

Six Walks

In and around the Parish



Produced by the Parish Council

Wickham Bishops Parish Council

Six Walks Booklet

This booklet was printed in 2007. Since then, there have obviously been some changes, both to buildings, gates, trees etc and some minor adjustments to paths. Here we list some of the more significant changes.

The Chequers is no longer a pub, it is now a pleasant Italian Restaurant, “Olio at The Chequers”

The Mitre is no longer a pub, it is partly an excellent beauty salon “The Mulberry Spa” and also “The Mitre Lounge” a bar with indoor and outside seating, serving good coffee, drinks and food as well as takeaways (currently open Wed-Sat 12 noon – 11pm and Sundays 12 noon - 6pm).

The gardens at Glen Chantry are no longer open to the public.

With regard to parking for the walks, please note that prior permission should be sought before using the Church or Village Hall car parks. For the Village Hall, ring BHSa on 07543 033783.

Walk 2 and Walk 6: Please note that the start of the footpath from Kelvedon Road to Goat Lodge Road now runs between some new houses (and not through a farm gate).

Walk 5 The Rail Trail Walk: We can suggest an alternative section through open fields to avoid walking down Wickham Hall Lane and along Langford Road. When you reach the layby (and dog bin) on Grange Road instead of taking the footpath diagonally across to Wickham Hall Lane, take the new footpath to the left of it, through the gate and follow path along field edge, onto the next field where the footpath goes straight across the field to a path between hedges. You then follow the path round the field edge passing Likely Wood on your right, and then continue to follow the track down to Langford Road. Turn left along a short footpath along field edge then cross Langford Road directly after the buildings that are on the other side of the road. Follow the path straight ahead, to the left of Reigate Bungalow, up to the Rail Trail and turn right to continue the walk.

Please remember to keep to the footpaths and follow the signs, and that dogs should be on leads or under close control at all times. Please remember to “pick up” after your dog!

Essex County Council have a useful online Public Rights of Way (PROW) interactive map which you can use to see all of the footpaths in the County www.essexhighways.org

Wickham Bishops Parish Council have a team of willing volunteers who help clear footpaths and other minor jobs that may need doing to maintain them. More volunteers are always welcome!

Remember that footpaths can be muddy, and uneven so take care. Please report any major issues with paths to the Parish Clerk, or to Essex Highways. Enjoy your walks!

Wickham Bishops Parish Council

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River Blackwater on the River Walk

Introduction to Wickham Bishops

Although there is evidence of Roman occupation, Wickham was still a very small manor at the time of the Domesday Book of 1086 and belonged to the Bishops of London. It was originally centred around St. Peter's Church, but gradually moved up to the top of the hill and St. Bartholomew's Church was built in 1850.

The village is built along the Blackwater ridge and the hill is full of springs. It is an agricultural community – arable farming and fruit since 1924.

Since the advent of the railways in 1848 travel to London has been possible and it is now a popular commuter village.

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Key to all Maps

FB..... Footbridge
FG..... Fieldgate
KG..... Kissing Gate

S..... Stile

— — — Footpath

—|—|— Bridleway

 Byway

— — — Permissive Path



St. Bartholomew's Church, Wickham Bishops

This was built in 1850 at a cost of £4,000 in memory of Thomas Leigh, Rector. The spire has been reshingled three times and the height is approximately 37 metres to the top of the weathercock. In 1911 a clock was donated by

Thomas Dixon in memory of his four daughters, whose names are on the chime.

St. Peter's Church, Wickham Bishops

This was built in the 11th Century by Maurice, Bishop of London using some Roman bricks and tiles. It was restored in the early 19th Century and a south vestry added. Presently leased to the Friends of Friendless Churches and is currently used by Benjamin Finn, a craftsman in stained glass. It won a conservation award in 1997.



The Trestle Bridge

(Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 217).

The viaduct, presumably built by Thomas Jackson, was constructed between 1845 and 1847 as part of the Witham to Maldon railway. There is a

southern span of eleven trestles 50 metres long crossing the Blackwater River, linked by a short earth embankment to the northern span of 36 metres over the mill stream. It was recently restored and is the last timber viaduct to survive in this country.

Blackwater Rail Trail



This trail closely follows the route of the former Witham - Maldon Railway. The track runs from the centre of Witham, through the villages of Wickham Bishops and Langford to the north of the Maldon bypass. At this point the line divided to serve the two stations of Maldon (no longer existing). Unfortunately short sections of the track had been sold by British Rail to private landowners before Essex County Council took it over. Please note that there is no public right of way across private sections.

