

People and Wildlife

Since the trains have stopped, wildlife has taken full advantage of this quiet trackside habitat. Rangers manage the site all year round to improve the Fitch Way's recreational and wildlife potential.



Pathways to Explore

From the Fitch Way you can join many public footpaths and explore the surrounding countryside.



Using the Fitch Way
Please use the Fitch Way with consideration for others. Motorcycles are not allowed. Walkers and cyclists should note that at certain times of the year the Fitch Way may be muddy.



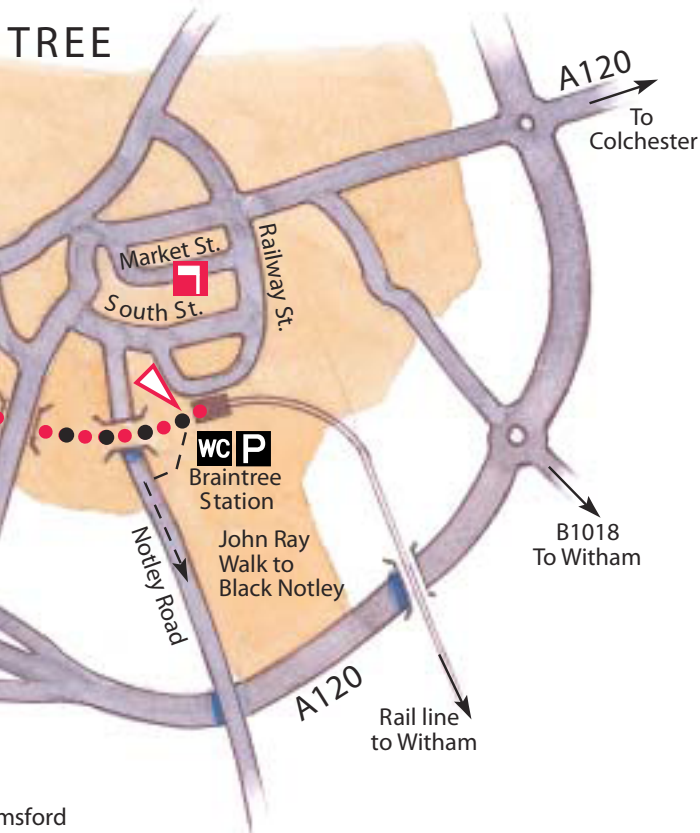
Inside Rayne Station

Volunteers
If you would like to help on the Fitch Way, at Rayne Station Centre or in any of our other parks, please contact the Ranger Service.

Rayne Station Centre
Rayne Station was built in 1866 and was one of the busiest on the line. Renovated in 1994, it is now the Visitor Centre tearoom for the Fitch Way. The rich heritage of the Fitch Way countryside is revealed in the exhibition. The station has public toilets and facilities for people with disabilities.



Opening times: booking hall and toilets open every day from 9am to 5pm. Exhibition room open every Sunday from 1pm to 4pm.



msford

KEY

- All users (walkers, cyclists and horse riders)
- Walkers
- Cyclists
- Horse riders
- - - - - Public Bridleway
- - - - - Public Footpath
- P** Parking
- ☕** Refreshments
- ⛶** Picnic Area
- 🍺** Public House
- WC** Toilets
- ▷ Access point
- ! Beware busy road crossing
- └ Bus route

How to find us

By rail: Braintree Station is on the Fitch Way

By bus: A regular bus service operates along the A120 from Braintree as far as Takeley.

Enquiries on Essex Traveline **Tel: 0870 6082608.**

Essex Ranger Service

The Rangers for the Fitch Way, Garnetts Wood and the Blackwater Rail Trail are based at Rayne Station Centre. Schools and groups are welcome. An annual programme of guided events and activities is also available at the station. All events are open to everyone. Please contact us if you wish to book your school for a Ranger guided visit.

