

# Chappel

Words and pictures by Laurie Page of the Public Rights of Way team at Essex County Council.

A walk from the Railway Museum in the parish of Wakes Colne to the neighbouring parish of Chappel, a pretty village with a grand viaduct.



**Distance:** 3.3 miles.

**Starting point:** Car park for the Chappel Railway Museum (free)

**How to get there:** From the A1124 between Colchester and Halstead. At Wakes Colne by the viaduct take the turning into Station Road. The Museum car park is a little way up on the right.

**Map:** O.S Explorer 195 Braintree & Saffron Walden.

**Refreshments:** The lovely 14<sup>th</sup> century Swan Pub en route which serves good food.

**Tourist Information:** Hollytrees Museum, Castle Park Colchester CO1 1UG      Tel: 01206 282 920

**Place of interest nearby:** The Railway Museum is an interesting visit, with their old steam engines and railway memorabilia. The Station dates back to the 1890s and a reconstruction shows how it would have been in late Victorian times. 01206 242524.





## The Walk

- 1.** Walk back down Station Road where you drove in. At the road T-junction turn right onto a newly created footpath that runs gently uphill, parallel with Bures Road. Follow this to the end where you turn right into Spring Gardens Road and walk over the little bridge. Immediately on the other side of the bridge, take the footpath on the left going down steps into the field. Walk along the field edge with the hedgerow to the left. At the bottom of the field as the main path swings right, go straight on into the next field. Follow the footpath arrows (The Fair Maid Walk) leading eventually to a wooded area and onto a boardwalk. The path runs parallel to the railway line. At the path T-junction go left to the railway track.
- 2.** Carefully cross the railway line and negotiate a gate and wooden bridge. Continue through the corn field. At the other end you will come to the lane by Willow Cottage. Take the Footpath almost opposite. Follow the path (Fair Maid Walk) as it bends right around the field boundary and then goes left across the crop field. Follow the yellow arrow between the fence and the hedge. At the end cross into the next field and head for the white post on the other side. Continue straight on into another little field taking you to a quiet lane. Turn left.
- 3.** Go all the way down the lane passing Crows Hall. When you reach the main road, turn right onto the pedestrian path and after about 100 metres, opposite Wakes Hall, go left along a wide footpath



leading down to Old Hall Farm. At the Farm, go through a metal gate and keep to the concrete track, which passes over the pretty River Colne via a footbridge. Go through another metal gate and bear right across the meadow. After crossing a ditch via a culvert, go straight ahead and before the end of the field you will reach a path onto which you turn left and proceed to the far corner of the field where you negotiate a metal gate leading to another wooden footbridge. This is part of the Mary Allingham Walk, named after the well known crime novelist who spent some time at Chappel whilst writing her 1933 book entitled *Sweet Danger*.

4. Pass the lake on your left and onto a wooden boardwalk. Go through another metal gate. Bear left going across the grass field. At the other end of the field is yet another gate and a bridge, which brings you out to a wide grass track. Ahead is the spire of Chappel village church. Continue through a wooden kissing gate and then one on the left into the next field. Wakes Colne mill appears on the left. Get over a stile and onto a shingle track which leads past the church to the road where you have a splendid view of the viaduct. This Grade 1 listed structure has 32 arches, taking trains 75 feet above the Colne Valley. Turn left to the Swan Inn where you can visit for food and drink or continue past the pub to the crossroads. Go straight over, up Station Road to return to the parking area on the right by the railway museum.



The Swan Inn