Whitehouse Farm

This dates from the 15th Century and was originally part of Hill Farm, but made into a separate property by Henry Jermyn who died in 1673 leaving it to his two daughters.

Wickham Place

The original house was probably altered to its present dimensions in 1715. It was occupied by the Army during World War 2.

Wickham Mill Bridge and Sluice

This was formerly attached to the Wickham Mill (mentioned in the

Domesday Book but now demolished). There is an 18th Century bridge of two segmental arches. To the east the millstream is contained by parallel brick walls attached to the sluice.



The Village Hall

The original hall (now demolished) was given to the four parishes of Beacon Hill in 1929 by Sir Follet Holt. The present hall was built in 2005.

The Chequers

Dates from the 17th Century. It was used as a tavern as long ago as 1769. In 1810 "Wickham Chequers" was sold to Alice Peppercorn for £627. After 1828 it was subdivided into cottages and in 1868 it was three cottages. Probably originally "The Wayfarer's Arms".



The Mitre

This is a 17th Century building. Originally "The Carpenter's Arms" it was opened in the 1850's and was owned by Maurice Warren, a carpenter, and subsequently run by his widow. It was renamed in the 1890's.





The War Memorial

This was erected in honour of the 31 men from Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted killed in both World Wars.

The Beacon

There was originally a beacon on this site and it was rebuilt in 1988 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Spanish Armada. It has been lit in recent years to commemorate the 50th anniversary of VE Day in 1995; to mark the Countryside March to Parliament in 1997; and in 2005 to mark the 200th anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar.



Blue Mills



An 18th Century wood boarded mill and adjacent Georgian mill house. The mill operated on two wheels and was the largest of the three Witham mills and furthest downstream hence 'below' (Blue) mills. The mill is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The interior has recently been restored to its 18th century

version. The turret clock is a distinctive feature and chimes hourly.

Glen Chantry



Glen Chantry Garden has featured in many TV programmes and articles in the gardening press and has been developed by the owners since 1976. The garden includes features such as rock gardens, several ponds, a sunken garden, a white garden and colour themed beds. It is open every

Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April to mid-October.

The Green Man - Little Braxted

In 1830 it was described as an inn and victualling shop which suggests it sold groceries as well as ale. After that William Peck lived there and Thomas Fuller, the blacksmith, lodged with him.



St. Mary's Chapel - Little Braxted

The Reverend Ernest Geldart lived at Braxted Place. He broke his leg and was unable to travel to the church at Little Braxted to conduct his services, so built the chapel in 1888 and it was extended in the 1930s. Services are still held here occasionally.



Shut Heath Wood

This is 23 acres of broad-leaved woodland donated in 1995 to the Essex Wildlife Trust by the late Mrs. Kitty Gimson of Heath House.

Especially beautiful in the spring when it is ablaze with bluebells and primroses. The grove of huge holly trees is particularly noteworthy.

St. Peter's Church - Great Totham

This dates from approximately 1183, but was restored in 1878 and extended in 1990. There is a carving of St Peter above the window of the vestry at the east end – carrying a fish. The private pew of the de Crespigny family on the south side of the chancel was designed by Reverend Ernest Geldart as was the east window installed in 1882. There are many interesting graves including that of Eliza Macmurdo, wife of Arthur Macmurdo, the architect.



The Bull - Great Totham

This is the oldest pub in Great Totham and was built in the 17th Century or earlier. It was used as the Manor Court by the Lord of the Manor and was a popular eating-house in the 19th Century.

1. River Walk

Distance 6.6 km. (4.1 miles)

Approx. time: 1 hr.45 mins.

13% on roads or pavements.

Start and finish at St. Bartholomew's Church car park.

Turn right out of the car park. After 100 metres turn right into Mope Lane and follow lane until you reach Thistle Hall on the left. Take footpath to the right of Thistle Hall entrance gates.

Follow footpath to gate and turn right into Mope Grove and continue on fenced footpath round the wood. After crossing a footbridge, turn right at gate and follow path across the field to a gap in the hedge and onto the golf course. Follow the waymarked path downhill beside the fairway towards the road at Blue Mills.

Before reaching the road, turn left and follow the path along the river bank. (Keep a look out for golfers and flying golf balls!). Stay close to the river bank on your right hand side, eventually leaving the golf course through a gate and following a narrow riverbank path, under the restored railway trestle bridge, to reach Mill Bridge and sluice and Wickham Place (on right hand side). (On this section of the walk are many willow trees which are grown for making cricket bats).

Follow track to reach Station Road. Turn left over road bridge and immediately on right hand side take steps down to a footpath which leads by hedge on left hand side and then cross field to the old (disused) St. Peter's Church .

