



The Hundred Parishes

Walks between railway stations – number 15

Newport to Audley End - 5 miles (8kms)

This route is mainly rural and quite hilly, mostly along footpaths and with attractive views of open countryside. The route offers opportunities to pick sloes and blackberries in the autumn. Some of the route follows part of the long-distance Harcamlow Way.

There are few buildings and no settlements or places to eat or drink along the route.

Parts of the route can be muddy at times. There are no stiles.

This walk is an extended version of walk 17 (2.5 miles) and a shorter version of 16 (7 miles).

Start: Newport Station. Grid Reference TL522336 - Postcode CB11 3PL.

Finish: Audley End Station - TL516363 - CB11 4LD.

Parking at both stations is expensive but there is a cheaper option near Audley End Station beside the former Fighting Cocks pub at Wendens Ambo, beside the B1383 (TL519365 – CB11 4JN).

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195.

A diagram of the route is provided at the end of this description.

Tip: If travelling by train to and from the two stations it is usually cheaper to buy a return ticket for the most distant station, rather than two single tickets.

Tip: If travelling by car, it is suggested that you park near the finish and catch the train to the start, thereby avoiding the possible pressure to finish the walk at a certain time.

Leave Newport Station on the East side of the track, that is from the southbound platform, number 1 (this is over the footbridge from the northbound platform from London, the main entrance and booking office and the car park).

Turn left along a quiet lane, heading uphill. In less than 100 yards, just before reaching a small unofficial parking area, turn right onto a public footpath. Climb a few steps up from the road and continue straight ahead on the path.

The route climbs steadily out of the valley of the River Cam. Over to the right Newport Quarry comes into view. This is the only working chalk quarry in Essex and produces around 15,000 tons of chalk a year.

On reaching a wooden fence, pause and turn to look back at the village of Newport with its prominent church with a tower.

Continue up to the corner of the field, turn left and in 20 yards turn right to continue gently upwards.

In the autumn, the hedgerow on the left can be rich with blackberries and sloes.



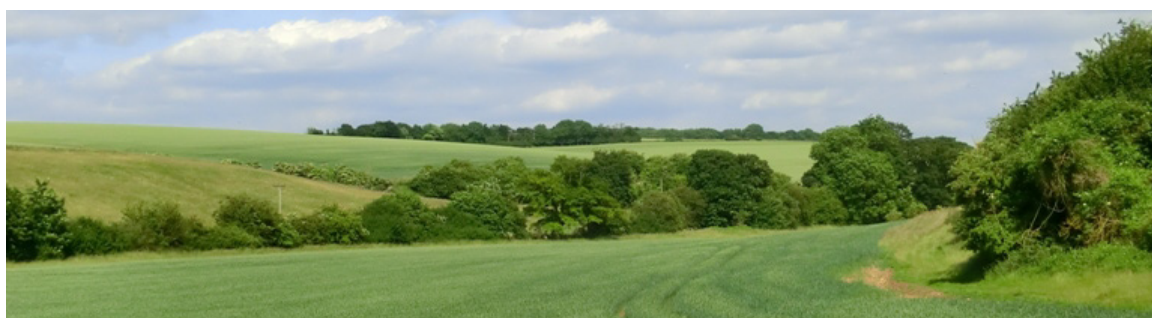
Keep the hedgerow immediately on the left, bearing left and right along the field-edge path.

Continue along the field edge, climbing gently for more than a quarter of a mile. Then, soon after passing a large house on the left, our route turns left to follow the path beside a hedge, downhill for 100 yards towards a road.

Just before Debden Road, the footpath turns right before descending to meet the road. Cross the road with care and turn left along a section of footpath running beside the road. After about 30 yards, turn right between hedges.

This narrow path descends steeply and can be muddy at times. Take care – short steps, knees bend! The path becomes slightly wider as it passes through a short stretch of woodland but still may be slippery after rain.

After the descent, emerge from the wood and continue straight ahead across a field with this long view to the right.



At the far side of the field, enter a small wood and take care as the first few yards can be slippery. Cross Debden Water on the wooden footbridge with metal handrails and immediately turn right onto the path, passing through woodland with a stream (Debden Water) on the right.

Emerge from the wood onto a field, turning left, uphill, with the hedgerow on the left. The route now heads North.

Cross from one field to another and continue to climb steadily, keeping a hedge on the left.

At the top of the hill, keep straight ahead through woodland.

After the wood, continue ahead with the ditch on the left. Over to the left, Newport is again visible down in the Cam valley to the West.

