



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 337

Duddenhoe End, Langley, Chishills, Heydon, Elmdon – 12.2 miles (20 kms)

This circular, clockwise walk explores the lanes of five administrative parishes: firstly Elmdon, Duddenhoe End & Wenden Lofts, then Langley, then Great & Little Chishill, then Heydon, then Chrishall, returning to Duddenhoe End which is marked **1** on the diagram on the final page of this route description. The route goes through a number of villages and hamlets and includes several churches. Some elements of this route also feature in other, shorter routes.

Only three places along the route potentially offer refreshment: The Pheasant in Great Chishill, (SG8 8SR – 01763 838535 - <https://www.pheasantgc.com/>) served food 7 days a week in 2024 but King William IV in Heydon (SG8 8PN – 01763 838773) was temporarily closed and The Bull at Langley Lower Green had limited service and opening times (CB11 4SB - 01279 777307 - <https://www.thebullpub.co.uk/>). They are marked, respectively, **3**, **4** and **2** on the route diagram. You should always check availability before relying on a pub or restaurant.

You can, of course, join this circular walk anywhere along the route.

Start and finish: The route description starts and finishes at Duddenhoe End Village Hall, about one mile south of Royston Road, B1039. Walkers visiting the village are invited to park here - Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL459367 - Postcode: CB11 4UU (a large area) - what3words: violin.down.workroom.

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 194 and 209.
A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

This route is mostly on quiet lanes, but please follow the usual safety precautions: if there is no pavement, 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 and cyclists may be as surprised to see you as you are to see them!

We leave the car park by the way we drove in, turning left into the lane and crossing to walk on the right.

Very soon, we pass Duddenhoe End Farm on the right; the solid-looking farmhouse dates from the 18th century.

Further along, the lane turns right beside the entrance to White Friars Farm on the left.

Over to the right, there is a substantial wood – High Wood.

We pass Highwood House on the right.

The lane turns right and continues beneath an avenue of trees until we reach the southeast corner of High Wood where there is a large parking area. Just here, the lane turns left, still attractively tree-lined and now heading South.

For the next half mile, our lane defines a parish boundary - on the left is the administrative parish of Elmdon, Duddenhoe End and Wenden Lofts, the result of a merger of two administrative parishes in 1958. The parish of Langley is on the right.

After crossing a stream, we pass various commercial buildings around Grange Farm and Duddenhoe Grange on the right and are then welcomed to Langley Upper Green. Langley parish has two main settlements – we will visit the second, Langley Lower Green, a little later.

We cross the entrance to Sparrows, a 21st-century residential development on the right.

Further along, we reach Langley Community Centre on the right, at the corner of Langley Upper Green. The building has been enlarged in recent years from a modest cricket pavilion but it still serves that purpose when a match is played on the green.

We reach a road junction where we turn right, signposted towards Meesden, Lt Chishall (a misspelt Lt Chishill) and Lower Green.

Immediately on the left, we pass Langley Baptist Church and cemetery.

We continue beside the green on the right. At the end of the green, the lane bears left, passing the former red-brick village school on the right, now a private house called The Primary.

We descend for a short distance to The Causeway on our right, with Church Cottage facing us on the corner. Langley parish church is situated about 200 yards up The Causeway, a pretty diversion if you wish to add a little to the route distance. The 12th-century church is usually open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 10am till 5pm. If you do divert, please retrace and turn right beside Church Cottage to continue along the lane.

We soon leave the village of Langley Upper Green. The church's red-tile roof and squat tower may be visible amongst the trees, looking back to the right. We might also see the red-tile roof of the adjacent Langley Hall.

This is Bull Lane and we stay on it for about half a mile.

After a while, the lane descends, passing a herd of rusty deer outside Meadow View Cottage on the right.

At the bottom of the hill, we reach a road junction. There is no welcoming sign, but we are now in Langley Lower Green. We might pause for a couple of minutes to take in this location . . .

On the corner to our left is The Bull pub, marked **2** on the route diagram. It has limited daytime service and opening hours (advertised in 2024 as Saturday and Sunday from 1pm).

The fingerpost sign on the green was manufactured at Maldon Iron Works in Essex, probably before the second World War.

