

"THE ONLY WAY"

I love to live in Yorkshire, God's country after all,
Its dales and moors and stunning coast all constantly enthrall.
It has so many qualities that set the place apart,
But there's another county that will always have my heart.

It is the place where I was born, not known for rolling hills,
But every time I think of it my heart with pleasure fills.
Essex, my home, my base, my root, wherever I may stray,
Whatever I encounter – it IS the only way.

From Battlesbridge to Finchingfield, Orsett to Manningtree,
From Pilgrim's Hatch to Ockendon, and Stock, and old Tiptree.
There's Colchester, the oldest town in all of England fair,
And Hanningfield and Wivenhoe, there's lots of oysters there!

And then there's Saffron Walden, where saffron grows a-plenty,
And Herongate (not Harrogate) and Ingrave and Great Bentley.
We've Ingatestone and Totham and the lovely Hatfield Peveral,
And everywhere you go you'll find the country pubs are several.

There's Leigh on Sea, with shellfish that's famous everywhere,
You can munch your plate of cockles and drink in the sea air.
We've Chipping Ongar, Coggeshall, Bradwell and Great Baddow,
Writtle, Thaxted, Prattlewell and Wakering and Dunmow.

Shout out for Billericay and another for Mountnessing,
For Hockley and High Easter, for Shoeburyness and Messing.
Little Baddow, Barrow Hill, the posh school at Felsted;
And Rochford, where Queen Anne once lived, before she lost her
head.

Then Bicknacre, Great Warley and Layer de la Haye -
To be completely honest I could carry on all day.
John Betjeman claimed the county was his very favourite place,
And that is good enough for me, and now I close my case.

So, don't believe the image that the media portrays
Of the land of white stilettos and seaside holidays.
But go, explore the little gems hidden in plain sight,
And I guarantee you'll be surprised, cos Essex is all right!