

# JANE'S WALK COLCHESTER 2024

Jane's Walk is an international festival of local walks taking place in towns & cities worldwide, celebrating the urbanist, writer & activist Jane Jacobs (1916-2006). Jane's Walks are typically shorter (under 3 miles), and best thought of as non-expert, community-led 'walking conversations' on a wide range of themes.

**Our Colchester festival this year is dedicated to the memory of Pam Nelson, Ron Bell & Derek Wray, longtime supporters of Jane's Walk Colchester, who we have sadly lost in 2023-24.**

All walks are FREE. No booking is necessary unless stated.

Walk times are approximate. Some meet locations (prefixed ///) use what3words: <https://what3words.com/>.

Unless otherwise indicated, all city centre walks are step-free. For large text and further info on walk accessibility, see our Facebook walk event pages, or call Rowena Macaulay (07710 474999).

**Find us at:** Facebook/Insta/X (@janeswalkcolch) and <https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/janes-walk>

## Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May

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**WALK 1: An ancient route to Copford Church.** Copford back in time: follow a route first trod thousands of years ago. Around Gravel Pits Wood, across Copford Plains, to the Church with its fabulous 12th-century wall paintings & Romanesque apse. Children welcome (all off-road, wild woods & activities in the church!). With David Knock & Claire Macaulay.

Meet: 11am, Copford Village Hall, CO6 1BX (2m, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A rural walk, with some mixed terrain and off-road paths that could be muddy in wet weather. Some medium gradients. But step-free, and plenty of help on hand! Be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 2: Alleys and follies - Hidden Colchester (1).** Discover Colchester off-road, from Camp Folley North to Kendal Road Folley, Childwell Alley and thence to The Moors; Parsons Lane to Love Walk (coffee stop at Old Heath Rec) and on to Camp Folley South. Plenty of geography, history, legend and gossip along the way! With Des Bowden and Phil Hitchins.

Meet: 1.30pm, Napier Road North carpark (///vent.acting.scrap), (3.4m, 2.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** a difficult walk for wheelchair users, although there may be alternative routes in the relevant sections with assistance (in particular, steps at Lidl Car Park and over Railway Bridge). Also a steep gradient at Love Lane, and potentially muddy slope from Moors to Spurgeon St. Be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 3: Commemoration Plaques – Where, Why & How?** A town centre stroll to see some commemorative plaques & discuss where they are, why they are there & how such plaques are valued & installed. With Pamela Bradley.

Meet: 4pm, Jumbo Water Tower, outside Mercury Theatre (1.5m, 1.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free with one significant exception at Scheregate Steps. However, an alternative route is possible, omitting one plaque only (please advise at the walk outset if this will affect you). There are also medium gradients at Trinity Street and St John's Street, and a steep section at Church Lane. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**EVENT: Jane's Walk Colchester Launch & Grand Quiz 2024!** Fundraiser evening, festival opening & launch of *Walk with Words* (a new Colchester trail). Tables/teams of 4-6. Bring your own drinks (alcohol/soft), glasses & snacks. Chilean-inspired street food from *Toast* served from the Cardinal Bourne kitchen.

Venue/Time: Cardinal Bourne Hall, Priory St. (///prep.lower.saints), 7-11pm (doors 6.30pm). Tickets: £10 per person (Eventbrite)

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Level access, accessible toilet.

## **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May**

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**WALK 4: Together We Walk, Together We Grow!** A circular 'growers' walk from Mercers Farm allotments, via Bull Meadow & Cowdray Marsh Local Wildlife Site, up through High Woods Country Park to the Together We Grow community garden, a 2-acre site with orchards, veg beds & poly tunnels! Tea/coffee & cake. With Clare Smee.

Meet: 10am, at the yellow bridge, Riverside, nr. Lower Castle Park (///dozen.cling.leaves), (3m, 3 hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** step-free and hard surfaced paths all the way, except for within the allotment sites themselves, where the terrain is grassy/earthen and uneven, and the going difficult for chair users in particular. Kissing gates into and out of Bull Meadow where there is also a boardwalk section. The Meadow is however only a short section of the walk and can be circumnavigated. There are also some long medium-steep gradients on both outward and return journeys to High Woods (though downhill on return).

**WALK 5: Weans Walk Wild in Wellies in Wivenhoe Woods.** Go wild, enjoy games & fun activities with Forest School leader, Jean Quinn. Children of all ages up to 12 yrs. accompanied by an adult. Possibly too long for 2-3 yr. olds, but pushchair friendly. Break for snacks; bring a drink.

