



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 148

### Quendon & Rickling – 6.8 miles (11 kms) (option to shorten to 4.9 miles)

*This walk, almost entirely in the parish of Quendon and Rickling but with a short excursion into Ugley, is mostly along footpaths and only briefly visits the parish's centres of population. The route passes beside or through several woods that are usually carpeted in bluebells in springtime. Much of the route is on higher ground with extensive views. There is one stile. There may be an opportunity to visit the two parish churches, so please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. Some paths may be muddy. Occasionally on Quendon Estates, field margins are mown, possibly causing confusion regarding the proper route, so take care to consider the route instructions! The Cricketers Arms at Rickling Green lies within half a mile of the finish. If you bring your own refreshment, the route passes seats near the Chequers at Ugley and outside Rickling Church.*

**Start and finish:** The walk starts and finishes at an informal parking area just northwest of Rickling Green. Should there be no space here, you may like to park about 200 yards southeast on the road in Rickling Green. The route starts from the parking area.  
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL507302 - Postcode: CB11 3YZ.  
The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195.

From the parking area, head northeast along the bridleway, passing a house called Redlands on the right. In about 50 yards, turn right off the main track onto a footpath, immediately entering a wood known as Coney Acre. This is the first of several bluebell woods on this walk.

After about 50 yards, ignore the path that forks to the right. Keep straight ahead, ignoring other minor paths. When our path reaches a T junction with a high metal fence ahead, turn left, keeping the fence on our right. Behind the fence, and out of sight, is Rickling House, once the home of singer/songwriter Roger Whittaker. Perhaps his best-known hits were "I don't believe in if anymore" and "The Last Farewell", released in 1970 and 1971.

In 100 yards, ignore the bridleway that forks to the left and continue with the high fence on the right.

Pass a doorway on the right and just afterwards, when the fence ends, we go straight ahead at a crossroads of paths. We are still in woodland, but this section does not have bluebells. Bluebells tend to occur in ancient woodlands, so this is presumably a newer section.

When the path reaches the edge of the wood, keep straight ahead across a grass field, tending to bear right rather than left.

Nearing the end of this field, the top of Quendon Church appears to the right – a distinctive white bell tower and cupola.

Leave the field through a gap in the hedge and immediately turn right, with hedgerow on the right, heading towards a house. At the corner of the field, follow the path round to the left with the big house on the right.

After about 30 yards, turn right through the hedge and pass along a clearly defined path, soon reaching a road. This is the B1383, Cambridge Road and we are now in Quendon. Turn right, immediately passing Orchard House on our right, then Flintstone Cottage 1835.

Pause when we reach a terrace of red brick and flintstone houses. These were converted from stables early in the 20th century. On the opposite side of the road is Mill House, 17th-century timber-framed and plastered.

With care, cross the road to Mill House and turn right. Almost immediately, turn left up a narrow lane to Quendon Church, dedicated to St Simon and St Jude.

The church has 13th-century origins but was much rebuilt and restored in both the 16th and 19th centuries. The distinctive bell tower was added in the 1960s. If the church is open, do take a look inside, but if your boots are dirty please remove them or cover them. Amongst the Quendon residents who are buried here is William Winstanley (1628 – 1698). He is given considerable credit for the revival of joyful Christmas customs that had been banned by the Puritans in the time of Oliver Cromwell.

Return to the lane and turn left past the church parking area. Go through a gateway and keep ahead on a grassy bridleway. The path soon bends to the right. When it reaches the end of the wood on our left, turn left, keeping the wood on our left.

After about 50 yards, the woodland ends and the path turns half right, heading towards a large wood.

On reaching the woodland, bear left, keeping the wood on our right. This is Quendon Wood, a large, commercially-managed wood that is also rich in bluebells.

At the end of our field, turn right to keep the wood on our right. We will now head in this southerly direction, beside the wood, for more than half a mile. To our left, the M11 motorway basically follows the valley of the River Cam.

Pass beneath a power line and through a kissing gate. Keep half right across a small field, with wood on the right, towards a gate. From here, looking half left, you may be able to discern the outline of Ugley Church amongst the taller trees.

At the end of the wood, turn right through a gate and then turn half left to diagonally cross this larger field, heading towards an older house, grey with a chimney at each end. For the next half mile we will be in the parish of Ugley.

About half way across the field, the path goes across a noticeable dip, perhaps a former quarry or pond. Pass beneath another power line and soon, at the end of the field, pass through a gate onto a lane.

When safe, cross the lane to the pavement and turn right. We are now in the Ugley hamlet of Patmore End, passing three thatched cottages on the right: Mallows, Hollyhocks and Guyvers, the latter with a cat finial on the thatch roof. All date from the early 18th century, so are about 300 years old. All were modernised in the 20th century.

By now the pavement has run out, so you may like to cross to the right. The lane meets the B1383. At the junction, on the left is the Chequers pub [which in April 2021 looked closed] and on the right there is a small green with a seat. It commemorates one of the many cyclists, especially from north London cycling clubs, who used to compete in time trials along this flat stretch of road, the former A11, usually in the early hours on Sunday mornings. Just beyond the pub (we don't need to go there) are two houses that were built in 2020 in the field that was previously occupied by the weekend clubhouse of one of those London cycling clubs, the Eagle Road Club.

From the corner beside the pub, cross the main road with extreme caution.

