

Advice to Cyclists Using the Port of Harwich



Cyclists should ask for guidance as they leave Harwich Port as the ferry terminal has recently been altered. If possible, leave via the old exit and Parkeston village.

Like any major seaport, routes from Harwich can be busy with lorries and cars. Frequently, bike tourists from bike-friendly Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands are horrified at the amount and speed of motor traffic in the UK. Because touring cyclists' maps are often large-scale road atlases, they find themselves bowling along the main A120 road with cars whizzing past at up to 120kph. If you want to sample a gentle seven-day tour in Britain, buy 1:50,000 scale Ordnance Survey Landranger maps, sheets 169, 155, and 168, and head for Bury St Edmunds using B and C roads as much as possible. Plan a loop to take in Ipswich on the way out and Colchester on the way back or vice versa. If you are planning a longer trip, pop into any petrol station forecourt to buy a softback motoring atlas. These generally show minor roads and pages can be torn out to use as you travel. Expect to pay no more than £6.

The following two routes from Harwich to Colchester and Ipswich will help tourists avoid main roads. Care is important: many British motorists do not respect cyclists. If you have time to spare in Harwich, follow the brown tourist signs into old Harwich which has a Napoleonic War fort called the Redoubt, and a treadwheel crane. It was also home to Mayflower, the ship which took the Pilgrim Fathers to the USA in 1620.

Heading North or West towards Colchester or Ipswich **Measurements approximate**

Leave Harwich International Port heading south to the first major roundabout (1km, this assumes you are leaving the port via the old exit). Remember to give way to traffic from the right; once on the roundabout, be dominant ... position yourself as if you were a driver; make sure you make eye contact with drivers trying to join the roundabout.

Either:

(Recommended option) Continue south (third exit) into the town of Dovercourt, turning right at the next mini roundabout (1km). Stay on the same road for 3km, passing All Saints Church on your right then Ramsey Church, also on your right , before heading downhill to Ramsey roundabout.

Or:

Head west (fourth exit) along 3km of the comparatively busy A120 until you reach Ramsey roundabout. This stretch of road will be busy with motor traffic, especially after ferries have docked.

Then:

At Ramsey roundabout (windmill in sight), head north west into the village of Ramsey on the B1352, bearing right at the first T-junction. Follow the B1352 for 8km through the village of Wrabness into Bradfield, turning right at Bradfield church. There is camping available at the Strangers Home public house. Follow the road for 5km into Mistley. I recommend the Gallery Restaurant, on the right near Swan Basin, for either a light snack or a vegetarian meal.



Either:

Leave the B1352 (which forks left, ie you go straight ahead) at Mistley Towers (pictured above) and ride along the picturesque waterfront road into Manningtree. (The Towers are the remains of a redundant church designed by the architect Robert Adams who was hired to turn Mistley into a model village and spa, a project which was never completed.)

Or:

If you have young children with you, visit Mistley Environment Centre and teashop by turning left at Mistley Towers (pictured below) and riding 200m. After your visit, retrace your steps back to the Towers and ride along the picturesque waterfront road into Manningtree.

It is worth stopping to explore Manningtree, which is England's smallest town and the home of the English WitchFinder General Matthew Hopkins (pictured left) in the 1640s. This cruel man made money by finding witches and having them hanged, getting a bounty from the Government for each witch put to death under the terms of the Witchcraft Act of 1563. Hopkins' greed led to the deaths of up to 400 people, mostly women.

After Manningtree you have a choice:

Either:

Head for Colchester <http://www.visitcolchester.com/> In Manningtree, turn left, climbing up Colchester Road into upper Lawford, turning right on the B1352. Two hundred metres after the petrol station (when the road becomes the A137), take a left and the second right into country lanes. Head for Burnt Heath (not signposted) passing Grange Farm and Waterhouse Farm, continue past Chancery Farm and Park Farm to Crockleford Hill then into Colchester. A map is advisable for this section.

Or:

Head for Ipswich: Continue west through Manningtree towards the railway station and Lawford, then turn right under the railway bridge to join the northbound A137. Cross the River Stour. Ride up Brantham Hill (Camping: follow signs to East End). At the Brantham Bull pub, turn right on to the B1080 and ride through Stutton to Holbrook and Freston into Ipswich.



An alternative would be to turn left on to the B1070 immediately after crossing the River Stour and pass through East Bergholt, under the A12 main road towards the village of Holton St Mary, after which you can pick up National Route One (see below). If you have time, in East Bergholt, take the loop to Flatford, birthplace of the landscape artist John Constable (1776-1837). Constable's family mill at Flatford is pictured above, and nearby there is a restaurant, museum and the chance to hire a boat for a river trip.

Colchester is Britain's oldest town and has a rich history. Click this www.colchester.gov.uk and follow the "Visiting" link to find out more about the town. Colchester Cycling Campaign has ensured there is lots of bike parking in the town centre. Cyclists touring with luggage may like to know that secure parking is available at Enform, the Environment Centre in Church Walk, off Head Street, and in bike kennels (use your own lock) at the Balkerne Hill bridge (near Balkerne Gate) and at the bus station off Queen Street.

Heading towards Colchester (London, Ipswich, Hull, Inverness) on the National Cycling Route.

Sustrans information: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/> Maps also available from <http://www.visitcolchester.com/>

Britain's National Cycle Route Charity, Sustrans, has devised a quiet route from Harwich to Colchester.

This is interesting and pretty but can be circuitous. If you want to follow the NCR to Colchester, buy a map from Sustrans and watch for signs with a red number beneath a bike on a blue background.

Colchester-London is incomplete, but Colchester to the north is better.

Harwich to Colchester will take cyclists via Dovercourt, the Oakleys, Stones Green, Tendring Green, Great Bentley, Elmstead Market and Wivenhoe into Colchester.

Colchester-Ipswich is signed via Langham, Stratford St Mary, Great Wenham and Chattisham.

CCC hopes this page encourages you to visit this part of England. Please feel free to e-mail for more information.