Meet: 10.30am, Wivenhoe Railway Station car park, CO7 9DJ (1.5m, 2.5 hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** a woodland walk with off-road, earthen paths, some gradients and also camber. Could be muddy in the wet. Likely to be difficult for chair users, unless all-terrain or with assistance. Be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 6: How to Read a House.** We walk past them every day, but how often do we actually look? A house can tell us a lot about when & how it was built, how it has changed & who might have lived there, if you just know how to read it. We'll discuss the historical background to the areas we visit & look at some free resources that can support further research. With Andrew Mowbray.

Meet: 2pm. Firstsite (foyer), CO1 1JH (2m, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Mostly low gradient, though some medium-steep eg within Dutch Quarter. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 7: Alleys and follies - Hidden Colchester (2).** More off-road surprises: from Camp Folley to Old Heath Rec; Parsons Walk and Grant Meadows to Distillery Lane; Bourne Valley to the cemetery, and The Folley to Plum Hall. With Des Bowden and Phil Hitchins.

Meet: 4pm, Napier Road North carpark (///vent.acting.scrap), (3.4m, 2.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Step-free and mostly hard-surfaced, though potentially muddy paths at Parsons Lane and in sections of Bourne Woods. Boardwalk through Bourne Woods. Be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 8: A Shot in the Dark - Creating High Impact Photographs in Low Light (dedicated to Ron Bell).** Try out some techniques for capturing engaging pictures at night and learn how to 'find' light, making night photography more interesting and fun! Just bring your imagination, a camera with a manual setting option, or just your smartphone. No flash needed. Suitable for all levels. With Jonathan Doyle.

Meet: 9pm, Firstsite entrance, CO1 1JH (0.5m, 1.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way, step-free, and mostly level or low gradient. It is also a walk that can be adapted to accommodate user access needs. It is fine simply to turn up, but please be in touch in advance to discuss further if you'd prefer.

## **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May**

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**WALK 9: Everywoman - 150 Years of Life at Home in New Town.** Home improvements (indoor toilets!); rich & poor housed on separate roads; mass weddings at Camp Church; homes for 'fallen' women... From birth through childhood, ageing & death, meet local New Town women! With Sheila Kelly.

Meet: 10.30am, St Johns Orthodox Church (old Camp Church) Military Rd. CO1 2AN (1m, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city fringe walk that is hard-surfaced all the way, step-free, and level or low gradient.

**WALK 10: Poetry in Motion.** A short tour of the city centre visiting the iconic & not so iconic places that have inspired, moved or even triggered people into writing a poem. Hear a range of poems from local writers in their place of creation & some of the stories behind them. Ending at The Commons Café (Minorities). With Billie Vasquez-Walters & friends.

Meet: 12 noon, Level Best Café, St John's St. (0.7m, 1.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way; step-free (Scheregate Steps can be bypassed via the Vineyard St lift); and mostly level or low gradient, with the exception of Trinity St. (medium-steep) where some chair users may need assistance. Plenty of help on hand. But do be in touch with any questions.

**WALK 11: The Wonder of Middlewick.** Join Colchester Natural History Society (CNHS) on the first of several planned surveys of the extraordinary biodiversity of this threatened green space (then every Monday in May). With Michael Padmore.

Meet: 2pm, at the gateway by the pillbox on Mersea Road. (///tennis.modern.likely), (3m, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** An off-road walk, with some mixed terrain, grassland and earthen paths that could be muddy in wet weather. Mostly level or low gradient, and step-free. Manual chair users are likely to find the going difficult, especially without assistance. Be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 12: Radical Colchester: Let's Create a People's History!** An alternative look at our city's history, this time from below. How did our people - & not their kings, queens, lords & generals - forge our city's story? Tories prepare to be triggered! With Bryn Griffiths.

Meet: 2pm, at the War Memorial (2.5hrs, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Some medium-steep gradients eg within Dutch Quarter. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 13: Walking the Elephant.** Colchester's rich history is bejewelled with elephants. We discuss this whilst creating a virtual pachyderm by recording the route of the Colchester Strav.art elephant. Fitness app useful but not required. Suitable for 12+ children & adults. With Jeremy Warren.

