

THE ANCHOR AND DANBURY COMMONS, ESSEX

A 5 mile circular pub walk from The Anchor in the village of Danbury, Essex.

The Anchor is the epitome of an English Country Inn, boasting beautiful traditional beams and a warm welcoming atmosphere, the perfect setting for post-walk refreshments. The walking route explores the network of beautiful commons, woodlands and heaths that surround the village. Along the way there are captivating views and plenty of wildlife to discover. You will enjoy bluebells in the spring, birdsong in the summer, rich woodland colours in the autumn and frost-covered heather in the winter months.

Getting there

Danbury is located 5 miles east of Chelmsford in Essex. The walk starts and finishes at The Anchor, at the eastern edge of the village, on Runsell Green. If you are coming by public transport, there are bus stops on the A414 close to Runsell Green. If you are coming by car, the pub has its own large car park.

Approximate post code **CM3 4QZ**.

Walk Sections



Start to Forest House

Standing at the car park entrance with your back to the pub, turn left to follow the roadside path, passing the triangular green on your left. Just before you reach the road junction ahead, turn right into Runsell Lane. Follow this lane, taking care of any traffic, for about 250 metres to reach the first side lane on the right, Twitty Fee (signed to the Timber Yard).



Challenging Terrain

**5 miles
Circular
2.5 hours**

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Access Notes



- 1. The walk includes several climbs and descents throughout.*
- 2. The woodland stretches can be very muddy after rain and in the wetter months, so good boots are a must (and wellies with grips are recommended in winter).*
- 3. There are a few stretches along village lanes, so take care of traffic at these points. You will need to negotiate some kissing gates, but there are no stiles and no livestock on route.*
- 4. The commons have a complex network of multiple paths, so we recommend using the live GPS-based map on the iFootpath App to help with navigation.*

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Turn right onto this small side lane and follow it between hedgerows. You will pass Brocks Farm on your right and then the timber yard on your left. Simply continue on the narrow access lane and, after a further 220 metres, you will see a pair of metal vehicle gates and a kissing gate on your left (an entrance for Scrubs Wood). Do NOT take this gate, instead continue on the lane for a further 25 metres then turn left onto the signed public bridleway immediately before Forest House.

1 → 2 Forest House to Spring Elms Lane



This bridleway (which can be muddy in part) leads you into the woodland known as Poors' Piece. At the bottom of the slope, the path leads you on a fenced embankment across a small stream. Keep straight ahead on the main bridleway now climbing uphill. At the top of the slope, you will reach a junction of paths (with a kissing gate into Little Baddow Heath across to your right). Do NOT take this gate, instead bear just slightly right (about 2 o'clock) to join the main woodland path.

Shortly, at the next crossroads, keep straight ahead and follow the main woodland path leading you steadily downhill. At the bottom, the path crosses a stream and then begins to climb again past more woodland. Danbury is ringed by woodland by virtue of its glacial origins, the soil being unsuitable for the arable farming typical of most of Essex. Simply keep ahead along the woodland path and then a vehicle access track, and eventually you will emerge out to a junction with Spring Elms Lane.

2 → 3 Spring Elms Lane to Warren Viewpoint



Turn right and then immediately left to join the signed public footpath leading you into the next section of woodland. Follow the white-topped waymarker posts guiding you along the path, to join a stretch with a solid (close-boarded) wooden fence on

your right. A few paces later, do NOT take the signed footpath to the left, instead keep ahead on the path between fences. Stay with the path as it turns right, eventually emerging to a T-junction with a bridleway track, with a white property directly ahead.

Turn left to join the bridleway and follow this between wire fences, swinging steadily left. You will reach a crossroads of paths (with a fingerpost on your right). Turn left to continue on the bridleway. After just 50 metres, where the path swings left, we turn off the main path to take a quick detour to a viewpoint.

