



# The Hundred Parishes

## Walks between railway stations – number 11

### Newport to Audley End - 11 miles (18 kms)

*This gently-undulating countryside walk passes through six parishes: Newport, Wicken Bonhunt, Quendon & Rickling, Clavering, Arkesden and Wendens Ambo. The route is mostly along paths, bridleways and byways with a few lanes. Some stretches are stony and others can be muddy at times. This walk is particularly recommended on a bright clear day when the many extensive views will be at their best. The route passes six churches. There are pubs near the start and finish and in Clavering (Fox & Hounds) and Arkesden (Axe and Compasses). It is wise to check beforehand whether a pub will be open when you need it. There are several seats along the route. If you hope to visit a church or a pub, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. The route crosses two stiles near Rickling Church but they can be avoided.*

**Start:** Newport Station. Grid Reference TL522336 - Postcode CB11 3PL.

**Finish:** Audley End Station - TL516363 - CB11 4LD.

Parking at both stations, albeit rather expensive, especially before 9:30am.

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195.

Two diagrams of the route are provided at the end of the description.

*Tip: If travelling by train to and from the two stations it is usually cheaper to buy a return ticket for the most distant station, rather than two single tickets.*

*Tip: If travelling by car, it is normally suggested that you park at the finish and catch the train to the start, thereby avoiding the possible pressure to finish the walk at a certain time to catch a train.*

Leave Newport Station through the main entrance, which is on the Cambridge-bound platform on the west side of the tracks. Proceed straight ahead along Station Road, immediately passing a former maltings on the right: the buildings were constructed in 1855 beside the railway and had their own rail siding. Malting ceased in 1982 and the premises now serve a variety of commercial purposes.

Further along, we pass Newport's village hall on the left; just beyond it is a large common.

We soon reach a junction with the London to Cambridge Road, B1383. [About 200 yards to the right, on the opposite side of the road, there is a branch of Dorringtons, the bakers - just in case you require rations]. Cross the main road with care and continue ahead up Frambury Lane.

At the top of the hill, turn right and in about 50 yards turn left. At the end of this short road, keep straight ahead across a narrow field and then downhill on a footpath between trees.

At the bottom of the descent, follow the path round to the right, soon reaching a small parking area. Just as you reach the parking area, turn left through a gap in the hedge to follow the field-edge path close to the road on the right. The path soon joins the road (B1038). Turn left, keeping to the pavement on this side. Here, we leave Newport and enter the parish of Wicken Bonhunt.

Pass beneath the M11 motorway and immediately turn left and then right to join what was once the main road before the motorway was constructed in the 1970s.

Very soon, turn left onto a path that passes the tiny 10th-century thatched St Helen's Chapel, shown here and one of the oldest buildings in Essex.



100 yards after the chapel, turn right along the field edge with hedgerow on the left.

At the end of the field bear right and soon turn left between trees into a new field. For about half a mile, the field-edge path runs close to a stream on the left – Wicken Water. This was once probably the main road route until the present B1038 road was built to our right on somewhat higher ground away from potential flooding.

After some twists and turns, the path rejoins the B1038. We turn left along the pavement, now in the village of Wicken Bonhunt and with Wicken Water immediately on our left.

Soon, we pass 17th-century Mill House with tiled roof on the right. A windmill once stood on the hill behind Mill House but it was demolished in the early 20th century.

When the pavement runs out, cross with care to continue along the pavement on the other side. Set back behind the long, low flint wall on the right is Wicken House, a private house which until 2008 was owned by Essex County Council and used for 60 years as a venue for residential courses.

Just before reaching the Coach and Horses pub / Ananta restaurant, pictured here, we fork right along a lane which soon reaches Wicken Bonhunt's parish church. You are encouraged to visit, if open, but first please remove or cover dirty boots.



St Margaret's dates from the 13th century although it was largely rebuilt in the 1850s. It has fine stained-glass windows. The chancel – to the right as one enters the building – is little changed from the 13th century and the font is even older. The building is used regularly both for church services and as a community centre.