Meet: 4pm, outside Mercury Theatre, CO1 1PT (3.5m, 2.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A longer walk, but hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Some medium gradients eg via Ryegate Rd / Castle Park (elephant's trunk), and Roman Rd / Riverside estate. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**FILM/TALK: Wings of Desire (1987, Dir. Wim Wenders).** Introduction & discussion with Sandra Moog & Felix Schnell (Uni of Essex). An 'elegiac hymn to a broken cold-war Berlin' (Guardian 2022). An angel struggles with his immortality as he watches over human life in a divided Berlin, & longs for the tangible joys of physical existence when he falls in love with a mortal.

Venue/Time: Colchester Arts Centre, 7-10pm (doors 6.30pm). Tickets on door (Pay as You Feel).

ACCESSIBILITY: Level access, accessible toilet

## Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May

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**WALK 14: Lunch Hour Spring Foraging Walk at Hilly Fields.** Join me to discuss food, folklore, nutrition and medicinal uses for common plants. An introduction to foraging (all levels welcome); share your own knowledge as we go! Bring a flask with hot water to try some foraged tea mixes. With Clementine Moule.

Meet: 12noon, Hilly Fields entrance, Sussex Road (///sticky.chair.sorry). (1m, 1hr).

ACCESSIBILITY: An off-road walk, with some mixed terrain, grassland and earthen paths. Could be muddy in wet weather. Step-free, and mostly level or low gradient. Manual chair users may find some of the going difficult, especially without assistance. Be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 15: In the Footsteps of 'the Colchester Ten' - Caught in a Treacherous Tudor Web!** A new trail launched in partnership with Colchester Young Archaeologists Club - the result of an English Heritage challenge to deliver 'a little known or forgotten' local story - tells the tale of some ordinary Colchester people whose lives took an extraordinary turn, at a shocking event in the town more than 450 years ago. With Barbara Butler.

Meet: 6pm, St James's Church, East Hill (1.5m, 1.5hrs)

ACCESSIBILITY: A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Some sections with medium-steep gradients (e.g. East Hill and Dutch Quarter). Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary. There is seating near Balkerne Gate and in Castle Park. No dogs allowed in Castle Park.

**FILM/TALK: The Experimental City (2017).** Documentary about the remarkable tale of Athelstan Spilhaus's *almost* successful project to create a futuristic new city in 1960s Minnesota, based on his comic strip *Our New Age*. Introduced by historian & author Ben Wilson (Metropolis, 2020; Urban Jungle 2023), with discussion/Q&A.

Venue/Time: Colchester Arts Centre, 7-10pm (doors 6.30pm). Tickets on door (Pay as You Feel).

ACCESSIBILITY: Level access, accessible toilet

## Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May

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**WALK 16: Look up at our Trees in Castle Park.** A walk around Castle Park based on our 9 different species of Oak Trees. An opportunity to look closer at the trees around us & to share our knowledge & stories about any of the trees we walk past. With Diana Hargrave.

Meet: 10.30am, Castle Park, Museum Street Entrance (1m, 1.5hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: The Castle Park paths are hard-surfaced all the way but set over some significant gradients in places. This walk is mostly step-free. Two of the featured trees however are accessed via a path with some very low steps. There will be plenty of help on hand for any wheelchair users needing assistance. Please be in touch to discuss further as necessary.

**WALK 17: A Westlands Warble & Wander.** Sing & stroll – join natural voice singing quartet Voce Silva on a walk in Westlands Country Park & beyond, stopping to learn songs together in harmony. Songs will be taught by ear, no singing experience necessary. With Lorraine Francis & friends.

Meet: 6pm, inside entrance gate in James Carter Rd, opp. Shillito Close CO3 9XA (1.3m, 2hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: Kissing gate access to this park means it unfortunately may not be accessible to users of larger chairs or mobility scooters. Some uneven terrain and possibly muddy woodland paths. Bring a light portable seat if needed. Please be in touch with further questions.

**WALK 18: Haunted Colchester (dedicated to Derek Wray).** From the dark history of the ancient Dutch Quarter to the secrets of the old town centre & haunted East Hill. Ending with fortifying beverage at The Forester's Arms! With Rob Brown.

Meet: 7.30pm, at Colchester Town Hall (1m, 1.5 hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Some sections with medium-steep gradients (e.g. East Hill and Dutch Quarter). Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

## Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May

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**WALK 19: Unravelling Colchester's Textile History.** A city centre walk taking a journey through time looking for clues to Colchester's historical links with the wool, silk & textile manufacturing industries. With Lorraine James.

