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SUMMER 2023



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“

Today we had our U16 Canvey Island rugby team bonding session at the Aqua Park. The Aqua Park team were really good and the boys had a fantastic time. See you next year!!”

RICHARD - COACH



Aqua Park Lakeside



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SCAN ME
TO BOOK



Welcome...

To the 2023 summer edition of Essex Explorer magazine. In this issue we celebrate the new Stick Man sculpture trail at Weald Country Park and list 15 excellent things to keep you and your family busy this summer in Essex.

Read about the 70th anniversary of the Windrush generation, the Siege of Colchester and discover how you can help attract more of our pollinating pals to your garden by building a bee hotel. Explore perfect park picnic spots, walks for you and your four-legged friends, recommended summer reads and delicious summer food courtesy of Tiptree Tea Rooms as well as much, much more.

If you're still stuck for inspiration, find out about many excellent events, exhibitions and productions 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 summer and explore Essex's beautiful countryside and coastline with us.



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

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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.

 www.explore-essex.com

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 [@exploressex](https://twitter.com/exploressex)

 Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk

Please share or recycle this magazine where possible.



New app launched to help combat climate change

A free 'Carbon Cutting Essex App' to provide practical and cost-effective ideas on how to reduce your carbon footprint has been launched by Essex County Council (ECC).

From the daily commute to recycling and home energy saving, the app provides hundreds of practical and cost-effective ideas on how to minimise your impact on the planet.

With a range of fun activities, quizzes and videos, app users will be rewarded points to enter prize draws or they can be donated to good causes.

Find out more about the 'Carbon Cutting Essex App' on the ECC website: www.essex.gov.uk/reducing-carbon-emissions. You can download the app for free on the App Store or GooglePlay.

New Community Orchards at Essex Country Parks

New orchards have been planted at Belhus Woods, Hadleigh and Weald Country Parks - in association with the Essex Forest Initiative and ECC Place Services - to benefit both local people and wildlife.

The fruit trees that have been planted are all native East Anglian varieties and are specific to our region. As the trees grow and the new orchards flourish, it's hoped that visitors will enjoy them through the seasons, from the spring time blossom to the fruit available to be picked in the autumn.

Read more:

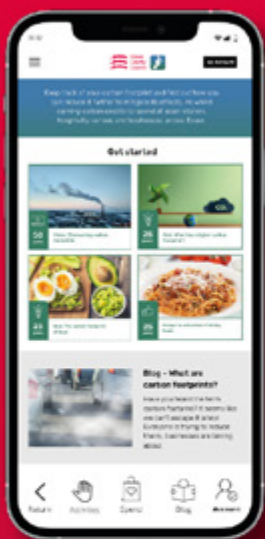
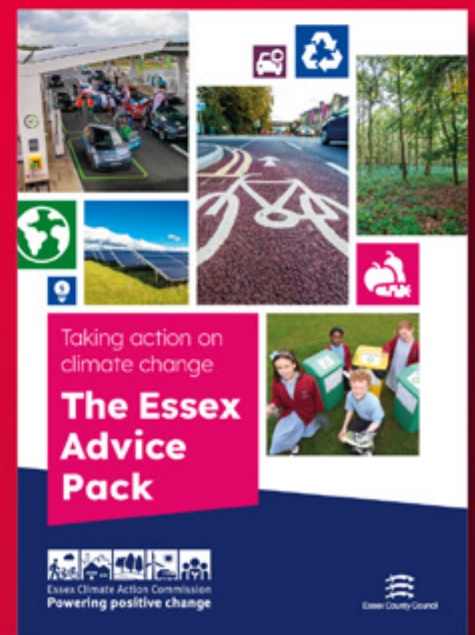
www.explore-essex.com/blog/community-orchards



Want to learn more about how you can help tackle climate change?

Check out our Essex Advice Pack for practical guidance and cost-effective recommendations to help us all to reduce our carbon footprint.

Download your free copy today by scanning the QR code.



On our new Carbon Cutting Essex app, you can learn how to reduce your carbon footprint through a series of fun activities, quizzes and videos.

Download the app today using the QR code.



Keep up to date with all the latest news by signing up to the monthly newsletter.

Scan the QR code on the right or visit www.essex.gov.uk/sign-up and subscribe under the planning, land and recycling section.



15 things to do in Essex this summer

We've pulled together 15 ideas to help you enjoy everything Essex has to offer this summer.

From simple pleasures such as enjoying a picnic in a beautiful setting and exploring our incredible coastline to experiencing something new, discover a local festival, visit a museum on a rainy day, or volunteer and get involved in your local places - the only question is what to do first.

1. **Enjoy a picnic in the great outdoors.** Head to an Essex Country Park and bask in the fresh air in our fabulous open spaces on a balmy day – discover our best picnic spots on page 32.
2. **Explore the stunning 350 miles of Essex coastline,** go beach combing at Cudmore Grove Country Park or the sunshine coast. Find oyster shells and sea glass, even shark's teeth if you're lucky. What seashore marvels will you find? Paddle in the sea and feel the water beneath your toes.
3. **Volunteer in Essex,** becoming a volunteer can be very rewarding and a great way to learn new skills, meet others and help your community. Visit www.explore-essex.com/support-us or www.essex.gov.uk/volunteering2 for opportunities to get involved.
4. **Take to the skies,** challenge yourself and your children to reach new heights on the High Ropes Adventure at Essex Outdoors (Harlow) or enjoy Sky Ropes at Great Notley Country Park. www.essexoutdoors.com/harlow-high-adventure
5. **Get on the water,** enjoy an incredible experience at the Lakeside Aqua park, enjoy a very special day out on the River Blackwater with Essex Outdoors or sign up to a paddleboard taster session. Read more about water sports on page 34.
6. **Take a walk on the wild side,** use the Go Jauntly app or the Active Essex Daily Mile to discover new routes in Essex. Discover our top dog walks on page 36.
7. **Experience a festival,** exhibition or cultural activity in Essex. Find out more in our Summer of Culture guide: www.explore-essex.com/culture/soc-guide
8. **Visit a garden.** Experience the restored Tudor Walled Garden at Cressing Temple Barns and discover its fascinating history. Enjoy some refreshments at the Tiptree Tea Room.
9. **Discover more about your heritage** with our county's marvellous museums – the perfect rainy day outing for all the family. Read more www.explore-essex.com/culture/soc-guide
10. **Visit the new Stick Man sculpture trail** at Weald Country Park and enjoy the play parks nestled within the beauty of Essex Country Parks. Great Notley is home to Essex's longest play trail and everyone loves the Gruffalo trail at Thorndon Country Park. Read more about the Stick Man trail over the page. Or take part in our new Nature Detectives trails to boost your child's love of animals and numbers. More on page 25.



11. **Boost your wellbeing.** Treat yourself to a ticket to the magnificent Mersea Minds in Motion wellness weekend, read more on pages 26 and 28.
12. **Enjoy an event in Essex.** Explore our summer days out listings from pages 38 and 39.
13. **Go somewhere you've never been before.** Discover a wealth of attractions with Visit Essex at www.visitessex.com
14. **Go Green.** Download the new Carbon Saving app for Essex www.essex.gov.uk/reducing-carbon-emissions
15. **Spend some time at home with the family.** Cook up a feast, read and have some well deserved down time. See recipes and book recommendations on pages 22 and 30. Or make a bee hotel, page 12.



Win an Essex Explorer Passes worth £85!

In Essex there is a country park for everyone whatever you're looking for. Discover adventurous days out, space to roam free, spend time with nature, meet with friends and set imaginations free. Save money on parking and cafés at many Essex Country Parks by purchasing the annual Explorer Pass and get out more for less all year round.

Enter our prize draw to win one of three Explorer Passes we have to give away. Simply tell us the correct answer to the question below and email it to: Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk, title your email: Explorer Pass Competition. Usual terms and conditions apply.

Which Essex Country Park is home to the Stick Man?

- a. Weald Country Park
- b. Belhus Woods Country Park
- c. Cudmore Grove Country Park

Find out more about the pass and watch our new video:

www.explore-essex.com/explorer-pass



New Stick Man sculpture trail at Weald Country Park

For many years families have been travelling to Weald Country Park in Brentwood to experience and enjoy the Stick Man.

Now, Essex Country Parks have invested in a brand new sculpture trail which has been installed at the park to bring the Stick Man characters to life for local families to enjoy. The new trail is in a similar vein to the Gruffalo carvings at Weald's sister park Thorndon, which are also based on a much-loved picture book by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler.

