



Title: Woodham Walter

Distance: about 5.5 miles

Time taken: 2 hours

Refreshment: The Bell in Woodham Walter


Location: 3 miles west of Maldon

Parking: Opposite the Bell Pub, Woodham Walter

Walk description

This walk starts and finishes in the ancient rural village of Woodham Walter. Both the Pub where we suggest parking, and the Church near the end of the walk, date from the 16th century. The views across rural Essex are lovely, it feels as though the hustle and bustle of modern life is light years away. The terrain is varied, with woodland, arable fields, a nature reserve and horse paddocks along the route. The horse paddocks are all fenced off from each other, but you'll see a series of home-made access points linking the paddocks; just work your way through these. And at one point, you'll come across more radio masts than even Marconi could dream of!

Be aware that the footpaths on the OS map are out of date here and there - the footpaths have moved over the years. Follow the route we've given you and you'll be fine. Conversely, as you walk through the open access nature reserve you don't have to follow our route, you can go any way you choose. But you need to find the right exit to get back on track. The exit point

 is about three quarters of a mile southwards of the entrance.

A. Walk away from the pub towards Little Baddow (1) for about 600 yards then turn right into Stivvy's Road. After 200 yards take the footpath to the left.

B. Go across the field then through the gate into the next field and follow the waymarkers to the following field edge, cross the footbridge.

C. In the next field the exit footbridge is not visible from the entrance. You'll find it in the hedge opposite about half way between the entrance and the telegraph pole visible in the far right corner, to the right of a large tree (2).

D. Walk through the next field towards the five barred gate, turn right on the farm track for about 10 yards then turn left through the home-made access gate (3).

E. You're now walking through a series of half a dozen or so paddocks, linked by similar

access points. Work your way between the paddocks heading directly from each entrance to the next exit point. After the last paddock, walk through a small piece of scrubland and look for a stile on your right (4).

F. Crossing this stile takes you onto a mown area adjacent to a house; it is a public right of way. Keeping close to the hedge, cross this field: the exit point is a stile about 10 yards to the left of the 5-barred gate (5: taken from the roadside).

G. Cross over the road junction and take the bridleway on the left heading south and continue along this into Danbury Ridge Nature Reserve.

H. Continue on the bridleway into the woods; the route bears slightly to the right.

I. After about 250 yards the bridleway takes a sharp left turn; don't take this, go straight ahead along a footpath (6).

J. At a T-junction near to the crest of the hill, at a waymarker propped up in logs, turn right. 50 yards later the path diverges; take the left fork (7) : you will shortly come to a piece of heathery heathland with surprisingly lovely views across a small wooded valley.

K. Continue along this path as it slopes downhill towards a stream. L. At the stream there are several bridges. Take the route using two wooden bridges across the stream (8), and go right then left up the slope.

M. Keep on the main path until you exit the woods and the nature reserve by Robins Wood, at the end of the "Twitty Fee" track. Cross the track taking the footpath opposite, which runs alongside a golf course.

N. Continue along this footpath until you reach the roadside.

O. Crossing the road take the footpath opposite, next to a 5-barred gate.

P. After about 50 yards the footpath divides; take the left fork going through the fence gap, onto the field edge. Follow the field edge as it runs alongside woodland (9).

Q. As you approach the end of the woods you will see a footpath emerging from the woods, turn left onto this. Continue along this path to a lane.

R. Across the lane, just past a lone oak, you will see the next footpath going through a hedge into a field (10).

S. Follow this path round the field edge. Just after the path bears to the right there is a gap in the hedge to your left; the path goes through here (11).

T. Follow this path with trees and a stream to your left until again the path bears right. Shortly after this you come to a track to the left leading to a farm. The path goes through the farmyard keeping to the left of the buildings.

U. As you exit the farmyard head down the access road to a small lane.

V. Cross the lane to the footpath opposite.

W. Walk up a track past two cottages and use the field entrance to the right of a five barred

gate.

X. As you enter the field you can see a gap in the hedge at the opposite side of the field (12); go around the field edge to this point and then cross through into the next field.

Y. Keep to the field edge. After about 80 yards the tree line pushes the path to the right and then suddenly drops away; continue straight on into the field. You are now in The Wilderness! Head for an area of rough grass which forms the field boundary here.

Z. At the field boundary turn left keeping the rough grass to your left, and head along the track (13). There are very few trees in this area but look for two large bushes close together; there is a footbridge between them which takes you towards a small piece of woodland.

AB. Follow the path straight on through the woods and out the other side, then keep on the rough grass dividing two fields; head towards a telegraph pole.

AC. From here you can see St Michael's church, make for the gate at the rear of the churchyard and walk through the churchyard to the front.

AD. Turn right down the hill and back to the parking spot.

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