



# The Hundred Parishes

## Quiet Lane Walks – number 303

Nuthampstead and Anstey - mostly through open countryside - 4 miles (6 kms)

This walk starts and finishes at The Woodman Inn in Nuthampstead. If you wish to park there and take refreshment before or after the walk, you are advised to book in advance on 01763 848328 or <https://www.woodmannuthampstead.com/>

Alternatively, you may find somewhere to park in the residential road, Park Farm Lane, SG8 8LT, about 100 yards North and East of The Woodman.

**Start and finish:** The route starts and finishes at the war memorials outside The Woodman, Nuthampstead (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL412345 - Postcode: SG8 8NB).

If you wish to visit Nuthampstead Airfield Museum, behind The Woodman, please first check opening times - <http://www.nuthampsteadmuseum.com/>

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 war memorials / Woodman car park, turn left onto the lane, heading southwest and immediately passing the pub on the left.

Almost immediately, we leave the village of Nuthampstead to pass through open countryside.

Over to the right, the very tall communication tower is more than two miles away, in the next parish, Barkway. It was once known as RAF Barkway; it was erected in 1941 and served for 70 years as part of the RAF communications network.

Over to the left, about a quarter of a mile away, the straight line of trees was planted after World War II beside what was the main runway of Nuthampstead's airfield. The three-runway airfield was constructed by American civil engineers in 1942 / 1943 on farmland that was requisitioned for the war effort. The air base was known officially as Station 131 and up to 3,000 American servicemen were based here. Initially, it was a base for fighter planes and then it became used primarily by bombers. The last mission was flown in April 1945, just two weeks before the war ended. By then, more than 300 airmen had been killed and a similar number were taken prisoner. Behind The Woodman, a museum tells the story of the Americans and the planes that flew from here.

We continue parallel with the runway and trees for some distance. This uncomplicated walk requires few directions. The lane twists and turns for about a mile.

After a relatively sharp climb, we enter a 30mph zone. This is a good spot to pause and look back at the view which extends northwards for many miles into Cambridgeshire.

Around this high point, we cross the parish boundary, leaving Nuthampstead and entering Anstey.

About a mile after leaving The Woodman, we see our first houses as we enter the village of Anstey. We soon reach a road junction with a small triangular green. Our route bears right but you may like to bear left for a few yards to view the cottages that date from the 16th or 17th century. Retrace to the junction and then follow the lane signposted towards Hare Street, heading for a red telephone kiosk.

We soon pass red-brick Anstey Chapel on the left, probably built in the 19th century.

Pass the telephone kiosk on the right. Almost immediately we reach a busy little green with a seat, a postbox and a shelter which protects a wellhead - the 19th-century mechanism for winching water up from the well below. The well has for many years been capped by a concrete slab. The thatched and weather-boarded cottage on the right is called Well Cottage and dates from the 17th century.

Our route turns sharp right at the little green, but you may wish to keep straight ahead for a hundred yards or so to the Blind Fiddler pub (01763 848000 to check opening times) or Anstey church which is another quarter of a mile in the direction of Hare Street and Buntingford. If you do choose to visit these, retrace to the wellhead.

From the wellhead, take the narrow lane signposted towards Nuthampstead and Barkway. The sign declares that it is 2 miles to Nuthampstead but we have nearly 3 miles to cover before we return to The Woodman.

After about 300 yards, at the tiny hamlet of Pain's End, we pass Woodside Cottage on the left. This thatched property is more than 500 years old and started life as an open hall house around 1500AD.

We descend past an entrance on the left to Bandons, out of sight but yet another ancient building, built in the 15th century as a manor house.

A little further along we cross a small stream where a sign tells us we have left the village of Anstey, although we are still in the parish.

The lane climbs and we ignore the turning on the left.

We continue past North End Farm on our left and soon afterwards ignore a signposted footpath (our walk number 132 goes that way, passing through Barkway Golf Course). Around here, we imperceptibly return to the parish of Nuthampstead.

Our lane runs beside the golf course on our left, then a driving range on the right, and then a car park and clubhouse on our left. Immediately afterwards we reach a crossroads with a "main road". We go straight across into the unsignposted lane, ignoring a Nuthampstead village sign to the right.

[This lane has been known to flood just before Bury Farm; if you should encounter this problem, simply retrace to the crossroads and turn sharp left, passing the Nuthampstead village sign.]

After about 300 yards, the lane turns sharp right opposite Bury Farm, passing Bury Cottage on the right and then Bury Farm Cottage on the left; each is thatched and each dates from the 17th or early 18th century. (Walk 131 passes through this corner on footpaths).

The lane soon reaches the “main road” and we turn left. This is Bell Lane, where many of Nuthampstead’s 140 residents live. This road is relatively straight and wide because it was upgraded by the Americans to provide a more reliable approach to the airfield.

Until now, most of the route has been along lanes that are too narrow to follow the usual advice but now we should normally keep to the right, facing oncoming traffic.

We pass several white-boarded cottages.

Later, we pass the entrance to Caylers Farm on the left.

In another 200 yards we turn right onto a lane signposted to Anstey. In about 100 yards, we reach The Woodman pub where we started. The thatched element of the pub dates back to the 17th century.

This route description, last updated 20 April 2024, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk). There, you can read more about the parishes of Nuthampstead and Anstey and also find many additional walk routes.

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

