of water, which should reduce the risk of general flooding in the area as well as capturing debris and silt - which filters the water - as it flows into the lake.

A series of leaky dams have been installed along the stream at Weald Country Park, at the top end of the main lake. The dams are made of logs from alder trees which have been cut from around the nearby lake. Regrowth will be seen on the cut trees within a year and will create a low growing habitat for wildlife, before eventually growing back to full height.

Some hawthorn trees have been reduced in size as part of these works to allow more light through along the stream. The increase in sunlight will encourage a wider variety of plants to grow, and the ponds created by the dams will make a habitat for more wildlife, thereby encouraging greater biodiversity in the area.



Pond Life

Two new ponds have also been created in the meadow above the lake.

This will increase the network of ponds in the park, which are already home to all three species of UK amphibians, newts, frogs and toads. Having more ponds supports growing populations of these animals as well as insects such as dragonflies.

These new ponds and leaky dams will prevent areas around the park from becoming waterlogged and reduce flooding in winter months by capturing water. They will also quickly attract a whole new range of wildlife.

Why not dig your own small pond in your own garden as it's a great way to attract birds, insects and frogs? For tips on creating your own pond visit: www.essexwt.org.uk/actions/how-create-mini-pond

Spotters guide: Wetland wonders

With the warmer months coming, now is the perfect time to get out and about to view the local wildlife.



Here we have worked with our Essex Country Park Rangers to bring you a spotters guide of the most common (and more unusual) wetland creatures you are likely to see in your garden, local green spaces and country parks. Wetlands are an important habitat and are teeming with life, both above and below the surface. From spring onwards, larvae and spawn will transform, while water banks will come alive with the chirps and calls of wetland birds.

So, this spring and summer why not embrace the great outdoors, take a trip to the parks and see if you can spot any of these wetland wonders.

Common Frog



Common Toad



Coot



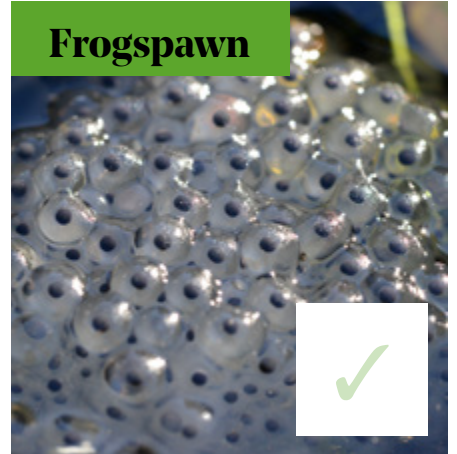
Damselfly



Dragonfly



Frogspawn



Greater Crested Newt



Grey Heron



Kingfisher



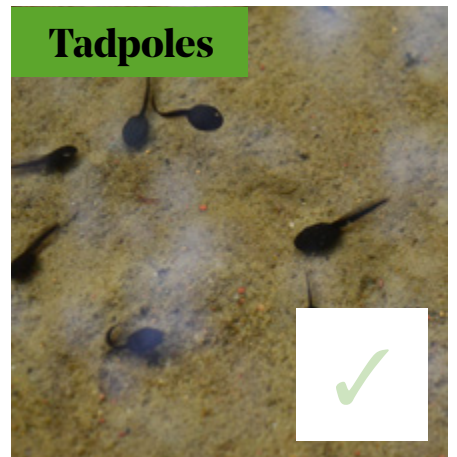
Moorhen



Mute Swan



Tadpoles



Photography in the parks

**With photographer
Andrew Adams**

Andrew Adams is a resident of Brentwood and a long time Essex Explorer contributor who enjoys nothing more than trekking and photographing the flora and fauna found within our amazing parks across the county.

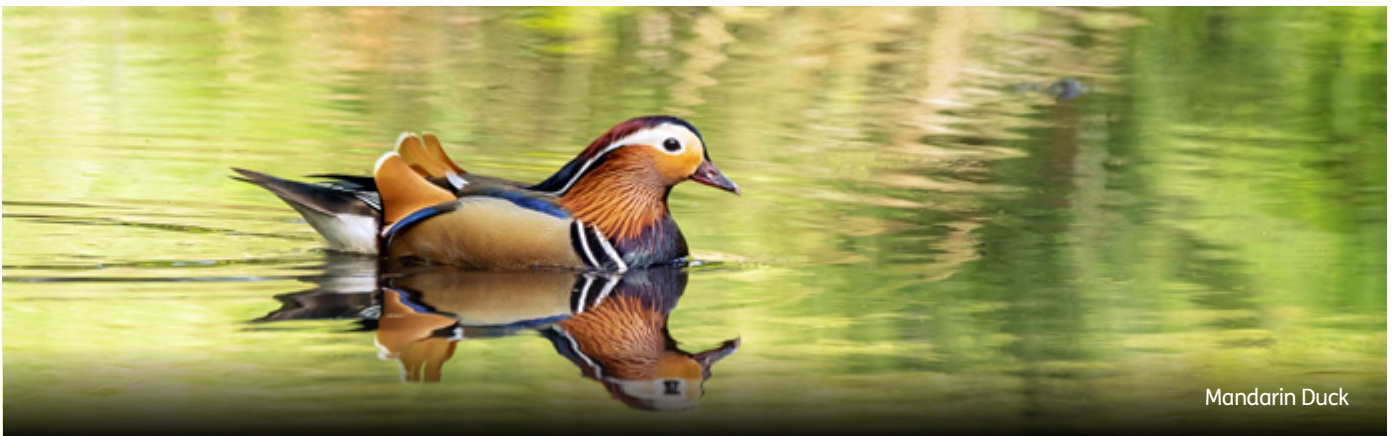
He is an experienced and multifaceted photographer with interests in wildlife, landscape and street photography. These stunning images were taken at Danbury, Thorndon and Weald Country Parks. Why not get out and about and see what you can discover?

To see more of Andrew's photography, visit his Instagram page: [#andrew_d_adams](https://www.instagram.com/andrew_d_adams) or visit Youpic: www.youpic.com/AndrewAdams

Find out more: www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/our-parks-and-places



Greylag Goose



Mandarin Duck



Greylag Gosling



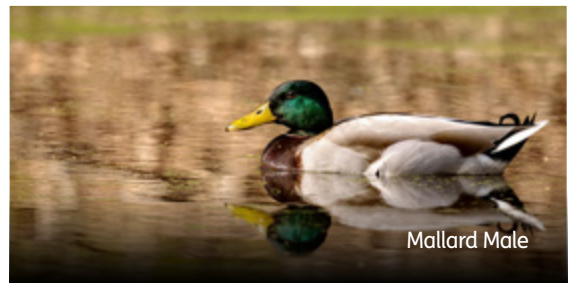
Migrant Hawker



Mute Swan and Cygnets



Mandarin Male



Mallard Male



Southern Hawker



Common Blue Butterflies



Great Crested Grebe



Egyptian Goose

Commemorating the North Sea Flood of 1953

“With its miles of saltmarsh, mud filled creeks and shingle beaches, Essex has always had a close relationship with the sea. From oyster fishermen at Burnham to barge skippers at Maldon, from boat builders at Wivenhoe to leisure boat captains at Southend, many Essex people have drawn a living from it, while countless others have drawn pleasure.”