Immediately opposite the junction, there are two interesting thatched, timber-framed and plastered houses. To the right, the tiny single-storey property is called Friday Shoppe; it dates from the 17th or 18th century. To its left, Brooms is much larger and was once a range of small

dwellings. It dates from the 18th century and has an ancient wooden plaque in the wall - it declares, "Notice by order of the Magistrates. All Persons found begging in this Parish will be taken up by the Vagrant Act and Punished as the Law Directs".

Our route turns right, signposted towards the mis-spelt Little Chishall, Barley and Royston. We will not encounter another road junction for about 3 miles.

We soon pass the back of a sign that welcomes anyone coming the other way to Langley Lower Green.

After about half a mile, we pass an entrance on the left to Langley Park Farm and a rally driving school.

Further along, we pass between white-painted handrails as the lane crosses a stream. Beneath us is the River Stort which rises about half a mile to our left. It flows to our right and meanders for over 20 miles, mostly through the Hundred Parishes, before joining the River Lea at Stanstead Abbots.

In another quarter of a mile, we reach the tiny hamlet of Killem's Green, part of Langley administrative parish, with white weatherboarded Roughways Cottage on the right.

The lane turns left and climbs gently. For a quarter of a mile, the lane defines the parish boundary, with Langley on the left and Chrishall on the right.

We leave Chrishall behind as we pass through Gypsy Corner Farm.

A little later there is no official welcome to Cambridgeshire but our departure from Essex is marked by its county sign on the right. This is real border territory: the woodland only half a mile to our left is in the county of Hertfordshire. Here, we are at one of the highest spots in the Hundred Parishes, over 460 feet (140 metres) above sea level.

At this point we also pass from Langley parish into Great & Little Chishill. This administrative parish was once part of Essex until a boundary change in 1895 moved it into Cambridgeshire.

A wide and distant view opens up ahead and to our left. Soon afterwards, we pass Manor Farm on the right and then the lane descends fairly steeply into the tiny hamlet of Little Chishill.

Just past a pair of creamy gault brick houses on the right, a footpath to the left beckons to Little Chishill Church which is set back from the road. The church merits closer inspection, with much dating from the 12th to the 14th century. The church is usually locked, but from the churchyard you can see 16th-century Rectory Farmhouse to the left. Coming back along the path, there is a view of Little Chishill Manor on the opposite side of the lane.

From the churchyard, we turn left to continue down the lane with Little Chishill Manor behind the fence on the right.

As the lane bears left, we pass an unusual water pump and a post box on the right - and also the start of a public byway which is used in Walk number 123. Today, we stay on the lane. We soon pass the back of a sign which welcomes anyone coming in the opposite direction to Little Chishill.

After about 300 yards, we meet a long row of mature trees, mostly beech, which line the lane. The trees and our lane run beside a stream called Cumberton Bottom which flows in a gully on

the left of the lane. Along here, we pass a curiosity on the right – a metal pipe protruding from a concrete base with a padlocked cap. Perhaps this is used to sample water quality. What is intriguing is the painted TL43031 – it looks like an incomplete Ordnance Survey Grid Reference. However, it is not the grid reference for this location which is approximately TL413378. If you are able to shed any light on either the gully or the pipe, please post feedback on www.hundredparishes.org.uk.

For the next quarter of a mile, we continue beside the stream, usually not visible at the bottom of a deep and wide canyon. The explanation for this unusual gully may lie in human activity more than a thousand years ago. Cumberton Bottom or Cumberton Brook once marked the boundary between the Saxon kingdoms of Essex and Mercia, with Essex on our right and Mercia on our left. Is what we see today purely natural – or was it widened to keep out the enemy?

We reach a road junction where we will turn right. If we were to turn left, we would immediately cross the stream and enter Shaftenhoe End in Barley parish in the county of Hertfordshire. However, today, we will stay in Cambridgeshire. Our route turns right, signposted to Gt Chishill and Heydon.

Our new lane climbs steadily out of the valley.

After about half a mile, just before an isolated group of farm buildings on the right, a look back will confirm that we have been climbing. Also from this point, visually following the power lines to the left will lead the eye to Great Chishill windmill, about a quarter of a mile to the North.

The lane dips and then rises again to another viewing point.

After a brief downhill section, we are welcomed to Great Chishill, the more populous element of the Great & Little Chishill administrative parish.