On the far side (now back in the parish of Quendon and Rickling), go straight into the wood on the signposted footpath. This is another bluebell wood – Broom Wood. Soon, go over a stile. The path through this wood can sometimes be muddy.

Follow the meandering path, helpfully waymarked from time to time with yellow arrows. After a while, cross over a ditch on planks. After the ditch we enter a newer section of the wood with no sign of bluebells.

After about 100 yards of the younger wood, cross a wider track and keep straight ahead.

When the path leaves the wood, immediately turn left and in about 20 yards turn right. Follow a ditch on the right. After about 100 yards, follow the field-edge path to the right and then left, still following the ditch on the right.

After about 200 yards, our path reaches another path at a T junction and we turn right, crossing over the ditch.

Pass beneath a power line and then reach a lane.

[We will turn left, but should you wish to divert to a pub then the Cricketers Arms at Rickling Green can be found by turning right for about half a mile.]

Our route turns sharp left along this narrow lane, Brixton Lane.

In about 400 yards, close to a pylon on the left, we turn right onto a public footpath. This path, lined with mature trees, can sometimes be muddy or rutted.

After about 400 yards, when a wood on the right ends, turn left to continue along the bridleway with field on either side. Ahead, on the horizon, you may see the white water tower at Berden, two miles distant.

When the field on the right ends, go right through the hedgerow and then bear half right to follow the hedge on the right. Our route is now signposted as the Harcamlow Way, a long-distance route.

Soon, the path goes diagonally across a small field towards the right corner of a wood. We meet a track just before that woodland and here we turn right on the track, heading downhill towards farm buildings.

After about 100 yards, on a clear day we may be able to see the rotating radar station on top of the hill at Debden, located at about 2 o'clock and around 4 miles distant.

After a descent, the footpath becomes a concrete drive and comes into the various farm buildings at Rickling Hall.

Keep straight ahead between farm buildings; at the end of the building on the left bear slightly left and then turn left past a small, older building on the left. Pass beside a wooden barn with corrugated iron roof on the left. Pass a pond on the left and, beyond it, red-brick Rickling Hall which dates from around 1500 AD.

Follow the drive round to the right, going away from the Hall. Continue up the long, surfaced drive to pass through a gateway at the far end. If the gate is shut, bear to the left and pass behind the wall onto the other side of the gate.

[Should you wish to reduce the length of your walk, you can turn right from the gateway along the lane for half a mile to where we parked. This would reduce the total walk length to 4.9 miles]

For the full distance, just after the gateway go straight ahead on the lane, towards the tower of Rickling Church about half a mile away. Stay on the road until we reach the church which sits within a tiny hamlet called Church End.

Much of the Church of All Saints dates from the 14th century and it is listed at Grade I because of its architectural and historic value. It seems remote from today's main settlement around Rickling Green and it is thought that the population may have relocated in the Middle Ages, perhaps after an outbreak of disease.

In springtime, Rickling churchyard is resplendent with daffodils. When the yellow blooms fade, they are superseded by white daffodils. There is a convenient bench in front of the church to the right of the path (and two more behind the church). A small notice beside the front seat explains that the adjacent stone slab came from inside the church and is believed to be the gravestone of Humfrey Waldene, "the founder of the church" who died in 1340 AD.

You are encouraged to explore the inside of the church if it is open, but please remove or cover boots if they are dirty.

On leaving the church retrace your steps back to the lane and on leaving the churchyard, turn sharp left onto a lane. Immediately on the right is 18th-century Church End Farm. This lane is part of the Harcamlow Way.

On the left, pass Apple Tree Cottage, now a single dwelling created by joining two thatched cottages from the 17th or 18th century.

Bear slightly right, passing various farm buildings on the left and continue ahead on a clear, wide public byway with extensive views. On a clear day, you may be able to see Chesterford Research Park, the white building at the top of the distant hill to the left. This is about 6 miles away. On a really clear day you may also be able to see what looks like smoke just to the right of Chesterford Research Park: this is actually a long straight line of many pylons heading North and beyond the Hundred Parishes.

After about a quarter mile, the track turns left. Just afterwards, turn right beside a gate onto another wide gravel public bridleway with hedge on the right, heading towards woodland.

On reaching the wood, turn right, still on the bridleway. Through the trees you may be able to glimpse Quendon Hall, now a popular wedding venue called Parklands.

Over to the right we can sometimes see Rickling Church where we were earlier.

The track descends, crosses a stream and then climbs for about 200 yards with more woodland on the left. At the top of the climb we reach a junction of paths. This is known as Hanging Hill. There is conjecture that it may have taken its name from where a gallows once stood – they tended to be positioned at junctions of roads or paths.

Turn left, back on the Harcamlow Way and descending beneath a canopy of mature trees.

At the bottom of the descent there is a fork in the path, keep straight ahead on the right fork which soon bears right and starts to climb. Towards the top of the rise, we can once again see Quendon Church to our left.

At the top of the climb we reach woodland on the left. We walked through this earlier: Coney Acre. Stay on the track with the woodland on the left for about a quarter mile until we reach a road.

Immediately on the right is the parking area where we started. If you didn't manage to park just here, turn left towards Rickling Green where you parked.

You can read more about the parishes of Quendon & Rickling and Ugley on [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk).

This route description, last updated 10 June 2021, 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.

