

PURLEIGH & STOW MARIES AERODROME

COUNTRYSIDE WALK



CIRCULAR WALK

Long walk with uneven or muddy ground. Walking boots recommended



START
PURLEIGH



4 HOURS
15 MINS



8.7
MILES



OVERVIEW

This walk explores the countryside around the hilltop village of Purleigh and provides an opportunity to visit a working vineyard and an historic World War I aerodrome near Stow Maries (check with the respective websites for current opening times). Points 1 to 3 of this walk form part of the long-distance St. Peter's Way footpath; look out for the distinctive red logo on many of the footpath signposts on this section of the walk.

HOW TO GET HERE

Location for the start of the walk:

Purleigh – 4½ miles south of Maldon (south on B1018, turning right onto B1010)

OS Explorer Map No: 183

OS Grid Reference: TL 841 020

Parking:

Roadside parking near the church, in Church Hill or The Street (CM3 6QH)

Public Transport:

Buses D1, D2 from Maldon or Burnham-on-Crouch to Purleigh (not on Sundays or Bank Holidays)

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



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NEW HALL VINEYARD

Wine was made locally in the Middle Ages with a vineyard planted at Purleigh in 1120. By contrast New Hall is a relatively recent manifestation, having been established by the Greenwood family in 1969. It is East Anglia's largest vineyard (with nearly 200 acres). The wines can be sampled and purchased from the cellar shop which is open daily. An annual wine festival is held on the first full weekend of September.



STOW MARIES AERODROME

Stow Maries Aerodrome was built in 1916 to house the Royal Flying Corps, which would later become the RAF. It is the only intact First World War aerodrome in the world, other sites were all demolished or replaced by larger buildings during the Second World War. In 2012 all 24 surviving buildings were listed Grade II*.

Because of the site's condition and importance, a number were included on the English Heritage "Buildings at Risk Register" but due to an extensive restoration project with a fantastic team of volunteers, 3 buildings were successfully removed from that list. The site is open for visitors, by air or by road and gives a fascinating insight to local history.

THRIFTWOOD NATURE RESERVE

A beautiful woodland rife with singing birds and spring flowers. It has a large population of both resident and summer migrant birds and flowers including St John's wort, heath wood-rush and pale and pill sedges.



ALL SAINT'S CHURCH

A famous rector of All Saints' Church in Purleigh was Lawrence Washington, the great-great grandfather of George Washington, who was the first President of the United States of America. Lawrence was rector from 1633 until 1642, when the Parliamentarians summarily removed him from his post, on the grounds that he was a "malignant Royalist" and a "common frequenter of alehouses". He was forced to move to Little Braxted, where he died in poverty in 1648, and was buried in All Saints' churchyard in Maldon. His sons John and Lawrence were so disillusioned with their father's ill-treatment they soon fled England and settled in the English colony of Virginia in North America.

REFRESHMENTS

STOW MARIES AERODROME CAFE, Hackmans Lane, Stow Maries, CM3 6RJ
- Tel: 01245 429134 (check opening times before visiting)

THE BELL, The Street, Purleigh, CM3 6QJ - Tel: 01621 828348

SUB POST OFFICE AND STORE, Church Hill, Purleigh, CM3 6QH - Tel: 01621 828275

BREWERS ARMS, Main Road, Bicknacre, CM3 4HD - Tel: 01245 224061

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

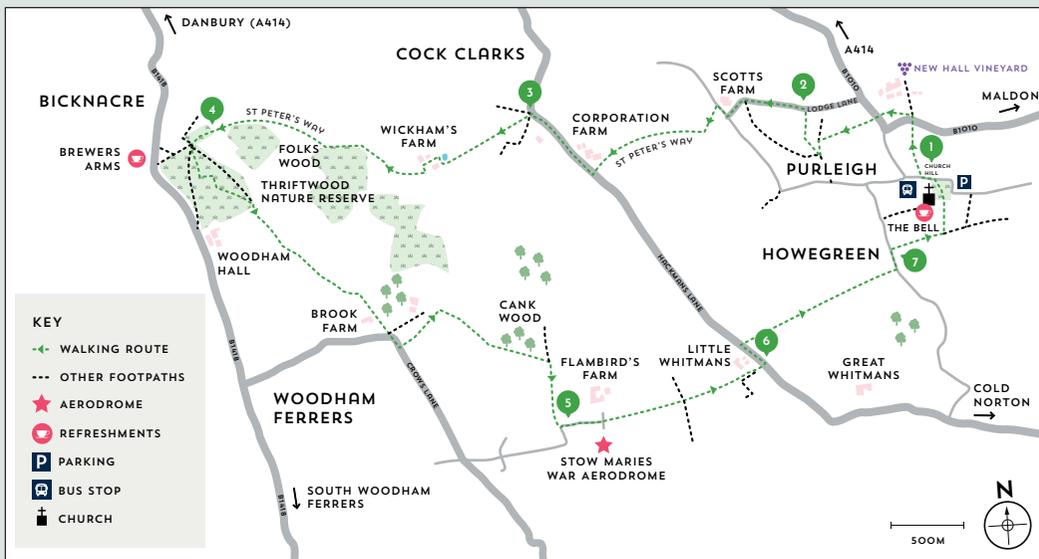


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This walk was developed by Maldon District Council & Chris Harvey.