Soon afterwards, we pass a small green on the right and then 17th-century May Street Farmhouse. We are now in May Street.

From here, our lane climbs again, quite steeply.

White Horse Cottage on the left is a former inn dating from the 17th century.

We cross Maltings Lane on the right.

At the top of the climb, shortly before the crossroads with the B1039, there is another 17th-century building on the left – Hill Farm House - standing sideways to the road.

Our route goes straight ahead, but please take care in crossing the junction and pause to view the many interesting features around this crossroads, including the war memorial and village sign. The parish of Great & Little Chishill boasts the highest point in Cambridgeshire (480 feet, 146 metres, above sea level), about half a mile to the right, east of this crossroads.

Having crossed the main road, we continue along Heydon Road, beside Great Chishill parish church on the left. The church is worth visiting. St Swithun's dates from the 13th century and survived a fire in 1789 that destroyed most of Great Chishill. The church has 6 bells, dating from 1686 to 2021 – yes, 2021. When you get home, you may like to read an account of the 2022

project to re-hang the old bells and to install the new one -

<http://www.greatchishill.org.uk/subpages/Bells1.html>

From the church porch, we should turn left to retrace through the churchyard and then turn left along the pavement.

On the right, thatched Rectory Cottage was built originally as two homes in the 17th or 18th century. Immediately opposite, on our left, there is a good distant view at the entrance to Rectory Farmhouse

We are just over halfway along the route, having covered about 6.5 miles from Duddenhoe End. The Pheasant public house on the right is marked **3** on the route diagram. In 2024, it served food 7 days a week from noon to 2pm (or longer), and was the only open, food-serving pub along the route.

If you do stop for refreshment, turn right from the pub and cross the road to continue along the pavement on the left.

We cross New Road on the left. About 30 yards later, the former village lock-up, erected in the late 19th century, stands beside the road on the right.

Set back on the left, number 31, Walnut Tree Cottage, dates from the 17th or 18th century.

Further along on the left, a pair of thatched cottages, numbers 57 and 59, date from the early 18th century, possibly late 17th.

When the pavement ends on the left, we should cross to the right to face any oncoming traffic.

We leave Great Chishill and soon enter the parish of Heydon.

Soon after Greenhill on the right, there is a thatched cottage, Highway Cottage, which dates from the 17th or 18th century. For many years until 2021, a Wood Green Animal Shelter operated from here, with lots of outbuildings. It was noted for its unofficial 'blue plaque' commemorating a former resident, Arthur, the cat who found fame in Kattomeat adverts in the 1980s before retiring here. Sadly, the animal shelter has now closed.

A two-storey, 18th-century thatched house called Miss Long's Cottage, number 59, is next on the right.

Soon afterwards, we should cross to the left to use the pavement.

A little further along on the right, the King William IV pub and restaurant, marked **4** on the route diagram, may offer food and drink but it closed in 2024, hopefully only temporarily. Its old website claimed 17th-century origins and explains that it was named after the monarch in whose reign the Beerhouse Act of 1830 abolished the tax on beer and extended the opening hours of licensed public houses.

We continue along the pavement.

Further along, we should pause beside The Old School House on the left. It is dated 1846 and has a fine set of four octagonal brick chimneys.

Looking back a little, on the other side of the road, there is an entrance to Heydon Place. This mostly-hidden, private residence was built in 1853 as the Rectory for Rev Latimer Neville (1827 – 1904). For over 50 years, he served as Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He was the 4th son of the 3rd Baron Braybrooke. Older brothers succeeded to the title but failed to produce an heir, so when Latimer Neville was aged 75 he inherited the title as the 6th Baron Braybrooke and presumably took up residence in the family seat at Audley End House, just outside Saffron Walden. Sadly, he enjoyed the title for only two years until his death when the Braybrooke title passed to his son, Rev Grey Neville.

Latimer Neville was Rector of Heydon's Holy Trinity Church, which is the next building on the right. It dates from the 15th century but was much rebuilt in the 20th century following WWII bomb damage that caused the tower to collapse into the nave. You may like to look inside if it is open.

From the churchyard, we return to Chishill Road and turn right to the bus shelter. From here, we should cross the road when safe to get a clear view round to the right.

At the road junction, we should follow the main road round to the right, passing a green on the left and following the sign towards Chrishall and Saffron Walden.