On leaving the churchyard, keep straight ahead, passing the pub on the left and then Wicken Bonhunt's village sign on the right. Cross the main road with care, bearing slightly left to go ahead onto a bridleway. The bridleway climbs steadily.

After a while, a gap in the hedge on the left should offer us a view, beyond the M11 motorway, towards Newport where we started this walk. We should be able to see the church tower and possibly, to its right on the horizon, the rotating radar scanner is at Debden, more than 3 miles away. From here, there is a clear view back to Wicken Bonhunt parish church

At the top of the field, we turn right, continuing along the bridleway, now with hedgerow and ditch on the right.

After 150 yards, at the end of the field, we bear left and soon pass through the hedge and immediately turn left to continue climbing.

The path turns to left and right before flattening out as our route passes imperceptibly from Wicken Bonhunt into the parish of Quendon & Rickling. We have a gentle descent followed by a rise towards a block of tall conifer trees.

On reaching the conifers, we keep straight ahead beside them, ignoring the farm entrance on the left. The large farm buildings often store grain and at times of the year the driers can be heard some distance away.

We turn right onto a lane, immediately passing Appletree Cottage on the right. This was once two cottages, dating from the 17th or 18th century. They were linked in the 20th century.

After 200 yards, just before a road junction, bear right and then turn right into the churchyard of Rickling Church, shown here. The church stands a mile north of Rickling Green, the main community which it now serves. It is yet another church that merits a visit, dating from the 13th century. As usual, please remove or cover dirty boots.



On leaving the porch, turn right and continue to follow the path past the church tower, soon leaving the churchyard by crossing two stiles. [These are the only stiles on this walk; if you cannot manage them, retrace to the lane, turn right and right again, passing The Old Vicarage and immediately afterwards re-joining the route where the footpath comes in from the right].

After the second stile, turn left, keeping the hedge on the left, and in 200 yards turn right onto a lane.

After nearly half a mile, at the bottom of the hill, turn left onto a tarmac bridleway with hedge on the left.

Just before farm buildings, the bridleway turns left, passing a large moated 18th-century farmhouse on the right with two storeys plus attics, pictured here. This was once known as Moat Farm, the scene of a much-publicised murder. The body of wealthy spinster Camille Holland was eventually found and the fraudster and murderer, Samuel Herbert Dougal, was hanged at Chelmsford in 1903.



Stay on the driveway/bridleway as it bears to the right, passing a sign that says we are entering Orchard Farm. Follow the bridleway up the drive through Orchard Farm. Immediately after exiting the farm through a beech hedge, turn right along a tree-lined bridleway, with another view back to the right of the former Moat Farm. As we came through Orchard Farm, we left Quendon & Rickling and entered the parish of Clavering.

After 300 yards this tree-lined path reaches a field, where we turn left, keeping the hedgerow on the left.

At the end of this field, we turn right along another stretch of fairly straight bridleway which is, at first, tree-lined.

After nearly half a mile, the bridleway meets a byway. Turn right along this track, passing beneath power lines with a pylon close by on the left. The power transmission line heads south-west towards Pelham electricity transformer station which we may be able to see on the horizon some 2 miles distant.

After a while, as the track starts to descend, it may be possible to see one of two former windmills in the distance, somewhat to the right. They have been without sails for many years and are known locally as the salt and pepper pots.

The track becomes a well-defined and ancient sunken lane.

At the bottom of the hill, keep to the main track by turning right, following a stream (the River Stort) on the left. This track sometimes floods, so keep to the right, where it is possible to climb up to the field edge if necessary. The track becomes a metalled lane as it enters the village of Clavering. Soon, set back on the right, is a large thatched house called The Druce. It was built as a hall house in the 15th or 16th century, had a second storey added in the 16th or 17th, and was further updated in the 20th. It gave its name to this lane, The Druce.

