

Afternoon tea: Long Melford

Overnight: Long Melford area



DAY 4 - Long Melford to Battlesbridge (39m/63km)

MORNING - Halstead and Coggeshall

→ Leave Long Melford on the road to the town of Sudbury. From here, take the A131 to Halstead.

Halstead - with the decline of the medieval wool industry, this market town turned to silk manufacture. Started by the Courtauld family in the 1800's, they opened the first of their silk weaving factories in the impressive weather-boarded mill beside the River Colne. Today *Townford Mill* has been converted into an antiques centre with 75 dealers on four floors. The town is also noted for its 600 year old church and country-style shops. *Market - Fri, Sat.*



Halstead's weather-boarded antiques centre

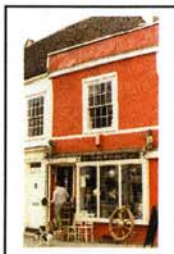


Morning coffee - Halstead

→ Leave Halstead on the A1124 to Earls Colne. Here you turn right onto the B1024 to Coggeshall. When you reach the A120, go straight across into the town.

Coggeshall - this unspoilt town was once an important place in the trade of wool and lace making. Today it is home to a range of antique dealers and shops. Look out for *Mark Marchant Antiques*, which deals with clocks, barometers and music boxes.

There are many fine timber-framed buildings, including *Paycocks* - the former 16th C. home of a wealthy wool merchant. Coggeshall is said to be the most unluckiest place in Britain, as it sits where ley lines cross. Over the years there have been an unusually high number of strange events, and the town has several ghosts. *Market - Thurs.*



Coggeshall

Lunch: Coggeshall

AFTERNOON - Battlesbridge

→ Follow the B1024 to Kelvedon. Then join the A12 south towards London. After 13 miles, leave the A12 to join the A130 towards Southend-on-Sea. Six miles later at the roundabout, take the turning into Battlesbridge

Battlesbridge - this little riverside hamlet is home to the *Battlesbridge Antiques Centre*, the largest such centre in the county of Essex. Situated on the banks of the River Crouch are five interesting old buildings housing over 80 dealers selling antiques and collectables.



Lose yourself in the Battlesbridge Antiques Centre

Afternoon tea: Battlesbridge

----- END OF TOUR -----



Lovejoy Trail

Follow in the footsteps of the loveable antiques rogue 'Lovejoy'. This BBC comedy drama series (1986-1994) starred Ian McShane in the title role. Based on the novels by Essex writer Jonathan Gash, almost every episode featured locations in the East of England (notably in Essex and Suffolk). Lovejoy lived in a pretty country cottage, and travelled around in a battered Morris Minor called 'Miriam'. His close friends were tweed-dressed Tinker Dill and young apprentice Eric Catchpole. He also had relationships with local aristocrat Lady Jane Felsham, and later auctioneer Charlotte Cavendish.

The village of *Kersey* (nr. Hadleigh) in Suffolk was used for the very first scene in the series, when Lovejoy and Eric drive through the ford on a motorbike with a side car. The hall at the village of *Belchamp Walter* (nr. Sudbury) in Essex doubled as 'Felsham Hall', home of Lady Jane, and later Charlie Gimbert.

Antiques Trail

Discovery Tour C

For further information on this tour (including opening times of attractions listed), please contact the **East of England Tourist Board** on +44 (0)870 225 4800, or visit www.visiteastofengland.com



Discovery Tour C

Antiques Trail

The East of England is a treasure trove for antiques collectors. This tour guides you to historic towns and picturesque villages lined with antiques shops and centres just beckoning you to browse. Visit family treasure houses to view their priceless heirlooms, or if you have a keen eye for a bargain then make a bid at a local auction.