For more information please contact the Ranger Service for the Fitch Way on

Telephone 01376 340262

Web Site www.essexcc.gov.uk/countryparks

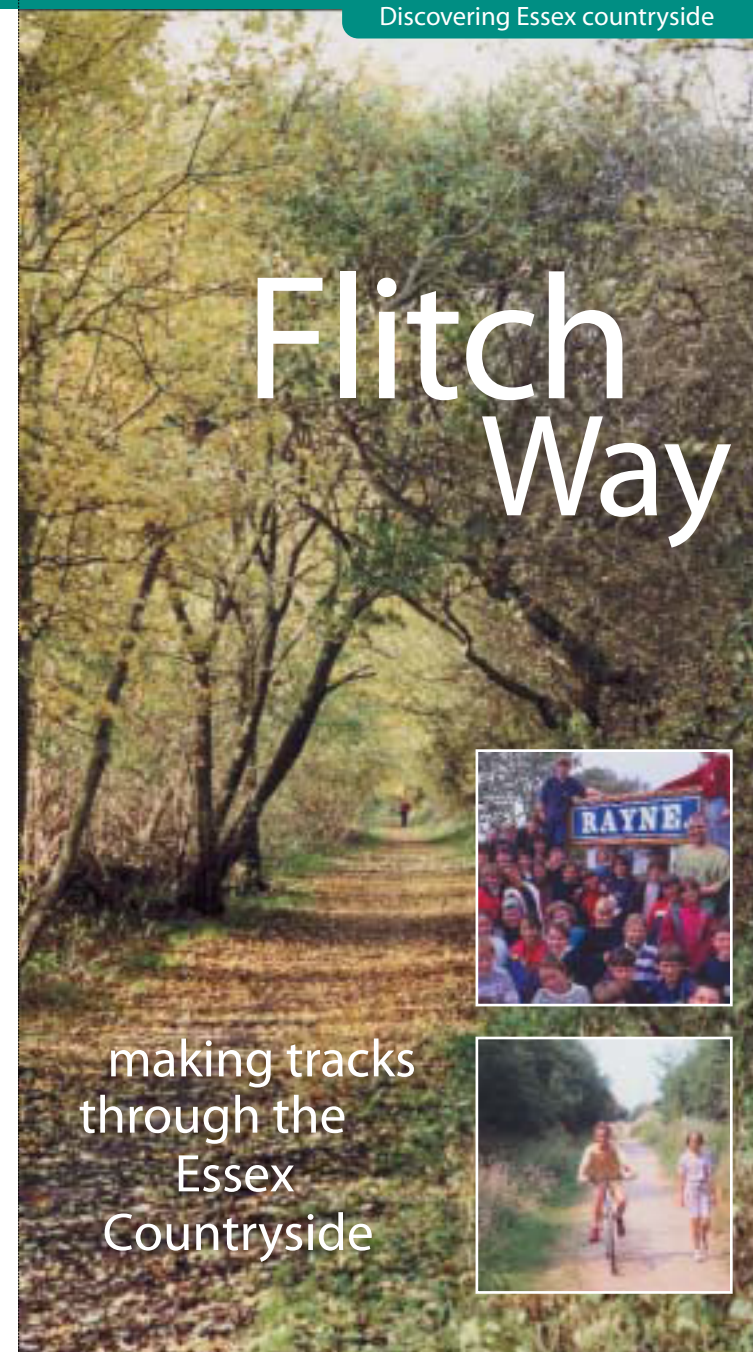
Access

If you would like more information about the activities or the accessibility of sections of the Fitch Way please contact the Ranger Service.

If you would like this information in large print, braille, audio or on disk, please Telephone 01376 340262



Essex County Council



Fitch Way

making tracks through the Essex Countryside



Essex County Council

Welcome to Flich Way

A country park passing through fifteen miles of countryside along the former Bishop's Stortford to Braintree railway.

Your journey on foot, bicycle or horseback will take you through wildlife-rich railway cuttings, Victorian stations and bridges, with views across impressive farmland, nearby villages and woods.

For more information about the Flich Way visit Rayne Station Centre near Braintree.



The Royal Forest

The Flich Way runs along the northern edge of Hatfield Forest. Once owned by the Crown, the woods and rides became popular for deer hunting. The forest is steeped in history with a landscape unchanged for over 900 years. It has many ancient trees and the plants and animals that thrive here migrate along the railway hedgerows from this natural sanctuary.

Railway Days

The Bishop's Stortford to Braintree branch line, a single-track railway, opened in 1869. Travel then became a real possibility for people in the many villages along the route; – going to market, a business trip to London or a day excursion to the seaside. Farmers and local industries made much use of the railway to transport goods to and from the main towns.



To Bishop's Stortford and train station 1 mile (for London & Cambridge)

To Stansted Airport and train station 3 miles (for London)



Start Hill
The Flich Way begins at the railway bridge over the road to Tilekiln Green. Cars can be parked in the small lay-by.