Visitors to Weald will be able to meet six of the animals from the book in a beautiful park setting. The carvings include Stick Man tree, squirrel, swan, rabbit and frog, and park manager June Jackson has been very impressed with the quality of the carvings.

The sculptures have been created and installed by Thomas Chainsaw Carving, who has produced characters from solid pieces of Western Red Cedar, overseen by license holder Magic Light Pictures to ensure authenticity.

June Jackson, Weald Country Park manager, said: "Much of the previous trail had been made from oak from the park and was therefore at the end of its natural life.



“These new sculptures not only bring the book and its characters to life in an even more vibrant way, but they also encourage reading, interaction with nature and will help to stimulate imaginations. We hope that families from across Essex and beyond enjoy our new trail.”

The new trail starts and ends at the visitor centre car park and loops around the lake to the right. It's on fully accessible and surfaced paths, suitable for those with push chairs or in wheelchairs, and is a total distance of 1.4 kilometres (or almost a mile).

We encourage you to make a day of it, enjoy the trail along with the two childrens play areas and den building along the way. You can also purchase a bag of duck or deer food from the visitor centre at the start and feed the animals you spot on the lake and in the deer enclosure. You could always bring a picnic or pick up some sandwiches and hot or cold drinks from the café.

Discover Stick Man and his family tree this summer.

Plan your visit to Weald Country Park:
www.explore-essex.com/weald



Bees, more than just honey

It's no secret that bees are vital for our environment, pollinating plants, flowers and crops, providing us with food and in turn supporting many other species of animals, from birds and bats to insects and mammals.

They play an important role in maintaining healthy eco-systems. With bee species declining in the UK – due to deforestation, pesticide use and climate change - Essex Country Parks are doing all they can to restore the bee population.

Creating a buzz at Essex Country Parks and heritage sites

Belhus Woods Country Park

The meadows, rough grassland and coppiced woodland provide great habitats for a wide variety of bee species. The sandy, gravelly shores of the lakes at Belhus are also great for mining bees to nest in. Early spring, staff and volunteers undertake monthly surveying which provides insight into the bees across the county. Several different species have been recorded in the park, however with over 270 bee species in the country, it is believed there are many more to discover.

Hadleigh Country Park

Hadleigh Country Park undertakes annual conservation works to improve the habitat for bumblebees. A bare-earth, sun-facing habitat has been created to encourage hole nesting solitary bees.

From monitoring and surveying an area of the park, it was discovered that spreading green hay, such as cuttings from wildflowers and grasses as they start to shed their seed, resulted in a greater plant growth and increased bumblebees gathering nectar and pollen. This included the extremely rare Shrill Carder Bee and the Brown-Banded Carder Bee, both of which have experienced a decline.

The new community orchards at Belhus, Hadleigh and Weald Country Parks provide a great source of nectar for bees and other pollinators.

Cressing Temple Barns

Thanks to volunteer beekeeper, Jan French, Cressing Temple Barns has grown its active hives from one to three and amazingly each hive can contain up to 70,000 bees in the summer months.

It's no surprise that the bees of Cressing Temple have gained awards for their honey as the plants of the beautiful and historic Tudor Walled Garden provide an excellent source of nectar. The apiary, or hive, is in the apple orchard and in the spring is surrounded by beautiful marguerite daisy and overhanging apple blossom. Discover some bee keeping history in the Tudor Walled Garden, where you will find two old-fashioned skeps, or hives, made of willow where bees would have been kept in the past.

Lend a hand, make a change

To ensure pollinators have plenty of food sources, choose a mix of garden plants that bloom throughout the season, English lavender and foxgloves are great for the summer months whilst primroses are a great early nectar source.

Get involved as a volunteer at an Essex Country Park by emailing, explore.essex@essex.gov.uk



Get busy building a bee hotel

Get 'beezy' and help our pollinating friends this summer by building a bespoke bee hotel. Bee hotels come in all shapes and sizes and building one is a simple fun craft. It's also a great way to help your children become interested in the natural world around them.



The summer months are the perfect time to help the bee population thrive in your garden, they're essential to our ecosystem as they pollinate flowers and fruit. Building a bee hotel will help your garden look blooming beautiful whilst helping maintain a healthy bee population.

This craft is for the solitary bees, as unlike bumblebees and honeybees they do not make colonies or live in a hive. In fact, experts believe that there are around 275 different species of bee in the country, and as the vast majority are solitary bees, they form a very important part of the pollination network.

To make a bee hotel, you'll need a few items, such as a plank of wood that's 10 centimetres wide, hollow canes or stems of different diameters (ideally these need to be between three and 10 millimetres for the different sizes of bee), a saw, some secateurs, a drill and screws or a hammer and some nails.



Building your hotel:

1. Saw or cut your plank of wood into five sections. Four of these sections will form the rectangle 'box' where you will add your stems next. You can drill and screw the four parts together to form a box or keep it simple and use a hammer and nails. Once completed, take your spare piece of wood, and attach it to the frame so it forms the back board.
2. Take your secateurs and cut your stems into the lengths that will fit your frame. Ideally, they should be a millimetre or so shorter, so they do not stick out of the frame. This protects them from the rain. Bramble, reed or bamboo canes are best for the stems.
3. Lay your frame on a flat or tilted surface and start to add the stems. It doesn't matter too much if some are slightly longer than the others as at this stage, as we want to make sure that it's a tight fit. The more stems you add to the space the more they will lock tightly together.
4. Once you've added the stems, now is the time to either hang it up or place it somewhere where it's off the ground, to ensure the bees are safe from predators, and where there is a lot of sunlight. If you don't have a suitable place, then you can build up some stones or bricks and sit it on top.

Now sit back and see if any solitary bees decide to move into their new home. If they do, the females will lay their eggs inside the stems. The egg is sealed up in a cell, which is made from a small amount of mud, and each one is left pollen which the grub will eat when it hatches. Some stems can house up to seven cells and before long you'll see the young bees emerge.

Did you know that different species of bumblebees have different proboscis (tongue) lengths which means they need to feed from different shaped flowers? Or that honeybees visit flowers for two purposes? One is to collect pollen, which is used to feed the brood, the other sees them collect nectar which is turned into honey to feed the colony over the winter months.



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.

Fallow Deer

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](#) or visit Youpic: www.youpic.com/AndrewAdams

Visit the Essex Country Parks.

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



Spotted Burnet



Grasshopper



Red Poll cow



Kestrel



Mandarin Duck



Wasp Hoverfly



Grasshopper



Emerald Damselfly



Essex Skipper



Fallow Deer



Egyptian Duck



Green Lacewing



Wren

Celebrating 75 years of the Windrush generation



'Here I stand?' at 'Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories'. Ionie Richards

"As we passed through the white cliffs of Dover, it was beyond imagination. I just came out having something to eat in the mess hall and I saw this crowd with the cameramen at the docks and I was waving my teacup, waving to be noticed," recalls Edwin Hilton Hall, one of the West Indian passengers on board His Majesty's Transport (HMT) Empire Windrush.

On 22 June 1948, over 500 passengers from the Caribbean disembarked from HMT Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks to start a new life in Great Britain. Many left their homes on the Caribbean islands, such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and travelled to Great Britain to help fill the country's post-war labour shortages.

It was a significant cultural moment that shaped the United Kingdom and now a range of events, exhibitions and performances have been held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Windrush generation and bring the story to life.

To mark the occasion, the Port of Tilbury held a programme of events, exhibitions and performances to bring the community together to acknowledge and celebrate the Windrush generation at the London International Cruise Terminal.

The free event - which was open to all - included Windrush exhibitions by The National Archives, Tilbury Riverside Project, Gateway Learning Community, along with tours led by EVEWRIGHT and a collaborative arts project from Sharing Our Lives.

The event also saw performances by the Royal Opera House Youth Dance group, Woodside Primary Academy's steel pan band, a Caribbean themed tea dance, as well as contributions from Tony Fairweather, author of 'Twenty- Eight Pounds and Ten Shillings - A Windrush Story', also take place.



Empire Windrush packed with West Indian immigrants on arrival at the Port of Tilbury on the River Thames on 22 June 1948. Image: Alamy



'Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories'



'Motherless Child' at 'Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories'. Gary Cordice

In June, guided tours of 'Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories' occurred as part of the ongoing work at Tilbury Docks by Ewewright Arts Foundation (EAF) which presented 'Belongings: Windrush 75'.

Having received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, and supported by Arts Council England, the 'Belongings: Windrush 75' project included an array of audio-visual works - featuring interviews, sounds and songs - that reflected on the themes of migration, identity and settlement to form a unique understanding of the Windrush generation and its descendants.

