



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 338

Castle Camps - mostly through open countryside – 4.9 miles (8 kms)

This clockwise circular walk is entirely within Castle Camps, a rural parish with a population of less than 700. The route is mostly through open countryside with a short stroll round Castle Camps village at the end.

The first mile of the route is also included in Walk number 309 but travelling in the opposite direction. The final quarter of a mile, around the village, is also in Walks 153 and 154.

The route description starts and finishes at the car park for the village hall and recreation ground at the southern end of Castle Camps village.

The narrow entrance to the car park is on the north side of Park Lane, around 30 yards east of the village sign and war memorial which stand at the corner of Park Lane and High Street.

The only possible place for refreshment along the route is The Oak in Castle Camps, about 200 yards north of the start and finish, but it has limited, evening-only opening times. However, it is only a 2 mile drive to Helions Bumpstead where The Three Horseshoes, a community-owned pub, is open at lunchtimes from Wednesday to Sunday - CB9 7AL – 01440 730088 - <https://threehorseshoeshelions.co.uk/>. From Castle Camps car park turn left and keep straight ahead for 2 miles.

You may, of course, join this circular route anywhere along the way.

Start and finish: The route description starts and finishes at the Castle Camps village hall car park, Park Lane - Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL633432 - Postcode: CB21 4SS – what3words: brother.hotspots.limo

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 210.
A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Please follow the usual safety precautions: when 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 came in.

We turn right onto the pavement, heading west but for only about 30 yards.

When we reach a small green, with care, we should bear left to cross the road and use the pavement on the opposite side. The pavement commences just opposite the green.

We immediately pass the junction with The High Street on the right.

In about 50 yards, we reach another junction where we follow the pavement round the corner to the left, signposted to Camps End and All Saints Church. We are now in Church Lane.

We pass Castle Camps Primary School on the left.

Our pavement runs out so we should cross to the right to face any traffic.

The lane soon turns right and we now have extensive views to our left, including the tall communication tower which is a little over a mile to the south. Midway between us and the tower is Castle Camps' parish church.

We pass two thatched dwellings on the right, dating from the 18th or 19th centuries – and then we leave the main residential area behind. Most of Castle Camps administrative parish is rural; the total population was just 650 in the 2021 Census.

We soon pass the back of a sign that welcomes those from the opposite direction to Castle Camps.

After a seat on the right, there is a small Woodland Trust site on the right. If you choose to explore the path around the site, on return to the road please turn right.

We come to a road junction where we turn left, signposted to Parish Church. The 13th-century church stands about 200 yards down this lane.

The land on our left is the site of a medieval village and is part of a substantial area that is protected as a Scheduled Monument.

Before we reach the church, an informative interpretation panel on the left gives an explanation about the earthworks which survive from the Norman motte and bailey castle within whose grounds the church was built. The original village developed around the castle but in the Middle Ages, at the time of the Black Death, the surviving inhabitants moved to Camps Green, the location of the present village. It was this castle, Camps Castle, that gave Castle Camps its name.

The church is usually closed, but if it is open we should take the opportunity to visit. In any case, we may like to tour the churchyard, or a little beyond to see evidence of the castle earthworks. About 10 yards beyond the church tower, a cross marks the grave of a former rector, John Bode, who wrote the well-known hymn "O Jesus I have promised" in the 1860s.

On leaving the churchyard, we turn left along the lane to retrace the 200 yards to the road junction. Here, we turn left.

The lane heads West and is rich with blackberries in the autumn.

After about a quarter of a mile, the lane turns left.

In another 300 yards, we pass a few houses on the right and then descend to a road junction.

Here we turn right, signposted to Bartlow, Linton and Camps End.

Our lane climbs gently and in a quarter of a mile we pass a turning on the left which goes to Camps End. There is a seat opposite the road junction, one of several along our route. We follow the main lane round to the right, signposted to Bartlow and Linton.

In about 200 yards, our lane bears left and soon passes between handrails on each side of the road. These identify where the road crosses a ditch. The ditch carries the River Granta. It is flowing in our direction and runs just to the left of our lane for the next three-quarters of a mile. In due course it will join the River Cam. It is one of two Grantas that contribute to the Cam which in turn flows into the River Great Ouse.

In another quarter of a mile, we reach a crossroads. If we were to go left for just a few yards we would again cross the River Granta.

There are farm buildings to left and right at this crossroads and the roadway to the right also goes to a property called Camps Hall.

