



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 108

### Albury and Braughing – 8.1 miles (13 kms)

*This circular Hertfordshire walk is mainly rural with extensive views from higher ground, especially on a clear day. Mostly in the parishes of Albury and Braughing, the route also includes a little of Furneux Pelham. Some of the route can be muddy at times. The only opportunities to purchase refreshment come after 3 miles in the village of Braughing, where (in 2023) the Axe & Compasses opens for lunch 7 days a week (01920 821610). Please check beforehand if you plan to stop at any particular establishment.*

*The walk passes two interesting churches. 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 no stiles.*

Start and finish: Albury Church. There is usually space to park on the road beside the church wall. Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL435247 - Postcode: SG11 2JQ.

*Alternatively, parking for one or two cars may be possible at Patient End (TL428269, Postcode SG9 0JN), starting from there at the top of page 5 of this route description.*

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 194.

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

With the church on your right, walk up Parsonage Lane, heading west and passing Albury Primary School. Soon afterwards, on the right, there is a house called *Labour in Vain*. This was once a public house with that name. The image below comes from a 1909 postcard.



The photo was taken looking back down the hill towards the church. The pub is on the left and a shop, no longer in existence, on the right.

Continue up the gentle climb. Pass a lane signposted to Albury Hall on the right and soon, when the road turns left, continue straight ahead. Pass several houses on the right and, when the road ends, keep straight ahead, past 17th-century Parsonage Farmhouse on the right, onto a gravel bridleway.

After a while, a white water tower comes into view. This lies just inside the parish of Albury. Continue towards the water tower. About 200 yards before reaching it, the path switches from the left to the right side of the hedge. After the switch you can look back to Albury Church's short spire, a style often referred to as a *Hertfordshire spike*. Continue, now with the hedge on the left.

Stay on the path as it turns left with the hedgerow and soon pass close to the water tower on the left. Immediately after the water tower, the path turns right. It can be muddy at times.

At the end of the field we pass, without fanfare, from Albury parish into Braughing parish (pronounced *braffing*). Keep straight ahead on the public bridleway. We are now in the hamlet of Braughing Friars with several new homes on the right. When the bridleway becomes a lane, keep straight ahead, passing a variety of residential properties including Friars House which dates from the sixteenth century. After a while, ignore a road to the right.

After following this fairly straight lane for about a mile since the water tower, it bends to the right. In about 50 yards, turn sharp left onto a gravel track (Bridleway 17, signposted to Standon, 1¼ ), immediately passing The Tin House on the right. The path soon becomes narrow with hedgerow on either side and then widens with trees on either side.

Please take especial care to follow the next section . . . A very short descent brings the path into woodland (Hill Wood). The path enters the woodland and VERY SOON, only 10 yards after the field ends on the right, turn right and up a bank onto an unofficial path that is not waymarked. It weaves through the wood, sometimes with uneven surface, basically following the edge of the wood on the right. After about 200 yards we meet another path. Turn right and immediately cross a footbridge over a ditch.

At the other side of the bridge, turn left and immediately go half right onto a cross-field grass path that climbs diagonally across the field, heading in a north-westerly direction. If a tractor has been working in the corner of the field where we entered, the start of this diagonal path may not be obvious, but it soon becomes clear.

This straight path continues for about half a mile in a west-north-westerly direction. After a climb and descent, the path climbs again with a hedgerow on the left. At the top of this rise, a spire appears ahead – another Hertfordshire spike, this time on Braughing church. There are extensive views all around. On a clear day, ahead and at about 2 o'clock to the right you may be able to see the very tall communications mast on the horizon at Reed, about 6 miles distant and beyond the Hundred Parishes.

Continue to descend, passing between houses, to a residential road. We are now in the village of Braughing. Turn left and then follow the residential road to the right, keeping a small green on the left.

Pass Jenyns School on the right and bear slightly right onto a path with a “No Cycling” sign. Pass a small green and picnic area on the left and follow the path and then road to right and left, soon emerging from Green Hill Close onto a busier road.

With care, bear left and cross the road to a small green. This can be a popular spot with a picturesque ford ahead, the village sign and several seats.

With the village sign on your left, head half right across the small green and cross a road. Do take a look at the informative Braughing Parish interpretation panel. Then turn right, with the panel on your left, and head uphill, away from the ford. Before regaining the busier road, turn left into Church End, for a while following the waymarked Greenwich Meridian Trail (“GMT”).

This short lane brings us to a crossroads opposite the church. On the left is Fleece Lane. This is where, back in the sixteenth century, the funeral of Matthew Wall was halted after the pallbearers slipped on wet autumn leaves and dropped his coffin, waking Matthew who was only asleep and not dead. Many years later, when he did die, Matthew left funds for the event to be celebrated. To this day, on the October anniversary, Fleece Lane is swept and the church bells are rung to celebrate Old Man’s Day.

Turn right, past The Old Boys School 1574 on the right, and soon turn left into the churchyard. The church is well worth a visit – but first please remove or cover boots if muddy. Do look up at the ceiling.

Leave through the church porch and turn left, taking the main path up through the churchyard. About 50 yards along this path, note the fairly modern gravestone on the left for Mathew Wall who really did die in 1595.

Continue up the path to exit through a gate. The first house on the left dates from the 16th century when it was built with timber framing; the red brick front was added in the 17th century. Pass a small green with a 200-year-old village pump and surrounded by a variety of pretty houses which mostly date from the 16th century.

Two of Braughing’s pubs are to be found here, each building dating from the 16th century: The Brown Bear, to the right, had limited opening hours in 2023, while The Axe and Compasses to the left opened 7 days a week.