Turn left and follow track over the old railway line (Blackwater Rail Trail) to reach Langford Road. Go straight across road, through the side gate and take fenced path uphill through the orchard. Cross tarmac drive and immediately turn left to follow the field edge round two sides to a gap in the hedge in the top corner just to the left of

some outbuildings.

Go through gap onto Station Road and turn right up the road for a few metres. (Take care of traffic on the sharp bend.) Look for footpath sign on left hand side with steps leading down from road. Take path downhill, initially behind some houses and then alongside pasture land with a drainage ditch on right hand side.

Turn right at gate opposite some farm buildings, through another gate and follow path round the left hand edge of the field to a gate in the far corner. Go through the gate, across a small footbridge into Sparkey Wood. Follow the signed path up through the wood and beyond to reach Mope Lane. Turn right and retrace route back to Church car park.



2. Shut Heath Wood Walk

Distance 7.0 km. (4.35 miles)

Approx. time: 1 hr.45 mins.

45% on roads or pavements.

Start and finish at the Village Hall car park.

Proceed along The Street (the main road through the village), past The Chequers pub on left hand side (food, garden area, dogs not allowed on premises or in garden), to reach some shops and The Mitre pub on left hand side (food, garden, dogs allowed in garden at landlord's discretion).

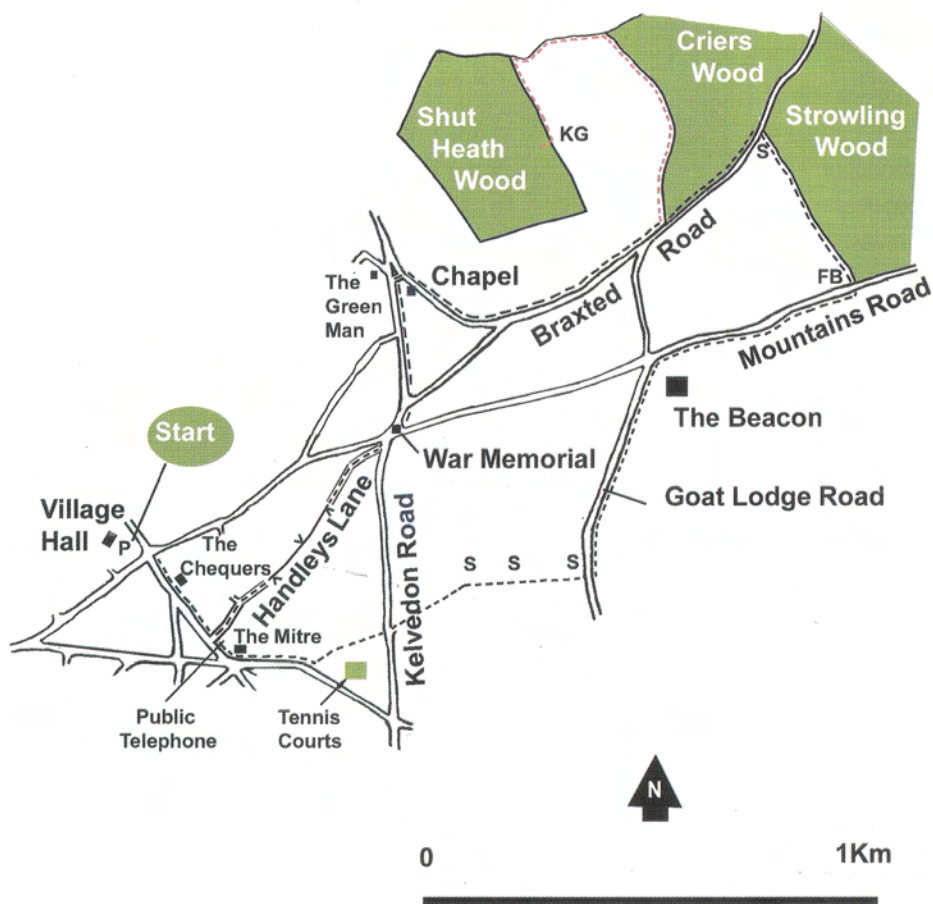
Turn left into Great Totham Road, and at the sports ground, turn left to follow signed footpath past the tennis courts and between fences to emerge onto Kelvedon Road. Cross the road and take the signed footpath through the farm gates. Follow footpath over 3 stiles to reach Goat Lodge Road. Turn left and follow road to crossroads, noticing the Beacon on right hand side. Turn right onto Mountains Road.

