



The Hundred Parishes

Circular Walks – number 118

Clavering – 2.4 miles (4 kms)

This anti-clockwise walk explores much of the village of Clavering which lies at the heart of a fairly large rural parish of the same name. Most of the route is on roads with some stretches of track and path which can be muddy at times. There are two pubs along the way. There are no stiles, but Clavering does have a few seats. Please be prepared, before entering either the church or a pub, to remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags.

Start and finish: There is a lay-by close to the Clavering Christian Centre on the west side of Stortford Road about 100 yards south of the staggered crossroads with B1038, Pelham Road. Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL473318 - Postcode: CB11 4PH. The route can be followed on either Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 194 or 195. A diagram of the route is provided at the end of this description.

The walk starts from the layby beside Clavering Christian Centre, built in the 1870s as a Congregational Chapel. Clavering's war memorial stands in front of the chapel and was erected in 1921. The parish church, which we will pass later, has memorial plaques inside.

With care, cross to the pavement on the east side of the road and proceed towards the staggered crossroads. Turn right on the B1038 towards Newport. Almost immediately, when safe, cross the road to the small green. Here you will find the Clavering village sign, a very informative interpretation panel with a map of Clavering and also a "talking bench". We will pass most of the places pictured on the display panel.

When ready, cross back to the pavement on the other side of the road and continue along the B1038. We will stay on this road, climbing gently for about three-quarters of a mile, passing a great variety of houses. We will mention several, mainly those that are listed for their historical or architectural value.

Soon pass a small green on the right with a row of thatched cottages that date from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Cross the young River Stort; it rises about 4 miles north-west of here in the adjacent parish of Langley and flows generally south (to the right) for another 20 miles to join the River Lea near Hoddesdon.

Brooklands, on the right, is rather deceptive: its modern rendering conceals a 16th-century timber-framed hall house. Just beyond the house, we walk beside a long flint wall. A look back to Brooklands reveals two distinctive 19th-century bay windows at first floor level.

Pass the 18th-century Fox and Hounds pub and then continue past more interesting houses, mostly dating back several centuries.

18th-century Pavitts was once a shop.

Set back on the right, thatched Home Farm Cottage dates from the 18th century. The next building, Home Farm House, is of similar vintage.

Swan Cottage was, until the mid-1900s, the Swan Inn. The near half was added in the 19th century to the original 18th-century thatched building.

Soon, we pass long, partly-thatched Clatterbury House, part of which dates from the 17th or 18th century. The timber-framed wing was added in the 20th century.

A little further along, thatched Bower Cottage on the right is of similar vintage. Just before the Cottage, there is a footbridge on the left which crosses the stream that has been running beside the road since the Fox & Hounds. When safe, you might like to cross the road to the field entrance immediately opposite Bower Cottage and just beyond the footbridge. Here, an interpretation panel explains that the stream, called Kingswater, joins the River Stort at the bottom of the hill. The interpretation panel is positioned at the southwestern end of the Clavering Jubilee Nature Trail, a 1-mile trail that could be added to our "official" walk before resuming at the next paragraph.

From the panel, cross back over the road to Bower Cottage and continue uphill on the pavement.

In another hundred yards or so we come to Hill Green on the right. Just at the start of the green, Hill Green Cottage is set back on the right, thatched and 16th-century.

Further along, we pass a pond on the right and then a water pump and a Victorian post box on the left. The upper part of Hill Green is used for cricket. On the far side of the green, the thatched cricket pavilion was converted from a wartime hut. To its left is a former Primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1877.

Just before the green ends, we pass 18th or 19th-century thatched Old Forge Cottage on the left, and then Clavering Village Hall.

Soon, when the main road turns right, our route goes straight ahead, so we should cross the road when safe, possibly at the corner where traffic can be seen in both directions. The Cricketers pub on the right is where local celebrity chef Jamie Oliver first learned to cook when it was owned by his parents. The Cricketers has 16th-century origins but has been much extended in more recent times.

We should keep straight ahead on Arkesden Road, signposted to Stickling Green. In only 50 yards we turn left towards Stickling Green. There is a pavement on the right.

Soon after passing 21st-century Eldridge Close we get out into the countryside.

In a little while, we pass a farm driveway on the right and ignore the public footpath opposite, going into the shrubbery on the left.

