



Title: Abridge

Distance: about 5 miles

Time taken: 2 hours

Location: 8 miles north west of Brentwood

Parking: Roadside parking in New Farm Drive, opposite Knights Walk

OS Explorer Map: 174 Epping Forest & Lee Valley

Grid Ref.: TQ 471 968

Transport: Hourly bus service from Theydon Bois (on the Central Line) to Abridge

Refreshment: The Blue Boar, Abridge 01992 812 110

## Walk Description

In a tiny patch of land bounded by the M11 and the M25 is this quiet rural area, full of beauty and tranquillity. The walk takes you from the village of Abridge, over the River Roding and up into farmland north of the river, before swinging round to the east and then sweeping back into the river valley. Then south of the river you walk up into the hills overlooking the Stapleford Aerodrome, go across fields to the 1000 year old church of St Mary and All Saints, Lambourne, and then back to Abridge via meadows and woodlands. There are some lovely views to be enjoyed all along the route. This walk ought to be called 'the walk of many bridges' - there at least 8 to cross, from simple plank bridges, to proper wooden ones with handrails, metal ones and even one magnificent concrete structure. On the downside though, there is some road walking on the route, although mostly along tiny quiet lanes.

## Directions

A. From the parking, walk down New Farm Drive (1) to the main road and turn left. Walk along the pavement for less than a quarter of a mile and then turn right onto Abridge Road to cross the bridge over the River Roding (2). At the north end of the road-bridge, turn right over a stile into the field immediately north of the river.

B. Cross the field (known as Bloody Mead) diagonally towards the stile (3), and climb over it

into the next field. Continue north east with a fence on your right, to a stile on the left of a metal gate (4) and walk north along the field edge to Epping Lane.

C. Turn right on the lane for about 50 yards then turn left into a field with a ditch on your left. After another 30 yards, cross the ditch at the waymarker and continue north, now with the ditch on your right (5).

D. After about another 200 yards bear right following the field edge and shortly after, cross the wooden footbridge[FB\_I] on your right (6) and turn left to continue north. Keep walking along the field edge to a second footbridge[FB\_II] and stile.

E. From the far side of this stile you can see Hydes Farm on the crest of the hill, with a neat hedge around the farmhouse and some trees to the east (7). Walk diagonally across the field, aiming for these trees. As you approach the brow of the hill you will see a stile ahead of you leading to the farm access road (8).

F. Cross over this stile and continue north east along the access road, which follows the route of an old Roman road. The views from here are lovely.

G. At a black gate, turn right to continue along the access road, now walking east (9). After about 120 yards the road turns right, heading south. Continue walking until you return to Epping Lane.

H. Turn left on Epping Lane and walk for about a third of a mile. You will pass a couple of footpath signs on the right, but carry on until you are in sight of Hobbs Cross Road (leading to the Hobbs Cross open farm) on the left. Just before this junction there is a stile on the right (10) leading to a beautiful meadow: walk south through this. The meadow narrows at its southerly tip, and right in the corner, under the tree, is a metal footbridge[FB\_III] (11).

I. On the far side of this footbridge you can see the next footbridge[FB\_IV] ahead of you; cross the field diagonally to the south east, cutting off the south west corner, to reach this bridge. Directly ahead of you is another small footbridge [FB\_V], this time reached via the field edge (12).

J. The signage after this footbridge [FB\_V] is confusing: the waymarker appears to send you due east along the northern edge of the field, whereas the OS map and the signage at the exit point from this field put the path along the southern edge, running roughly along the banks of the river. So turn right as you leave the bridge and follow the river to yet another footbridge [FB\_VI] – a sturdy concrete one this time (13).

K. Walk to the side of the Ongar Road and turn right for about 30 yards, passing what might be a tankette on the opposite side of the road, to the turning on the left to Patch Park Farm, on the left of the nursery (14).

L. Walk up this access road for about half a mile – there are some good views of the aerodrome to be enjoyed as you go – and through a small business park, to a substantial

leylandii hedge which marks the boundary between the semi-industrialised area and farmland. Go through the gap in the hedge, and continue walking south uphill between two fields (15) until you come to another footbridge [FB\_VII] (16).

M. Turn right after this bridge to walk alongside the field edge for about 25 yards, where you will see a waymarker in the hedge directing you south east across the field. When we were there the route across the field was not clear, but you can see a couple of solitary oak trees in the field to your right, and beyond them a small copse (17). Aim for the copse.

N. Pass to the left of the copse, then walk south to the corner of the woods you can see projecting into the field. From the edge of these woods turn right to cross the field towards a metal gate with houses beyond. Continue in the same direction along Church Lane (18) towards Lambourne Church, which is well worth a look around if you have the time.

O. Carry on along Church Lane, which becomes less of a road and more of a track, until you come to a white fence with a 'Private Road' sign attached (19). Immediately in front of this, on the right, is a little wooden gate into a field, with a stunning view across the Roding valley.

P. Once through the gate, turn left and follow the fence alongside a line of trees(20) until you come to the entrance into Soapley's Wood (21). Turn right once in the woods and follow the path until you emerge from the woods into a beautiful sloping meadow, full of friendly horses when we were there. The exit from this field is via an unnecessarily complicated final concrete footbridge near[FB\_VIII] the north west corner of the field (22).

Q. Continue roughly north west though the next field, exiting onto New Farm Drive near the boundary of an imposing private house. Turn right, and walk down the lane (23) back to the parking.

[This page at www.essexwalks.com](http://www.essexwalks.com)

This route description is not meant to be used in isolation, it is one piece of a three part guide to the walk. The other two pieces are the route map, and the numbered photographs. The walks work best when the description, map and the photos PDF are printed off and used in conjunction with each other.

The numbers in brackets in the description refer to specific points along the route, marked with numbered symbols and these in turn are matched to illustrative photographs which show you the lie of the land.



These symbols are shown at strategic points along the route, overlaid on a 1:50K Ordnance Survey map: [OS Map](#).

The set of photographs in PDF format can be downloaded from this page:

[www.essexwalks.com/walks/abridge.html](http://www.essexwalks.com/walks/abridge.html)