



The Hundred Parishes

Circular Walks – number 157

Manuden and Ugley – 4.8 miles (8 kms)

This mainly rural walk explores countryside on both sides of the Stort valley, in Manuden parish for two-thirds of the distance and Ugley parish for one-third. Other parts of Manuden and countryside further west are explored in Walk 146. This route is mostly on footpaths with some quiet lanes. Some paths can be muddy at times, so stout footwear is recommended. There is one small stile. There may be an opportunity to visit Manuden Church and/or the Yew Tree pub towards the end of the walk (although they don't open every day), so please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or put on boot covers or plastic bags.

Start and finish: The walk starts and finishes in the ample free car park of Manuden's Community Centre in David Collins Drive at the northern end of the village.
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL486273 - Postcode: CM23 1EH.
The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195.
A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Leave the car park along the tarmac path that passes between Manuden Community Centre on the left and houses to the right. These homes were built at the same time as the Community Centre which opened in 2014. The path runs beside a wooden fence on the right, with the recreation ground on the left.

At the end of the tarmac path, turn right along a lane and pass a thatched cottage on the left: 18th or 19th-century Laurel Cottage. The lane soon reaches Manuden's main road, The Street. Here, we turn left and almost immediately pass three thatched houses on our right, each dating from the 17th or 18th century. The next house on the right, number 95, was built as a Methodist chapel in 1880.

Continue along the pavement for about 100 yards, passing six houses on the left. Immediately after number 76, Valderrama, we turn left down a narrow alley, signposted as a footpath. This can be fairly overgrown in summer time.

When the narrow path ends, continue almost straight ahead on the path between two fields.

After about 200 yards, cross a footbridge with metal handrails over the River Stort. At the far end of the bridge, cross over a metal 'stile'. Keep straight ahead and soon pass beside a metal gate and come onto a lane. This is Pinchpools Road. We turn left.

Continue along the lane for about a quarter mile, ignoring footpaths to left and right, until we reach Pinchpools Farm on the left. The farm buildings consist of a former manor house, built around 1560 AD and altered over the next couple of hundred years, and two barns that date from the 17th century. The house is timber-framed and plastered with its front faced in red brick. The official listing for the building tells us that the chimney stack is original.

Immediately opposite the entrance to Pinchpools, we turn right onto a bridleway, passing a house called Racedale on the left. Pass through a gateway and continue ahead on a wide, stony track, climbing gently and steadily for some distance.

As the path flattens, we pass imperceptibly from Manuden into the parish of Ugley. We will remain in Ugley for the next mile and a half.

Stay on the main track, meandering somewhat but heading generally eastwards with occasional mud at times.

When we reach the end of fields on each side, the track bears slightly left, passing Wakeling's Wood on our left. The track is no longer so firm beneath our feet.

After the wood we descend gently. Ahead, in the distance, we may be able to see the tall microwave radio mast about 4 miles away in Debden parish.

As we approach farm buildings, we follow the track round to the right and then left, to pass through the farmyard with the larger buildings to our right. This is Bollington Hall Farm. Just beyond the buildings, we reach a junction with a lane. Here, we turn right.

We soon pass red-brick Bollington House on our right.

After about 200 yards, we leave the lane as it turns left past Bollington Hall Cottages. Instead, we keep straight ahead for a short distance, passing The Cottage on the right. As soon as we have passed The Cottage, we turn right onto a public bridleway, stony at first. We are now on the long-distance Harcamlow Way which we will follow for the next mile, heading generally West and back into Manuden village.

This a clear path, firstly with shrubs on either side and then continuing with shrubs and ditch on our left.

Later, there is an open field on our right and hedgerow on the left.

About half a mile after Bollington Hall Cottages, we reach the end of our long field and go straight ahead through the hedgerow into the next field. This narrow and uneven gap can be slippery. Continue ahead on the field-edge path with hedgerow on the left and, after only about 20 yards, follow the field edge round to the left.

After another 80 yards, we turn right, away from the hedge, continuing on the Harcamlow Way and now on a clear path between fields. We have now left Ugley and returned to Manuden parish.

At the end of the field, continue ahead on the path, now descending towards Manuden and the Stort Valley. Ahead, we can see the scattered elements of Manuden parish. To the left, at about 11 o'clock on the clock face, we can see Manuden church. To the right, about 2 o'clock, we can see the sports field where we started and, beyond it, is Pelham electricity substation, where all the rows of pylons meet.

