

8 THORNDON PARK

Enjoy the variety of trees and woodlands found in the park, from the majestic grand old oaks to the regimented Scots pine plantations. Whatever the season the Country Park offers a unique atmosphere with plenty to delight the visitor.



Distance and time taken
4.5 miles (7 km) – 2.5 hours.

Going
Hilly in places.

Transport
For details of public transport for this walk contact the Travel Line on 0870 608 2608.

Habitat types
Deer parkland and conifer woodland.

Ordnance Survey Map
Explorer 175.

Parking
Thorndon Countryside Centre, car parking charges apply.

Refreshments
Thorndon Countryside Centre.

Dogs
If you take your dog with you, please keep it under control, preferably on a lead.

More about Thorndon Country Park

Thorndon Country Park is 400 acres of attractive woods and parkland. The Park contains a wide diversity of landscapes. Within a short distance of the car park you can find woodland, deer pasture, hay meadows, marshland and ponds rich in wildlife. So exceptional is the natural history of Thorndon Park that most of it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Thorndon Countryside Centre

Visit Thorndon Countryside Centre for refreshments and souvenirs. You will also find leaflets and displays to help you discover more about the Country Park and surrounding countryside.

The Countryside Centre is open in summer 10am to 5pm and in winter from 10am to dusk.



Thorndon Countryside Centre

The centre is a joint venture between Essex County Council and Essex Wildlife Trust. Much of the wood used in the building's construction was salvaged from Thorndon's own storm-damaged trees. The centre holds informative displays and light refreshments are on sale.

The Deer Park

The magnificent heavy-headed pollarded oaks and hornbeams are a reminder that this area was a deer park in the 18th century.

Childerditch Pond

This is an artificial pond created many hundreds of years ago by Cistercian monks attached to Coggeshall Abbey. The pond was only dug twice this century; the first time by German prisoners of war after World War One and the second time mechanically in 1976. Keep a watch out for kingfishers and herons.

The Woodland Trust has purchased 135 acres of Hatch Farm, creating a link between Thorndon's North and South Parks. The Trust will be planting trees to recreate a parkland landscape.

Thorndon Park Golf Course

Perhaps the only golf course landscaped by Capability Brown! Actually the course was started in the 1920s on land sold by the Petre family. The 9th Lord did pay Brown the sum of £5,000 in 1760 to landscape the area.

Childerditch Field

This field was last ploughed in 1970 and has since been used for grazing cattle. Notice the landslips which have developed on the steep clay slopes. The marshy area at the bottom of the field is home to some unusual plants such as wild angelica and fleabane. The field is also one of the best in the district for butterflies.

Old Hall Pond

This was the fish pond for the old Thorndon Hall. In the early 18th century it was incorporated into a very elaborate landscape garden plan for the 8th Lord Petre. To satisfy his passion for horticulture the 8th Lord built huge hot houses along the western bank of the pond and successfully grew pineapples and bananas!

The Crinoline Lady

A visit to the park wouldn't be complete without seeing the Crinoline Lady, the name given to a very old oak pollard. The strange growth around the base of the tree is said to be caused by generations of deer rubbing the velvet from their newly-grown antlers in summer.

Jury Hill

A good place for a seat if ever there was one! From here there are fine views across the Thames Valley to Kent.

