



FAMILY HISTORY TRAIL



Suitable
for kids
6-12 old

Duration: 45 minutes

Take care:
you are responsible for the
safety of yourself and your
party. **Respect Covid-19**
social distancing and
group gathering guidelines.

Respect
any ancient
monument and
remember to put
your rubbish in a
bin or take it home
with you.

On behalf of Colchester
Borough Council, welcome to
Colchester's Castle Park.
Please enjoy your visit.



The park is located at the edge of the town centre and the nearest **car parks** are
Priory Street, **Britannia** and **Leisure World Colchester**: colchester.gov.uk/parking.



If you don't want to drive why not catch the bus to Colchester High Street?

Please check Castle Park **opening hours** prior to starting the trail colchester.gov.uk/parks

Recycle this sheet if you printed it out at home

INTRODUCTION

Castle Park was opened to the public in 1892 (over 120 years ago) and its history goes back even further than that. Follow the route on the map to find out about its fascinating history and learn some fun facts as you go. YOU BEGIN AT COLCHESTER CASTLE. ----->



1 COLCHESTER CASTLE

This castle has stood here for over 900 years and it isn't even the oldest thing in the Park! It was built by the Normans after William the Conqueror invaded in 1066 and was the largest Norman keep in Europe. It is built on the remains of a Roman temple and the builders used material from the ruins of the Roman town. It has served as a symbol of power, a military base, a prison (it once held Colchester's witches) and is now a museum.

ACTIVITY: Stand at the front of the castle and look at the roof – can you see a tree growing from the corner above the door? Why do you think it is there?

Answer: It was planted to celebrate England's victory at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 (not an easy guess if you didn't know!)

ACTIVITY: What are the five items you would want to help you live through a siege? (Remember, the people who actually lived through this had to resort to eating cats, dogs and rats so what would be your priority?)

2 CIVIL WAR OBELISK

In 1648 England was at war with itself. Forces loyal to King Charles I clashed with the armies of Parliament. Colchester became a battle ground during this war. The King's soldiers, led by Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were inside the town's walls. The Parliament's New Model Army set up camp outside the walls and put the town under siege for 11 long weeks. Eventually the King's soldiers surrendered but hundreds had died from starvation, disease and the fighting. This is the spot where Lucas and Lisle were executed by firing squad.



We'd love to see photographs taken on the trail. Why not share your pictures with us at [@YourColchester](#) [@EnjoyColchester](#) or [@Better Colchester](#) using [#ColchesterCastleParkTrail](#)

4 OLD YEW

This is thought to be the oldest tree in the park - it is at least 150 years old. It might not be the biggest but it is still impressive!

ACTIVITY: How long can you stand on one leg with your arms out like a tree?

5 BANDSTAND

The bandstand was built in 1895 and the Park is lucky to still have a Victorian bandstand in full use. The town has two other famous Victorian landmarks - Jumbo the water tower and the Town Hall. Owing to its age, the bandstand requires a lot of care and attention to maintain it.

ACTIVITY: Stand on the steps of the bandstand and pretend to play your favourite instrument for the crowds.

OR Do your best impressions of a Victorian lady or gentleman walking around the bandstand and enjoying a show.

3 HOLLYTREES

This building is now a museum but it used to be the home of Charles Gray and his wife Sarah and was built in 1718. They used to own the Castle too and are responsible for creating what is now Castle Park - it used to be their back garden!

The museum's opening hours have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

