



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 307

Albury parish – a circuit of Patmore Heath - 1 mile (1.6 kms)

This walk - perhaps best taken at strolling pace - starts and finishes at The Catherine Wheel at Gravesend, in Albury parish - marked **1** on the diagram on the final page of this route description. If you wish to park there and take refreshment before or after the walk, you are advised to book in advance on 01279 260930 or <https://www.thecatherinewheelalbury.co.uk/>

Alternatively, you may find somewhere to park along the lane which runs east from the Catherine Wheel. Another option is to park in the small parking area beside the nature reserve, marked **2** on the diagram, joining the route description near the bottom of this page.

Start and finish: The route starts and finishes outside The Catherine Wheel, Gravesend, Albury (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL440257 - Postcode: SG11 2LW).

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 194.
A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Please follow the usual safety precautions: keep to the right so as to face oncoming traffic, crossing occasionally to the left if this offers a clearer view around a right-hand bend. Drivers may be as surprised to see you as you are to see them!

From the pub, turn right along the pavement beside the pub and then almost immediately turn right into a narrow lane, possibly signposted to Patmore Heath (the sign was missing in 2024).

Immediately on our left, we pass Gravesend Farmhouse, a timber-framed and plastered building dating from the 18th century. It is the first of 15 listed buildings that we will pass on this short walk – we will mention some of them. In about 100 yards we pass a few houses on our left and then reach a road junction.

Our route goes straight ahead. As advised by the notice board on the right, we have reached Patmore Heath, “an outstanding example of grass heathland” that is managed by the Herts and Essex Wildlife Trust.

Our route goes clockwise around the heath, of which 18 acres (7 hectares) has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest – an SSSI or “triple-S I”.

We continue ahead with Patmore Heath on our right. To our left, largely hidden beyond trees and shrubs, are three listed 17th-century cottages, all now renovated for modern living.

On the right there is a small parking area, marked **2** on the diagram. Just before it, there is a large puddingstone in the left verge – formed around 50 million years ago and deposited here by a melting glacier, probably after the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago.

Just beyond the parking area, on the heath, an interpretation panel explains some of the history of the heath. It tells us that this is a rare acid grass heath.

The area was once quite open, used for the grazing of livestock. When this practice ceased around the 1930s, shrubs and trees grew up. In recent years, the Wildlife Trust has cleared shrubs and limited the number of trees on the site so that is now a welcoming place for insects and birds. The thinning out of tree cover has also allowed several ponds to flourish – we will see them later.

Continuing along the lane, we soon pass an entrance on the left signposted to Heath Farm. Down the drive, the large round, pink building appears to have been a giant dovecote. It stands next to 18th-century Patmore Lodge.

We continue past a pond on the right.

Next, we reach a small group of houses. The official listing detail for 18th-century Heath End Cottage, set back on our left, reveals that it was once two dwellings and before that apparently served as a lock-up.

On the corner, facing us, is Mill Cottage – and to its right Mill House with its tall chimney stack and millstones outside.

Here we turn right to pass several relatively-modern properties on our left. It was here that a windmill once stood. The image below is taken from a postcard, published around 1910.

The windmill had an exceptionally-tall brick tower. The house in the centre of the picture is Mill House and the one to the left is Heath End Cottage. Apart from the names of properties, there is now no sign of the mill – and the pond in the foreground is no longer so obvious.



We continue past the bungalows on the left and the heath and ponds on our right. After a while, we reach another group of older buildings, mostly listed. The first of these, behind a long red-brick wall, is The Hunting Box, a brick-built house dating from the 17th century.

Immediately after The Hunting Box, a footpath is signposted to the left. This leads eventually to 16th-century Patmore Hall, about a mile to the east. The longest walk on the Hundred Parishes website, Station Walk number 18, uses this footpath, a little over halfway along its 17-mile route. We will resist it today.

Soon, we come to Flintbury Cottage, set back behind a low boundary wall. Both the cottage and the wall are built largely of flintstones.

The next house stands sideways to the road – 19th-century Pightle Cottage. Pightle is an ancient word, generally meaning a small piece of land taken off a large field.

Next, we pass thatched, 17th-century White Cottage, set back somewhat on our left, then more 18th-century thatched properties: Penny Cottage (note the straw finial on the roof – a dog stealing sausages) and a pair of dwellings under one thatched roof: The Cottage and Thatched Cottage.

Just as our lane turns right, we pass 19th-century Hitch Lane Cottage, somewhat hidden on our left – with white weather-boarding and a slate roof.

As the lane turns sharp right, we pass close beside one of the heath's larger ponds so perhaps it is appropriate to mention that the ponds here are home to all three types of native English newt: great crested, smooth and palmate.

Having turned the corner to the right, we are now heading north with Patmore Heath on our right.

To the left, we now sometimes have a view down to the valley of the River Ash which flows from north to south, about a quarter of a mile away. Beyond, the land rises again and is well wooded - part of the estate that belonged to Albury Hall, once-grand but demolished around 1950.

Soon, we come to West View on the left, 17th or 18th-century, a timber-framed house with weatherboarding and partly thatched.

The building styles and materials have been quite varied. They continue to be varied as we pass a number of more recent dwellings.

Back in 1086, the Domesday Book included both Albury and Patmore. The number of households in Patmore was recorded as: 2 villagers, 2 smallholders, 6 cottagers and 3 slaves.

Before long, we reach a road junction. There is no signpost. If you parked at the Patmore Heath parking area, please turn right and follow the last 4 paragraphs of page 1 to return to your car.

To return to The Catherine Wheel, we will turn left.

We soon reach the 'main road' and turn left to the pub car park.

The Catherine Wheel was opened in 2007, a completely new building that replaced its predecessor which had been destroyed by fire in 2004.

The previous pub was thatched and built about 1765. A photo of the original, probably taken in the 1940s, is shown on the right. It was downloaded from <https://www.ukphotoarchive.org.uk/>

This route description, last updated 05 May 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk

There, you can read more about the parish of Albury and also find many additional walk routes (including Walk number 112 which covers 6 miles, starting from Patmore Heath).

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



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

