

SHUT HEATH WOOD & GREAT TOTHAM

COUNTRYSIDE WALK



CIRCULAR WALK

Long walk with uneven or muddy ground. Walking boots recommended



START
GREAT
TOTHAM



2 HOURS
30 MINS



5.9
MILES



OVERVIEW

This fascinating walk explores the myriad of lanes and footpaths encircling the villages of Great Totham and Wickham Bishops, and in springtime provides the perfect opportunity to see Maldon District's most spectacular display of bluebells in Shut Heath Wood Nature Reserve. There are four pubs on or close to the walk route.

HOW TO GET HERE

Location for the start of the walk:

Great Totham – 4 miles north of Maldon

OS Explorer Map No: 183

OS Grid Reference: TL 808 070

Parking:

Grass verge on left hand side of School Road (CM9 8PT)

Public Transport:

Bus No. 90 – Maldon to Witham (Blackwater Link)

ST PETER'S CHURCH

The attractively situated parish church of St Peter's dates back to the 13th century, although extensive alterations were undertaken in the 1870s. The church contains some early 17th century brasses, as well as a chapel for the locally-renowned Champion de Crespigny family.



JOHN DOUBLEDAY

John is a local sculpture artist and was commissioned to create the Brythnoth statue which can be found in Promenade Park.

SHUT HEATH WOOD NATURE RESERVE

Shut Heath Wood Nature Reserve is owned and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The reserve includes 23 acres of ancient woodland, containing a mixture of oak, sweet chestnut, hornbeam, ash, elder and hazel. In spring, the wood has expansive carpets of bluebells (the best glades are in the north of the wood), along with bugles, cuckoo flowers, wood sorrel, wood anemones, primroses and dog violets.



LOCAL ARCHITECTURE

Great Ruffins, located on Beacon Hill, was designed and built by the architect Arthur Mackmurdo (1851-1942). The house is of architectural or historical interest and is Grade II* listed. The house is not typically Edwardian and has a number of unusual features including the central tower.

USEFUL WEBSITES

ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

www.essexwt.org.uk

M A L D O N D I S T R I C T

VISITMALDONDISTRICT.CO.UK TOURISM@MALDON.GOV.UK

Tell us what you think of the walk & send us your photos:

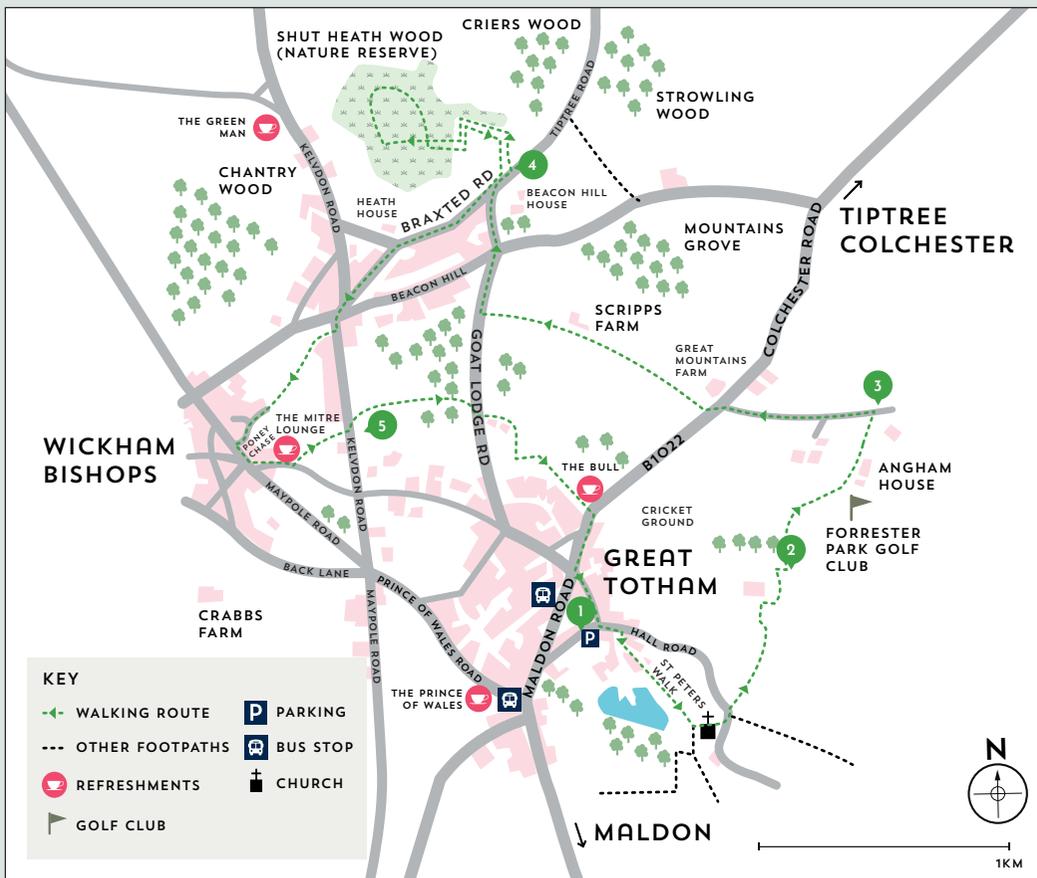


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This walk was developed by Maldon District Council & Chris Harvey.



