



Title: **Mill Green**

Distance: 4½ miles

Time taken: 1½ - 2 hours

Location: 5½ miles south west of Chelmsford

OS Explorer Map: 183

Grid Ref.: TL 638 012

Parking: Mill Green Common, Mill Green Road, CM4 0JD

Bus: None under a mile

Train: No train service

Refreshment: The Cricketers, Mill Green 01277 352400 CM4 0JD

The Viper, Mill Green 01277 352010

PEAR Rating: 

Walk Description

'Writtle Forest is a wild and lovely place. Nearly everything one sees there is of the fourteenth century or earlier: the great assart surrounded by hornbeam springs and alder slades: the heathland. Pollard oaks, and woodbanks; the lonely cottage with a palfrey grazing on its pightle, on the site of the hermitage where a solitary monk dwelt. This astonishing survival from the depths of the medieval countryside is within 25 miles of St Paul's cathedral.'

So said Oliver Rackham in 1976, and nothing much has changed since. The ancient woodland and common supports a wide range of wildlife including dormice and fallow deer; woodpeckers, nuthatches and coal tits; dragonflies and adders. The strange hollows and pits you will see in the woods and the remains of medieval clay pits, used to make pots and bricks.

The entrance to the car park is tricky to spot: it's about 60 yards north of The Cricketers pub, on the opposite side.

Directions

- A. From the car park on Mill Green Common (P) head north west, away from the road, wending your way through the gorse bushes along a well-trodden path (1).
- B. After about 250 yards you will reach the Mapletree Lane. Continue ahead along this unsurfaced road, with the woods on your right and a few houses ahead on the left (2).
- C. Walk along this muddy and pitted road for almost half a mile until you reach a right turn (3) after which the woods on the right stop and there is a field beyond the hedge. This is the ancient assart, or forest clearing, in which a hermitage once stood. The boundaries of the assart have barely changed since medieval times.
- D. Continue straight ahead along the track for a further 250 yards passing a couple of houses on the left and then an ineffective vehicle barrier. As you approach the woods (called Birch Spring), there is a junction on the left. Ignore this, and head straight on north west along the very muddy path into the woods, passing an information board on your left (4).
- E. Keep going along the track through the woods in almost a straight line for a little over half a mile, to the roadside. There is another information board here on the right. Cross the road and continue ahead through Parsons Spring woods along the concreted Old Barns Lane (5).
- F. After a quarter of a mile you will see open ground ahead through the trees on the right. Turn hard right through a wooden barrier and along the footpath, initially at the edge of the woods (6).
- G. Follow the footpath east south east for about a quarter of a mile to the roadside, where the path disintegrates into a pond. Unless it's been very dry, it might be easier to scramble over the woodbank to the left of the wooden barrier, rather than wade through the proper exit. Cross the road and walk along Metsons Lane opposite, towards Barrow Farm R.D.A. (7).
- H. Continue along this lane past the riding school, keeping an eye out for the slightly unusual fauna lurking in the trees.
- I. You will pass Metsons Cottage on your left then, 150 yards later, emerge from the trees to see a beautiful fishing lake on the right. Continue along the track passing J Oddy & Sons Fencing Suppliers on the left. At the roadside, turn left to head north along the Ingatestone Road (8).
- J. 65 yards later, turn right into Cock Lane. After 250 yards you come to a Y-junction. Bear right past a bungalow (9).
- K. 70 yards later the road stops. Go straight on into a field along a bridleway. Almost immediately, leave the bridleway by turning left into the woods along a footpath (10). These woods and nearby fields are home to a large herd of wild fallow deer.

L. Follow a wide, fairly straight path through the woods heading east south east. After a third of a mile, you will reach a crossroads. Go straight on across a wide rutted track to continue along a narrow footpath. 100 yards later, cross a small wooden footbridge and continue along the path to the edge of the woods. Cross another footbridge to exit the woods.

M. There is a wide open field ahead of you, and sometimes the way ahead is not clear. You will see a copse of tall trees ahead on the left (called Finches Spring): aim towards the right-hand edge of these trees (11). As you get closer you will see the copse is square shaped: head for the nearest corner where you should see a waymarker, then keep straight on with the wood on your left.

N. 50 yards later cross a footbridge in the facing hedge and walk up the slope aiming just to the right of a large oak tree (12).

O. Turn right along the road, passing a couple of houses on the left, then after 70 yards, turn left over an impressive footbridge and along an enclosed footpath (13).

P. When you emerge into a field 50 yards later, keep going south up the field edge with a hedge and ditch on your right. Shortly after you pass a dead tree, the field edge curves round to the right before disappearing completely. Continue along the field boundary and as you ascend, have a glance back behind you – there are some lovely views from up here. Aim for the right hand edge of a patch of woodland, and climb over the first of four stiles (14).

Q. Walk along the field edge with the woods on your left, climbing over another (very awkward) stile 90 yards later. Continue beside the woods to a third stile in the south west corner of a field beside a giant tree stump. Climb over the stile into the woods (15) and 70 yards later, cross the final stile onto a wide track which forms part of the route of St Peter's Way.

R. Continue along the unmade road for a few yards towards a house on the right. You will pass a three-trunked tree on the right. If you want to go to The Viper, keep walking along this road to Mill Green Road and the pub is just across the road.

S. To continue the route, look for a footpath on the left just past the three-trunked tree into another patch of woodland. This path is easy to miss: it's about 70 yards past the barrier, and a few yards to the right of a telegraph pole (16). The wooded area is part of Mill Green Common. Get your bearings before you go in: it's easy to get lost. Some people have been wandering around in there since the 80's, still wearing their shell suits and trainers, and listening to Depeche Mode on their Sony Walkman. If you meet one, he'll ask for batteries. Don't give him any. Batteries act as a gateway drug to much worse music: he'll end up lying under a bush listening to Rick Astley (or even Dollar) and weeping silently.

T. Head roughly south west through the woods, as best you can. Mill Green Common is an 'open access' area meaning you are free to walk wherever you wish, and don't have to stay on the footpath. This is handy, as the footpath signs peter out after a hundred yards or so. Also, the terrain is complex: steep slopes, ponds, and thick bushes conspire to ensure you cannot walk in a straight line. You will probably have to retrace your steps more than once.

U. At some point you should emerge onto Mill Green Road. Turn left, towards the village (17). Continue south along Mill Green Road back to the car park entrance. The Cricketers is 50 yards south of the car park entrance, on the opposite side of the road.

[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](#).