The guided tours of the 'Tilbury Bridge Walkway of Memories' saw history brought alive through an immersive audio and visual site-specific art installation on one of the bridges that the Windrush generation first walked across as they entered the country in 1948.

There were also two new films directed by EAF screened, 'Motherless Child' and 'Here I Stand?' which both explored the resilience, identity and determination of the Windrush generation. Both films were screened in the Grade II listed ticket hall along with other selected artists.

Finally, as part of the project a new film by young people from Tilbury GLC schools was presented, including audio and visual displays and projections.

To find out more visit:
www.evewrightarts.org

Images courtesy of EVEWRIGHT

From Romans to the Civil War

Pompeii murmillo gladiator helmet
Image: The Trustees of the British Museum



Throughout 2023 Colchester is celebrating its recent city status.

Two thrilling experiences this summer will bring very different aspects of the city's history to life. Get up close to the 2,000-year-old murmillo helmet from Pompeii and discover more about Roman gladiatorial games. You'll also travel back to 1648, a time of intense battle and civil war in Colchester, with an epic re-enactment.

Gladiators: A Day at the Roman Games

A spectacular new exhibition at Colchester Castle – which opens on Saturday 15 July 2023 and runs until Sunday 14 January 2024 – aims to showcase what a day at the Roman games would have looked and felt like. It's ideal for anyone fascinated by Roman history as well as Colchester's own rich heritage.

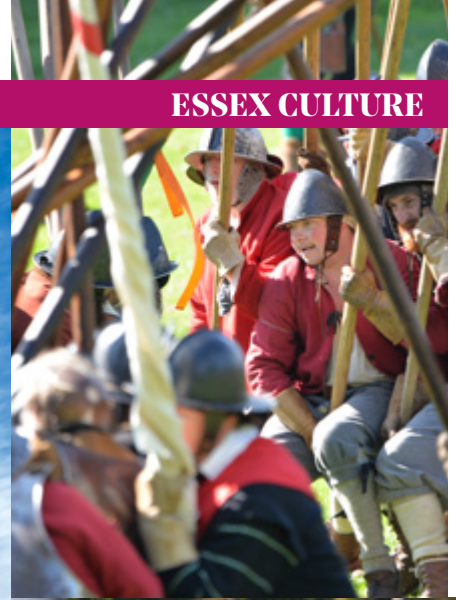
'Gladiators: A Day at the Roman Games' will feature items on loan from the British Museum including the 2,000-year-old murmillo gladiator helmet which was unearthed in Pompeii, alongside many other fascinating objects from Colchester Museum's own rich collection and beyond.

The murmillo was a type of gladiator popular across the arenas of the Roman Empire. Their helmet was distinguishable for its broad rim and high crest, which would originally have been decorated with horse hair.

The exhibition will expose the reality of what life would have been like for Roman gladiators in Colchester thousands of years ago. Visitors can discover more about the life, and death, of gladiators in the arena through the exhibition's thematic displays. From the scene setting 'Let the Games Begin' to 'Morning Beast Hunts' showcasing the animals that fought in the arena, to 'Midday Executions' and 'Afternoon Gladiatorial Combat' – all areas will be family friendly and interactive.

This fascinating event will be included as part of your admission to Colchester Castle.

Find out more: www.colchester.cimuseums.org.uk/gladiators



The Colchester Siege Spectacular

Colchester Castle Park and city centre

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 August

The English Civil War Society are coming to Colchester's Castle Park this August as part of a free weekend of living history and pageantry to mark the 375th anniversary of the Siege of Colchester which took place in 1648.

The Civil War ran from 1642 to 1651, with the siege of Colchester occurring when the English Civil War was reignited in several areas of Britain during a relative lull. Colchester found itself in the thick of the unrest when a Royalist army - on its way through East Anglia to raise support for the King - was attacked by Lord-General Thomas Fairfax, the head of a Parliamentary force. The Parliamentarians initial attack forced the Royalist army to retreat behind the town's walls, but they were unable to bring about victory, so the siege began.

The siege lasted 73 days before the Royalists eventually surrendered in August, following the defeat of the Royalist army in the north of England at the Battle of Preston in 1648. The commanders were executed and the site is now marked by an obelisk in Castle Park.

The Siege Spectacular, featuring over 500 participants, will faithfully recreate some of these events and include displays using cannons, gunpowder and cavalry in action with pop-up experiences around the city centre.

Visitors to this immersive encounter will be able to meet the protagonists and hear their stories, witness battle scenes, explore the living encampments and discover the truth behind the tall tales at this epic re-enactment.

Find out more: www.visitcolchester.com/whats-on/colchester-siege-spectacular-p1861921

Throughout 2023, Colchester will be celebrating its new city status with a programme of fantastic events. Browse the event listings and keep checking back as more will be added throughout the year.

www.visitcolchester.com/whats-on/year-of-celebration



Summer Reads

We've picked some of our favourite new paperbacks so you can relax, escape and enjoy a good read this summer. Pack a book wherever you go and enjoy reading outdoors when the weather lets you, whether it's on the beach, under a tree, in the garden or at the park.



£9.99
RRP PB

The Paper Palace

By Miranda Cowley Heller

A No.1 New York Times bestseller and Reese Witherspoon Bookclub pick.

This gripping summer read set in Cape Cod, is described as being perfect for fans of 'Where the Crawdads Sing' and 'Little Fires Everywhere' and asks the question who would you choose. Your husband or your one true love?



£8.99
RRP PB

The Maid

By Nita Prose

A No.1 New York Times and Sunday Times Top Ten Bestseller, this novel was also a BBC Radio 4 Book at Bedtime pick and won the Ned Kelly award for international crime fiction.

When Molly Gray enters suite 401 she discovers an infamous guest dead in his bed and a tangled mystery unfolds, with Molly at the very heart of it. Because if anyone can uncover secrets and fingerprints amongst the mess it's the maid...



£9.99
RRP PB

Shrines of Gaiety

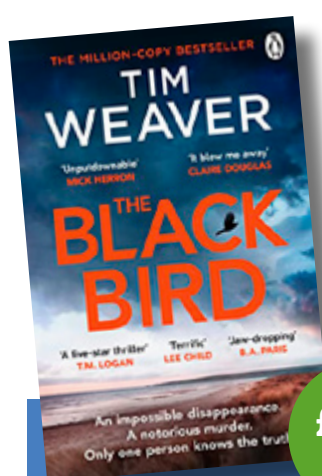
By Kate Atkinson

'Seduction, betrayal, and larger-than-life characters that will have you hooked until the last page' – Sunday Telegraph

1926. London hums with a new nightlife. And queen of it all is the notorious Nellie Coker...

But beneath the dazzle of Soho's gaiety there is a dark underbelly, a world in which it is all too easy to become lost.

Kate Atkinson brings together a unique cast of characters in a mesmerising novel that captures the uncertainty of life and of a world in which nothing is quite as it seems.



£8.99
RRP PB

The Black Bird

By Tim Weaver

A Richard and Judy book club pick for 2023 and Sunday Times top three bestseller.

Cate and Aiden have vanished. Their car plunged into a ravine and exploded. But the vehicle was empty. Missing persons investigator David Raker knows that behind every disappearance lies a dark tale waiting to be uncovered. But can he uncover the secret at the heart of this one?



£8.99
RRP PB

Insomnia

By Sarah Pinborough

'Pinborough writes like an absolute dream about an absolute nightmare. I loved it!'
– Richard Osman

A Richard and Judy book club pick for 2023.

From the outside Emma has it all, but something is keeping Emma awake. She's tried so hard to bury the past, but Emma's secrets are the stuff of nightmares...



£8.99
RRP PB

The Last Summer

By Karen Swan

'The Last Summer is meticulously researched and beautifully told... a wonderfully satisfying read.'
– Santa Montefiore

Summer on St Kilda, a wild, remote Scottish island. Two strangers from drastically different worlds meet...

Opposites attract in this epic and spellbinding novel which will transport you to the wild beauty of the Scottish Isles, and the glamour and intrigue of high society in the 1930s.

Ready, Set, Read! Summer Reading Challenge

Take part in the Ready, Set, Read! Challenge, coming to a library near you this summer.



Essex Library Services and The Reading Agency are teaming up with the Youth Sport Trust for a very special sports, play and creativity themed challenge.

Children will be able to join a superstar team and their marvellous mascots as they navigate a fictional summer obstacle course brought to life by children's illustrator Loretta Schauer

The challenge is open to all children, is free of charge and runs from Saturday 15 July to Saturday 2 September in all Essex libraries and mobile libraries. Children are being asked to read six library books and they'll collect stickers for their folder. After reading six books they earn their certificate and medal.

