

# CHELMER & BLACKWATER NAVIGATION

TRIP TYPE: SOLO CYCLE (CIRCULAR RIDE)

OBJECTIVE: CYCLE FROM HEYBRIDGE BASIN TO SPRINGFIELD BASIN, CHELMSFORD ALONG THE CHELMER AND BLACKWATER NAVIGATION, THEN CYCLE BACK ON TRACKS AND ROADS VIA WOODHAM WATER AND MALDON.

DISTANCE: 27 MILES (13.5 MILES OF CANAL)

TIME: 3 HRS 45 MIN, 7.2 MPH

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 1, PP 18-24

COSTS: £5 PARKING AT HEYBRIDGE BASIN. NO TRAINS.

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

OVERVIEW: You should only attempt this ride when the ground is dry, and vegetation short, otherwise it is muddy and overgrown. There is no towpath for the majority of the canal, just a well-used footpath. There are at least 2 carries: over a fence by a swing gate, and up and down over a footbridge, with 2 more if you take the Grace's Walk route back to the start point, hence the ride is MODERATE.



The only alternative to the Grace's Walk route is to return along the navigation.

The ride is mainly rural, except through Maldon, which is a nice town but the navigation goes through the industrial side. There are plenty of pubs and cafés along the way.

## 1. HEYBRIDGE BASIN TO SPRINGFIELD BASIN (13.5M)

Park in Daisy Meadows Car Park, Heybridge, which cost £5 for the day. Parking in the village is otherwise very restricted. At the

far end of the car park to the entrance is a path up to the navigation. Turn right on the path.

The path is stony, decent to start with, but gradually worsens. It is mostly an earthen footpath with nettles, bumpy and narrow.

As you pass Tesco on the left cross the footbridge. Turn right into the small nature reserve and follow the narrow, nettled path to the golf course. Stay on the gravel path to the side of the course unless you have a death wish. (Alternatively, rather than crossing the footbridge by Tesco, continue on the Blackwater Rail Trail then turn left on a track and cross the navigation at Chapman's Bridge, to the golf course.)



Mill at Great Baddow  
Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation

At Beeteigh Lock cross the footbridge to continue on the right of the navigation. The path is now narrow and bumpy.

At Hbe Mill lock the towpath crosses back to the left. There is a swing gate through which a bike cannot be taken so you will have to lift it over the fence.



During good weather Paper Mill lock is very busy with picnickers and walkers. Stay on the left side. The path is better in places here, but still slow progress due to the number of people about.

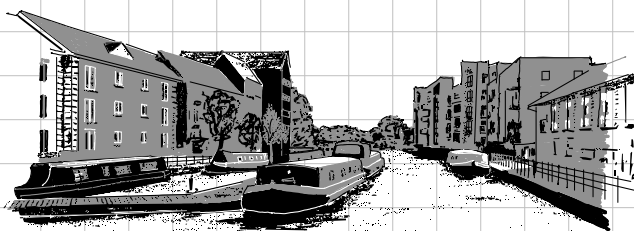
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After a few more miles the navigation turns south (left) along-side Chelmsford Bypass, A12. Just before the river passes under the A12 note a footbridge which leads to Grace's Walk (which you will return to later).

There is a short stretch of concrete track under the A12 bridge which leads to Sandford Mill Bridge. Rejoin the footpath under the bridge here.

Next are some meadows with a poor path, including an awkward footbridge, then you suddenly find yourself in Chelmsford. Bear right, cross the steep bridge and ride to the end of Springfield Basin.

There are quite a few pubs in Chelmsford, including the Queen's Head in Lower Anchor Street, CM2 0AS, which is one of Roger Protz' top 25 pubs in Britain (and hence, well worth a visit).



Springfield Basin,  
Chelmsford

## 2. SPRINGFIELD BASIN TO HEYBRIDGE BASIN (VIA GRACE'S LANE) (13.5 MILES)

Note: there is a long climb on this route. If you prefer to stay on the flat, return the same way you came, along the navigation.

Return to the footbridge at Grace's Walk and cross it. The steps are steep. Cross the field, and the awkward little bridge with bars. Cross the field by the pylon. Continue across Hammonds Road and then on Grace's Walk (a track) to Grace's Lane (a min

road). Turn right and follow the lane to the junction and bear left on Riffhams Chase. At the T junction turn left on The Ridge. This is the highest point of the ride, and it's fairly easy going from now on. Turn right on Mill Lane, right again on Spring Elms Lane, and at the end turn right on Little Baddow Road. This

takes you to The Bell at Woodham Walter, where you can take refreshment if you wish (nice to sit outside, and there's only a few miles to go).

Leaving the pub turn left on The Street, which becomes Rectory Road. Turn right on Blue Mill Lane then right on Curling Tye Lane up to London Road. Turn left and head into Maldon.

Cross over the A144 bypass and continue to Market Hill, B1018. Turn left and drop down to cross the River Chelmer. At the third roundabout turn right on The Street, and rejoin the navigation at the bridge, turning right. It's a short distance back to Heybridge Basin. Make sure you take in the magnificent views over the Blackwater Estuary.

Perhaps another pint at The Jolly Sailor, which is very friendly and looked more interesting than The Old Ship, which is a food pub.

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