



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 116

### Matching – 5.7 miles (9 kms)

*This anticlockwise, countryside walk is fairly flat, passing through the three main settlements within the parish of Matching. The route follows a mixture of quiet lanes and footpaths, including two cross-field paths towards the end. Some sections can be muddy. The route passes Matching Church and two pubs, midway at Matching Tye and near the end at Matching Green. If you hope to visit any, please be prepared to remove dirty boots or cover them with boot covers or plastic bags. There are several seats along the way and one stile.*

Start & Finish: It is suggested that you park on the straight road (Downhall Road) on the long, straight East side of Matching Green, near the pond (the opposite side of the green to the Chequers pub). The route description starts from there. Grid Reference: TL537111 – Postcode CM17 0QE.

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

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

Walk north towards the crossroads, passing the pond and cricket pavilion on the left. Immediately after 18th-century The Limes on the right, turn right at the crossroads towards Matching Airfield and White Roding. Soon, pass the entrance on the right to Stock Hall, a former manor house that is out of sight down the long drive.

After a quarter mile, approaching a junction, cross with care to the left side of the road and turn left along a quiet lane, Potash Road. This lane is not signposted other than as National Cycle Network route 50. The land to the right was part of RAF Matching, an airfield used from 1944 to 1946 by the Royal Air Force and the United States Army Air Forces, primarily as a bomber base.

After another half mile, turn left onto a public bridleway, a fairly obvious tree-lined path with a sign that may be obscured by the hedge and trees. The bridleway is about 20 yards before the road turns sharp right at a corner marked by two large concrete blocks. If you reach this corner, please retrace 20 yards to enter the bridleway.

[About 100 yards along the bridleway, a short stretch can be affected by an overflowing ditch. If you encounter this problem, it is suggested that you retrace to the road, turn left, pass beside the concrete blocks and turn left along the field edge, following parallel to the bridleway for about 200 yards before passing through the hedgerow to rejoin the bridleway.]

After a long stretch with hedgerow on both sides, the path continues straight ahead across a sometimes overgrown area, heading towards large farm buildings ahead on either side.

The path meets a tarmac road with a house on the left. Turn half right onto the road. We are now in Kingstons Farm, a commercial estate with units on either side. Pass through the estate and exit through a large white metal gate. About 200 yards later turn left, still on the estate road.

In another 200 yards, the estate road reaches a lane. Turn right and, after the bend, when safe, cross to the left, passing Stone Hall Cottage on the left. Soon turn left along the lane signposted to Matching Church.

Stay on this lane until it passes a large swan lake on the left and then some ancient oak trees on the right before reaching Matching's parish church.

Pass through the gate on the right into the churchyard and follow the path to the church porch. Over to the left is Matching Hall, a private residence that stands in a moated site, having started life in the 15th century as the manor house.

You are encouraged to visit the church if open. St Mary's is of Norman origin, retaining elements from every century since the 13th. One of its six bells was cast in 1500 AD.

From the church porch, turn right to continue along the path. Over to the right, beyond the churchyard, the Old Vicarage dates from around 1600 AD. Pass the war memorial on the left before leaving through the gate.

Just outside the churchyard, the ancient building on the right is the Marriage Feast Room. It dates from the 15th or 16th century and seems to have always been used as a community building, especially for the celebration of weddings. Like the church and Matching Hall, it has a Grade 2\* ("two star") listing.

The oak tree ahead was planted by Lady Selwin Ibbetson in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887. Lord and Lady Ibbetson lived at Down Hall, less than a mile to the north and now a hotel.

Cross the green, passing beneath the oak tree, to a crossroads. Pause and look back at the view of tree, church and marriage feast room, a scene that can be photographed from many angles.

At the crossroads, go straight ahead and slightly right along the lane, passing the entrance to Matching Hall Farm on the left. Ignore a footpath on the left. If you haven't glanced back recently, try again before we lose the view!

Continue along this lane, at the top of the rise ignoring a bridleway on the right. The lane is lined for a considerable distance with relatively young trees, possibly sycamore or another member of the maple family. Make a note to come back in 10 or 20 years to see how they mature.

Pass a single house on the right and go through a gateway.

At a small green, keep left, passing the entrance to Collins Cross Farm on the right – the farmhouse dates from around 1500 AD.

Pass the gateway on the right to The Old Schoolhouse – in July 2020 the drive passed through a lovely field of daisies.

When the lane reaches a road junction, we turn left, but pause on the small green and look back at the house which was, indeed, the old school.

After turning left onto the new lane, follow it into the hamlet of Matching Tye, probably the most populated hamlet of Matching parish.

