



AUTUMN/WINTER 2020

ESSEX EXPLORER Magazine

PARKS IN WINTER

Walking with author
Stephen Neale

Essex Vineyards

Get Going
in the Garden

Check our
website for the
latest on our parks
and places given
changing levels
of COVID-19
restrictions.



Wivenhoe House Hotel is temporarily closed during national lockdown. Check their website for updates.

A photograph of Wivenhoe House Hotel. The image shows a large, multi-story red brick building with white window frames and a modern white extension. The building is surrounded by a green lawn, a gravel path, and some trees. The sky is blue with white clouds.

STAYCATION WITH US AT WIVENHOE HOUSE HOTEL

Welcome ...

To the very first edition of Essex Explorer, a magazine with fascinating features, inspirational lifestyle ideas, competitions and all of the latest news from across our parks and green spaces - and it's all for you.

This issue is jam-packed full of the latest news, discover the history of a Tudor garden and gain some green-fingered tips from Rebecca Ashbey, Head Gardener at Cressing Temple Barns, great winter reads, delicious recipes and an insider look at the local grape harvest at New Hall Vineyard, plus lots of competitions.

Meet author Stephen Neale, who tells us about his love of the Essex coastline, its countryside and some of his favourite walks. Discover the special landscape of Marsh Farm Country Park, and the migratory birds that overwinter there, as well as the wildlife to look out for when you are out and about this season.

Travel back in time and delve into the history of one of the parks or learn about the county's past with the Essex Record Office.

We hope you enjoy the articles in this edition, we want to inspire you to create your own adventures and make the most of the incredible spaces we have in our beautiful county.

Autumn and winter really are the best seasons to enjoy the county's inspiring and diverse landscape, so wrap-up warm - and whatever happens over the coming months during these challenging times - you can always embrace the great outdoors and Explore Essex.



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

Contents

News	4
Parks & Wildlife	6
Wildlife Watch	12
Essex Past & Present	20
Stephen Neale	20
Essex Vineyards	26
Get Going in the Garden	30
Get Cooking	34
Winter Reads	36
Days Out/Things to do	38

About us

Explore Essex brings together a unique group of green spaces and heritage places owned by Essex County Council and our mission is to deliver a broad range of facilities and activities for the people of Essex.

Conservation is also at the heart of what we do. Any money spent with the Explore Essex group of places is ultimately reinvested to help maintain and develop the sites for the benefit of visitors, and the protection of the flora and fauna within.

Get Connected

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



www.explore-essex.com



[@exploressex](https://www.facebook.com/exploressex)



[@exploressex](https://www.instagram.com/exploressex)



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



Explore.Essex@essex.gov.uk

EDITORIAL: EMMA WILLIAMS, CHRISTOPHER DAVIES, SOPHIE FINCH.

CONTRIBUTORS: STEPHEN NEALE, ROB HAWORTH, REBECCA ASHBEY, WIVENHOE HOUSE, TIPTREE TEA ROOMS, NEW HALL VINEYARD, EXPLORE ESSEX EVENTS TEAM, ANDREW ADAMS

ADVERTISING: MARKETING.EXPLORESSEX@ESSEX.GOV.UK

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

© ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL 2020 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, CM1 1QH

Explore Essex

NEWS

Autumn/Winter 2020

Essex Country Parks awarded Green Flag status for excellence

Explore Essex is delighted to share the news that our Country Parks have been recognised for their excellent standards by being awarded Green Flag status.

The Green Flag awards recognise and reward well managed parks throughout the country and demonstrate that the spaces meet the needs of the communities they serve.

This international award, now in its third decade, also confirms that our parks boast the highest possible environmental standards, are beautifully maintained and have excellent visitor facilities.

To celebrate receiving the Green Flag award, the visitor centre at Great Notley Country Park was lit up in green. Six other country parks – Thorndon, Weald, Belhus Woods, Danbury, Cudmore Grove and Hadleigh – all received Green Flag status and have proudly displayed their new flags within the park grounds.

Essex Country Parks have an important role in helping people with their physical and mental health – particularly relevant in these current times – by providing access to large green spaces in which to walk, cycle, ride, play and run free.

The parks also boast a diverse range of beautiful landscapes and important habitats. Each park offers visitors something unique, from the deer enclosure at Weald, to the longest children's play trail in the county at Great Notley or the five lakes at Belhus Woods.



Councillor Simon Walsh, Essex County Councillor Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action, said:

“We are delighted that our country parks have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag status once again. It truly is a testament to our park development managers and rangers – as well as our highly regarded and respected voluntary and friends’ groups – and the fantastic work they do which ensures our green spaces meet this excellent standard.”





The Essex Forest Initiative

We're passionate about the Great Outdoors at Explore Essex and we're sure you are too. If you are one of those people, like us, who really wants to do your bit to help combat Climate Change to protect and improve our environment, there is plenty of positive change being put into place that we can celebrate in our county. Read on to find out more about some of these schemes and discover how you can get involved.

Have you heard about the Essex Forest Initiative?

Essex County Council announced a pledge, last autumn, to plant 375,000 trees across Essex over five years to reduce carbon levels, this is known as the Essex Forest Initiative and is part of the Essex Climate Change Action Plan. The initiative aims to capture 60,000 tonnes of carbon, and there will be further projects as part of the Climate Change Plan to promote sustainable transport and help reduce waste over the coming months and years.

Read more about the Essex Forest Initiative
www.essex.gov.uk/the-essex-forest-initiative

Tree Planting: How can I get involved?

We are very excited to confirm that this winter Explore Essex Country Parks aim to plant thousands of trees across our land as part of the Essex Forest Initiative, in partnership with the Woodland Trust.

We are hoping to run a series of pre-bookable public tree planting events at our Country Parks next year.

If you are interested in taking part sign up to our newsletter, we'll release bookings to our subscribers first.

Sign up to our newsletter here:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKESSEX/signup/10840>



Explore Essex Awards Arts Partnership Commission

To celebrate the Essex Forest Initiative, Explore Essex are pleased to announce the award of an exciting commission to arts partnership INSTAR to produce a work in one of our parks which will explore people's connection with the natural world through contemporary art.

INSTAR, artists Trish Evans and Nick Humphreys, have previously worked with The Wildlife Trusts, The National Forests and The National Trust. We are incredibly excited by their initial concept of a playful immersive experience using mirrored and steel surfaces in the landscape and which aims to engage with local residents and visitors.



Parks in winter

**The benefits of the great outdoors
in the changing seasons**



With temperatures dropping, daylight dwindling and the weather becoming more wintry, the temptation to stay indoors and get cosy is increasing. However, getting a daily or weekly dose of the great outdoors has some surprisingly positive health benefits and is a fun, free day out for all the family.

In the uncertain times we find ourselves in at the moment, visiting country parks is a great way to unwind, reconnect with nature and relax, whilst being surrounded by acres of green space – with the added benefit of having plenty of room to abide by social distancing measures.

Here are some of the many benefits of a trip to the park – whether you go for a run, a walk or just to enjoy the beautiful scenery.

1 A trip to the park provides you with quality time to disconnect from technology and the stresses of life. This time enables reflection and can help you think more clearly. Studies show that you are more likely to think of creative and innovative ideas whilst taking a stroll in pleasant outdoor surroundings. If you're stuck for ideas, take a trip to the park to get your creative juices flowing.

2 The quiet, traffic-free atmosphere in the park can improve your mental health by promoting relaxation and boosting your wellbeing. Studies show that spending as little as 20 minutes in the park is enough to boost your wellbeing and improve your life satisfaction. With the daylight hours not being in our favour, head over to the park in your lunchtime break or on the weekend.

3 Getting outdoors can reduce fatigue by boosting vitamin D levels, helping you to feel more alert and refreshed. Thus, improving your concentration levels and productivity.

4 Exercise improves your physical health. Did you know it can reduce your risk of certain diseases, such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes, by up to 30%? Exercise, even just a gentle walk, can build your muscle strength and increase your fitness levels.



5 A trip to the park can help you beat those winter blues! Exercise and fresh air can increase your serotonin levels which, in turn, can boost your mood and self-esteem.



6 It's also great for those of you with children. Exploring outdoor playgrounds are not only lots of fun, they can increase imaginative play and improve communication skills, strengthen children's muscles and co-ordination, and burn off excess energy!

With all these positive benefits to both your mental and physical health, and a selection of parks conveniently located all over Essex, it is an ideal time to get out for a stroll and enjoy the delights of winter – crunchy leaves, dewy grass, fresh air and winter wildlife. So, wrap up warm and grab your coat and wellies for a day in the great outdoors.

Which park should I visit?

Head over to Cudmore Grove for a refreshing stroll and beachcomb to blow away the cobwebs. It is nestled on the coast where the Colne Estuary meets the River Blackwater, with unparalleled sea views. If you're a wildlife lover, be sure to visit Marsh Farm situated on the Crouch Estuary, abundant with wildlife, including a wide array of migrating birds (see the Wildlife Watch on page 12 for more).

Options for more sheltered, inland parks include Danbury and Belhus Woods. There's plenty to do, such as exploring the ancient woodlands, meadows, strolling around the lakes and spotting the historic remains.