WALK ROUTE

1. Start with your back to the church at Purleigh on Church Hill. Go through the lych-gate into the cemetery opposite; there is a lovely view across to Maldon and the Blackwater Estuary from here. Head for the far left hand corner of the cemetery, and go ahead on the field edge path (on the left hand edge of the field), which is part of New Hall Vineyard. This heads downhill to the B1010 road. Follow the path down to a gap in the hedge. Go through the gap in the hedge to cross the road, heading slightly left to take the direction pointed to by a signpost. This follows the line of the road, but it's a bit more scenic. Walk around the left edge of New Hall vineyard, following its curvature to come to a path leading to the road. Turn left onto the road, then in 20 yards turn right onto a footpath between houses. This soon enters a copse, then follows the left side of a meadow; continue ahead, ignoring all paths heading off left and right. Cross over a stile into a field and take a diagonal route to the top left corner, where you can see the outbuildings of Mill Farm. Cross a stile then turn right onto a green lane. Walk along this byway for 350 yards. When the byway meets a lane (Lodge Lane), turn left onto it.

2. Follow the lane as it turns left at Scotts Farm. At a T-junction, turn right onto Birchwood Road. After 60 yards turn left at a footpath signpost. Follow the right edge of a field, turning right after a short time. At a signpost, turn left to cross the field, coming to a crossing point on the ditch by the start of a boundary the other side. You should now be going south-west and merging with a power line. When you, and the power line meet, turn right onto Hackmans Lane. Follow the road for just over 650 yards, passing some farm buildings (Corporation Farm). At a right bend in the road, take the middle footpath of three, signposted as St Peter's Way.

3. Initially this is a cross-field path; aim to walk to the left of a tree, then follow the right edge of this field to its extremity. Go through a gate by a lake, then continue in the same direction to come to another two gates (near Wickham's Farm). After the third gate, turn right, following the field edge to a plank bridge. Cross the bridge then turn left. At the point the boundary goes left; don't do the same, but carry on in the same direction you have been going, following a signpost across the field. Follow the path to another signpost. Go right at it, following the left-hand field edge. Soon turn left at a signpost to head across a field. Follow the next post across another field to another post. At this post, turn right to follow the edge of Folks Wood, until at its north-west corner, head across another field to a signpost to come to Thrift Wood.

4. Turn left immediately after you enter Thrift Wood to follow a path just to the left of the main one; you are now leaving St Peter's Way. This path twists and turns a bit, just keeping inside the edge of the wood. Follow this path for 600 yards, leaving the wood at its south-eastern tip. Keep in the same direction along a bridleway following the right edge of four fields. The bridleway eventually comes to a gate. Turn right, then immediately left to walk along a road for a short while. At a footpath signpost turn left to walk across a field, keeping parallel to the left edge of the field. At the far side of the field walk across a ditch, then turn right in the direction pointed by a way-marker. Walk along the right edge of this field to another way-marker telling you to go left. Do this to skirt the edge of Cank Wood. At the south-eastern corner of Cank Wood, turn right onto a bridleway and follow it to a lane.

5. Turn left at this lane, going round the gate, to walk in the general direction of a water tower. At a T-junction, go slightly right, following the signpost into a meadow. Alternatively, you can make a brief detour to the right at this point to visit the Stow Maries Aerodrome (check opening times before visiting). Back in the meadow, keep to the right-hand edge, and soon you bear half left to the signpost in the middle of the far boundary. Go through the gate then square up to follow the cross-field path to a hedge gap and bridge, just to the right of a farm track. Cross this bridge to follow the left edge of two fields. At a gap in the hedge, go through it then walk half right (following the direction of the power line). Mount a new fence to cross it. Keeping in the same direction, walk to the far left corner of this meadow, coming to a road (Hackmans Lane).

6. Turn left on to the road and walk about 250 yards to a footpath signpost. Turn right there and head gently uphill. There are spectacular views to the north and east as you reach the top of the hill; Danbury, Maldon and the Blackwater Estuary can be seen. Carry on to a plank bridge, cross it to walk along the left edge of a field. The views continue, with a glimpse of the two main buildings of the decommissioned Bradwell Nuclear Power Station. Head gently downhill, the path becoming enclosed by fences after a while. Keep on along the path to come to a kissing gate. Cross it then turn left onto a road.

7. 150 yards along the road (after the house called "Primrose") is a footpath signpost to the right. Follow it, first going around the right side of a gate. Continue along an "avenue" of trees to come to a way-marker. Go slightly left to cut the corner of a field, soon coming to another way-marker. Cross a stile to rejoin the St. Peter's Way. Go across a pasture going slightly uphill. Cross a stile to the left of a gate, then walk past some farm buildings, making the best of some remaining views to the right. Keep ahead to a white building (the rear of the "Bell" public house). Turn left then go through the gate to the churchyard at Purleigh church. Walk through the yard to the lych-gate at Church Hill.

USEFUL WEBSITES

NEW HALL VINEYARDS

www.newhallwines.co.uk

STOW MARIES AERODROME

www.stowmaries.com

