



Bountiful Burnham

Havengore Creek provides a route between the Thames Estuary and the River Crouch

The approach

As the river is used regularly by commercial vessels drawing up to 6m heading to **Wallasea Island**, the principal navigation buoys are sited mainly for their benefit.

The distances between these pilotage buoys is quite considerable so careful position plotting is essential.

The approach to the river from Whitaker No 6 is 254°T for 2.8 nautical miles, your course running between **Buxey Sand** to the north and **Foulness Sand**. It's essential that you don't stray over to port on to Foulness Sand, which dries close south of the channel. From here on navigating the **Whitaker Channel** should be based on pilotage buoys and essential course positioning, as described in the 'Crouch Harbour Authority Guide to the Crouch and Roach'. Mark Wakelin, the Crouch's harbourmaster says there are other shortcuts into the Crouch from the north between Swallowtail Bank and the **Sunken Buxey**, and the Ray Sand Swatchway but these should only be attempted with extreme caution and in ample rise of tide.

As you navigate your way upriver you'll pass the mouth of the **River**

Roach to the south – 2.5 miles off Burnham. Keep your eyes peeled for a landmark on the north bank – the towering Royal Corinthian Yacht Club (RCYC) building (see map over page). When you see this, you're nearly there. This Grade II listed building marks the start of an 8-knot speed limit through the moorings.

Where to moor

Although there are visitor moorings available at most of the clubs and boatyards the most convenient place to moor is at **Burnham Yacht Harbour**, situated on the north bank, past the moorings. The entrance to the marina is marked with lit piles and can be entered at all states of the tide. It is, however, advisable to call up the marina harbourmaster as soon as possible on

“Burnham is notable for its high pub-to-mile ratio”

VHF ch80 to ensure yourself a berth. Phil Manning, one of the three harbourmasters on call, says although they close the office at 7pm, there's always someone to help. "Assuming you have a 25ft motorboat for

example, the chances are we'll have space but we do prefer our customers to call and book in advance, so we can give clear berthing instructions," he said.

The harbour is situated at the west end of town, half a mile away from the main hub. But there's plenty of facilities on site,

Cruise to this historic east coast town and soak up the old-world charm of the Essex countryside

REPORT BY SUE PELLING

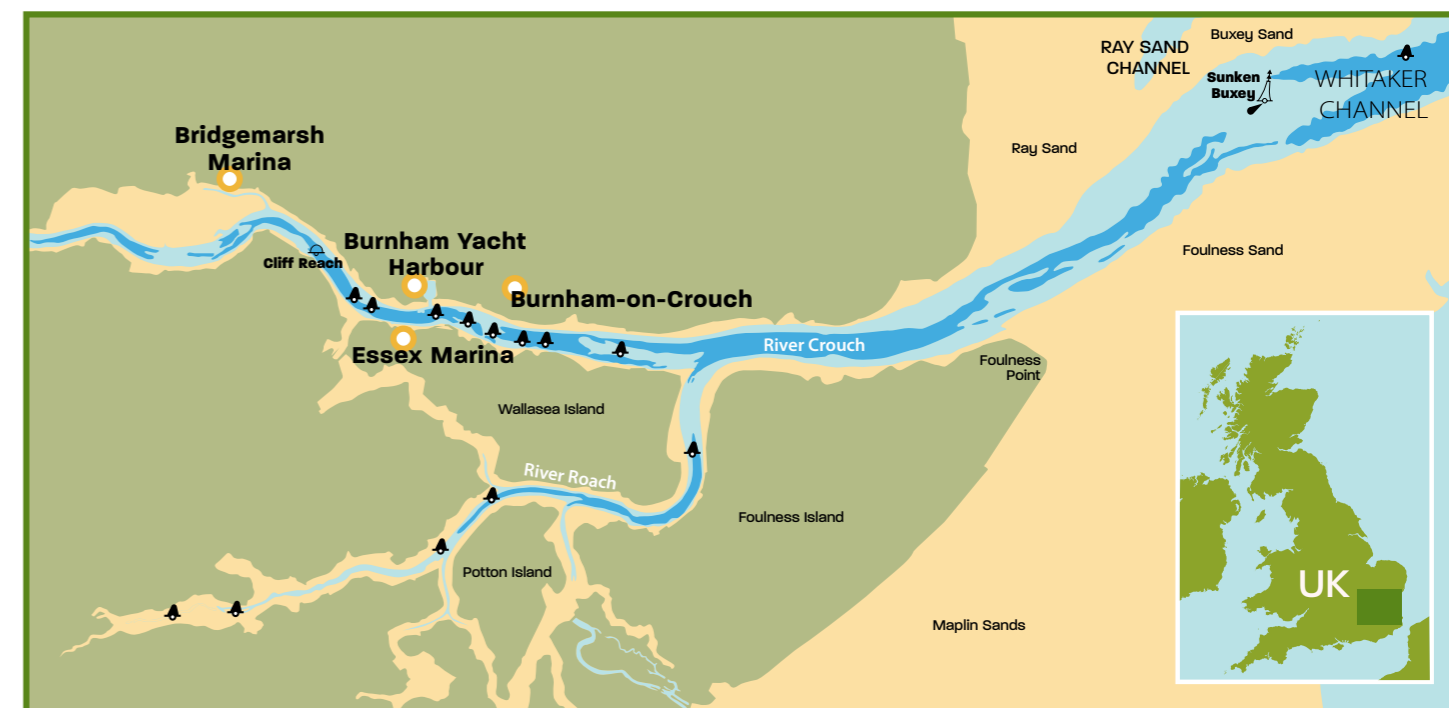
Tucked away up the River Crouch off the wild, flat Dengie Peninsular lies the quaint little town of Burnham-on-Crouch with its eclectic mix of whitewashed, weatherboard and

