



# The Hundred Parishes

## Walks from railway stations – number 1

### 11 miles (17kms) circular walk from Stansted Mountfitchet Station

*This gently-undulating countryside walk passes through the parishes of Stansted Mountfitchet, Farnham, Manuden and Ugley. The route is mostly along quiet lanes and footpaths that are generally well surfaced but with some stretches that may be muddy. The route passes three churches and several pubs. If you hope to visit a church or a pub, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. There are several seats along the route, mostly in churchyards. The route crosses one stile at Ugley.*

**Start & finish:** Stansted Mountfitchet station. Grid Reference TL514248 – Postcode CM24 8BE. Parking in pay-and-display car parks at Station (CM24 8BE) or Mountfitchet Castle (CM24 8LY). Public may use toilets nearby at Kings Arms and Yeoman's tea room. There are pubs near start & finish and at Hazel End (1.5 miles) and Manuden (4.5miles). The route can be traced on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195. Two diagrams of the route are provided at the end of the description.

Leave Stansted Mountfitchet station by the main exit (near the booking office on Platform 2). Turn immediately left along Water Lane. Avoid the entrance to the station car park, keeping to the right and following Stansted Brook on the right.

Pass Braemar House on the left and, later, a few houses with bridges across the brook. After number 17 and just before the tarmac surface ends, turn right onto a concrete footbridge over the brook. Follow the path steeply uphill, keeping straight ahead along Millfields.

At the top of the climb, bear left into Millside and soon pass Stansted Windmill. The tower mill was built in 1787 and is largely intact inside. It is open to view on regular dates through the summer.

Continue downhill to meet the busy main road, Silver Street, the B1383. Turn left and, when safe, cross the road via the traffic island. On the far side, the knight sign welcomes visitors to Stansted Mountfitchet. The sign reflects Stansted's link with the Magna Carta which was forced on King John in 1215 AD by a group of barons that included Richard Montfichet, Stansted's lord of the manor.

We continue on the pavement, crossing the entrance to Blythwood Gardens. In another 30 yards, we turn right into a narrow footpath between fences.



When the path reaches a field, continue straight ahead with the hedge on the left.

At the far corner of the field, pass through a gap in the hedge and drop down a couple of steps onto Limekiln Lane. Almost immediately opposite, the path continues through a gap in the hedge and bears slightly right to cross the field diagonally. Head towards the building to the right of the farmhouse which is pictured here in winter. *[If this short stretch of path is muddy, it can be avoided by ignoring the gap in the hedge, turning right along the lane for 300 yards and then turning sharp left into Watermill Lane for 100 yards to where the path meets this lane opposite a new house].*



When the path reaches Watermill Lane, turn left onto the lane, passing Watermill Farm on the left. [Grid Ref: 501245]

Cross the River Stort. This used to be the site of a water mill until around 1900AD and there were watercress beds here until after the Second World War. In crossing the Stort, we have passed from Stansted Mountfitchet parish into Farnham.

When the lane turns to the left, keep straight ahead on the path, uphill beneath a line of mature oak trees – some of many to be seen along this walk.

At the top of the climb, the path reaches the ground of Farnham Cricket Club. Keep to the right, passing the pavilion and avoiding the playing area. Over to the left, on the horizon about a mile south, we should be able to see a water tower that stands where the Hertfordshire town of Bishop's Stortford meets ancient Birchanger Wood. Our walk is entirely within Essex, but we are not far from the Hertfordshire border – here it is just over a quarter of a mile to the south.

At the far corner of the cricket ground, our path meets a road only a few yards from the 17th-century Three Horseshoes pub, just to our left [GR: 496242]. We are now in the hamlet of Hazel End, part of the parish of Farnham.

Cross the road with care and keep straight ahead, passing a Victorian post box on the left and joining the lane signposted to Farnham. The farmhouse on our left dates from the 16th century; the large sarsen stone on the green to our right is around 50 million years older. This little hamlet of Hazel End has all the traditional constituents of an idyllic village scene: pub, pond, cricket field and ancient thatched cottages - almost every building is listed.

We continue along this winding lane for more than half a mile.

At the start of a steep descent, just before a ford sign, we get a good view of the imposing Hassobury mansion to the right. It was built in 1868 for the wealthy Gosling family and later served as a school before being converted into several homes. The Goslings were generous benefactors of Farnham Church, which can also be seen to the right.