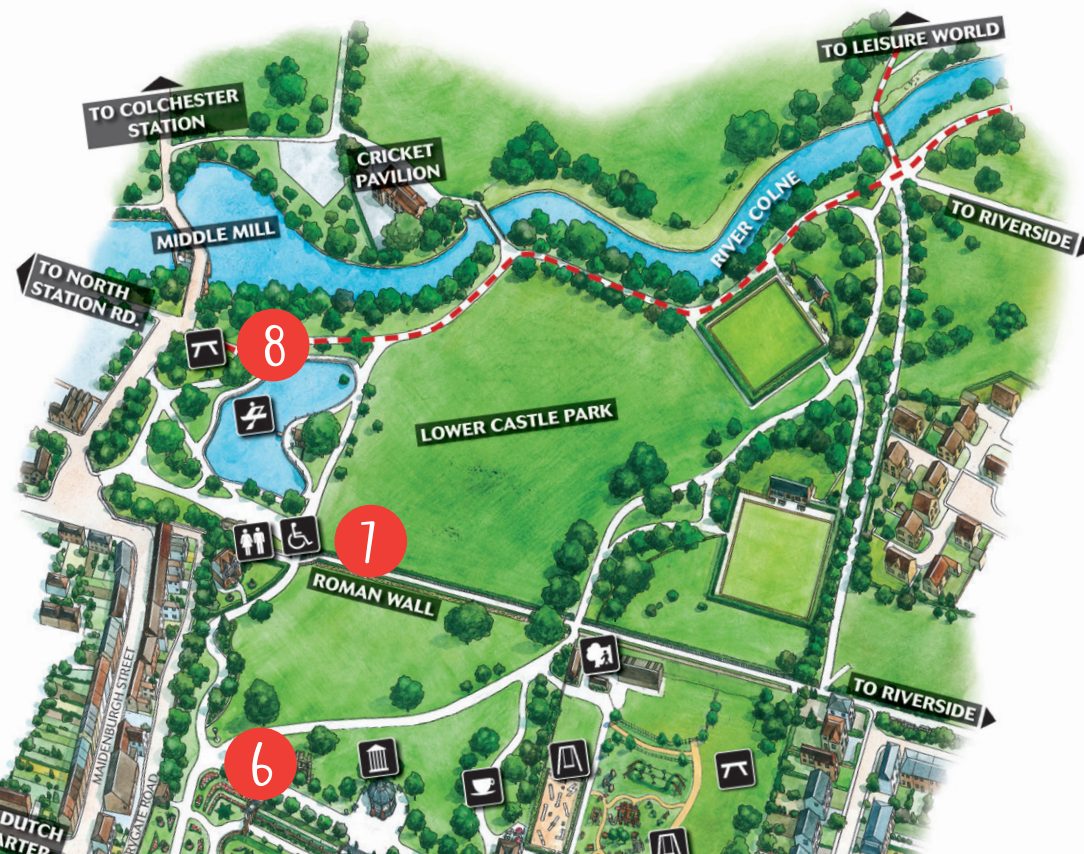
Visit colchester.cimuseums.org.uk/hollytrees-museum for up to date information.

ACTIVITY: The house is now surrounded by lots of plants that are great for insects. Follow the path around the building and count the number of bees, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies you can see.

6 Roman Villa

Romans invaded Britain in 43AD and set up a colony in Colchester in 49AD (they called it Camulodunum). This is the remains of a Roman villa which would have been home to some wealthy Romans. The castle wouldn't have been here then and the Roman wall at the bottom of the hill would only have recently been built.

ACTIVITY: Stand in the Roman villa - which room do you think would have been the kitchen? The bedroom? Can you see where the walls would have been?



7 Roman wall

Colchester's Roman wall is the longest and oldest town wall in Britain. It was built in 70 AD so is almost 2000 years old! It was built after Queen Boudicca destroyed the original Roman town and temple - the Romans decided they needed a big wall to keep themselves safe from the local people. This wall was once 6 metres tall and 3 metres thick. It was still used to defend the town 1600 years later during the English Civil War!

ACTIVITY: Does someone you're with know their height? Get them to stand with their back to the wall. The wall was once 6 metres (20 feet) tall - imagine how many people standing on their shoulders that would be.

8 Tank Traps

These concrete blocks were part of Britain's defences in case the German army invaded in World War Two. These are tank traps which would stop tanks making the journey through Colchester on the way to London from the coast. Although no invasion came, the Park did see some action during the war - a bomb narrowly missed the Castle and another shattered all the windows in Hollytrees. Thankfully for the people who lived here, Colchester was the most heavily defended town in Essex.

ACTIVITY: A tank would easily be able to drive through the shallow river water in front of you. Can you think of other ways to defend the town from tank attack?



We hope you enjoyed this trail. Why not check out what else we have to offer at colchester.gov.uk/parks