

Lifewalks Ramble

Ongar Loop.

This is a circular walk at 3.9 miles (6.27km) long and covering some beautiful open countryside with good views and points of interest. Starting at Shelley Shops, St Peters Avenue, Ongar, Essex. CM5 0BT.

Most of the walk is round the edge of farmers' fields on earth paths which can be uneven and muddy after wet weather. 30% of the route is on tarmacked or hard paths and mostly flat with a couple of slight inclines. With a busy road crossing the A414, care needs to be taken when crossing this busy road. Be aware of vehicles along the quieter roads. If you require further copies of this walk please e-mail our Community Engagement Officer Karen Murray on kmurray@eppingforestdc.gov.uk We are following part of Epping Forest District Councils Countrycares route. You can access the extended route on <http://www.visiteppingforest.org/things-to-do/greensted-country-walk-p1727161>

1. Stand with your back to the shops, Look to the right and you will see a path to the left of the play area, follow this path.
2. At the end of the path turn left onto Queensway Rd. Walk along and look to your right you will see a telegraph pole on the other side of the road, turn right here down the path between the hedges/houses.
3. You then come to the end of this path and onto another road, cross the road and continue straight on through the houses
4. You come to another Road (Acres Ave), cross the road and head towards the carpark, go to the right of the car park and follow the path, keeping the car park on your left.
5. At end of path turn left. Follow path until you reach the road edge. You will see a path opposite to your right (sign posted Public Footpath).
6. Walk down this path, keeping the conifers on your left. Follow path round to left. You will then see immediately to your right a dirt path. Take this path through the wooded area. Running parallel with Cripsey Brook.
7. Turn right at next path junction and follow round to the left. Head towards the road (A414)
8. Go through the arched metal posts, you are on the road (A414) so **take care** this is a very busy road. Turn right and walk a little way you will see on the opposite side of the road the Vojan Indian restaurant. When you are parallel with the restaurant, make sure you have a clear view in both directions to be able to cross this **busy road**. You can now leave the busy road behind you and enjoy some beautiful Essex countryside.
9. With the Vojan restaurant on your left walk along the country lane (Penson's Lane) in front of you, be aware of any vehicle's that may occasionally use this lane.
10. As you walk along you will notice a slight incline and if you haven't already smelt the crop you can look over to your right and you will notice a farmer's field full of brassicas.
11. Continue along the Penson's Lane which bares to the left and you then find yourself passing over the Epping and Ongar Heritage Railway, This part of the line was an extension from Loughton which was completed in 1865 and it was planned to go on to Chelmsford but this never happened and the line eventually closed in 1994. Luckily an enthusiastic band of volunteers have brought the line back to life. If your lucky you might see a vintage train pass beneath you.
12. Carry on, along the lane, if you look to the left in the distance just above the trees you can just make out the steeple of Greensted Church, which you will see later on close up.
13. You will come to a large white house on your left and you will see two concrete bollards and a way marker. Continue through these following the yellow arrow for public footpath and turn immediately left. (Keeping the white house on your left) You walk around the boundary of the house and will notice a lovely oak tree.

14. Continue along hedge line, as you enter the field, ignore the grass path to your right. Continue straight on. You then come into an open field, with some open views across the ploughed fields. You will see a gate in the distance in front of you.
15. You go through the gate following the public foot path, you might see some sheep in the field. You come out onto the top end of Church Lane. You continue along the lane towards the church ignoring the path/bridge on your right.
16. You will walk through a small hamlet and its worth stopping and looking at the ancient Greensted Church It is the oldest wooden church in the world, and was built around 1060 AD, although excavations suggest there have been buildings here since around 500 AD. The oldest grave is next to the entrance to the church, and is of a twelfth century Crusader, thought to be a bowman.
17. Turn Left at church, along the public footpath, you will see the old vicarage on your right (Church Lodge). Then turn right through a metal fence
18. You might pick up a few conkers here if there are any left. Follow along the edge of a barbed wire fence on your right. You might see some horses in the fields here.
19. You come to the end of the barbed wire fence and you continue straight across a tarmacked path to a foot bridge. Continue straight on, following the public foot path sign.
20. As you walk along the path through the open field you will see a line of houses in the distance. You come to a crossroads in the path. (You might want to continue straight on through the gate ahead of you into Ongar town centre and grab a snack) But if your happy to carry on then...
21. Take the lefthand path following the line of Oak trees, keeping these on your left and the houses on your right.
22. You get to the end of the field and line of oak trees (The railway line is in front of you behind the wire fence). Follow the path round to the left keeping the railway line on your right.
23. You come to the corner of the field and you go over a small foot bridge.
24. Immediately turn right going under the railway line.
25. You then follow the line of Cripsey Brook (keeping the stream on your immediate right) (You can follow the Cripsey Brook to Moreton, round North Weald, and to near Thornwood Common where it begins. Ongar Castle was built at the point where the Cripsey Brook joins the River Roding, which then flows all the way to the Thames in Barking.)
26. You will then exit the field back on to the **busy** A414 so **take care** this is a very busy road. Make sure you have a clear view in both directions to be able to cross this **busy road**.
27. Turn right walk along the road and immediately turn left through the arched metal posts.
28. Retrace your footsteps back to Shelley Shops