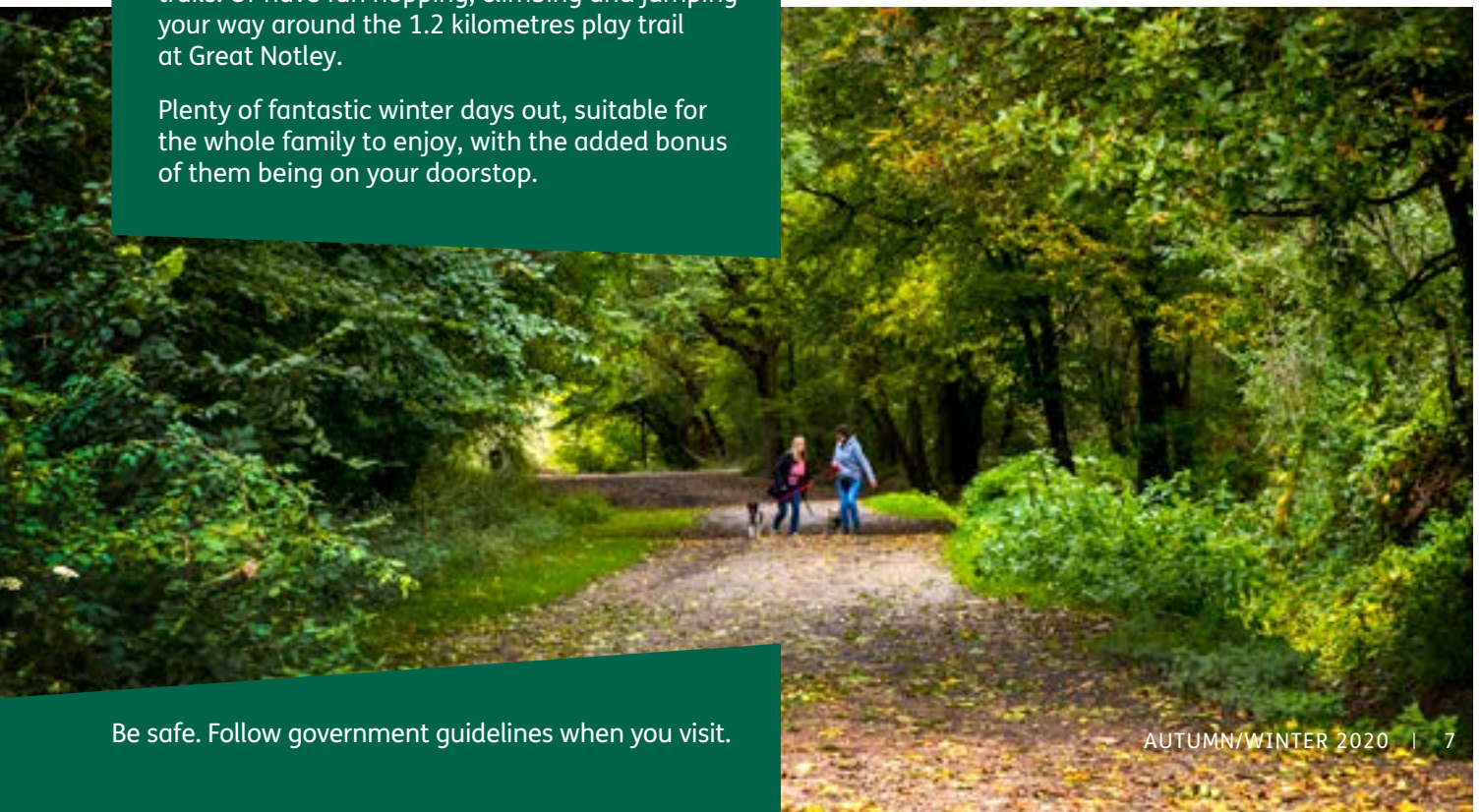


Looking for a park that will delight your little ones?

We recommend Weald Country Park, home to the Stick Man Trail. This much-loved wintry tale tells the story of the Stick Man who is trying to get home to his family. Or if your children are fans of the Gruffalo, let their imaginations run wild at Thorndon Country Park's Gruffalo Trail. Best of all, they're free!

Enjoy an active day out at Hadleigh Country Park – put your cycling skills to the test on the cycling trails. Or have fun hopping, climbing and jumping your way around the 1.2 kilometres play trail at Great Notley.

Plenty of fantastic winter days out, suitable for the whole family to enjoy, with the added bonus of them being on your doorstep.



Parks spotlight

Weald Country Park



Located in Brentwood, Weald Country Park is well-loved, family friendly and popular with both locals and celebrities. Rich in history, it originated as a medieval deer park in the 12th century and then became the site of the great Tudor mansion, Weald Hall, built in the 16th century.

Fast forward to 2020 and Weald Country Park is still home to herds of deer and the perfect park for an autumnal/wintry outing. We recommend heading over to the enclosure where you can get up close and feed the deer. Food is available to purchase from the visitor centre and feeding chutes are set up to help you deliver your tasty treats. If you delve into the woods on a stroll, you might be lucky enough to spot some wild deer roaming the park.

In addition to the wonderful wildlife at Weald, it's historic landscape and stunning views offer a serene and relaxing day out for a winter walk. With over 500 acres of open grassland, ancient woodland, fishing lakes, wildflower meadows, the deer park and the Stick Man Trail, there is plenty to keep the whole family entertained.

Whether you enjoy cycling, walking or even horse riding, there are designated paths and routes circling the woodlands, meadows and lakes – perfect for some downtime to switch off from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Fishing is also permitted so why not wrap up warm and bring the family along to hone your fishing skills together (although, fishing permits are required).

Your little ones will get the most enjoyment out of the Stick Man Trail. With over two kilometres to explore and seven play areas to climb, swing and crawl through, this self-led trail is sure to get imaginations running wild as it brings to life the story of the Stick Man from Julia Donaldson, and illustrated by Axel Scheffler,



bestselling book. It is a tale of adventure and showcases the family bond between Stick Man, his lady love and their stick children. The question is, can you help Stick Man find his way back to the family tree in time for Christmas?

After a day of exploring this beautiful park, warm up with a hot drink and a snack from the Wiggly Bush Café, located in the visitor centre (takeaways only).

Weald Country Park is open from 08:00am to dusk every day and the Stick Man Trail is free to use during park opening hours. A Stick Man Trail map is available to purchase from the café at the visitor centre.



Parks spotlight



COMPETITION

Stick Man Trail

The Stick Man play trail is designed by leading natural play specialists and brings to life the bestselling Julia Donaldson, and illustrated by Axel Scheffler, picture book, Stick Man.



The trail has been designed to work with the historic parkland and its stunning views with the aim that it will inspire imaginative play.

The Stick Man play trail covers two kilometres of the park taking you past the deer enclosure, the lake and the grazing area. There are seven play areas to enjoy on the route with areas to climb, swing, crawl through and lay and enjoy watching the clouds go by. See if you can spot the Stick Man and his family built into the play areas.



The Stick Man play trail is open to everyone and is free to use during park opening hours throughout the year. A map of the trail is available to buy from the visitor centre for 50p.

WIN one of two Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Goody Bags. Prize includes a Zog sticker book, hardback Stick Man annual and cuddly Gruffalo toy.

To be in with a chance of winning send your answer (one entry per person) to:

Marketing.ExploreEssex@essex.gov.uk

Title your email with the competition name.

For competition closing dates and full terms and conditions please visit the Explore Essex website.

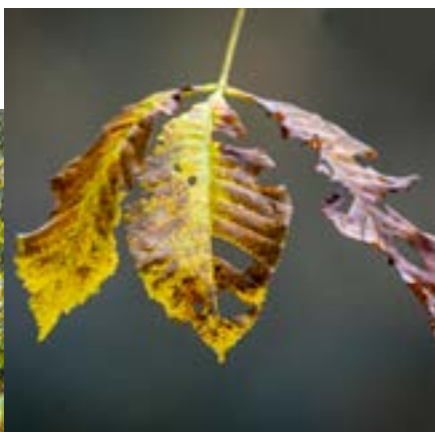
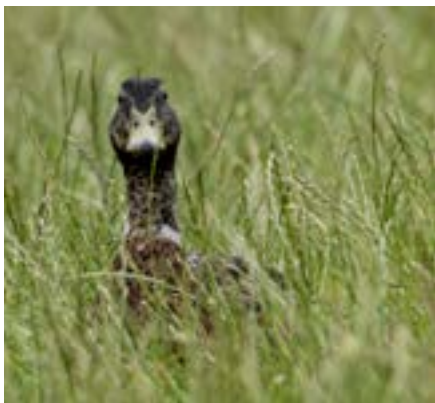
Q: Which trail inspired by the book by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler is at Weald Country Park?



- a. Stick Man Trail
- b. Gruffalo Trail
- c. Zog Trail

© 2008 & TM Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Licensed by Magic Light Pictures Limited.





Our parks in autumn and winter

**With photographer
Andrew Adams**

Andrew Adams is a resident of Brentwood and enjoys nothing more than trekking through the many amazing parks across the county. He is an experienced and multifaceted photographer with interests in wildlife, landscape and street photography.





These stunning photos were taken at Belhus Woods, Danbury, Thorndon and Weald Country Parks. Keep your eyes peeled for deer, ducks, robins, mushrooms and other fungi, fallen leaves and more. **We would love to see your wildlife photos – for the opportunity to feature in our next edition, please email us at Marketing.ExploreEssex@essex.gov.uk**



Discover winter migratory birds

See something special from Siberia

While the nip of Jack Frost and icy winds are part of winter, it's still the perfect time of year to wrap up warm, get out in the fresh air and discover the array of wonderful wildlife that can be found in our country parks.

In this edition we focus on Marsh Farm Country Park. This 300-acre park is adjacent to the River Crouch and is a Special Protection Area, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a RAMSAR site, due to its importance for overwintering Dark Bellied Brent Geese and overwintering wetland birds in general, as well as many species of waders and ducks during the autumn and winter months.





