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 Poyney’s Ch ASE 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 yard 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 (Brasted 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 1/4 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 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 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 onto the lane (Shams Chase), and head down this for 1/2 mile. You might catch 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 now house), 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.

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. After 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 1/2 mile, you reach a fork of roads; take Church Road, which is the left hand fork (the right hand fork is Baptist Lane). After another 330 yards, you will reach the Village Hall car park, the starting point of your walk.
This walk was kindly developed by Chris Harvey for the Maldon District Tourist Information Centre.

50p to cover printing costs

For further information please contact:
Maldon District Tourist Information Centre
Wenlock Way, Maldon, Essex CM9 5AD
Tel: 01621 856503
Website: www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk
Email: tic@maldon.gov.uk

WALKING IN THE MALDON DISTRICT
CIRCULAR COUNTRYSIDE WALK

Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted

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

Time taken:
Full circular walk: 2 1/2 hours (allow extra time to view the church).
Short circular walk: 1 3/4 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)

Refreshments
On (or close to) the walk
Chequers, 32 The Street, Wickham Bishops, CM8 3NN - Tel: 01621 891162
Green Man, Ketton Road, Little Braxted, CM8 3LB - Tel: 01621 891659
Mitre, 2 The Street, Wickham Bishops, CM8 3NN - Tel: 01621 891379

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.

The Reverend Ernest Geldart (1848-1929), 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.

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