200 yards after leaving the wood, do not bear left towards another large wood, but turn right with a new hedge and ditch on the left.

There are extensive views from this path. A water tower on the horizon over to the right is about 2 miles away, near Cole End in the parish of Wimbish.

After the descent, cross a footbridge and continue in the same direction, now with a ditch and mature trees on the left.

After about 300 yards, cross another footbridge over a stream called Fulfen Slade and continue with hedgerow on the left. After a short rise, the route is joined by another path coming in from the right.

Continue with woodland and Fulfen Slade on the left.

Ignore the footpath and wooden footbridge with metal handrails that bears left through the strip of woodland.

After a further quarter of a mile, turn left onto a short concrete bridge over Fulfen Slade. Turn immediately right to follow the path with Fulfen Slade now on the right. After a while, the path is usually carpeted with crunchy beech nuts where it passes beneath mature beech trees. The beech trees continue for some distance and this track is known as Beechy Ride.

A short sharp climb brings the path to a sometimes-busy road (B1052). Cross with care and then descend steeply, back down to the level of the stream. The path leads into a field, but after only 10 yards it cuts back under the trees to again follow the tree-lined stream.

When the path leaves the trees, bear right and very soon turn left so that the stream is now on the left. At this point, Saffron Walden, the largest town in the Hundred Parishes, is within a quarter of a mile to the right, albeit mostly out of sight.

When the path reaches a road, cross with care and keep straight ahead along the private road towards Abbey Farm.

After passing buildings on the left, the roadway reaches the 17th-century perimeter wall around private St Marks College. We should not follow the roadway round to the right but, instead, turn sharp left just before the wall, across a small green and passing a gateway through the wall on the right. Just here we get a glimpse of the back of the college which was built originally as almshouses in 1611.

We continue with the wall on our right. The path squeezes between the wall on the right and buildings / junk yard on the left, soon re-emerging into countryside.

Keep straight ahead with a ditch and trees on the right.

After about 200 yards, follow a flint wall on the right until the path reaches a road. Keep right, onto the road, staying on the right and facing oncoming traffic. There is no pavement for nearly half a mile along this road.

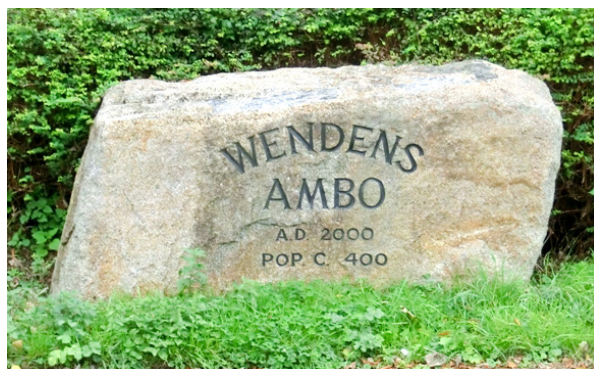
Just after the road crosses the narrow River Cam, cross the road with care to take the pavement on the left side. Soon, pass a Second World War pill box in the field on the right.

Turn left onto the main London Road (B1383).

Pass another pill box on the left, half-hidden by shrubs, and just afterwards reach the former Fighting Cocks pub – it has been closed for some time and now offers parking, specifically for rail commuters.

From outside the pub, cross the B1383 with care. On the far side, this large stone offers a welcome to Wendens Ambo.

Take the turning opposite the pub, the B1039, signposted towards Royston.



After a final short climb and a right-hand bend, fork left just before the mini roundabout into the approach to Audley End railway station.



The station is situated in the village of Wendens Ambo. When it first opened in 1845, it was called *Wenden* but it was soon renamed in deference to nearby Audley End House. The rather grand porch or canopy, facing what is now the car park, was erected primarily for the convenience of important passengers whose connecting journey would be by horse-drawn carriage to or from Audley End House.

The railway line was constructed only after agreement had been reached with Lord Braybrooke of Audley End House as to the route. The line passes through the extensive Audley End estate but, rather than following the obvious route along the Cam valley, like the B1383 which passes close to the front of the House, the railway runs out of sight between here and Great Chesterford, through tunnels half a mile to the west.

The ticket office and London-bound platform are on this side of the track. Cross the bridge for trains bound for Cambridge. Not all trains stop at all stations so, before boarding one, please check that it is scheduled to stop at your intended destination.

This route description, last updated 19 May 2022, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk where you can find many more walks and further information about Newport and Wendens Ambo.

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

A diagram of the route, drawn by Glyn Kuhn for the Hundred Parishes Society, is shown on the next page.