Walk around Marsh Farm Country Park and you'll be greeted with the sight of **Dark Bellied Brent Geese** (which arrive at the park from the end of October). The geese migrate from Russia to overwinter on the Essex coast by flying 2,500 miles from the deepest, darkest depths of Siberia.



The geese – which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act – are herbivorous and feed on eelgrass (an important underwater plant) and other vegetation. The grazing marsh at the park is managed through hay cropping and sheep grazing to provide short, lush grass for the Brent Geese to feed on when they arrive here in October. Marsh Farm is also an important habitat for coastal plants such as Sea Barley, Sea Clover, Sea Lavender and Grass Vetchling.



Currently, there are good numbers of Dark Bellied Brent Geese, however, their conservation status in the United Kingdom is "amber" as there are only a few overwintering sites used by the Dark Bellied Brent Geese in this country, and so these sites need to be protected.

But, if you stroll around Marsh Farm you'll see much more than Dark Bellied Brent Geese, as the park is home to a vast array of both migratory and resident wildlife.

Walk east from the Riverside car park and you will find yourself on the sea wall, with the tidal River Crouch on your right, and the country park on your left. Keep walking to discover the expanse of green fields (the grazing marsh much loved by the Brent Geese), borrow dykes, mud flats and salt marsh that provide food and shelter for a variety of overwintering wetland birds. The Marsh Farm Ranger conducts a monthly wetland bird survey – as part of the UK national wetland bird monitoring scheme – and during

winter over 3000 Dunlin can be recorded, an impressive sight when you see them on the wing. These small birds breed in the uplands of England, Scotland and Wales before migrating south for the winter. The large area of saltmarsh is also home to another 19 migratory species such as Redshanks, Lapwings, Wigeons, Teals and Oyster Catchers to name but a few.



Serious 'twitchers' regularly visit to view this avian spectacle but there's still much more to see throughout the park. Resident avian species, such as the park's famous Mute and Black Swans, Mallards, Little Grebe's, Coots, Reed Bunting and many more, while mammals like Seals, Stoats, Foxes, Muntjac, Badgers, Water Voles and Weasels can be seen year-round.

Wherever you go in our parks you're sure to see something special, so wrap up warm and take a stroll – you never know what you might discover. If during your explorations you see any of the inhabitants of our parks, then take a picture and send it to **Marketing.ExploreEssex@Essex.gov.uk** we'd love to see your photos.



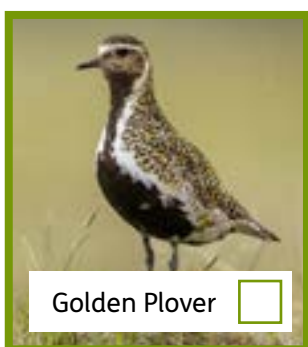
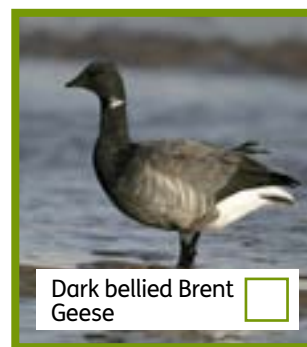
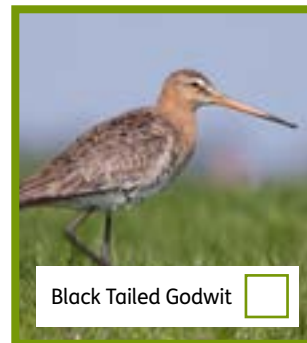
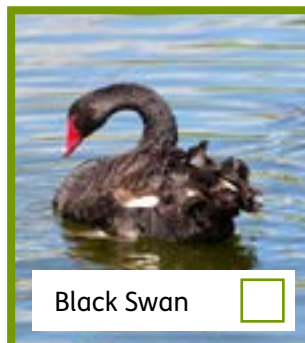
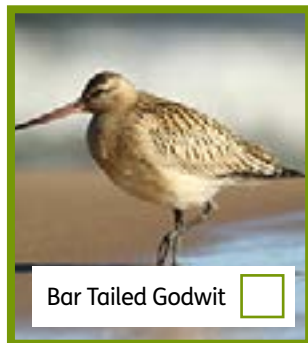
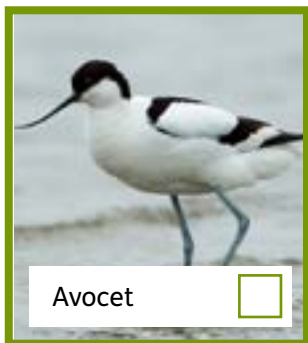
See overleaf for a full range of both resident and migratory birds that inhabit our parks during the autumn and winter months.

When you visit our parks, you'll see a wide range of

national and international creatures, right here in Essex on your doorstep. Why not get out and explore the parks this winter and see what you can find.



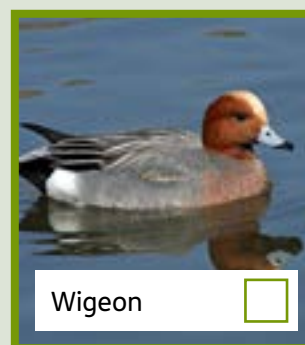
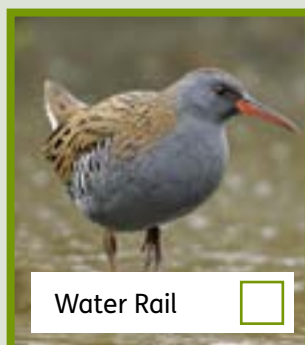
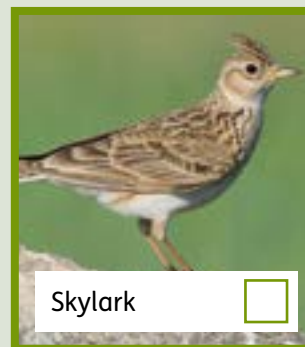
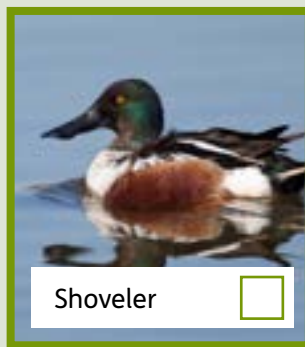
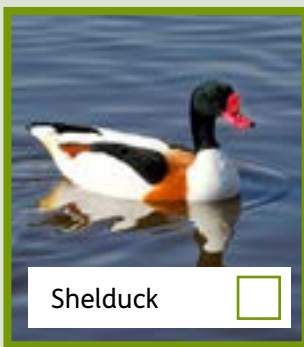
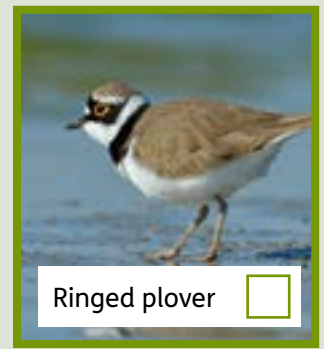
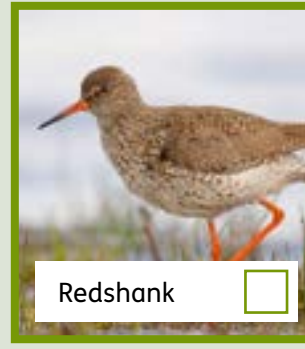
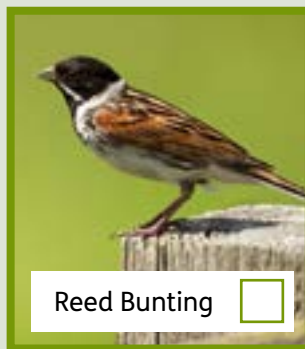
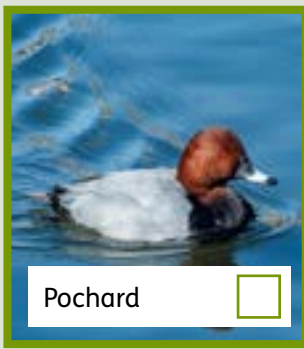
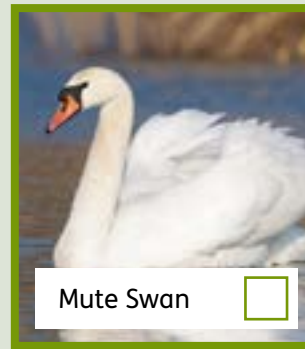
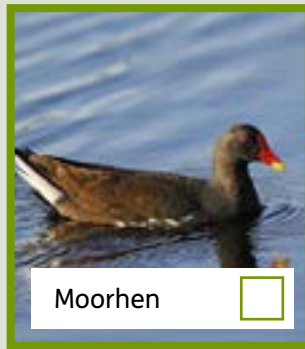
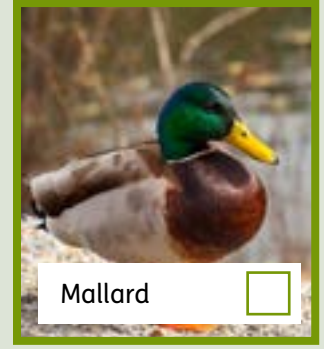
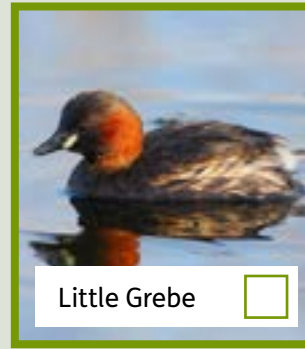
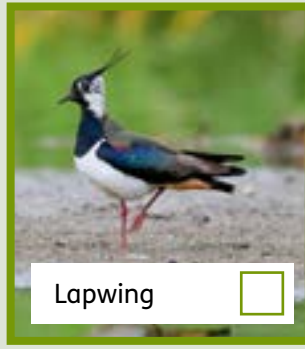
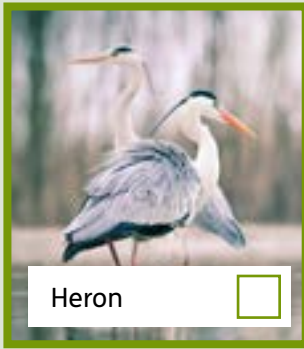
Resident



How many different species of birds can you spot in the parks this winter?

