

Wendens Ambo Circular			Wendens Ambo Circular (extended Walk)		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check	1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
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## Wendens Ambo [Audley End station] Circular

**Start:** Audley End Station

**Finish:** Audley End station

Audley End Station, map reference TL 515 363, is 60 km north east of Charing Cross, 23 km south south east of Cambridge, 68m above sea level and in **Essex**.

**Length:** 23.7 km (14.7 mi), of which 7.4 km (4.6 mi) on tarmac or pavements.

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 258m. For a shorter or a longer walk, see *below* **Walk options**.

**Toughness:** 4 out of 10

**Time:** 5 hours 15 minutes walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8 ½ hours.

**Transport:** Audley End station is on the West Anglia Main Line from Liverpool Street to Cambridge (two trains per hour), with a journey time of between 53 to 63 minutes. Trains usually stop at Tottenham Hale for connections with Stratford services and the Victoria Line.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** Take the train closest to 10.30 hours if intending to eat in Arkesden, or the train closest to 9.30 hours if intending to eat in Chrishall, and if walking the extended walk.

**OS Landranger Map:** 154 (Cambridge & Newmarket) and 167 (Chelmsford)

**OS Explorer Map:** 194 (Hertford & Bishop's Stortford), 195 (Braintree & Saffron Walden)

### Walk Notes:

This is a relaxing walk in the quiet chalky uplands of north-west Essex, on the borders of Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, very much off the beaten track, and with gently rolling hills, plenty of woods and copses as well as some pretty villages. Right from the start the walk takes you past picturesque thatched cottages with ample examples of pargeting, a decorative medieval plastering technique, and on through some farmland to the early lunch stop in Arkesden, one of the prettiest villages in Essex with one of the best pubs and loveliest churches.

The route then gently ascends to Chrishall, the dedicated lunch stop on the full walk, along field boundaries and green lanes. Chrishall village is close to Essex' highest point and the approach offers fine views into a corner of the Cambridgeshire plain and back down the wide 'winding valley' that gives Wendens Ambo its name. After lunch you follow the Icknield Way to Elmdon, with more views north out across the Cambridgeshire plain to Cambridge itself, then later alongside a high hedge with views off to your right into the winding valley back to Wendens Ambo.

### Walk options:

It is possible to **shorten the walk** by 6.2 km (3.9 mi), this cuts out most of the higher ground including the outlying villages of Chrishall and Elmdon and is rated **3/10**.

It is possible to **shorten the walk** by 3.0 km (1.9 mi), this cuts out Chrishall and is also rated **3/10**.

It is possible to **lengthen the walk** by 2.0 km (1.3 mi), going over Essex' (and East Anglia's) highest point, this is rated **5/10**.

### Lunch: (details last updated 27/06/2021)

**The Axe & Compasses** The High Street, *Arkesden, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4EX* (01799 550 272, <http://axeandcompasses.co.uk/>). Open 11.30-15.00 and 18.00-23.00 Mon-Fri, 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00 Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.00 and 18.30-21.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-14.15 Sun. The Axe & Compasses is located 4.9 km (3.0 mi) into the walk and a fine example of a family-run 17<sup>th</sup> century traditional thatched country pub and restaurant.

**The Red Cow** 11 High Street, *Chrishall, Essex, SG8 8RN* (01763 838 792, <http://www.theredcow.com/>). Open 16.00-20.00 Mon, all day Tue-Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun. Lunch served 12.00-14.00 Thu-Fri, 12.00-14.30 Sat and 12.00-15.30 Sun. Dinner served 17.30-20.00 Wed-Sat. The Red Cow is located 13.1 km (8.2 mi) into the full walk and 15.1 km (9.4 mi) into the long walk.

**The Maltings** Heydon Lane, *Elmdon, Essex, CB11 4NH* (<https://themaltingspub.co.uk/>). The Maltings (formerly The Elmdon Dial) is located 12.1 km (7.5 mi) into the shortened walk, 15.1 km (9.4 mi) into the full walk and 17.1 km (10.7 mi) into the long walk. The Elmdon Dial shut in May 2013 when the then new Landlord suddenly died, a subsequent application for re-classification as dwellings failed and it was sold at auction in early 2018. A lengthy refurbishment seems to have now stalled. Check the website for details.

