



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 318

Felsted hamlets – 4.0 miles (6 kms)

This walk goes through some of the hamlets that make up the eastern part of the parish of Felsted. The route does not pass anywhere to eat or drink. The route passes a telephone kiosk that now serves as a book exchange, so please consider if you would like to carry a book or two for swapping.

The route description starts and finishes in Evelyn Road, a quiet residential road in Willows Green, not far from the junction with Main Road and the former telephone kiosk.

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

Start and finish: The route description starts and finishes in Evelyn Road where there are places to park in the road without obstructing entrances to bungalows - Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL719197 - Postcode: CM3 1QQ - what3words: booms.procured.surfacing or thereabouts.

The route is partly on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 183 and partly on Map 195. A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

This route is mostly 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!

Having found somewhere suitable to park, we set off on foot, heading southwest, away from the junction with Main Road and keeping to the pavement on the left.

We pass bungalows on each side of the road until we reach the end of Willows Green. We are in a designated Quiet Lane, yet just here traffic becomes subject to the national speed limit, 60mph, just before we pass the entrance to a playground on the left. Despite this anomaly, we can expect little disturbance from motor traffic, although these lanes are popular with local cyclists.

The pavement ends, so we should cross to the right, facing any oncoming traffic.

The next building on the right is 17th-century Rutlands. Like many of the older buildings we will pass, Rutlands is listed for its special architectural or historic interest. Felsted parish has a high number of listed properties, 197 in total, representing more than one in ten of all buildings. On this rural route we will pass a good number.

After bends to right and left, we pass Howletts on the left. Like Rutlands, this also dates from the 17th century and is another timber-framed building with some brick cladding. Just afterwards, an 18th-century thatched barn stands beside a pond.

Evelyn Lane continues through open countryside and it is another half a mile before our next buildings, just a few new houses before we reach a crossroads with Felstead Road. Here, we turn right, signposted towards Felsted and Dunmow. If we had gone straight ahead we would have come to Leez Priory in about a mile. Walk number 317 goes past it.

After turning right, we walk beside a mature orchard on the right, followed by the long, thatched Thistley Green Cottage, dating from the 17th or 18th century.

Our lane descends to cross a stream which was once part of an extensive network of fishponds that were maintained by Leez Priory several centuries ago. Our lane marks the boundary of a long loop of fishponds to the left, stretching along the valley to the distant Leez Priory. The fishponds area is designated as a Scheduled Monument where building and excavation are not permitted.

In another 200 yards, we reach a road junction where we turn right, signposted towards Mole Hill Green. Our new lane is called Hollow Road and we soon pass signs that say this is a designated Quiet Lane. This is a designation that can be given by local authorities under the Transport Act 2000, often in conjunction with setting a speed limit.

Soon, as the lane starts to climb, we pass a group of ancient buildings on the right: Bridge House Farm dates from the 15th century when it was built as a hall house (where the main room was an open hall with a central fire whose smoke drifted up through a hole in the roof - until some years later when a fireplace and chimney were installed). Its associated buildings include a barn that may be even older.

Our quiet and narrow lane continues, initially climbing gently.

We pass a few isolated houses of varying architectural styles before reaching the hamlet of Molehill Green. A former entrance to Riverside Books on the left is followed by a number of new houses.

We come to the end of Hollow Road at a road junction. At the corner, on our left, pink-painted Pyes Farm Cottages date from the 17th century or earlier. The building has two "eyebrow dormers" peeping from the thatch.

At the junction, we turn left, signposted towards Rayne (not long ago, the sign said Felsted!). We pass the side of Pyes Farm Cottages and then Mole Hill Barn which dates from the 17th or 18th century.

Soon, on the left, we cross the new entrance to Riverside Books at Pyes Farm.

Soon, signs tell us that we have reached the end of this stretch of Quiet Lane.

Just afterwards, we turn right at a junction, signposted towards Rayne and Braintree.

In a hundred yards, as the road starts to climb, we almost imperceptibly cross a stream in a deep gully. This is the River Ter, whose presence is given away by the metal railings on both sides of the road.

Just after, somewhat set back on the left, we pass Pyes Bridge Farm, thatched and from the 17th or 18th century.

On the right, we pass Taverners, a former inn – Pyes Bridge Tavern. The building dates from the 17th century.

After about a quarter of a mile, we come into another tiny hamlet, Crix Green, where the road forks. Before reaching the junction, we might cross to the left to improve visibility.

At the junction, Crix Green Mission just round the corner to the right still provides facilities for community benefit. Our route bears left, signposted towards Bartholomew Green.

[Here, there is an opportunity to reduce the route by about a mile by forking right, towards Great Leighs and Chelmsford. If you do this, after about 300 yards you can rejoin this route description a few paragraphs below.]

After forking left, we soon pass a sign that welcomes us to the hamlet of Bartholomew Green.

We pass only occasional houses, mostly 20th century.

In due course, we reach a T junction where we turn sharp right, signposted towards Great Leighs and Chelmsford. If, instead of turning sharp right, we had turned left we would soon have reached the boundary of Felsted parish and passed out of The Hundred Parishes into Rayne. The centre of Rayne is very pleasant, but we had to draw a boundary somewhere!

Having turned sharp right, we now head south, once again through open countryside with only occasional houses.

After nearly half a mile, we reach a junction. Just ahead and to the left is a house called Blackleys – whose name appears in large letters within the pargetting. This is a listed building which is recorded as originating in the 15th century as an open hall with crosswing, albeit “altered and recently restored”. It is difficult to imagine how it may have once looked. Not far behind Blackleys, just out of sight, there is a large solar farm.

We ignore Milch Hill Lane, a no-through road that goes straight ahead past Blackleys. Instead, we follow the main route round to the right.

In about 200 yards, on the right behind the low flintstone wall, there is another former hall house with crosswing – Abraham’s Farm. It also dates from the 15th century. Its original layout is easier to discern. The original hall is to the right, facing the lane and now with a small dormer window; the crosswing is to the left.

We soon come to a road junction where we bear left, heading south and signposted towards Gt Leighs and Chelmsford.

[This is where the main route is joined by the shortcut from a few paragraphs above.]

We soon pass a national speed limit sign – perhaps a reminder that we should walk on the right, facing oncoming traffic.

On the left, we pass Milch Hill House with elements that date from the 17th to 19th centuries.

Soon, we approach the hamlet of Willows Green. To our left, set back from the road, is Willow Farmhouse with farm buildings between the house and our road. The house, with red-tiled roof, substantial chimney stack and four windows on the jettied upper storey, was built around 1580 AD.

Just before the entrance to Willows Farm, we pass a sign welcoming us to Willows Green.

Just afterwards, we cross the junction with a lane on the right, signposted to Molehill Green. We keep straight ahead.

We can now use the pavement on the right as we pass several modern bungalows.

Within a hundred yards we reach another junction where we turn right into Evelyn Road, signposted towards Leez Priory and Cock Green. Note the metal fingerpost sign – it was manufactured at Maldon Iron Works in Essex, probably between the Wars and many years before the bungalows were built.

Having turned right, when safe we should cross to the left to use the pavement.

Almost immediately, we pass a telephone kiosk that today houses a defibrillator and also serves as a book exchange.

We soon pass a green sign that tells us we are on another Quiet Lane.

Soon, we return to where this route description started.

[If you started somewhere else along the route, please continue ahead, rejoining the route description from page 1.]

This route description, last updated 24 July 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the parish of Felsted 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.