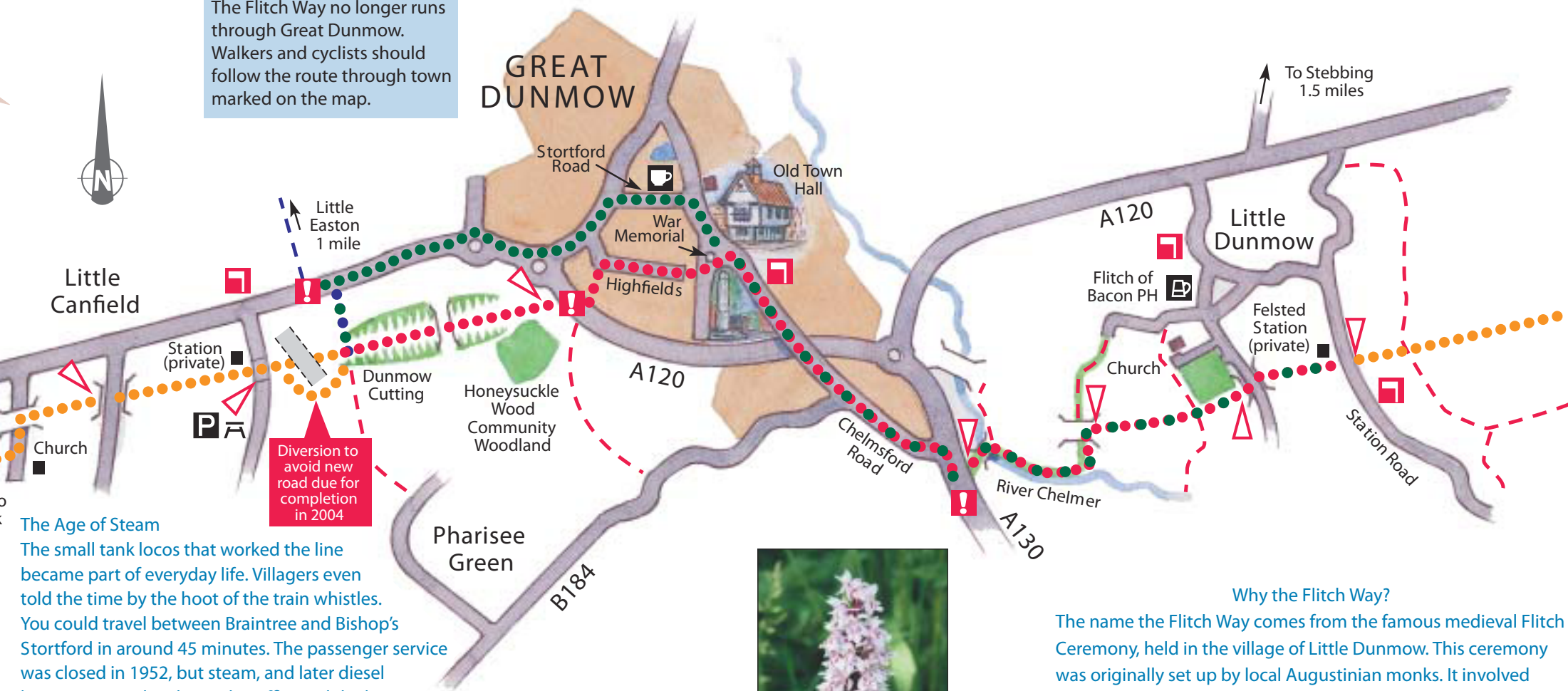
Following the Flich Way
Walkers may use the whole route. Cyclists and horse riders need to refer to the key in conjunction with the map to see which sections they cannot use.

KEY

- All users (walkers, cyclists and horse riders)
- Walkers
- Cyclists
- Horse riders
- - - - - Public Bridleway
- - - - - Public Footpath
- P** Parking
- ☕** Refreshments
- 🏡** Picnic Area
- 🍷** Public House
- WC** Toilets
- ▶ Access point
- ! Beware busy road crossing
- ⏏ Bus route

Through Great Dunmow

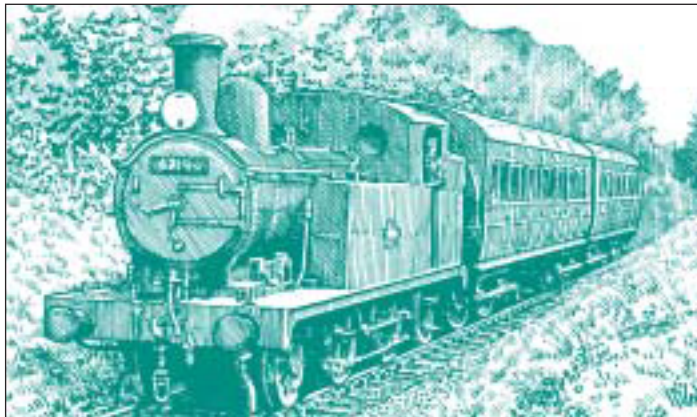
The Flitch Way no longer runs through Great Dunmow. Walkers and cyclists should follow the route through town marked on the map.



Diversion to avoid new road due for completion in 2004

The Age of Steam

The small tank locos that worked the line became part of everyday life. Villagers even told the time by the hoot of the train whistles. You could travel between Braintree and Bishop's Stortford in around 45 minutes. The passenger service was closed in 1952, but steam, and later diesel locos continued with goods traffic until the line finally closed in 1969.



Common Spotted Orchid

Dunmow Cutting

An important area for wildlife. Its south facing bank provides a superb habitat for a great variety of plants, birds, butterflies and other insects. For over a hundred years railway staff kept the banks cut back, ensuring wildflowers had space to thrive. Essex Rangers continue this practice today.

Why the Flitch Way?

The name the Flitch Way comes from the famous medieval Flitch Ceremony, held in the village of Little Dunmow. This ceremony was originally set up by local Augustinian monks. It involved giving a flitch (a large piece of bacon) to couples who had not argued in marriage after a year and a day. Little Dunmow makes an excellent stopping off point along the route.



The church at Little Dunmow