

Freedom Pass circuit

Section 36: Epping to Shenfield (northerly route)

Distance: 15.57 mi, 24.91 km (avoiding Brentwood 1); 15.49 mi, 24.78 km (avoiding Brentwood 2); 16.96 mi, 27.14 km (via Brentwood)

Introduction

This is a very long section. The first half goes east to Chipping Ongar, following the Essex Way for much of the way. It then goes south-east. At Kelvedon Hatch, there is a choice of routes: a more direct one to Shenfield, or a longer one with a diversion south via Brentwood. The disadvantage of the direct route is that it includes one of two very nasty crossings of the Brentwood Bypass, both equally lethal.

Besides the start and end, there is a pub at Toot Hill, several places to eat in Ongar and two pubs in Kelvedon Hatch. The gap between Toot Hill and Ongar is about 1 hour, and that between Ongar and Kelvedon Hatch is about 2 hours.

Directions

We start on the Essex Way. Leave Epping Station on the east side, by platform 1; or, if that is not possible, turn right out of the main entrance and then turn right again over the footbridge.

Walk to the end of Hillcrest Way.

Turn right down the main road.

Take the footpath on the left, immediately after Bower Court.

Cross one field and carry on along the edge of another.

About halfway along, turn left and immediately bear right (not fully right).

Enter a line of trees, and turn left along a bridleway.

Follow this bridleway between the trees to the next road, which is Coopersale Street.

Turn right along it.

When it bends right, take the footpath left, in front of the wooden fence.

Follow this path as it gently ascends.

When it arrives at the middle of one side of a field, bear left towards the middle of the left-hand side.

Bear right along the edge of the field.

The path levels out, and then enters Gernon Bushes.

Just inside the wood after a footbridge, turn right.

Follow the path, roughly parallel to the edge of the wood, down to a couple of footbridges.

Then bear left, and ascend diagonally, ending up alongside the M11.

After a kissing gate, turn right.

Cross over the M11, and leave Gernon Bushes.

Keep straight ahead until the path enters another wood, at the corner of a field.

The path now goes in a dead straight line for several miles. The first half of this stretch is through woods, the remainder is among fields.

Towards the end, when the main track starts to bend left, turn off right and cross a field diagonally.

Bear right and then follow the path straight ahead until you reach a road.

Turn left along it.

Carry on past Toot Hill Road on the right and Mill Lane on the left, and go straight on, past The Cottage, when the road bends left.

Then turn right.

Shortly after, cross over the ditch on the right and carry on alongside it.

Keep straight ahead on this path.

Halfway along the left-hand edge of a large field you come to a fork. Bear left.

Keep straight on when the Essex Way turns off left.

At the road turn left then immediately right.

Follow this path along the edge of a couple of fields.

After a pond on the right (which may be empty), cross over the ditch and carry on with the ditch on your left.

Just before the end of the next field, cross over the ditch again and carry on with it on your right.

Go straight across the entrance to a school and a track on the right, along a pavement.

Turn right along a footpath between wooden fences.

Turn left at the end, and follow the road round to the right.

Take the next left, which is Green Walk.

At the end, turn right up the main road, then left on the track after 25A&B. (Turn left down the main road, to reach the centre of Chipping Ongar, where there are places to eat.)

At the end, turn left, then right along Longfields, then left along the footpath between nos. 23 and 25.

When you reach the stream, do not go over it, but bear right (not sharp right), on a path alongside the stream.

After passing a kissing gate, head towards a metal footbridge over the Roding.

Do not cross the Roding, but carry on alongside it.

Go through a kissing gate a little to the right of the road bridge, cross the road, and carry on along the footpath opposite.

Previously this next stretch was so overgrown with brambles as to be impassable

without have secateurs. But more recently it has become much easier. However, there are still a lot of nettles to negotiate. Keep on the main path between the River Roding on the left and a ditch on the right, as far as a footbridge.

After the footbridge, cross a field diagonally, aiming towards a white post with a red cap.

On reaching it clamber up the embankment and turn left along the pavement.

Pass two wooden gates, then turn left into Great Myles.

Carry on straight ahead along the grass track when the main track bends left at a junction with another track on the right.

The path is very overgrown at first. You may find it easier to make your way along the edge of the field on your right.

Later a farm track joins from the left. Keep going parallel to a stream on the left.

At a T junction, turn left then right alongside the stream (do not cross it). Head towards the radio mast on the horizon.

Cross a ditch.

At the next ditch, which has a wire netting fence beyond, turn right. Shortly, at the end of the fence, turn left across the ditch, then immediately left again between two wire netting fences.

After a gate, turn right.

Follow the path over a footbridge into the wood.

Keep on the main path, with a wire-netting fence on your right.

