



Essex Extras: Stansted Mountfichet

Start and finish: Stansted Mountfichet railway station (TL 514 248) or the castle car park (TL 515 249)

Distance: 8½ miles (13km)

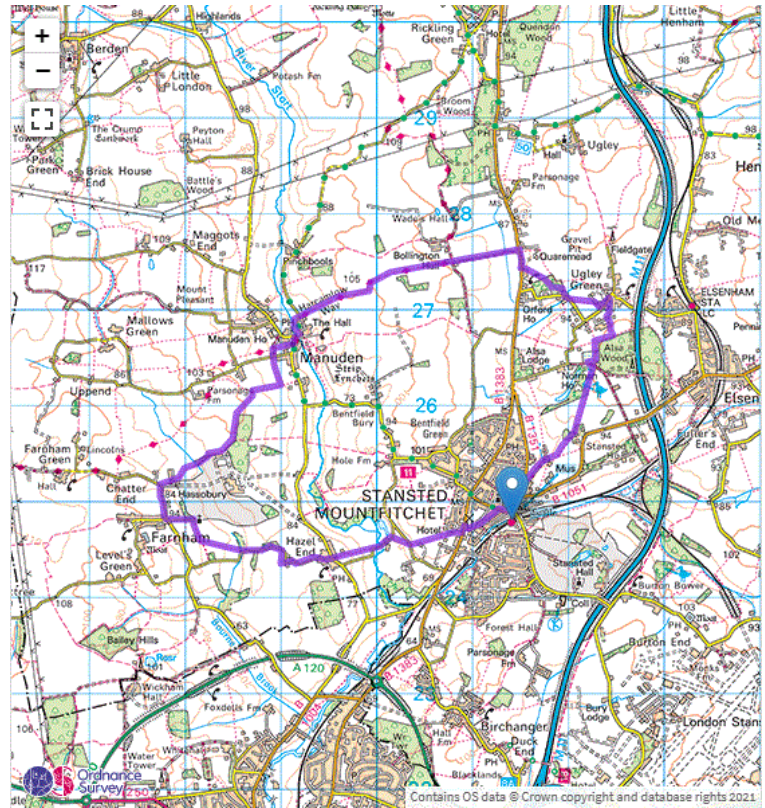
Walking time: 4 hours

Maps: OS Explorer 195, Landranger 167

Transport: rail services from Liverpool Street, Cambridge and Stansted Airport. Buses from Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport (not Sundays)

Refreshments: many options in Stansted Mountfichet; also the [Three Horseshoes](#) at Hazel End and the [Yew Tree](#) at Manuden

This walk links the thriving small town of Stansted Mountfichet to the quiet mediaeval village of Manuden and the famously-misnamed hamlet of Ugley Green.



From either the station or the Castle car park nearby, walk the few yards to the King's Arms pub. Go up Chapel Hill past the post office and turn left into Woodfields, continuing into Mill Side, which leads to the **windmill**. Dating from 1787, the sails can still turn and the machinery is in working order. It is open on Sundays from May to October, and bank holidays except Christmas and new year.

Stansted Mountfichet is even older than its name implies, for there was an Iron Age hill fort here, on which the Norman castle is thought to have been sited. [The present attraction here](#) – mightily popular with school and family groups – gives a good account of life in a ring-and-bailey castle, but it's a recreation: after the castle's sacking by King John in 1215, the villagers found the stone too good to waste.

From here, drop down an unnamed lane to Silver Street and cross this busy road. Turn left, and take the path right at a concrete sign, keeping on the left side of a field when it comes out into the open.

Cross a minor road, and continue half right across a field to another minor road. Turn left here, past the site of a former mill on the River Stort, and continue along a line of oak trees where the road turns left. You soon come out to Farnham cricket ground at the hamlet of **Hazel End** (*pictured left*), and like all good rural pitches it has a pub, the Three Horseshoes. The hamlet has a vineyard too!



Take the minor road to Farnham. Just before a ford take the path right over a footbridge, and 70m beyond a solitary tree turn right to Farnham's isolated church.

At the church turn left onto a lane, then right at a junction. At Saven End Farm take the bridleway on the right, which veers left. Turn left onto a path at marker. Cross a field half right, keeping a copse to your right, and turn right at a marker. Take the track left just before a barn. Keep on over a minor road and turn right into the churchyard at **Manuden**.

Manuden retains its Saxon street layout and remains visually much as it did in mediaeval times, even if former trades such as maltings and leatherwork have moved away; street lights have not been allowed to encroach. If there is an interloper, it's the church, which while retaining Norman features was largely rebuilt between 1863 and 1876. Manuden Hall, just up the road to Clavering, was torched in the Swing riots of 1830.



Turn left onto the road after the churchyard (*pictured left*) and leave the village by the minor road to Rickling Green, turning right in 200m onto a bridleway, passing to the left of 'Mossbury'. There are excellent views back to the village as it climbs. At the top, continue straight over a field, then turn left, keeping a ditch on your right. Continue through a gap in the field corner. At a group of cottages turn left and immediately right down a surfaced lane to the B1383. Cross it and turn right.

In 200m just before a group of houses, turn left, and soon bear half-right. 25m after a belt of birch trees, take the fainter, right-hand path. Turn left when it passes through two concrete posts, and then in 50m turn left to enter **Linnets Wood** in 50m over a low earth mound. Managed by the Woodland Trust, planting started as recently as 1973, but the mixed native broadleaves that have been chosen are already establishing very well. A waymarker confirms your direction, and then 25m after a dedicatory post, veer left to leave the wood at a gap. Turn right here, coming out to concrete and wooden path signs opposite 'Jordans'.

Follow the concrete sign direction (ie left) on a grass strip across a field, forking right onto a drive, and turn left at the road, which brings you to **Ugley Green** – nothing like it sounds; it's delightful, with a comprehensive mix of vernacular architecture: thatch, half-timber, pargetted plaster, weatherboarding, and arts-and-crafts brickwork.

At the phone box, turn sharp right onto Dellows Lane. At 'Lavender Cottage', turn left on the grass path. Turn right at and into the wood, and turn left at the wood corner, now just beside the wood. Reaching a metalled track, turn left, and in 80m turn right onto a headland. On your right is the **Aubrey Buxton nature reserve**, once pleasure park to the nearby mansion of Norman House. Where this turns half-right, continue straight across a field, cross a neck of woodland past a derelict barn, and cross a second field. At 'Yew Tree Cottage' drop downhill and in the dip turn left onto a metalled lane, which soon enters Stansted Mountfichet past the Dog & Duck.