



Walk on the

WILD SIDE



JO VAUGHAN BEGINS THIS MONTH'S NATURE TREK FROM A DELIGHTFUL CORNER OF SUFFOLK

THE volunteer-run Round Plantation Club site, just a short walk from Mildenhall village, is a wildlife haven. Situated in the centre of the local forest, it is peaceful and is always full of different species of birdlife.

Our walk takes us through the local wooded landscape before crossing a large

watercourse and heading into Eriswell. Here you'll find a pub to quench your thirst, with food too if you time your visit right. Walk-wise, the going is easy, so there's no excuse for not taking part, although one section is a little overgrown, so long trousers are a must to save yourself from scratches and stings.

For the remainder of your stay, there are lots of nearby attractions to visit, the closest within walking distance: the Mildenhall and District Museum. With known occupation in these parts dating back as far as the Anglo-Saxons, there's plenty to keep your interest here. The museum tells tales of the village's history and is also home to a number of valuable exhibits. The stories told are a mixed bag of local hangings in the market place, servant-hiring fairs, local market days and various peasant uprisings.



General information

NEAREST CLUB SITE:
Round Plantation Caravan Club Site, Brandon Road, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds IP28 7JE. Tel 01638 713089. Open until 1 October
DISTANCE: 6.5 miles/10.4km
TERRAIN: Good paths
NUMBER OF STILES: Two (the first could be difficult for larger, unfit dogs)
ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 226 – Ely & Newmarket. Long trousers
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy
REFRESHMENTS: The Chequers Pub, Eriswell
TOILETS: None



DIRECTIONS

1 Leave the site via its main entrance road then, at the main road, turn right. Cross the entrance to Woodlands Way, then immediately cross the road and continue ahead down a track (sp bridleway), past a gate marked 'Heath Hatcheries'.

2 When the track bends right, continue straight ahead down a grassy alley, through some wooden bollards. Continue along the footpath at the end of the hedge, and almost immediately turn right down a gravel track into woodland.

3 When the wide main track turns 90 degrees left, carry straight on to a smaller path, into denser woodland. Continue straight ahead, ignoring any forks.

4 On reaching a clearing with a tree in its centre (behind which is a footpath marker post), turn 90 degrees right through the bracken, following the yellow arrow on a black background.

5 Cross the wooden bridge, and then immediately turn left following the public footpath arrow, along the edge of a field. At the end of the field turn right and continue walking along its perimeter, keeping some woodland to your left.

6 At the corner of the field veer slightly left and continue until you cross a wooden bridge. Turn left at the next wooden footpath sign, following a yellow arrow.

7 At the next footpath marker turn right over 'Middle Weir'. After this, continue straight ahead, following the path around to the left just before a field,

walking through an avenue of trees and bushes.

8 At the T-junction turn right, still following a similar grassy path. Keep to the path as it veers to the left towards some houses. When

you get to the road, cross it onto the pavement, and turn left past the church and The Chequers Pub.

9 Just past the local town sign, cross the road to the bus stop and continue on until soon turning left following a footpath sign next to a sign advertising 'Orchard Free Range Eggs'. Continue up the footpath at the end of the driveway. At the path junction continue straight ahead.

10 After the bridge, continue straight (be careful – the path is a little overgrown here). Keep the field to your left and the dyke to your right until you reach the line of trees ahead. Just before this, when you're nearly at the road, veer left to continue along the edge of the field.

11 At the field's corner veer right towards the road and continue ahead, crossing the entrance road to Eldon Farm. Immediately afterwards turn right to cross the main road, following a public footpath sign and over a stile.

12 Continue straight ahead, following the line of the telegraph poles. Keep near these telegraph lines until you come to a small lake on your right. Skirt to the left of this and then veer left following a grassy track. Cross the next stile and turn left down the lane.

13 At the road, turn left and walk along the pavement. At the crossroads, continue straight on down Eldon Lane. Walk past the entrance to Game Keepers Cottage, and continue straight ahead along the line of fir trees.

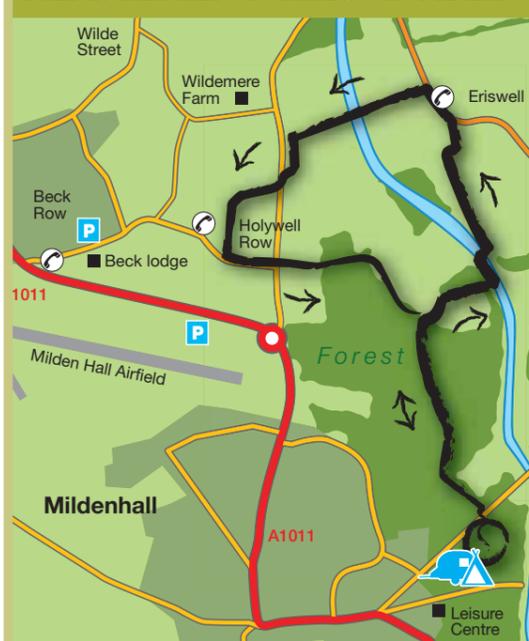
14 When eventually you get to a post with a red and yellow arrow on it, turn right following the red arrow marked 'Byway', retracing your steps back through the woodland. On reaching the main path veer left and continue straight ahead.

15 At the path's crossroads, at the remains of a signpost and a junction of telegraph poles, turn left through a narrow gap to the left of the fir-tree fence. Continue along the avenue until you return to the main road. Here, turn right and then very soon left back into the site.

Local attractions

- Mildenhall and District Museum, 6 King Street, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds IP28 7EX. Tel 01638 716970 or see mildenhallmuseum.co.uk. Cost: Free. Features a Victorian kitchen and the Mildenhall Treasure, among other exhibits. Only the ground floor is accessible to disabled visitors.
- West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, The Visitor Centre, Icklinham Road, West Stow, Bury St Edmunds IP28 6HG. Tel 01284 728718 or see stedmundsbury.gov.uk/weststow.htm. Cost: adult/child & concessions/wheelchair users – £5/£4/free. Disabled access is excellent into the visitor centre, café and shop, but the houses within the Anglo-Saxon Village aren't totally accessible because of their nature. Vehicle access into the village itself can be arranged in advance.
- Prickwillow Drainage Engine Museum, Main Street, Prickwillow, Ely CB7 4UN. Tel 01353 688360 or see web.ukonline.co.uk/jill.lawson/pwillow/engine.htm. Cost: Adult/OAP/children – £3/£2/£1. Full disabled access. Various engines recovered from the district's pumping stations.

Mildenhall: 6.5 miles/10.4km



Tourist information

- Ely, Oliver Cromwell's House, 29 St Mary's Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4HF (open daily – admission charge). Tel 01353 662062 or see ely.org.uk/tic.htm.
- Bury St Edmunds, 6 Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1UZ. Tel 01284 764667 or see stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/visit. (Open daily except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day).