



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 332

Broxted - Tilty – 6.2 miles (10 kms)

This walk passes through two administrative parishes: Broxted and Great Easton & Tilty. The counter-clockwise route goes through attractive countryside, visits Tilty Church and passes through hamlets within Broxted parish. Some sections of the walk are used in other routes, numbers 120 and 321, but in the opposite direction.

The route description starts and finishes at Broxted Village Hall. There are no opportunities to purchase refreshment along the route although there are several seats, including in Tilty churchyard and porch. There is hope that The Prince of Wales pub near the start may reopen one day. The Swan at Great Easton (01371 532394) is about a quarter of a mile uphill from the southeast corner of the route. It is always advisable to check pub opening times.

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

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 - what3words: eyelashes.birthing.socket). The route description starts from here.

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer 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: where there is no pavement, 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!

Before setting off, note the interpretation panel outside the hall. It was partly funded by a grant from The Hundred Parishes Society.

From Broxted Village Hall, we turn left along Brown's End Road.

In just a few yards, we should pause at the telegraph pole on the left and look back towards the village hall. To the right of the trees around the hall, on a clear day, we may be able to see the spire of Thaxted Church, on the horizon, about 4 miles away.

Pressing on, we soon pass cottages on the right that display the year 1845 and a large "M" with a crown. This is a logo of the Maynard family who lived for many years at Easton Lodge, not far away in Little Easton where they were lords of the manor. Properties that they once owned usually display either the M and crown or another family emblem, a stag. We will see others on this walk.

After a while, we pass several individual thatched cottages on the right: 19th-century Shepherds Hey, 17th-century Millfield Cottage and then 15th or 16th-century Knowles, somewhat smaller and with exposed timbers.

Later, the lane skirts round 16th/17th-century Browns End Cottage with tiled roof.

Our lane turns left past newer houses, North Hall Cottages, and then descends, for a while beside Philipland Wood on the right.

About half a mile after North Hall Cottages, we come to a road junction where we turn left.

Having turned left, we are now in Water Lane.

A footpath signposted to the left goes to the right of the SSE Wood, planted in 2004 by members of the Stop Stansted Expansion campaign group to highlight the threat to this area and in particular that a proposed additional airport runway would consume this piece of countryside.

We pass Baldwins on the right, a house that is mostly 19th-century but with a little from the 16th.

A little further along, a driveway forks to the right towards the various buildings of Broxted Hill Farm. From this point, the view across the valley to our left includes the red-roofed, 16th-century Muscombs. Just off our lane, in the driveway to the right, a commemorative stone in the flintstone wall records the determination of the SSE campaigners. Their campaign eventually succeeded in halting the proposal for an extra runway, saving Muscombs and this lovely valley.

Broxted Hill Farm includes an 18th-century weatherboarded barn and 16th-century farmhouse.

We continue ahead on the lane, descending at first, and for a while heading towards Muscombs.

The lane climbs for a while past Rushy Mead on the right, a late 20th-century house in mock-Tudor style with apparent exposed beams.

Immediately afterwards, we reach a road junction where we bear right – there is no signage. The road coming from the left is Muscombs Road and we have turned into Broxted Road.

At the junction, we leave the parish of Broxted and enter the administrative parish of Great Easton and Tilty, an amalgum of two former parishes.

For the next 200 yards, we walk beside a high fence on the right – it seems to be hiding some redevelopment of a large, early 20th-century house called Stoneyfield.

Soon after the fencing ends, we pass Foxholes on the left, an 18th-century cottage with a long “eyebrow” window peeking out from beneath the thatched roof.

Further along, we pass an entrance on the left to Furrows. About 50 yards later, we can look back to see this house which is distinctive because of its many gable windows – eight are visible.

Now, ahead in the distance, we may be able to see part of the village of Great Easton whose main street climbs to the church at the top of the hill.

Our lane descends past a series of 21st-century properties on the right and then a terrace of older houses, Attwood Cottages and Attwood House, just before a staggered crossroads. Our route turns left, signposted towards Tilty, Duton Hill and Thaxted. There is a choice of seats here – indoor and outdoor – if a rest is required.

Immediately after turning left, we might carefully cross to the right to look through the field gateway. In the meadow there is a “pill box” from World War II. Just beyond it is the River Chelmer. Many of these robust concrete structures were installed in the 1940s when German invasion along the East coast was feared. The pillboxes would provide shelter for members of the Home Guard as they lay in wait for any advance by the German army, an additional defence to the natural barrier provided by the river. The line of pillboxes ran all the way along the Chelmer and, further north, along the River Cam, providing an outer ring of defence for London.

As we continue along this lane, we may see more pill boxes between the lane and the river which meanders a little to our right.

A little further along, we pass Chase House on the left. We will not pass close to another dwelling for some time.