At the bottom of the hill, just before some white railings on a left-hand bend, turn right onto the footpath, crossing Bourne Brook on a concrete footbridge. From here, the path goes straight across a field, heading uphill towards a single oak tree on the horizon. If the field is impassable, we could take an alternative route described in the box below. Soon after passing the tree, the path meets the end of a hedge and we turn right along a grass path to Farnham Church with its war memorial.

To avoid the cross-field path, retrace over the footbridge to the road. Turn right to continue along the lane, crossing Bourne Brook and then turning right. In another 300 yards, at the end of the wood on the right, leave the lane by turning right onto a footpath. The path runs beside the wood and in 200 yards meets the footpath we should have used, coming from the right. Now continue on the grass path to Farnham Church.

From the grass path, we have a clear view of Hassobury to our right, pictured here.

Sadly, Farnham church is usually locked, but there are seats outside if you would like an early break. If the church is open, do take a look inside, but first please remove boots or cover them.

The church was built in 1859, funded mainly by Robert Gosling who owned most of the parish of Farnham.

From the church gate, we head uphill along the lane – pausing to look back at this view of the church.

On reaching a road, we turn right and keep straight ahead, signposted to Farnham Green, ignoring Rectory Lane on the left and passing a primary school.

At the next junction, at the bottom of the hill, we turn right. We should ignore both the entrance to Saven End Farm on the left and a lane to the right, taking the signposted public bridleway between them and passing the 17th-century house and barns of Saven End Farm over to the left.

We go through a gate and follow the bridleway across a field, passing close to the right of a tall dead tree. The bridleway heads to a gate in the bottom left corner of the field. Here, we cross Bourne Brook again and follow the path uphill through woodland.





When the bridleway leaves the woodland, keep to the right of the field, with woodland and a relatively new house on the right, and then walking beside Home Wood.

After about 200 yards, ignore the bridleway that goes right into the wood, keeping ahead and now on a footpath which should be less disturbed by hoof prints. We still have woodland on the right – now it's called Oozes Wood. We have just left Farnham and entered the parish of Manuden.

Oozes Wood ends after about 300 yards and we keep straight ahead into the field. The view to the right, across the valley of the River Stort, includes the farm buildings of Bentfield Bury which lies on the outskirts of Stansted Mountfitchet.

The Ordnance Survey map shows the path crossing the field diagonally to the right, following the telephone line, but we will follow the more obvious and used route: follow the grass verge straight ahead along the left of the field. The spire of Manuden Church appears ahead and to the right, down in the valley.

After about 150 yards, follow the field-edge path round to the right to meet the telephone line. Here, turn sharp left, away from the telephone line.

In about 50 yards, the main path bears right and heads downhill, but our route goes straight ahead, keeping to the left of a line of mature oak trees.

Follow the field edge round to the left and then right, around a farmhouse with 16th-century origins. Keep the hedge on the right for about 100 yards and, at the end of the field, turn right and almost immediately left, past 18th-century Broome Cottage.

With care, cross the lane and go straight ahead into Dogden Lane, almost immediately passing Keepers Cottage on the left, also with 18th-century origins.

Soon, turn right onto a public footpath (number 23), heading downhill. We have now joined the Harcamlow Way, a long-distance footpath which we will follow for more than 2 miles.

After 400 yards, cross another path and pass through a gate into a cemetery. This is the overflow cemetery for Manuden Church and we soon come into the old churchyard.

You might like to visit the church if it is open (removing or covering dirty boots). It dates from the 12th century, albeit substantially rebuilt during the 19th century. On leaving the church, turn left from the porch and continue along the path with the exposed timbers of 16th-century Benrose on the right, shown here.



Keep straight ahead and exit by the gateway. Take great care as the gate opens directly onto the road with no pavement. When safe, cross the road to the pavement opposite and turn left towards the Yew Tree pub.

Our route turns right just before the pub, but first you may like to take a refreshment break at the pub. We have covered about 4.5 miles from Stansted and have another 6 miles to go.

Take the lane beside the Yew Tree, signposted to The Hall and Pinchpools. Note the large puddingstone beside the entrance to the pub car park: puddingstone is a natural rock composed mainly of flint pebbles and believed to have been formed around 50 million years ago. It was probably deposited nearby by a retreating glacier.