Images courtesy of: Essex Police Museum, Jaywick Local History Society and Clacton and District Local History Society



“Yet the relationship has not always been a benign one, for during the night of Saturday 31 January 1953, Essex witnessed another side to the sea’s presence. With a power which was irresistible, and a speed that was startling, it overtook sea defences that had been built over centuries. Some people woke to find the water advancing with icy stealth towards their homes, leaving them barely the time to save themselves and a few possessions. Others found even this last-minute flight impossible; the sea was upon them. For them there was to be no escape from this tide...”
 Extract taken from ‘One Hundred Years of Essex History from the Pages of the Essex Chronicle Newspaper’ by Steve Hussey.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the severe storm, coupled with a high spring tide, which led many to describe The Great Flood of 1953 as the worst natural disaster in Great Britain in the 20th century. In fact, the scale was unprecedented.

On the night of Saturday 31 January, a huge tidal surge caused devastation along the east coast of Britain by washing away sea walls and leaving coastal defences battered and broken. Over 300 lives were lost and 40,000 people were made homeless. In the Netherlands, the government announced that 1,835 people had died due to the floods, while another 28 people died in Belgium after sea defences suffered heavy damage.

A combination of wind, high tide, and low pressure caused the sea to flood the land up to almost six metres above sea level. Most sea defences facing the surge were overwhelmed, which led to the extensive flooding.

As a low-lying county, Essex was particularly affected, with flooding from Harwich to Tilbury. During that fateful night, over 300 sea defences were breached, and 30,000 acres – many of which was valuable farmland – were flooded with salt water. Overnight, communities along the coastline were submerged.

While the whole county suffered, the areas hit hardest were Canvey

Island, which saw the tidal surge claim the lives of 58 people and left 11,000 out of the island’s 11,500 people unable to return to their homes. Along the coast, Jaywick was also devastated. Over 35 people perished and 600 of Jaywick’s remaining population of 700 were left homeless.

In the aftermath, the government of the day invested heavily in new sea defences and further flood defence measures were instigated along the country’s coastline, many of which are still in use today.

To mark the 70th anniversary, commemorative events recently took place in Canvey Island, with a new plaque unveiled at Canvey Library. The library also hosted exhibitions from Canvey Community Archive and the Essex Record Office, featuring photographs, maps and accounts of survivors, so that the public could learn more about the event that shaped the island’s history.

Further commemorative events have also taken place at Harwich Museum and Jaywick Martello Tower, where visitors could see the ‘Tides of Tending’ exhibition, which focused on how the floods of 1953 affected Jaywick and the surrounding coastal areas.

Also, in commemoration the book ‘The Great Tide’, written and researched by Hilda Grieve, then Senior Assistant Archivist at the Essex Record Office, has been re-published. ‘The Great Tide’ was commissioned by Essex County Council shortly after the flood, with the intention of documenting the “complete story” of the disaster.

Copies of ‘The Great Tide’ are available to purchase for £20 from the Essex Record Office or £25 with postage. For details on how to order your copy email ero.searchroom@essex.gov.uk. You can find out more about ‘The Great Tide’ and listen to archive recordings about the 1953 flood with the Essex Record Office blog: www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk

If you missed the events commemorating The 70th anniversary of the Great Flood you can learn more in a short documentary featuring survivors of the flood in Essex.

Ray Howard MBE, provides vivid descriptions of the devastation, whilst Malcolm MacGregor shares his heroic story of how he acted to save others in his community.

Watch it at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7jW1lImygs

Flood management, moving from grey to green

Did you know that UK's approach to flood management has changed? Previously hard grey infrastructure, such as levees, were relied on to 'hold back water' and prevent flooding. However, this just moved the problem elsewhere, resulting in needing high defenses. Now we're combining soft green infrastructures, such as marshes and swales - which are shallow, broad and vegetated channels - to hold excess water within the landscape.

Our modern landscape is very different from 100 years ago. Urbanization has resulted in the loss of flood plains and the creation of hard surfaces that don't absorb water. Urbanization, combined with trends in climate change, has created an environment highly susceptible to flooding. To manage flooding sustainably means changing our relationship with nature, which we can do by restoring the natural functions of rivers and flood plains.

Natural flood management and 'green infrastructure' involves utilising nature to soak and hold water in the landscape, like a sponge. Measures include:

- Leaky dams. These are log piles placed like steps along a watercourse which slow the flow of water. This allows the surrounding landscape to soak up water and helps to restore wetlands. You can visit leaky dams at Harlow, as well as Thorndon and Weald Country Parks and in Wivenhoe.
- Trees. Leaves, branches and bark slow the rain before it hits the ground. The tree root systems help water penetrate the soil which reduces run-off. The Essex Forest Initiative is planting native water-loving trees, such as hawthorn, alder and elder across the county.
- Retention ponds, rain gardens and wetlands hold water in wet periods and release it in dry spells. Why not visit the rain gardens in Danbury and the retention ponds at Basildon University Hospital?

Slowing and reducing the flow of surface water makes flooding more manageable while allowing the environment to flourish. To understand more about the benefits of natural flood management visit:

www.catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/what-is-natural-flood-management



The floods team

The Essex Flood and Water Management team investigate and assess flood risk across the county, including flooding from surface, ground and existing watercourses, and prepare strategies and actions to reduce flood risk. To find out your flood risk use this online map: www.flood.essex.gov.uk/know-your-flood-risk/check-if-you-re-at-risk-of-flooding

What can you do at home?

How your home and garden is designed can reduce the risk of flooding. Small actions, if done by many people, can significantly reduce flood risk.

To 'slow the flow' and reduce your flood risk simply:

- Redirect your gutter to drain into a water butt or rain garden. Rain gardens are small depressions in the ground that act as an infiltration point and feature native flora.
- Install a water butt and make a pledge to yourself to empty it regularly – Essex residents may be eligible for a subsidy at www.GetComposting.com
- Change the material of your driveway or patio to a permeable surface like gravel, as it allows water to soak through. Alternatively, use pavers with gaps that allow water to drain into the earth.

- If you have ditches on your property keep them clear.

Personal flood protection

- If you experience flooding or live in a critical drainage area you may be eligible for a grant to cover the cost of house protection including flood doors and barriers.

For more information and guidance to reduce flood risk visit: www.flood.essex.gov.uk

Delve into the deep with 'ARKADE'

An exhibition which aims to create deeper connections to the natural world through contemporary art is concluding in May thanks to the Essex County Council Arts and Cultural Fund.

'ARKADE', an exhibition by arts partnership INSTAR, explores how the impact of climate change affects communities and local people, especially the changing coastal habitat around Jaywick, which is increasingly susceptible to rising sea levels and flooding.

Deriving from 'Ark' meaning something that affords protection and safety, 'ARKADE' has seen INSTAR work with the University of Essex in a collaboration between artists, scientists and residents.

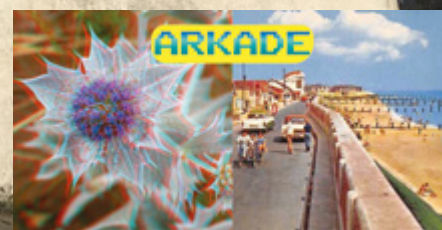
Taking the latest scientific research, environmental solutions and the local interventions underway in Jaywick, in order to inspire creative ideas and opportunities, 'ARKADE' has held launch events, as well as workshops for local schools and community groups in Jaywick.

'ARKADE' – which finds inspiration from seafront amusements like coin machines, signage, games and sounds – will unveil its final public artwork in the heart of Jaywick in May, while a touring exhibition of the 'ARKADE' artwork will be available to view at Jaywick Martello Tower.

Speaking about the 'ARKADE' exhibition, INSTAR artists Trish Evans and Nick Humphreys, said: "Seafront amusements are a cultural wonder in our coastal communities, they illuminate our holidays and provide spaces for play.

"Visually they are bright and iconic, resonating nostalgic memories and experiences as children and with our families. They are embedded in our coastal lives, which is why 'ARKADE' has taken inspiration from them."