brick cottages that are so typical of an old market town. Known as the Cowes of the east coast and immortalised in the classic song by Ian Dury and Blockheads, 'Billericay Dickie', this Essex town is one of those

The entrance to Burnham Yacht Harbour is marked with lit piles



must-visit places. Historically, the town of Burnham-on-Crouch has always been famous for its fishing and oyster beds, but today it's better known for its yachting heritage with Burnham Week – arguably the UK's longest-running regatta dating back to 1893 – which takes place at the end of every August. Situated on the north bank of the Crouch, Burnham is often regarded as a welcome retreat for those facing unenviable conditions out in the North Sea. It may be situated a fair way up river (13.5 miles) and it will undoubtedly put your navigation skills to good use as you weave your way through the sandbank channels down the Whitaker Channel, but it's certainly worth the trip and has plenty to offer both on and off the water.





Take a seal and wildlife spotting trip from Wallasea Island aboard *Lady Essex*

Things to do

Hire a bike

To get a real feel of the local area it's worth considering hiring a bike from the Dengie Cycle Centre (01621 772777) for £5 per day, which includes four local maps. Although at 16 miles each way it's a bit of a trek, St Peter's-on-the-Wall (northeast towards Bradwell) is beautiful. It's home to the oldest church still in use in Britain, built by St Ceadd in AD654.

Ferry trip

Take a 10-minute ferry trip across the river to Wallasea Island and visit the much-publicised Wallasea Wetland Project. This new nature reserve, managed by the RSPB, can be explored either by foot from Wallasea Marina or on a Seal and Wildlife Trip on the *Lady Essex* Ferry. The ferry service leaves from the quayside and operates on a fairly regular basis throughout the summer.

Railway Museum

The privately owned Mangapps Railway Museum is a short bike ride away and a must-visit for train enthusiasts. It has an interesting collection of steam and diesel trains and over 80 carriages and wagons, some of considerable historic and technical interest. There's even a length of track with restored stations and signal boxes reconstructed from sites throughout East Anglia.

Local museum

The Burnham-on-Crouch & District Museum, formerly Tucker Brown Boathouse, is devoted to the history of the Dengie Hundred area. The opening hours from Easter to October are limited, so call ahead on 01621 783444 to check, but if you time it right you'll get to view two floors of exhibits ranging from maritime and agricultural, to industrial and social history.

