



The Hundred Parishes

Quiet Lane Walks – number 333

Leaden Roding – High Easter – 7.7 miles (12 kms)

This walk passes through three administrative parishes: Leaden Roding, Aythorpe Roding and High Easter. The route includes a section of out-and-back through the village of High Easter, turning at The Snug Café. This is the only option for refreshment along the route. (01245 230715 to check openings – in 2024 it was open from Tuesday to Saturday from 9am to 3pm). That section could be omitted, reducing the overall distance from 7.7 to 6.3 miles.

A diagram of the route is provided at the end of this description. Locations are marked with bold numbers: **1** at the start, **2** at The Snug and **3** where the route could be shortened.

The route is fairly flat, mostly along quiet lanes although the beginning and end are on pavement beside Dunmow Road, the B184.

The clockwise route goes through attractive countryside and passes through the villages of Leaden Roding and High Easter and the hamlet of Keeres Green in Aythorpe Roding parish.

Some parts of the route are also used in other walks, numbers 128, 130 and 313.

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

Start and finish: The route description starts and finishes at a lay-by beside the B184, Dunmow Road, outside Rodings Primary School in Leaden Roding, a quarter of a mile north of the mini roundabout junction with A1060. The lay-by is at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL594137 - Postcode: CM6 1PZ – what3words: strongman.property.winters

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 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!

From the lay-by, we head north along the pavement, with the school on the left.

We soon cross over the exit from the school and then reach a small 21st-century close called Long Hide. Here, the pavement ends so we should cross the main road, with care, to use the pavement on the right. We continue along the pavement beside the B184 for the next quarter of a mile before we get into quiet lanes. A national speed limit sign reminds us to be especially watchful.

Before too long, we turn right off the B184, signposted to “Keers Grn”. The hamlet is generally spelt Keeres by Ordnance Survey and Historic England, but the locals seem to omit the third E.

Nonetheless, by turning the corner we have crossed the parish boundary from Leaden Roding into Aythorpe Roding. These two parishes are part of the grouping of eight which bear the name Roding, named after an Anglo-Saxon chieftain called Hroda.

Soon on the right is Old Mill Close, a small residential estate built around 2015 on the site of a disused commercial depot.

The lane through the hamlet of Keers or Keeres Green passes beside a variety of attractive homes with a few modern additions between the more established properties.

Almost immediately, we are greeted by a small group on the right - 16th-century Beadles Cottage (thatched and set back), thatched 18th-century Pavitts Cottage (beside the lane), and then weatherboarded 17th-century Lattice Cottage.

Further along, Judd's Cottage, on the left just before the entrance to Keers Farm, goes back to the 14th century when it was built as a small hall house. A hall house usually had a high open hall as the main living space, heated by a central fire whose smoke escaped through vents in the roof. Later, when chimneys became fashionable, most were modified by the insertion of a chimney to take the smoke away and usually also by the insertion of a floor to turn the hall into two storeys.

A little further along the lane, we pass 17th-century Thatched Cottage on the left and 17th-century Millers Farmhouse on the right.

After Cut Elms Farmhouse on the left, we pass 17th-century Cut Elms Cottage on the right. Here we leave the hamlet of Keers Green and for the next two or three miles we will see only a few scattered houses.

On the way, we pass thatched 18th-century Cawdles on the right.

We go straight on past the drive on the right which leads to Friar's Grange, a 14th-century hall house that was part of the estates owned by Tilty Abbey, the Cistercian monastery further north in The Hundred Parishes.

Just after Friar's Grange, we get a glimpse of the tower of High Easter parish church, about a mile to our right.

A little further on, we pass Keers Green Villas on the left – without the third E !

Collins Farm, on the left, has exposed timber framing and dates from the early 16th century.

Soon afterwards, we get a view across the fields to the left to Aythorpe Roding windmill, half a mile or so to the West.

A quarter of a mile beyond Collins Farm, we reach a grass traffic island with a horse chestnut tree. Here, we turn right, signposted towards High Easter.

We pass a range of agricultural buildings on the right at Bigods Farm.

The next house on the right is the partly-thatched Yeomans, another former hall house, dating from the 14th or 15th century.

Further along, we ignore a lane which goes off to the left, signposted to Loves Farm only.

We pass beside woodland on the right and just about here we imperceptibly cross the parish boundary, leaving Aythorpe Roding and entering High Easter.

On the right we pass Hill Farm farmhouse with the tall chimneys and soon afterwards we reach a triangular grass traffic island where we turn right, signposted towards High Easter.

We immediately pass agricultural 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.

This spot is marked **3** on the route diagram on the last page of this description. The full route turns left to explore the village of High Easter, with a chance to take refreshment at the Snug Café (01245 230715) before retracing to this junction. The reduced route of 6.3 miles turns right here. To follow the shorter route, please skip to near the top of page 6 of this description, where the figure **3** appears again. The full route continues immediately below . . .

There is no signpost at the road junction but we turn left. This is a somewhat busier lane so we should certainly walk on the right.

We are about to enter the village of High Easter. High Easter is an extensive rural parish with the village of High Easter at its centre. *Easter* is a derivation of the Anglo-Saxon word *eowestre*, meaning *sheepfold*. Altogether the parish has around 70 listed buildings. We will pass around a quarter between here and where we will turn around, at The Snug.

