



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 310

Great Waltham parish including some of the village – 5.5 miles (9 kms)

This circular walk explores some of the southern part of the Essex parish of Great Waltham, including part of Great Waltham itself. In the centre of Great Waltham, the parish church merits a visit but is normally open only at set times – in 2024 it opened each Monday from 1pm to 2:30pm and on the final Wednesday of each month from 10am until noon.

The route description starts and finishes from a clear stretch of lane, Margaret Woods Road, east of Margaret Woods Farm. This point is marked **1** on the diagram on the last page of this description. Its location is more fully described in the box below.

An alternative starting point is the Rose and Crown pub in the hamlet of Minnow End, marked **3** on the diagram. If you wish to park at the Rose and Crown and take refreshment before or after the walk, you are advised to book in advance on 01245 360359 or www.roseandcrowngreatwaltham.co.uk In 2024, the pub was usually open every day. The Rose and Crown, location **3**, is situated at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL701130 - Postcode: CM3 1AG – what3words: coins.sport.simple. From this point, the route description can be joined near the top of page 5.

The Stores tea room in Great Waltham, marked **2** on the diagram, is an alternative place to eat en route, although it is advisable to check opening times and availability beforehand – 01245 362649 or <https://www.thestores.co.uk/> In 2024 it was not usually open on Sundays or Mondays.

The route also passes the Walnut Tree pub at Broads Green – 01245 360222.

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

Start and finish: The route description starts and finishes in Margaret Woods Road, east of Margaret Woods Farm, just west of The Retreat and immediately west of a double gateway. (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL688122 - Postcode: CM3 1FF - what3words: sues.grouping.rated).

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 183.
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!

We head west, away from The Retreat and almost immediately pass a wide gateway and an unusual installation on the right. An ageing commemorative plaque on a raised concrete base declares “Sand and Gravel Association – Restored Gravelpit Award”. Out of sight behind the installation, a large lake has been created from a former gravel pit, and there is another on the opposite side of the road. We are in an area from which much gravel has

been extracted, presumably during one of the phases of expansion of Chelmsford, a city with a population of more than one hundred thousand which lies only about 2 miles south of where we are standing – and which will remain out of sight throughout this rural walk.

We pass Margaret Woods Farm on the right, a reminder that we are in Margaret Woods Road.

We reach a junction with Breeds Road where we turn right, signposted towards The Walthams and Pleshey.

In about 200 yards, we come to a small group of houses that constitute the hamlet of Fanner's Green. The house on the corner celebrates the fact that the Tour de France passed along here in 2014 – don't miss the weather vane!

Immediately opposite the terrace of houses, a footpath leads off to the right. Although this route is billed as a "quiet lane walk", on a dry day you might be tempted to follow the path – it runs beside our lane, but on the other side of a ditch, for the next half mile; but be warned, it is easy to miss the exit back onto the lane. Should you take the footpath, come back onto the lane at the first opportunity, after about 300 yards.

To our right, beyond the narrow strip of woodland and footpath, we may get occasional glimpses of one of the large lakes that formed when quarrying ceased some years ago. In springtime, this strip of woodland can be rich in yellow cowslips.

We pass the entrance to a bridleway on our left – opposite an exit from the footpath on the right.

After a while, our lane bends sharply to the right – before we reach it, we should cross to the left for a while so we can be seen by any oncoming drivers.

About a hundred yards later, we turn left at a triangular green. The fingerpost sign does not have a finger pointing our way, but we are soon advised that this is Humphreys Farm Lane.

We soon pass Humphreys Farm on the left. On our right, a cottage with a turkey weather vane has an attractive garden.

After a few twists and turns, our lane reaches a junction with another lane. There is no signage, but we turn right onto Mashbury Road.

In about 300 yards we pass a building on our left which, according to its listing, was constructed largely from 16th-century materials. The timber-frame and plaster building is decorated with pargeting on each gable end.

We descend gently through the 20th-century hamlet of High Houses, passing a lane on the left that is signposted towards Pleshey. Mashbury Road becomes Barrack Lane.

As we continue to descend, we pass some older properties on the right including Peter's Cottage and Elm View which date from the 18th or 19th century.

In the valley to our left, Walthambury Brook flows from left to right, from west to east, heading towards the River Chelmer which we will meet later.

We soon come into Great Waltham village and are able to use pavement on the right. We cross the entrance to Cherry Garden Road on our right.

The parish church comes into view and we pass Wisemans, slightly set back on the left – a 16th-century timber-framed and plastered house with some exposed external beams.

The pavement ends abruptly at the high garden wall of the vicarage, so we need to cross when safe to the left. Here, we pass the village stores and the Beehive pub on the left.

We reach a road junction with Great Waltham's Norman parish church immediately ahead (see opening times in the first paragraph of this route description). We will take a short, unhurried circuit around the centre of the village and come back through the churchyard, mentioning some of the buildings that are listed for their historical or architectural heritage. First, we need to turn right so, when safe, cross our road to join the pavement on the right, beside the low wall and hedge of The Old Vicarage.

On the opposite side of the road, the lychgate, erected in 1920, gives thanks "FOR MANY MERCIES RECEIVED DURING THE GREAT WAR".

We follow the pavement round to the left and, with care, cross South Street. We have now arrived at The Stores tea room, marked with a **2** on the route diagram, a building that dates from the 17th century. (Should you pause here for refreshment, on leaving turn right along the pavement)

Immediately opposite The Stores, the building merits consideration. The central, targeted element, now called Church View Cottage, dates from the 15th century. It was extended in the 19th century to include what is now called Six Bells Cottage on the left and the red and black brick element to the right, Church Gate Lodge. The building served as an inn, The Six Bells, for over a hundred years until the late 1900s; part of its metal sign has survived.

