



# A wee wander, Bourne Mill circular walk, Colchester, Essex

## Walking trail

When Bourne Mill was a fulling mill, in order to wash oils out of the cloth, urine was used in the fulling process. This may well have come from the local inns. This circular three-mile walk takes you through some of Colchester's country nooks, visiting the River Colne, Bourne Valley, Cannock Mill, Distillery Pond and Almshouses in Winsley Square, before visiting the streets and pubs that were built in the mid to late 19th century.

Start: Bourne Mill car park TM 00565 23846

- 1 Starting from the Bourne Mill entrance, turn right and look for a footpath which goes down between buildings about 20 metres away.
- 2 Follow this footpath and take the path to the left which goes along a boardwalk next to the River Colne.
- 3 This path is known locally as the Bourne Valley; you will pass some ponds, so stop to look at the birdlife for a moment; there is a lot going on.

## Birdlife

There are a number of birds that call these ponds home, such as mallard and tufted ducks, coots, and swans, to name but a few.

In partnership with



Bourne Mill, Bourne Road, Colchester, Essex,  
CO2 8RT

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Easy

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1 hour 15 mins

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3 miles (4.8 km)

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Landranger 168

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- 4 Continue along this path towards Old Heath Road, and as you reach Old Heath Road you will notice Cannock Mill on your right. Turn right, and cross the road immediately (opposite Cannock Mill House). Continue along the river on Distillery Lane.

#### Cannock Mill

The Crown leased Cannock Mill in 1575 to Edward Lucas, who in 1576 assigned the lease to Sir Thomas Lucas. Sir Thomas bought the mill soon after taking out a new lease in 1594, and rebuilt it c. 1600 as an overshot mill with two ponds. It was a corn mill in 1632, and included a fulling mill in 1651. It seems to have been a corn mill, perhaps with a fulling mill, in the 18th century; in 1803 and in the 1820s it was a flour and fulling mill. The mill remained in the Lucas family until 1917. It was rebuilt in 1845, as an overshot mill fed by iron pipes from a high pond; new buildings were erected in 1875. It worked as a corn mill until the later 1940s when it became a store for Cramphorn's. The building was restored in 1973.

- 5 Continuing along the track until you reach the Distillery Ponds, again stop and watch the wildlife in the calm of the Mill pond. Hull Mill is at the end of the Pond; this was later the Distillery and is now rather attractive living accommodation. Pass in front of the building and follow the path round to the right. After about 50m you will see a yellow finger post signalling a footpath which goes up to the left.

#### Hull Mill

Hull mill, below Cannock mill on the stream south of the town, was recorded by that name in 1438; was a corn mill through the middle-ages; had a fulling mill added, and later an oil mill. It was all demolished in 1896, so the current building has been built on the site since that time. It is now all part of the Distillery Pond housing development.

- 6 Take this footpath to the left. This is quite a narrow footpath, and has a gradual incline. Continuing, pass 'Grants Meadow Allotments' on your right. When reaching the top of the rise, you will reach the end of Recreation Road, (adjoining Smith's Field). Turn left into Recreation Road, and follow it until you meet Old Heath Road.

- 7 When reaching Old Heath Road, directly opposite is Winsley Square, a group of Almshouses, all of which have been 'gifted' and each house indicates from where. It is worth taking a few minutes to wander around.

### Winsley's Charity

Established by the Will of Arthur Winsley, who died on 30th January 1726, the charity has been in existence now for over 290 years. Along with the original Almshouses, a Chapel was also built, which is still in use today. Within his Will, Arthur Winsley stipulated that a "Good Preacher" should be paid to preach a sermon every New Year, a tradition which continues to this day. There are now 80 Almshouses, but originally there were just twelve, built for 'Twelve Ancient Men that have lived well, and fallen into decay'. Wives being originally evicted on the death of their husband! The square became Grade 2 listed in 1950.

- 8 When coming back out onto Old Heath Road, turn left and follow the road towards Colchester. Pass a playground and park on your right on Old Heath Road; continuing past the Bourne Road/Wimpole Road crossroads, the road now becomes Military Road; keep going until you reach the first wee stop – the Royal Mortar, at No. 120 Military road.

### The Royal Mortar

Built in 1862, before many of the houses around it, the pub was built as part of 'New Town' and is part of the group of pubs in Colchester with military names. The Leech family ran it from 1891-1933.

- 9 Continue along Military Road to wee stop 2, which is the British Grenadier at no.67.

### British Grenadier

Its earliest known date is 1859. The first licensee was John Neville certainly until at least 1874.

- 10** From the British Grenadier continue along the road until turning into Roberts Road on your left. Take the first footpath on your right into Parade Square; turn left into the square and then right along Sargeant Street. Follow Sargeant Street round to the the left and follow it all the way to the end, and continuing straight ahead along a footpath through to the Mersea Road. At Mersea Road, turn right and walk 100 metres to Lucas road on the right, and wee stop 3 the 'Odd One Out' at 28 Mersea road.

#### the Odd One Out

Affectionately known as 'the Oddie'. Step inside the door and get transported back in time; it really is a traditional pub; no mobile phones, a choice of ales and whiskies – it is worth a look! The Pub was previously known as 'the Mermaid', and the current licensee has been there for 30 years. This image is circa 1980's.

- 11** From the Oddie, turn round and walk back along Mersea Road for 200m until you reach Berechurch road, 2nd turning on your right. Follow Berechurch road until you reach the junction with Meyrick Crescent and Wee Stop number 4 nestles in the junction.

#### The Britannia

This pub was built in 1865; has been taken over by a Gurkha family, and is now a Nepalese Restaurant and Bar. Has very good reviews.

- 12** Leaving the Britannia on your left, continue along Meyrick Crescent. Turn right when you reach Mersea Road and next wee stop 5 is the Grapes on the left at 87 Mersea road.

#### The Grapes

The Grapes was 'known' in 1876, but its building date is unclear. Clearly this building looks relatively new.

- 13** On leaving the Grapes, continue along Mersea Road; pass Bourne Road on your left and then cross over, and where the road bears to the right, go through a gap on the left onto a footpath and follow the path along the south side of Bourne Mill ponds. Turn left and follow the path up to Stalin Road continuing round the road until you meet a footpath which goes down Bourne Valley to meet the footpath where you started. End at Bourne Mill entrance.

### **Bourne Mill**

Some lovely views of Bourne Mill from the south side of the ponds.

End: Bourne Mill car park TM 00565 23846