(please note: some of the birds featured are not displaying their winter plumage).

Overwintering wetland birds



This is Essex

Ever been fed-up by the stigma around Essex?



THIS IS ESSEX
EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

This is Essex is an exciting new campaign by tourist management body Visit Essex which seeks to challenge the stereotypes around the people and place. We attended the launch to find out more.

Lisa Bone, Tourism and Place Marketing Manager, said: "This is the start of a long-term campaign to re-position Essex. We are more than people's assumptions and we want to create new messages about what Essex is and what we have to offer.

The county includes the UK's first city, historic villages, small market towns and a city. Essex boasts excellent universities, cutting-edge industry, stunning scenery and coastline all within an hour's commute of London.

Councillor Durham, Vice-Chair of Visit Essex, said: "If nightclubs and beauty salons are your thing we do have plenty, but, Essex is also a great place for quiet walks, a boat trip or paddle boarding on the river, seal watching, wine tasting at vineyards, spa breaks, cycling with the family, watching wildlife on island nature reserves or simply enjoying a great meal out.

The This is Essex campaign challenges the perceptions of our diverse county by putting Essex's Extraordinary People at the heart of it, celebrating achievement, and helping to make people feel proud to say they are from the county.

Authors and artists alike are also challenging the Essex stereotype, artist Elsa James has led a campaign and author Sarah Perry has just released her new book 'Essex Girls', following the success of her previous title 'The Essex Serpent', which is now being made into a TV series."

Lisa Bone added: "Our video was created to once and for all take on this stereotype and encourage people and the media to take a second look at the county. It is a tongue-in-cheek way to confront our image by showcasing a wide range of talented and diverse people (our ambassadors) to show that Essex people are diverse, talented and surprising . . . and there is more to Essex than you think."

**There are so many different sides to Essex.
It's a great place to invest, live, work,
study and of course visit. "**

So, the film....

Watch here www.visitessex.com/this-is-essex
Tell us what you think #ThisIsEssex @VisitEssex

Meet some of the Visit Essex Ambassadors

In the film comedian Ellie Taylor takes a wry look at the Essex accent, pantomime dame Anthony Stuart-Hicks shows off his white stilettos with tongue firmly planted in cheek and eighth generation Mersea oysterman, Tom Haward, proves going 'out, out' doesn't always mean getting out the false eyelashes and fake tan! On top of all that, female rally champion, Nabila Tejpar shows us all that, surprise surprise, the county is not full of 'boy racers' after all.

The film also stars Essex treasures like Michelin starred chefs, the Galvin Brothers, Super Scientist Dr Miles Adcock, Paralympian Anne Wafula-Strike, Coggeshall Vintner, Jane Mohan, Harwich Town Crier, James Cole, Hedingham Castle owner, Demetra Lindsay and metal detectorist, Adrian Gayler.





Discover the county's past

with Essex Record Office

Delve into the county's rich and varied history with one of the country's leading archive services - the Essex Record Office (ERO). Founded in 1938, the ERO is a treasure trove full of fascinating documents, images and recordings that tell the story of nearly 1,000 years of our county's past.

Take a trip to and you'll be amazed at what you can discover at the ERO with services and much more, such as:

Collections: The majority of the ERO's vast collection of historic documents can be viewed in person in the ERO Searchroom. Every document is listed on their online catalogue, www.essexarchivesonline.co.uk and many of the key collections can be viewed from the comfort of your own home by purchasing

a subscription. This includes parish baptism, marriage and burial records, wills from all over the county and a selection of electoral registers.

Archival services: Enquiries, surveying, appraising and cataloguing are all part of the ERO's extensive remit. Have a genealogical or local history question you'd like answered or Freedom of Information enquiry? Then the ERO's Archival Services should be your first stop.



Credit: ERO - Spalding Collection

Art Collections: Not many people know it, but the ERO holds a significant art collection, dating from 1570 to the present. While the collection is strong in classical portraiture, it also has many examples of the modern art movement from the 1950s and 1960s, with many having a strong Essex connection. There's also archaeological reconstruction and Dutch genre paintings and of course Essex landscapes, many of which are available to view by appointment in the building.

Certificate Copies: Get a birth, marriage or death certificate for events that happened in Essex – the ERO's can supply certificates from the start of civil registration in even go back to July 1 1837 to the present date. and you can order up to 10 certificates. These can be ordered on the ERO's website: www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk.

Conservation: Have an old book, publication or parchment that you want repaired or conserved? Then visit the ERO as they've been caring for their own collections since 1938. For a small cost tThe ERO can help with book, paper and parchment repair and conservation; preparing documents for display or storage; packaging with conservation grade materials as well as provide advice on storage.

Digitisation Services: The ERO has secure, state-of-the-art facilities for digitising archives, books, artefacts, works of art and audio-visual records. With years of experience your precious products of the past are in safe hands and with the ERO's expertise they can produce high-quality, professional digital images of your collections. Whether you're a heritage organisation, academic or an individual with a collection of family papers and photographs, the ERO has something to suit your needs. Essex Sound and Video Archive (ESVA): Let the past come alive before your eyes and ears with the ESVA. The ESVA collects sound and video recordings which cover all aspects of life and culture in Essex, with a particular focus on oral history, broadcast material, music and dance. You can receive digital copies on subjects from agriculture to the Second World War. Currently, the ESVA has over 30,000 recordings, so there's sure to be something to pique your interest.

Reprographics: Gain copies from most of the ERO's vast collection or receive high-quality digital images. Whether it's for your own private research or for display or publication, you can take part of the past home with you. The ERO also provide a state-of-the-art digitisation service which can

provide archival copies of your own collections. Whether you are a heritage organisation requiring digitisation of a whole collection, or an individual with a collection of family papers and photographs, we offer a range of digitisation services to suit your needs.

Sound and Video Services: Have you got precious material stored on vinyl records, open reel tapes, cassettes and video tapes or other outdated media? Don't fret as the

ERO offers an affordable way for you to preserve your material and memories for years to come.

Search Service: Don't worry if you come a cropper while conducting genealogy or other research as the ERO's Search Service can help with researching your family tree, the history of your house or tracing vintage and classic car registrations – and you'll receive a report on their findings.

Visit <https://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/> for a full range of services, information and fascinating facts about the ERO and the county.



The Essex Record Office reveal

the hidden history of Weald Hall

In 1950, Weald Hall became one of the county's country house casualties of the post-war period. Having been used by the military during World War II and badly damaged by fire, the house was pulled down. Soon afterwards the estate was purchased by Essex County Council and is today Weald Country Park.



Portions of the house dated back to the 16th century, although it had been substantially added to and remodelled over time. From the 11th century until 1540, the manor of South Weald was in the possession of Waltham Abbey. When the abbey was dissolved under Henry VIII, the manor was sold to Sir Brian Tuke. The Tuke family only owned the estate for eight years and in 1548 it was sold to Sir Antony Browne, who is the most likely candidate to have built the core of the 16th century property, about 100 metres northwest of the church.

Browne was a regular at the court of Henry VIII and founder of Brentwood School. He assisted Thomas Cromwell in engineering the downfall of Anne Boleyn and during the reign of Mary Tudor assisted with the persecution of Protestants. He had a busy personal life too; with his wife Alice he had seven sons and three daughters, as well as two illegitimate children and two children, who died in infancy, with his second wife, whom he married when he was about 42 and she was 15.

The estate remained in the Browne family for more than 100 years but was sold in 1668 to Sir William Scroggs. Scroggs fought for the Royalists during the Civil War, and went on to have a long legal career, including as a Lord Chief Justice. According to his entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, he had 'a reputation for debauchery, loose living and love of drink'.

Less than 20 years later, in 1685, the property was sold again, this time to a merchant, Erasmus Smith. The Smiths made substantial improvements to the house and grounds, and a map commissioned in 1738 shows a plan of the house surrounded by formal walled gardens and an extensive landscaped park.

The property next changed hands in 1752 when it was purchased by Thomas Tower. His son Christopher purchased more land to extend the park and softened the formal lines of the garden to keep up with 18th century fashions. He also commissioned Robert Adam to make changes to the hall's interiors.

The estate passed through several generations of the Tower family, the last of whom to own it was Christopher John Hume

Tower. Census records provide an interesting snapshot of his life at Weald Hall; in 1901 the family were attended by 15 live-in servants.

Christopher John Hume Tower was to experience much tragedy in his life. His first wife died in childbirth and their daughter died a month later. He remarried and had two sons, Christopher Cecil and Hugh Christopher, who were both killed during World War I. Christopher was killed in action near Loos in France on October 2 1915, and Hugh was killed while serving with the Royal Flying Corps in 1916.

Today little trace of the house remains, but visitors can spy remnants of garden buildings and the shape of the 18th century informal landscaping and meet the park's resident herd of fallow deer.