**Currently closed.**

### Tea: (details last updated 27/06/2021)

**The Bell Inn** Royston Road, *Wendens Ambo, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4JY* (01799 540 382, <http://thebellinnpub.co.uk/>). Open all day every day. Food served 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00 Mon-Fri, 12.00-21.00 Sat and 12.00-18.00 Sun. The Bell is located 830m from the station.

**The Fighting Cocks** London Road, *Wendens Ambo, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4JN* (01799 541 279, <http://www.thefightingcocks.biz/>). The Fighting Cocks are located 300m off-route beyond the station.

**Currently closed** due to an extension project.

## Notes:

### Audley End station

Audley End railway station serves the village of Wendens Ambo and the town of Saffron Walden. When it opened in 1845 the station was called Wenden, but it was soon renamed Audley End in deference to Audley End House which lies 2 km to the north. There was a platform at the east end of the station for the branch line to Saffron Walden (closed in 1964), of which the building still remains in the current car park, where the route and platform are also clearly visible.

### Wendens Ambo

The village name originates from the joining of two villages, Great and Little Wenden, to form Wendens Ambo, meaning "both Wendens" in Latin. It is likely that the farming community of Wenden probably started around the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, taking its name from the valley in which it lies: Wendene (Saxon, probably meaning: winding valley). The Domesday Book contains the first written account of Wendena Magna (Great Wenden) and Wendena Parva (Little Wenden). On 23 March 1662, they were joined to create Wendens Ambo.

### Saffron Trail

The Saffron Trail is a linear waymarked 113 km (70 mi) Long Distance Path in Essex running in a north-westerly direction from Southend-on-Sea to Saffron Walden. The waymark used is a crocus.

### Pargeting

Pargeting (or sometimes pargetting) is a decorative or waterproofing plastering applied to building walls. The term, if not the practice, is particularly associated with Suffolk and Essex (in Norfolk the term "pinking" is used instead), but it can also be seen in Kent and is documented as far away as York and the West Country. There was plenty of pargeting in London before the 1666 Fire.

English plasterwork became increasingly elaborate in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the dramatic external decoration of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace (1538) was contemporary with early plaster friezes in the great houses. Some of the most opulent pargeting was produced over the next 150 years with a high point around 1660, when the technique began to fall out of fashion.

In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century architects like Norman Shaw became interested in the 'arts and crafts' skills of an earlier age and there was a revival of interest in pargeting.

Pargeting derives from the word 'parget', a Middle English term that is probably derived from the Old French *pargeter* or *parjeter*, to throw about, or *porgeter*, to roughcast a wall. Pargeting was applied to the wet plaster, generally by sticking a number of pins in a board in certain lines or curves, and then pressing on the plaster in various directions, so as to form geometrical figures. Sometimes these devices are in relief, and in the time of Elizabeth I represent figures, birds and foliage.

The original raw material is parge, a mixture of sand and lime with a binder like hair, traditionally used for parging flues and underlining roof tiles to reduce drafts. Many additional ingredients are recorded, including stable urine, loam, soot, tallow, road scrapings, cheese, dung, blood and salt, the aim being to produce a viscous material slowly curing to something leather hard. If it cured too quickly it would be difficult to work up a complex pattern.

### Harcamlow Way

A waymarked 227 km figure-of-eight Long Distance Path through Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex, starting in Harlow. Mainly on tracks and green lanes, passing many places of historic interest, crossing low hills, woods and arable land via Standon and Manuden to meet the cross-over point at Newport. It continues through Saffron Walden and over the low Bartlow Hills to Horseheath and the Fleam Dyke, to enter Cambridge, the return route passing through Melbourn and Chrishall to Newport, continuing via Debden, Thaxted, Takeley and Hatfield Forest.

