

1. From the Village Hall car park, walk to the crossroads and turn right to walk along The Street (the shop with the 'Snows Corner' sign is on the corner of this road), soon passing the Chequers pub. Nearly 200 yards after the pub, turn left into a narrow road (Handley's Lane), soon passing Poney's Chase on the left. Continue ahead where the housing finishes and the road becomes an unmade track. Ignore the entrance to Wickham Bishops Sports Field on your right. You soon pass to the rear of the 'Black Houses' which were designed by Arthur Mackmurdo. The track emerges onto Kelvedon Road; turn left for a few yards to reach a crossroads. Turn right here onto Beacon Hill (signposted towards Great Totham North and Tiptree), passing the village war memorial on your left.

2. Walk along Beacon Hill for nearly 300 yards, passing the large road sign advising you have entered Great Totham, with the entrance to Arthur Mackmurdo's 'Little Ruffins' on your right. Turn left at the footpath signpost on the left hand side, going over the stile. After 130 yards, go over another stile and cross over a lane (Braxted Road), taking the signed footpath opposite. After 70 yards, you will reach another lane (Heath Lane); turn left and walk along the lane. After passing St Mary's Chapel on the left hand side, you reach the small village green of Little Braxted, with the Green Man pub opposite. Turn right here to head along Kelvedon Road. After 1/4 mile, turn left onto Witham Road, immediately passing 'The Old School House'. After 3/4 mile on this lane, shortly after passing Sewells Farm on your left and Homefield House on your right, look out on the left for a footpath signpost by a double five-bar gate as the road curves to the right.

3. **FOR THE LONGER WALK**, continue on Witham Road for just over 1/2 mile, passing Little Braxted Hall Cottages. St Nicholas' Church, parish church of Little Braxted, is on your right. It is usually open from 10 am to 4 pm every day, but if you find it locked, you can ask for the key in the Little Braxted Hall office in the large buildings to the back of the church, or you can knock at Little Braxted Hall itself (just past the church) if the office is shut. The church is well worth a visit, so it's worth trying to track down the key! After visiting the church, retrace your steps back along Witham Road to the footpath signpost by the five double five-bar gate on your right.

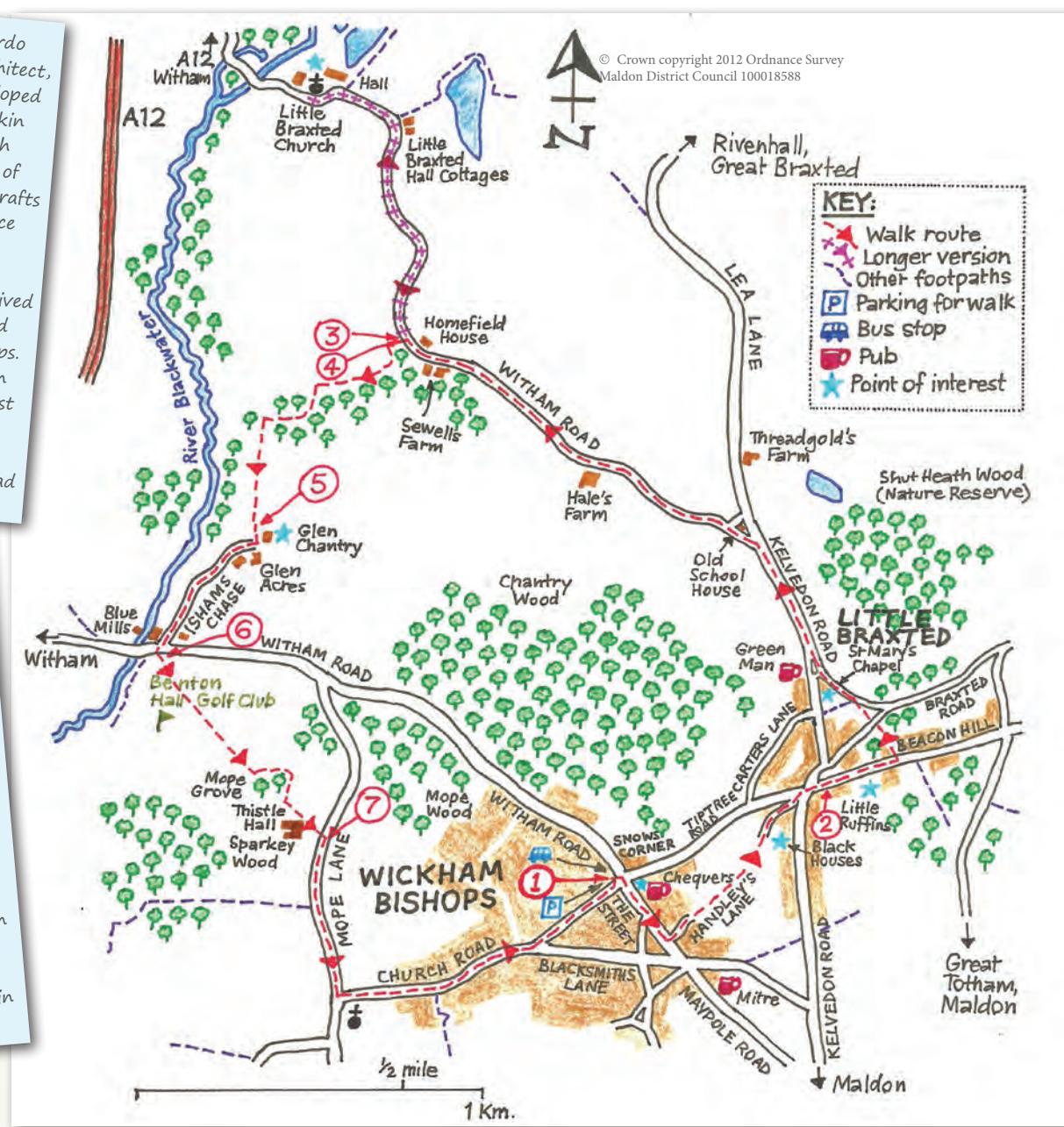
4. **FOR BOTH WALKS**, go around the gate to join the concrete track; this follows the left hand edge of a large field. After 350 yards, turn left at a metal gate onto a footpath leading into the wood (ignore a wider track on the left 150 yards before this). On reaching the edge of the wood, cross over the stile, turn left

● Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo (1851-1942), a renowned architect, artist and social reformer, developed his artistic talent with John Ruskin at Oxford and by associating with and being influenced by the likes of William Morris in the Arts and Crafts Movement. He helped to introduce the Art Nouveau style to England and was a founder of the Rural Community Council of Essex. He lived for a time at the house he designed at Little Ruffins at Wickham Bishops. An example of his work can be seen at Snows Corner; it was the old post office but is now a hair salon. You can also see the 'Black Houses' he designed, which are in Kelvedon Road (close to the walk - see map).

● At Little Braxted church, the Reverend Ernest Geldart found the basic structure in good shape, but the inside was, to his mind, rather dull. Between 1881 and 1886 he gradually transformed the interior of the little Norman church. The walls and much of the furnishings were comprehensively decorated with stencil-work and pictures (he did most of the work himself). He installed a new font, low chancel screen, altar and choir stalls. Practically no surface was left unadorned, and the combination of pictures, texts and symbolic devices spells out Geldart's religious and artistic doctrines in a most spectacular fashion.

and go ahead on the grassy path through the middle of a large field.

5. After about 250 yards, the path joins a track by the edge of Glen Chantry house and its famous garden; go ahead in the same direction. At the entrance gates to Glen Chantry, turn right onto the lane (Ishams Chase), and head down this for 1/4 mile. You might catch



6. Cross over the road and take the waymarked footpath for about 250 yards, as it heads uphill through Benton Hall golf course, alongside the sixth tee and a fairway. The footpath goes through a gap in the hedge; go ahead on the path bordered by fenced hedgerows across a field, which is in a small valley. On the other side of the field, go through a kissing gate, then cross a footbridge. The fenced path takes a right hand bend around Mope Grove wood to another kissing gate. Go ahead along the fenced path, turning right onto Mope Lane and soon passing the entrance to Thistle Hall on your right.

7. Go up Mope Lane for just over 1/4 mile, until you reach the junction with Church Road. Turn left here, soon passing St Bartholomew's Church (Wickham Bishops' parish church) on your right. After just over 1/3 mile, you reach a fork of roads; take Church Road, which is the left hand fork (the right hand fork is Blacksmiths Lane). After another 330 yards, you will reach the Village Hall car park, the starting point of your walk.



● Sue and Wol Staines, both teachers, lovingly created Glen Chantry garden. A labour of love for them for nearly 30 years, they have built a garden described by the 'Times' as "an inspiration, a place for gardeners to develop their own ideas for creating beautiful pictures with plants". Good views of the garden can be seen from the footpath.

glimpses of the River Blackwater down to your right; to the left you will pass some quite impressive houses. After passing the rear garden of Blue Mills (an 18th century wood boarded mill and millhouse), you will reach a road (Blue Mills Hill); you will see a signposted footpath in a hedge gap on the opposite side of the road.

This walk was kindly developed by  
Chris Harvey for the  
Maldon District Tourist Information Centre.

50p

to cover printing costs

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COUNCIL

### Refreshments

on (or close to) the walk

Chequers, 32 The Street, Wickham  
Bishops, CM8 3NN – Tel: 01621 891162

Green Man, Kelvedon Road, Little Braxted,  
CM8 3LB - Tel: 01621 891659

Mitre, 2 The Street, Wickham Bishops,  
CM8 3NN - Tel: 01621 891379

## WALKING IN THE MALDON DISTRICT CIRCULAR COUNTRYSIDE WALK Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted



This walk takes in some of the charming scenery around the villages of Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted. The longer version of the walk provides an opportunity to visit one of the smallest churches in Essex, which has an extravagantly decorated interior. You will also have an opportunity on both versions of the walk to catch tantalising glimpses of one of Essex's loveliest gardens (sadly, no longer open to the public). There is quite a lot of walking on roads, lanes and pavements, making it a good walk to do after wet weather.

### KEY:

- Walk route
- Longer version
- Other footpaths

Distance:  
Full circular walk:  
5.2 miles (8.4 km).  
Short circular walk:  
4.1 miles (6.6 km)

Time taken:  
Full circular walk: 2½ hours  
(allow extra time to view the church).  
Short circular walk: 1¾ hours

Location: Wickham Bishops - 4 miles north of Maldon (via B1022 or B1018)  
OS Explorer Map No.183  
(Chelmsford & The Rodings)  
OS Grid Reference: TL 843 124

Parking: Wickham Bishops Village Hall Car Park, at Snows Corner crossroads (CM8 3JZ)  
Public Transport: Bus No. 90 (Blackwater Link) – Maldon to Witham (regular service Monday-Saturday, but not Sunday)

The Reverend Ernest Geldart (1848-1929), was rector of Little Braxted from 1881 to 1900. Before taking Holy Orders, Geldart trained as an architect, and thereafter managed to combine the two careers, enhancing his income by designing church furnishings, fittings and small extensions for his fellow clergy. In 1888, Geldart broke his leg and was unable to travel to Little Braxted church to conduct his services, so he built St Mary's Chapel alongside Braxted Place (where he lived). Services are still occasionally held here.

