

The Old Windmill and South Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex



Challenging Terrain

3 miles
Circular
1 to 2 hours

200114



Access Notes



1. The paths follow sections of arable fields and grass meadows, all of which can be very muddy in the winter and after periods of rain, so the walk is one best enjoyed in the warmer months.
2. The paths in a couple of places can also be a little overgrown so good stout footwear and full length trousers are recommended (unless you're immune to nettles!).
3. The route has several climbs and descents throughout and there are a couple of sections of road walking so take care of traffic.
4. There are a few gates plus six stiles, some of which are fully enclosed with wire fencing so dogs may need a lift over.

The Old Windmill has been serving food and ale since 1799 and today, with a beautiful sympathetic refurbishment, it really is a gem of a pub.

A 3 mile circular pub walk from the Old Windmill in South Hanningfield, Essex. The walking route explores the local countryside, a peaceful journey through arable fields and ancient lanes, visiting the pretty local church on route.

Getting there

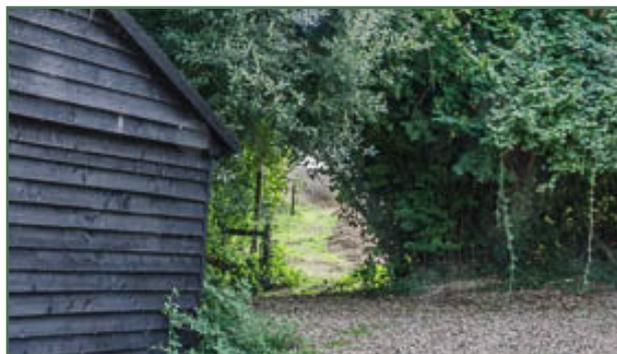
South Hanningfield is situated between Basildon and Chelmsford, just off the A130. The walk starts and finishes at the Old Windmill pub which is on South Hanningfield Road. The pub has a large car park alongside.

Approximate post code **CM3 8HJ**.

Walk Sections



Start to Flemings Farm



To begin the walk, head to the rear of the pub car park (with your back to the road you need to head to the back left corner). Pass through the gap here under an arch of trees to join the grass footpath which runs along the left-hand edge of a crop field. Keep ahead as the path continues with crop fields each side and power lines running parallel to the left.

The path skirts right to run to the right of a long line of hawthorn and oak trees. As the field edge swings right, fork left up a short slope to reach a T-junction with a quiet road and a small fenced reservoir opposite. Turn right along the road and then, as the fence on the left ends, turn left past a disused stile to follow the left-hand edge of this next crop field (with the reservoir still on the left).

As the fence on the left ends, strike out ahead over the centre of the crop field, aiming for the left-hand end of the long hedgerow ahead. As you reach this hedge line, bear slightly right to follow the right-hand edge of the next field heading



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gradually downhill. At this point you'll have beautiful views across the valley ahead. At the bottom of this field you'll reach a post with yellow arrows marking a junction of paths, with Flemings Farm visible across to the right.

1 → 2 Flemings Farm to Stone Track



Turn left following the bottom edge of the field you just descended. At the far corner, follow the field edge path as it swings left with a belt of trees on the right. As the main belt of trees ends, fork right down a short slope to reach the adjacent field. Keep ahead along the bottom boundary of this field and into the next field. At the gap in the tree line on the right, dog-leg right then left to join the wide grass ride with a private property on the right. Pass through the staggered barrier to reach a T-junction with the road.

Turn left along the road edge, taking care of any traffic. Where the road swings left, keep straight ahead through the gate to join the footpath along the left-hand edge of the field. At the top corner you'll meet the edge of Scrub Wood ahead. Turn right along the edge of the field and less than half way along, where the woodland on the left ends, dog-leg left and then right to follow the path down the right-hand edge of this next field.

In the field corner, bear right to reach a junction of several paths. Take the second left, an ancient lane with passes under a tunnel of trees. Continue to the point where the dirt lane becomes a stone track. Keep ahead for just a few paces more and then look out in the hedge on the left for a partially hidden stile.

2 → 3 Stone Track to Romans Farm



Cross this stile and follow the path with fenced horse paddocks to the right. Cross the next stile ahead and cross a small footbridge and then pass through a wide gate (or use the stile alongside) and keep straight ahead on the tarmac drive to reach a T-junction with the main road.

Turn left along the road edge, taking extreme care of any traffic. After about 200 yards you'll see a sign marking a footpath off to the right. Cross over the road to take this path, which leads you through the metal entrance gate of Roman's Farm.

3 → 4 Romans Farm to Church



Keep straight ahead onto the footpath in line with the gate which passes between outbuildings. Cross a short section of scrub, cross a stile and then swing left to reach an open grass field. Keep ahead along the left-hand edge of this, passing a pylon on the right. At the end of the field, keep ahead on the narrow path through another section of scrub.

Cross the stile and pass through the small woodland belt, passing under the branches of the large oak tree to reach the next large open grass field. Keep ahead, close to the left-hand boundary, heading for the church spire visible on the hilltop ahead. Continue through the long narrow grass field. About 150 yards before you reach the tree line at the end of the field, fork left across a small sleeper bridge, to join a narrow path between hedgerows.

Cross the next stile and keep ahead on the path which passes a large white thatched property on the right. You'll emerge to a gravel driveway. Turn right along the gravel driveway for a short stretch and then turn left into the church yard.

4 → 5 Church to End



Cross straight through the church yard passing to the left of St Peter's Church. Take time to admire the pretty wooden clad 15th century belfry and the ornate timber porch with stained glass panels.

At the far side of the church yard, pass through the metal kissing gate into the large lawn area of a private property. Follow the right-hand boundary of this private meadow and, at the bottom corner, pass out over the stile to reach a T-junction with the main road. Ahead you'll have lovely views across the enormous Hanningfield Reservoir.

Cross over the road with care and turn left along the concrete path, with the reservoir over to the right. Hanningfield Reservoir was built in 1957, flooding this section of the Sandon Valley and the hamlet of Peasdown. Contrary to popular belief, no buildings survive under the water, however, an earth removal machine was left in situ and concreted over prior to filling.

At the end of the road you'll come to a T-junction. Turn right, signed to Ramsden Heath. Further along on the left you'll reach the Old Windmill for some well-earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