In approx. $\frac{1}{4}$ mile turn left onto signed footpath over a small footbridge. Follow footpath keeping hedge and then Strowling Wood on right hand side to reach Braxted Road. Turn left and follow road with Criers Wood on right hand side. At the end of the wood turn right onto a track leading to an information board for Shut Heath Wood. After another 100 metres turn left down the field edge with hedge on right hand side, and enter the wood through a kissing gate. Explore the wood keeping to paths.

Retrace steps to Braxted Road. turn right on road, and bear right at junction. At the next junction bear right into Green Man Lane. Follow lane, passing Chapel on left hand side, to emerge opposite The Green Man pub (food, pleasant garden, dogs welcome in garden and the public bar).

Turn left and follow Kelvedon Road, passing the end of Carters Lane, bearing right at next junction to reach the War Memorial at the crossroads. Cross Tiptree Road as though to continue on Kelvedon Road, and immediately turn right into a Byway track which becomes Handleys Lane. Follow this (ignoring the entrance to the sports field) until you reach The Street (the main road through the village).

Turn right on The Street to return to the Village Hall car park.



3. Glen Chantry Walk

Distance 6.5 km. (4 miles)

Approx. time: 1 hr.45 mins.

58% on roads or pavements.

Start and finish at St. Bartholomew's Church car park.

Turn right out of the car park. After 100 metres turn right into Mope Lane and follow lane until you reach Thistle Hall on the left. Take footpath to the right of Thistle Hall entrance gates.

Follow footpath to gate and turn right into Mope Grove and continue on fenced footpath round the wood. After crossing a footbridge, turn right at gate and follow path across the field to a gap in the hedge and onto the golf course. Follow the waymarked path downhill beside the fairway towards the road at Blue Mills.

At the bottom of the hill, go ahead to metal gate onto the road. Cross road and proceed along Ishams Chase. At entrance gates to Glen Chantry, turn left along a gravel track. Where the track bears sharp right, continue straight ahead to follow cross field footpath.

On reaching the hedge, turn right to find a stile and a winding footpath through the woods. On leaving the wood, turn right onto a concrete track and follow this to the gates onto Witham Road. Turn right onto the road and follow for some distance, eventually bearing right to join Kelvedon Road, which is followed uphill to find The Green Man pub on right hand side (food, pleasant garden, dogs welcome in garden and the public bar).

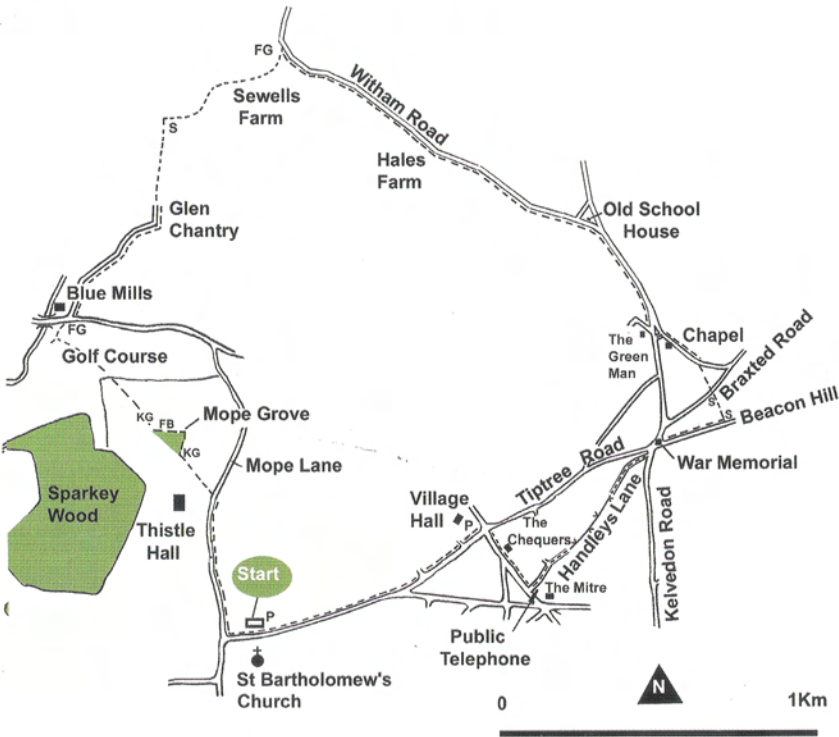
Opposite the pub bear left, passing St. Mary's Chapel on right hand side. Just past a thatched cottage, turn right onto a footpath, and immediately turn left to follow footpath across Braxted Road and two stiles to reach the road at Beacon Hill. Turn right and follow road to the War Memorial on right hand side.

