

RIVER CROUCH ESTUARY

Woodham Ferrers to Battlesbridge and back – on the tide! About 5 miles in all

A great family paddle when the tides fall right. Very suitable for touring kayaks and open canoes. The lower part of the river is quite exposed, so watch the wind.

From South Woodham Ferrers follow the signs to the country park (through a housing estate). Marsh Farm Country Park is on the left – keep ahead to the car park beside the estuary and launch either from the shingle or from the slipway. The trip works on neap tides but is best on Springs. Aim to **leave** Woodham Ferrers an hour before high water (Dover + 1 hour 22 minutes)

Paddle upstream with the rising tide. There is a yacht and motor boat club on the right bank (with brainless bling encrusted morons on wetbikes) to avoid, but otherwise the trip is very peaceful, with lots of wetland birds to observe on the way. You'll also see a number of old moored sailing barges in various states of repair (and decay) before you eventually come to the old tidal mill at Battlesbridge. The water flowed into the pool as the tide rose, and then when the tide ebbed the lock gates closed and the water flowed out through the water wheel, driving the machinery. Now the gates are chained open and the rising and falling tide produces a jet or even a wave. (If you live in East Anglia, then *any* moving water is worth getting excited about!)

You can carry on up the River Crouch on the rising tide until the tide turns; the river gets very narrow, but it is fun to explore.



TIDAL MILL AT BATTLESBRIDGE



Even more fun is to explore the Barge Inn (draught beers include Adnams Broadside, Courage Directors and Charles Wells Bombardier) and the antiques warehouse at Battlesbridge (the largest in Essex). The view across the salt marshes from the restaurant at the top of the antiques warehouse is really spectacular.

BATTLESBRIDGE BASIN

When the tide turns, paddle back to Woodham Ferrers. Don't leave it much more than 45 minutes after high water at Battlesbridge to return, or you will have a muddy get-out!



THE VIEW FROM THE CAFE