Credit: ERO D/DM P1 - The Walker map



Walking with author Stephen Neale



Ex-journalist, keen kayaker, wild camping enthusiast, walking path surveyor and award-winning bestselling author, Stephen Neale is all of the above. Born in Southend-on-Sea, and now living with his family in Leigh-on-Sea, Stephen has produced three bestselling books, *Camping by the Waterside*, *Wild Camping* and *The England Coast Path*. Here, Stephen talks to Essex Explorer magazine about why he loves nothing more than walking around our glorious county....

How did you start writing about Essex and its countryside?

About 15 years ago my wife and I bought a motorhome. As we're keen kayakers and swimmers we wanted to drive to caravan sites that were next to rivers and the sea, pitch up and go kayaking or swimming. Unfortunately, I found that a lot of the campsites descriptions were vague to say the least, so I decided to start my own website which proved popular.

At the time there was a TV programme by Martin Dorey called 'One Man and His Camper Van' and I saw on his social media that he had a book coming out. I retweeted it and thought no more about it. About a month later I got a surprise call from Martin, saying that he loved my website and that I should turn it into a book. It got me thinking and so I spoke to some publishers. Eventually I signed a deal and the rest they say is history.

What do you enjoy most about walking in Essex?

Quite simply it's the variety that the county offers and the fact that everywhere is accessible. Essex is just as beautiful as, for example Cumbria, but it's much easier to get out on the trail and explore the different landscapes. Essex is a truly diverse county, what with its coastal and countryside walks, but it's only when you reach the more secluded areas do you realise what wonderful landscapes and an amazing array of wildlife we have right on our doorstep.

Where have you been recently?

Well, normally I walk with other people, but all that changed with social distancing. Probably my longest journey prior to the pandemic was last year when my friend and I walked the Essex Way. We walked the 81-mile route in nine days, although it was probably closer to 100 miles as you detour through picturesque villages. It was like walking in an oil painting as we passed from one field to another under beautiful and wide-open blue skies. I love Cumbria, and if you're

Be safe. Follow government guidelines and plan your walks in advance.



Cudmore Grove



West Mersea

walking up Coniston then your view changes, but the Essex Way is truly accessible and is a wonderful walk as you're never far from a village for refreshments or accommodation.

What's next for you?

I'm planning to walk the Saffron Trail – which is a wonderful journey from Southend to Saffron Walden and is just over 70 miles in total. After walking the Essex Way, where I stayed in B&B's each night, this time I'll camp as I've had enough of luxury.

Do you have different walks you prefer to do based on the time of year?

During the winter months I prefer walking in woodlands, for the simple reason it's always a bit warmer than walking on the coast and two of my favourites are Hatfield and Epping Forest. I love indigenous woodland and walking

through these forests you can imagine what it was like in Essex a thousand or more years ago. What many people don't realise is that Essex has some of the oldest and best woodlands in Europe. Everywhere you walk you're travelling through thousands of years of history and heritage with every step.

One of my favourite winter coastal journeys is a two-hour walk from Fingringhoe (near Colchester) along the River Colne as it has woodlands, creeks and coastal paths – which again demonstrates the variety we have in the county.

How would you describe Essex to someone who doesn't live in the county?

I'd describe it as a wonderful county that has a variety of landscapes and wildlife, is easily accessible and is ideal for fabulous walks, whatever your age or

fitness. I wouldn't say Essex is flat – despite what many people think – as it has rolling hills, but you don't have to work too hard to enjoy a view. Basically, I want to walk all day and then walk the next and you can't do that in the more hilly, mountainous areas of the UK – that's why Essex is perfect.



Walking with author Stephen Neale (cont'd)

Wildlife wise we're very lucky. You can see migrating birds in the saltmarsh creeks, Peregrine Falcons in Basildon, Red Kites and Buzzards in the countryside, Hen Harriers at Wallesea Island, the woodlands surrounding Colchester have Roe Deer and Muntjac's, there are Otters in the majority of rivers, Pipistrelle Bats in parks and fields, rare butterflies and the best fauna and fungi in Britain – we really are blessed to have all this wonderful wildlife so close to us.

What's the strangest thing you've found when walking?

Well I didn't actually find it myself; I read about it and went to help but at Cudmore Grove, on Mersea Island, a Mammoth's tusk was discovered so I went and helped excavate it. Cudmore Grove really is a hidden Essex gem, it's a wonderful Site of Scientific Interest, with some fantastic coastal walks, and is known as the 'Hippo graveyard' due to the hippopotamus bones that were found there in 1979.

From your book what, and why, is your favourite area of England?

It has to be South Devon – it truly is beautiful – as it's stunning and perfect for everything I enjoy, namely walking, kayaking and camping.

You've produced three books so far, are there any others in the pipeline?

There are many more to come as I find it's a lot of fun writing books. It really is a privilege to be able to write about something you're passionate about but unfortunately, you're never going to become rich from it.

All images courtesy of Stephen Neale / Wild Essex.com



Holland on Sea



Hoy Lake



COMPETITION

We have two copies of Stephen's bestselling and award-winning book 'The England Coast Path' to give away to our lucky winners. To be in with a chance of winning send your answers to the question below to

Marketing.ExploreEssex@essex.gov.uk

For competition closing dates and full terms and conditions please visit the Explore Essex website.

Question:

How many miles of coastline does Essex have?

A) 350 B) 35 C) 3.5



Lion Creek

From grape to glass:

Wine harvest in Essex

It's hard to believe that just over fifty years ago there were no vineyards to be found in Essex. Fast forward to 2020 and there is a lovely selection of vineyards dotted across the county, from the sunny Crouch Valley to the outskirts of Braintree.

So, what is it about Essex that makes it great for producing wine?

We spoke to New Hall Vineyard, the first established vineyard in Essex, to find out more about how our coastal county is suited to viticulture.

Mr and Mrs Greenwood pioneered the East Anglian vineyard movement in 1969 by establishing New Hall Vineyard when there were no others in Essex. Mr Greenwood was a farmer, hence he quickly realised that from an agricultural perspective, the microclimate had great potential for viticulture.

New Hall, along with other renowned vineyards in the Crouch Valley, enjoy a unique microclimate aided by a combination of low rainfall, a temperate growing season and ideal growing degree days tempered by the neighbouring River Crouch and Blackwater. The risk of frost is very low, and the dry, warm season allows a steady accumulation of sugars and flavours to develop in

New Hall Vineyard gives us an insight into their harvesting process, from grape to glass.

Picking the grapes

The process of deciding when to pick the grapes is more complex than you might think. The first step is sampling, which involves taking a cross section of berries from each of our plantations every few days from mid-august. The juice is analysed in the lab for natural sugar and acidity. Multiple factors need to be considered, such as the berries' mouthfeel, skin and seed colours and textures and the taste of the juice. The berries will visually give you clues as to when they are ripe.

Based on this information, a plan for ideal harvest dates can be formed to ensure that each plantation of fruit is picked at optimal ripeness and quality. The short-term weather forecast also needs to be constantly monitored.

New Hall Vineyard has 14 different grape varieties on site, spanning over 30 different plantations, so harvest logistics can be a complex process and it requires constant communication between the Vineyard Manager and Winemakers.





Does the process differ for white and red wine?

Red and white grape berries destined for white wines are picked and whole bunch pressed simultaneously to reduce contact between juice and skins.

However, for red wines, the red berries are crushed and destemmed first prior to pressing, and the juice macerates in the skins to extract colour and phenolics. Maceration may take days, or even weeks, depending on the style of red wine. They also require warmer temperatures during fermentation and can benefit from a secondary type of fermentation called malolactic fermentation (MLF). MLF softens the natural acids in wines and can improve the mouthfeel.



From pressing to bottling

New Hall wines are all produced on site in their 250,000-litre capacity winery. From the time that the grapes are pressed to just before the wine is bottled, each litre will go through a very complex and interesting journey around the winery. The process from berry to bottle takes around eight months for a vintage still wine, and a minimum of 17 months for a Traditional Method Sparkling Wine.

Once fruit has been weighed, it is whole-bunch pressed and then transferred into a temperature-controlled stainless-steel tank to settle naturally overnight. Natural grape solids settle via gravity, and the clear juice can then be 'racked' into a fresh tank. The juice is then inoculated with a specific yeast culture and nutrients if needed. Nurturing the yeast culture is a vital part of the process; it is the population of growing yeast cells that will work their magic on aroma and flavour pre-cursors in the juice, and as a byproduct produce the

all-important alcohol! Yeast needs to be warm, well-nourished and have adequate oxygen in order to thrive and maintain a well-paced fermentation. The winemakers monitor each tank twice a day to ensure the yeasts are behaving themselves and to adjust their environment accordingly.

After fermentation, each tank of wine undergoes a process of stabilisation and filtration which is a lengthy process but an essential one. This process will ensure that the wine remains bright, clear and stable in the bottle.

Three months later, blending trials begin to take stock of all the wine in the tanks and see how each varietal has changed and developed. Growing more grape varietals gives more freedom in the winery to create different combinations.

New Hall (Credit Visit Essex)





What factors affect the quality of your harvest?

Weather

The weather plays a huge role in the size of the crop. Interestingly, while the vines are flowering in the current growing season, they will simultaneously be forming fruit inside dormant buds for the following season. Good spring weather at flowering means that the dormant buds will be forming minute inflorescence (flower primordia) and consequently a good potential crop; whereas unfavourable weather will encourage leaves and tendrils to form instead.