Turn left opposite the War Memorial, and immediately turn right into a Byway track which becomes Handleys Lane. Follow this (ignoring the entrance to the sports field) until you reach The Street (the main road through the village).

(Turn left to find The Mitre pub on left hand side (food, garden, dogs allowed in garden at landlord's discretion).)

Turn right on The Street. The Chequers pub is on right hand side (food, garden area, dogs not allowed on premises or in garden).

Turn left into Church Road, and follow this road back to St. Bartholomew's Church and the car park.



4. Sparkey Wood Walk

Distance 3.5 km. (2.17 miles)

Approx. time: 45 mins.

28% on roads or pavements.

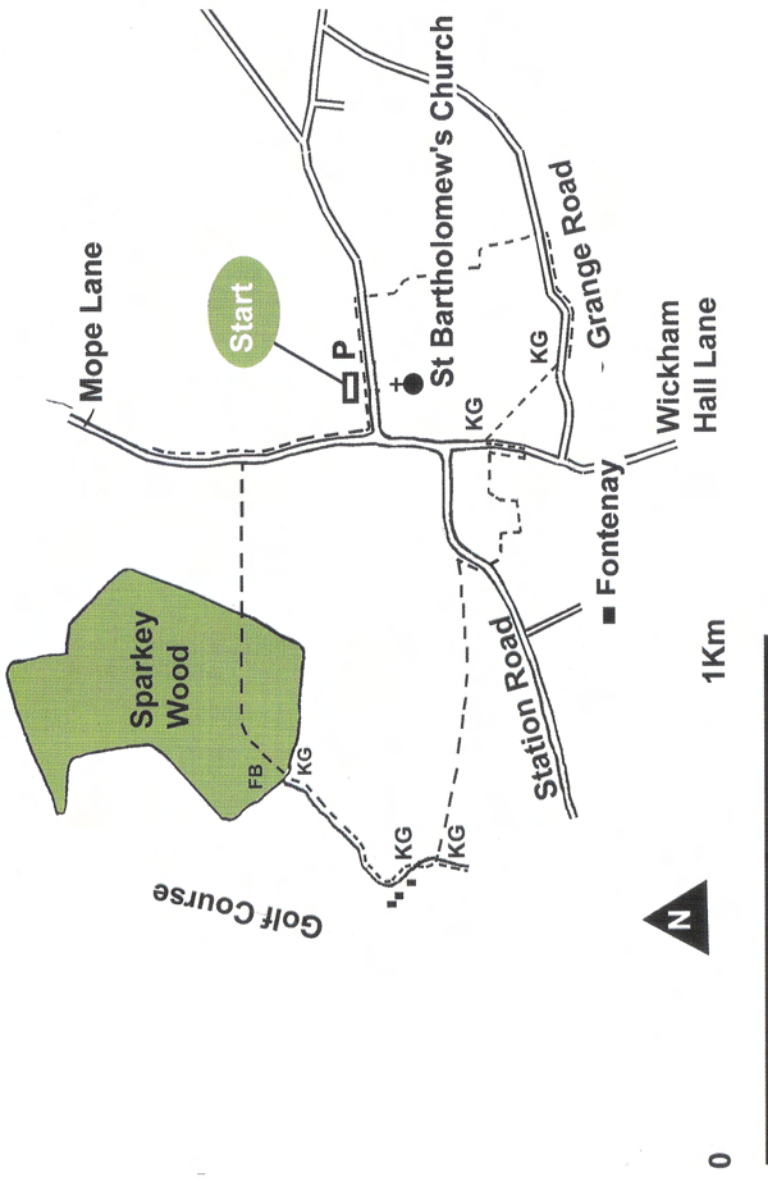
Start and finish at St. Bartholomew's Church car park.

Turn right out of the car park. After 100 metres turn right into Mope Lane and follow lane until you reach a gravelled track (footpath sign) on left leading to Sparkey Wood. Turn left onto track and follow into Sparkey Wood, and then downhill through the wood.

At the bottom of the wood, cross a footbridge, go through the gate, and follow hedge on right hand side round to a gate on the far side of the field. Immediately through the gate, turn left through another gate, and follow fenced footpath uphill, eventually passing behind some houses to reach Station Road.

Turn right on road for a few metres (beware of traffic on the bends), and look for footpath sign leading through a hedge gap on left hand side of road. Go through the gap and bear left alongside some old farm buildings. Then turn left and follow route round the edge of the field with newly planted trees. About half-way along the hedge at the top of the field, go through waymarked gap and turn left onto Wickham Hall Lane.

