



Title: Essex Way: Peppers Green to Chipping Ongar

Distance: about 8 miles

Time taken: 3 hours

Start Point: Pepper's Green, Salt's Green A1060

OS Explorer Map: 183

Grid Ref.: TL 621 109

Transport to Peppers Green: : Arriva No 59 from Chelmsford or Harlow Bus Station, service runs hourly during the day, not on Sundays or bank holidays.

Transport from Chipping Ongar: Arriva Bus 501: hourly service to Brentwood, Epping and Harlow;

SM Coaches No 20: 2 per hour to Harlow and Epping; Imperial Bus Company: No 339 hourly service to Brentwood

Refreshment: Pubs and cafes in Chipping Ongar, including The Royal Oak, 01277 363893, & The Cock Inn, 01277 362615: both are open all day.

## Walk Description

From the ancient, enclosed green lanes to the wide open Roding valley, this is a walk full of contrasts.

The first section of the walk takes you through over 2 miles of peaceful green lanes, before going out into the farm land around Willingale, with its single churchyard shared by two churches, St Christopher's and St Andrew's. The Essex Way goes right through the churchyard, with one church on either side. St Andrew's Church to the south was built around 1130, whereas the more modern St Christopher's dates from around the fourteenth century.

As you leave the churchyard there is a stately descent through fields to a stream, with lovely views across the countryside. You then walk through more arable lands and past the hamlets of Miller's Green, Witney Green and Cannon's Green before descending down a steep and muddy lane to the Roding valley. Finally, the route meanders along the riverside all the way to Chipping Ongar.

## Directions

- A. From the Peppers Green bus stop on the A1060, walk south along the lane towards Peppers Green (1). After a quarter of a mile you will come to the hamlet of Peppers Green, where the metalled road becomes a byway along a green lane. Continue walking southwards along the byway (2).
- B. After a further three quarters of a mile you will come to a T-junction, in front of a steep bank (3). Turn right along the byway here, ignoring the bridleway on the left.
- C. Walk west along the byway for a further half a mile, when the byway turns left and shortly afterwards, meets the access lane for Rowe's Farm. Turn right onto the lane (4).
- D. Walk west along this lane for about a third of a mile, when you will see another green lane leading off to the left (5). Turn into this and walk roughly south for another third of a mile, to Skreens Park Road.
- E. On the opposite side of the road, to the south, there is a gap in the hedge. Go through this into a field (6) and carry on walking south, with a hedge and later a ditch on your right . After about 300 yards you will come to a footbridge, cross this and turn right walking west, with the ditch on your right (7).
- F. At the facing hedge, turn left to walk south alongside the hedge for about 350 yards. You will come to a wide hedge gap, cross through the hedge here and continue south with the hedge now on your left.
- G. At the end of this field there is a footbridge through the hedge. Cross this and turn right, walking west with the hedge at your right, for about 200 yards. Look for a large gap in the hedge and cross through to continue west on the other side of the hedge. Carry on in the same direction through gaps in another couple of hedges, until you come to the Willingale recreation grounds.
- H. Once in the recreation grounds you will see a fence ahead of you, on the left. The Essex Way goes to the left of this fence (8), through the trees, to The Street.
- I. As you reach the roadside you can see Willingale Churchyard, with the two churches of St Christopher and St Andrew sharing the churchyard opposite. Walk through the churchyard, between the churches, towards the west.

J. As you leave the churchyard you will have a hedge on your left, but after a few yards cross through the hedge via a footbridge, and continue west with the hedge on your right (9). There are lovely views across Essex from here.

K. Continue in the same direction for just under half a mile, until the field slopes downhill towards a stream and you see a footbridge in the facing hedge a few yards to the left (10). Cross the stream using the footbridge, go up a couple of steps and head west cross the field ahead of you towards the waymarker you can see in the hedge.

L. Turn left at the waymarker and follow the hedge around the borders of a house, emerging onto the road via a footbridge through the hedge, near a junction. Turn left into Fyfield Road, walking south, for about 300 yards. At this point the road turns sharp left, and about 10 yards later there is a footbridge on the right. Cross over this into a field.

M. The footpath goes south west across this field to a gap in the hedge. But it's a big field, and there are several gaps in the hedge! Look at the chunks of hedge: most of them are about 5 feet tall with tops roughly parallel to the ground surface. However one chunk of hedge slopes gradually to the ground, on its left edge. The Essex Way crosses the field boundary through the gap immediately to the left of this hedge (11).

N. Once through this gap, bear slightly right towards the small wooden gate in the fence ahead of you (12); cross the mowed grass beyond this to the wooden gate set in a white fence, and go through this onto Willingale Road, and turn left.

O. Follow the road as it curves round to the right, until you come to a large lay-by on the left. There is an enclosed bridleway leading out from this lay-by, heading south west. Walk along this. After about 300 yards the ancient hedge on the right stops and is replaced by some new planting. Continue on the bridleway to Cannon's Lane, Cannon's Green.

P. Turn left on the lane, walking south. At end of the lane, continue south along a farm track. As you pass a field entrance on the right, the track becomes a green lane and bears to the right (13). After around 100 yards you will pass a field entrance on the left; continue along the lane.

Q. The green lane starts to descend, and as it does so, the lane itself becomes deeper and the sides steeper. Sometime the going underfoot can be very muddy indeed. However, the local landowner has made it plain that he objects to walkers using the field edge, so unless the lane really is impassable, please persevere.

R. As the slope increases you will see a footpath off to the left; ignore this. Instead, continue until you approach the bottom of the slope where there is a wide gap in the hedge on the left. Go through this and turn right immediately past the hedge on the right, to a large metal footbridge (14). Cross over the footbridge and turn left.

S. You should be on the west bank of the River Roding, walking south or south west. This is a beautiful part of the walk, following the river for a little over a mile as it meanders through the valley. There are many, many bridges to cross (to misquote Jimmy Cliff) as tributaries flow into the river from the surrounding fields, and some of the bridges are in a poor state, but all are passable.

T. Continue along the river bank until you come to a stile – the first on this section of the Essex Way. On the far side of the stile is a long thin grassy field; the path goes south across this field, leaving the river bank towards the far corner of the hedge on your right (15). When you reach the corner, walk alongside the hedge for 200 yards until the field opens out, and then bear right to walk diagonally across the field towards a gate.

U. Climb over the stile on the right of the gate and cross the residential road to the stile opposite (16). Follow the path through this wooded area, walking roughly south west, to another stile leading onto the A414. Cross over this busy road and go down the steps opposite to a stile in a wooden fence; cross this into a field and turn right to walk west, parallel to the A414 with the hedge on your right. Turn left at the facing hedge, by a gate on the right.

V. Walk south with a hedge at your right for a quarter of a mile, to a T-junction, then turn right (17). Go up the slope until you approach the houses, then turn left to walk south for 200 yards, with a line of trees and playing fields on your right.

W. Turn right to follow the line of trees, then left to continue south between two fences, until you come to a farm entrance. Go left for a couple of yards, then right along a wide grassy track with a rather overgrown pond on your right. The track curves round to the right and comes out through a wooden gate into Castle Street, in Chipping Ongar.

X. Almost immediately, look for a small alleyway on your right. This takes you past the church of St Martin of Tours, and on past some lovely old buildings to Ongar High Street (18). Turn right on the High Street to go north to the library. The next stage of the Essex Way starts from here.

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