**An Alternative Essex Way Part 2, Saturday 12th June 2021**

13 walkers, 23.1 miles – leader Ron WIlliamson

A perfect summer’s day sunny but with some cloud, a cooling north breeze and low humidity. Ideal for what for many of us was our longest walk for some time.

Leaving the large commuter village of Ingatestone we made our way through affluent Fryerning and into the Essex countryside. Along footpaths and bridleways we continued our north easterly traverse of the county bypassing Chelmsford to our destination of Cressing station a few miles south of Braintree.

This proved to be a grand exploration and a great escape from the crowds flocking to our beaches, in fact except for at our pit stops we hardly saw a soul all day. All in all a perfect day marred only by the fact that one potential walker failed to make the starting line after becoming disorientated in the labyrinth of Stratford station. Of the 13 starters only 10 could reflect on their achievement as we relaxed on the benches at the finish in the early evening sunshine, as the three early pacemakers over-exerted themselves and had opted for the 13-mile option.

Photographs by Rod Smith and Gavin Fuller