Children can read any library book of their choice; fiction, non-fiction, picture books or books they share with parents and carers – they all count. Also, the under-fours aren't forgotten as a special version of Ready, Set, Read! is available just for them.

Keep up to date with this year's Summer Reading Challenge – which is delivered by libraries and produced by The Reading Agency – by following Essex Library Services on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, @EssexLibraries. Visit: www.libraries.essex.gov.uk

Summer Read on the Road – and the Mini Explorers

This summer head to the Essex Country Parks for the launch of the new Mini Explorers trails to help nurture your children's love of numbers and discover the Summer Read on the Road too.

An excellent, free day for families with young children, you'll enjoy sunny story times, fun forest school activities and of course the new Mini Explorers trails. Spot the animals, solve the sums and enter the prize draw to win. You'll also be able to sign up to the Summer Reading Challenge on the day, discover the new 'Read and count with me under a tree' family book bags available to borrow and be inspired by the team at Talk, Listen and Cuddle.

The events will be at Essex Country Parks at the beginning of the school summer holidays from around 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Hadleigh Country Park
Monday 31 July

Thorndon Country Park
Thursday 3 August

Cudmore Grove Country Park
Monday 7 August

Great Notley Country Park
on Friday 11 August

Dates and locations may change, check for full details:
www.explore-essex.com/events

Download 50 things to do before you're five from the team at Talk, Listen and Cuddle: www.tlc-essex.info/games-and-resources/50-things-to-do-before-youre-5/

Activities are part of Essex County Council's Year of Numbers and Year of Reading initiatives. Supported by Essex Country Parks and Essex Libraries, Talk, Listen and Cuddle and Adult Community Learning.

Essex Year of
NUMBERS



Mersea Minds in Motion

A wellness weekend to boost mind, body and soul in an idyllic island setting.

In 2022 when we were recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Essex Outdoors team at Mersea decided to put on an event to help boost physical, emotional and mental health. A concept that was born during the series of lockdowns when we saw the impact of how outdoor activities can increase confidence, self-esteem, resilience and a general sense of wellbeing.

Aimed at adults and young people aged 14-years-old and over, Mersea Minds in Motion was attended by a group of people who enjoyed it so much that they immediately wanted to return. And so, we're very pleased to confirm that Mersea Minds in Motion is back for a second year.

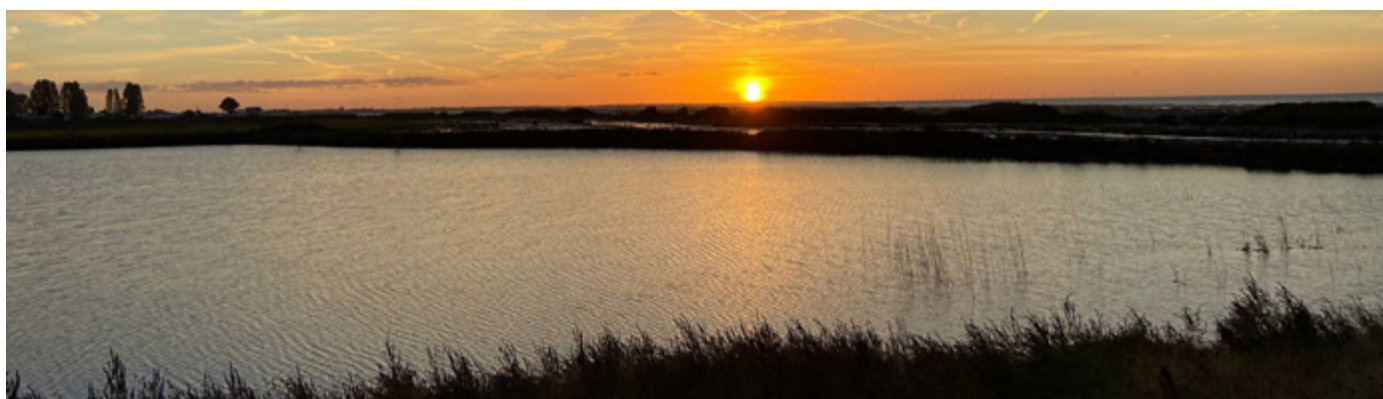
We asked the team at Essex Outdoors Mersea about what they had set out to achieve and they said: "We wanted to provide a residential experience focusing on mental wellbeing that was free from discrimination and stigma. We also wanted to offer high quality sessions - focusing on different aspects of wellbeing - and introduce tools that people will be able to use in the future, while demonstrating the positive link between outdoor activities and mental health."

Last year's event proved popular with one attendee stating: "Everything was outstanding and we'll definitely bring a group next time."

The unique proposition of Mersea Minds in Motion is its mix of outdoor activities with a series of wellbeing taster workshops, all provided by experts. This is something that Mersea Minds creator Emma Hollis set out to achieve, an event where attendees could try a range of different and new activities in a friendly and safe place.

Emma said: "I hope the event can help broaden the activities we traditionally associate with wellbeing, such as yoga, mindfulness and Pilates, and help people to consider and recognise the impact that outdoor activities can have on wellbeing."

With a one-minute walk to the beach and surrounded by countryside, Essex Outdoors Mersea is a purpose-built outdoor activity and residential centre, which has a track record in delivering outstanding activity to schools, and is the perfect place to host the event.



Mersea Minds in Motion

Friday 29 September to Sunday 1 October 2023

Day tickets from £54

Weekend tickets from £117

www.essexoutdoors.com/mersea-minds

This year, attendees will be able to enjoy an energising mix of sessions - including yoga, art and music therapy by the sea - alongside activities such as climbing on the brand-new vertical challenge, as well as enjoying the zip wire, bushcraft and archery. Those who choose to stay for the whole weekend will stretch and unwind with further sessions towards the end of the day and be able to take part in evening activities like sunset walks after their evening meal. With a range of sessions available, participants will be able to decide how active or relaxing they want their weekend to be.

Weekend tickets include six meals and a BBQ and cooked breakfast, all catered by the on-site kitchens. Accommodation is based on six or two-person heated cabins with shared bathrooms in an idyllic setting on the coast.

We predict that the Mersea Minds Wellness Weekend 2023 really will leave you feeling refreshed, re-vitalised and ready for anything.





Walks, wildlife and wellness

**Boost your wellbeing
with Essex Country
Parks and discover six
benefits of getting out
and about in nature.**

The benefits of being outside are relevant to everyone, no matter your age or lifestyle. Research has proven that exposure to nature can have both mental and physical health benefits. Not only does it make us feel better emotionally, but it decreases blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and stress hormones. If you need persuading to spend more time outdoors, these six reasons should help.

If you're working from home, getting outdoors in the fresh air can help you think clearly and boost your vitamin D levels, leaving you alert and refreshed. It can also improve your concentration levels, creativity and productivity.

An early morning stroll in the fresh air with wildlife and nature is a positive start to the day. Even a gentle 20 minute walk can increase your fitness levels and build muscle strength, all while releasing feel good endorphins. 'Go Jauntly' can help you discover new walks, visit: www.gojauntly.com

Country parks are the perfect way to stay active, meet friends or make new ones. Joining a park run means you can exercise in stunning scenery. Park runs currently take place at Cudmore Grove, Great Notley, Hadleigh and Marsh Farm Country Parks.

With children spending more time indoors, it can be a challenge to disconnect from technology and electronic devices. Exploring outdoor play areas are lots of fun and can increase imaginative play, communication skills and strengthen their muscles and co-ordination.

Observing and interacting with wildlife in their natural habitat is a great way to relax and improve wellbeing. Visit the grazing goats at Hadleigh, feed the ducks and deer at Weald or go fishing at Belhus Woods, Danbury or Weald Country Parks.

Volunteering can provide a healthy boost to your self-confidence and self-esteem. Spend time preserving nature for future generations by volunteering at an Essex Country Park. Email Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk to find out more.

Whether you're looking for a bracing stroll along the coast, a woodland walk or somewhere to hone your cycling skills, Essex has a selection of Green Flag status parks on your doorstep. They cater to all and have mobility scooters to hire for free at some parks. Find out more by visiting: www.explore-essex.com

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Al fresco recipes from Tiptree

This summer why not tempt family and friends to dine al fresco and enjoy the long summer days in the great outdoors with a delicious picnic. We've picked some of our favourite Tiptree recipes to make the perfect homecooked treats to eat outside. Just add a picnic blanket and your favourite people.