After 100 metres turn right by footpath sign at entrance to "Ballards", through gate, and follow fenced footpath across the field and through gate onto Grange Road. Turn left and follow road. Just past some cottages on left hand side, turn left onto footpath which winds behind the houses and emerges into Church Green. Turn left out of Church Green onto Church Road to return to St. Bartholomew's Church and the car park.



5. Rail Trail Walk

Distance 5.8 km. (3.6 miles)

Approx. time: 1hr.30 mins.

37% on roads or pavements.

Start and finish at St. Bartholomew's Church car park.

Turn left out of the car park onto Church Road, and then turn right into Church Green. Take footpath between house numbers 10 and 11, and follow this to emerge onto Grange Road.

Turn right and follow the road past houses on both sides. Look for field gates on left hand side, and take footpath which goes diagonally across the paddock. Bear right onto farm track leading to fenced footpath which leads by Whitehouse Farm out onto Wickham Hall Lane. Turn left and follow lane downhill to junction with Langford Road.

Turn left and walk along road (take care – fast traffic!) past Reigate Barn and then in approx. 100 metres turn right (footpath sign) onto track leading to the Blackwater Rail Trail. Turn right and follow the Rail Trail.

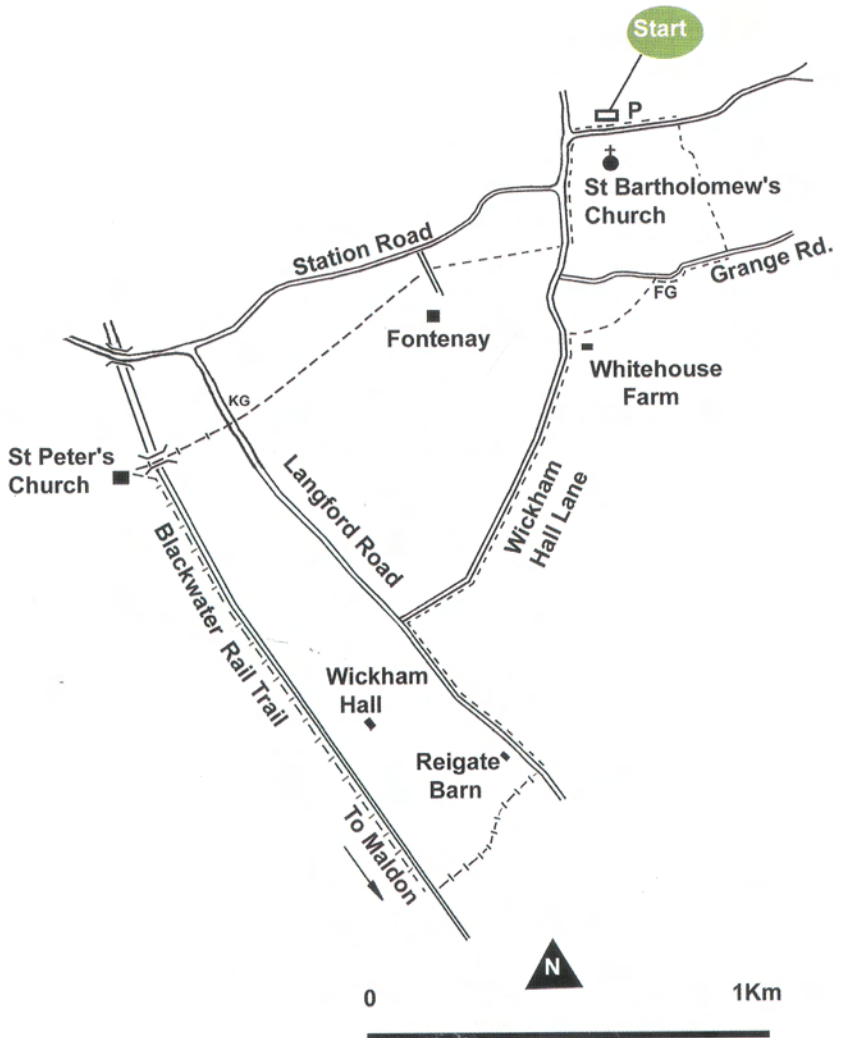
(Note: an extensive section of the Trail can also be walked by turning left towards Langford.)

Continue on the Rail Trail until you reach a brick arched bridge over the former track bed. Take either the path up the embankment to the left, or the steps up the embankment to the right, to gain access to the bridge.

Turn left for a few metres to view the disused St. Peter's Church. Return to the bridge and continue up the track to Langford Road. Go straight across road, through the sidegate, and follow the fenced footpath uphill through the orchard. Cross the tarmac drive which leads to Fontenays, and follow waymarked path through the

apple trees and then the field of newly planted deciduous trees to reach a gap in the hedge leading onto Wickham Hall Lane.