Fortunately, East Anglia is blessed with a low rainfall and rarely experiences frost damage. Our region here is rich with grape growers who all enjoy a matrix of conditions which enable a long, temperate growing season for aromatic grape varieties. Essex vineyards tend to start their harvest a good few weeks before other wine regions; this is a combination of the early-ripening varieties of grape and warm microclimate.

Looking after the vines throughout the year

Viticulture requires working constantly throughout the growing season to ensure the vines' best qualities are maximised to produce a high-quality crop. Each varietal has its own quirks and characteristics which must be considered when undertaking activities such as winter pruning. The key to successful commercial grape-production is encouraging the vine to reach balanced vegetative and reproductive growth; i.e. the perfect ratio between leaves, shoots and fruit, and equally, quality and quantity.

If a vine was left unattended, its instinct would be to simply grow larger, taller and produce the least fruit possible to reproduce. Therefore, its key to use a combination of trellis systems, carefully considered planting densities, pruning methods and soil treatments to achieve balance. Care should be taken to avoid minimal damage from pests and diseases.

As a winemaker, what wine and food pairings would you consider to be a match made in heaven?

Some classic wine and food pairings are:

Bacchus: a medium dry white wine - with smoked food.

Signature: a dry white wine - with aromatic Thai dishes.

Bacchus Fume: a dry white wine - with a good mature English cheddar and fruity chutney.

Pinot noir: a red wine - with herby roasted winter veg.

Huxelrebe: a zesty, dry white wine - served with a shared board of salted nuts, dips, salted crackers, crudités and olives.

What are New Hall's bestselling wines?

New Hall produces red, rosé, white and sparkling wine - something for everyone. Their classic bestselling wines include Bacchus, Barons Red, English Rose and Signature. You may already be familiar with New Hall wines as they are sold in many city restaurants, cafes, wedding venues, global cruise liners, hotels, independent retail outlets and local pubs and eateries.

Look out for New Hall's range of limited edition wines, launched to celebrate the businesses fifth decade of wine production.

Images courtesy of New Hall Vineyard and Visit Essex.

If you would like to buy some New Hall wines, visit the online shop: www.newhallwines.co.uk

Free delivery on orders over £60 and 10% off orders of 12 bottles or more.



DID YOU KNOW?

- It takes roughly one kilogram of grapes to produce a bottle of still wine –that's around five or six large bunches.
- Vines have a relatively long lifespan and can produce excellent yields of great quality grapes for over 35-years. The older vines have a wonderfully gnarly appearance.
- Essex has been recognised as a successful grape-growing site for centuries. Vines have been planted in Purleigh since the 12th Century.
- Essex has more vineyards in its micro-region than any other region in the UK, and this number is set to keep on increasing.
- The process from berry to bottle takes around eight months for a vintage still wine, and a minimum of 17 months for a Traditional Method Sparkling Wine.



New Hall (Credit Visit Essex)

Get going in the garden

Cutting, pruning and prepping is the key to getting going in the garden during the winter months. Here we meet Rebecca Ashbey, Head Gardener at Cressing Temple Barns, who explains why the Tudor garden at Cressing is so special. Rebecca also offers some green-fingered top-tips to make your garden look blooming lovely come the spring and summer months.

The Cressing Temple Barns garden is laid out according to the way the plants were used in the past. It features a medicinal border full of healing plants - such as Mandrake (*Mandragora officinalis*) which was used as an anaesthetic and pain killer - as well as plants that could be added to pottage and soups, a strewing garden full of aromatic herbs that were once used to freshen the house and a dye garden where the plants were used to make colourful dyes.



Other plants within the Tudor garden are Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), which were a valuable source of vitamins and protein in the spring months and could be made into fibre and cloth, Soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*), which was used to clean the dirt out of wool fleeces before spinning, and Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), which was the main plant to make a blue coloured dye.

At Cressing, we garden using organic principles that were used during Tudor times. Because of this the garden is a haven for wildlife, with bees and other insects feasting on the nectar and pollen provided by our wildflowers in the flowery meadow.

The birds love the orchard fruit and sparrows can always be heard twittering in the hawthorn hedge at sunset. It is a very peaceful place to wander or just to sit and relax, listening to the bubbling water in the fountain and the birds singing.



The Cressing Temple Barns garden reflects a time when people lived in harmony with the natural world, understood it and depended upon it for their everyday needs and their livelihoods. In these challenging modern times, there is much we can learn from their way of life.



Rebecca Ashbey, Head Gardener at Cressing Temple Barns



For more information about the Tudor garden and Cressing Temple Barns, please visit our website.

“Gardening is a great way to keep fit, I use it as my gym and daily workout, and just being outside in the fresh air and close to plants and wildlife can lift your spirits.

I never feel happier than when I’m in the garden, especially at Cressing Temple Barns, which has a beautiful Tudor walled garden full of herbs, wildflowers and plants that would have been common in the 16th century.”



Open spaces at Cressing are still open. Follow government guidelines when you visit.



TOP TIPS

- Don't try to do too much at once. Little and often is better than a marathon gardening stint and then nothing for months. Getting one or two things right will give you a lot of confidence.
- 'Right plant, right place' is a good gardening motto to follow. Labels state the best place to plant as well as its size. Read gardening books and websites for advice or ask the gardeners or volunteers at Cressing Temple.
- Remember, new plants need regular watering. Many plants fail because they weren't watered enough in the first few weeks which can make it difficult to recover them.
- Try to plant something for every season. Don't just plant summer flowering flora as you'll have nothing to look at for the rest of the year.
- Be patient and see it as a voyage of discovery. Find what plants you like, what you are successful with and what gives you the most pleasure.
- Think long-term with perennials, shrubs and trees. Bedding plants give you a riot of colour, but you have to plant them every year and it can become expensive. A hardy perennial plant or shrub will be with you for years.
- Plants in containers are great for small gardens but you need to care for them, so don't plant more than you have time for. Watering, feeding, re-potting takes time and effort. Remember, container plants are totally reliant on you, they can be rewarding but don't think of them as an easy option.
- Make your garden or plot your own and put your character into it. Plant what you like to look at, what you like to eat and make it how you want it to look. There is no right or wrong type of garden - express yourself and be creative.
- Think ahead for the next season. Pruning fruit trees in winter will give you a better crop in the summer and autumn. During spring, stake your plants so they're firm when they bloom in summer.
- Finally, help the wildlife in your garden. Leaves under bushes and hedges, old stems of perennial plants and a few piles of sticks provide a refuge for insects to overwinter. Leave seed heads on flowering plants as they're a valuable food source for birds. Make sure there's a source of fresh water - ponds are great but a bird bath or a shallow bowl of fresh water can be just as good for birds and mammals during winter. Also, consider making, or buying, an insect hotel, hedgehog box or roosting box for wildlife to shelter in during winter, see overleaf on how to make a bug hotel and basic bird bath.



The open spaces including the restored Tudor Walled Garden at Cressing Temple Barns are open.

Follow government guidelines and plan your visit in advance: Indoor spaces including the barns and Tiptree tea rooms are closed during lockdown.

Cressing Temple Barns, Witham Road,
Braintree, Cressing, CM77 8PD

Recipes and Cookery

Get Cooking

How to make Templar Scones by Tiptree Tea Rooms

This recipe from Tiptree Tea Rooms is inspired by the Knights Templar history at Cressing Temple Barns, where you can find The Barns Tea Room.

Granted to the Knights Templar in 1137, Cressing Temple Barns is of significant historic interest for its unique buildings and garden. Internationally renowned for its impressive and remarkably well-preserved medieval carpentry, the barns provide a remarkable insight into the building techniques of the time and a glimpse into the lives of the people who built them. The Grade I listed Barley and Wheat Barns are the oldest known timber framed barns in Europe and amongst the few remaining Templar buildings in England.



Ingredients

Cheese	200g
Self-Raising Flour	500g
Pinch of Salt	
Margarine	110g
Baking Powder	11g
Milk (to add)	
Egg	1
Tiptree Wholegrain Mustard	38g
Tiptree Hot Gooseberry Chutney	38g
Plain Flour for dusting	



Method

Pre-heat the oven at 220 degrees.

Sieve flour, salt and baking powder: add margarine then rub together until mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

Add one egg, Tiptree Wholegrain Mustard and cheese, mix well (leave enough cheese to sprinkle on the top of your scones).

Make a well in the middle; gradually add milk and fold into a form of good consistency, not too dry or too wet. Start with a spoon and then fold in with your hands.

Sprinkle flour onto a dry, cold side and onto your rolling pin. Roll until no taller than your scone cutter.

Dip your scone cutter into the flour to stop from sticking to mixture. Cut out your scones, trying not to twist as you pull out the cutter. Re-roll the offcuts and repeat.

Line baking tray with greaseproof paper and then place scones on the tray. Then brush with egg or a little milk.

Sprinkle your remaining cheese on top of each scone.

Place in oven and set timer for six minutes.

After timer sounds, remove from oven and turn the oven down to 160 degrees.

Rotate tray and bake for six minutes.

Remove from oven, allow scones to cool on a rack and then serve with Tiptree Hot Gooseberry Chutney.

Tiptree

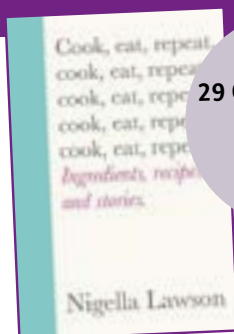


Cookery Books

Mouth-watering, tempting and delicious, these new books are the perfect way to cook up a storm in your kitchen this season.