### Arkesden

Arkesden is one of the prettiest villages in Essex and has one of the best pubs and loveliest churches. There is evidence of settlement there since the Bronze Age and it is mentioned as Archesdana (said to mean 'Arcel's valley', possibly a Danish name) in the Domesday book. Today, Arkesden is considered one of the prettiest villages in the county with many old dwellings, dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and more than 30 grade II listed buildings, many thatched. Wicken Water stream meanders between weeping willows along the length of the village, making its way to the River Cam (or Granta). It rises near the highest point in Essex, Crishall Common, near Langley. Passed en route in Hampits Road are The Ancient Shepherd, a former pub, and the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel which has been very nicely converted into a house – the story goes that this was founded in the 1880s by an Anglican lady who had fallen out with the vicar!

### St. Mary the Virgin, Arkesden

The handsome Church of St. Mary the Virgin, dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, stands on foundations of a Norman predecessor. Although it was extensively restored by the Victorians it still houses elaborate 17<sup>th</sup> century marble sculptured monuments and an impressive Elizabethan memorial to the Cutte family – predominant in the spread of the Nonconformist movement in north-west Essex. Their spectacular tomb from 1592 dominates one side of the church through its sheer size, six-poster form and through being

painted in bright pink (notice the missing heads of the kneeling sons of the couple, supposedly chopped off by Cromwell's troupes). The Cutte family is more famed for their part in the Battle of Blenheim, when John Cutte, born in Arkesden in 1661, led Marlborough's attack, earning him the nickname 'The Salamander' for his bravery.

### **Wicken Water Boulders**

A large concentration of boulders can be seen in the bed of the Wicken Water, they consist of either Hertfordshire puddingstone or sarsen stones. There are at least 12 boulders here, of varying sizes and shapes, the largest being a slab of colourful puddingstone 1.5 metres by 1.1 metres in size. Most of the stones are obscured by silt from the stream or covered in moss. One rounded boulder of puddingstone has been cleaned to reveal its colour and texture. A sarsen stone is present at each end of the bridge itself. Hertfordshire puddingstone contains well-rounded flint pebbles bound together with quartz 'cement', making it a very tough rock. Sarsen stones are boulders of extremely hard sandstone. They are distinctly different rocks but were both formed under the same conditions around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was very hot. Both rocks are very resistant to erosion.

Arkesden is unique in Essex for the number of erratic boulders that are scattered around the village. They can also be seen on the roadside, by the inn, and in private gardens.

<http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk/portal/p/Geology+Site+Account/s/Wicken+Water+Boulders/o/Wicken+Water+Boulders>

### **The Ickniel Way**

Said to be one of the oldest roads in Britain, the Ickniel Way is one of the few long distance track-ways to have existed before the Romans occupied the country. The name is Celto-British in derivation, and may be named after the Icenii tribe, who may have established this route to permit trade with other parts of the country from their base in East Anglia. It has also been suggested that the road has even older prehistoric origins. It stretched from the Dorset Coast to the Wash, crossing the River Thames near Wallingford. It was later one of the "Four Highways" of medieval England (the others being Ermine Street, Fosse Way and Watling Street). Today the Ridgeway National Trail follows parts of the ancient Ickniel Way for 139 km (87 mi) from Overton Hill to Ivinghoe Beacon in the Chilterns. The modern day Ickniel Way long-distance path then runs for 274 km from Ivinghoe Beacon to Knettishall Heath in Norfolk.

### **Chrishall**

Chrishall (pronounced *Chris hall*) is a small village, equidistant between the two medieval market towns of Saffron Walden and Royston. Although in Essex, Chrishall lies close to its borders with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire and has a 'Hertfordshire' postcode (SG8).

The village was listed in the Domesday Book as *Cristeshalla*, or "nook of land dedicated to Christ". It is one of only two English settlements whose name contains the word "Christ" (Christchurch being the other).

The Ickniel Way, a Neolithic track, passes through the parish.