As we pass Goodfellows Farm, up the hill to our left and with a pillbox in front, we should keep watch for highland cattle with their very wide horns – they can sometimes be seen grazing in this area. To the right we may see patches of a very tall invasive plant, giant hogweed, which has become established along the banks of the Chelmer. It should not be touched as the sap can cause blisters and scars.

When we reach a lane, we turn left, signposted to Tilty Church. The lane, called Tilty Grange Road, climbs and we soon pass a sign welcoming us to the hamlet of Tilty.

Ahead, to the right, we can see the impressive east window of Tilty church.

After about 300 yards of climbing, we turn right, signposted to Tilty Church. Immediately on our left is an 1845 building displaying the Maynard family stag and two Ms with crowns.

To our right is the former vicarage. It was here in the mid-20th century that Tilty’s left-wing vicar, Hugh Cuthbertson, established a “smokers cooperative”, showing people how to grow and process their own tobacco, thereby avoiding tobacco duty.

We come to the church which you are encouraged to visit, but first please walk ahead a little to appreciate the scale of the east window. Ahead, in the field, we may be able to make out some low stone walls which are all that remain of Tilty Abbey. Now, let’s take a look at the church . . .

Tilty Church was built around 1220 AD, outside the grounds of the abbey and close to the abbey 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 lane, with its great east window, is the chancel, added around 1330 AD. Further away from the lane is the older nave with a bell turret that was added in the 18th century. The church is often open and you are encouraged to look inside.

We leave the churchyard through the gate and turn right to retrace along the lane. Hugh Hall, immediately on the left, is presumably named after Hugh Cuthbertson, the former vicar.

At the end of the church lane, we turn right and continue along Tilty Grange Road, climbing steadily.

We pass two 16th-century houses on the right, each with tall brick chimney stacks: Pumpkin Hall and then The Grange (with a Maynard family stag). They are both set back from the road and not so visible when leaves are on the trees. 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. On the horizon to the far right you may be able to see the spire of Thaxted Church and John Webb's Windmill just to its right. Panning to the left, the white water tower, behind trees, 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].

Further along, before the lane descends, the houses at Church End, Broxted are spread along the horizon ahead.

The lane descends, crosses a ditch, and then climbs again.

At the top of the climb, the lane passes a pair of houses, Coldharbour Villas, as it turns left. For the next quarter of a mile, our lane is very narrow and there seems to be nowhere for vehicles to pass one another.

Tilty Grange Road comes to an end when it reaches a junction. Here, we turn right, signposted towards Broxted. Almost immediately we pass the back of a sign that tells us we have left The Maltings, one of Broxted's several hamlets.

For a while, the new lane climbs and also defines the parish boundary with Great Easton & Tilty on the right and Broxted on the left.

The lane turns left and from now on we will be totally in Broxted administrative parish.

Soon, a sign welcomes us to Church End, the most populous of Broxted's several hamlets – in 2021, Broxted's total population was 550.

We pass Mill Cottage on the left, a reminder that a windmill once stood close by, possibly where the next cottage is now sited.



Our lane turns to the left and with care we cross the road that goes off to the right, signposted towards Thaxted. The photo above was taken at this spot some years ago.

We follow the main road round to the left, signposted towards Mole Hill Green.

After a few relatively-modern dwellings, we pass 18th-century Brick House on the right.

Before we reach the next road junction we should cross the road with care to use the pavement that bears left beside a small green with a seat.

Just here, on the right, is 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.

On the green itself, a fingerpost sign advises that we are now heading towards Takeley and Broxted. The cast iron signpost was made at Maldon Ironworks in Essex, probably in the 1930s.

The short stretch of pavement soon meets our new road. When safe, we should cross to walk on the right.

After passing a red-brick house on the left, we should look back at it for a better view. This was once a public house, The Bell.

Just afterwards, we pass the entrance to Cranham Road on the left. Broxted's village sign stands on the far corner of the junction, erected in 2002 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

We soon come to the end of the residential area, passing School Villas on the right and then the back of the sign welcoming anyone coming the other way into Church End. The national speed limit sign should prompt us to keep to the right, facing any oncoming traffic. This lane may not be as quiet as those we have used so far.

Our lane descends, heading towards a line of poplar trees that will be joining us from the right. Before we reach them, our lane is lined with trees on each side as we start to climb.

On the left, set back beyond the farm buildings, is 17th-century Broxted Hall. After the entrance, we follow a long 18th-century flint-walled building on our left. To the right, the line of poplars halts shortly before reaching our lane.

After a little more climbing, we are welcomed to Brick End, Broxted, and invited to reduce our speed.

After about 200 yards, with care we should cross to the pavement on the left.

We keep to the pavement, forking left off the main road.

We soon pass the back of the Prince of Wales pub on the right. It closed in 2024.

We continue ahead on the pavement, now in Brown's End Road and passing a row of houses on the left.

Just after the end of the houses, we return to Broxted Village Hall on the left, where this walk description started.

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

This route description, last updated 17 September 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the two administrative parishes of Broxted and Great Easton & Tilty 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.