We pass a few more thatched cottages and then reach a road. Just a few yards to the right is the Fox and Hounds pub (which does not open 7 days a week). If you do pause at the pub, afterwards turn left to continue the route.

Our route turns left along the road (the B1038), soon crossing over the River Stort. Keep to the pavement on the left.



After about 200 yards, we reach a staggered crossroads where the pavement ends. With great care, cross diagonally to the pavement on the opposite side of the road and continue ahead on Pelham Road, signposted towards Brent Pelham.

After about 300 yards, we turn right down the lane to Clavering Church, passing the 15th-century former guildhall on the left immediately before going through the gate into the churchyard.

The Church of St Mary and St Clement is largely 15th century and, of course, worthy of a visit after removing or covering dirty boots.

From the church porch, turn left and follow the path round the church, turning right to an interpretation panel that explains that the moat and earthworks in front of us are the remains of Clavering Castle, which stood here a thousand years ago.

Continue along the path to leave the churchyard by the gate, immediately passing one of Essex's oldest houses on the left – The Bury was built around 1300AD and is shown here in winter.



This lane leads to the historic and picturesque centre of Clavering. Turn left, heading downhill. On reaching a pump on the left, please turn around and compare the view with the one below from more than 100 years ago.



Continuing ahead, we approach a ford over the River Stort. Just beyond it stands one of Essex's smallest houses, The Little House, dating from the 17th century. We will avoid the ford by keeping right and using the footbridge. Then, turn right along the lane.

After 200 yards, we turn left onto a byway, immediately before Colehills Close.

The byway climbs steadily for about half a mile, sometimes stony and possibly muddy further on. Towards the top, we may be able to see the two former windmills – the salt and pepper pots - with white caps, over to the left. These brick-built tower mills stand only 200 yards apart at Clavering's Mill End.

After about half a mile, the byway reaches a lane, opposite the rather fine 19th-century Clavering Court. Here, we turn left. [*We could divert to a second Clavering pub, The Cricketers, which lies about a quarter of a mile to the right: follow this lane to a junction and then go right for a few yards to the pub on the left. If you do this, turn right when leaving the Cricketers and soon turn left, signposted to Stickling Green.*]

Having turned left opposite Clavering Court, we soon pass the pretty, 18th-century, thatched Court Cottage on the right.

In another 50 yards, we turn right through a gate onto a footpath. Follow the field-edge path, turning to left and right, keeping the hedge on the left.

At the corner of the field, go through a gate and keep straight ahead. After a while the path switches to the other side of the hedge, but keeps straight ahead. We go straight across another path and at this point leave Clavering to enter the parish of Arkesden.

At the top of the hill, we are more than 375 feet (115 metres) above sea level. To our right, mostly hidden, is the Wood Hall estate which includes a substantial mansion dating from the 17th century and an adjacent private village.

Our route continues almost straight ahead and now descends for about half a mile into the village of Arkesden. Long before we reach the village, its church comes into view.

When the path reaches a lane, we turn left. Cross the road with care and keep to the right, with a stream, our old friend Wicken Water, immediately on the right and thatched 17th-century Watts Folly just beyond. Soon, turn right at the junction, signposted towards Audley End and Saffron Walden. On the small green to our left, an interpretation panel gives information about Arkesden – yet another pretty village with many listed buildings.

Continue ahead to a larger green with a seat. Just beyond it, Arkesden's parish church is worth exploring if you have time – please remove or cover boots if dirty. St Mary's dates from the 13th century, albeit much renovated in Victorian times. Between the church and the green, Arkesden's war memorial has been built into a puddingstone.

From the church, retrace down the green, passing the village hall on the left before forking left onto a path, now with Wicken Water on the right – note more puddingstones in the water beneath the road bridge.

We pass beside Watts Folly and, after 100 yards or so, the path rejoins the road, almost opposite The Axe and Compasses pub (which partly burnt down in March 2022 and was rebuilt and reopened in September 2023). The pub featured in a number of episodes of the “Lovejoy” television series, popular in the 1980s and 1990s.