To find out more visit:
www.we-are-instar.co.uk/ARKADE



EXPEDITIONS (on shore and off shore)

Friday 14 and
Saturday 15 April
Jaywick Community
Resource Centre

Join INSTAR and partners on Saturday for a beach survey to discover species and wildlife treasures in and around Jaywick. This session will also include bite sized coastal drawing activities. All materials will be provided.

Join INSTAR for the first of a number of offshore expeditions to discover ocean wildlife. This boat trip will introduce you to nature on the sea and scientific exploration with the help of the University of Essex. All ages welcome. Booking essential. For more information and to book visit: www.we-are-instar.co.uk/arkade-events-and-workshops

Let's fight back against food waste

Sign the Essex Food Waste Pledge



Did you know that the average Essex household wastes £60 every month by throwing away food that could have been eaten?

In total, that's £720 a year. This is why the Love Essex team want to help put this money back into your pocket. Not only is food waste costing us all money but it harms the environment and feeds climate change.

Throughout 2023, Essex residents are being encouraged to sign the Essex Food Waste Pledge and complete monthly challenges to reduce the amount wasted in the county. If you sign the pledge and complete a

challenge, you will be in with the chance of winning £60 in supermarket vouchers.

To watch the new short film all about food ending up in the wrong place, 'What a Waste', head to the Love Essex YouTube channel. To sign the pledge, and find top tips on how to reduce food waste and save money at home, please visit: youtu.be/S9smVgD924k

Find out more by visiting:
www.loveessex.org/explore-food

Travel back in time with a trip to the Tower

Experience the past and the present this spring and discover events, concerts, heritage, tours and much more at the historic Layer Marney Tower.

This 500-year-old Tudor Palace was built in the 1520's as a statement house by Henry Marney - the 1st Lord Marney and Henry VIII's Lord Privy Seal, Captain of the Bodyguard and holder of many other notable positions - and features the country's tallest Tudor gatehouse which is constructed from stucco and terracotta.

Much to Henry VIII's delight, Layer Marney Tower was built to the height of fashion, however the palace itself was never finished as Henry Marney died in 1523. His son John, the 2nd Lord Marney, continued the building work, however, he passed away two-years later leaving two daughters but no male heirs to continue the family line and construction work.

While the work wasn't completed, visitors today can still marvel at the main range - which measures approximately 300 feet long - the 80-foot-tall principal gatehouse, an array of outbuildings and a church.

Following the passing of the 2nd Lord Marney, his daughters became the wards of the Duke of Norfolk and eventually sold the house to Sir Brian Tuke, the Treasurer to the Royal Household and Governor of the Kings Posts.

In 1667, the estate was bought by Nicholas Corsellis with the money he had made as a merchant selling indigo, lead and tobacco. Educated at Felsted School, and soon after buying Layer Marney Tower, Nicolas gave the living

and accompanying Rectory to his old headmaster, the Rev. William Drake.

For six generations Nicolas' family lived at Layer Marney Tower, however in 1835 it was sold to Quintin Dick, a successful Far East trader who held the seat for seventeen years as the Member of Parliament for Maldon.

During the Great Earthquake of 1884, when Layer Marney Tower was under the ownership of the Peache family, the buildings suffered considerable damage. An 1886 report in *The Builder* magazine described the state of the house as 'the outlay needed to restore the tower to anything like a sound and habitable condition would be so large that the chance of the work ever being done appears remote indeed.'

Fortunately, brother and sister Alfred and Kezia Peache began repairs and the gatehouse was re-floored and re-roofed and they created the garden to the south of the Tower. Later their son, James Calthorpe Peache, added bathrooms, electricity and central heating.



In 1901, the successful stockbroker Walter de Zoete bought the house and continued its modernisation. After enlarging the gardens, building a folly known as the Tea House and converting the stables into a Long Gallery, he lost money in the Japanese stock market crash and sold the house to Dr and Mrs Campbell. At the time their daughter, Maybud, was a well-known botanist and botanical explorer, who added to the garden.

Having tried to sell the property three times during their 30-year ownership, it was eventually purchased by Gerald and Susan Charrington. In 1959, Mrs Campbell's executors put the house up for sale and Gerald and Susan - who were married in Layer Marney Church two years prior - brought the house on a romantic whim and have occupied it ever since.

Today Layer Marney Tower offers heritage tours, hosts events, educational visits and a great day out. For more information visit: www.layermarneytower.co.uk

Lambs bottle feeding: Sunday 2 April - Tuesday 11 April

Come and enjoy a family fun day out for all ages. Wrap up warm, pull on your welly boots and get up close and feed the lambs. You'll have your own bottle of milk to feed your favourite and they may even let you stroke their woolly coats, and it's a great opportunity to take photos.

Also, on Sunday 9 and Monday 10 April is the annual toddler Easter Egg Hunt and the Egg and Spoon race. Please purchase your tickets in advance. Tickets include entry to the Tower, gardens, picnic area and play equipment. The gift shop and tea room, which serves hot and cold drinks and light lunches, will be open. See the website for ticket sales, www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events or phone 01206 330784.



Delightful Tiptree dishes

Get into the swing of spring with these mouth-watering recipes from our friends at Tiptree Tea Rooms. If you are cooking up a feast this Easter, these delectable dishes are perfect to prepare for family or friends.

If you prefer to dine out, head to one of the Tiptree Tea Rooms across the county this season and indulge in lunch or afternoon tea.



Starters

Prawn Avocado

Ingredients

2 large ripe avocados
20 seedless white grapes
4 sun-dried tomatoes in oil
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons Tiptree tomato ketchup
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
To finish:
Prawns or mozzarella
Rocket
Cherry tomatoes

Method

1. Split the grapes lengthwise and add chopped sun-dried tomatoes.
2. Mix the olive oil, Tiptree tomato ketchup and lemon juice and pour over grapes.
3. Split the avocado lengthwise, remove the stone and fill with the grape mixture.
4. Top with prawns or mozzarella, dust with black pepper serve with rocket and tomatoes.



Main Course

Spiced Lamb

Ingredients

- 2 racks of lamb (for 4 people)
- 4 teaspoons Tiptree wholegrain mustard
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary leaves
- 1 tablespoon of fresh chive leaves
- 1-2 tablespoon light olive oil and knob of butter
- 12 medium asparagus spears, trimmed and griddled (optional)
- 125g soft goat's cheese
- 2-3 tablespoons fresh double cream
- Black pepper, ground
- 1 tablespoon fresh chives

Method

1. Set the oven at 200c fan or 220c for a non-fan oven.
2. Finely chop the rosemary leaves and chives. Spread Tiptree mustard on the fat of the loin and cover with herbs.
3. Wrap tightly in clingfilm and chill for at least 1 hour. Cut racks in half so you have 4 portions.
4. Cream the goat's cheese, add a little cream to help the mixture to stand in peaks. Season with cracked black pepper corns and chives.
5. Place in an oven proof dish in oven to heat with one tablespoon of oil.
6. Heat the oil in a heavy pan, add butter then seal meat on each side for 1½ min in total.
7. Remove the meat from the pan. Place in a oven dish.
8. Cook according to taste, 10 minutes for pink or 15 for well done.
9. If using asparagus, brush the pan with little oil and griddle until just tender.
10. Allow the meat to rest in warm place for 5 minutes.
11. Serve with asparagus, goat's cheese and fresh vegetables or salad.