On the other side of the green, The Old Post Office dates from the 17th century.

We should join the pavement on the left and follow it beside the red-brick wall on our left for some distance. Behind the wall, 19th-century Heydon House sits on the site of the former manor house.

In due course, we reach a large pond with, hopefully, waterlilies, fish and ducks. In the middle of the pond, there is one of those classic signs waiting for a kingfisher to perch on it.

Here, the pavement runs out so, with care, we should cross the lane to continue on the right.

We soon pass Lane Farm on the left with the distinctive cream-coloured gault bricks that were fashionable in the 19th century.

In another half mile we reach a junction where we keep straight ahead, signposted towards Elmdon and Saffron Walden. At this point we leave the parish of Heydon and enter the parish of Chrishall, at the same time departing from Cambridgeshire and returning to Essex.

Our lane now climbs gently and the view opens up to the left. On a clear day, we may see the white buildings of the city of Cambridge, about 10 miles to the north. As we climb higher, the hangers at Duxford Imperial War Museum should come into view, lower down and to the right of Cambridge - they are about 4 miles away.

The climb eases off as we reach Hillside House on the right, a modern dwelling in Tudor style with apparent exposed timber framing.

For a while, our lane is lined with a variety of trees on the right.

We pass red-brick Mill House on the right and then 21st-century red-brick Ridgewood on the left.

In about a hundred yards, we reach a junction where we bear left to join a new road, signposted towards Elmdon and Saffron Walden.

In another 200 yards, we turn right, also signposted towards Elmdon and Saffron Walden. Our new road is called Hertford Lane.

Soon, we pass a small patch of woodland on the right. Immediately afterwards, we cross another invisible parish boundary, leaving Chrishall and returning to the parish where this route description started, the rather wordy Elmdon, Duddenhoe End and Wenden Lofts. By area, it is a large parish, albeit with a population of only around 600. We have about 3.5 miles to go.

The houses over to the right are in Crawley End, part of Chrishall parish.

We soon pass the entrance to Pightle Farm on the left.

Hertford Lane continues for another half mile or so until we are greeted by two Elmdon signs as we enter the village. There are many buildings here that have been listed for their architectural or historic value – we will mention a few. Most of Elmdon village is also protected as a conservation area.

The thatched White Cottage on the left dates from the 17th or 18th century.

We soon descend into the centre of Elmdon where we can join the pavement on the right, but only for a few yards until we reach the empty sign post outside a former pub, The Elmdon Dial, on our right. Here, we should cross back to the left and keep to the left of a tiny village green with war memorial, bus stop and fingerpost sign. We pass Crawley House on the left and immediately bear left into the churchyard of Elmdon's parish church.

The church, whose exterior is faced in flintstones, is dedicated to St Nicholas; it was mostly rebuilt in the 19th century, probably on its original foundations and preserving some 16th-century features inside. The tower has survived since the 15th century. Just inside the door is a lovely illustrated map of the village.

From the church porch, we turn right and retrace through the churchyard to the road. Here, we turn right to the end of the little green before crossing the main road. On the far side, we turn left and very soon come to a seat outside the village hall.

From the seat, looking beyond the bus shelter and war memorial, we get a better view of Crawley House which was built around 1600 AD. It was acquired by a Thomas Crawley who endowed it as a grammar school. It served that purpose for about 300 years.

The cast iron fingerpost on the green is another that was made at Maldon Iron Works in Essex, probably in the 1930s.

We continue along the pavement, bearing right and heading towards Audley End Station and Saffron Walden. We are now in Elmdon's High Street.

We immediately pass another former pub on the right - The Carrier. It closed in 1972 but the present owner has retained the pub sign and a Greene King Brewery plaque on the wall.

We soon pass 18th-century Old Bakery on the right.

In another 50 yards, The Old Stores on the right dates from the 19th century and retains its shop front. Opposite, on the left, Northwind and Bangles are part of a house that originated in the 16th century.

On the left, a telephone kiosk was still in service in 2024.

We cross Kings Lane as it comes in from our right.

On the right, a flight of steps leads up to the front door of The Old Forge which dates from the early 19th century.

The pavement runs out just before we cross the entrance to a narrow lane that doubles back to our right.

