

CUDMORE GROVE

Cudmore Grove where the buffaloes roam!
Blow away those cobwebs with an exhilarating day at the coast.



Distance and time taken

3.5 miles (5.6km) – 2.5 hours

Going

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

Transport

For details of public transport for this walk contact the Travel Line on 0870 608 2608.

Habitat types

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

Ordnance Survey Map

Explorer 184.

Parking

Cudmore Grove Country Park. The Country Park is open from 8am until dusk, car parking charges apply.

Refreshments

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

Dogs

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

More about Cudmore Grove

Cudmore Grove covers an area of 38 acres and is owned and managed by Essex County Council. It was designated a Country Park in 1975 and is now managed for wildlife and informal recreation. The site comprises an area of grassland; a cliff top grove of oak trees and a small sandy beach...so don't forget your bucket and spade!

Prior to 1975 the site was an area of farmland bordered by elm trees. The elm was the dominant tree on Mersea Island but in recent years Dutch Elm Disease has claimed many victims. New trees have been planted to try and restore the balance.

East Mersea is a 'Twitcher's Paradise'. Most of the mudflats and saltmarsh surrounding it belong to the Colne Estuary National Nature Reserve and these provide important breeding grounds for many species of bird. Take your binoculars and see how many different types of bird you can spot.



Colchester oyster fishery

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

Pyefleet Channel

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

View across the Colne

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

Old Fort

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

Old bones

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



Polder scheme

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

Brent Geese

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