Turn left onto the lane, and continue past the junction with Station Road. Turn right into Church Road to return to St. Bartholomew's Church and the car park.



6. Blackwater View Walk

Distance 9.4 km. (5.84 miles)

Approx. time: 2 hours 45 mins.

37% on roads or pavements.

Note: a variation (6A below) will shorten the walk by 1.75 km (1.1 miles), and there is a shortcut near St. Peter's Church (6B below).

Start and finish at the Village Hall car park.

Proceed along The Street (main road through the village), past The Chequers pub on left hand side (food, garden area, dogs not allowed on premises or in garden), to reach some shops and The Mitre pub on left (food, garden, dogs allowed in garden at landlord's discretion).

Turn left into Great Totham Road. At the sports ground, turn left to follow signed footpath past the tennis courts and between fences to emerge onto Kelvedon Road. Cross road and take the signed footpath through the farm gates. Follow path over 3 stiles to reach Goat Lodge Road.

Turn left and follow road uphill to find a farm track on right opposite "Little Hill". Turn right and follow track past Scripps Farm to reach Colchester Road. Turn left onto major road and then immediately turn right into Beckingham Road. Follow the road passing the entrance to Forrester Park Golf and Tennis Club.

(Note: the shorter version of this walk (see 6A below) turns right off the road down Angham House Drive.)

Just past Angham House Drive, opposite Paynes Farm, take the 2nd turn right through a gate to follow signed footpath gently downhill past several fields with golf course on right, to reach Church Road. Turn right and follow the road past Jepcrack's Farm, over a small bridge, and round a sharp right hand bend.

(Note: a shortcut to St. Peter's Church is available - see 6B below).

Shortly after the bend, turn left into track to Sains Farm. After approx. 500 metres look on right hand side for Waymarker Post marking a gap in the hedge and a small footbridge.

Cross the bridge and take crossfield footpath to woods on far side. Turn right and follow path round the edge of the field keeping woods on your left. Look for a well-defined footpath emerging from the woods on left hand side, and at this point turn right to follow path across field to gap in hedge opposite and a small footbridge.

Cross the bridge, and follow path towards the spire of St. Peter's Church to enter churchyard by a gate. Head to the left of church, and over a footbridge and bear left on path through gate into field. (Do not go through lych-gate onto road.)

(Note: the shorter version of the walk rejoins the route at this point.)

Follow footpath with hedge and then fence on right hand side, and past a lake on left hand side, to reach a tarmac alleyway into a new housing development.

Proceed through the housing development, bearing right to emerge onto Hall Road opposite the old Honeywood School. Turn left on Hall Road, bearing right to follow road to then take second right turn into Seagers.

Immediately turn left into cul-de-sac for Nos. 1-18. Go to the end, and turn right into path just short of No. 12. Turn left shortly into playing field, and follow path to cross Colchester Road opposite The Bull pub (food available, dogs welcome in the public bar).

Take the signed footpath to the left of The Bull. Follow path behind houses on left into a field. Continue along left hand edge of field

until it turns sharp left. Then go diagonally across the field to exit in the far left hand corner onto a track which passes "Staplers", before emerging onto Goat Lodge Road.

Turn right on road and take second footpath on your left over a stile. Follow this path to emerge onto Beacon Hill. Turn left and walk down to the War Memorial at crossroads.

Turn left opposite the War Memorial, and immediately turn right into a Byway track which becomes Handleys Lane. Follow this (ignoring the entrance to the sports field) until you reach The Street (the main road through the village). Turn right on The Street to return to the Village Hall car park.

6A - Variation to walk:

On Beckingham Road, turn right down Angham House Drive, follow footpath past the house on left, cross stile to follow path through copse. At Waymarker Post turn right, then left to emerge onto golf course. Take care! Fairways cross path from both directions. Watch out for flying balls and give consideration to golfers.

Continue straight ahead across the golf course, aiming for a gap in the first hedge (Waymarker Post in gap), and then downhill to the hedge and treeline. Turn left at hedge and walk along edge of golf course with hedge on your right.

