



Clare Short Walk Series

Originating from and returning to Clare Castle Country Park.

Short Walk

1

Hermitage Farm and the Common



Distance: **2 miles**

Approx Time: **60 - 80 mins**

Difficulty: **Easy**

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Short Walk Series

Clare Short Walk 1

The Clare Short Walks Series is a collection of four overlapping walks aimed at walkers who wish to explore Clare and its surrounds. The walks are all under 2.5 miles and are designed to take between 60 and 80 minutes at a leisurely pace. All the walks start and end in Clare Castle Country Park.

- 1 From the car park walk to the river and turn left along the river bank. Follow the path past the ponds on your left and continue with the Chilton Stream to your right. At the end of the path turn right onto a small path with an old cemetery on your left. You will come to a main road, Cavendish Road.
- 2 Cross Cavendish Road, turning right and then immediately left into Harp Lane. You are now on the Stour Valley Path. Go past the playing field and buildings on your left. Follow the path through a wooded area (care: may be slippery in winter) into a field. At the corner of the field turn left. Leave both barns on your left and then turn left before the double black barns. The track then goes through tall willows and into Hermitage Meadow.
- 3 On reaching the main road (Snow Hill) turn left and walk 200m. Turn right into Sheepgate Lane.
- 4 Go along Sheepgate Lane for 25m and turn left onto the Lower Common through a gate.
- 5 Walk across the Common; there are a number of trails, but directly opposite the entrance to the Common and beyond the earthworks is a path that takes you to the left of the Primary School.
- 6 Go straight across the road at the entrance to the Primary School and take the footpath in front of you towards the cemetery.
- 7 Walk past the cemetery. Keep the field to your right and on the corner turn left towards the Swan Inn.
- 8 At the entrance to the Swan car park from the road turn right and walk past No 1 Deli and around the corner.
- 9 Cross the road and walk down Malting Lane back to the car park.

Swans on the New Cut



Malting Lane, Clare



'Fields of Gold' near Hermitage Farm



Wooden Sculpture Clare Castle Country Park



Walking across the Common in Clare





Points of interest

Clare Short Walk 1

This walk takes you around the edge of Clare, along the stretch of river known as the New Cut, through the Park alongside the Chilton Stream and towards Hermitage Farm. You will walk across Clare Common where remains of a Saxon or earlier settlement can be seen. Parts of the walk can be muddy in winter; suitable footwear is advised.

- A** Clare Castle began as an earth and timber castle in the late 11th century. It has 2 baileys, a moat and a high motte with the ruin of an early 13C keep. In the 19C a railway station was built through its inner bailey.
- B** The main river running through the Park is not the Stour. It is a mill stream called the 'New Cut', established to operate a mill belonging to the Priory, in use in the 14th century. The original Stour runs to the south of the Priory.
- C** As you leave the Park, you pass the old Baptist cemetery and site of the early chapel. The Chilton Stream runs through a culvert under the A1092, which you cross, but there was once a bridge here, called Pysenebregge, and the road was called Puddle Lane. The clarity of the Chilton Stream may be the reason for the town's name of Clare.
- D** Sheepgate Lane, running on the north side of Clare Common, is an ancient trackway, later a livestock drove. Clare Common is marked as 'Clare Camp' on many maps, but the evidence for either Roman or Iron Age connections has not been found. In medieval times, the Lower Common served Clare Castle as its manor farm, with extensive agricultural buildings. Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536) leased out the Common Pastures for the benefit of the poor of Clare. Today they are used for grazing, allotments and arable farming.
- E** The Swan Inn in the High Street is one of Clare's oldest premises. Above the main doorway is a carved solid block of oak – possibly the oldest inn sign in England. It seems to be the base of an oriel window taken from Clare Castle.
- F** Malting Lane follows the outline of the outer bailey of the Castle. Look out for the Antiques Warehouse, formerly a grain warehouse.



**CLARE CASTLE
COUNTRY PARK**

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