Discover a Tiptree Tea Room near you here:
www.tiptree.com/locations

Easy vegan Easter biscuits

**Get sweet satisfaction
with these tasty treats.**

Ingredients (makes approximately 15 biscuits)

100g vegan margarine (or butter
for non-vegan)

145g plain flour

50g caster sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (or flavouring
as required)

100g icing sugar

Sprinkles to decorate

You will need

Easter egg cookie cutter (a glass or cup will do)

One baking tray

Baking paper

Wooden spoon

Rolling pin

1. Preheat the oven to 160C (or 140C fan oven) and line your baking tray with baking paper.
2. Use a wooden spoon to mix the vegan margarine (or softened butter) and the sugar in a mixing bowl until light and creamy. Add vanilla extract or flavouring.
3. Gradually fold in the flour to form a dough, take care and ensure that the mixture isn't too sticky or wet.
4. Using your hands, bring the dough together to form a ball. You can also wrap the dough in cling film and refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm the dough up.
5. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough on a clean floured surface, to about 2/4mm (approximately the thickness of a pound coin).
6. Using an egg-shaped cookie cutter, cut out your biscuits, use the left-over cuttings to make more biscuits, you can make them any shape you like.
7. Place the biscuit shapes on your baking tray lined with baking paper and bake in the oven for 12 to 15 minutes, until they are just golden brown.
8. Once cooked, leave to cool down on a cooling rack whilst you prepare the icing.
9. Stir together the icing sugar and 2 to 3 teaspoons of water and a few drops of flavouring or colouring if desired.
10. Once the biscuits are cooled drizzle the icing over them lightly, you can use the back of a spoon to smooth the icing over.
11. Decorate with sprinkles and enjoy.

Easter crafting, make, design and paint



Get creative over Easter by making these three-ingredient salt dough Easter egg decorations, perfect for decorating twigs, or gifting, and bringing some Easter joy and colour to your home. Have fun imagining all sorts of designs.

Ingredients

1 cup of plain flour
(about 250g)

Half a cup of table salt
(about 125g)

Half a cup of water
(about 125ml)

You will need

Easter egg cookie cutter,
(a glass or cup will do)

Drinking straw

Paint and paint brush

Rolling pin

Baking paper

Baking tray

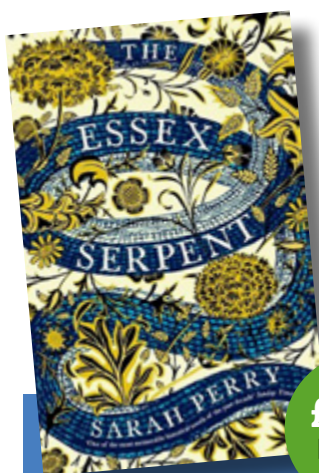
Ribbon or string

1. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Slowly add the water a little bit at a time, until a dough consistency is formed. Make a ball with the dough.
2. Transfer your dough to a floured work surface and have fun giving the dough a good knead.
3. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough out, use cookie cutters or a cup or glass to cut your shapes out.
4. Add a hole (large enough to fit string or ribbon through) in the top of each shape using a straw.
5. Put your finished items on a baking sheet or baking tray and leave to air dry for approximately two to three days. Alternatively, you can bake in the oven on the lowest setting for one hour, then turn them over and cook for a further hour.
6. Once the salt dough shapes have hardened (and cooled if baked), they are ready to decorate. Unleash your imagination to make all sorts of designs.
7. Acrylic paints work well, pastel pink, blue and green colours create a lovely spring feel, pearlised paint also gives a pretty finish. Try white with blue stripes or zigzags, pink with white polka dots, you can even personalise with names.
8. Once the paint has dried, thread a thin ribbon or string through the hole you made earlier, your decorations are now ready to hang up.



Waterside Reads

We've picked some of our favourite waterside reads, from the marshes of Essex to the swamps of North Carolina, via the 'Salt Path' and 'The Old Man and the Sea'. Be swept away for a short while and immerse yourself in a good book this spring.



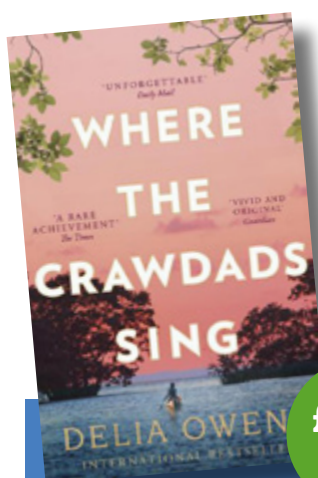
£8.99
RRP HB

The Essex Serpent

By Sarah Perry

The Sunday Times number one bestseller, now an Apple TV series starring Claire Danes and Tom Hiddleston, is written by Essex born Sarah Perry.

Set in the late 1800s against a vivid backdrop of the creeks and coastal parish of Aldwinter, this richly atmospheric tale pits religion against science and celebrates love in all its forms.



£9.99
RRP HB

Where the Crawdads Sing

By Delia Owens

This number one New York Times bestseller is now a major motion picture.

A haunting and compelling story set in Barkley Cover, a quiet, small town on the North Carolina coast where the so-called 'Marsh Girl' lives. Implicated in the murder of popular local, Chase Andrews, the 'Marsh Girl' must fight to save herself. But nothing, and no one is as they seem...



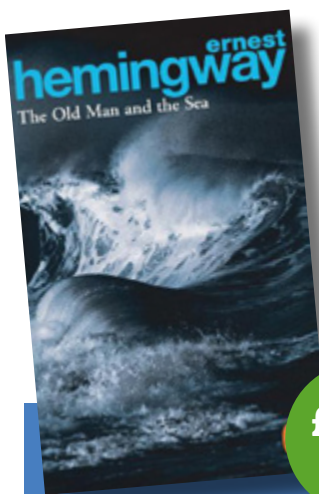
£9.99
RRP HB

The Woman in Black

By Susan Hill

Be transported to Eel Marsh house and an English village surrounded by swamps and wreathed in sea fog and secrets. Meet the mysterious woman in black who haunts this foreboding and forgotten place.

Be chilled to the core by this heart stopping horror story. Now also a major motion picture starring Daniel Radcliffe, partly filmed on Osea Island, Essex.



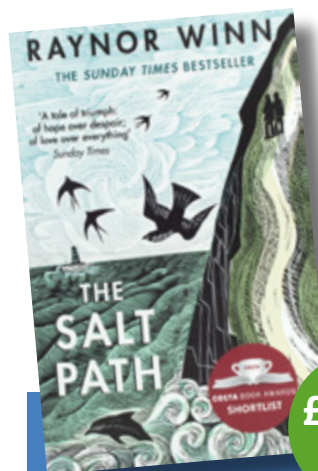
£7.99
RRP HB

The Old Man and the Sea

By Ernest Hemingway

Set in the Gulf Stream off the coast of Havana, Cuba, Hemingway's famous fable is the story of an old man, a young boy and a giant fish.

This classic tale of an aging fisherman's quest to catch a huge marlin is a frequently cited as one of the greatest novels of the 20th century, by one of the greatest writers in American History.



£10.99
RRP HB

The Salt Path

By Raynor Winn

Raynor Winn and husband Moth make the brave decision to walk the 630 miles of the sea-swept West Coast Path, after the simultaneous collapse of their business and the diagnoses of Moth's terminal illness.

Their walk becomes a remarkable journey, through ancient, weathered landscapes, through grief to the healing power of the natural world.

TOP
PICK FOR
KIDS



£7.99
RRP HB

The Snail and The Whale

By Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

"How I long to sail!" said the tiny snail...

One little snail longs to see the world and hitches a lift on the tail of a whale.

Together they see some incredible sights, but when the vast whale gets beached in a bay it's the tiny snail's big ideas that saves the day.

