



# The Hundred Parishes

## Walks between railway stations – number 16

### Newport to Audley End via Audley End House - 7 miles (11kms)

*This route is mainly rural and quite hilly, mostly along footpaths and with attractive views of open countryside and parkland. 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 except towards the end of the route. There are two cafés at 5.5 miles that are open from time to time: one functions beside the Audley End Miniature Railway when it is operating; the other is in Audley End House, for which admission charges apply (unless you can produce an English Heritage membership card). Another option is to divert from the route after about 4 miles, into Saffron Walden where there is a choice of eating places. This adds around half a mile to the route.*

*There are occasional seats towards the end of the walk.*

*Parts of the route can be muddy at times, so if you hope to stop somewhere for refreshment, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or don boot covers or plastic bags. There are no stiles.*

*This walk is an extended version of walks 17 (2.5 miles) and 15 (5 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, Wenden Road, we turn right, keeping to the pavement on the right.

After about a quarter of a mile, gently uphill, Wenden Road meets Audley End Road on the edge of Saffron Walden town. Saffron Hall and Saffron Walden County High School are just to our right. With care, cross Audley End Road onto the pavement and turn left, signposted towards Audley End House.

The high red-brick wall on our right is the southern boundary wall of Audley Park. The wall dates from early in the 17th century, the time when Audley End House was built. The wall heads west for more than half a mile – we will see it again later.

After 100 yards, just beyond a seat, we turn right through a metal gate beneath a brick arch, thereby entering Audley Park.

Follow the footpath straight ahead, crossing a track and then descending gently along an avenue of trees. The avenue comprises mature trees plus saplings planted in 2022 to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The town of Saffron Walden comes into view, at first to the right and later straight ahead. The view ahead is dominated by the tall spire of Saffron Walden's parish church.

Just before the path reaches a gateway, the exit from the park, our route turns sharp left, taking the middle of three paths.



*[Should you wish to visit the town for refreshment, go through the gateway and keep straight ahead along Abbey Lane for 400 yards to reach a set of traffic lights at the High Street. There are plenty of pubs, restaurants and cafés nearby. Afterwards, retrace from the traffic lights back down Abbey Lane and through the gateway into Audley Park. A thorough exploration of the town is offered in Walk 101, but that is probably best left for another day.]*

Having turned left before the gateway, we should take the middle of three paths. This path is not tree-lined.

After a while, the path crosses a wooden footbridge with metal handrails over a stream (The Slade).

Further along, just after a wooden gateway, there is a choice of paths which run parallel and eventually meet – the right-hand path is suggested.

Cars parked at Audley End House appear over to the left and later the house itself comes into view.

Pass an entrance to farm buildings on the right (beside a golf course tee) and continue straight ahead on the path, beneath trees, keeping the Slade on the right.



Pass through a brick arch and continue with a brick and flint wall on the left.

Follow the wall round to the left, joining an estate road and soon crossing the River Cam. Over the wall, immediately to the left of our utilitarian bridge, stands the Tea House Bridge, built in 1783 by Robert Adam as a place to take tea. We see just the back of the building; this is what the front looks like, as photographed from Audley End House's gardens.

Continue along the estate road until it reaches the relatively busy London Road (B1383).

We turn left, keeping to the pavement beside another wall of Audley End park. We pass private entrances to Audley End House and then have a splendid view of the front of this Jacobean mansion. It was built in the early 1600s by Thomas Howard, 1st Earl of Suffolk, treasurer to King James I. It was then the largest residential property in England, three times the size of the present building. It was purchased in 1668 by King Charles II and later reduced in size to reduce the cost of upkeep. It is now cared for by English Heritage and is open to the public.



Do look back, to the left of Audley End House, at the magnificent red-brick stable block, pictured below. It was probably built around the same time as the house.



Turn left at the road junction, signposted to Audley End House and Miniature Railway. Cross the bridge (also designed by Robert Adam) over the River Cam. This view of the bridge is from the river bank.

Just after the bridge, the entrance to Audley End House is on the left. An entry fee is charged for access to the house, gardens and tea room, except for English Heritage members.



Opposite the house entrance, on the other side of the road, is Audley End Miniature Railway, whose small café is open when the steam trains are running (see [www.audley-end-railway.co.uk](http://www.audley-end-railway.co.uk)).



Just beyond these attractions, keep to the pavement on the left, beside the high perimeter wall which we passed through about a mile ago when we first entered Audley Park. The row of large red-brick houses on the right date from the 17th to the 19th centuries and have all been modernised.

After the houses on the right, cross the road with care and turn right into the road signposted to the College of St Mark.

This road passes through the hamlet of Audley End, shown here on a day without parked cars. The long run of houses on our right dates mainly from the 18th century.



At the end of the street, cross a bridge over a stream and just afterwards bear left, ignoring the entrance to St Mark's College. The college is private, but some parts can be glimpsed through the entrances and over the wall. It was built originally as almshouses in 1611.

Follow the road round to the left towards Abbey Farm, following the brick wall on the right.

Keep following the wall round to the right, leaving the roadway, passing a small green on the left and another college entrance on the 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).

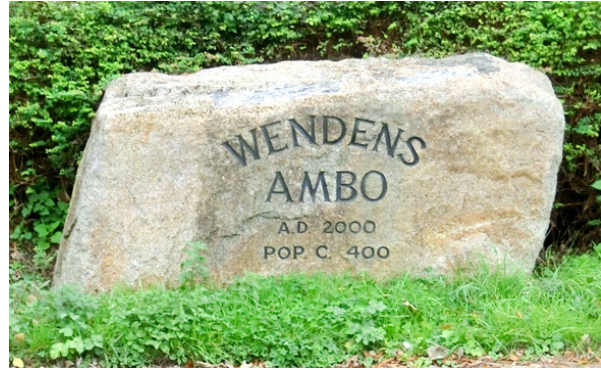
Pass another pill box on the left, half-hidden by shrubs, and just afterwards reach the former Fighting Cocks pub – it has been closed for some time and now offers parking, specifically for rail commuters.

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. Whilst the station is situated

in the village of Wendens Ambo, it is named after the better-known Audley End House.



The ticket office and London-bound platform are on this side of the track. Cross the bridge for trains bound for Cambridge. A ticket machine is located on the London platform. 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 18 May 2022, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) where you can find many more walks and further information about Newport, Saffron Walden and Wendens Ambo.

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

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