The road soon crosses a bridge over the River Stort. The river is often dry. Just ahead, behind the beech hedge, is Manuden Hall. It dates from the 16th century although much of it is a replacement following a disastrous fire in 1888. Arson was suspected. Manuden was particularly badly affected by a wave of "incendiarism" that was blamed on farm labourers who were discontent with their pay and with the progressive mechanisation of farming



After another 200 yards, we turn right onto what appears to be the driveway of a bungalow called Mossbury. The bridleway, still part of the Harcamlow Way, goes round the left of the bungalow and continues straight up the hill for some distance, heading East. The climb levels off and the grass path crosses a large field.

At the far side of the field, turn left and follow the bends of the field edge for 100 yards or so before going straight ahead through a gap in the hedge where the field edge turns left.

Maintain this easterly direction with a hedgerow on the right, climbing gently.

After reaching the top of the rise, on a clear day, the microwave communications tower at Sibleys, near Henham, can be seen on the horizon around 4 miles distant. It was built during the Cold War of the 1960s.

Eventually, the bridleway meets another at a T junction. Turn left to immediately join a metalled lane that comes in from the right. Keep ahead onto this lane, now heading North. Pass Bollington House on the left and then Bollington Hall Farm, continuing ahead on the lane.

We pass Wades Hall on the right, a 21st-century home, and continue ahead on an unsurfaced track.

After a while, our route runs beside a wood on the right for about 200 yards. The main track bears to the right, but this is private. Bear round to the left, keeping the field on the left. Pass through woodland for 100 yards and, shortly before the wood on the right finishes, bear half right off the main track and onto a footpath. Soon, pass a small pond on the left, and cross a ditch by a wooden bridge.

Now in a field, soon bear slightly right to follow the path diagonally across the field, passing beneath an electricity transmission line.

Before reaching the second power line, and immediately before the path crosses a ditch, we turn right. Keep the hedge and ditch on the left, bearing right and then left, still with the hedge on the left.

After a while the hedge ends and the path meets the edge of a wood. Turn left and after only 30 yards turn right to follow the footpath through Broom Wood. Here, many large trees were blown down during Storm Eunice in February 2022.

Keep straight ahead through the beech trees, cross a more major track, cross a wooden footbridge and follow the path slightly right. The path passes through vegetation and can be boggy as it passes under the power line. By now we are in a part of the wood that is usually rich with bluebells in springtime. Pass through the trees and over a stile to the main B1383. Be careful as you cross this busy road to the former Chequers pub opposite. Constructed with a timber-frame in the 17th or 18th century, it was re-fronted with red brick in the 19th. It has functioned as an inn since at least 1789 when it had its own brew house, stable yard, gardens and orchard. The pub closed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and in 2022 was looking very neglected. We are now in the parish of Ugley. [GR: 512288]

Turn left past the pub and immediately turn right into Patmore End and down the lane signposted to Ugley Church and Henham. After several relatively new houses we pass three thatched cottages on the left that date from the early 18th century.

In another 200 yards, the lane turns left but we go right in front of The Lodge, signposted to Ugley Church. This is an even narrower lane between fields. After 100 yards, we follow the lane as it turns left towards Ugley's parish church.

Just before the entrance to the churchyard, to our right is Ugley Hall, built in the 1830s. Beyond it are various buildings of Ugley Hall Farm.

We keep straight ahead on the gravel drive into the churchyard of St Peter's. Ahead is the 16th-century red-brick tower which is believed to be the last church tower in Essex used as a dovecote – as recently as the early 20th century. Bear right to the porch. If it is open and you would like to visit, please cover or remove dirty boots. The church dates from the 13th century but was much restored in the 19th. (So far, we have covered nearly 8 miles).

Leaving from the church porch, turn left. Just beyond the buttress on the left is a gravestone to Ugley's Ernest William Dalrymple Tennant, 1887 to 1962. Between the World Wars, he was a leading advocate of friendship and trade between the UK and Germany and became a close friend of Joachim von Ribbentrop who subsequently served as Germany's Foreign Minister during World War II. Tennant was one of the UK's unofficial emissaries to Germany in moves to prevent war but they were all unsuccessful. Following the war, Ribbentrop was the first to be executed for war crimes after the Nuremberg trials.