Meet: 5.45pm, Firstsite entrance, CO1 1JH (2.5m, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way. It is mostly step-free but entails an occasional single step (as for example at the entrance to St Martin's Church, West Stockwell St. - avoidable via side entrance, but entailing some uneven terrain). Some sections with medium-steep gradients (e.g. East Hill and Dutch Quarter). Easy access routes for all abilities will be used where ever available. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary

**EVENT/TALK: Navigating Landscapes.** Conversations with writers/artists Lora Aziz (Homeland is Presence, 2022), & James Ravinet (Marking the Land, 2023). Exploring Artistic Interventions & Public Rights of Way in Essex.

Venue/Time: The Commons Café, The Minories, High St. 7-9pm (doors 6.30pm). Tickets on door (Pay as You Feel).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Step-free access via garden gate at the rear of the Minories and ramped path (short, medium gradient). Level access to building. Accessible toilet.

## Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May

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**WALK 20: From the Cradle to the Grave. Myland: Healthcare Centre of Colchester!** From the Community Stadium (Colchester United) and Northern Gateway Sports Park (Colchester Rugby & inclusive cycling) to Colchester General Hospital, former Severalls Hospital & Turner Village, explore the history of this genuinely sporting & caring area! With Robert Johnstone.

Meet: 6pm, Northern Gateway Sports Park (///plug.square.brisk), (3m, 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city fringe walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free, but which has some long, medium to steep (in places) gradients. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**FILM/TALK: They Came to a City (1944, Dir. Basil Dearden).** Introduction by writer Adrian May, with discussion/Q&A. Based on J. B. Priestly's play, a rarely seen classic of British cinema. Nine disparate Britons arrive at a mysterious dream city, where, according to their class & disposition, they find themselves either in 'an earthly paradise of peace & equality or a hell starved of ambition & riches'.

Venue/Time: Firstsite Studios, 7-9.30 pm (doors 6.30pm). Tickets on door (Pay as You Feel).

ACCESSIBILITY: Level access, accessible toilet.

## **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

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**WALK 21: The Gods & Colchester, from Pagan Deities to the Reformation.** A walk through the City of Colchester to the sites of lost religious buildings & those still existing, & a description of what lay outside the walls & where. With Max Fox.

Meet: 10am, outside Tesco Express on Crouch Street (1m, 2hrs)

ACCESSIBILITY: A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Some short sections with medium-steep gradients (e.g. subway on Southway, Headgate). Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 22: Walk with Words.** Celebrate the launch of a new, interactive walking route, connecting Colchester city centre, University of Essex (UoE) & Greenstead. Connect with the local landscape & get creative: discover remnants of the past, appreciate the places where nature & city collide, consider who & what went before & what it means now. Finish at UoE for a hot drink & some creative writing! With Maddie Last.

Meet: 10.30am, St Botolphs Roundabout (entrance to Britannia Car Park), (2.2m, 1.5 hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: A city centre-fringe walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free, but which has some long, medium to steep (in places), mostly downhill gradients. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 23: The Wrong Side of the River.** Explore the lesser trodden lagoons on the west side of the River Colne between Hythe and Rowhedge. With 101 bird species recorded, don't forget binoculars! Ending at the Rowhedge Sea Shanty Festival (S9 bus back, or ferry to Wivenhoe 1.15-4.45pm). Dogs welcome on leads. With Emma Regan.

Meet: 11.30am, the red Colne Lightship, King Edward Quay, Hythe, CO2 8GQ. (2m, 1.5 hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** An out-of-town walk via mostly off-road, raised, riverbank path; surfaced but not hard-surfaced. Two kissing gates en route will allow wheelchair users through, but not mobility scooters or all-terrain chairs. Otherwise, this is a step-free route that may be accessible to some more active wheelchair users, especially where accompanied. There will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 24: Trip Down Memory Lane - an interactive walk to map our collective memories.** Join YAK (Firstsite's Young Art Kommunity) for a relaxed stroll in the vicinity of Firstsite Gallery, exploring our connection to the natural world through memories of place. Contribute to a collective collage back at Firstsite, recording our experiences of the journey. No artistic experience required!

Meet: 1pm, Firstsite Reception (0.5m, walk+workshop 2hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A short, city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. Entails short sections with medium-steep gradients (eg on East Hill and Queen St) where manual chair users may need assistance. There will be plenty of help on hand if unaccompanied but do be in touch with any questions. Note: Firstsite (start/end point venue) has accessible toilet facilities.

