



The Hundred Parishes

Circular Walks – number 120

Broxted and Tilty – 5.5 miles (9 kms)

This clockwise, countryside walk, often with extensive views, explores some of Broxted parish and the hamlet of Tilty in the adjacent administrative parish of Great Easton & Tilty. The route is moderately hilly and follows a mixture of lanes (some with light traffic) and footpaths. There is a pub near the start/finish (although it was closed in 2024 after a fire) and there are several seats along the way. There are several stiles. Some of the route lies beneath a flight path from nearby Stansted Airport, so it is likely to be noisy from time to time. Parts of the route can be muddy at times, so if you hope to view inside the two lovely churches en route or stop for refreshment, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or don boot covers or plastic bags.

Start and finish: There is usually space for one or two cars on the gravel parking area outside Broxted Village Hall, Brown's End Road, Brick End, Broxted (Grid reference TL574258, Postcode CM6 2BQ). Alternatively, with prior permission, you may be able to park in the nearby pub car park opposite the Prince of Wales (01279 850256) (Grid reference 572259, Postcode CM6 2BH). The route description starts from the Village Hall. 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 parking area and turn right along the lane. When the lane turns left, keep straight ahead on the pavement, passing the Prince of Wales pub on the left. Soon, bear right onto a new road, keeping to the right so as to face any oncoming traffic.

We leave the hamlet of Brick End at the national speed limit sign. Soon afterwards, we pass a long 18th-century flint-walled building on the right and just afterwards cross the entrance to Broxted Hall which dates from the 17th century.

On the left are distinctive rows of tall poplar trees.

After a gentle descent, followed by a gentle climb, we enter the hamlet of Church End, the largest settlement of the rural parish of Broxted whose total population numbers around 500.

We cross the entrance to Cranham Road on the right, but pause here and look sharp right to see Broxted's village sign, erected in 2002 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Our route continues ahead.

When the road bears left just before a junction, we take the path to the right beside the small green. Note the ancient Maldon Ironworks signpost, indicating that our direction is towards Thaxted. On the opposite side of the road stands the Old Vicarage. This house has an extensive garden which is opened to the public from time to time. The garden was developed in the early 21st century by Michael Goulding, OBE and Michael Coates, affectionately known locally as "The Two Michaels". Goulding was flower arranger to royalty and nine successive prime ministers and a judge for 40 years at Chelsea Flower Show.

Continue to the right, soon passing 18th-century Brick House on the left. As we approach a junction, cross with care to the left side. Keep left of a small green to turn left and, almost immediately, turn left again onto a footpath. Follow this path with hedgerow on the right and soon with fencing on the left.

The footpath soon brings us to Broxted's parish church. St Mary's dates from the 13th century and has a rare shingled spire. Follow the path to the left to the church porch. The church is well worth a visit, but first please cover or remove boots if they are muddy.

Inside, the church has a pair of unusually modern stained-glass windows. They are the *Hostage Windows*, installed following the release from Lebanon in 1991 of three British hostages: Terry Waite, Brian Keenan and, most significantly, journalist John McCarthy whose family lived next to the church in 16th-century Church Hall. The three men had been held captive for 5 years.

Exit the church porch and turn right, keeping the church on the right. Soon a wide view opens up to the north, across the valley towards a hidden church only half a mile away at Chickney. [Walk number 106 goes past that fascinating Saxon church].

Continue round the church. Soon, just ahead and behind the wall/hedge is the former Church Hall, once home to the McCarthy family and, prior to that, the former Deputy Prime Minister and local MP, Rab Butler. In more recent years the range of buildings served as Whitehall Hotel and it has now been converted and extended to become residential accommodation.

Turn right, still with the church on the right. Now keep straight ahead beside the churchyard and retrace along the footpath with fencing on the right, back to the hamlet of Church End.



On reaching the road, turn right for a few yards and pause by the signpost. Below is a photo taken from this spot before the derelict windmill was pulled down in 1953.

Now turn left and take the road towards Great Easton. When safe, we should cross to the right of the road. The first house on the right possibly stands on the site of the windmill. The second house is Mill Cottage.

Continue along the lane for some distance.

Just after entering The Maltings hamlet, ignore the narrow lane on the left, signposted towards Tilty, and keep straight ahead towards Great Easton.

At the foot of the hill, pass Old Malting on the right, a tall 17th-century timber-framed building that was clad in red brick in the 18th century. Cross a stream and turn left, through a gate, onto a footpath. At this point we leave the parish of Broxted and enter the administrative combined parish of Great Easton and Tilty. Continue for some distance on this little-used path with the stream on the left and fencing on the right.

After a quarter mile, cross a stile and then a bridge over the stream to reach a lane. Go straight across and continue ahead on a footpath cum drive. After about 300 yards, the drive turns left into a private area and towards a fishing lake, but our path continues straight ahead on a grassy path with hedgerow on the left.

After another 300 yards, we cross a rather dilapidated bridge over a stream and then climb over a stile. Keep straight ahead with ditch and hedgerow on the left.

When the path reaches an open green area, bear half right and pass through a gate. Bear half left for about 50 yards to the corner of the field and climb over another stile, cross a concrete bridge, go ahead for a short way through trees, and then turn right onto a field with ditch and hedgerow on the right, i.e. walking along the righthand side of the field.

About half way along this field, we may be able to see the World War II pillbox in woodland to the right. This was one of around 80 that were constructed in 1940 between Dunmow and Newport, just part of a massive defensive network designed to thwart a potential German invasion.