This beautiful picture book is perfect for sharing with the whole family

Set sail this season

Essex Outdoors 'On the Water' offer some incredible experiences on the stunning Blackwater Estuary during the spring and summer months. Choose from sumptuous sailing days or picture-perfect powerboat trips with room for up to seven people aged seven-years-old and over.



The boats are skippered by highly experienced instructors, at a Royal Yacht Association (RYA) accredited centre. Take the opportunity and have a turn at the helm and try steering under their instruction, or simply sit back and take in the views. Perfect if you're thinking of taking up the sport or if you'd simply like to try something new.

When booking you can choose to depart from the Essex Outdoors centre at Bradwell-on-Sea or Mersea Island, whichever works best for you and your 'crew'. From Bradwell you can decide to head to the scenic destinations of West Mersea waterfront or Maldon quay, from Mersea you can set sail to Bradwell or Maldon and enjoy stunning views of the River Blackwater.

You'll disembark at your agreed destination around lunchtime, so you can book a restaurant of your choice beforehand or order a scrumptious picnic platter as part of your experience. Crabbing lines can be provided for entertainment when you dock, or you may even be able to disembark at a beach – tides permitting.

Lasting approximately six hours, this will be a day to remember for everyone. The perfect staycation day trip, celebration or a get together for a family or small group of friends.

Choose from a stunning sailing day or a thrilling high-speed powerboat experience.



Departure Times: 10.00am
Return at approximately: 4.00pm
Call: 01621 776256
Email: onthewater@essexoutdoors.com
www.essexoutdoors.com/on-the-water

RYA Powerboat courses are also available:
www.essexoutdoors.com/courses/powerboats

You might also be interested in the RYA Youth Sailing Weeks for your children at Essex Outdoors Bradwell, residential and non-residential options available with dates in July and August. Beginners and all abilities welcome.

WIN a Sailing Experience worth £190 with Essex Outdoors.

We're excited to have a Sailing Experience Day to giveaway to one lucky reader.

To enter our prize draw simply email us the answer to the following question.

The sailing days take place on:

- A. The River Crouch
- B. The River Blackwater
- C. The River Severn

Email us your answer at: Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk by midnight Sunday 30 April 2023 and title your email: **On the Water Prize Draw.**

View our full terms and conditions:
www.explore-essex.com/ee-comp



Swing, slide and glide, kid's play in the parks

The benefits of outdoor play and connecting with others have become more apparent than ever in recent times, having fun and spending quality time together are on the top of many a list.



Playing in the fresh air is beneficial for children of all ages, improving cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills along with general wellbeing.

Here, nestled within the beauty of the Green Flag award-winning Essex Country Parks, we highlight four fabulous natural and unique play areas to set children's imaginations free, whether they put on a musical performance at Hadleigh or become pirates at Cudmore, there's plenty to enjoy and explore.

Discover all of our parks by visiting:
www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/our-parks-and-places



Belhus Woods Country Park

Described as a magical place, this pleasant play area has a variety of specially designed apparatus to suit all ages and abilities, themed on music, theatre and performance. It includes adventurous and musical elements - constructed using natural resources and in harmony with the natural environment.

Imaginations can soar with musical installations, slides, climbing structures, swings and a sandpit, providing hours of enjoyment and entertainment for both old and young alike.



Image credit: Tom Heenan

Great Notley Country Park

If you are looking for Essex's longest play trail, head to Great Notley where you can jump, swing, slide, crawl and climb your way around 1.2 kilometres of fun, including giant seesaws, swing scales, rope climbers, zipwires, slides, forts and a large sand play area. Great Notley is also home to the towering 'Sky Ropes' where you can challenge yourself to new heights navigating your way around bridges and beams high in the sky.



Cudmore Grove Country Park

There certainly is a lot to explore at Cudmore Grove, including a wood framed play area, which is in keeping with the natural habitat, for children to enjoy.

It's designed with three key play areas to explore and is situated on a soft sandy floor. The 'cargo harbour' is inclusive of a selection of climbing apparatus, slides, complete with a bell to ring, and is designed to symbolise the fishing industries up and down Essex's coast.

The 'crow's nest' themed climbing frame and nets symbolise the Essex barges which meander along the county's rivers.

Many fossils also have been found on the foreshore of Cudmore, from the bones of monkeys and woolly mammoths to shark's teeth, hence the 'bone yard' dinosaur themed frame which children can climb and adventure.



Hadleigh Country Park

In one of the largest green spaces in Essex, the play park at Hadleigh offers a fun and interactive area for children where they can climb, swing and slide, as well as enjoy a balance bike track for those early lovers of two-wheels. The play park is well designed and has a soft floor covering on most of the play area to help cushion any unexpected falls.



Image credit: Vanessa Nelson

Reach new heights at Harlow High Adventure

Climbing is an excellent activity for all ages. Helping to build confidence and increase physical strength, endurance and flexibility. It's perfect for both small groups and individuals, boosting mind, body and soul.



The state-of-the-art outdoor climbing facilities at the Essex Outdoors Harlow centre offer two sessions for the whole family, groups of friends, or just the kids, in a safe environment – and there's a coffee shop onsite.

The main attraction is known as the High Ropes Hexagon. Here you can cross the river on the wobbly rope bridge to ascend to the 12-metre high hexagon climbing tower. Explore the exhilarating high ropes course and its exciting array of obstacles which include cargo nets, balance bars and barrel swings in a 90-minute session*.

While the High Ropes Hexagon is for anyone who can reach 180cm with their arms fully stretched – which may discount younger, smaller children – the outdoor Climbing Wall Adventure is perfect for anyone aged six-years-old and over.

This safe, fun and colourful outdoor 'clip and climb' activity consists of five different walls, each with its own different 'challenges' to test your climbing skills. Race to the top before abseiling back down.

Sessions run simultaneously so you can book your children on different activities at the same time as works for their age, bravery and height.

Book your adrenaline loving child's perfect party at the High Ropes Hexagon and Climbing Wall Adventure today.

Find out more www.essexoutdoors.com/harlow-high-adventure

*Sessions include safety talk and kitting-up time.

Re-opening early April, weekends only.
Book online in advance.

Spring 2023



Image credit Jarrod Publishing

Aqua Park Lakeside

Daddy Day Care

Sunday 18 June: All day

Slip, slide, splash, and share a lifetime of laughs with your dad this Father's Day. Everyone thinks their old boy is superman, time for him to prove it. Splash out on this special two-hour session by giving him the gift of adventure. Buoyancy aids are included. Wetsuit hire is not included. Price: £25 per person for two-hour Aqua Park session. Online booking essential. Must be aged six-years-old and over and able to confidently swim 25 meters unaided.

www.aquaparkgroup.co.uk

Braintree Museum

The Warner Textile Archive:
Behind the Scenes Tours:
The Palaces of King Charles III
Virtual Talk

Wednesday 10 May: 7.00pm

Join us for this free online talk exploring the connection between Warner & Sons and royal interior decoration. Learn how Warner & Sons helped shape the style of royal

homes for more than 100 years and how historic pattern continues to be seen in the palaces of King Charles III. Suitable for adults. Price: Free.

www.ticketsource.co.uk/braintree-museum/warner-textile-archive-free-virtual-talk/e-yaledb

Braintree Museum

Talks Day

Saturday 13 May

We are thrilled to welcome three industry experts giving a variety of fascinating textile talks on 20th century textile design, manufacturing and fashion. Suitable for adults. Price: £15 per person.

www.braintreemuseum.co.uk

The Warner Textile Archive

Behind the Scenes Tours:
The Palaces of King Charles III-
Royal Furnishing Textiles