Chrishall's location is key to its character, as the village sits at the highest point in Essex (and also of East Anglia), at 147 metres above sea level. Road construction has avoided this high ground and therefore Chrishall is off the beaten track.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train at **Audley End station** on platform 2 and cross over the footbridge to platform 1 to leave the station into a car park. *Turn diagonally left* through the car park to continue – in 50m – along a road to the right of **Neville House**. In 100m *turn left* along the opposite pavement at a T-junction with **Royston Road** through the village of **Wendens Ambo** and in 60m cross the railway on a road bridge. In 165m you have a green on the left and in 70m at the end of the green you *turn left* along a tarmac driveway to the left of **St. Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo**, with a 'Hertfordshire Spike' on its tower. Continue past the churchyard and the wooden clad, converted **Long Barn** and in 50m from the church yard corner you *turn right* at a fork in the driveway. Follow the driveway around the barn and past the lower churchyard corner and *turn left* into a grassy area 20m [!] before reaching a road. Follow a tarmac path to the bottom right-hand corner of the park and leave it through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate. Continue in the same direction by *turning left* along a tarmac lane.

In 90m you cross **an unnamed stream** either on the road or on a higher lying railed footpath, signifying an often-flooded area. Ignore a left turning footpath and continue in the same direction along this quiet lane past some impressive old houses, many with good examples of **Pargeting**, a rendering and plastering technique widespread in Essex. Ignore a footpath turning right in 180m and **Rookery Lane** joining from the left in another 150m to continue in the same direction along a car wide concrete bridleway and in 300m walk through an underpass beneath the **M11**. On the other side of the motorway after 15m ignore a left forking track and in 10m the concrete discontinues as you continue in the same direction along a car wide grassy track to the right of a ditch and to the left of an earth bank (and an arable field at a higher level), gently uphill. In 800m – by a marker post in the top-right corner of the field on your left – *veer left* to cross a farm track and continue to the left of a hedge (185°), in 20m passing to the right of a green metal car barrier. [You are now following the **Harcamlow Way** for 3 km.]

In 250m you *turn right* with footpath and Harcamlow Way markers and continue along a grassy field boundary with trees to your right. In 180m you walk under a HV line and in 100m continue between trees for 130m. In 400m in the far-right corner of the field walk through a gap and *veer left* into another field with a marker post along a wire fence on the left (215°). In 250m, where the fence ends, *veer right* along a grassy margin to the right of a ditch. Ignore a right turn en route, and in 370m, at the far side of the field, continue in the same direction with trees on your right and in 150m continue between houses on tarmac. In 90m you *turn right* at a T-junction with **Wicken Road (Poore Street)** in the pretty village of **Arkesden** and in 70m *turn right* again at a T-junction with **The High Street**. You have **Wicken Water** on your right (an occasional stream and a tributary to the **Cam River**). In 150m pass the early lunch stop **The Axe and Compasses** (the only lunch stop on the short walk) to continue in the same direction through the village (a **good picnic spot** is 90m further along: a bench on the other side of Wicken Water).

In 110m, at a triangular green with a good info panel, the route continues in the same direction along **Hampit Road** (signposted Duddenhoe End), but first you ought to *turn right* and visit **St. Mary the Virgin Church** on the right, with its marble sculptured monuments and impressive **Elizabethan tomb for the Cutte Family**, en route crossing a stone bridge over Wicken Water, where there are some 12 large erratic boulders in the stream. They are mostly Hertfordshire puddingstone, but also some sarsen stones, though to be 55 Million Years old and collectively known amongst geologists as the **Wicken Water Boulders**. In 325m you ignore a footpath turning right over a railed wooden footbridge and in 65m pass a converted chapel on your right

and (2 houses along) The Ancient Shepherd, an ale house until 1900. In 70m a signposted footpath turns off to the left.

### Here you have a choice:

**For the extended walk**, you *turn left* along the footpath and pick up the directions at the end of the main walk directions under **Extension**.

**For the main walk**, you continue along the road, in 150m ignore a footpath (and with it the **Harcamlow Way**) turning left along a tarmac car wide lane (signposted **Chardwell Farm**), but in 200m [!] you *turn left* along a signposted byway between trees, along **Steven's Lane** (on the OS map). The track rises gently and in 450m you ignore a right turning footpath along a field boundary, then in 40m a left turning one and then *turn right* with the car wide track in 35m. You continue in the same direction, while ignoring a couple of right turning footpaths along the way and in 400m *turn right* at a T-junction with a gravel/tarmac lane. In 50m *turn left* with a signposted byway, and follow this track for 1 km, ignoring all ways off, as it gently curves right, crosses a footpath coming out of a field on the right and then curves left past a reservoir behind trees on your right. Eventually you *turn left* at a T-junction with a road in **Cooper's End** (on the OS map). In 30m you *turn right* along a tarmac lane at a three-way junction (again signposted **Duddenhoe End**). In 750m you reach a three-way lane junction, where a bridleway turns right along car wide gravel track.

