



The Hundred Parishes

Circular Walks – number 112

Albury and Furneux Pelham – 6 miles (10 kms)

This clockwise walk is mainly rural in well-wooded countryside with a stroll through part of the village of Furneux Pelham. The walk is moderately hilly, mostly along clear tracks and country lanes. Some tracks can be muddy at times. The route passes an interesting church in Furneux Pelham and there is also a pub there (The Brewery Tap, which in 2023 opened only from Thursday to Sunday). Another pub, near the start and finish, The Catherine Wheel, opened from Wednesday to Sunday in 2023. If you hope to visit the church or a pub, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. There are no stiles.

Start and finish: A small parking area at Patmore Heath, about ¼ mile along the lane that runs beside the Catherine Wheel pub in the hamlet of Gravesend. Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL443259 - Postcode: SG11 2LT. If there is no remaining space, please try the road that runs alongside the western side of the Heath (you passed it on the right just before the parking area). The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 194. A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

From the parking area, head towards the interpretation panel which gives information about Patmore Heath Nature Reserve, an 18-acre Site of Special Scientific Interest. The grass heathland is an uncommon habitat in southeast England. After inspecting the panel, go round it to the left and then right onto a main path, heading across the heath towards the apex of a bungalow.

Fairly soon, reach a lane and turn right, passing the bungalow and then a variety of houses on the left. They date from the 17th to 19th century; most are listed. On the right we pass several small ponds, homes to all three species of England's native newts.

When the lane turns right go straight ahead onto a bridleway, passing 19th-century Hitch Lane Cottage on the left. Soon, keep right, ignoring a path that goes left. The derelict wooden building at the junction of these two paths is a disused former chapel. Descend gently on a clear path.

When the path reaches a lane (High Hall Road), turn left. In about 50 yards cross with care and turn right, opposite High Hall, onto a stony bridleway. Before continuing, look back at the unusual chimney stacks on High Hall. Continue on the bridleway, passing farm buildings on the left. As the track starts to descend, Albury Church comes into view on the horizon.

After a fairly steep descent, cross the River Ash on a concrete bridge. Keep straight ahead, ignoring the footpath to the left.

After about 100 yards, follow the path round to the right, now with the river on the right and heading in a northerly direction along the Ash Valley.

At the end of the field, follow the path round to the left. Climb steadily with a wood on the right. Over to the left, the spire of Albury Church protrudes above the trees.

At the end of the field there is a staggered crossroads of paths. Follow our track to the right and then, almost immediately, left, thereby maintaining the direction of travel.

The wood on our left is called Ypres, named like other woods on the Albury Hall estate after a disastrous 20th-century event in British history. Further along, one of the copses to the right is called Munich. This stretch of bridleway, part of the long-distance Harcamlow Way, can be muddy if horses have used it recently.

When we reach the end of Ypres on our left, the path bears left to reach a lane. Turn right onto the lane and follow it for about 300 yards, now with Suez Wood on the right.

To our right, just beyond the narrow strip of woodland, the long, high brick wall once marked the perimeter of Albury Hall

Just before the end of Suez, turn right (opposite a puddingstone) onto a footpath into the woodland.

Follow this narrow path, passing a fishing lake on the left before emerging onto a small green.

Keep straight ahead and soon reach a lane. Keep straight ahead by turning right onto this lane. Walk beside the brick wall on the right – more of the perimeter of Albury Hall. Nothing survives of this three-storey 18th-century mansion, pictured here from an old postcard. It was demolished around 1950 after being used by military personnel in World War II.



The lane climbs for a while before turning left, but at this point we go straight ahead along a gravel track. We pass Charleston House on the right. Soon, after a large pond, when the track turns right we keep straight ahead, heading towards Furneux Pelham Church in the distance.

Soon, we walk beside a hedgerow on the left. After a rise, Pelham electricity transformer station comes into sight about two miles distant, ahead and to the right. From there, giant pylons head in all directions distributing electricity along seven power lines.

Keep straight ahead. As the path descends, we pass from Albury parish into Furneux (pronounced *Furnix*) Pelham parish.

After the descent, our path crosses a ditch on a concrete bridge and then climbs steadily for a quarter mile before reaching a lane at the hamlet of Patient End. Turn right, soon passing Gables Cottage.

Descend and, just before the road goes over a ditch, turn left through a gate onto a footpath (No 008).

Follow this straight field-edge path, with hedgerow on the right, for about half a mile, watching out for deep rabbit holes on the path. Pass through two more gateways. At the end of a field, turn right through a gateway on the right and meander through a small area of woodland.