Starting point: Woburn (Bedfordshire)

Duration: Four days Mileage: 138 miles/222 kilometres

Route of tour:

- Day 1: Woburn - Woburn Abbey (Antiques Centre) - Ampthill - Hitchin (overnight)
- Day 2: Hitchin - Hertford - Sawbridgeworth - Saffron Walden (overnight)
- Day 3: Saffron Walden - Finchingfield - Clare - Cavendish - Long Melford (overnight)
- Day 4: Long Melford - Halstead - Coggeshall - Battlesbridge



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DAY 1 - Woburn to Hitchin (22m/35km)

MORNING - Woburn and Woburn Abbey

Woburn - surrounded by wooded countryside and parkland, this small and beautifully preserved Georgian town is acknowledged as one of the most historically important in Britain. 18/19th C. houses and period shop-fronts line the High Street, offering antiques, reproduction and fine art dealers. *Christopher Sykes Antiques* are specialists in wine related artefacts, with a collection of over 400 corkscrews.



Georgian Woburn

→ At the crossroads in the centre of the village, turn left, and follow the signs to Woburn Abbey.

Woburn Abbey - magnificent 18th C. Palladian mansion, built on the site of a Cistercian monastery founded in 1145. It has been the home of the Dukes of Bedford for nearly 400 years, and is presently lived in by the Marquess of Tavistock. The abbey is set in a 3,000 acre deer park, designed by Humphrey Repton. Inside are fine collections of porcelain, gold and silver, furniture and art (Venetian views by Canaletto and the Armada portrait of Queen Elizabeth I).

Morning coffee and lunch: Woburn Abbey

Woburn Abbey



AFTERNOON - Woburn Abbey Antiques Centre and Ampthill

Woburn Abbey Antiques Centre - before leaving the abbey, pay a visit to the south stable block, which houses one of the largest antiques centres in Britain. Over 60 shops and showcases are set on two floors, with outlets fronted by 18th C. original and historic shop fronts rescued from across Britain.

→ Leave Woburn on the A4012 north to the village of *Husborne Crawley*, then take the A507 to *Ampthill*.

Ampthill - this small market town sits under the brow of the Greensand Ridge. Picturesque narrow streets are lined with fine Georgian buildings, and there are numerous antique shops to explore. Visit the *Ampthill Antiques Emporium* and the *Pilgrim Antiques Centre*. Nearby Ampthill Park was once home to a 15th C. castle, where Henry VIII's first wife Katherine of Aragon, was held pending their divorce proceedings. *Market - Thurs.*

Ampthill



Afternoon tea: Ampthill

→ Leave Ampthill on the A507. After 8 miles, turn right at the roundabout to join the A600 south to Hitchin.

Overnight - Hitchin



DAY 2 - Hitchin to Saffron Walden (49m/79km)

MORNING - Hitchin

This medieval town is built around its large market square, surrounded by Tudor and Georgian buildings. Narrow streets and lanes are lined with half-timbered houses and coaching inns. There are also several antiques and collectable shops, such as '*Philips of Hitchin*', a Georgian house displaying 18/19th C. furniture in period settings. The town holds one of the largest markets in the south east of England, and there are regular craft and antiques fairs. *Market - Tues, Fri, Sat.*



Hitchin



Morning coffee: Hitchin

→ Leave Hitchin on the A602 until junction 8 to the roundabout at *Watton at Stone*. From here take the A119 to *Hertford*.

Lunch - Hertford



AFTERNOON - Hertford and Sawbridgeworth

Hertford - this historic county town has over 1,000 of history to explore. The former castle with its Norman mound, massive walls and 15th C. gatehouse stand in attractive gardens. Hertford sits at the meeting place of four rivers, and is home to an impressive 18th C. Shire Hall, and the oldest Friend's Meeting House (c.1670) in the world. The town has also become famed as an antiques centre, mainly along *St. Andrew Street*. *Market - Sat.*
Tourist Information Centre 10 Market Place
+44 (0)1992 584322



Hertford Castle



→ Leave Hertford on the A414 east to *Harlow*. Then take the A1184 north to *Sawbridgeworth*.

