



Royal  
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with IBG

## Conflict and culture

A self-guided walk around Colchester



Journey through Colchester's 2,000 year history  
Follow in the footsteps of Roman soldiers  
Explore impressive buildings and surprising features  
Enjoy Colchester's vibrant arts scene

[www.discoveringbritain.org](http://www.discoveringbritain.org)

the stories of our landscapes  
discovered through walks



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# Conflict and culture

## Journey through Colchester's 2,000-year history

Colchester in Essex is Britain's oldest recorded town and has a fascinating history as a multicultural settlement.

Discover a legacy of rulers from Belgium, Italy, Germany and Denmark. Find out about other people who left their mark on the town including the Normans, the Flemish and a man who made millions in Mexico.

Also explore Colchester's proud identity as a military town and discover a vibrant arts scene, both of which give Colchester worldwide connections.

Discover some impressive buildings and structures including a restored castle and a ruined priory, a very old wall and a grand town hall, a travellers' inn and a soldiers' canteen, mansions of the wealthy and cottages of the poor, a jumbo brick tower and a golden banana. Be prepared for some surprises!



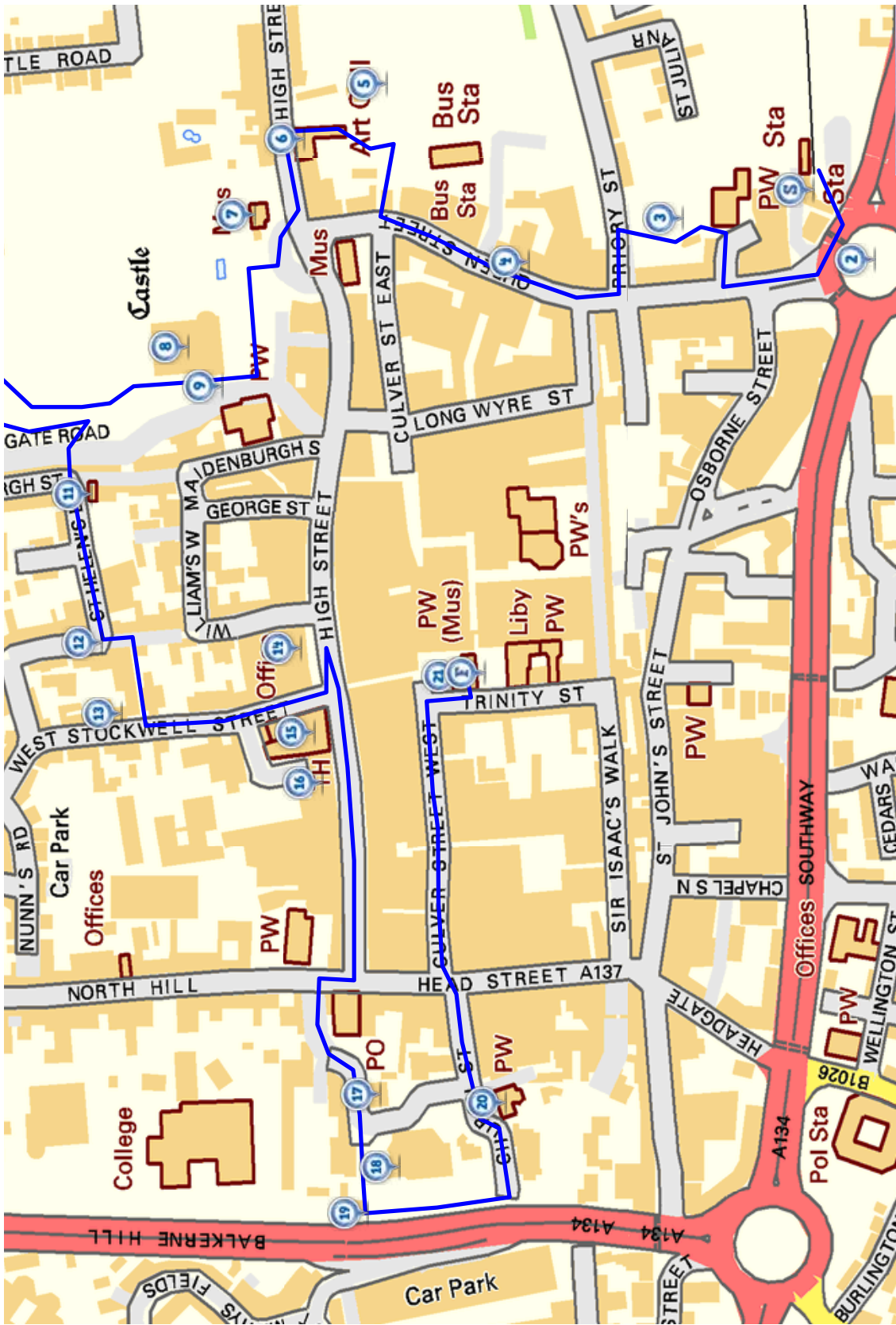
Roman walls are evidence of Colchester's military past  
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