### Here you have a choice:

**For the shortcut**, *turn right* along the bridleway with a hedge on the left and a fence on the right and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Shortcut I**.

**For the main walk**, *turn left* along a tarmac lane into **Duddenhoe End** and in 120m *turn hard right* with a footpath signpost along a narrow path *to the right of a wooden field gate*. In 80m you continue in the same direction along a field boundary and in 35m you continue in the same direction across the arable field at the corner of a row of hedges on your right. In 300m you cross into the next field over an earth bridge crossing a ditch (notice the splendid **converted chapel** on the left across the field, foliage permitting) and in 100m cross **School Lane** (on the OS map) to continue in the same direction along a left-hand field boundary. In 120m start to descend gently, with **Elmdon** village visible on the hill on the other side of the valley. In 220m *veer left* with the path to continue between trees and in 250m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road.

In 30m you *turn left* with a concrete signpost and cross a concrete bridge over **the unnamed stream** that flows towards **Wendens Ambo** and was crossed at the beginning of the walk. Walk uphill with a hedge on the left and trees on the right. In 220m *veer left* with the hedge and in 110m you emerge in an arable field corner by a marker post and continue in the same direction along its right-hand boundary (a footpath joins from the left) and with a wood on your right. In 250m you reach a three-way footpath junction by a marker post and with a two-railed footbridge on the right and an un-railed plank bridge ahead.

### Here you have a choice:

**For the direct route to Elmdon**, cutting out Chrishall (and 3.0 km), *turn right* across the railed footbridge over a ditch and *veer left* with the clear path through the top end of the wood. In 40m you emerge from the wood to go over a stile and walk gently uphill between fences with horse paddocks either side. In about 300m cross a car wide gravel farm track (fine views back from here) and continue further uphill between fences. In 180m the path levels out where you have a hedge on the right and in 140m you go

through a kissing gate and continue along the right-hand hedge to the right of a cricket field. *Veer right* to keep to the right of a willow-fringed pond and leave the sports field to the right of a car gate onto a road. *Turn left* downhill along **Essex Hill** into **Elmdon** village, in 40m with a pavement on the left. In 350m you reach the triangular village green by a disused bus shelter, with **St. Nicholas Church** on the right and **The Maltings** pub 30m away on the left. *Turn right* along **Ickleton Road** to the right of bus shelter and church and pick up the directions below at the double asterisk \*\*).

**For the Main Walk**, continue in the same direction over the un-railed plank bridge and continue with a sturdy wooden fence on the left, and in 350m you *turn left* at a marked three-way footpath junction, where a hedge joins from the left. Stay to the left of the hedge and in 200m you walk into the next field and along the left-hand fringe of **Park Wood**. In 400m the path *turns left*, then right with marker posts by **The Vicarage of Holy Trinity Church, Chrishall** to in 50m reach an unmarked four-way junction of footpaths at a wooden gate on the right, leading into the churchyard. The footpath coming up a field boundary on the left is the **Extension**. The hill on the other side of the valley on your left tops out at **the highest point in Essex** (and therefore East Anglia). *Turn right* into the churchyard.

**\*)** Go past the church on its left-hand side and leave the churchyard in 80m through a hedge gap and a metal kissing gate into a grassy field and follow its right-hand fence. In 90m leave it through another metal kissing gate and then across a plank bridge over a ditch to walk through a grassy area and then cross **Bury Lane** to continue through a gap to the left of a metal field gate and along a fenced path. In 110m continue in the same direction along a right-hand field boundary and in 50m *turn right* with it. In 75m you cross the tarmac **Chalky Lane** (note the historic water pump on the left) and continue in the same direction with a footpath signpost along a grassy field boundary. In 320m you *turn left* with the boundary and in 60m you *turn right* in the field corner. You walk along a lane (**Hogs Lane**) into the centre of **Chrishall** village and in 220m reach the lunch stop **The Red Cow** on your right at a T-junction with **High Street**.

