



Ashdon



Distance: 7 ³/₄ miles

Time taken: 3 hours

Location: 3 miles North East of Saffron Walden

Parking: Off Fallowden Lane, Church End, Ashdon, CB10 2HL

OS Explorer Map: OS Explorer 209

Grid Ref.: TL 580 416

Transport: No regular train or bus service

Refreshment: Bartlow: The Three Hills

Ashdon: Rose and Crown

Walk Description

Right on the borders of Essex and Cambridgeshire is this quiet and secluded area, rich in history. The walk passes two medieval churches and the resplendent Bragg's Mill, but perhaps the most remarkable place along the route is Bartlow Hills, believed to include the largest burial mound in northern Europe. Aside from the history, the walk wanders through the undulating hills of north Essex, with extensive views across the fields. There is a nice mix of terrain with field edges, farm tracks, green lanes and tiny narrow roads. You will also see old tumbledown farm buildings, well maintained thatched cottages and the glorious windmill. The two villages each has a variety of beautiful old buildings, a stream running through, and a friendly and welcoming pub. Idyllic.

Directions

A. From the car park (P) turn left along Fallowden Lane and walk west for about a third of a mile to the end of the road, where a disused railway line branches off to the left (1). Continue straight ahead for another 50 yards, passing to the right of Halt Cottage.

B. At the facing hedge turn right in front of a gate and walk north around the field edge with a hedge on your left. Continue alongside the hedge as it turns left then right. 140 yards later, just in front of a group of trees, turn left through the hedge (2).

C. Walk ahead to a tiny lane, and turn right to Ashdon Street Farm. Take the path ahead, with a functional but ugly barn on your left and a number of decaying but delightful barns on your right. Immediately past the farm buildings, bear right along a field edge with the hedge on your left for 100 yards, then bear right again to cross the field towards a telegraph pole (3).

D. Continue ahead with a hedge on your right for 50 yards, then cross a wooden footbridge and a couple of yards later, go down a steep slope into a sunken green lane and walk along it for about 300 yards. Just past another wooden footbridge, at a footpath junction, turn left to head north west, with a hedge on your left (4).

E. At the top of the field there is a large oak tree apparently blocking the way: go around the tree to the right then cross a grassy bridge behind it and continue north west, now with a hedge on your right. (5).

F. 200 yards later, go through a gap in the facing hedge and bear right to cross the next field diagonally, towards the near corner of a small wood (6).

G. Walk towards the white house (Great Bowsers) with the woods on your right. Turn right immediately in front of the garden wall and head east - north east along a concrete bridleway (7).

H. Stay on the bridleway for almost a mile. The concrete peters out and the path continues eastwards along a well-defined farm track. After walking downhill beside a small wood, turn left at the T-junction to walk northwards along a byway (8).

I. Near the crest of the hill is a line of pine trees. About 350 yards past this, ignore the farm track off to the right and continue along the byway for another 100 yards to a field entrance (you can see Rivey Hill water tower on the horizon). Bear right to continue downhill along a farm track (9).

J. Continue along the track for 500 yards to the Bartlow Road, and turn right (10).

K. Carry on past what remains of the railway bridge (where you leave Essex and enter Cambridgeshire: remember to remove your white stilettos and put on socks and sandals), over a stream and past Blackditch Barns, to a T-junction. Turn left, heading northwards into Bartlow. 150 yards later you will pass (or pop in to) The Three Hills, which was doubling up as the village polling station when we were there.

L. Continue northwards for 75 yards to the crossroads and turn right. After 150 yards look for a turning on the right just past The Old Coach House, which takes you into the churchyard of St Mary's (with its unusual round tower). Fork left through the churchyard (11). You are now on the Harcamlow Way.

M. Follow the path along an enclosed alleyway, over a stream and the disused railway, and into Bartlow Hills. The exit from this astonishing Roman burial site is found by walking eastwards between the first and second barrow, and then along a fenced path ahead (12).

N. The fenced path brings you to the roadside. A few yards before the road, turn left and climb over a ridge then up a slope to walk south through some woods. Be sure to stay on a narrow footpath parallel to the road, heading south, not the wide farmtrack leading away from the road (13).

O. After 200 yards go down a few steps onto a drive, and turn left then bear right to pass between a farmhouse with free range children and a curious round tower. Carry on to the field edge, and turn left (14).

P. Walk up the side of the field with a hedge on your left. Continue for a little over half a mile along the track (and the county boundary) until the hedge stops and the track turns sharp left. At this point, you are about to re-enter Essex. Please take a moment to re-apply your fake tan, then turn right to leave the farm track and head south west along a grassy footpath, with a bank and then some trees on your left (15).

Q. 300 yards later you will come to another small copse: continue ahead passing it on your left. Keep going for another 250 yards to a footpath crossroads. Go straight across and walk south along an avenue (16).

R. Go past some paddocks, then the walled grounds of Waltons. You can glimpse some 17th century cottages at the far side of the lawn. Keep going downhill along the driveway, with buildings on your left. Continue along the driveway to the roadside. Cross the road and go up a slope, through a gateway and into the field opposite (17).

S. Keep to the left field edge. At the facing hedge, climb over a stile and go ahead across the field towards Bragg's Mill. As you get close, bear left to go towards the back of the mill (18).

T. The windmill site is open to the public, so you can have a look around before continuing along the tiny lane behind the windmill. Walk past a cottage on the left, then bear right over mowed grass, and head downhill along a green lane. This can get very muddy, and it looks as though by custom and practice, people use the field edge to the right when the bridleway is impassable (19).

U. After 125 yards turn right leaving the lane and walk west along a field edge with the hedge on your right (20).

V. Follow the hedge line westwards for almost half a mile as it meanders gently downhill. As you approach Ashdon you can see the exit from this field on your left: continue around the field edge to the exit into Kate's Lane (21).

W. Turn right along Kate's Lane to a T-junction, then turn right again towards Ashdon (22). At the next T-junction, the Rose and Crown is ahead of you.

X. Turn left along Church Hill heading south west. After 300 yards look out for Ashdon Museum on the left side of the road. Take the footpath to the right of the museum (23), and turn right after 30 yards, in front of the footbridge. Head south west, parallel to the road but behind some houses. After the last house the path bears left to cross the meadow towards some woods (24).

Y. Bear right in front of the woods to walk up the slope with the woods on your left. Exit from the south west corner of the meadow (25) and carry on in roughly the same direction along an enclosed path past Ashdon Hall towards All Saints Church. The remains of medieval Ashdon are in the field to your left, although there's little to see (26).

Z. It's worth wandering around the churchyard to see the Guildhall, on the south side. Leave the churchyard via the north gate and turn immediately left to go through a graveyard to the main road. Turn right to return to the car park.

[ROUTE DIRECTIONS at www.essexwalks.com](http://www.essexwalks.com)

The ROUTE MAP and ROUTE PHOTOS **also** need to be downloaded and saved on your computer for printing.



The Route Map PDF can be downloaded from this page: [Description & Map](#)



The Route Photos PDF can be downloaded from this page: [Photos](#)

This route description is not meant to be used in isolation, it is one piece of a three part guide to the walk. The other two pieces are the route map, and the numbered photographs. The walks work best when the description, map and the photos PDF are printed off and used in conjunction with each other.

The numbers in brackets in the description refer to specific points along the route, marked with numbered symbols and these in turn are matched to illustrative photographs which show you the lie of the land.



These symbols are shown at strategic points along the route, overlaid on a 1:50K Ordnance Survey map: [Online OS Map at www.essexwalks.com](#).