Firstsite Gallery reflects the town's contemporary culture  
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



# Route overview



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## Practical information

<b>Location</b>	Colchester, Essex
<b>Getting there</b>	<p><b>Train</b> - Colchester has 2 stations. The walk starts from Colchester Town on the southern side of the town centre. Colchester North is the through station with services from London Liverpool Street, Norwich, Ipswich and Chelmsford.</p> <p><b>Bus</b> - The nearest stop to the walk is at Colchester Town railway station, which is served by many local bus routes.</p> <p><b>Car</b> - Access via the A12 from Chelmsford, the A120 between Braintree and Harwich and the M25. Plenty of parking in Colchester town centre including on Osborne Street by St Botolph's Circus (near Stop 1 of the walk).</p> <p><b>Bicycle</b> - Colchester is on National Cycle Route Number 1 (to Harwich) and Number 51 (to Oxford via Ipswich, Cambridge and Milton Keynes).</p>
<b>Start point</b>	Colchester Town railway station, CO2 7EF
<b>Directions from railway station to the walk start</b>	<p><b>From Colchester North railway station</b> there are many buses that run to the town centre. Alternatively it is about 20 minutes walk between stations.</p> <p>If walking take the first right at the roundabout outside the station and go under the railway bridge. Continue along this road up to a second roundabout and turn onto North Station Road. Continue for about 1 kilometre until you reach Southway. Turn left and continue onto St Botolph's roundabout.</p>
<b>Finish point</b>	Holy Trinity Church, CO1 1JN
<b>Onward journey</b>	To return to Colchester Town station see Directions 22.
<b>Distance</b>	1 ½ miles
<b>Level</b>	Gentle - A fairly flat town centre route

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### Conditions

The route is along pavements and paved footpaths. The town centre can be busy at weekends. Be careful of traffic when crossing main roads.

### Suitable for

**Families** - Exciting sights for children including the castle and the Roman remains.

**Wheelchairs and pushchairs** - step-free if using the alternative directions provided

### Refreshments

There are plenty of places to eat in the town centre. Cafés along the route at the Firstsite Gallery (Stop 5), The Minories (Stop 6) and Holy Trinity Church (Stop 21)

### Toilets

Public toilets are available in the galleries and Castle Park (Stop 9).

### Places to visit

**Firstsite Gallery** is open Tuesdays to Saturdays 10am to 5pm. Closed Mondays except Bank Holidays. Free entry. Tel: 01206 577067

**The Minories gallery and Garden Cafe** are run by Colchester School of Art. Free entry. Tel: 01206 712437

**Colchester Zoo** is open daily from 9.30am, closing times vary throughout the year. Admission charges £19.99 adults, £13.50 children, £17.50 seniors, £9.99 disabled or carers. Tel: 01206 331292