After a while, we follow hedgerow on the left as we continue descending.

As we reach the valley, the path passes a bungalow on the left and soon joins a lane, Pinchpools Road. Here we turn left.

On our left is Manuden Hall. This dates from the 16th century although much of it is a replacement following a disastrous fire in 1888. Arson was suspected. Manuden was particularly badly affected by a wave of "incendiarism" that was blamed on farm labourers who were discontent with their pay and with the progressive mechanisation of farming.

Follow the lane round to the right and soon cross over the River Stort. On the left is what remains of Manuden's village green. On the right is the Yew Tree Inn – and just before it is an ancient puddingstone protecting the corner of a wall. You may like to take refreshment here if the pub is open. The inn dates from the 16th century but has been much modernised. Manuden's main street and much of its conservation area lies to the right beyond the pub [Walk number 146 explores that area], but we are going to turn left.

From the Yew Tree, with care, cross Pinchpools Road to the ancient signpost. This cast iron fingerpost was made at Maldon Ironworks in Essex, probably around 1930.

Proceed in the direction of Stansted, keeping to the pavement on the left and with the parish church on the right. Our route does not go into the churchyard but, if you would like to visit Manuden's 12th-century parish church, after about 50 yards cross with care to pass through the gate into the churchyard. After visiting, retrace and cross with care back to the pavement, turning right.

Continue past the church on our right and note the exposed beams of 16th-century Benrose which backs onto the churchyard.

On the left, there is modern pargetting on number 18, Holcombe. Opposite, we can see the entrances to Benrose (with the red-tiled roof) and to the thatched Wayside Cottage, number 37, which was once three tiny 18th-century cottages.

On the left, we pass several houses that date from the 18th century.

On the right, the low wall surrounds what was once the village pound and beyond it is The Bury which dates from the 16th century.

On the left, we pass Manuden Primary School which dates from the 19th century and displays an 1877 foundation stone.

Beyond the school, we pass more 18th-century houses: number 6, appropriately-named The Long House, then the much smaller Grove Cottage and then The Old Inn. The latter, standing sideways to the road, used to be called the Cock Inn.

When safe, we will cross the road and retrace a hundred yards or so. On our left, we pass Manuden Cottages, 6 pairs of houses that were built by J. Thomas as almshouses in 1857.

When we reach Mallows Green Road, we turn left, signposted towards Mallows Green and Uppend. Now on our right is the former village pound, a place where stray livestock would have been held.

We pass The Panels on the left and then, on the right, the entrance to The Bury with its two thatched barns: the older one, beside the road, dates from the 16th or 17th century.

On the left, we pass two cottages that date from the 18th century or earlier, probably built as a single dwelling. Further up is a terrace of 19th-century lime-washed cottages with a water pump.

When we reach the last of the terrace, Top Cottage, we turn right onto a public byway.

After about 100 yards we reach an entrance to Manuden cemetery on the right. Here we turn left, away from the cemetery, onto a footpath that soon reaches a field. Continue ahead on the field-edge path, climbing gently with hedgerow and trees on our right.

As we approach the top of the field, to our left is the thatched Keepers Cottage, dating from the 18th or 19th century.

The path reaches a lane where we turn right. This is Dogden Lane and we stay on it for about half a mile.

We go straight on past Butt Lane on our right and then Butt Lane on our left. Here, Dogden Lane becomes Sheepcote Lane.

Over to our right we look down onto the northern part of Manuden and across the Stort valley to where we journeyed at the start of this walk.

The lane passes beneath several grand oak trees before reaching a junction. Here, we fork right, passing a small green on the left, and then turn right onto a new lane, Maggots End Road. Please keep to the right to face any oncoming traffic.

The lane descends, beneath more oak trees. In about 200 yards we reach Clavering Road. Cross with care to the wide grass verge on the far side and turn right.

Within 100 yards, we turn left onto David Collins Drive. On the right is Langlands, a private road of 21st-century homes built in earlier styles. We soon return to the car park where we started.

You can read more about the parishes of Manuden and Ugley on www.hundredparishes.org.uk.

This route description, last updated 19 June 2021, 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.