Ahead and to the left, the parish church comes 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 so we should expect to progress more slowly.

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 cast iron fingerpost sign – manufactured at Maldon Iron Works in Essex, probably in the 1930s.

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, whose premises we will pass shortly.

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. The lime tree was planted to commemorate the coronation of King George V in 1911. 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 – it is marked **2** on the route diagram. Not long ago, this building also served as the village post office. We have covered around 4.4 miles since leaving Leaden Roding and we have about 3.3 to get back there, so we may wish to succumb to the café's temptations!

On leaving The Snug, we turn right to retrace along the pavement through High Easter village.

As we pass Lodges Coaches, behind the hedgerow to our left is the village hall and football ground.

We cross the entrance to Gepps Close.

The pavement runs out just before the next road junction so, with care, we should cross to the left for a while.

On the right, after the cricket ground, we get a good view from this direction of The Old Vicarage with its tall chimneys.

We return to the corner with the village sign on the right. Here, we follow the main road round to the left, signposted towards Leaden Roding. Just after the corner, the entrance to High Easter Church is just on the right. If you didn't get inside earlier, you might like to try now. When you leave, retrace to the main road and turn right.

For a while, we have the luxury of pavement on both sides of the road.

Then we should be sure to use the only pavement, on the right.

The right pavement ends shortly before the road bends to the right, so we should cross to the left to get a better view of traffic.

As we leave the residential area, the road straightens so we should cross back to the right to face any oncoming traffic.

We pass farm buildings on the right and return to the junction where we decided earlier to take the longer option – marked **3** on the route diagram. Now we continue along the main road, bearing round to the left – there is no signage.

About 150 yards after the road junction, we reach Old Mill on the right, a private house of unusual design with a circular top storey. It was built in the 20th century on the foundations of an 18th-century post mill, a windmill that ceased its operations in 1906.

The next house on the right is Mill House, a 17th-century house for the miller with associated bakehouse and brewhouse.

The next building on the right has interesting pargetting that includes a windmill, donkey, farm horses – and, rather curiously, two men in Elizabethan costume fighting with swords.

Further along on the right, 17th-century Lower House has an interesting chimney stack.

On the right, Heyrons is now residential, converted from a series of barns and farm buildings and now supported by substantial buttresses.

We pass the entrance to High Trees House, out of sight behind the trees on the right.

The road bears to the right and we pass the start of a public byway on the left.

About 300 yards further on, we pass Lower House Farmhouse, set back a little on the left between farm buildings. The house dates from around 1600 AD.

In another 200 yards, we turn right onto a new lane, signposted to Leaden Roding.

We immediately cross over a stream with brick parapets on each side of the road.

Our new lane soon bears left as a broad public footpath joins us from the right.

In half a mile or so, we reach a junction with a small triangular grass traffic island. Here, we turn right, onto High Easter Road, signposted towards Leaden Roding. We immediately pass Manns Cottage on the right with a black post box.

In about a quarter of a mile, we pass Slices on the left, behind a white gate. This thatched house began life in the 16th century as a small hall.

A little further along, we pass imperceptibly from High Easter parish back into Leaden Roding parish. Soon afterwards, Chase Wood begins on our left.

For a while, the lane passes between woodland on the left and right.

Still within woodland, our lane bends sharp right, just as a byway comes in from the left. The wood on the left now has a new name: Poorhouse Wood. The origin of its name is unknown.

Just before we reach a sign welcoming us to Leaden Roding, we pass a long, thin pond on the right, running beside the lane. The field immediately beyond the pond usually has a good show of daffodils in springtime.

Further along, 17th-century Chalks Farmhouse is set back on the left.

Soon afterwards, we are again welcomed to Leaden Roding with a 30mph speed limit sign.

As we come into the residential area, we pass a turning on the right called Chalks Green. This is just after an open area of common land with that name. The area is kept as grassland and 80 species of flowers have been recorded here.

We next cross Lordswood View on the right and can now use the pavement.

We cross the entrance to Rosssdene Gardens and just before we reach a busy junction there is a small green on the left with Leaden Roding's village sign, erected in 1994.

Here, we follow the pavement round to the right, joining the B184 as it heads northwards towards Great Dunmow and High Roding. We immediately pass a small general store on the right. On the other side of the road, the 19th-century house with two bay windows on the ground floor functioned as the King William IV pub for more than a century until the 1990s.

Almost immediately, when safe, we should use the pedestrian crossing to cross the B184 and turn right along the pavement on the left side of the road.

We soon pass The Granaries on the right – it dates from around 1600 AD and has an impressive chimney stack.

On our side of the road, on the green opposite the Granaries, there is a shiny metal object on a circular concrete base. This is the spigot mounting for a portable mortar, a kind of gun. The spigot would have been installed here during World War II to defend this stretch of road against the feared German invasion. It would have been built with a surrounding trench for the gun crew.

A little further along, we pass the Fire Station, off to the right.

With care, we cross the entrance to Holloway Crescent.

Soon afterwards, we reach the lay-by beside the school 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 20 September 2024, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the parishes of Leaden Roding, Aythorpe Roding and 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.