Cross to the right and continue along the pavement on the right. After 100 yards, when the pavement ends beside Box Tree Cottage, cross the road with care to take the concrete footbridge over Wicken Water, turning right on the footpath past the 17th-century thatched cottages pictured here.



The path soon rejoins the road, just after the junction on the right. Turn left onto Wicken Road (Poore Street), signposted to Wicken. After 50 yards, we turn left onto a tarmac lane which rises steeply and soon becomes a public footpath.

This is part of the long-distance path, the Harcamlow Way. The path climbs steadily for half a mile, with extensive views opening up in all directions.

At the top of the climb, at the end of the field, go straight ahead, keeping the hedge on the left.

The rotating radar scanner at Debden may again be visible on the horizon about 3 miles ahead. This originally served the military air base that once operated there; today, the scanner primarily serves Stansted Airport. At a similar distance, but somewhat to the right, a microwave communications tower stands on the horizon, a relic from the Cold War of the 1960s. Somewhat closer in that direction is the white cliff of Widdington quarry.

About 200 yards after passing beneath the power transmission line, our bridleway meets another bridleway. We turn left onto the new bridleway.

Now, ahead and slightly to the right, Wendens Ambo church can be seen down in the valley, beyond the M11 motorway.

A short descent leads to a staggered cross roads of tracks. Ignore the one that turns sharp right and take the track that turns less sharply right, heading steadily downhill towards the M11 motorway with a hedge on the left.

Walk through the long tunnel beneath the M11, leaving Arkesden and entering the parish of Wendens Ambo. Keep straight ahead into the village of Wendens Ambo. Our lane, Duck Street, is joined by Rookery Lane, which comes in from the right.

The name Wendens Ambo derives from the amalgamation in 1662 of two small parishes whose names included Wenden, ‘ambo’ meaning both.



Our lane passes beside a good mix of houses, mostly from the 20th century but interspersed with some older gems. After a while, a shingle track and footpath leads off to the left. This is not our route, but we have a view of a 17th-century house about 50 yards down the track: Old Rectory Cottages whose facing (eastern) wall is dominated by a huge tapering chimney stack.

After a few modern houses on the right, there is a pink two-storey house with a gabled dormer window, somewhat hidden behind a wall and vegetation. This timber-framed and plastered house dates from the 16th century and was moved to this site in 1939 from Suffolk.

We stay on this lane until it reaches a junction with a telephone box. This is the B1039 road. The Bell public house, shown here, is about 50 yards to the left.

Our route turns right and, very soon, right again into Church Path. The view to Wendens Ambo church ahead is much photographed, although it is a challenge to avoid including parked cars. An alternative, less known view of the cottages can be gained from the churchyard beyond the gate.



This is the final church on today's walk; do visit if you have time.

The church tower is Norman and the arch above its west doorway (facing us) has Roman bricks.

Leave the churchyard by the same gate and turn immediately right through a gate onto a tarmac path with the church and churchyard on the right.

After a short climb, cross a small car park to return to the B1039.

Cross the road carefully to use the pavement on the opposite side and turn right.



After 200 yards, brick walls on either side of the road mark where it crosses the railway. Just afterwards, Railway Cottages on the left is a Victorian terrace of nine dwellings faced with flint stone.



Cross the road with care and turn right by the mini roundabout into the approach to Audley End Station.

Whilst the station is situated in the village of Wendens Ambo, it is named after the better-known English Heritage property Audley End House which is about 1.5 miles north of the station.