Tuesday 23 May and Saturday
17 June: 10:30am

Join us on one of our popular behind the scenes tours to discover how to decorate a palace. Visit Braintree Museum for an introductory talk

and refreshments, then see historic textiles up-close at the Warner Textile Archive that were supplied to the royal household and learn more about the long association between Warner & Sons and palace refurbishments. Tours last approximately two and a half hours. Suitable for adults. Price: £20 per person.

www.ticketsource.co.uk/braintree-museum

Beth Chatto Plants & Gardens

Easter Egg Hunt

Tuesday 4 April – Saturday 15
April: 10.00am – 5.00pm
(closed Easter Sunday)

Come to the Internationally Renowned Gardens and enjoy an Easter Egg hunt, whilst enjoying the amazing gardens that was the result of over 60 years of hard work by Beth Chatto and her husband Andrew, find the Easter Eggs placed around the garden. Suitable for children. Price: Adult admission £13.50 – all children go free with a paying adult.

www.bethchatto.co.uk

Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre

With you in Mind

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday's: 2.00pm - 4.00pm

With you in Mind provides support and activities for mental health, based at our Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre. We offer inclusive activity sessions for adults who want to improve their confidence, well-being and mental health. Our team of activity co-ordinators and mental health first aiders will support you at each session. Suitable for adults. Price: first session free and £3 per session after.

www.chelmsford.gov.uk/withyouinmind

Colchester Zoo

Easter EGGstravaganza

Friday 1 April - Sunday 16 April

During the Easter holidays we will be celebrating our reptiles and birds by offering you the chance to learn all about these EGGCITING animals. Complete the trail and learn about our historic friends and meet some recently hatched baby dinosaurs. Suitable for all ages. Price: Standard admission ticket.

www.colchester-zoo.com/event/easter-eggstravaganza

Meet Peppa Pig and George

Sunday 21 May

Don't spend time jumping around in muddy puddles! Join us and the ever-popular children's TV characters, Peppa Pig and George. Suitable for all ages. Price: Standard admission ticket

www.colchester-zoo.com/event/peppapig-and-george-2023

Zoobilee half term

Saturday 27 May - Sunday 4 June

Throughout the May half term we are hosting a variety of fun activities daily in celebration of turning 60. Our Zoobilee week is bursting at the seams like our party balloons and is packed with mystical shows from Magic Iain, Samba Dancers, and Marimba Music from Otto & The Mutapa Calling. Suitable for all ages. Price: Standard admission ticket.

www.colchester-zoo.com/event/zoobilee-half-term

Colchester Zoo's Big Birthday Bash

Friday 2 June 2023

Join us for our birthday bonanza as we celebrate turning 60! Our special birthday is bursting at the seams just like our party balloons and is packed with shows from Magic Iain, Marimba Music from Otto & The Mutapa Calling, and finished with a Zoobilee Party and later closing time! Suitable for all ages Price: Standard admission ticket

www.colchester-zoo.com/event/zoobilee-czbirthday

Visit Colchester

Guided Walking Tour of Colchester

Every Saturday: 11.00am

Colchester was Britain's first city and is now its newest after regaining city status in 2022. With a story stretching back over 2000 years, join one of our official city guides on a guided walk and explore the dramatic events that have shaped the city, from the destruction of Roman Camulodunum to the Civil War Siege of 1648 and beyond. Suitable for families. Price: £6 per adult. Children five to 15-years-old: £3.85.

www.visitcolchester.com/whats-on/guided-walking-

tour-from-camulodunum-to-colchester-p1231381

Danbury Parish Council hosting at Danbury Leisure Centre

Coronation Village Fete

Sunday 7 May: 1.00pm - 6.00pm

A traditional village fete to celebrate the coronation of our new King Charles, with craft market, inflatable fun fair, live entertainment, food, drink and competitions. Enter our competitions, all ages welcome:

1. Art, Portrait of The King 2. Photography, Danbury a Landscape, 3. Baking, Delicious Danbury Cakes and Pies, 4. 'Good Dog' competition - you and your pet. Suitable for families. Price free.

www.danburyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

Ladybird Train Event

Tuesday 4 April: 9.30am

Catch the train from Witham station to Braintree where you will be guided for the short walk to Braintree Museum. Show your train ticket for free entry to the Ladybird book exhibition. Catch any train back to Witham. Suitable for ages five to 11-years-old. Price: £5 for adult, £3 for child.

www.esscrp.org.uk/events/ladybird-train-event

Essex Wildlife Trust

Fingringhoe Nature Discovery Centre

Nightingale Private Guided Tours

Tuesday 25, Thursday 27, Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 April. Tuesday 2, Thursday 4, Tuesday 9, Thursday 11, Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 May: 7.00pm

Join one of our reserve guides who will lead you on a walk round the reserve to hear the Nightingales. Suitable for all ages but must be confident of walking for up to two hours. Price: £15.

www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/fingringhoe

Nightingale Late Night Opening

Friday 28 April, Monday 1 May,
Friday 5 May, Saturday 6 May,
Wednesday 10 May:
Until 9.00pm

The reserve will be open all day and night until 9.00pm for special late-night access to hear the Nightingales sing. No booking required. Café and shop open. Suitable for all ages. Price: £3 suggested donation

www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/fingringhoe

Belfairs Nature Discovery Centre

Self-led Easter Trail

Friday 7, Saturday 8 and Sunday
9 April: 10.00am-3.00pm

Find bird themed clues on a walk through the woods. Small prize on completion. No booking required. Suitable for all ages. Price: £2 per child.

Bird of Prey Night: Imperial Bird of Prey Academy demonstration

Wednesday 12 April:
7.30pm – 9.00pm

To book call 01702 477467. Suitable for all ages. Price: £9 per person.

Forest Bathing with Ruth from Forest Clouds

Thursday 20 April
and Sunday 21
May: 10.00am – 12.30pm

To book call 01702 477467. Suitable for all ages. Price: £18 per person.

Quiz Night

Saturday 22 April:
7.30pm – 10.00pm

Teams of six required. To book call 01702 477467. Suitable for adults. Price: £36 per team.

Epping Forest District Council

Musical in 2 Days: Rapunzel

Monday 3 April - Tuesday 4 April:
10.00am – 3:30pm

North Weald Village Hall

Princesses and knights required to be fabulous performers, show off your singing, dancing and acting skills in a mini version of Rapunzel. Working with our professional choreographer, you'll recreate scenes and musical numbers to pop songs and musical theatre tracks; then show them to your family and friends in a performance at the end of day two. Suitable for five to 12-years-old. Price: £50

www.eppingforestdc.bookinglive.com

Play in the Park

Various dates throughout the
Easter holidays

Play in the Park is all about playing games and having fun outdoors. No need to book, just drop in anytime, we'll be at various parks around the district with a range of sports equipment and arts and crafts resources for families to enjoy together. Suitable for children of all ages. Price: Free.

www.eppingforestdc.bookinglive.com

Family Fun Drop In: Easter Bunny Mask

Tuesday 4 April
10:30am – 3:30pm

Join us anytime to have a go at making your own Easter Bunny Mask. No need to book, just drop in

during the times above and allow about 30 minutes to do the activity. Suitable for all ages but the activity most suits those aged from five to 11years-old. Price: £2.50

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/whats-on/activities-for-children

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday 8 April
10:30am – 3:30pm

Join us for the Easter Egg Hunt. Follow the trail around the museum to claim your chocolate prize! No need to book just drop in during opening hours and allow around 30 minutes to do the trail. Suitable for all ages. Price: £2.50

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/whats-on/special-events

Family Fun Drop In: Easter Flower Bower

Tuesday 11 April
10:30am – 3:30pm

Join us to have a go at making your own Easter Flower Bower. No need to book, just drop in during the times above and allow about 30 minutes to do the activity. Suitable for all ages but the activity most suits those aged from five to 11-years-old. Price: £2.50.