Shortly before reaching a green, pass Rose Cottage on the right, built around 1835 and an unspoilt example of its time. Soon reach Matching Tye village green opposite the Fox Inn. Our route turns right but before heading off, we will make a short diversion to view a few of Matching Tye's varied range of interesting buildings.

Turn left, past Gainsborough Cottage which proclaims 1692 above the door. According to the property's listing, it is not quite so old, being an amalgam of three cottages from the 18th or 19th centuries.

Keep heading in this direction, watching for traffic on this short stretch of bendy road. On the left is Little Brewers, a house that originates from the 16th century.

On the right, Ployters Farm dates from the 16th century. It has undergone several changes over the last half millennium including division into multiple cottages and then reunification to form the present single dwelling.

On the left is Matching Village Hall, followed by Matthews Chapel, a former congregational chapel built in 1875 and now a private house. We turn around here and retrace back past the 18th-century Fox Inn.

From the Fox, turn left towards Harlow. When safe, cross to the pavement on the right and soon follow this road past 17th-century Shetlocks Farmhouse and its 4-bay barn of the same era.

Continue on the road past a mix of more modern houses. After crossing the entrance to Rainbow Road on the right, cross the main road with care and turn left into the lane signposted towards Housham Tye. Follow the lane to the right and then left.

Shortly before the lane turns sharp right, we turn left beside a metal gate (opposite the entrance to Willow Cottage on the right). Turn to the right and follow the track as it winds past an old farm building on the left and then a single-storey converted barn on the right.

Before reaching a field, look back and to the right. Beyond the converted barn is The Old House, 16th-century or earlier with a large chimney stack. Continue ahead to the field and turn left onto the field-edge path, keeping the wood on the left.

Follow the field-edge path as it twists to left and right beside the wood on the left. The wood is known as Matching Park and is believed to be "ancient woodland", meaning that it has been woodland continuously since at least 1600 AD.

After about a quarter mile, on reaching the end of Matching Park, stay in this field by turning right. Follow the hedgerow on the left and after only 50 yards, follow the path to the left, keeping the hedgerow on the left.

At the end of this field keep straight ahead towards a metal gate. After the gate, turn right along the lane. In another 30 yards leave the lane by turning right onto a footpath (immediately opposite the entrance to Round House, Matching Tye).

Follow a field-edge path with hedgerow on the left.

After about a quarter mile the path follows the field edge by turning left, then right and left again. At the next corner do not follow the field edge to the right but keep straight ahead to

cross a wooden footbridge with wooden handrails. On the other side of the bridge continue straight ahead across a field, travelling east towards a wood – we should aim for the near tip of the wood. There should be a waymark on a post on that corner of the wood but in February 2022 the indicator was not obvious.

On reaching the trees, keep straight ahead, now on a field-edge path with the wood on the left.

[In case you felt slightly uneasy for the last quarter mile, it may have been because we ventured outside The Hundred Parishes, passing briefly through part of the parish of High Laver. Please rest assured that the natives are friendly. Now, with the woodland on our left, we are back in Matching].

When the woodland on the left ends, at a crossroads of footpaths, continue straight ahead across an open field towards a waymark on a post at the far side of the field. [If too muddy to cross the field, you could follow the field edge to the left and curve back to the waymark].

At the waymark, where the hedgerow comes from the left to meet our path, we continue straight ahead, now with a hedgerow on our left.

At the corner of the field, we go straight on, across a wooden footbridge with wooden handrails. At the far side, initially keep to the left, with hedgerow on the left, and then pass along the centre of the meadow. After a while, cottages come into view.

At the end of the field, we cross a stile and reach a road. We are now in Matching Green.

Cross the road with care and turn left on the pavement. Cross the entrance to Colvers on the right and soon reach a junction with the road that goes around Matching Green. At the junction, note the fingerpost sign on the little triangular green, in particular the precise distance to London: 26¼ miles.

Turn right. To the left is Matching Green itself, at 13 acres one of the largest village greens in Essex. Note the cricket pavilion with its Old Father Time weather vane, similar to the one at Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

On the right, we pass Elm House with a blue plaque that celebrates the artist Augustus John (1878 – 1961) who lived here from 1907 to 1911 – reportedly with his wife, his mistress and nine of his hundred children!

Next on the right is the Chequers pub and restaurant.

We may be able to cut across the wide green to where we parked at the start of this walk. If a cricket match is in progress, continue along the road and then turn left on the far side of the green, back to the car.

You can read more about Matching on [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk)

This route description, last updated 16 February 2022, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com).

A diagram covering this route, based on the Ordnance Survey map, is shown on the next page. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