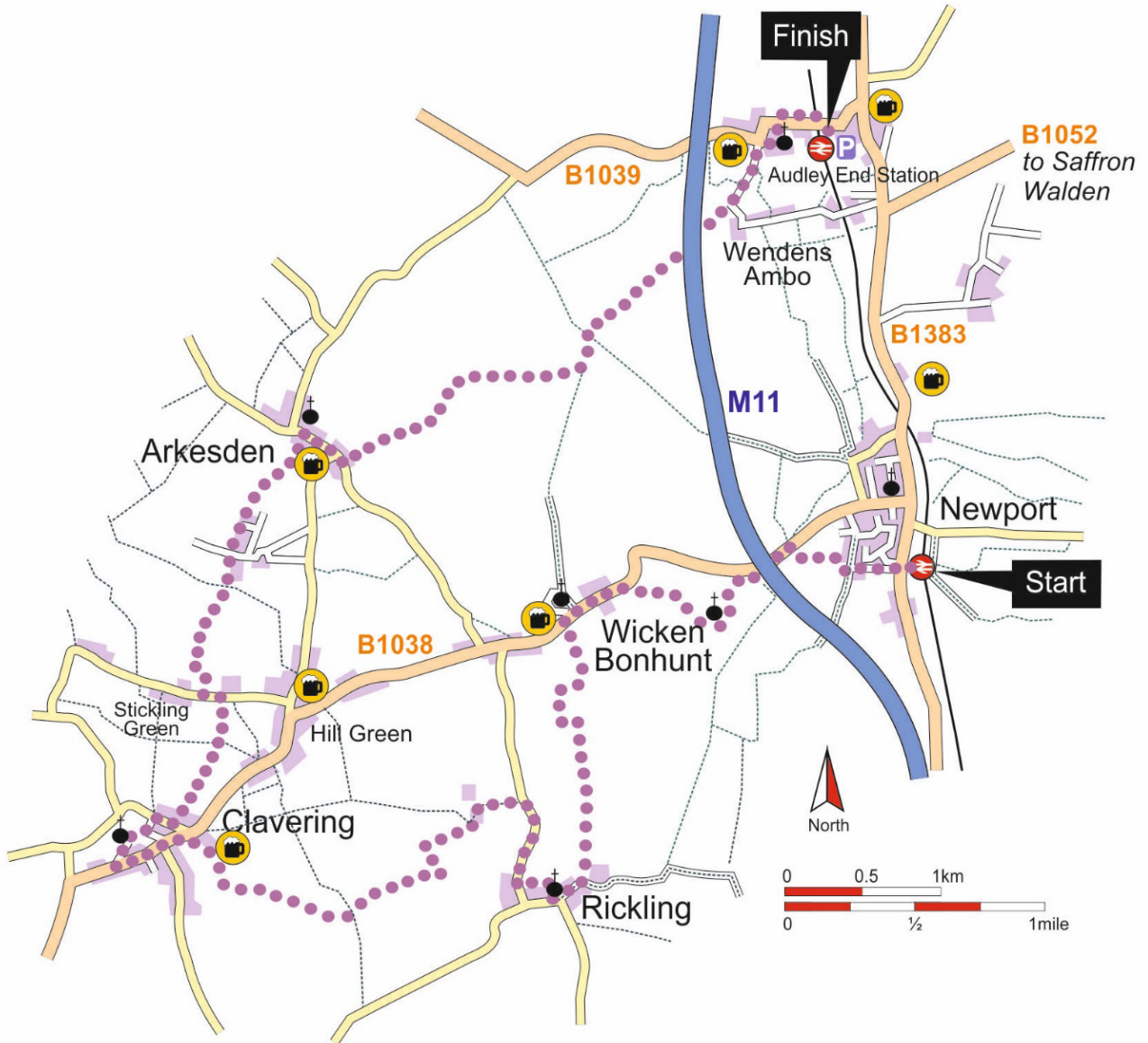
The ticket office and London-bound platform are on this side of the track. Cross the bridge for trains bound for Cambridge. A ticket machine is on

the London platform. Not all trains stop at all stations so, before boarding one, please check that it is scheduled to stop at your intended destination.

This route description, last updated 27 September 2023, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) There, you can find additional information about each of the parishes through which this route passes, as well as many more walks.

Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com).

Below are two maps of the route, firstly one drawn by Glyn Kuhn for the Hundred Parishes Society and then one based on the Ordnance Survey map and published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.





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