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/whats-on/activities-for-children

Family Fun Drop In: Tiger Tea Party

Tuesday 30 May
10:30am – 3:30pm

Epping Forest District Museum,
39 – 41 Sun Street, Waltham
Abbey, EN9 1EL

Join us at Epping Forest District Museum on Tuesday 30 May anytime between 10:30am and 3:30pm to have a go at making your own paper teapot and teacups so you can have your own tea party

with a tiger! No need to book, just drop in during the times above and allow about 30 minutes to do the activity. Suitable for all ages but the activity most suits those aged from five to 11-years-old. Price: £2.50

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum/whats-on/activities-for-children

Gardens of Easton Lodge

Tudor Day

Sunday 23 April:
11.00am - 5.00pm

An opportunity to explore the Gardens and meet the Tudors, who built Easton Lodge. Enjoy Tudor activities: archery, quill writing, trying on Tudor armour, basket weaving and much more. Suitable for children and families. Price: £6.50 or £5.50 if booked in advance. Children under-16 free entry.

www.eastonlodge.co.uk/whats-on/april-open-day-our-tudor-beginnings

The Red Countess

Sunday 21 May 21:
11.00am - 5.00pm

An opportunity for the curious to learn about the Countess of Warwick's involvement in local and local socialism in the early 20th century, while exploring her Gardens in gorgeous spring colours. Suitable for children and adults alike. Price: £6.50 or £5.50 if booked in advance. Children under-16 free entry.

www.eastonlodge.co.uk/whats-on/may-open-day-the-red-countess

Open Thursdays

Weekly on Thursdays from April:
11.00am - 3.00pm

Time for a leisurely exploration of the gardens, dogs welcome on leads. Visitors enjoy seeing the volunteers hard at work and chatting with them. Suitable for old

and young alike. Price: £5. Free for children under-16.

www.eastonlodge.co.uk/whats-on/open-thursdays-3

Harlow Town Park Circular Walk

Social Strollers Walking Group

Every second Friday:
10.00am - 10.45am

Starting from the Greyhound/School Lane car park come and discover the Town Park with our friendly walking group led by the Town Park manager. Suitable for older age groups. Price: Free. For more details or to book email:

mike.levett@harlow.gov.uk

Hylands Estate

Hylands Estate Open Estate Day

Sunday 16 April (no May date)
10.00am - 3.00pm

Hylands House opens its doors to reveal the secrets behind its history with an exhibition displayed every Open Estate Day in the library. Outside traders are located in the fresh air, between The Stables and Hylands House. The Stables, home to a vibrant community of artists and designers, will be open for exploring with a programme of live music in the Hotbox Sunday Sessions. Discover unique handmade pieces available to purchase in the Stables Artists shop. Suitable for all the family. Price free.

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/explore/openestate

Vintage Afternoon Tea

Sunday 16 April:
12.00pm and 2.30pm

Enjoy a traditional afternoon tea with unlimited tea and coffee inside the Terrace Room, overlooking the gorgeous parkland. Make the most of your visit by viewing the opulent spaces Hylands House has to offer at our monthly Open House and be

sure to stop off at The Stables for live music and to explore the Artist Studios with unique handmade items. Suitable for all the family. Price: Adults: £34.00, children under-12 £20.00.

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events/vintage-afternoon-tea-6/all

Hosted at Hylands Estate,
organised by Aztec Events

All About Dogs

Sunday 30 April - Monday 1 May:
9.30am - 5.00pm

The All About Dogs Show is the UK's Favourite dog event for dogs of all shapes and sizes - and it's returning even bigger and better in 2023. Bring your dog for two days full of exciting arena displays, expert advice, shopping and lots of fun have-a-go activities including the popular Fun Dog Shows where you and your dog can win rosettes, plus enjoy K9 Aqua Sports, talent competitions, live music and more. Suitable for all the family. Price: £7 - £12.50.

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events/all-about-dogs-show-4/all

Hosted at Hylands Estate,
organised by Aztec Events

National Flower Show

Friday 19 to Sunday 21 May:
9.00am - 5.00pm

The National Flower Show returns in May 2023 for a three-day gardening extravaganza set in the stunning grounds of Hylands Estate. It's the ideal show for gardening enthusiasts and homeowners alike as the ever-growing event celebrates the best of gardening, homes and lifestyle offering ideas and inspiration, plus expert plantsmen are on hand offering advice and the tools to help create your own garden haven. Suitable for all the family. Price: £4 - £29

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events/national-flower-show/all

Hosted at Hylands Estate,
organised by Tanya Krackowizer

Jewellery Making Workshops

Saturday 1 April:
10.00am and 2.00pm
Pendant and Earring Set

Sunday 2 April:
10.00am and 2.00pm
Simple Spinning Ring

Saturday 13 May:
10.00am and 2.00pm
Stacking Rings

Sunday 14 May:
10.00am and 2.00pm
Skinny Textured Bangles

If you love the idea of making your own jewellery or perhaps designing your own wedding rings, our Jewellery Making Workshops could be the perfect choice for you. Fun and informal, TLK Jewellery Making Workshops & Lessons are great fun for all ages over 18 and abilities. Suitable for those 18-years-old and over. Price: From £85 per person.

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/organiser/tanya-krackowizer

Hosted at Hylands Estate,
organised by Nicky Gayle

Art Classes

Thursday 6, 13, 20 and 27
April: 2.00pm
Thursday 4, 11, 18 and
25 May: 2.00pm

Learn a new skill or improve your abilities with Nicky Gayle's art class at her studio in The Stables. All abilities are welcome to come along, and all materials are included in the price. Workshops take place every Thursday throughout the year. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Price: £16 per person.

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/organiser/nicky-gayle

Hosted at Hylands Estate,
organised by Method
Studio Architects

Design Consultations and Planning Workshops

Friday 14, 21 and 28 April:
2.00pm
Friday 5, 12, 19 and 26 May:
2.00pm

Method Studio Architects know the design and planning process can be complicated. So to make this easier, our afternoon workshop can help you understand what to expect from the process. This workshop is completely free. Suitable for anyone looking for architect quotes. Price: Free. Book in advance.

www.hylandsestate.co.uk/organiser/method-studio-architects-2

Milsom Hotels and Restaurants

Grand National lunch in the marquee

Sunday 15 April

Join us in the marquee at Talbooth Restaurant for our first annual race day event of 2023 which brings race day atmosphere to Dedham. Spend a day by the river including delicious lunch, horse betting and entertainment. Ticket includes: Prosecco reception, four course lunch with coffee, televised racing, onsite bookmaker and singer, Casper Clarke. Suitable for adults. Price: £100 per person. Booking required. Call 01206 321105.

www.milsomhotels.com/event/grand-national-lunch-in-the-marquee

Afternoon tea in the marquee

Sunday 30 April

Enjoy Afternoon Tea and fizz in Dedham in the Marquee at Talbooth Restaurant. Sarah Mai will be performing a mixture of Jazz, Swing, Rock 'n' Roll. Book to join us on Sunday 30 April. Please note, all ticket purchases are non-refundable

unless we are able to resell them. Suitable for adults. Price: Tickets £40 per person. Booking required: Call 01206 321105.

www.milsomhotels.com/event/afternoon-tea-in-the-marquee

Coronation lunch in the marquee

Saturday 6 May

A street party themed coronation lunch in the Marquee, with bunting and food inspired by the dish we created for the Queen on her visit to Colchester Town Hall for a civic luncheon in 1985. Ticket price includes three course lunch and a glass of Pimm's on arrival, entertainment from Casper Clarke and the option of boat trips on the River Stour. Suitable for adults. Price: £65 per person or £650 for a table of 10. Booking required: Call 01206 321105.

