

# THRIFT WOOD

Enjoy views of ancient woodlands and open countryside as you explore some of the famous Green Lanes of Essex. This corner of the county is home to ancient manor houses and relics of the Wildwood which once covered Essex.



## Distance and time taken

Complete Circuit – 5.5 miles (9 km) – 3 hours  
southern route via Emberson's Wood and  
Wickham's Farm – 5 miles (8 km) – 3 hours

## Going

Flat. Wear strong, comfy boots or wellies as  
bridleways and paths across farmland may be  
muddy after rain.

## Transport

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

## Habitat types

Ancient woodlands and hedgerows.

## Ordnance Survey Map

Explorer 183.

## Parking

Horseshoe Nurseries, White Elm Road, Bicknacre  
by kind permission of the Manager. Open seven  
days a week but the car park closes at 6pm.  
Also gravel lay-bys – Main Road, Bicknacre

## Refreshments

Pubs in Bicknacre and Cock Clarks.  
Local shops and post offices in both villages.

## Dogs

Keep dogs on a lead, especially where sheep are  
grazing around Wickers Farm. Close all gates.

## More about Thrift Wood

Formerly known as Hall Wood, these 48 acres of ancient woodland are leased and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The woodland consists of hornbeam coppice with oak standards. Other trees to look out for include birch, ash, coppiced sweet chestnut and wild service tree. The reintroduction of coppicing has enhanced the plant and animal life in the woodland and results in a colourful display of bluebells and wood anemones in the spring. The most important woodland butterfly is the heath fritillary which was introduced by the Trust in 1984. This attractive butterfly became extinct in Essex by the end of the 19th century due to the decline of good coppice woodland. The caterpillar of the heath fritillary feeds on common cow-wheat and this plant has increased greatly with the coppicing in Thrift Wood. The introduction of this butterfly has therefore been a success.





### Bicknacre

A Saxon name, meaning Bicca's peoples clearing.

### White Elm Crossroads

It is claimed that a notorious highwayman was executed and buried at the crossroads with an elm stake through his body.

### Folks Wood

In ancient times owners of woods defined their boundaries using banks and ditches. Look out for old coppice stools and animal homes along the length of this ditch.

### Thrift Wood

Look out for cow-wheat and wild service tree, both indicators of ancient woodland. Pregnant women used to eat cow-wheat flour in the belief that their child would be male.

### The Old Salt Road

Salt extraction from sea water was an important industry in the 14th and 15th centuries. This bridleway is the Old Salt Road.

### Jacklett's Farm

Home of Roger Joket in 1310, hence the name. A later owner was Edward de Vere, who some claim to be Shakespeare. To be or not to be, that is the question .....

Many ancient trackways have ancient hedges. Why not try to date a hedge? Pace out 30 strides and count the number of different trees and shrubs (don't include ivy, brambles or climbers). Multiply this number by 100 for a very rough age for the hedge in years, e.g. five species = roughly 500 year old hedge. Look out for blackthorn, hawthorn, elm, ash and oak.

### Hedgerow dating

### Charity Lane

This is a fine example of a Green Lane, for which Essex is famous. The County has over 800km of these tracks which are no longer roads but survive as public rights of way. Many date back to before the Romans. With a rich variety of trees, shrubs and wild flowers, Green Lanes form valuable wildlife 'corridors' through the countryside.

### Emberson's Wood

An ancient woodland. Useful timber was removed in the past. Birch has now taken over.