We continue straight ahead, still signposted towards Bartlow and Linton.

After another half mile, we reach a road junction where we turn sharp right. The only signpost tells us that we have come from Camps End.

This is the lowest point on our route at 72 metres or 236 feet above sea level. Perhaps we failed to notice the gradual drop from 122 metres or 400 feet where we started, but the next mile of our journey will remind us that what goes up must come down – and vice versa. We will climb gently to regain that altitude.

Our new lane may be slightly busier than the last, so we should remember to stay on the right, facing any oncoming traffic. Do pause and look back from time to time to see the ever-expanding views. On a clear day, on the horizon, we may be able to see the red-brick water tower on Rivey Hill, to the north of Linton, about 4 miles away. Way beyond the water tower, we may even see the group of 13 rotating wind turbines at Wadlow Farm, about 6 miles away, hopefully glinting in the sunshine.

After a mile, we pass a turning on the left, signposted to Shudy Camps and Haverhill. We keep straight on. Occasionally, we may get a glimpse of Shudy Camps church over to the left, about a quarter of a mile away behind trees.

As the road levels off, a roadside sign welcomes us to Castle Camps – this is a reference to the village; we have never left the parish.

A little further along, we pass an equestrian centre, Bartlow Riding School, and then Hill Farm.

As we enter Castle Camps village, we pass a pond on the left and a house called Pond Park on the right. When safe, we should cross to use the pavement on the left. We pass between new housing on each side of the road with an occasional view over to the right of Castle Camps church.

Amongst the 20th and 21st-century properties, thatched Wisteria Cottage on the right dates from the 17th or 18th century.

Further along, we pass the turning on the right which we took near the start of the walk, signposted to Camps End. We keep straight ahead, still on the left pavement, signposted towards The Bumpsteads.

Soon we come to another junction where we follow the pavement round to the left, signposted towards Haverhill. We are now in the High Street for a short out-and-back exploration of the centre of Castle Camps village.

On the way out we will comment on a few buildings on the left, generally those that are listed for their architectural or historic value. On the way back we will mention other properties that will then be on our left. Most of the older buildings have been renovated and extended from what may have been humble beginnings.

We pass Old Pump House on the left and, further along, an entrance to the Bowls Club.

Set back, behind Meadow Lane Cottage, are thatched, 18th-century Meadow Cottages. Soon after, there is a pedestrian entrance to the Bowls Club.

Further along, there is another thatched cottage, sideways on to the road - Elizabeth Cottage which dates from the 18th or 19th century.

Next on the left is the village pub. For many years it was called "The Cock" and since 2019 it has been "The Oak". In 2024 it had limited opening hours – Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings only.

Just after the pub, we come to a village green. The small wooden building once operated as a forge. It functioned for a hundred years until 1989.

In front of the former forge, there is an informative interpretation panel. This tells us that Castle Camps village was, until not long ago, known as Camps Green, one of the several hamlets that now make up the parish of Castle Camps.

Behind the former forge, the thatched 18th-century cottage is called The Forge.

The larger thatched house to its right is Potash Cottage, dating from the 18th or 19th century.

Just beyond the green, we come to The Cottage on the left, thatched with exposed beams. According to its official listing, it dates from the 17th or 18th century.

We will turn around here and retrace, keeping to the pavement on this side of the road. None of the buildings now on our left is listed but they are still an important part of Castle Camps.

After the red telephone kiosk – now repurposed as an informal lending library - we pass thatched Appletree Cottage on the left.

Soon afterwards, the part weather-boarded building appears to be a former shop.

United Reform Church on the left was erected in 1856 as an independent chapel.

Just before High Street bears right, Old Stores Cottage on the left is faced with pargetting designs in its plasterwork.

Next on the left, the more modern Poppy Cottage has a pargetted panel of poppies.

As we approach the junction, we should cross the road when safe and fork to the left of the small triangular green. Castle Camps' war memorial and village sign are to be found here, together with a seat. The sign was erected in 1993 and designed by the children of Castle Camps.

After the green, we reach Park Lane. Immediately opposite is The Old Inn, a 17th-century private house that functioned as The George until the early 20th century.

We turn left into Park Lane and in 30 yards turn left again onto the drive to the village hall and recreation ground where this walk description started.

[If you started the walk elsewhere, please go to page 1 to rejoin the route description.]

This route description, last updated 03 October 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the parish of Castle Camps and also find many additional walk routes.

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.