Read more about picnics in the Essex Country Parks on page 32.



Chicken Skewers with Tiptree Hot Mango Sauce

Try this tasty Tiptree chicken recipe that's perfect for your picnic.

Ingredients

4 chicken breasts
Olive oil
Greek yoghurt
Paprika
3 garlic cloves
Tiptree Hot Mango sauce
Fresh coriander and sesame seeds for garnish
Wooden BBQ skewers

Directions:

- Step 1** Slice the chicken breast into pieces.
- Step 2** Add to a bowl with four large spoonfuls of Greek yoghurt.
- Step 3** Mix in the paprika, crush the garlic and add that along with a pinch of salt a small dash of olive oil to marinate the chicken. Leave in the fridge for a minimum of four hours.
- Step 4** Once marinated, carefully transfer the chicken to the wooden skewers and cook in the oven for around 20 to 25 minutes.
- Step 5** Finish on a BBQ or griddle pan.
- Step 6** Top with your garnish and serve with Tiptree Hot Mango sauce.



The Barns Templar Cheese Scones

A take on the very popular Templar Scone, inspired the by Knights Templar history at Cressing Temple Barns, you can also purchase these at the Barns Tea Room.

Ingredients

200g cheese
500g self-raising flour
Pinch of salt
110g margarine
11g baking powder
Milk
1 egg
38g Tiptree Hot Gooseberry chutney
Plain flour for dusting
Scone cutter, greaseproof paper
and baking tray



Directions

- Step 1** Pre-heat the oven to 220 degrees.
- Step 2** Sieve the flour, salt and baking powder into a bowl. Add the margarine until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
- Step 3** Add one egg and most of the cheese (leaving enough to sprinkle on top).
- Step 4** Make a well in the middle of the mixture, gradually add milk, aim for a good consistency, not too dry or too wet. Start with a spoon and then fold in with your hands.
- Step 5** Sprinkle flour onto a dry, cold side and onto your rolling pin. Roll until no taller than your scone cutter.
- Step 6** Cut out scones, dip cutter into flour after each cut, try not to twist as you pull it out. Re-roll and repeat.
- Step 7** Line the baking tray with greaseproof paper, place scones on the tray and brush with a little egg or milk. Sprinkle your remaining cheese on top.
- Step 8** Place in the oven and set timer for six minutes.
- Step 9** Turn the oven down to 160 degrees, rotate the tray and bake for another six minutes.
- Step 10** Remove from the oven, allow to cool on a rack, then serve with Tiptree Hot Gooseberry chutney.

If you have time, discover a delicious and refreshing range of mocktails to have with your meal.
Visit: www.tiptree.com/blogs/recipes/tagged/drinks

Picnic days and summer haze



There is something wonderful about dining on culinary delights in the great outdoors. Picnics have a long-standing history in England, becoming popular in the 20th century due to developing transport links providing greater access to the Great British countryside.



With long scenic strolls and outdoor adventures it's well known that you can build up quite an appetite, however, picnics are much more than just food. They're a great way to relax with family and friends while creating long lasting memories and enjoying the fresh air in natural surroundings.

From breathtaking views to tucked away gems, there is something for everyone to explore and enjoy over the warmer months - so pack a picnic and take a trip to one of these delightful destinations.



Belhus Woods Country Park

Located in Thurrock and near the M25 and A13, Belhus Woods is a great meeting point for friends and family to enjoy a picnic. Children will love the musical themed play area and there's plenty of wildlife to see in and around the lakes, from ducks to dragonflies. Take your four-legged friend for a stroll around the lake or let them enjoy all that the dog agility area has to offer.

Danbury Country Park

For a quieter experience, Danbury is great for all ages. This historic park has accessible paths, lakes and woodland brimming with wildlife. There's also a large open space that's great for picnics and for children to run free and play to their hearts content.

Thorndon Country Park

Work up an appetite for your picnic by enjoying a scenic walk to Thorndon South. Take in the expansive views of Essex and you can even see Canary Wharf on a clear day. Children will enjoy the Gruffalo trail and with plenty of big open spaces it's a great place to take a kite or some post-picnic fun.

Cudmore Grove Country Park

Soak up the sea air on Mersea Island by heading to Cudmore Grove. Not only can you enjoy its sandy coastline, there's also acres of green grassland and wooded areas to explore. With views across the Blackwater and Colne estuaries it's the perfect spot for a picnic. Children can enjoy the coastal themed play area, while avid 'twitchers' can while away the day in the bird hide.

Great Notley Country Park

Explore nature including lake life and wildflower meadows. Children can enjoy Essex's longest play trail and there are perfect picnic spots along the way. Family and friends can also climb high on the bookable Sky Ropes activity.

Weald Country Park

Escape the cities and towns and head to Weald for a picnic. Close to the A12 it's well connected and easy for family and friends to visit. With wide open spaces there's plenty of room for picnicking and exploring. You and your children can feed the ducks and deer before taking them to see the updated Stick Man trail.

Picnics are welcomed at our Green Flag awarded Essex Country Parks and picnic benches and tables are available at all locations. However, please note that barbecues are not permitted at any of our sites.

Discover the perfect park for your picnic by visiting:
www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/our-parks-and-places

Splash into summer

Find out how you can splash into summer at Hadleigh Country Park and Essex Outdoors.

Over the last few years water sports have become increasingly popular with many people enjoying paddle boarding, open water swimming, canoeing and kayaking. Not only is it great fun but it's also a fantastic way to keep fit.

Here we bring you some ideas to discover the best water-based activities at Hadleigh Country Park and Essex Outdoors – it's perfect for a family-friendly day out and it's a great way to learn a new hobby. You might be also interested in booking a fun filled splash experience, including an inflatable water park and obstacle course, at Aqua Park Lakeside (see page two).



Hadleigh Country Park

Have fun and learn new skills – from taster sessions to fitness and technique classes – in a safe environment this summer on the reservoir at Hadleigh Country Park. With water-based activities for all abilities, from stand-up paddle boarding to open water swimming, there's something for everyone. However, please note that these activities are all run by third-party organisations and booking is required online in advance.

Stand Up Paddle (SUP) boards are available to hire from Saltwater SUP - which also offer beginner courses and social activities - and allow you to enjoy the numerous benefits of time spent on the water. If you want to get into open water swimming and 'swim on the wild side', then the Hadleigh Plungers are for you.

Essex Kayaking at Hadleigh means you can also kayak with friends and family. Kayak with confidence regardless of your experience levels. Discover more: www.glampinginessex.co.uk/essex-kayaking-hadleigh-country-park. Find out more in the 'activities' section here: www.explore-essex.com/hadleigh

To book a swimming session with the Hadleigh Plungers visit: www.hadleighplungersows.co.uk

To book a Saltwater SUP session visit: www.saltwater-sup.co.uk



Essex Outdoors Bradwell

The coast is your host at Essex Outdoors Bradwell. Situated on the River Blackwater - it's perfect for sailing, yachting and water sports. Essex Outdoors Bradwell, which is a Royal Yachting Association training centre, offers powerboat and sailing courses, experience days and a children's sailing week.

The five day youth sailing week is perfect for water and adventure loving children. It's suitable for total beginners to the more experienced sailors aged 10 to 16-years-old, either way your children will gain a boat load of experience.

Discover more at Essex Outdoors Bradwell:
www.essexoutdoors.com/our-centres/bradwell



Essex Outdoors Harlow

Have fun on the water with the Saturday Paddle Club and Tuesday taster sessions at Essex Outdoors Harlow. Led by expert instructors you can try canoeing and kayaking in a safe setting and all equipment is provided.

You can also keep your children entertained with the School Holiday Activity Days. Children aged eight to 16-years-old can have a go at a different activities, whether it's ascending the high ropes, completing the climbing course to cruising the River Stort in a canoe, they're sure to be kept entertained.

For those who'd like to try SUP for the first time, Essex Outdoors is holding Tuesday night taster sessions through July, August and September. No prior experience is necessary as you'll be introduced to the skills and techniques required by qualified and friendly coaches. Visit: www.essexoutdoors.cinolla.com/harlow/course/stand-up-paddle-board-taster-session

Find out more about Essex Outdoors Harlow.
Visit: www.essexoutdoors.com/our-centres/harlow

Please note: We do not allow swimming in any lakes within the Essex Country Parks and green spaces.