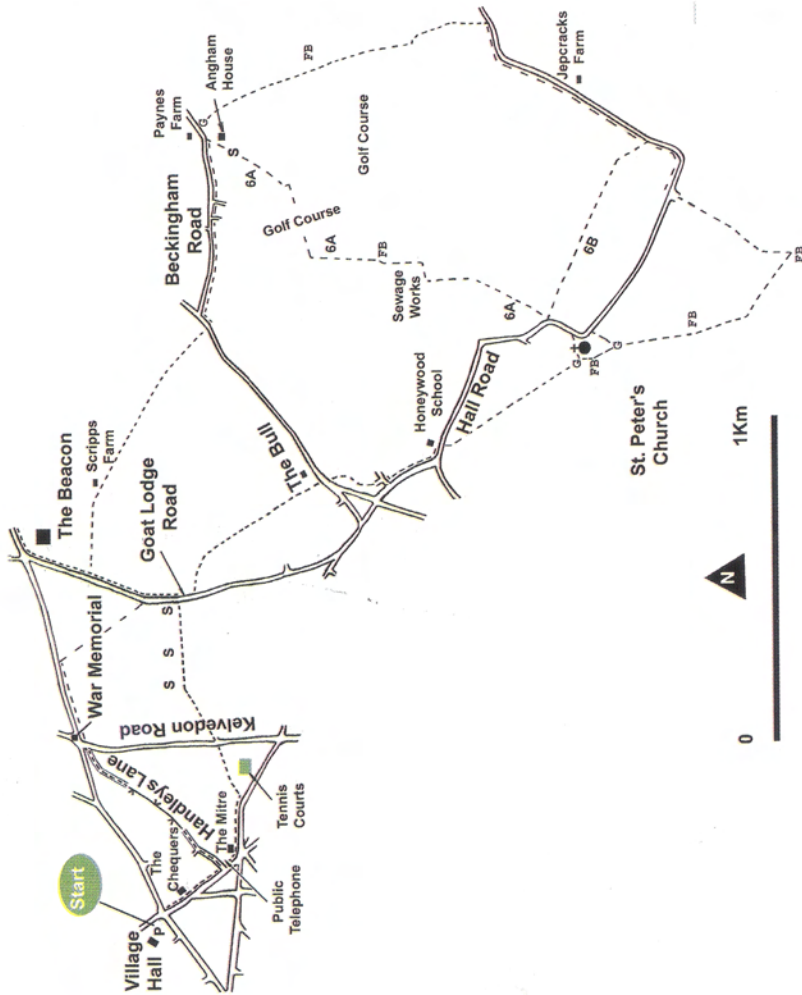
In about 400 metres look for Waymarker Post in a corner by an electricity pole. Turn right and cross stream by footbridge. Turn left to follow path by Sewerage Works fence. Follow fence as it turns right. Then where an old fence on your left terminates, turn left away from Sewerage Works fence to emerge into field.

Take footpath across two fields to reach road. In first field aim towards a hedge gap next to a large tree on the opposite side of the field. In second field aim at the church spire just visible in the trees to the right of the white house.

On reaching the road turn left and walk to St. Peter's Church. Turn right through the lych-gate into the churchyard. Follow path with church on left to path junction. Bear right to a gate into a field. At this point you rejoin the main walk route.

6B – Shortcut to St. Peter's Church:

Shortly before the sharp right hand bend in the road, look for a Waymarker Post on right. Turn right and follow path along the hedge line to the road. Turn left to reach St. Peter's Church.



WICKHAM BISHOPS

Access to the village from outside can be made by a limited bus service from Witham and Maldon. If possible leave your car at home.

Traveline 0870 608 2608
www.traveline.org.uk

Parking on verges damages wildlife and can cause traffic congestion.

Car parking is identified on the route maps.

Car parking at these locations is entirely at the discretion of the landowners and at the risk of car owners.

A public telephone is situated outside the Post Office next to The Mitre.

This booklet is supported by the Parish Paths Partnership, an initiative funded by Essex County Council, and is available from ECC in larger print, Braille, audio tape and disc formats



THE COUNTRY CODE

Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.

Leave gates and property as you find them.

Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.

Keep dogs under close control.

Consider other people.

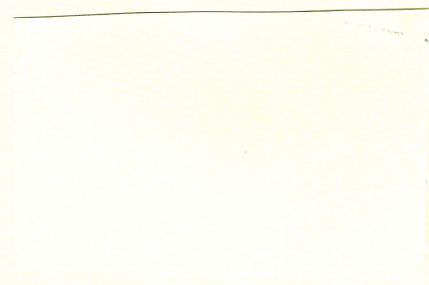
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Footpaths: for walkers.

Bridleways: for walkers, horse riders and pedal cyclists.

Byways: for walkers, horse riders, cyclists and motorised vehicles.

Permissive Routes: are routes the landowner permits the public to use, but they are NOT Public Rights of Way.



O.S. Map Explorer 183.

November 2007