



Title: Great Sampford

Distance: 5½ miles

Time taken: 2 hours

Location: 7 miles south east of Saffron Walden, CB10 2RL

OS Explorer Map: 195

Grid Ref.: TL 643 354

Parking: [Limited] Roadside parking in Finchingfield Road (one car only)

Bus: Great Sampford has no regular bus service

Train: No train service

Refreshment: The Red Lion Inn, Great Sampford, 01799 586010

PEAR Rating: 

Walk Description

Tucked away in the folds of the hills of North Essex is the sleepy village of Great Sampford. The countryside around here is truly lovely, with gently rolling hills giving marvellous views across the valleys, and plenty of pretty thatched cottages sprinkled around. There is water everywhere on this walk - streams and rivers, ponds and moats - and bridges galore! Unfortunately, in one or two places the walk crosses a shallow ditch where there isn't any bridge, and although the route is passable, it's a bit of a scramble.

Directions

A. Great Sampford is a picturesque, historic village with narrow roads. Parking is difficult but a single car should be able to find a place without too much trouble. From wherever you park, locate the church and go into the churchyard (1) using the gate on the right, by a long, low thatched cottage. Make your way west, past the tiny garden of remembrance, and leave the churchyard via a gate on your right (2), following Turpin's Trail. Continue west over a stile into a field which slopes down to the River Pant.

B. At the bottom of the slope there is another stile (3), cross this and head towards the bridge over the river. Bear right towards the next bridge, then turn right to follow the field edge to a third bridge.

C. After the third bridge the footpath bears right (4) to sweep northwards through the field, curving left just before the river bank and then heading roughly north west towards a solitary tree (5). Cross the footbridge under the tree and turn left to walk up the field edge.

D. After 150 yards or so, the hedge line bends to the right for about 10 yards before returning to its former direction. At this point the footpath leaves the field edge and heads west cutting off the south west corner of the field (6). This section of path is unmarked, and it is clear from the boot marks that many walkers skirt around the field edge rather than walk straight across.

E. Continue up the hill on the right of the hedge towards Goddards Farm. Go behind the grey barn, past the moat, to the farm track. Turn right, heading north east (7). The views from here are lovely - the church you can see in the distance is St Andrews Church, Hempstead.

F. Follow the farm track as it meanders down towards the B1053. As you near the road, cross a farm bridge then walk to the roadside to the right of the hedge.

G. Just to the right of Cherry Garden (aka Long Thatch) Cottage opposite, take the driveway heading uphill (8). After almost quarter of a mile the driveway bears right; continue between the blue fences (9) until you are at the gate to Howses. You will see the moat on your left and a pond on the right. Cross the stile on your right and go through the paddock, with a pond and hedge to your left. At the facing hedge cross the stile and bridge.

H. Turn left along the crest of the hill (10). After about 200 yards you will come to a lane; turn right here, walking south east, past Free Roberts to Howe Lane. Turn left up Howe Lane for about 200 yards to Byatts Farm and turn right here along the farm track (11).

I. As you pass the end of the farm buildings turn left then right to walk south east along a grassy track. At the south east corner of the field cross the ditch then continue south east, now with the ditch on your left (12). At the bottom of this field, cross back through the hedge and continue south east.

J. After about 100 yards the hedge stops at a small footbridge. Carry straight on across a field (13), over Parsonage Farm Lane and across the next field, before following the hedge line to pass just to the left of a pretty, red, thatched cottage (14).

K. Turn right at the roadside for a couple of yards then take the footpath opposite, over a simple plank bridge. Continue south east with the hedge on your right, for about a third of a mile.

L. You will come to a large gap in the hedge (15) leading to an enclosed part of a private garden. The area is private, but according to the OS map, the legal public right of way goes through it. The line of the footpath heads north west towards the pylon. As you approach the corner it seems like there is no way out, but just at the last minute you will see a plank bridge hidden behind a large bush (16).

M. Cross the bridge - this area is not well maintained and it may be a bit of a scramble - and turn left to walk along the field edge heading south west, with a ditch on your left. After 150 yards turn left to follow the ditch to a footbridge under a tree (17). Follow the hedge line south to the road.

N. At the roadside, turn right to go west across the field and down towards the road. Go to the left of Mill House opposite and follow a footpath behind the house, then cross this field still walking downhill, towards the north west corner (18).

O. Near the corner you will see a rickety gate (19) on the far side of a shallow muddy ditch. Go through this and continue across a grassy area, with the River Pant meandering to your left. Cross over a stile in the facing hedge, then another in the next hedge. Continue towards the westerly edge of a wooded area, and walk between the trees and the river (20).

P. Continue along the riverside for about a quarter of a mile. As you pass the westerly edge of the hedge, there is a ditch to cross which is a bit of a scramble.

[**Q.** If this crossing is too difficult, then to get back to the parking cross in front of the hedge and follow its line northwards towards the village, go through a gap in the hedge on the left and walk across the field towards the houses, cutting off the north east corner of the field. Turn down the enclosed path between the houses leading to the junction of Homebridge and Willetts Field: turn left to walk to Fitchingfield Road and the parking.]

R. Otherwise, and for a lovely view of the historic heart of Great Sampford, continue along the riverside until you approach the road bridge, then bear right to join the carriageway by the telephone box (21). Bear right again and walk up the hill away from the bridge, to Finchingfield Road and back to the parking.

[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](#).

The parking facilities available on this walk are not suitable for large walking groups or those arriving in more than one car. Parking cannot be guaranteed. If you are using a car, be considerate with your parking: parking areas in rural communities are primarily for local use: please don't abuse this and spoil it for others. It could result in parking controls being tightened, requiring the withdrawal of the walk route. For more see: [Advice: Courtesy](#)