Remember, even if you are an experienced swimmer always keep in mind that while the weather may be warm the water may still be very cold and it could lead to Cold Water Shock. To stay safe around water visit: www.visitleevalley.org.uk/staying-safe-around-water

Discover a delightful day out with your fluffy friends

All the Essex Country Parks – from Belhus Woods to Weald – are perfect for a day out with your four-legged friend. From wide open spaces and woodland avenues to fields and beaches, there's a walk which you and your fluffy friend are bound to enjoy.



Here we've picked some of our top dog walks to suit you whatever you're looking for.

Belhus Woods Country Park

With ancient woodlands, grasslands, five lakes and a dog agility training area, which is ideal for puppies and rescue canines, Belhus Woods is the perfect place to take a stroll for those with a four-legged friend.

With over 300 acres of park to explore there's no better place to exercise for both pooches and people, or you can both talk a leisurely circular route through Whitehall and the Running Water Woods and back towards the visitor centre where both dogs and owners can relax with a well earned drink.

Discover more:
www.explore-essex.com/belhus-woods

Cudmore Grove Country Park

Situated on Mersea Island, Cudmore Grove is nature reserve with over 102 acres of unique coastal landscapes, habitat and heritage overlooking the Blackwater and Colne estuaries.

Designated as a Special Site of Scientific Interest, a Ramsar site, National Nature Reserve and Special Protection Area, the park is home to several miles of walking paths which circle and cross the site, including the sea wall walk, and is a great place to tire out even the most energetic of our fluffy friends.

Cudmore Grove also has a beach, making it the ideal walk for any pooches that like a paddle.

To find out more visit:
www.explore-essex.com/cudmore-grove

Danbury Country Park

As an award-winning Grade II listed park and garden set in the remains of the 13th century Danbury Palace, Danbury has ancient woodlands and wildflower meadows that both dogs and owners can enjoy exploring.

With accessible paths and seating areas around the lake and across the 45 acre park, you and your four-legged friend can choose how long or short you want the walk to be.

For more information visit:
www.explore-essex.com/danbury



Hadleigh Country Park

With wide open spaces, Hadleigh is a great place for dogs and owners alike to take a walk and discover the estuary views.

With varied terrain which takes you through trees, pasture, meadows and marsh, you and your dog can either enjoy the one kilometre family friendly trail or the longer nine kilometre loop of the park. There's also a walk to Hadleigh Castle and along the sea wall, both take 90 minutes, and you and your canine friend can refresh yourselves at the café.

Find out more by visiting:
www.explore-essex.com/hadleigh

Thorndon Country Park

Woodlands, birdlife, open parkland, fishing and the Gruffalo trail makes Thorndon Country Park the perfect destination for dog walkers and families alike.

Located at Thorndon South is a dog activity course, where they can jump, negotiate ramps, tunnels, hoops and much more. The course - which was built by the Thorndon Guardians - offers a great way give them a fun day of exercise while keeping them entertained.

Learn more here:
www.explore-essex.com/thorndon

Weald Country Park

With over 500 acres of meadows, grassland, rolling hillsides and woodland, the historic Weald Country Park offers the chance to run around and get some great exercise.

There's also a number of taps and dog bowls to keep canines refreshed during the warmer summer days, while owners can rehydrate themselves at the Wiggly Bush café.

Visit:
www.explore-essex.com/weald

Please remember when visiting an Essex Country Park to act responsibly and respect the wildlife. Always tidy up after your dog, use a lead in busy areas and keep your pets on a lead and under control as some parks are home to grazing livestock and children's play areas.



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Day's Out: Summer 2023



Image credit Harlow Museum

Adventure Island

Superhero Weekend

Saturday 19 and
Sunday 20 August:
11.00am until close both days

Come and see all your favourite superheroes and villains with a themed treasure hunt, entertainment and activities. Suitable for: All ages. Price: The park is free admission, only pay to go on the rides. www.adventureisland.co.uk/events

Beecroft Art Gallery

Edwin Lucas: An Individual Eye

Saturday 10 June to
Sunday 11 September

The exhibition traces his development from the early watercolours of his youth to his boldly experimental oil paintings of the 1940s and 1950s, when he was one of Britain's first surrealist influenced artists. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/2844/southend-to-be-first-city-outside-of-scotland-to-exhibit-work-of-unique-and-underrated-artist

Cammashall Farm

Pick your own fruit

July and August:
9.00am to 4.00pm

PYO strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, blackcurrants and sunflowers. Please check the pick your own page of our website before booking to see what's available. Suitable for all ages. Price: £3 voucher redeemable against fruit picked. Pre-booking required. www.cammashall.co.uk/pyo

Maize Maze

July and August:
10.00am to 3.00pm

Jurassic themed six acre Maize Maze with two games to play and a reward at the end when you find your way out. Suitable for all ages. Price: £5 per person. Under-two's free. Discounted family tickets available. No pre-booking required. www.cammashall.co.uk/maize-maze

Garg's Animal Encounters

Wednesday 26 July,
Friday 4 August, and Thursday
17 August: 10.00am to 11.15am

Garg's Animal Encounters is an exciting and educational experience that gives you the chance to get up close and handle some fascinating animals. Suitable for ages four-years-old plus. Price: £6.95 per child. One free adult space with each paying child. Pre-booking required. www.cammashall.co.uk/events

SEN Session

Sunday 3 September: 10.00am

Garg's Animal Encounters is an exciting and educational experience that gives you the chance to get up close and handle some fascinating animals. Suitable for ages four-years-old plus. Price: £6.95 per child. One free adult space with each paying child. Pre-booking required. www.cammashall.co.uk/events

Clacton Airshow

Thursday 24 and
Friday 25 August
(Thursday 11.00am to 9.00pm.
Friday 11.00am to 5.00pm)

Join us over two days and enjoy thrilling flight displays and spectacular twilight flights (Thursday only) in the skies over Clacton's stunning seafront and a host of ground events and entertainment on the West Greensward. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. www.clactonairshow.com

Colchester Zoo

Wild Vibe Wonderland

Saturday 22 July 2023 to
Sunday 3 September 2023

To make this summer extra zoo-rific for our 60th birthday, we have teamed up with Jammy Creative Studios to provide you with a full six weeks of entertainment as they bring an exclusive Wild Vibe Wonderland to us here at Colchester Zoo. Suitable for all ages. Price: General admission required. www.colchester-zoo.com/event/summer-at-the-zoo-wild-vibe-wonderland

Summer Nights

Saturday 22 July, Saturday 5 August, Saturday 19 August and Saturday 2 September 2023

Join us until 8.30pm for our extended summer opening where you can enjoy the zoo into the evening with a special party as we celebrate turning 60. Plus, live music from 5.00pm to 8.00pm. Suitable for all ages. Price: General admission required. www.colchester-zoo.com/event/summer-nights-2-september

Starlight Safari Night

Saturday 16 September and Saturday 30 September 2023 until 9.30pm

Enjoy a magical twilight spectacular and a live performance by One-Drum at 6.30pm, 7.30pm and 8.30pm with traditional Highlife Jazz and Afrobeat music using authentic African instruments. Suitable for all ages. Price: General admission required. www.colchester-zoo.com/event/starlight-safari-night-30-september

Dino Discovery Day

Saturday 23 September 2023

Take a step back in time with our Dino Discovery Day filled with all things prehistoric, including the chance to meet and greet our

dinosaur friends. Discover extinct species from millions of years ago, from gigantic carnivores to the graceful herbivores. Suitable for all ages. Price: General admission required. www.colchester-zoo.com/event/dino-discovery-day-september-23/

Chelmsford Riverside Leisure Centre

Get In! Mini and City Camps

Monday 24 July to Friday 1 September inclusive

Whole and half day holiday camps for kids, running Monday to Friday throughout the summer holidays. Early booking discounts, childcare voucher payments, early drop off and late pick up available. Suitable for ages: Four to 12-years-old. Price: £14.50 for a half day or £17 for a whole day. www.chelmsford.gov.uk/citycamps

Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre, Dovedale Sports Centre, South Woodham Ferrers Leisure Centre

Monday 24 July to Friday 1 September inclusive

Get In! Kids holiday courses

Fun holiday activities, for kids of all ages. Including swimming crash courses, beginners ice skating and more. Suitable for ages: 0 to 16-years-old. Price: £5 - £40 dependent on activity. www.chelmsford.gov.uk/getin

Chelmsford City Council, Community Sports and Wellbeing team

Play in the Park

Weekdays from 24 July to 25 August: 10.00am to 12.00pm and 1.00pm to 3.00pm

Play in the Park is a series of free, two-hour multi-activity sessions run for children at community and parish venues. Some sessions also

feature additional activities such as inflatables, reptile handling and scooter lessons. Suitable for age three to 11-years-old. Price: Free. www.chelmsford.gov.uk/play