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PUBS & RESTAURANTS

- Ye Olde White Harte Hotel 01621 782106
- The Queen's Head 01621 772315
- Victoria Inn 01621 783585
- Ship Inn 01621 785057
- Star Inn 01621 782010
- Anchor 01621 782117
- Railway 01621 786868
- The Oyster Smack Inn 01621 782141
- Temperance Bar Cafe 01621 783448
- New Welcome Sailor 01621 784778
- The Contented Sole Restaurant 01621 786900
- Quayside 01621 783350
- Cabin Dairy Tea Rooms 01621 782404
- Ferry Boat Inn (North Fambridge) 01621 740208
- Plough & Sail (River Roach) 01702 258242
- The Punchbowl Inn (River Roach) 01702 258376

including the Swallowtail Restaurant & Bar, toilets and showers, washing and drying facilities, a well-stocked Marinestore chandler's, and a boat maintenance centre, which includes a 30-tonne travel hoist and a slipway. Diesel is available but petrol boats will need to head to the fuel berth at Wallasea Island just across the river.

Burnham Yacht Harbour is one of the safest places to moor up, not just because of its 24-hour on-site security, but because Essex Police Marine Unit, Essex Police Terrorist Unit and the RNLI are based there, too.

Food and drink

Once all the mundane tasks such as refuelling, and stocking up on supplies at any of the two supermarkets (Co-op or Tesco) are out of the way, take time to enjoy this historic town. A gentle stroll along the seawall into Burnham will take about 20 minutes. On route you'll pass all four yacht clubs (Burnham Sailing Club, Crouch Yacht Club, Royal Burnham Yacht Club and the aforementioned RCYC) as well as many welcoming waterfront pubs, including



Ye Olde White Harte Hotel on the quayside is the perfect place for a pint



Sitting on the dock of the bay – take in the fantastic quayside view as you enjoy a leisurely afternoon drink

Ye Olde White Harte Hotel, where you can relax with a pint of local Adnams Ale and watch the sun go down.

Burnham is notable for its impressive pub-to-mile ratio so the chances of being left 'high and dry' with 10 pubs to choose from in the space of a mile are fairly slim. The Queen's Head, Victoria Inn, Ship Inn, Star Inn, Anchor Inn, Railway Hotel, The Oyster Smack Inn and New Welcome Sailor to name a few offer a variety of fine ales and most serve good, hearty meals.

If you're looking for a more refined restaurant look no further than The Contented Sole on the High street. Another popular restaurant is The Galley (in The Oyster Smack Inn), and if you can manage to secure a booking in its limited opening hours, try The Quayside Restaurant where you bring your own wine. The fairly new Temperance Trattoria and Bar Café on the High Street is a trendy place to eat and socialise. For a curry, head to Spice Fusion at the top of the High Street for

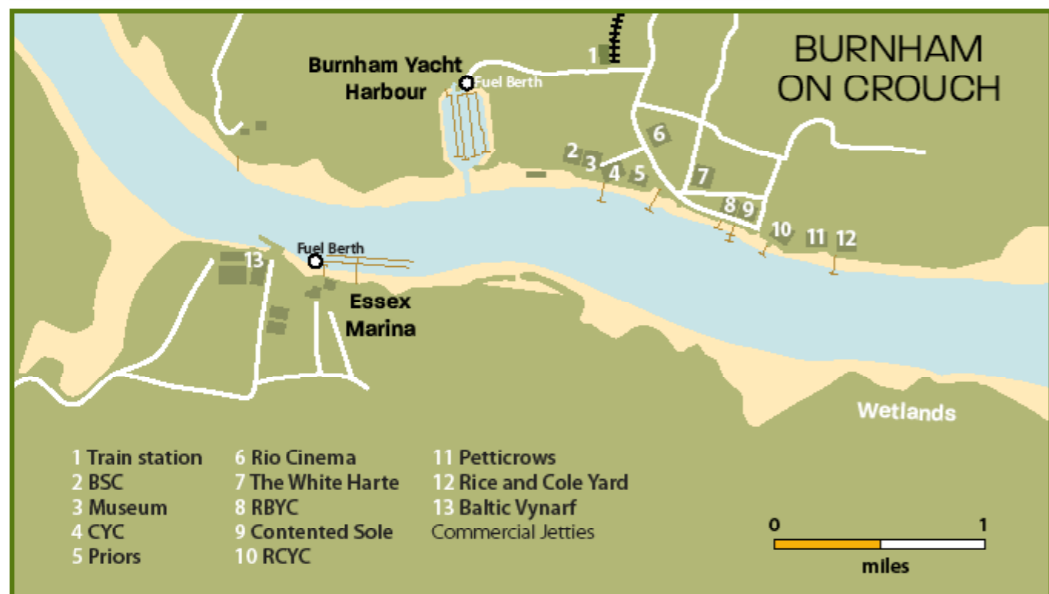
one of the best Indian meals you're ever likely to eat. Or, if you prefer Chinese (takeaway or sit down) opt for the Slow Boat. The crispy duck comes highly recommended. For a British classic – fish and chips – the Jolly Friars will suffice. A healthier option is The Oyster Pit on the quayside, which is stocked with fresh, local catch all year round.

