



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 117

Stebbing – a short stroll in and around the village – 2.8 miles (5 kms)

*This clockwise walk explores the village at the heart of Stebbing parish. It is extremely rich in listed buildings and this route passes more than 50. Stebbing has a pub and the parish church is usually open. Please be prepared, before entering either, to remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. The route is a mixture of High Street, lanes and footpaths, some of which can be muddy at times. It includes some stiles and steps. A longer walk, number 119 covering 8.5 miles, includes part of this route, mostly travelling in the opposite direction.*

**Start and finish:** There is space to park along Stebbing's High Street where the route starts a little south of the pub.

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL661242 - Postcode: CM6 3SG.

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195.

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

Our route starts by heading south, towards the church, probably along the pavement on the right. Stebbing High Street is extremely rich in ancient buildings, most of which are listed, so please take your time to appreciate the variety of architectural styles and external decoration including pargetting. Mostly now residential, some still show evidence of an earlier existence as a pub, shop or farmhouse. This walk description mentions some of them.

On the left we pass Town Farm and a former pub, The Kings Head, each dating from the 16th century. On the right, The Vicarage dates from the 19th century.

Further along on the right, Stebbing Memorial Hall was built in 1674 as a Quaker meeting house. It ceased to function as a church in 1884 and now hosts meetings of the garden club, etc.

Just afterwards, on the left, red-brick Bakery House was once not only a bakery but also a post office and stores.

The road descends past Tudor House on the right, constructed on the steepest part of the hill in the 15th century or earlier.

When the pavement ends, we should stay on the right, facing any oncoming traffic.

At the foot of the hill, the road crosses a brook and, after another 50 yards, with care we should cross to the left and leave the road by forking left onto a footpath, up steps into the churchyard of Stebbing's 14th-century parish church. Note the single hand of the church clock.

The church has a Grade I listing and certainly merits a visit. It is most notable for the beautiful 14th-century carved stone screen that divides the nave from the chancel. There are

only two other surviving stone screens in Europe, one in nearby Great Bardfield and the other in Trondheim Cathedral, Norway.

On leaving the church, turn immediately left along the grass path and pass through a wooden gate to emerge onto a small green. Immediately on the left is The Chantry – almost as old as the church, dating from around 1400 AD. We are going to turn right here so, when safe, cross the road and turn right. Now on the left is the former Red Lion pub. It dates from the 16th century and was restored in the 20th century after a fire.

Just after the bend, on the right, Rose Cottage, standing in front of the church, has a blue plaque recording that this was once the home of Henry De Vere Stacpoole, surgeon and author. He is most remembered for his 1908 novel *The Blue Lagoon* which was made into a film in 1980.

Continue past the church and then the war memorial at the junction with High Street. The war memorial was erected in 1920 to commemorate 20 local men who died in the First World War. A further 6 names were added after the Second World War.

On our left, immediately opposite the junction, Church Farmhouse dates from around the 15th century. After the junction, we should cross on the right, facing any oncoming traffic, and passing a new church car park, opened in 2021.

Soon, we pass 17th-century Priors Farm Barn on the left and then reach Priors Hall (also known as Parsonage Farmhouse), a magnificent building that dates back to around 1400 AD. It was once a manor house, was largely rebuilt around 1600 AD, and has been well maintained in recent years.

We follow the lane downhill, looking back at the side view of Priors Hall.

At the bottom of the hill, we cross a stream and immediately afterwards turn right to descend wooden steps down to join a footpath. Follow the path with the stream on the right. The narrow path can be muddy at times. After about 100 yards, we go ahead on a wooden footbridge with metal handrails over a ditch and then pass new woodland on the left.

Ignore a footpath that goes off to the left and continue beside relatively new trees. Fairly soon, we turn right to cross a concrete footbridge (with a stile at each end) over a stream. Immediately turn left through a small field.

In another 100 yards, turn right over another concrete bridge with stiles to emerge onto a lane. To the left, the lane leads to 18th-century Stebbing Mill, but our route turns right, uphill on Mill Lane. Stebbing Mill, or Town Mill as it was once called, is on Stebbing Brook, a tributary of the River Chelmer. It ceased to operate in 1995 and is now a private house.

After climbing for about 100 yards, we pass 15th-century Tan Farmhouse on the left.

In another 100 yards, our route turns left through a gateway but, before turning, note the building on the left immediately after the gateway – a former Congregational Chapel that has been converted into housing. On the opposite side of the road is Stebbing Village Hall, a former United Reformed Church, built in 1877.