Chelmsford Theatre

Blood Brothers

Tuesday 15 August to Saturday 19 August

The tale of two twins separated at birth has achieved the acclaim that few musicals have. Bill Kenwright's production surpassed 10,000 performances in London's West End. Price: See website. Suitable for ages 12-years-old plus. Contains some coarse language. www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/

Down Hall: Hotel, Spa and Estate

Jazz Brunch: Fox, Wiggle and Sass

Sunday 6 August: 11.00am to 1.00pm

Join vintage vocal harmony trio Fox, Wiggle and Sass as they sing their swinging feel good tracks. Grab your friends and join us for brunch on the terrace, sipping cocktails whilst listening to the sounds of jazz. Suitable for ages 18-years-old and over. Price: £35 per person. www.universe.com/events/live-from-the-lawn-jazz-brunch-tickets-hatfield-heath

Jazz Brunch: Chris Kennedy

Sunday 3 September: 11.00am to 1.00pm

Join jazz pianist and singer Chris Kennedy as he plays a selection of classic jazz and swing. Suitable for ages 18-years-old and over. Price: £35 per person. www.universe.com/events/live-from-the-lawn-jazz-brunch-tickets-hatfield-heath

East Coast Distillery

Free Distillery Tour and Tastings

Every Saturday
12.00pm or 2.00pm

Join us for a free distillery tour and we'll show you around, introduce you to our botanicals, processes and Monty the still. And there will be an opportunity to sample our hand crafted locally inspired gins. Suitable for 18-years-old and over. Price: Free but book online. www.eastcoastdistillery.co.uk/tours

Essex Country Parks Mills

Open specific Sundays now
until September

Visit the historic Alderford, Beeleigh, Finchingfield, Mountnessing and Stock mills. Water, steam and post mills available. Suitable for all. Price: Free. See website for opening times: www.explore-essex.com/places-to-go/our-parks-and-places

Essex County Cricket Club

2023 Cricket Season

Now until Friday 29 September

Join Essex at The Cloud County Ground over the summer across three formats as they look to build on a good 2022 season. Perfect for the whole family to enjoy during the summer holidays or for an enthusiastic sports fan looking to get out in the warm weather. The Eagles' look to recreate 2019 success, as well as return to the pinnacle of the longer format which saw Essex win five trophies between 2016-2021. Suitable for all ages. Prices: Start from £5. www.essexcricket.org.uk/tickets/cricket/prices-2023

Essex Cricket

One Day Cup game(s)

Thursday 3 August: 11.00am,
Friday 11 August: 2.00pm.
Sunday 1 August: 2.00pm and

Tuesday 22 August: 2.00pm

First class professional cricket at its best and suitable for all the family. Suitable for all ages. Price: Match tickets from £5 for under 18-years-old and £16 for adults, with hospitality packages starting from £65 per person. www.essexcricket.org.uk

Essex Country Parks

Nature Detective Trails

Every day from Saturday 22 July
to Sunday 3 September

Pick up a free Nature Detectives trail from seven of the Essex Country Parks or download the trail. Spot the animals, solve the sums, enter the prize draw and have fun at the selfie board. Includes extra activities to do at home. www.explore-essex.com/numbers-in-nature

Essex Fire Museum

Family Open day

Tuesday 15 August:
10.30am to 4.00pm
Sunday 27 August:
10.30am to 4.00pm

A family open day at Essex Fire Museum. Museum trails, arts and crafts and the opportunity to sit on our fire engines and squirt water. Suitable for ages two to 11-years-old. Price: Free. www.essex-fire.gov.uk/essex-fire-museum

Essex Outdoors

River Blackwater Experience Days

Weekends 10.00am to 4.00pm
approximately

Choose from a sailing or powerboat experience, set sail from Bradwell or west Mersea, moor up for lunch, go crabbing or discover a secret beach. Suitable for ages seven-years-old plus. Sailing £210 for a group of seven, powerboat £280 for a group of seven. www.essexoutdoor.com/on-the-water

School Holiday Activity Days

Weekdays 9.00am to 5.00pm

Keep your kids active and entertained at one of four centres – Bradwell, Danbury, Harlow and Mersea. Children will undertake sessions in small groups with expert instructors. Check the day and centre to see what's on. Suitable for children aged eight to 16-years-old. Price: £37.50 per day. Book four and get one free. www.essexoutdoors.com/school-holiday-activities

Harlow High Adventure

Weekends, various sessions
from 10.00am

Reach new heights on the excellent high ropes adventure at the Essex Outdoors Harlow centre. Choose from the Hexagon, perfect for taller, older children and adults or the climbing walls for children aged six-years-old and over. From £11. www.essexoutdoors.com/harlow-high-adventure/

Epping Ongar Railway

Real Ale and Cider Festival

Friday 21, Saturday 22 and
Sunday 23 July: 10.00am to
9.00pm. Friday and Saturday,
10.00am to 5.00pm Sunday

Come and join the 10th anniversary of the Real Ale festival. Steam and diesel trains operating with vintage London buses connecting to Epping underground and Shenfield station. Suitable for 18-years-old and over. Children can travel on the trains and buses. Price: £18. www.eorailway.co.uk/events/real-ale-festival

Come and See Bluey

Sunday 30 July and Sunday
20 August: 10.00am, 11.40am,
13.20am and 3.00pm

Children's favourite, Bluey, will be visiting the Epping Ongar Railway for the first time. She will be making appearances at intervals during the

day. Suitable for 0 to 10-years-old. Price: £9.50. www.eorailway.co.uk/events/come-and-see-bluey

Come and See Chase and Marshall from PAW Patrol

Sunday 13 August: 10.00am, 11.40am, 13.20am and 3.00pm

Chase and Marshall from PAW Patrol are visiting the Epping Ongar Railway. The heroic pups will be making appearances at intervals during the day. Suitable for 0 to 10-years-old. Price: £9.50. www.eorailway.co.uk/events/come-and-see-chase-and-marshall-from-paw-patrol

Child fares just £1 throughout 2023

Saturdays and Sundays in July and August, plus Wednesday 2, 9, 16 and 23 August: 10.00am to 5.00pm

Take a ride on our steam and diesel trains and on our beautifully restored vintage London buses too. Inclusive bus connections from Epping underground and Shenfield station. Visit the Penny Salon gallery at Ongar and lots more too. Suitable for all ages. Price: Child £1; Adult £18. www.eorailway.co.uk

Gibberd Garden

Song Garden

Saturday 12 August: 1.00pm to 7.30pm

Don't miss your chance to immerse yourself in the beauty of nature, art and music at The Gibberd Garden annual Song Garden event. You can enjoy the beautiful Gibberd Garden, alongside live music performances from Roisin Quinn, John Devine, Don't Worry, Abela Brother and Paul Howard and Jo Clack, creating an enchanting experience. Suitable for all ages. Price: £15.00 + booking fee. www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-gibberd-garden-trust/t-gayxjor

Golf World Stansted Ltd

1066 Adventure Golf

On a weekly basis: Monday to Thursday: 9.00 am to 9.00 pm. Friday to Saturday: 9.00 am to midnight. Sunday 9.00am to 8.00 pm

Mini golf in a Norman 1066 setting. Suitable for ages three-years-old to adult. Price: £10.00 per adult, £8.00 per child or family tickets available. No booking required. www.golfworldstansted.co.uk

Harlow Art Trust, Gibberd Gallery

Re-Drawing Harlow

Saturday 5 August to Saturday 16 September: Open Monday to Saturday 11.00am to 4.00pm. Closed Sundays and bank holidays.

A solo exhibition featuring works of local artist, Jordan Cook. 'Re-Drawing Harlow' portrays Harlow in its current state and provides an insightful perspective on its ongoing transformations. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. www.sculpturetown.uk/whats-on

Harlow Museum and Walled Gardens

August fun and games

Every Tuesdays and Thursdays in August

Tuesdays will be bookable, free sessions that give children the chance to have a go at a range of sports and games. Thursdays will be craft based sessions where participants can make their own games to take home and play. Suitable for ages four-years-old and over. Price: Free. www.harlowmuseum.com/whats-on

Hopefield Animal Sanctuary

Kids Mega Fun Weekend

Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 July: 10.00am to 4.00pm

Inflatables, entertainment, foam pit and masses of fun for the whole family, this jam-packed weekend is a must when it comes to a day out for a good cause. Suitable for all ages. Price: £7 adults, £10 children, £6 concessions, under two-years-old free. www.hopefield.org.uk/events/kids-mega-fun-weekend

Family Fun Weekend

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 August: 10.00am to 4.00pm

Come and join us and our 500 rescued residents for a weekend of children's fairground rides, giant inflatables, entertainment and non-stop family fun. Suitable for all ages. Price: £7 adults, £10 children, £6 concessions, under two-years-old free. www.hopefield.org.uk/events/family-fun-weekend

Hylands Estate

The Wizard of Oz by Immersion Theatre

Tuesday 15 August: 1.00pm and 4.00pm

Immersion Theatre proudly presents a brand new adaptation of The Wizard of Oz, a magical family show. Refreshments available. Suitable for all ages. Price: £9.50 - £14.00. www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events

National Country Show Live, organised by Aztec Events

Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September: 10.00am to 5.00pm

An outdoor event featuring country shopping, food, entertainment, animals, live music, have-a-go activities, stunning arena displays and traditional country show finds.

