



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 313

High Easter parish – village and lanes – 5.5 miles (9 kms)

This walk is entirely within the parish of High Easter. The section through the village, at the end of the walk, is similar to Walk 125 but in reverse order.

The route description starts and finishes at the village hall car park which is marked **1** on the diagram on the last page of this description. An alternative start is marked **2** on the diagram, an unofficial parking area beside the road just north of Maidens Barn. From there, you should join the walk description near the bottom of page 2.

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

A tea room, The Snug, is close to the start/finish. It usually opens from 9am to 3pm from Tuesday to Saturday (01245 230715).

Start and finish: The route description starts and finishes at the car park at the eastern end of High Easter village, beside the village hall and almost opposite Lodge's Coaches and The Snug tea room. Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL627148 - Postcode: CM1 4QR (a large area) - what3words: operating.headlight.umbrella. Be aware that the car park can be busy during weekend football matches; then, it should be possible to park considerably along the road nearby.

An alternative start **2** is at approximately: TL635168, CM1 4RB and candle.befitting.genius.

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

A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

This route is entirely on quiet lanes, but 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 and cyclists may be as surprised to see you as you are to see them! This is a popular cycling area.

From the car park, cross the road with care and turn right along the pavement, heading East, away from the village.

High Easter is an extensive rural parish with the village of High Easter at its centre – we will pass through the village itself at the end of the walk. *Easter* is a derivation of the Anglo-Saxon word *eowestre*, meaning *sheepfold*. Altogether the parish has around 70 listed buildings. We will mention some as we go by.

We soon pass the back of a sign which tells people coming the other way that they are entering High Easter.

Our pavement ends here so, with care, we should cross the road to continue on the right.

We cross the entrance to Haydens Farm and then go past Rehobeth Place on the right, possibly named after a small town in Alabama, USA, or perhaps a mis-spelling of a biblical name, Rehoboth.

Further along, we come into the hamlet of Stagden Cross, part of High Easter parish,. We pass Stagden Cross Villas on the left – of which number 4 features the pargetted figure of a stag.

Soon afterwards, Stagden Cross Farmhouse, set back on the left, dates from the 16th century.

Just afterwards, we should cross the road with care and turn left into a lane which is signposted towards Barnston and Dunmow. This is called Cut Maple Road.

Over the next half mile, we pass several individual houses until we come to a thatched cottage on the right – this is called The Cut Maple.

Just afterwards, at a fork in the road, we follow the 'main' lane to the left. There is no signage.

The next building on the left is named SOKENS, although the map and its listing refer to SAWKINS, a house whose basic structure has been little altered over the last 300 years.

Next, on the right, is a former public house, The Labourer's Rest. The building and adjacent barn both date from the 16th century. This seems a very remote spot for a pub!

Immediately after the old pub, we keep straight ahead, ignoring the extremely narrow lane that goes off to the right.

The next building on the left, thatched and sideways-on to the road, is The Old Beer House, an 18th-century former ale house. Yet another remote drinking establishment! This is the first of a handful of properties that constitute Green Street, a hamlet within High Easter parish.

Further along, we pass Maidens Cottage and then Maidens Farm. In another hundred yards, we pass the entrance to Maidens Barn, a venue for such activities as wedding receptions and barn dances. This seems to be a remarkably sociable area!

Soon, a large white water tower comes into view, over to the left.

About 300 yards after Maidens Barn, we pass an unofficial parking area beside the lane on the left. This is marked **2** on the route diagram and is a possible starting point for the walk. With the parking area on our left, we continue north, soon passing a postbox on the right and reaching a road junction. Here we turn left, signposted towards The Roothings (an alternative spelling to Rodings) and Dunmow.

In about a quarter of a mile, we reach another road junction with a slightly busier lane. Here, we turn left, signposted towards High Easter. When safe we should cross to the right to face any oncoming traffic – this is the first roadway for about two miles that has been wide enough to 'walk on the right' !

After about 200 yards, just before a white concrete water tower, we turn right, back onto a narrower line, signposted towards The Rodings.

After another 200 yards, on the right, Poplar Cottage with the red-tiled roof dates from the 16th century.

Just afterwards, the house with exposed beams on the left is called Malyons; it also dates from the 16th century.

In half a mile, we ignore the lane which goes off to the right towards High Roding and Great Canfield, continuing ahead towards High Easter and Leaden Roding.

Soon, we pass Pentlow End on the right. The right wing is timber-framed with weatherboarding and dates from the 14th century when it was probably built as a hall house – a hall with central open fire. The building was subsequently modernised by the installation of a fireplace and chimney. The left wing was added about 200 years later, built of brick and later plastered.

After a quarter of a mile, we reach a junction with a fingerpost sign that was manufactured at Maldon Iron Works in Essex, probably between the two World Wars. High Easter is signposted to the left. That offers a shortcut back to the start, reducing the overall distance by half a mile, but our route keeps right, heading towards Aythorpe Roding.

Over to the left, we occasionally see the tower of High Easter parish church.

It is about 600 yards before we pass another house, rather hidden behind a gateway and woodland on the left but shown on the map as *Folks & Crows*.