Opposite Tennant's grave is a memorial to a former priest who died in 1896, having served as vicar of St Peter's, Oakley. For a while, there was a move to 'gentrify' the parish name from Ugley to Oakley.

Continue beyond the church, bearing half left to leave the churchyard through a wooden gate. We go past farm buildings on the right, and then cross a drive that leads into the farm, before turning right onto a long straight roadway, soon passing cattle sheds on the left. We will follow this bridleway for almost a mile, heading South.

Over to the left we can see traffic on the M11 and, beyond it, the microwave communication tower in Debden, now only 3 miles away.

This bridleway is very clear but can sometimes be muddy or overgrown. We keep heading towards a telephone mast in the distance.

As we approach the phone mast, over to the right is what looks like a shallow hill, but it is actually man-made, the result from many years of depositing landfill waste into Ugley Quarry.

We pass close to the phone mast and continue ahead.

After 17th-century Fieldgate Farmhouse on our left, we continue along Fieldgate Lane which takes us beside a variety of domestic and commercial premises to bring us into the hamlet of Ugley Green.

Now, on our right is the green of Ugley Green. If you would like to pause, there is a seat here. We keep straight ahead with the main green on our right, but very soon we should cross with care and fork to the left of a small green with bus shelter. Just beyond the bus shelter, on our right, is a cast iron water pump from the 19th, possibly 18th century. Beside it is another puddingstone.



Having forked left, we are now in Dellows Lane, a quiet back lane with several older residential properties.

After about a quarter of a mile, the lane turns sharply to the right, but we keep straight ahead through a gateway into a field. Soon, we bear round to the left and then to the right, before turning left again, now following the footpath which has a hedge on the left and a barbed wire fence on the right.

At a crossroads of paths, keep straight ahead, now with Alsa Wood on the left and a field on the right. Alsa Wood is usually rich in bluebells in springtime.

After a few twists and turns, the path (which can be muddy at times) emerges onto a lane where we turn left. The wood on the right is part of the Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve.

After 100 yards, we turn right, keeping the wood on your right.



After about 300 yards, at the corner of the wood, do not follow the wood round to the right but go straight ahead across a field on the footpath, descending gently and heading towards another wood.

At the far corner of the field, we follow the path round to the left, with a wooden fence on the left.

When the fence on the left ends, the path bears right, keeping left of the derelict corrugated iron hut. Do not follow the fence to the right but continue diagonally across the next field.

At the far corner, follow the path straight ahead with wire fencing on the right. The path emerges onto a lane with Yew Tree Cottage on the left. [GR: 518254]

We are now in Gall End, on the outskirts of Stansted Mountfitchet. Turn right, passing a pump on the left and North End House on the right. This was once Stansted's workhouse. On reaching the entrance to North End House, turn left onto the lane.

We follow this lane, Gall End Lane, for about 300 yards alongside Ugley Brook on our right. The brook is often dry but after heavy rain it can run like a torrent and has occasionally flooded the centre of Stansted Mountfitchet.

Keep straight on, passing the Dog and Duck pub on the left, and join Lower Street. When safe, cross to the pavement on the right and continue ahead.

There are several interesting buildings along Lower Street and several eating places. The stockade around Mountfitchet Castle can occasionally be seen to the left. On the right, we pass 16th-century Tudor House and then 16th-17th century Savages, pictured here.



At the end of Lower Street, beside a mini-roundabout, turn right into Chapel Hill and almost immediately cross, when safe, using the pedestrian crossing. Turn left, back down the hill for a few yards, and then right beside Kings Arms into Station Road.

The railway station is straight ahead. The entrance leads onto the Cambridge-bound platform, where the ticket office and dispensing machines are situated. Turn right along the platform and cross the footbridge for London-bound trains.

Trains do not stop at all stations so, before boarding one, please check that it is scheduled to stop at your destination.

This route description, last updated 08 April 2022, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk). There, you can read more about each of the parishes visited on this walk.



Please email [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com) if you have any suggestions for improving either the route or the description.

Below are two maps of the route, firstly one drawn by Glyn Kuhn for the Hundred Parishes Society and then one based on the Ordnance Survey map and published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.



A diagram covering this route, based on the Ordnance Survey map, is shown below. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