Suitable for all ages. Price: TBC.
www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events/national-country-show-live/all

Jaywick Martello Tower

Creative Net: Felting

Wednesday 2 August:
11.00am to 1.00pm

Free workshops on the first Wednesday of every month. Everybody welcome. Materials, coffee and biscuits provided. Join artist Lisa Temple-Cox for this felt workshop. Suitable for adults. Price: Free. www.explore-essex.com

Layer Marney Tower

Tudor Fair and Funeral Procession

Sunday 16 July:
11.00am to 5.00pm

Commemorating the death of Henry, 1st Lord Marney with a Tudor themed funeral procession and Tudor fair in the grounds. Enjoy food stalls, entertainment, music, dancing and demonstrations. Suitable for all ages. Price: £10 Adults, £7 children £28 family. If you wish to take part in the gentle three-mile walk, please contact admin@layermarneytower.co.uk. www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events/500-year-tudor-fair

Nightingale Ballet

Sunday 30 July:
Doors open at 3.00pm

New Creations Collective perform a brand new-biographical ballet based on the life of Florence Nightingale. Narrated extracts from Florence's personal diaries alongside a brand new score, original choreography, beautiful set and costumes. Picnics welcome. Suitable for children age eight-years-old and over. Price: Adults £18, children under 16-years-old £12, family (two adults and two children) £55, under two-years-old free. www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events/nightingale

Mersea Island Holiday Park

Colour Festival

Sunday 6 August

Dance your way through the enormous colour explosion as we paint the sky a beautiful rainbow. Celebrate all things colourful with food, drinks, activities and live music. Suitable for all ages. Please note: This event is on a holiday park and guests must have a holiday booked with Mersea Island Holiday Park to take part. Minimum two night stay. www.awayresorts.co.uk/parks/essex/mersea-island/colour-festival

Saffron Hall

Aurora Orchestra: From Memory

Thursday 31 August: 7.00pm

Join Aurora and conductor Nicholas Collon for an electrifying evening of music played off by heart. Suitable for: This event is not recommended for children under seven-years-old. Price: See website. www.saffronhall.com/whats-on/view/aurora-orchestra-3

Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre

Saffron Walden Food Tours

Thursday 20 July and
Thursday 27 July

Treat yourself to a two hour food tasting and walking tour with a personal guide. You'll meet artisan producers and eat award-winning products. Suitable for: 18-years-old and over. Price: £55 per person. £45 if booking four or more people. www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk/saffron-walden-food-tours

Southend City Council

Southend City Jam

Friday 1 to Sunday 3 September:
10.00am to 5.00pm each day

Southend's free international

street art festival is returning this September. Featuring a host of local, national and international artists who'll transform the city centre and seafront. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. www.southendcityjam.co.uk

Southend Museums

Anglo Saxon Weekend

Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August:
11.00am to 4.00pm each day

Explore the daily life of the Anglo-Saxons at a living history camp in Priory Park. Witness a battle re-enactment and take part in Anglo-Saxon themed crafts and activities including an archaeological excavation. Suitable for children aged five to 14-years-old. Price: £8 for adults

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

Stow Maries at War: A Call to Arms

Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August:
10.00am to 3.00pm

Step back to 1914 as Stow Maries prepares for the Great War. Wander the many living history camps, representing all manner of troops and enjoy award-winning exhibitions. Suitable for ages seven-years-old plus. Price: £10 on the door. www.stowmaries.org.uk/event-bookings/event/stow-maries-at-war-the-call-to-arms

The Cricketers, Clavering

Pizza Wednesday

6.00pm to 8.45pm

Enjoy wood fired family favourites every Wednesday night cooked in our brick pizza oven. From classic margherita to pepperoni - all on a fresh dough base with our own pizza sauce. This menu will run alongside our normal a la carte. Price: Free to attend, you just pay for your pizza and any extras you fancy. www.thecricketers.co.uk/pizza

Princes Theatre, Clacton**Rhythm of the Dance**

Sunday 30 July 2023: 7.30pm

Rhythm of the Dance is a celebration of Irish dance from its roots to the clean, modern style we see on stage today. Suitable for all ages. Price £29.50, £27 concessions – all ticket prices incur £1 restoration fee plus online booking fees apply. www.princes theatre.co.uk/event?i=873641882

RHS Garden Hyde Hall

Aardman presents:
Lloyd of the Flies - The Grand Bug and Pest Hotel Hunt

Saturday 22 July to Thursday 31 August: 10.00am to 5.00pm

Download Lloyd's Augmented Reality Bug Hunt app, have fun on the Grand Bug and Pest Hotel Hunt trail and enjoy family friendly activities all summer. Suitable for children up to 11-years-old. Price: Adults £13.85, children £6.95, RHS members free. www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/whats-on

Flower Show

Wednesday 2 to Sunday 6 August: 10.00am to 5.00pm

Enjoy dazzling flower displays, and demonstrations, plentiful gardening tips from expert exhibitors and enjoy an array of food. Suitable for adults. Price: Adults £13.85, RHS members free. www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/rhs-garden-hyde-hall-flower-show

Outdoor Theatre:
Comedy of Errors

Friday 18 August: 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Expect slapstick and memorable music nestled among Shakespeare's poignant poetry as the critically acclaimed Pantaloon put their own

spin on this classic comedy. Booking essential. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adults £15.50, children £8.50. www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/viewevent?EFID=2551&ESRC=CMS

Contemporary Craft and Design Fair

Friday 25 to Sunday 28 August: 10.00am to 5.00pm

This event will showcase 140 of the best contemporary craftmakers and artists in the UK and will give the public the opportunity to view and purchase direct from talented designer makers. Suitable for adults. Price: Adults £13.85, RHS Members free. www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/viewevent?EFID=2159&ESRC=CMS

Saffron Grange

Saffron Grange Tours and Tastings

Thursdays and Saturdays throughout the growing season, to the end of September

Learn what goes into creating the unique taste, hear more about the local land, its history and why it offers the perfect conditions for growing quality grapes. Suitable for adults aged 18-years-old and over. Family friendly tours during the summer. From £20 per person. www.saffrongrange.com

The Gallery at Parndon
Mill, Harlow

A sixties celebration
"flower power"

Thursday 29 June - 6 August

The exhibition is a celebration of the 1960's and showcases a range of creative responses from the membership of the Eastern Region Textiles Forum. Suitable for all ages. Price: free. www.parndonmill.co.uk

Talliston House

Talliston Storytelling Evening

Friday 28 July 2023: 7.00pm

Join renowned storyteller Sally Pomme Clayton for 'The Magician's Apprentice', an intimate, enchanting performance exploring the secret world of the magician and discovering true magic in the mundane world. Suitable for 16-years-old and over. Price: £24.99. www.talliston.com/sally-pomme-clayton

Talliston House and
Gardens Tours

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 July
Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 August: 11:30am to 3.00pm

An invitation to view "Britain's most extraordinary home" (The Times) offering you the chance to step inside Great Dunmow's magical house and gardens. Suitable for 11-years-old and over. Price: £22.50. www.talliston.com/talliston-tours

Wyvernwood

Summer of Adventure

Saturday 22 July to Sunday 3 September

Join the characters of Wyvernwood for a story led adventure this summer where you'll experience a day out like no other. Suitable for: Families with children between the ages of two and 12-years-old. Price: £19.50 per person. www.wyvernwood.co.uk/adventure-activities



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www.visitessex.com/industry-and-press/become-a-member

ESSEX BIG WEEKEND™

Friday 6th to Sunday 8th October 2023

Enter the ballot and register for FREE tickets
essexbigweekend.co.uk

Ballot is open from
Friday 25th Aug - Monday 25th Sept