Cook, Eat, Repeat

by Nigella Lawson



Hardback,
29 October 2020,
Chatto
& Windus,
£26 rrp

Cook, Eat, Repeat is a delicious and delightful combination of recipes, intertwined with narrative essays about food. With 150 new recipes and Nigella's trademark warmth and wisdom, food readers will want to return to it again and again.

Chapters include 'A is for Anchovy' (a celebration of the bacon of the sea), 'Rhubarb', 'A Loving Defence of Brown Food', a suitably expansive chapter devoted to family dinners, plus inspiration for vegan feasts, solo suppers and new ideas for Christmas.

It includes recipes for all seasons and tastes: Burnt Onion and Aubergine Dip; Butternut with Beetroot, Chilli and Ginger Sauce; Brown Butter Colcannon; Spaghetti with Chard and Anchovies; Chicken with Garlic Cream Sauce; Beef Cheeks with Port and Chestnuts; and Wide Noodles with Lamb in Aromatic Broth, to name a few. Those with a sweet tooth will delight in Rhubarb and Custard Trifle; Chocolate Peanut Butter Cake; Rice Pudding Cake and Cherry and Almond Crumble.

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookseller.

Also on BBC Two this winter.

Nadiya Bakes

by Nadiya Hussain



Hardback,
3 September
2020, Michael
Joseph
£22 rrp

You'll probably know Nadiya Hussain as the winner of the sixth series of *"The Great British Bake Off"*. Since winning, Nadiya has presented the BBC documentaries *"The Chronicles of Nadiya"*, *Nadiya's British Food Adventure* and *Nadiya's Family Favourites*. Now this book takes her back to her first love of baking and contains all the recipes from her BBC Two series of the same name.

'Let Nadiya fill your kitchen with pure joy' Woman & Home

Conquer cakes, biscuits, traybakes, tarts and pies, showstopping desserts, breads, savoury bakes, and even 'no-bake' bakes - all with her signature mouth-watering twists.

Some of Nadiya's deliciously easy recipes you can achieve at home include:

- Pink Peppercorn Pithivier
- Peppercorn Pull Apart Bread
- Teriyaki Chicken Baked Noodles
- Tomato Galette
- Money Can't Buy You Happiness Brownies
- Mango and Coconut Cake
- ... and much, much more.

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookseller.

Ottolenghi FLAVOUR

by Yotam Ottolenghi



Hardback,
3 September
2020,
Ebury Press,
£27 rrp

Flavour-forward, vegetable-based recipes are at the heart of Yotam Ottolenghi's food.

In this beautiful new cookbook Yotam and co-writer Ixta Belfrage break down the three factors that create flavour and offer innovative vegetable dishes that deliver brand-new ingredient combinations to excite and inspire.

Ottolenghi FLAVOUR combines simple recipes for weeknights, low-effort high-impact dishes, and standout meals for the relaxed cook. Packed with signature colourful photography, FLAVOUR not only inspires us with what to cook, but how flavour is dialled up and why it works.

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookseller.

Explore Essex Winter Reads

FICTION

Cosy up with some criminally good reads. There are lots of big publications available, but here are our top three . . .

The Thursday Murder Club

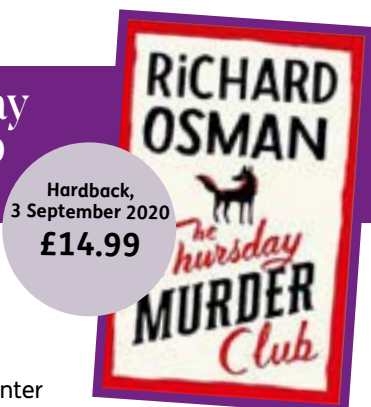
by Richard Osman

'So smart and funny. Deplorably good' IAN RANKIN

The first novel by TV presenter Richard Osman (co-presenter of of BBC One's *Pointless*).

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders.

But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case.



Hardback,
3 September 2020
£14.99

Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves.

Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.

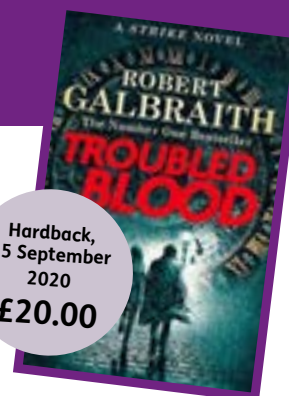
Troubled Blood

by Robert Galbraith

The fifth novel in the acclaimed and bestselling series starring private detective Strike and his sidekick Robin Ellacott by Robert Galbraith – J. K. Rowling's crime writing pseudonym.

You'll recognise these much-loved characters from the recent series, *Lethal White*, on BBC One.

Strike has never tackled a cold case before, let alone one forty years old. But despite the slim chance of success, he is intrigued and takes it on . . .



Hardback,
15 September
2020
£20.00

'The work of a master storyteller.'
The Daily Telegraph

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.

No Mercy

by Martina Cole

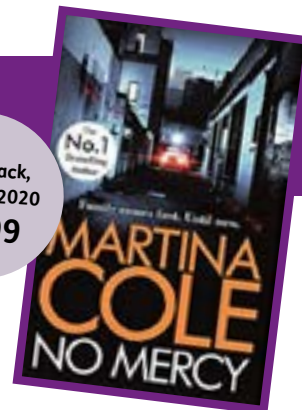
Paperback,
25 June 2020
£8.99

It wouldn't be autumn without a Martina Cole novel, but unfortunately her new book has been delayed so we're including this year's unputdownable paperback in our top picks instead.

Family always come first. Until now.

Diana Davis has been head of the family business since the death of her husband, an infamous bank robber. She's a woman in a man's world, but no one messes with her.

Her only son, Angus, is a natural born villain, but he needs to earn Diana's trust before she'll allow him into the business.



Once he's proved he has the brains to run their clubs in Marbella, he is given what he's always wanted. It's the beginning of a reign of terror that knows no bounds . . .

'She's a total one-off' Guardian

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.

KIDS AND ALL THE FAMILY

The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch

by Tom Fletcher

The magical and heartwarming sequel to Tom Fletcher's bestselling, *The Christmasaurus*.

One year has passed since William Trundle's incredible adventure with the most extraordinary dinosaur: the Christmasaurus. Now, William is swept back to the magical North Pole, where he meets the mysterious icy Winter Witch - whose power to control time allows Santa Claus to make the long journey all around the world every Christmas Eve.

And when they learn that the fate of Christmas itself hangs in the balance, William and the Christmasaurus must work with the Winter Witch to protect it...

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.



Paperback,
29 October 2020
£6.99

NON-FICTION

Discover how fungi are shaping our future, why Essex Girls should be celebrated and revel in our natural world with our winter non-fiction picks.

Essex Girls

by Sarah Perry (New HB)

The bestselling author of *The Essex Serpent*, Sarah Perry, returns with her first non-fiction publication. In this book she sets out to explore, defend and celebrate the 'Essex Girl'.

Essex Girls are disreputable, disrespectful and disobedient.

They speak out of turn, too loudly and too often, in an accent irritating to the ruling classes.

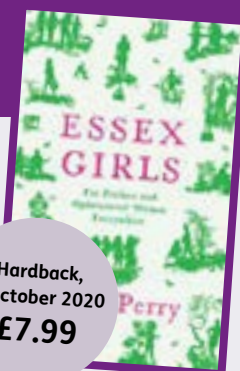
Their bodies are hyper-sexualised and irredeemably vulgar.

They are given to intricate and voluble squabbling.

They do not apologise for any of this. And why should they?

In this exhilarating feminist defence of the Essex girl, Sarah Perry re-examines her relationship with her often maligned home county. She summons its most unquiet

Hardback,
1 October 2020
£7.99



spirits, from Protestant martyr Rose Allin to the indomitable Abolitionist Anne Knight, sitting alongside them Audre Lorde, Kim Kardashian and Harriet Martineau, and showing us that the Essex girl is not bound by geography. She is a type, representing a very particular kind of female agency, and a very particular kind of disdain: she contains a multitude of women, and it is time to celebrate them. (Official publisher description).

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.

My Garden World:

the natural year by Monty Don

My Garden World by Monty Don is a celebration of every living creature that we all share.

THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER

'From a very early age I loved the countryside as much as any garden and was fascinated by the life that I saw all around me from trees, wildflowers, birds, insects and mammals. In a sense this book has been over sixty years in gestation. I have kept

Hardback,
17 September
2020,
£20.00



notebooks and journals ever since I could write and I have drawn upon these as well as the events of the past year.'

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.

Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds and Shape Our Futures by Merlin Sheldrake

'One of those rare books that can truly change the way you see the world around you, *Entangled Life* is a mercurial, revelatory, impassioned, urgent, astounding, and necessary read. It's fearless in scope, analytically astute, and brimming with infectious joy'

Helen Macdonald, author of *H is for Hawk*

The more we learn about fungi, the less makes sense without them.

In giving us bread, alcohol and life-saving medicines, fungi have shaped human history, and their psychedelic properties have recently been shown to alleviate a number of mental illnesses. Their ability to digest plastic, explosives, pesticides and crude oil is being harnessed in break-through technologies, and the discovery that they connect plants in underground networks, the 'Wood Wide

Hardback,
3 September 2020
£20.00



Web', is transforming the way we understand ecosystems. Yet over ninety percent of their species remain undocumented.

Entangled Life is a mind-altering journey into a spectacular and neglected world and shows that fungi provide a key to understanding both the planet on which we live, and life itself.

Buy from Waterstones.com or your local independent bookshop.

COMPETITION

WIN a signed copy of *Essex Girls* by Sarah Perry and T-shirt bundle, we've got two sets to give away.