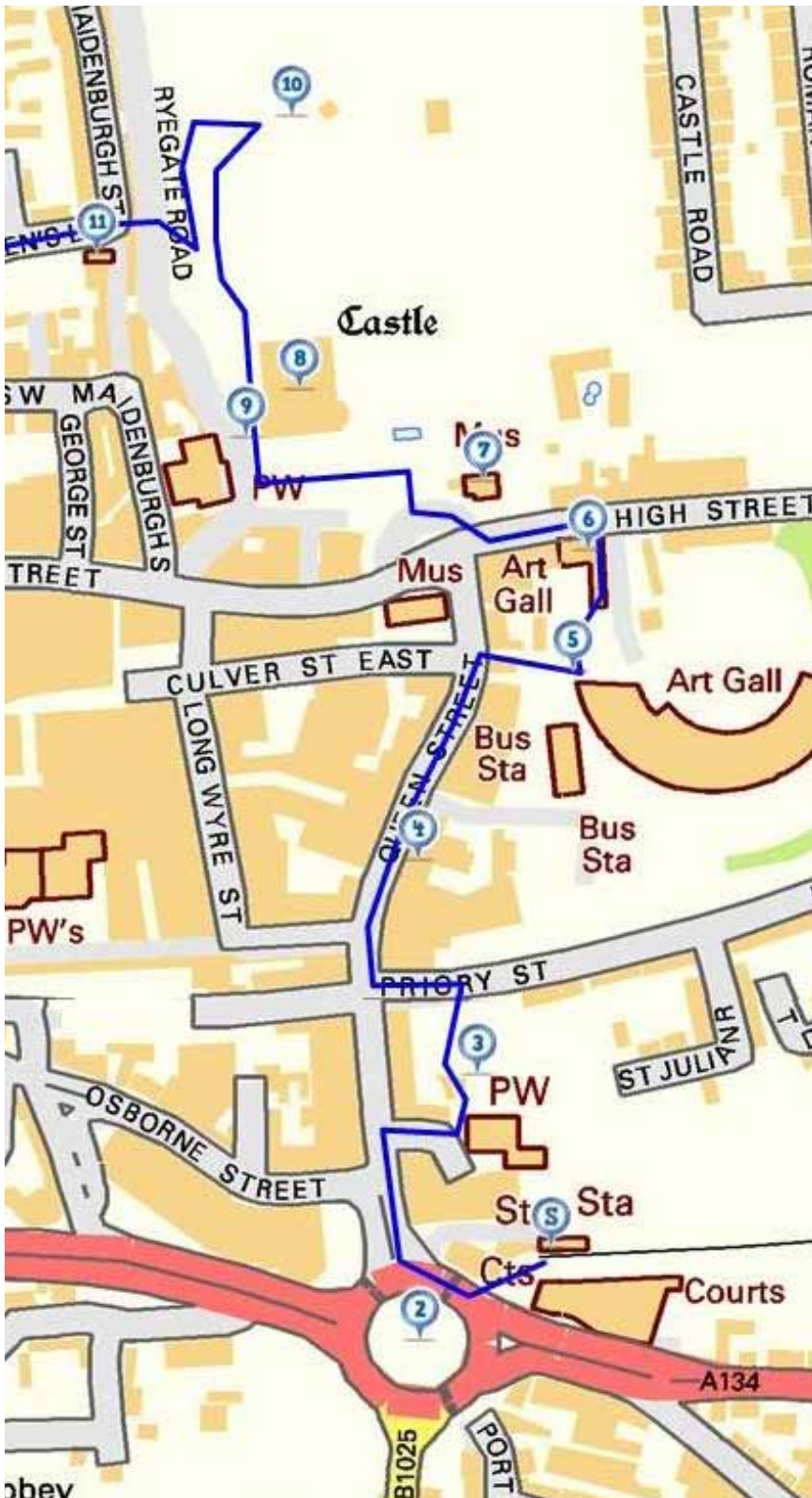
### Other info

**Colchester Oyster Festival** takes place annually in Castle Park each autumn. **The Oyster Feast** takes place on the last Friday of October at the Moot Hall.

### Tourist information

**Colchester Visitor Information Centre** is located at 1 Queen Street, directly across the road from the Hollytrees Museum (Stop 7). Open Mondays to Saturdays from 9.30am. Tel: 01206 282920