Towards the end of this field, we bear slightly left on the main path and pass over a concrete bridge into the next field. Immediately after the bridge, ignore the path waymarked to the right and continue ahead down the middle of the field. Soon, over to the right, a brick building comes into view; this is Tilty Mill which we will reach soon.

Keep ahead towards an exit from the field through a gap between trees but, immediately before the gap, we turn sharp right, now with trees on the left.

We pass over a stream and soon there is another pillbox on the right, this one disguised inside a small shed with corrugated iron roof.

We ignore a track that comes in from the left just before reaching Tilty Mill. We start to pass the mill, heading towards a house, but opposite the far corner of the mill our route turns left through a gateway. Do pause to look at what remains of this 18th-century water mill on a tributary of the River Chelmer. Whilst listed as Grade II* ('Grade two star'), it has been sadly

neglected for many years and is also listed as “heritage at risk”. The mill is probably on the site of a much earlier mill or mills.

Pass through the gateway. Almost immediately there is an interpretation panel which explains the ruins just ahead. This is the site of Tilty Abbey, founded by Cistercian monks in 1153 AD and a significant community for centuries until the monastery was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1536. There is another interpretation panel near the ruins.

Continue on the cross-field path, uphill towards Tilty Church. Over to the left, on the hill beyond the ruins, is the hamlet of Duton Hill, another part of Great Easton & Tilty parish.

Pass through a gate. There is another interpretation panel just to the right. It was about here where the gatehouse to the abbey once stood. Continue ahead to the entrance to the churchyard on the right. You are encouraged to visit the church.

Tilty Church was built around 1220 AD, outside the grounds of the abbey and close to the gatehouse, to serve visitors and other members of the abbey community because only the monks were allowed to use the abbey church.

Tilty church has two distinct architectural styles. The element closest to the footpath, with its great east window, is the chancel, added around 1330 AD. To the rear is the older nave with a bell turret that was added in the 18th century.

Leave the churchyard through the gate and turn right, back onto the lane. Hugh Hall, immediately on the left, is presumably named after Hugh Cuthbertson, Tilty’s mid-20th-century vicar who was probably most famed for his work establishing a tobacco-growing co-operative that helped smokers to grow their own and thereby smoke more cheaply by avoiding tobacco duty. Hugh Hall is attached to the former vicarage where he lived.

Just before the end of this short lane, note the emblems on the 1845 cottages on the right: a stag and a large “M”. These were symbols of the Maynard family who for many years were lords of the manor in the adjacent parish of Little Easton.

At the end of the church lane, turn right and continue along this quiet road for more than half a mile, passing several footpaths on the left and climbing steadily.

We pass two 16th-century houses on the right, each with tall brick chimney stacks: Pumpkin Hall and then Tilty Grange. They are both set back from the road and not so visible in summer. Beyond Tilty Grange, an extensive 17th-century barn has been converted into several homes.

The lane bears right and then turns sharp left. At this corner, note the ancient wych elm trees on the right.

After the left bend, the road runs along level high ground, initially with hedgerow on the right.

After about 200 yards, the hedgerow ends and the view to the right is fully exposed. On a clear day, several distant landmarks should be visible: along the horizon to the far right you may be able to see the spire of Thaxted Church and Thaxted windmill. Panning to the left, the white water tower is at Cutler’s Green, also in Thaxted parish, and then the tall microwave communications tower is in Debden parish. They are each about 3 miles distant. [Walk number 107 explores Thaxted and walk 106 passes the microwave tower].

A little further along, just before the road starts to descend, we turn sharp left between metal posts onto an unmarked but clear field-edge path with hedgerow on the left.

In about 200 yards, at the end of the field, we follow the path round to the right, continuing with hedgerow on the left. Now, over to the right, the line of houses at the top of the hill is at Church End, less than a mile away, mostly in Cranham Road where we saw the Broxted village sign.

After about 500 yards, at the end of the field, the path reaches a lane where we turn right. In about 50 yards, we turn left along a drive towards Moor End Farm, at the same time returning to the parish of Broxted (we have been in Great Easton and Tilty).

After about 200 yards, we follow the drive round to the left, passing The Granary on the right and The Old Stables on the left. Continue to follow the drive round to the right, passing a 17th-century barn on the left and farmhouse on the right.

Soon, at a crossroads of tracks, keep straight ahead onto a grass path with hedgerow on the right, heading gently uphill. After 200 yards bear half left, still with the hedgerow and ditch on the right, and continue to climb.

After climbing for about 400 yards, a metal handrail appears to the right, just the other side of our hedgerow. We keep straight ahead and very soon reach a crossroads of paths. Turn right over the ditch and almost immediately turn left to follow the path, now with hedgerow on the left and a long building in sight ahead, just to the right. After a while, Broxted Village Hall comes into view on our right.

When the footpath reaches a lane, we turn right. We are now back in the hamlet of Brick End. Broxted Village Hall, where we started, lies just ahead. Pass cottages on the left that display the year 1845 and the big "M" Maynard family crest.

Shortly before the hall, pause at the telegraph pole and look to the right. To the right of the trees around the hall, on a clear day, you may again be able to see the spire of Thaxted Church, on the horizon, now about 4 miles away. But that's for another day.

You can read more about the parishes of Broxted and Great Easton & Tilty on www.hundredparishes.org.uk.

This route description, last updated 12 August 2024, 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.