The best place to go for a Full English or afternoon tea is the Cabin Dairy Tea Rooms, opposite The Oyster Pit, but if it's a weekend make sure

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BOOKS & CHARTS

- East Coast Rivers Cruising Companion (ISBN 978-0-470-99092-6) Wiley Nautical
- Crossing the Thames Estuary by Roger Gaspar (ISBN 978 184625 040) published by Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson Ltd
- Where land meets sea by Colin Jarman, Garth Cooper and Dick Holness (ISBN 9781846231599) published by Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson Ltd
- East Coast Pilot by Colin Jarman, Garth Cooper and Dick Holness (ISBN 9781846230615) published by Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson Ltd
- Crouch Harbour Authority Guide to Rivers Crouch and Roach 01621 783602
- Stanfords Essex Rivers Chart Pack (Cat no 134678)
- Imray 2000 Suffolk and Essex Rivers series (ISBN 9781846231384)
- Burnham-on-Crouch UKHO Small Craft Chart (SC3750)
- Admiralty Tough Chart Area 8 – Rivers and Harbours of the Thames Estuary SC5908



It's 'bring your own wine' at the popular Quayside restaurant

Places to moor

Burnham Yacht Harbour

Berths 350
Visitor Berths Dependent on availability
Facilities Boatyard. Electricity and water and the use of the shower and washing facilities for an extra £2 a day
Prices £2.10 per metre per night. So a 25ft (7.6m) motorboat will cost about £16 per day
VHF Ch80 "Burnham Yacht Harbour"
Phone 01621 782150

Rice & Cole Boatyard

Berths 150
Visitor Berths Swinging moorings are available but unless you have a tender you will be restricted because the launch only works at weekends from 9am-5pm between Easter and October (although the yard will try to accommodate visitors during the week)

Facilities

Showers, boatyard
Prices £10 per night
VHF N/A
Phone 01621 782063

Priors Boatyard

Berths 12 swing moorings
Visitor Berths Swing moorings available all year round. The launch runs five days a week from April to

October and seven days a week in the summer months

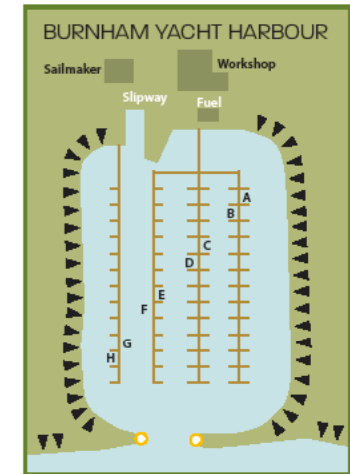
Facilities Boatyard, toilets, washroom
Prices £5 per night
VHF Ch37
Phone 01621 782160

Essex Marina

Berths Approx 300



Burnham Yacht Harbour is the most convenient place to moor



There's lot to explore both on land and water around Burnham-on-Crouch



Burnham is known as the Cowes of the east coast

you're early because this is a popular venue for the motorbike fraternity.