## Detail for the first half of the route

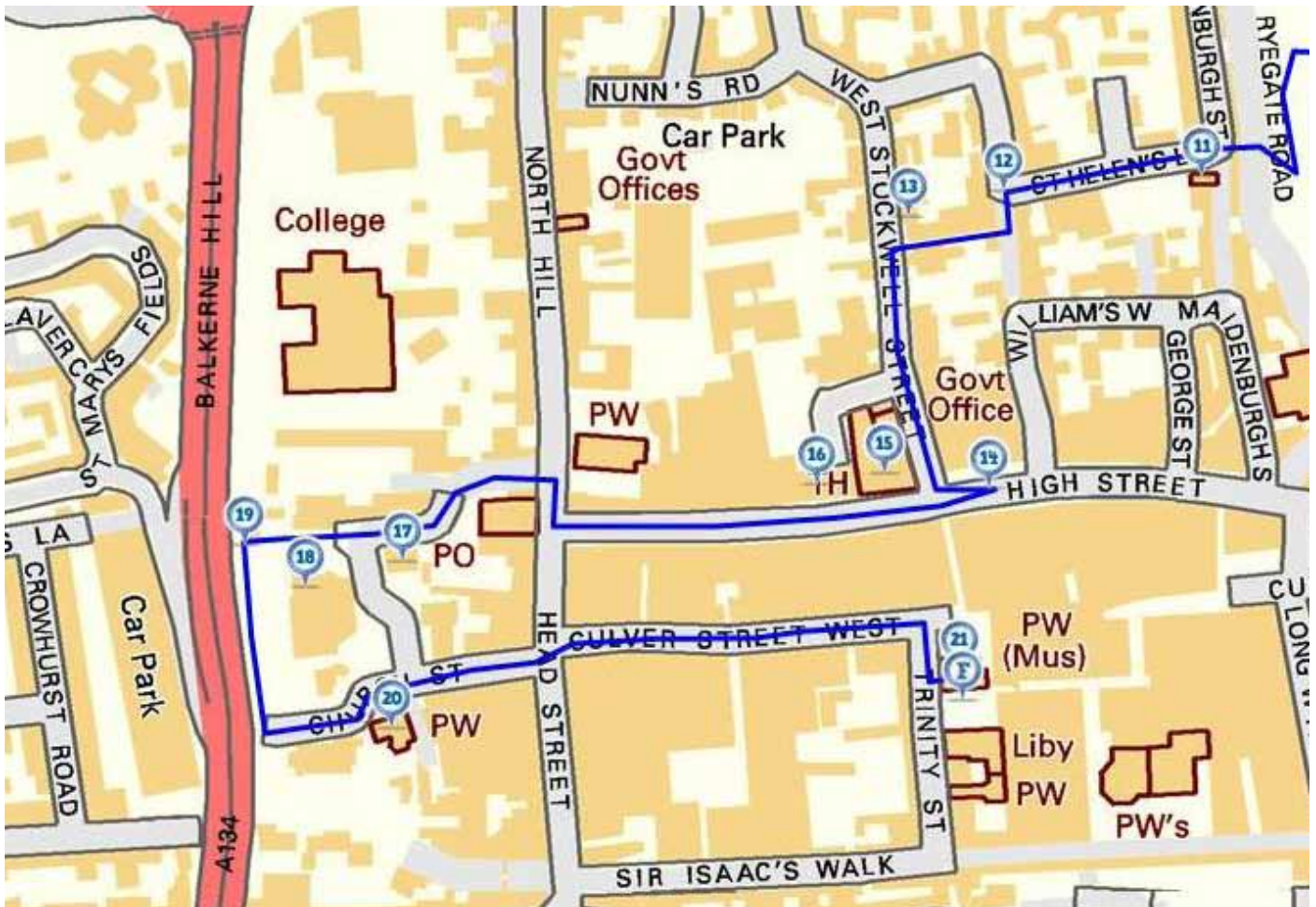


### Stopping points

1. Colchester Town railway station
2. St Botolph's Circus
3. St Botolph's Church and Priory
4. 37 Queen Street
5. Firstsite Gallery
6. Minories Art Gallery
7. Hollytrees House
8. Colchester Castle
9. Cowdray plaque, Castle Park
10. Roman townhouses, Castle Park
11. St Helen's Chapel



## Detail for the second half of the route



### Stopping points

- 12.** Corner of St Helen's Lane and East Stockwell Street
- 13.** Twinkle House, 11 and 12 West Stockwell Street
- 14.** The Hippodrome
- 15.** Colchester Town Hall
- 16.** Site of The Three Cups, 138 High Street
- 17.** Jumbo Water Tower
- 18.** Mercury Theatre
- 19.** The Balcerne Gate
- 20.** St Mary at the Walls Church (Colchester Arts Centre)
- 21.** Holy Trinity Church
- F.** Holy Trinity Church

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## Directions

These directions are for use with the Colchester walk audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

### 1. Welcome to Colchester

#### Colchester Town railway station

##### Directions 1

Colchester Town railway station is located just off St Botolph's Circus, a busy roundabout. Stand in a safe place beside the roundabout and listen to Track 2.