Turn sharp right (almost back on yourself) to join a narrow unsigned path, emerging to a small junction with two large oak trees on your left. Turn left here and you will quickly emerge into a grass clearing with a bench. This is a lovely spot to enjoy the views down the heather hills. The far-reaching view glimpsed across the top of the tree canopy of is a reminder of the hillside position that Danbury enjoys.

3 → 4 Warren Viewpoint to Blakes Wood



When you have finished at the bench viewpoint, retrace your steps back to the main bridleway and turn right to continue along this. The woodland path leads you directly out to the front of a white property on your left, The Old Rodney. Bear right to walk along the property's access driveway and, where the driveway forks, take the left-hand branch. At the junction with the road, cross over with care and walk ahead along Mill Lane.

You will emerge to a junction with another road, The Ridge. Taking care of traffic, turn right for 40 metres then cross over with care to turn left into Parsonage Lane (signed as a public footpath). Follow the lane passing between properties and then passing a sports field on your left. Continue on the residential lane as it bends right and passes a Prep School on your right. Just beyond this you will come to a fork. Take the left-hand branch and continue down the hill to reach the final property, Blakesmead. Take the path running to the right of this property, passing through a kissing gate into the National Trust site of Blakes Wood.

4 → 5 Blakes Wood to Lingwood Common

Walk ahead on the woodland path, with the fence for Blakesmead on your left. Where this fence ends, you will reach a path crossroads with a bench. Take the middle path here, passing the bench immediately on your left. Continue to the next path junction (with a waymarker post on your right). Take the left-hand fork here, signed with the yellow arrow for the public footpath.



The footpath leads you gently downhill, passing between beautiful old coppiced trees. Blakes Wood is managed by the National Trust and is ancient woodland. In spring there is a beautiful carpet of wood anemones and bluebells with some rare orchids. The woodland is home to lots of songbirds and you may be lucky enough to hear nightingales singing from the coppiced trees.

At the bottom of the slope, follow the main track as it swings left, crossing a small stream and then beginning to climb. At the top, a kissing gate leads you into the parking area. Leave the car park via the vehicle entrance and, taking care of traffic, turn right along the lane. Continue past four properties on your left, the last one being The White House. Just 30 metres after The White House, turn left onto a track signed as a public bridleway. This bridleway soon leads you past another National Trust sign, marking the start of Lingwood Common.

5 → 6 Lingwood Common to Runsell Lane



Follow the bridleway ahead through the common, with beautiful views across the valley to your right. You will be able to see the spire of the village medieval church at the far side of the valley. The church sits at the second highest point in south east Essex, 112m above sea level, and the spire rises a further 36m.

Part way along, at the top of a rise, you will come to a handy bench on your left – the perfect spot to pause and enjoy the tranquil setting. Ling is another term for heather and so, as the name implies, Lingwood Common is a place where heath and woodland meet.

Continue ahead on the main bridleway, undulating through the common and crossing several small streams along the way. At the crossroads by a second bench, continue straight ahead on the public bridleway now passing through the woodland part of the common (another hotspot for bluebells in the spring). Eventually you will emerge out into the parking area, directly opposite Runsell Lane.

6 → 7 Runsell Lane to End



Cross over the main road and walk ahead along Runsell Lane, taking care of any traffic along this residential lane. You may remember the name Runsell Lane from the early part of our walk and indeed this lane will be taking us almost all the way back to The Anchor. The lane leads you between houses and then past Scrubs Wood Nature Reserve on your left.

You will emerge to a T-junction. Turn left and follow the main lane as it bears right, soon continuing between open crop fields (although some of this land is earmarked for future development). Ignore the left turn into Twitty Fee (which was used on the outward leg), instead continue to reach the T-junction at the end of the road. Cross over to the far pavement, turn left along this and it will lead you directly back to The Anchor for some well-earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

Remember...the best way of following our walking guides is to use the iFootpath App (iOS and Android) where you will have all the information in the palm of your hand and see your exact location on the live map as you travel