We turn left just before these two buildings, through a gateway onto a public footpath, passing the Congregational Chapel cemetery on the right which is now incorporated into the

housing development. The path soon reaches Mill Lane Field, part of which is a cricket field. We turn half left and cross the field to leave through a gateway in the corner of the field.

Continue straight ahead on a narrow path with a chainlink fence on the left. Pass over a footbridge and look to the left. You may see a swan or even a heron on the pond. About 30 yards further along on the left there is a wooded mound, known as The Mount – the remains of a Norman motte castle with moat. Keep ahead with fencing on the left, watching out for holes in the path that have been dug by rabbits.

The path emerges onto a driveway to Stebbing Park, a house of 16th-century origins just visible down the drive to the left. Go straight across and through a metal kissing gate. After the gate, do not take the path that heads left and then up through trees, but keep more straight ahead with a red house, Falcons, on the right, heading towards a single tall conifer tree that rises above the horizon in the distance. This area is known as The Downs and the cross-field path can be boggy at times.

When the path reaches the corner of a field of willow trees, cross a wooden footbridge with metal handrails and keep ahead with the fence on the left. At the end of the fencing, the corner of our field is often boggy. Go straight ahead, crossing a large metal pipe. After 100 yards cross over another pipe and continue ahead for some distance through the next, long field. The path may be boggy at times as this is the flood plain for Srebbing Brook which flows just to the right.

After a while, a tall, red-brick building appears ahead – Bran End Mill, a 19th-century water mill now converted to housing. Like Stebbing Mill, this is also on Stebbing Brook. Shortly before the mill, cross a stile and soon ascend some steps to the left of the mill onto the road, the B1057. Turn right along the pavement, passing the former mill and then the 18th-century former millhouse on the right.

Keep to the right, facing any traffic. This sometimes-busy road has no footpath for much of the way, so please take extra care for the next 200 to 300 yards.

As the road climbs, we pass 17th-century Martins Hall on the left.

On reaching a crossroads, our route turns right. Note the ancient fingerpost on the left which has lost most of its three pointing fingers. It was manufactured in Essex at Maldon Ironworks, probably around 1930.

We turn right off the B1057 into Brick Kiln Lane, staying on the right where there is a pavement. This part of Stebbing is called Bran End. The names of some of its buildings suggest it was once a separate community. These include two former pubs dating back to the 17th century: the Green Man almost immediately on the right and then thatched Bird in Hand, also on the right – note the latter's plaster image on the wall.

When the road and pavement diverge, stay on the pavement to keep the small green on the left. Continue on the main road, crossing Brookfields on the right. Keep on the main road, ignoring turnings to left and right and from time to time crossing to use whichever pavement is available.

Soon after passing the Stebbing sign, when safe, cross to the right. Here, there is a good view of a lily and duck pond. Continue along the pavement, later crossing Marshall's Piece. Soon after, Shepherd's on the right dates from the 15th or 16th century.

When the pavement on the right ends, we should cross back to the pavement on the left.

Soon, on the right we have a view of the countryside, The Downs, and then we pass Falcons on the right, the red-painted house which we passed earlier after crossing the drive to head across The Downs. We continue along the main road with The Downs on the right.

The road we have been walking along is also called The Downs. It levels off and starts to descend, becoming High Street just as Stebbing Church comes into view ahead.

After a school on the left, we come back into the centre of Stebbing and pass many more ancient and listed buildings, starting with the thatched 17th-century Honeysuckle Cottage on the left. The 17th-century Hillside House on the right was once two cottages and is now decorated with 20th-century pargetting. Stebbing Village Stores on the right dates from the 17th century.

A little further along, Tweed Cottage on the right is an exceptionally old domestic property. It dates from the 13th century when it was built as a hall house – essentially a single-storey hall with a central open fire whose smoke escaped through an opening in the roof; the chimney stack and a first floor were inserted in the 16th century.

On the left, Shamrock Cottage and Archway Cottage, either side of an archway, were once a single residence dating from the 15th or 16th century. Opposite, the 17th-century White Hart pub on the right offers an opportunity for refreshment. It is the only survivor of at least 5 pubs and 2 beer houses that served Stebbing in the 19th century.

Our route continues past Mill Lane and the bowling green on the right. We soon return to where we parked.

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

This route description, last updated 14 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 below. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