### 2. A man on a mission

#### St Botolph's Circus

##### Directions 2

From St Botolph's Circus, go up St Botolph's Street, which is the road between the entrance to the station car park on the right hand side and a multi-storey car park on the left hand side. After less than 50 metres, turn right into a narrow lane with a church at the end. Go around the left side of the church to the open ground between the church and the priory ruins. Stop here and listen to Track 3.

### 3. Monks, bombs and musicians

#### St Botolph's Church and Priory

##### Directions 3

Do take time to explore the priory ruins and look at the information boards. When you are ready, go through the small graveyard at the side of the priory and out of the gate. Turn left onto Priory Street and then right onto Queen Street. About 50 metres up Queen Street on the right hand side is Number 37, which is a red brick building. At the time of creating this walk it was a bar called TPs. Stop outside and listen to Track 4. You may prefer to stand on the opposite side of the road for a better view of the building.

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#### **4. The 20th, the 12th and the 16th** **37 Queen Street**

##### **Directions 4**

Continue up Queen Street. Shortly before a church on the left hand side is a passageway on the right hand side. Go down this passageway towards a modern gold coloured building. Stop in the plaza outside and listen to Track 5.

#### **5. The Golden Banana** **Firstsite Art Gallery**

##### **Directions 5**

The gallery is free, so do go inside if you are interested in the art collections or the building itself. There is also a café inside. Directly facing the Firstsite entrance is what looks like a red brick circular tower. To the left is a gate through a brick wall. If the gate is open, go through to the garden inside and listen to Track 6. If the gate is shut, go round the right hand side of the tower, follow the road to High Street. Immediately on the left is the entrance to The Minories, where you can stop and listen to Track 6.

#### **6. A good impression** **Minories Art Gallery**

##### **Directions 6**

If you are in the garden of the Minories, go through the white door past the café, the shop and the gallery rooms to the front door. Turn left onto High Street. At the traffic lights, cross over to the right, past the war memorial and through the park gates. Take the first path on the right to the rear of a large house. Stop outside and listen to Track 7.

#### **7. Recreating the past** **Hollytrees House**

##### **Directions 7**

Retrace your steps back towards the castle. Stand in front of the castle and listen to Track 8.

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## **8. Temple, castle, prison then wedding present**

### **Colchester Castle**

#### **Directions 8**

Go along the front of the castle and past the bridge. Look straight ahead on the perimeter wall of the grounds for a crescent stone seat and plaque. Stop there and listen to Track 9.

## **9. Down Mexico way**

### **Cowdray plaque, Castle Park**

#### **Directions 9**

Follow the path down the side of the castle. Where the path splits, keep left and follow it downhill through formal gardens. When you reach a beacon, turn left along a tree-lined path towards the bandstand. Before reaching the bandstand, look on the left hand side for some stones laid out in the grass. Stop there and listen to Track 10.

## **10. The archaeologist's archaeologist**

### **Roman townhouses, Castle Park**

#### **Directions 10**

Retrace your steps along the path and turn left at the beacon. As the path starts to rise, it forks. There is also a small path immediately to the right which leads down to a gate. Take this path and leave the Castle Park. Go straight across and down the alley onto Maidenburgh Street. In front is a small chapel. Stop outside and listen to Track 11.

## **11. The Mother of Christianity**

### **St Helen's Chapel**

#### **Directions 11**

The chapel is usually open and it is worth taking a look inside. From the chapel continue up St Helen's Lane to the junction with East Stockwell Street. Directly in front are houses painted in different colours. Stop at this corner and listen to Track 12.

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## **12. Weaving through the streets**

### **Corner of St Helen's Lane and East Stockwell Street**

#### **Directions 12**

Turn left up East Stockwell Street for a few metres and then right along Quakers Alley that runs between the Townhouse youth centre on the right and St Martin's Church on the left. At the end, turn right down West Stockwell Street. Stop outside the first house on the right, which has a brown plaque on the wall, and listen to Track 13.