The path emerges from the woodland immediately opposite a fence. Turn right, soon cross a footbridge and walk up a short drive. On the left, the frame of an old pub sign hanging on a wall is a reminder that the house on the left was once a pub, The Star, a brick-clad, timber-framed building that dates from the 17th century. We have now entered the village of Furneux Pelham.

We are going to turn left beside The Star onto the road, but first take a glance to the right. The long, thatched cottage with four dormer windows was built in the 18th century as four dwellings.

Now turn left, keeping to the pavement. On the left we pass Well House which dates from the 17th century.

At the road junction, turn left. After only about 30 yards, please pause to check out the ancient metal county council notice on the left. It was erected in 1899 to discourage “locomotives and other ponderous carriages” from attempting to cross the bridge on which you are probably standing. There are some nice cottages a few paces further on but our route turns here.

Retrace to the junction and continue ahead to the church on the left. Pay heed to the advice around the clock.

A visit inside this 13th-century church is recommended – before entering, please remove dirty boots or cover them. Of particular note are the colourful angels that look down from the ceiling and the stained-glass windows by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones.



Exit from the church and turn left. On the left, we soon pass 18th-century The Old Vicarage, then the entrance to Whitebarns Lane, and then Chantry House which dates from the 16th or 17th century.

A little further on, note the unusual weather vane on the new house on the left and then the 19th-century pair of cottages: red brick with red roof tiles, red hanging wall tiles and original Victorian metal window frames.

Follow the lane past the incorrectly-spelt village sign. The spelling is attributed to the sponsors of the sign who chose to add an A to the traditional Furneux.

Pass Tinkers Hall Farm on the right; immediately afterwards a drive goes up to the unusual Roman Catholic church, part of a 17th-century barn that has been painted black and white and has a corrugated iron roof.

Continue along the lane, passing thatched, 17th or 18th-century Quainty. After passing Craigdhu on the left, look left through the field gateway. Over to the right are the buildings that once constituted a substantial brewery before conversion to houses and apartments.

Soon reach a crossroads and turn right – noting the Hertfordshire pudding stone protecting the corner of the building, the 19th-century Brewery Tap pub. Here is the only opportunity along this walk to purchase food or drink. Please check beforehand whether it will be open when you need it – www.thebrewerytapfp.co.uk or 01279 777604.

With the pub on the right, keep ahead on the pavement, passing the village hall on the right. Most dwellings along here are relatively new, with just Ye Olde Thatch on the right dating from the 17th or 18th century.

After the final house on the right, bear slightly right to enter the sports field. Keep straight ahead with the hedgerow on the left. At the end of the field, turn left, back onto the road and turn right.

Soon, before the road junction, cross the road with care and then turn left, heading in the signposted direction of Albury and Little Hadham.

You may like to cross to the right, although you will soon need to cross back to the left. Be on the left before the road turns to the right. At the bend, leave the road by turning left onto a track signposted to The Wash. Follow the track gently uphill with a hedgerow on the left and then downhill to reach a road. With care go straight across onto a very wide roadway.

Follow the road gently uphill with a hedgerow on the right. After about 500 yards the road and hedgerow separate. Continue along the road for about 70 yards until a footpath crosses the road. Turn right, across the green and pass through the hedgerow. Keep ahead with woodland on the left and a field on the right.

The path leaves the field and enters a narrow strip of woodland. Almost immediately turn left over an earth bridge across a ditch onto a tree-lined path.

When the path reaches a lane, turn right, soon passing Kings on the left. This property includes an 18th-century barn

Stay on this narrow lane for about half a mile. The lane passes more woodland and is quite sunken at times.

When the lane reaches a junction with several houses, our route goes straight ahead, now with Patmore Heath on the left but, before proceeding, you might like to consider this image from around 1910 of the exceptionally tall tower mill that stood close by. The house in the centre of the picture stands on the corner where you are hopefully standing and the mill was a few paces down the lane to the left. Apart from the names of properties, there is now no sign of the mill – and the pond is no longer so obvious.



Our route does not turn left. Continue past 18th-century Heath End Cottage on the right and with the Heath on the left.

In about 200 yards, as you pass a gravel drive on the right, look down the drive towards Heath Farm; the large round, pink building appears to have been a large dovecote.

Almost immediately, reach the small car park on the left where we started this walk.

This route description, last updated 13 February 2023, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk where you will find many more walks and can read more about Albury and Furneux Pelham.

Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to hundredparishes@btinternet.com.

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