Immediately beyond the former inn, an alley leads into the churchyard, followed by The Old Priests House, a 16th-century building. We continue ahead along the pavement.

On the right, we pass thatched, 18th-century Thatchers, then a little further along 18th-century Bakery (with 5 windows upstairs), followed by Laurels (with 4 windows upstairs) whose listing states that it dates from the 13th century! It has clearly been updated in the last 800 years

From here, when safe, we cross the road to pass beside a small green on our right with spreading oak tree and war memorial. The memorial lists the names of 36 men who died in the First World War plus another 9 who perished in WWII.

We are now in Banbury Square. Here, you will find a "listening bench" where you can sit and listen to local tales, spoken in local accents.

To our left is Badynghams, a striking 16th-century private house with impressive tall, thin and ornate chimneys. Although the house has been renovated in more recent times, the chimneys are believed to be original.

We turn left here, passing beside Badynghams and with the cemetery wall on our right.

After the alley, we continue ahead along the church path, but do look back at another striking, yet quite different, view of Badynghams.

We pass beside the church on our left before coming to the main entrance. If you have timed your visit right, you are encouraged to visit the church which has many engaging features.

We leave the churchyard and turn right along the pavement, with the Beehive on the left.

When safe, cross the road to continue on the left pavement.

We pass a few more houses, mostly dating from the 18th or 19th centuries, although the final one on the right, Marshalls, dates from the 15th. It has benefited from more recent modernisation.

After Marshalls, we leave the village, continuing uphill for about 200 yards until we pass a gateway on the left to GWCC – Great Waltham Cricket Club.

We continue ahead for another 100 yards until we reach a gateway on the right. When safe, we cross the road and go through the gateway beside a lodge house on the left

We have just entered a private estate, Langleys, and will use tarmac public footpaths through the grounds. We immediately take the left fork to proceed along this straight avenue of lime trees, descending gently. We will go along here for about a quarter of a mile before turning and retracing.

As we approach the side of the big house, the path becomes a roadway and bears left. It soon crosses over the River Chelmer. Just here, the river is channelled and often cascades with great force beneath the roadway. We will turn around here. If we were to continue, the path soon leaves Great Waltham and the Hundred Parishes and we would have to use a busier road to complete a circular walk.

So, we turn around, now retracing uphill.

On a lawn outside the rear entrance to the big house, gravestones commemorate former pets of the Langleys estate.

Further on, over to the right, there is a World War II pillbox amongst the trees, positioned like so many, close to the River Chelmer.

Just before we reach the lodge house and gateway where we entered the estate, we turn sharp left onto a similar tarmac footpath with metal fencing on each side.

We now descend gently and gradually the impressive front of Langleys comes into view on our left. The Langleys estate takes its name from its fourteenth century owners, although its origins can be traced at least two centuries further back. The estate and its “new” Georgian mansion are privately owned, having been in the Tufnell family since the early 1700s. The house was built in 1719 and has a Grade I listing. It is not open to the public.

We continue past the drive to the big house and soon cross a stream – Walthambury Brook.

The footpath passes another lodge house on the left – South Lodge, built about the same time as the big house. Just afterwards, we reach a road where we turn left.

This is Chelmsford Road, a little busier than the other roads today, but we have only half a mile before we get back to quiet lanes. Not far behind us are Badynghams and the parish church. We should keep to the pavement, passing beside the former deer park on our left.

We pass a sign on the right, for folk coming in the opposite direction, welcoming them to Great Waltham. We have left the village but are still in the parish. This whole walk is within the parish, in fact it is within a relatively small part of this unusually large parish.

In about a quarter of a mile, we come into the hamlet of Minnow End. The first building on the left is the Rose & Crown pub which dates from the 18th or 19th century. It is marked **3** on the route diagram. This is a possible start for this route and also a possible place for refreshment.

From The Rose & Crown, turn left along the pavement, heading south.

We stay on the pavement for a quarter of a mile until we reach a turning on the right, signposted to Broads Green and Chignal Smealy.

When safe, cross the road into Lark's Lane.

We are now back on a quiet lane, but should generally keep to the right, facing any oncoming traffic. The lane climbs gently until we reach Ball's Farm on the right: several old farm buildings are followed by the farmhouse which has a red brick front. This was built originally in the 15th century as a hall house with cross wings at each end. The shape remains, although it has been modernised.

Further along we pass a sign that tells us we have reached Broad's Green, a hamlet within Great Waltham parish. The lane narrows as we pass between houses. These include Yellow Cottage on the right with weatherboarding – yes, painted yellow.

Just afterwards, the weatherboarding is white on the pair of thatched cottages on the left - they date from the 18th or 19th century.

Further along we pass a lane on our right with The Walnut Tree pub just around the corner.

We keep straight ahead, between greens on each side of the road with relatively modern housing.

After the houses, the lane passes between a narrow strip of woodland on each side.

We pass the back of a sign which tells us we have now left Broads Green.

Soon we come to The Retreat on our right and just afterwards we return to where we started this walk.

[If you started the walk elsewhere along the route, continue heading West along Margaret Woods Lane - and join the route description from near the bottom of page 1]

This route description, last updated 18 May 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the parish of Great Waltham 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.