## **13. How I wonder what you are**

### **Twinkle House, 11 & 12 West Stockwell Street**

#### **Directions 13**

From Twinkle House, go up West Stockwell Street to Colchester's main High Street. Cross the road carefully and turn left. Walk about 20 metres until you are opposite a set of bus stops. Behind the bus stops is a red brick building with the words 'Grand Theatre' on the top. Stop there and listen to Track 14.

## **14. Making a right Charlie of himself**

### **The Hippodrome, High Street**

#### **Directions 14**

Retrace your steps along the High Street. Stop opposite the spectacular Town Hall and listen to Track 15.

## **15. The Oyster Feast**

### **Colchester Town Hall, High Street**

#### **Directions 15**

Remain in the same place. Look at the modern concrete building immediately to the left of the Town Hall (at the time of creating this walk it was a Job Centre) and listen to Track 16.



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## **16. The Travelodge of its day**

### **The site of the Three Cups, 138 High Street**

#### **Directions 16**

Continue along the High Street. At the end, cross over and stand outside the black and white building, which is the post office. Did you find the statue of St Helena that was mentioned earlier? If not, look back down the High Street and on top of the Town Hall – there she is, carrying the Cross, of course. Go about 20 metres down North Hill and then turn left along a narrow road called Balkerne Passage, which is almost opposite St Peter's Church. Follow the road round. Stop beside the brick tower and listen to Track 17.

## **17. Woah there Nelly**

### **Jumbo Water Tower, Balkerne Gardens**

#### **Directions 17**

Follow the road past Jumbo. Stop outside the building behind, which is the Mercury Theatre, and listen to Track 18.

## **18. All the world's a stage**

### **Mercury Theatre, Balkerne Gate**

#### **Directions 18**

From the Mercury Theatre, head towards the Hole in the Wall pub. Stand beside the brick archway and listen to Track 19.

## **19. Who goes there?**

### **The Balkerne Gate**

#### **Directions 19**

Walk along the raised path with the Roman walls on the left and the dual carriageway to the right. After a short distance is a set of steps up through the wall to a church. Stand outside the church and listen to Track 20.

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## **20. Where Humpty had his fall**

### **Colchester Arts Centre, Church Street**

#### **Directions 20**

Walk past the church and follow Church Street past the Friends' Meeting House. There is also another view of Nelly on the left hand side. At the main road, use the pedestrian crossing and go straight across into Culver Street West. Go along this shopping street until you reach a small square with a church. This is Trinity Square. Before going into the church, have you found the Three Cups that was mentioned earlier? Turn right down Trinity Street, past the church tower. Turn left into the churchyard and listen to Track 21.

## **21. The Father of electricity**

### **Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street**

#### **Directions 21**

Remain at Trinity Church and listen to Track 22.

## **22. A story of conflict and culture**

### **Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street**

#### **Directions 22**

From Holy Trinity Church, you are just a short distance from the railway station where the walk started or the High Street.



Scenes from around Colchester  
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

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## Further information

### **Balkerne Tower Trust**

[www.savejumbo.org.uk](http://www.savejumbo.org.uk)

### **Colchester and Ipswich Museums**

[www.cimuseums.org.uk](http://www.cimuseums.org.uk)

### **Colchester Arts Centre**

[www.colchesterartscentre.com](http://www.colchesterartscentre.com)

### **English Heritage - St Botolph's Priory**

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/colchester-st-botolphs-priory](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/colchester-st-botolphs-priory)

### **Firstsite Gallery**

[www.firstsite.uk.net](http://www.firstsite.uk.net)

### **Friends of The Minories**

[www.theminories.co.uk](http://www.theminories.co.uk)

### **Mercury Theatre**

[www.mercurytheatre.co.uk](http://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk)

### **Othodox Colchester - St Helen's Chapel**

<http://orthodoxcolchester.org.uk/chapel.htm>

### **St Botolph's Church**

[www.stbotolphs.org](http://www.stbotolphs.org)

### **Visit Colchester**

[www.visitcolchester.com](http://www.visitcolchester.com)

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## Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Walk the World walk:

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