Sawbridgeworth - described as one of the best small towns in Hertfordshire, Sawbridgeworth prospered from the former malting industry. These riverside maltings now house a series of large antiques centres (with over 400 dealers). The town centre is a conservation area with Georgian/Victorian buildings.

Afternoon tea: Sawbridgeworth

→ Remain on the A1184 north to *Bishops' Stortford*. Follow this around the town to the roundabout with the A120, which you join for 2½ miles towards *Stansted Airport*. Then at the next roundabout, turn left onto the B1383/B1052 to *Saffron Walden*.

Overnight - Saffron Walden

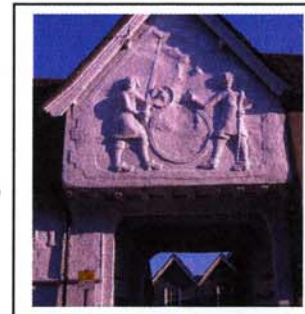


DAY 3 - Saffron Walden to Long Melford (28m/45km)

MORNING - Saffron Walden and Finchingfield

Saffron Walden - this ancient town takes its name from the saffron crocus, which grew here in the 16th C. There are numerous timber-framed buildings, some decorated with pargetting (raised decorative plasterwork), and the church is the largest in the county of Essex. Visitors can explore craft, speciality and antiques shops, such as the 14th C. '*Sun Inn*', renowned for its antiques, books, maps and prints. *Market - Tues, Sat.*
Tourist Information Centre - 1 Market Place
+44 (0)1799 510444.

Morning coffee: Saffron Walden



The pargetted Sun Inn in Saffron Walden

→ Take the B1053 to the village of *Finchingfield*.

Finchingfield - this is probably one of Britain's most prettiest villages, with its church and little cottages cascading down a hillside to the pond complete with its ducks. Enjoy some lunch in one of the pubs or tearooms here, then visit the *Finchingfield Antiques Centre*, which houses 25 dealers selling a wide range of antiques.

Lunch: Finchingfield



AFTERNOON - Clare and Long Melford

→ From *Finchingfield*, take the B1057 north to *Steeple Bumpstead*. Turn right in the village

onto the B1054. After about two miles, you reach the T-junction with the A1017. Turn right, then 1 mile later turn left onto the A1092 towards *Long Melford*. After about four miles you reach the little town of *Clare*.

Clare - this delightful little market town, has a beautiful 13th C. church and lots of colour-washed and timber framed buildings. The country park is dominated by the 100ft high motte of the former Norman castle. Clare boasts a variety of speciality and antiques shops, such as the *Clare Antique Warehouse*, with its never-ending array of treasures (around 80 dealers). *Market - Mon, Sat.*

Why not time your visit with one of the popular antique auctions, which are held in the town, throughout the year?



Visit an antiques auction in Clare

→ Continue along the A1092, and after 2 miles you reach the village of *Cavendish*.

Cavendish - a real 'picture-postcard' village which is an antique in itself, with its church and thatched cottages grouped around its lovely green.

→ Remain on the A1092 to *Long Melford*

Long Melford - originally one of the Suffolk Wool Towns (famed for cloth-making in the medieval period), this is now one of the most famous antiques centres in the East of England. At one mile in length, the tree-lined *High Street* (the longest in England) boasts a large range of antiques shops and centres. Visit the *Melford Antiques Warehouse* housing 150 dealers on four floors. There are also regular antiques fairs and book markets during the year.

At one end of the village is the large green, dominated by the magnificent 15th C. church, built of carved stone and flint. There are also two stately homes to visit, *Melford Hall* was built in 1578 and contains an original panelled banqueting hall. The famous children's author *Beatrix Potter* was a regular visitor, and the hall contains some of her watercolours and memorabilia. Just across the road is *Kentwell Hall*, a moated mansion renowned for its annual recreations of *Tudor Life*.