In another 100 yards, we come to the entrance on the right to three buildings: Court Lodge, straight ahead with tall chimneys, dates from the 17th century. On the right is The Maltings. Set back to the left is Clavering Court, previously called The Maltings. This was built in the second half of the 19th century and was then the 'big house' of Clavering whose owner was probably regarded as the squire. It was bought with 157 acres in the early 1900s by HW Baker, a stockbroker who went by pony and trap to Newport Station to commute to London. During the First World War, Mrs Baker led community efforts to make garments for troops and hospitals.

Just after Clavering Court, we should turn left onto a byway, but first you might like to stay on the lane for another 50 yards to view the pretty, 18th-century, thatched Court Cottage. Then retrace to turn right onto the byway.

The byway goes across a walled bridge over a stream: this is Kingswater again.

We are now on Colehill Lane, a fairly straight track that we follow for around half a mile. Sections may be wet or muddy at times. After about 200 yards, a former windmill with a white cap comes into view on the right. We may soon see a second. These two brick-built tower mills stand only 200 yards apart at Clavering's Mill End, one built in 1757 and the other in 1811. Since the pair lost their sails many years ago, they have been affectionately known as the salt and pepper pots.

The track descends to emerge onto Colehills Close and almost immediately reaches a lane where we turn right.

The lane follows a gully on the left - sometimes dry and sometimes a raging stream – this is the River Stort.

After 200 yards, we turn left, crossing the river on a narrow concrete footbridge with metal handrails. Just to the right is a ford which is sometimes impassable.

On the far side, we should look back over the river to the small thatched cottage, 17th-century and one of the smallest houses in Essex – appropriately named *The Little House*.

Now look ahead and compare today's view with this photo taken more than a hundred years ago. We will refer to the photo as we stroll up Middle Street.



Continue slowly up Middle Street, the centrepiece of Clavering's conservation area.

The buildings tend to get older as we proceed up the hill. On the left, set back at an angle, is 18th-century Willow Thatch.

On the right, the last of a terrace of three houses is Stort Cottage, dating from the 17th or 18th century. The Wheelhouse on the left is of similar vintage. The pump outside Stort Cottage can be seen in the old photo. Next, we pass weather-boarded Blakes Cottage on the right – this is the first house on the right in the photo.

Next on the right, Bakers, and then Tudor Cottage are each from the 16th century. On the left, Danceys, just out of the old photo, is a former farmhouse, also 16th century.

Facing us at the top is The Old Post House, dating from the 16th century. It was once a school and at another time served as the village post office.

We turn right, passing Bury Cottages on the right and climbing gently along a shingle drive.

We soon follow a holly hedge on the right. Here' you might like to turn around and take in the view back towards Middle Street. Where the drive turns right through the hedge, we can see The Bury, a rare medieval aisled hall built around 1300 AD and one of the oldest houses in Essex.

Our route keeps straight ahead, through the gateway into the churchyard. Once through the gate, another look back is called for. We continue ahead. Almost immediately, an interpretation panel on the right offers an explanation of the earthworks beyond the panel. This is Clavering Castle which is protected as a Scheduled Monument. The castle, or ringwork, is a medieval fortification that may pre-date the Norman Conquest of 1066.

After a few more yards, follow the shingle path round to the left, now with the 15th-century Church of St Mary and St Clement on the right. The church merits a visit – but first please remove dirty boots or don boot covers or plastic bags. The church has medieval stained-glass windows, several interesting monuments and angels look down from the ceiling.

After the church, continue up the path to exit the churchyard through the gateway. Immediately on the right is a former guildhall, built in the 15th century and later used as a workhouse and almshouses before becoming a private dwelling.

Continue up the lane. On the right at the top, red-brick The Old House dates from around 1690. For many years until the early 20th century, the right section of the building had functioned as a shop.

We turn left onto Pelham Road, the B1038, keeping to the pavement on the left.

After about 300 yards, we reach the staggered crossroads. It is suggested that we almost reach the turning on the left before crossing the B1038 and turning right into Stortford Road, signposted towards Berden and Manuden. Soon we will arrive at the layby on the right where we started this walk.

You can read more about Clavering on www.hundredparishes.org.uk.

This route description, last updated 17 February 2022, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk 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 below. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