Turn left, passing the Axe and Compasses on the right. Keep to the pavement on the left, soon passing a gold-painted house on the left whose plasterwork is decorated with panels of patterned pargetting.

Bear left onto The Street, passing 17th-century Pentlows farmhouse and then Pentlows, a modern residential road on the left. Continue downhill, past 18th-century The Old Vicarage and soon leave the village of Braughing.

Keep straight ahead when a road comes in from the right. Then, as the road turns left, keep straight ahead onto Public Bridleway 014. We will keep on this bridleway for more than a mile. The well-defined path climbs Pentlow Hill for some distance. If you need an excuse for a breather on the climb, look back at Braughing’s church spire.

The path gradually flattens out with the valley of the River Quin below to the left.

Ignore Byway 29 on the left and keep straight ahead. 50 yards later comes the first gap in the hedgerow, allowing you to see the hamlet of Hay Street on the B1368 on the other side of the Quin valley. Further up that road you can see another tiny hamlet, Dassels, still within the parish of Braughing. The large red-brick house is 17th-century Dassels Bury.

Our route is sometimes signposted as "GMT", referring to the 273-mile Greenwich Meridian Trail. The Greenwich Meridian runs about a mile to the west, roughly parallel with our north-bound path.

Ignore a footpath that descends to the left; keep straight ahead on the bridleway.

Our ridge path gradually bears to the right.

Ignore a bridleway to the left and right and carry straight on.

Pass houses called The Cat and Fiddle and Amesbury and continue straight ahead. Ignore a road that comes from the right and leaves to the left, continuing straight ahead along the public bridleway, now with hedgerow on either side.

When the path reaches some woodland, it divides. Keep left along a restricted byway. Soon, we walk parallel with a drive on the left. Pass a house on the left and keep straight ahead on the tree-lined track.

Ignore Braughing FP 103 on the left, signposted to Hobbs Lane 1¼.

On reaching a wood, turn right onto a public bridleway. Continue along a field edge path with the wood on the left and approaching a house ahead and to the right.

Just past the end of the wood, turn right onto a lane. This area is called Rotten Row. Pass an entrance to the house on the left and follow the lane round to the left. Soon, pass another entrance and after another 100 yards turn left. The house started life in the 16th century or earlier as a hall house. A chimney was installed in the 17th century and smoke from the hearth no longer drifted up and out through the roof.

Keep left to pass close to the house and then a pond. After passing the pond, enter another field and immediately turn right onto a bridleway with hedgerow on the right. There is a dressage area on the other side of the hedge.

Continue ahead on this field-edge path (sometimes churned up by horses).

In due course, follow the path and field edge round to the left towards some woodland, High Wood. Keep straight ahead and soon turn sharp right into a new field with the hedgerow on the left. We have now left Braughing parish and for the next mile will be in the parish of Furneux Pelham (pronounced *furnix*).

Continue to follow the meandering path, keeping the hedgerow on the left. At the top of a rise, bear left and right to place the hedgerow on the right. Continue ahead towards farm buildings.

In the distance, ahead to the left, the large Pelham Electricity Transformer Station comes into view. From this major substation on the National Grid, an army of giant pylons strides across the countryside, distributing electricity along seven power lines.

On reaching the farm buildings, take the gravel drive to the right, passing the tall, red-brick, 19th-century Patient End Farmhouse on the left. We are in the tiny hamlet of Patient End.

After about 200 yards, reach a lane and turn left.

*[The Grid Reference at this point is TL428269. You may have chosen to start and finish the walk at this point. If so, head East for just a few yards before turning right onto a footpath].*

Very soon turn right onto a footpath heading South with a ditch and hedge on the right. This is part of the Hertfordshire Way long-distance path.

At the bottom of a gentle cross-field descent, pass over a footbridge and continue ahead, now gently uphill. At the top of the climb, ignore a waymark indicating a footpath bearing left. About 50 yards further on, turn left onto a grass path heading towards woodland. Before reaching the woodland, look to the left where you may see the tall tower of Furneux Pelham parish church and get another distant view of Pelham electricity transformer station.

On reaching the wood, bear half right and pass through the wood on a clear path, at the same time passing imperceptibly from Furneux Pelham parish into Albury parish.

On leaving the wood keep straight ahead along a track. Stay on this fairly straight track for about three-quarters of a mile to Albury church, which never comes into view. The track sometimes passes between fields, sometimes passes woodland on the left, and crosses two other tracks. Over to the left and running parallel with our route is the valley of the River Ash. From time to time we see houses on the other side of the valley in Gravesend, a hamlet within the parish of Albury.

As we get nearer Albury church, we cross Harcamlow Way and then walk beside woodland on the right. This is Ypres Wood, planted during WWI. At the end of Ypres Wood, keep straight ahead, uphill on a cross-field path and heading towards a clump of trees. What is not apparent, at least in summer, is that just beyond those trees lies Albury Church, where we started.

At the top of a rise, go straight ahead into the trees and in another 100 yards reach the churchyard.

On the left is a hedged burial plot for members of the Glyn family who once lived at Albury Hall and were wealthy bankers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Albury Hall no longer exists, having been demolished in the 1950s but, since we re-entered Albury parish, we have been walking through what was part of the Albury Hall estate.

Pass through a gate and go past the church on the left. Please consider visiting the church which dates from the 13th century. Please remove or cover boots if muddy, which they probably will be by now!

Leave the churchyard by the gate to join the lane where we parked.

*[If you chose to start the walk at Patient End, turn right along the lane and continue from page 1]*

This route description, last updated 24 February 2023, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) where there are many more walk descriptions. There, you can also read more about Albury, Braughing and Furneux Pelham parishes in the parishes section.

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

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