REFRESHMENTS

THE BRAXTED BAKERY, Little Braxted, CM8 3ET - Tel: 07740 117688

VILLAGE STORES, 7 Maldon Road, Great Totham, CM9 8PR - Tel: 01621 892721

THE GREEN MAN, Kelvedon Road, Little Braxted, CM8 3LB - Tel: 01621 891659

THE MITRE LOUNGE, The Street, Wickham Bishops, CM8 3NN - Tel: 01621 891985

THE BULL, 2 Maldon Road, Great Totham, CM9 8NH - Tel: 01621 893385

THE PRINCE OF WALES, 2 Prince of Wales Road, Great Totham, CM9 8BZ
- Tel: 01621 891162

1. If you have parked on the grass verge in School Road (on the left hand side if you entered School Road from the B1022), walk down School Road past the junction with Hall Road. Turn right into Beadle Place, then after 40 yards, turn left into St Peter's Walk, which is a no through road. At the end of the road, take the path ahead which runs between houses. The footpath now enters countryside, and you soon have fine views of a lake to the right. After passing an attractive thatched cottage on the left, the fenced path heads towards Great Totham Church. Go through the kissing gate to enter the churchyard, then take the path to the left which heads through the lych gate. Turn left on the lane for 120 yards to a sharp left bend. There are two signed footpaths at this point; take the path ahead, which initially follows the left-hand edge of a field and then crosses the middle of a large field. Follow the path into a small copse. The path then skirts around the right hand side of a sewage works, and reaches a junction of paths. Take the right-hand path across the footbridge, then bear left to follow the stream to your left and golf course to your right.

2. Approximately 150 yards after entering the golf course, you will see a footpath signpost with an arrow indicating a right hand turn. Veer half right across the course, taking the route shown on the small map, heading in the direction of the low footpath signposts. Look out for golf balls as you cross the fairways! On approaching the 8th green, look for a gap in the hedge on the other side of the green. Go through this gap, following the path as it emerges from trees. It soon runs along the left-hand side of a fenced track, which passes Angham House and several other houses.

3. In reaching Beckingham Road, turn left for about 1/3 mile until you reach the junction with Colchester Road (B1022). Cross the road with care and turn left for 60 yards, then turn right onto the wide farm track, which is on the right hand edge of a large field. Walk around the five-barred gate and continue ahead on this track for just over 1/2 mile; it passes the farmhouse and farm buildings of Scripps Farm. Before you reach the farmhouse, make sure you look back to see far-reaching views across the Blackwater Estuary in the distance. Eventually you reach Goat Lodge Road; turn right onto the road for 250 yards, until you reach a crossroads. Take the road ahead, which passes Beacon Hill House on your right. After nearly 300 yards, you reach the junction with Braxted Road; continue ahead here for a further 70 yards as the road curves round to the right, just before the "Great Braxted" village road sign. Turn left onto the track, to soon reach an information board about Shut Heath Wood. After 200 yards, turn left away from the track onto the footpath to visit the wood, which skirts along the right-hand field edge.

4. After visiting the wood, retrace your path back to the road. Turn right and then right again into Braxted Road. Go ahead for over 1/3 mile, ignoring the road which forks right by Heath House. On reaching the junction with Kelvedon Road, turn left for 90 yards (signposted to Wickham Bishops and Maldon), until you reach the junction with Beacon Hill (by the war memorial). Cross over Beacon Hill, taking the track going off half right, which is signposted as a public byway (Handley's Lane). The track passes Wickham Bishops Sports Field and eventually merges with a cul-de-sac (Poney Chase). Go to the end of Poney Chase and turn left onto The Street. After 80 yards, turn left onto Great Totham Road, soon passing the "Mitre" pub. 150 yards past the pub, there is a footpath to your left by the car park for Rainbow Field; take this path, which passes Wickham Bishops Tennis Club.

5. The path eventually reaches Kelvedon Road; cross the road and take the footpath almost immediately opposite, which is initially the driveway of "Oaklands" house. The path soon goes between fenced fields, and after 500 yards you reach Goat Lodge Road. Turn right on the road for 70 yards, then turn left down the signposted track past a couple of houses to reach a field. Turn right along the field edge, which takes a left and right turn before narrowing into a footpath hemmed in by hedges and fences. 250 yards after the narrow footpath begins you will reach Maldon Road (B1022), with "The Bull" pub to your left. Cross the road with care, and turn right past the village cricket pitch. After 200 yards, turn left into Hall Road; on reaching the junction with School Road, turn right to return to the starting point of our walk.