**WALK 25: Poor Man, Beggar Man (and Woman!), Thief.** Walk through the city centre & listen to stories of the survival of the poor. From Alms houses to sleeping rough, housing has always been a challenge. Discover the impact of the Garrison on 1860s life. Learn about who was sent to St Mary's workhouse & why? And who uses the foodbank today? With Kevin Finnigan.

Meet: 3.30pm, Colchester War Memorial (1.5m, 1.5hrs).

**ACCESSIBILITY:** A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. May entail some short sections of medium-steep gradients. Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**EVENT: End of festival (almost!) PARTY!** With live music from local bands *Line Break* and *Vix and the Bleeding Hearts*.

Venue/Time: Colchester Arts Centre, 8-11pm (doors 7.30pm) – ALL WELCOME.  
Free entry. Paying Bar.

ACCESSIBILITY: level access, accessible toilets.

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

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**WALK 26: Walk with Purpose.** A walking trail exploring the lives and achievements of some of Colchester's women from the past. Join us as we visit locations around the town centre with connections to the stories of our women and use these to consider safe spaces for women in the urban environment today. With Claire Driver and Rebekah Wallace-Brown.

Meet: 10am. Firstsite foyer, CO1 1JH (1.5m, 1.5 hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: A city centre walk that is hard-surfaced all the way and step-free. May entail some short sections of medium-steep gradients (e.g. on East Hill). Wheelchair users in need of assistance will find plenty of help on hand, but please be in touch to discuss further if necessary.

**WALK 27: Foraging in the Footsteps of the Invading Roman Army at Lexden.** The Roman Claudius invasion (AD43) brought a large invading army to take over the Celtic tribal capital kingdom of Camulodunum. To achieve this, a large, relatively unknown settlement was established at today's Lexden. Foragers were extremely important to feed the invading forces stationed there. This walk links us with a lost aspect of an important event in British history. With Mitch McLean. Booking required (email: wildceltlight@gmail.com).

Meet: 10am, Lexden Crown pub (2m, 3hrs). \*Check accessibility info.

ACCESSIBILITY: a mixed terrain walk with some off-road sections which may be muddy. Some medium-steep gradients (downhill from the pub start at Cymbeline Way, Lexden) and pavement camber (Church Lane, Lexden). One set of steps which may be avoidable. Please be in touch to discuss as necessary.

**WALK 28: Pam Nelson Memorial Cycle Ride.** Join us in memory of Pam, on one of her favourite rides (mostly off-road) to Fingringhoe Nature Reserve, via Friday Woods. Bring a picnic/buy coffee at the reserve café, before riding back. Booking advisable (email: info@walkcolchester.org.uk). With Neil Allen, Emily Harrup & friends. Please ensure bikes are roadworthy & the distance OK at a leisurely pace.

Meet: 12 noon, outside St John's Green Primary School, CO2 7HE (16m return, 3.5hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: Open to all ages, providing the distance is manageable at a leisurely pace and children are accompanied.

**WALK 29: Riots & Rebellions in Colchester.** “The thing worse than rebellion is the thing that causes rebellion”. Colchester has always been a hotbed of revolution. From the Peasants Revolt to Poll Tax Riots; Boudica to the Civil War. Did you know Colchester was an important player in the Suffragist movement? Expect poetry, readings & pop-up surprises. With Dorian Kelly.

Meet: 12 noon. Castle Park, Museum St entrance, (1m, 2.5hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: a city centre (and immediate fringe) walk that is hard-surfaced all of the way and step-free. Mostly level except for underpass ramp from Abbeygate to St Joins Green and a slight hill at the Green itself. Please be in touch with any questions.

**WALK 30: One for the road, bartender!** Not a pub crawl but a circular walk visiting alcohol-related sites around the Hythe area. Hear about tales of idleness, multiple marriages, bigamy, suspicion, theft, smuggling, slavery, assault & murder! With Steve Shaw.

Meet: 3pm, Hythe Station (///plants.slowly.kick), (2m, 2.5hrs).

ACCESSIBILITY: A step-free, hard-surfaced route (with one short section of using a trail footpath). Please be in touch with any questions.

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Jane's Walk 2024 is kindly supported by the Colchester Cultural & Creative Events Fund, Colchester Arts Centre, Firstsite, and many, many local people – thank you!