To be in with a chance of winning send your answer (one entry per person) to the question below by emailing **Marketing.ExploreEssex@essex.gov.uk**. Title your email with the competition name.

For competition closing dates and full terms and conditions visit the Explore Essex website.

Q: What was the title of Sarah Perry's bestselling debut novel?

- The Essex Dragon
- The Essex Serpent
- The Essex Snake



Get wild and give nature a home



Not only do bird baths, bird feeders and bug hotels encourage wildlife into your garden they're also great for getting your young ones interested in nature.

It doesn't matter if your garden is large or small as there are many ways to get birds and insects to visit. Read on to find out more.



Build a Bug hotel



Did you know that 98% of all animals alive today are invertebrates (animals without a backbone) and the vast majority of these are insects? Insects perform a variety of fundamental roles, including pollination, decomposition and providing food for other animals. Sadly though, their numbers are declining at an alarming rate, but you can help by building a bug hotel.

Building a bug hotel is a great way to keep your children entertained and interested in nature and it's a simple and fun way to attract more insects and wildlife to your garden. All you need is a few hours and:

- Old wooden pallets or strips of wood
- Twigs, straw, moss or dry leaves
- Old roof tiles or old terracotta pots
- Bricks, ideally these should have air holes
- Bamboo canes (ideally hollow)
- Bark, sand, soil and any other natural materials you can find (e.g. pinecones, twigs, sticks etc.)



To build your bug hotel start by:

- Choosing a suitable site – ideally it should be on firm and flat ground. The basic structure needs to be strong and stable and no more than a metre high. Of course, as its your bug hotel you can make one large structure or lots of smaller ones
- Lay some bricks or tiles on the ground. Leave some space between them and try to create an H-shape.
- Now add your pallets or branches and place them on top of the bricks. Remember the more space you leave underneath the more likely you'll attract hedgehogs.
- Fill in the gaps with bark, twigs, sticks, sand or soil. The more nooks and crannies of different sizes you add, the more diverse the wildlife you'll attract. For insects add dead wood and loose bark, dry leaves and sticks for lady birds and large holes, tiles and stones for frogs and toads.
- Finally, when you think it's high enough - add a roof. Place some old tiles or wooden planks on top and cover it with earth. Now all you have left to do is name your bug hotel!



Build a bird bath

Even through the winter birds and mammals still need access to water so make this simple bird bath and help out our feathered and furry friends. All you need is a shallow watertight bowl and before you know it you'll have new visitors to your garden.

- 1 Take your watertight bowl, add some stones and gravel to the bottom of it (it doesn't have to be much).
- 2 Place some bricks, or whatever you have and/or can find, to raise it off the ground.
- 3 Add some clean, fresh water and you've created a basic bird bath. Now sit back and watch your flapping friends frolic to their hearts content.

If you make either of these then we'd love to see your efforts. Simply, take a picture and send it to Marketing.ExploreEssex@Essex.gov.uk and we'll post them on our social media channels.

Get out and get active on the Flitch Way this winter

Enjoy 15 miles of flat, traffic free, beautiful Essex countryside following The Flitch Way - a former railway line from Braintree to Bishops Stortford this winter. It's perfect for walking, cycling (as it's on the National Cycle Network Route 16) and horse riding for all age groups and family members.



Of course, if 15 miles is too long you can always break the Flitch Way down into more manageable chunks.

This leafy, traffic-free route starts at Braintree train station before winding its way through the Essex countryside to the towns of Great Dunmow and Bishops Stortford. The Braintree to Bishops Stortford railway line was decommissioned in 1972, but it's enjoyed a new lease of life as an attractive walking, running, cycling and horse riding destination due to its flat nature, the rich wildlife and attractive Victorian bridges and stations you see along the way.

Starting from Braintree train station car park, the route follows the old railway line and after two miles you'll find The Booking Hall Café. Here you can indulge in some delicious sweet treats and savoury snacks in the former Rayne railway station which was built in 1866. After, and if you feel like it, you can divert off the Flitch Way and explore Great Notley Country Park and discover its lakes and woodland trail.



After leaving the café, head west and continue along the former railway line towards and past Felstead and enjoy the peace and solitude as you make your way through some glorious Essex countryside and sheltered woodland for 7.5 miles. The route is mainly on cinder tracks so it's



ideal for whatever kind of bike you and your family members have, but it can get muddy just before you reach Little Dunmow and Great Dunmow, especially after bad weather.

When you reach Great Dunmow, follow the signs which route you through the town before finding yourself on its outskirts and back into the countryside. From here you'll go past the village of Takeley and skirt along Hatfield Forest and London Stansted Airport before crossing the M11.

Continue for approximately two to three miles and you'll find yourself approaching the outer suburbs of Bishops Stortford via a lovely tree lined avenue along the former railway line before reaching the end of The Flitch Way.



Please follow government guidelines when you visit. The Booking Hall Café at Rayne is open for takeaways



Why is it called the Flitch Way?

The Braintree to Bishops Stortford railway line was known as 'The Flitch Way' due to the Dunmow Flitch Trials which are still held in Great Dunmow every four years. The Trials are where a married couple stand before a mock court and have to prove to the judge and jury that they haven't 'wished themselves unwed' and if they are successful they receive half-a-pig known as a 'flitch' or side of bacon.



Get ready to Stop.Swap.GO!



A sustainable travel campaign aiming to make it easier for people in Essex to switch from cars to sustainable travel options, such as walking, cycling and using the bus, was launched in the summer. Stop. Swap. GO! is led by Essex County Council, and is aimed at children, young people and all adults living and working across the county. The project features content across the official Stop.Swap.GO! website and social media channels.

For those travelling to school or college there are now a range of maps on the website highlighting walking and cycling routes. These are helpful to avoid traffic congestion at the gates and includes 'drive and drop' zones to keep cars away from the most built up areas.



60 Day Challenge

Participants are encouraged to get out and about by joining the 60 Day Challenge where they complete daily walking or cycle tasks on an app.



The challenge has been a big step in helping many swap to more sustainable modes of travel. More and more people are joining the challenge and ditching the car when completing shorter, localised journeys. It has been encouraging to witness the enthusiasm with which the challenge has been embraced and Stop.Swap.GO! will be encouraging more people to join throughout the autumn and winter.

To help incentivise more active travel there are weekly prize draws. Already 48 lucky winners have won their choice of Amazon or Love to Shop vouchers so far. In addition, there are also occasional promotions encouraging everyone from young to old to get out and about without their car.



Challenge yourself to make small changes to the way you travel, every day. Plus, there's the chance to win vouchers every single week. **So what are you waiting for?**

**SIGN UP to the
60 Day Challenge**

Benefits to active travel

Throughout the summer, Stop. Swap.GO! have used social media to motivate Essex to move and have shared a range of information to help people and families make more informed choices.

As well as the better known benefits to heart health and cholesterol levels, the campaign has also shared the benefits to mental health and the impacts regular exercise can have on the mental health of young people.

60 Day Challenge participants have also been forthcoming about sharing their experiences of the joy of walking and cycling with a clear trend towards the beauty of nature, having time to think clearly, getting to know the local neighbourhood and discovering wild blackberries.

Essex Country Parks are great places to get out and about with all the family. From park trails to coastal walks, there is a wealth of options to choose from on the Explore Essex website. We're always interested to know what you discover while out on a new walk or cycle so let us know on the Stop.Swap.GO! social media channels.

Like follow and share the Stop. Swap.GO! updates on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



BRILLIANTLY BRITISH STAYCATION

Throw everything in the car and explore the wonders here on our doorstep. Sea, shopping and sightseeing are all within easy reach of Colchester, and Wivenhoe House is ideally located for a relaxing getaway. Whether you are a couple searching for a romantic getaway or a family seeking an ultimate adventure, we have something to offer.

What's included:

Four nights stay in one of our stunning Rooms

Full English breakfast each morning

Children stay on a complimentary bed and breakfast basis – they will also eat free of charge from our children's menu when adults dine in our brasserie for lunch or dinner

Late checkout of 12 noon

Contact us for pricing and further information
(upgrades available at a supplement)

BOOK NOW

Please note due to the Covid-19 crisis we are now offering a 'no cancellation fee' so you can book with confidence

Call us on 01206 863 666
Email reservations@wivenhoehouse.co.uk

Available from 13th July 2020
until 31st March 2021

Terms and conditions

Rate based on two adults in a Classic Room, upgrades available at a supplement, no single occupancy rate available; A 25% discount will be added to each night of your stay, resulting in one night free; Families will require a Deluxe or Luxury Room to accommodate Children; Children dine complimentary when two adults have a minimum of 2 courses each; 0-12 years of age is considered to be a child; Late checkout is subject to availability; Available from 13th July 2020 until 31st March 2021, except selected key dates e.g. Christmas, New Years, Valentines etc; Subject to availability, (exclusions apply).



Pay for
three nights
and get the
fourth FREE



Wivenhoe House Hotel is temporarily closed during national lockdown. Check their website for updates.



Tiptree

The Barns Tea Room is closed during lockdown.



YOU'RE CLOSER TO A TIPTREE CREAM TEA THAN YOU THINK

Visit the Barns tea room and enjoy a special Tiptree cream tea after a stroll around the outstanding barns and gardens. The tea room offers a wide range of home-made meals, made with fresh and tempting ingredients, perfect to unwind and indulge.

The Barns Tea Room, Cressing Temple, Witham Road, Braintree, Essex, CM77 8PD. 01376 585081 thebarns@trooms.com

tiptree.com