On the right we pass thatched Carpenters Cottage, dating from the 17th or 18th century.

Soon, there is an entrance on the right to Elmdon Cricket and Football Ground. Opposite, on our left, Wilkes Barn was once a public house, serving the community as the Wilkes Arms. It was named after the Wilkes family who were lords of the manor for around 200 years until the middle of the 20th century.

As the climb eases, we pass a gated entrance on the right to the Lofts Hall estate – Lofts as in Wenden Lofts, part of the parish name. This was once the home of the Wilkes family.

We may get glimpses through the woodland on the left of Pigots, a 16th-century moated manor house. The site around the house is protected as a Scheduled Monument.

Soon, a bridleway is signposted off to the left. This is part of the Icknield Way, an ancient trackway that probably pre-dates the Roman occupation and which generally follows high ground all the way from Wiltshire to Norfolk.

We keep straight ahead and soon pass between two signs which advise oncoming road users that they have reached the village of Elmdon. The lane descends for about half a mile. Before the merger of Elmdon and Wenden Lofts in 1958, our lane defined the boundary between the two parishes with Elmdon to the left and Wenden Lofts to the right.

With a good view ahead to the left, we pass an entrance on the right to Lofts Hall Farm. Within the Lofts Hall estate, out of sight from the road, there is a former church, 12th-century St Dunstan's. This was once the parish church for Wenden Lofts and is now just a shell.

Further on, we pass an ornate gateway, set back on the right – another entrance to the Lofts Hall estate.

After a while, the gradient lessens and we cross a stream before reaching a road junction where drivers sometimes speed, so please stay alert.

Here our route turns sharp right but first we might like to inspect the fingerpost sign to our left. It is topped with the words "Parish of Wenden Lofts" so it presumably predates the 1958 parish merger with Elmdon. It appears not to have been made by Maldon Iron Works. We can now, with care, follow the direction of the finger that points towards Chrishall, Great Chishill and Royston.

Having turned right, we should keep to the right of the road, facing oncoming traffic. Our new road is the B1039 which can sometimes be fast, if not busy. We will stay on it for only three or four minutes.

After about 300 yards, we reach a turning on the left. With great care, we should cross and turn up this narrow lane. There is no signage but the lane does have a central white line for the first few yards.

After a gentle start, the lane climbs quite steeply, rising about 100 feet in a quarter of a mile. This may seem cruel after 11 miles, but there will be few contours after this climb. For now, perhaps focus on the many animal tracks that cross the lane.

At the top of the hill, we pass a thatched cottage on the left called Cogmore. It dates from about 1700 AD.

Just afterwards, we follow the 'main' lane round to the right. There is no signage.

After about 200 yards we pass a seat on the right.

Soon afterwards we reach the thatched Hamlet Church on the left. Immediately opposite the church, a lychgate leads into a cemetery.

Just after the church, a gateway on the left provides access to both the Hamlet Church to our left and a 17th-century house, Lantern Thatch, straight ahead. If the church is open as usual, we should pay a visit – through the gate and diagonally along the path across the lawn.

The church was once an ancient barn. It was converted into a church in 1859 by Reverend Robert Wilkes of Lofts Hall. It is the only thatched church in the Hundred Parishes.

We leave the church and retrace across the lawn and through the gate, turning left to continue along the lane.

In about 300 yards, we reach a road junction. Here we go straight ahead, towards Langley and Arkesden although the fingerpost seems to point in a strange direction.

We soon reach a tiny hamlet, Upper Pond Street.

The two thatched houses on the right date from the 17th century. The second has a collection of straw finials along the ridge – two hares and then a cat chasing chickens. Upper Pond Street Farm on the left, with a red-tiled roof, is from the 18th century.

We continue ahead for another 300 yards, passing a house called Woodmans Acre on the left and then crossing a road junction with a notice welcoming visitors to Duddenhoe End.

We go straight ahead, signposted towards Langley, and almost immediately turn left into the car park where this route description started.

[If you started somewhere else along the route, please rejoin the route description from page 1]

This route description, last updated 05 October 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you will find many additional walk routes. You can also read more about the administrative parishes through which this walk passed: firstly Elmdon, Duddenhoe End and Wenden Lofts, then Langley, then Great & Little Chishill, then Heydon and finally Chrishall.

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.