www.milsomhotels.com/event/grand-national-lunch-in-the-marquee

Mercury Theatre (Studio)

Breathe

Thursday 6 April:
11.30am and 1.30pm

Breathe explores the inner workings of trees, all beautifully realised through a combination of puppetry, detailed sets and live camera work. Suitable for five-years-old and over. Price: £10.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/breathe

Too Much World At Once

Tuesday 18 April:
2.30pm and 8.00pm

A lyrical, theatrical journey that spans continents and lives, Too Much World at Once is an urgent coming-of-age story for our times. Suitable for 14-years-old and over. Price: £14.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/too-much-world-at-once

Mercury Theatre

Room on the Broom

Tuesday 11 April
1.30pm and 4.00pm.
Wednesday 12 April
11.30am and 2.00pm

Jump on board the broom with Tall Stories' fun-filled adaptation of Room on the Broom, the best-selling book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Suitable for three-years-old and over. Price: £15.50.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/room-on-the-broom

Top Secret: The Magic of Science

Friday 14 April: 2.00pm

Top Secret is fun and entertaining for the whole family to enjoy along with inspiring and educating every young budding magician and scientist. Suitable for 10-years-old and over. Price: £13.50.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/magic-of-science

The Signatures – Northern Soul Live

Saturday 22 April: 7.30pm

The UK's premier Northern Soul live show that's sweeping the nation. Suitable for all ages. Price: £26 - £28.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/northern-soul-live

Around the World in 80 Days

Tuesday 25 – Saturday 29 April

Join this raggle-taggle band of travelling circus performers as they embark on their most daring feat yet: to recreate the adventures of Phileas Fogg as he sets off on his race around the world. Suitable for ages seven-years-old and over. Price: £15 - £25.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/around-the-world-in-80-days

The Comedy Network

Friday 28 April and
Friday 19 May: 8.00pm

The Comedy Network is a monthly series of laugh out loud comedy nights, featuring the best up-and-coming comedians. Suitable for 18-years-old and over. Price: £13.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/the-comedy-network-apr

Great Expectations

Friday 12 - Saturday 27 May

Charles Dickens' best-loved novel is brought to life on stage in this thrilling adaptation. Suitable for 12-years-old and over. Price: £15 - £28.50.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/event/great-expectations

Nuclear Races

Rush Weekend

Saturday 13 May –
Sunday 14 May:
8.00am – 6.00pm

Nuclear Races are the UK's most awarded muddy obstacle race. A leader in the Obstacle Course Racing field for more than a decade with events to suit all ages and abilities. Races for both adults and Rookie races for kids, as well as our new Family Wave for those wanting to give their Rookies a taste of the adult courses. Suitable for: Adult Races for ages 12-years-old plus, Rookie Races for ages four – 14-years-old, Family Wave for ages 10-years-old and over. Price: Adult entry from £69, child entry from £29 and Family Wave ticket £35 per person.

www.nuclear-races.co.uk/nuclearevents

Talliston House & Gardens

Murder Mystery Evening

Friday 12 - Saturday 13
May: 18:30pm

Join author and creator of Britain's most extraordinary home, John Tarrow, for his new annual murder mystery whodunnit. A dozen guests will be cast as a sinister suspect in a murder linked to one of the many extraordinary times and places in the house and gardens. Suitable for adults. Price: £45pp.

www.talliston.com/murdermystery

Sealife Adventure

Open every day from 10.00am. Closing time varies between 5.00pm and 8.00pm. Last admissions to the Zooquarium is always one hour before close.

Sealife Adventure is the UK's premier Zooquarium, based on the seafront of Southend-on-Sea. Our exhibits consist of tropical and marine aquatic organisms, as well as mammals, such as Macaques, Meerkats, Penguins, Otters, Butterflies, Dinosaurs and more. Suitable for all ages. Price: £14 for a day pass or £16 for an annual pass with unlimited visits for 12 months, and 20-50% discounts across our other attractions (including Adventure Island and Adventure Inside). Children under 90 centimetres in height enter free of charge.

www.sealifeadventure.co.uk

Island Fest

Saturday 17 June: 11.00am.

It will be a festival like no other that will be showcasing a variety of talent from in, and around, Southend. The day will include performances and displays from a variety of bands, singers, dancers, actors, artists, comedians and fashion designers. That's right – we want to celebrate all the talent Southend has to offer. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free to

enter the grounds of the theme park and watch the entertainment. Customers can purchase wristbands for rides throughout the day for £26 or purchase an annual pass for £56 with unlimited visits for 12 months and 20 -50% discounts across our other attractions (including Sealife Adventure).

www.adventureisland.co.uk/events/island-fest or www.adventureisland.co.uk

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

Spring and summer opening

Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from now:
10.00am - 4.00pm, last entry 3.00pm (Please note: Sunday 28 May and Sunday 23 July require specific tickets.)

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome reopens to the public. No need to book on non-event days. Suitable for six-years-old and over.

Price: Adult (16 years +) £10, concession or young person (six - 16 years+) £7, infant (0 - five years) free. Group ticket (two adults and two young persons) £30.

Air Shows on Sunday 28 May and Sunday 23 July: Adult (16 years+) £20, young person (six -15 years+) £10, infant (0 - five years) free. Group ticket (two adults and two young persons) £50.

www.stowmaries.org.uk/event-bookings

East Anglian Craft Fayre

Saturday 15 April:
10.00am - 4.00pm.
Last entry 3.00pm

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome launches an exciting new event - a local craft fayre with lots of exciting and beautiful crafts for you to browse. All exhibitions, tours of the hangars, use of the shop and Airmen's Mess Café included in price - as well as access to the Craft Fayre.

All included as part of your general admission fee. Suitable for six-years-old and over.

www.stowmaries.org.uk/event-bookings/event/east-anglian-food-and-craft-fayre

Tuffon Hall Vineyard

Tours and Tastings

Saturday 29 April: 2.00pm

Whilst taking a stroll through our vineyard set in the beautiful North Essex countryside you will learn about growing grapes and producing award-winning wine in England. We will talk you through the lifecycle of a vine and just what it takes to get from harvest to bottle and how our small but dedicated team work hard to produce the delicious wine that you will then get to try. Suitable for 18-years-old and over. Price - £20pp. Booking essential.

www.tuffonhall.co.uk

RHS Garden Hyde Hall

The Giant Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday 1 April -
Sunday 16 April:
10.00am - 5.00pm

Join us for a larger-than-life egg hunt. Follow a trail around the garden and if you spot all the giant eggs, you'll get a free chocolate rabbit to take home. There are also fun craft activities too.

Suitable for children up to 12-years-old. Price: Adults: £13.85, children £6.95.

www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/whats-on

Spring Plant Fair

Saturday 22 - Sunday 23 April:
10.00am - 5.00pm

The perfect weekend for all keen gardeners and plant collectors, in partnership with Essex Plant Heritage. Pick-up inspiring ideas for

your spring garden at home and get great specialist advice from the growers. For the first time this year we will also be joined by the Southend Bonsai Society. Suitable for adults. Price: £13.85.

www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/whats-on

Spring Craft Fair

Friday 28 April - Monday 1 May

Pick up gifts for friends and treats for you at our popular Bank Holiday craft show. Showcasing talented craftspeople, artists and designer makers selling beautiful and unique fine art, photography, jewellery, ceramics and textiles. Suitable for adults. Price: £13.85.

www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/whats-on

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