



Title: Messing

Distance: 4½ miles

Time taken: 2 hours

Location: 7½ miles south west of Colchester

Parking: Roadside parking in The Street, Messing

OS Explorer Map: 183 (western section) & 184 (eastern section)

Grid Ref.: TL 897 190

Transport: There are no public transport links in the village

Refreshment: The Old Crown, Messing

Walk Description

This walk starts and ends in the pretty village of Messing, named as Essex's 'Best Kept Village' in 2007 & 2008. The walk itself is entirely rural, going through farmland and two ancient woods, seemingly miles from civilisation. The countryside around Messing is gently undulating, giving the pleasing impression of rolling hills whilst actually being fairly flat. This means the walk manages to combine lovely views with easy walking. One section of the route utilises concrete tracks which were originally part of Birch Airfield, a mile to the east.

Directions

- A.** From the parking (P), walk east towards the pub and then turn left at the T-junction along Lodge Road. Walk north for 75 yards then turn right down an enclosed path adjacent to the last of the old cottages, beside a detached garage (1). This leads you to a path between fields, heading east along a line of trees.
- B.** After 300 yards you will come to a concrete track. Continue east along here, for almost half a mile. As you approach the facing hedge the footpath bears slightly to the right, cutting off the north east corner of the field to your right. However most people continue along the concrete track almost to the hedgeline, then follow the track around to the right.
- C.** 130 yards after the right turn, there is a junction off to the left, climbing gently up the hill (2). Turn up here and continue along this track bearing left past the woods until you approach Birch Holt.
- D.** As you get near to the farm you can see what look like Nissen huts in the distance. While you are still 200 yards from the huts, turn right along the concrete track in front of a large oak tree, heading south with a hedge on your right (3). Continue all the way to the B1022.

E. At the roadside turn right and walk along the verge for 300 yards. Layer Wood is the other side on the road, on your left. Enter the woods using the easily missed footpath about 120 yards after the road sign warning of bends in the road ahead, and 150 yards before the bend itself (4). Head south through Layer Wood for about half a mile.

F. As you approach Keeper's Cottages turn right to walk alongside the garden fence to Haynes Green Road (5). Turn left on the road for 60 yards, then cross a small plank bridge on the right to walk roughly west.

G. Walk along the field edge with the hedge on your left. After 300 yards the hedgeline turns sharp left. At this point turn right to walk north across the field towards the inverted corner of the opposite hedge (6). When you reach the corner, continue north for a couple of paces, then cross through the hedge using a stile and go west, again with a hedge on your left.

H. Carry on over another stile, (7) and walk past the ancient defensive barrier known as The Rampart on your left. When you come to a farm track, turn left over The Rampart and then right to continue west, walking towards the woods (8).

I. Keep going west over a footbridge into Pods Wood and follow the path through the trees. After 360 yards you will come to a more major route through the woods, go straight across this to continue west (9). Stay on this path as it veers left, to the road.

J. Cross the B1022 and climb over the stile opposite, walking north along the field edge with a fence and woods on your right. The path goes to the right of a paddock, then continues north to New Road.

K. Turn right on the road and walk north for 80 yards, then cross a stile on the right into a field (10). Go along the northern field edge to another stile on the left, leading into Coneyfield Wood (11).

L. The route through Coneyfield Wood is not clearly defined. The exit is 400 yards north of the entrance, but we found we had to walk east first along a small path, then follow a more major track north west along the edge of the woods. As you are allowed to wander freely through these woods, you can choose your own route. We found these two magnificent Scots Pines to be a useful marker for getting out of the woods: the exit path runs between the trees (12).

M. Leave the woods along a field edge with a fence on your left then continue straight across the field to the fence opposite (13).

N. Turn left at the facing fence, walking west. At the facing hedge, turn right to follow a path north to the roadside (14). Turn right along School Road and follow the road round until you rejoin The Street, then turn right again towards All Saints Church and the parking.

[ROUTE DIRECTIONS at
www.essexwalks.com](http://www.essexwalks.com)

The ROUTE MAP and ROUTE PHOTOS **also** need to be downloaded and saved on your computer for printing.

 The Route Map PDF can be downloaded from this page: [Description & Map](#)

 The Route Photos PDF can be downloaded from this page: [Photos](#)

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: [Online OS Map at www.essexwalks.com](#).