Cruising and anchorages

The **River Crouch** stretches 10 miles further upriver via Fambridge, Brandy Hole and Hullbridge to Battlesbridge. This is a lovely, sheltered area for cruising but be aware that from Brandy Hole up to Battlesbridge the river dries out completely at low water so you need to check tidal charts carefully. There are plenty of popular anchorages upriver including **Cliff Reach**, which is just around the corner from Burnham on the north side and near the entrance to Bridgemarsh Marina. Further up it's worth popping into North Fambridge for a drink at the Ferry Boat Inn. Stowe Creek, which heads up to Stowe Marina, just west of Fambridge, is also a great anchorage. However, there's an 8-knot speed limit in place to prevent salting and bank erosion.

The upper reach of the Crouch was once a busy commercial shipping route for Thames Barges, which used to carry produce to and from the mill at Battlesbridge. How crews ever managed to negotiate these bulk carriers through the narrow and shallow mudflats is a mystery, but the welcoming Barge pub at the top end of the river was obviously a good incentive to persevere.

The **River Roach**, which is downriver (east), from Burnham is worth investigating too. The west bank marks the perimeter of the **Wallasea Wetlands** while to the east you have **Foulness Island**. Foulness Island is owned by the Ministry of Defence

(MoD) for ammunition testing so please note anchorage restrictions and be prepared for the odd loud bang! Not surprisingly, security is tight and landing on the island is strictly forbidden. But fear not, there's plenty

more to see further upriver, including a couple of good pubs – the Plough & Sail, and The Punchbowl Inn – and a route via the Havengore lifting bridge all the way through to the Thames Estuary.

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HOW TO GET THERE
Burnham-on-Crouch can easily be reached by road. From the A12, A127 or A13 take A130 towards South Woodham Ferrers. Once at Rettendon Turnpike, take B1010 signposted to South Woodham Ferrers and Burnham and then follow the long, windy road to Burnham-on-Crouch. For the marina, take the first turning on the right (at the Co-op) and follow the road to the river. Train – London's Liverpool Street via Wickford takes one hour
Air – Nearest airport is Stansted

USEFUL NUMBERS
■ B&H Taxis 01621 784878
■ Crouch Harbour Authority 01621 783602 www.crouchharbour.org
■ *Lady Essex* Ferry 01702 258666 www.ladyessex.com
■ Tourist Information Centre (Burnham High Street) 01621 784962
Opening hours – 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday

CHANDLERY
■ Marinestore 01621 874494
■ Mailspeed Marine (behind RCYC) 01621 781120
■ Fairways Chandlery 01621 782659

YACHT CLUBS
■ Royal Corinthian Yacht Club 01621 782105
■ Royal Burnham Yacht Club 01621 782044
■ Crouch Yacht Club 01621 782750
■ Burnham Sailing Club 01621 782812

CALENDAR DATES
■ Burnham Art Trail – June
■ Burnham Beer Festival – usually in June at the Constitutional Club
■ Burnham Week – last week in August including the Bank Holiday
■ Burnham Carnival – last Saturday in September
■ Burnham Farmers' Market – third Sunday of the month at Carnival Hall

Burnham sights

Seals
Seals are often spotted on the sandbanks as you approach Burnham and off the River Roach.

Brent Geese
Brent Geese are small and dark, and are the same size as a mallard. They generally have a black head and neck, a grey/brown back, with either a pale or dark belly. These dark-bellied geese breed in northern Russia during the summer and migrate to southern England during October and November. Over half the Brent Geese population is found in Essex and many live off the saltings and farmland on the Dengie Peninsula.

Burnham Clock Tower
This historic landmark can be found in the centre of town. Built in 1877, it was an addition to an existing school that was originally built in 1785.



Rio Cinema
Built in 1930, the Rio Cinema is situated on the north side of the High Street. This historic building is privately run and despite several refurbishments over the years, including the addition of an extra screen in 1979, it still retains some of its interesting, original features. It may be a bit ramshackle but it has a certain charm, it shows all the latest films and at £3 a ticket, it's incredibly good value for money. Contact the Rio Box Office on 01621 782027.