We continue ahead and in 200 yards we reach a junction. Here, we bear left, signposted towards High Easter, and immediately pass the various buildings of Hill Farm on the right.

Our lane twists and turns, passing occasional houses and then the entrance on the right to Willow Farm (shown as Trotters Farm on the map).

From here, the lane climbs gently until it reaches a road junction beside a farm entrance on the left. There is no signpost but we turn left. This is a somewhat busier lane so we should walk on the right.

We are about to enter the village of High Easter. Ahead and to the left, the parish church comes more into view.

Barley Barns, on the left, has a collection of ancient farm vehicles beneath an 18th-century cart lodge.

Next on the left, set back behind a pond, is High Easter Bury, a former manor house that dates from the 13th century.

We come into the village of High Easter, now walking along The Street. The village has a mixture of old and new dwellings; we will comment on some of the older ones.

We soon pass Wild Oaks on the right. Its exposed beams reflect its 16th-century origins.

Next on the right, Lanterns was once two houses dating from the 15th and 17th centuries.

Soon afterwards, when safe, we should cross the road to use the pavement on the left.

Just a little further along, the red-brick Meeting House on the left looks rather like a Victorian congregational church and was actually a non-conformist Victorian school.

Just afterwards, on the right, Penvites displays the date 1450 and does indeed date from the 15th century. An archway leads beneath Penvites to a 16th-century house, Little Penvites.

Next on the right, the private house with exposed beams is the former Cock and Bell pub, believed to date from around 1400 AD.

We turn left into the churchyard. Just before the church, a tall memorial is dedicated to Francis Gepp and Hubert Majendie Gepp, both of whom died before reaching middle age. They were children of the rector, Edward Francis Gepp, JP, who died in 1903 after serving for more than 50 years as vicar of High Easter.

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin was built around 1100 AD, largely of local flintstone and some recycled flat Roman red bricks. The red-brick porch and clerestory (the upper storey of windows) were added in the 16th century. The tower is believed to date from the 15th century. The church has a Grade I listing. You are encouraged to visit if it is open.

From the church porch, retrace through the churchyard, enjoying the rear views of some of the village's older buildings including the Punch Bowl on the left. On the right, immediately before returning to the road, The Old Post Office was built in the 15th century.

We return to the road and turn left, keeping to the pavement on the left and immediately passing the front of the former Punch Bowl restaurant. It was built as a house in the 16th century.

We want to follow the main road round to the right, so cross the side road with care. We head towards Pleshey and Dunmow according to the fingerpost sign – another from Maldon Iron Works.

High Easter's village sign, erected in 2000 AD, stands just after the junction.

We continue ahead, using the pavement on the left side.

Not far along, on the right, The Chantry, 1847, was built as a chapel and is now a private house

Tye Cottage on the left claims (on the gate) to be *circa* 1375. That is consistent with its official listing as dating from the 14th century.

The war memorial on the left includes the names of three members of the Lodge family who died in the First World War. They were, no doubt, related to the founders of Lodges Coaches which is based opposite the car park where this walk started.

On the right, Anvil House, marked 1708, is listed as slightly older, 17th century. This was the blacksmith's house and its garage today appropriately displays a weather vane with a blacksmith at his anvil.

The next building on the right, Forge House is one of two houses built on the site of the blacksmith's forge, many of whose contents are now held by Chelmsford Museum.

Pyms, on the left, was once the village general store. The left pavement will soon run out so, when safe, we should cross the road and continue on the right.

On the right, black weather-boarded Chestnut Cottage and then Cherry Cottage started life in the 16th century as a single house that was adapted to become the Poor House in the late 18th century. More recently, it was divided again into the present pair of dwellings.

On the left, we pass the entrance to Old Vicarage Close. Just afterwards, The Old Vicarage is a substantial building with tall chimneys. It was built in 1850 for Reverend Gepp. The 1871 census recorded that he lived here with his wife, three young children and three servants.

Just beyond the old vicarage, the cricket ground occupies part of the former grounds of the vicarage.

We ignore the turning on the left, signposted to Barnston and Dunmow. The road junction has a small green, Pump Green. A lime tree, planted to commemorate the coronation of King George V in 1911, is encircled by a seat installed by Three Valleys Water in 2006. The water pump, now well preserved, served the village until the 1930s.

On our side of the road, opposite Pump Green, pink-painted Harrington House dates from the 18th century.

Soon after Pump Green, our pavement ends so, when safe, we should cross to continue along the pavement on the left side of the road.

On the right, the thatched cottage with white weatherboarding, Barley Cottage, dates from the 17th century.

Soon, we cross the entrance to Gepps Close, named after the former vicar.

The depot of Lodges Coaches is on the left. This family business started in 1920 and operates a fleet of both modern and vintage coaches.

Immediately after Lodges, the Snug Café is on the left. Not long ago, it also served as the village post office.

If you pause at the café, afterwards, turn left along the pavement for a short distance before crossing the road with care into the car park where we started this walk.

If you started somewhere else along the route, please rejoin the description from page 1.

This route description, last updated 23 June 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the parish of High Easter 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.