Eventually you will have open country on the right.

On leaving the wood, cross the road, and carry on along Mill Lane.

Turn left along the main road and then bear left along Swan Lane.

Avoiding Brentwood:

Turn left at the end, past the pond, then right into Great Fox Meadow.

Almost immediately, go down the footpath to the left of Burrows House.

Turn right at the end.

At the end, carry straight on along the footpath on the left of the hedge.

On entering a field, go straight on towards a red gate.

After the gate, bear right.

Take the next turning left.

Carry straight on across Warren Lane.

At the left bend, carry straight on across the field on the right, towards a gap in

Via Brentwood:

Take the next turning right through the staggered barriers.

At the end, turn right, then turn left into a field before the main road.

Cross the field.

As you approach the far side, turn right then bear left along the edge of the field.

Once in the wood, turn left along a track.

When you reach a road, turn right.

Turn left onto a cobbled road.

Just before a five-bar gate, take the footpath on the left.

the trees.

Carry on along the left-hand edge of the next field, cross to the right-hand edge of the field on the left, and then back again at the corner.

Turn left along the edge of the next field and carry on round the first corner.

Carry straight on across Day's Lane.

Keep straight ahead until you reach a footpath (which may be hard to see) across the middle of the field on the right. Cross the field to a footbridge, then turn left.

A little later, cross the field on the right to a barely visible gap on the other side.

Carry straight on across the next field, aiming for the corner of the hedge.

Carry straight on alongside the hedge.

Turn left at the T junction.

Go over the stile on the right and carry on straight ahead.

Go over a stile.

Make for the left-hand corner of the next field, and go over another stile.

Turn left along the edge of the next field, and turn right at the corner.

Carry on along the edge of the field, shortly joining a minor road.

At the end, turn left along Doddinghurst Road.

Turn right into Stable Field.

Carry on past the farm buildings and stables.

Climb over a fence at the end, and turn right along the edge of a field.

Turn left before the entrance to another field,

At the end, turn right along Doddinghurst Road, then left opposite Hatch Road.

At the end, bear slightly left across the field and over a footbridge.

Bear slightly right across the next field.

Bear slightly right again across the third field.

Go straight across the first bit of golf course, then keep straight ahead down a gentle slope, between blue posts, to the corner of a wood.

Bear left onto a track through the wood.

At the end, carry on straight ahead on a tarmac path which bends right.

Cross the end of a tarmac path.

Bear left onto a residential road.

At the crossroads, keep straight ahead along a by-way.

Briefly join a tarmac road. When it bends right, keep straight ahead through staggered barriers.

At the mini-roundabout, turn left along Orchard Lane.

At the end, bear left.

Bear right onto Crow Green Lane.

Turn right into Catherine Close.

On the right bend, take the footpath on the left.

Turn left at the next road, and pass Priory Close.

Take the footpath on the right, between nos. 87c and 93.

Keep straight ahead along King Georges Road, and then another footpath.

When you reach the A12, turn right.

Turn left and cross the A12.

Take the footpath on the right, just before the church.

Turn left behind the church, and carry on along Costead Manor Road.

Turn left into Cleves Avenue.

On a sharp right bend, carry straight on into a small park.

On the other side, go straight ahead along the path opposite.

carrying on along the edge of the first field. Go over a stile, cross a ditch, and keep straight on. When the edge of the field bends left, turn right and cross the field. Cross the dual carriageway. Carry on along the left-hand edge of the field, later crossing to the right-hand edge of the neighbouring field.	Get across the dual carriageway somehow. Bear left across the next field, aiming for the internal corner. Carry on along the edge of the field, and then along the path alongside.	At the T junction turn right, then take the second or third turning left. Cross the road and carry on up Vine Way. At the end, turn right. At the end, turn left. At the end, turn left. At the mini-roundabout, turn right into North Road. Turn left into Wellesley Road. At the end, turn right. Cross the main road, and carry on along Burland Road. At the end, turn left. Just past Highland Avenue on the left, take the second of two footpaths on the right, into Marrymeade Park. Keep straight ahead on this path all the way to the end. Turn left at the road, and follow it round to the right. Just after the left bend, take the footpath on the right. Cross the main road and turn left along the pavement. Turn right along Shorter Avenue, then left along Margaret Avenue.
Follow the path into the trees, where it bends left and then right. At the road turn right. Turn left into Butterfly Meadow. Keep straight ahead up the slope past the corner of the churchyard. Bear left across the corner of a cricketfield, then cross another one diagonally. Exit through the carpark, cross the main road, and go down Tudor Close. Carry on along the footpath. At the end, turn left.		
Go straight across Crossways into Hunter Avenue, then take the service road on the right. Shenfield Station is on the opposite side of the main road.		