After lunch *turn right* along **High Street** towards a road junction by a triangular green with a small war memorial, where – in 50m – you *veer right* and in 40m cross **Church Road** and continue along the tarmac **Loveday Close** in the direction of a concrete footpath signpost (and with a small **Icknield Way Trail** signpost). In 50m – just before the end of this cul-de-sac – you *turn right* just after a yellow painted house (**Marchpane House**) along a grassy track, which in 25m *turns briefly left*. You now follow grassy field boundaries for almost 800m in the same direction. On your left you get far views on this stretch into the **Cambridgeshire** plain, including – near the end – of Cambridge itself. Enter a wood (**Cane's Walks**) through a gap in the trees and *turn right* at a T-junction with a byway (**Dark Lane (Path)** on the OS map).

In 220m you cross a car wide gravel byway (**Parkhouse Lane**) and continue in the same direction along a footpath through a gap to the right of a metal field gate. In 40m emerge from the wood and *turn left* with a marker post along a field boundary, which in 160m turns right and in 70m turns left. In 300m in the far-left field corner you *turn left* in the field corner with a marker post over a stile and a plank bridge. You cross more stiles in 30m and in 70m and *turn right* at a T-junction with a road into the village of **Elmdon**. In 170m you pass **The Maltings** (the ex-**Elmdon Dial**) on your right and in 30m reach the idyllic main junction in the centre of the village at a triangular green with a disused bus shelter on it and with **St. Nicholas church** up on a rise on the left. You continue in the same direction – to the left of the green – along **Ickleton Road**.

**\*\*)** In 170m ignore a right turning footpath, in 65m walk past **The Old Post Office** and in another 65m **[!]** *turn right* along an **easy-to-miss tarmac lane** between some yellow painted houses, with a bridleway signpost 15m along it. In 60m this continues as

an earthen track and in 40m along a right-hand field boundary through a couple of fields. In 380m *turn left* along a tarmac lane (**Freewood Lane**). In 700m you enter the grounds of **Freewood Farm** and in 40m ignore a bridleway turning left between some barns. Continue in the same direction along the concrete track which soon continues as an earthen track, through the farmyard with **Free Wood** on your left. In 580m – at the end of the wood on the left – ignore a left turning bridleway and continue with a hedge on your left along the boundary of three fields for 730m.

At the end of the hedge – by a junction of small electricity pylon lines – *turn right* and in 30m *turn left* with a marker post to continue in the previous direction. In 160m a footpath joins from the left and in 40m you continue in the same direction along a car wide track between trees and in 250m (just after passing a **house festooned with dovecotes**) you cross a road on the fringes of **Littlebury Green** to continue in the same direction along a concrete driveway with a bridleway signpost. In 25m you *fork right* to the right of a red brick house, then follow the drive initially curving left and in 350m get to a T-junction with the concrete car wide track turning left and a grassy track joining from the right. A wide valley stretches out in front of you. A bridleway joins from the right. This is Shortcut I. *Turn left* along the concrete track.

\*\*\*) In 410m the concrete discontinues and you continue in the same direction along a car wide gravel track. In 240m in the far-left corner of the field *veer right* to the right of a line of trees to continue into the next field along its boundary and follow the boundary for 600m to a T-junction, first *curving right* then *left* then *turning right*. *Turn left* with the hedge at the T-junction with a car wide track towards a **transponder mast** 240m away and at the mast *turn right* along a tarmac lane at a bend to then in 30m *turn left* through a gap to the left of a double metal field gate and continue along a gravel lane, to the right of the mast. In 1 km cross the **M11** on a concrete car wide bridge and continue in the same direction along a field boundary with a hedge on your left. In 300m – at the corner of a wood on your left, [!] *turn right* along a wide grassy strip between fields (with a **Saffron Trail** marker post on the left), your direction due S (i.e.: if you reach the railway line, you've missed the turning). In 500m the path starts to descend and continues between trees into **Wendens Ambo** to a road at a bend.

**For the quickest route to Audley End station**, *turn left* along the road, in 330m cross the railway line on the road and in 90m *turn right* at a mini-roundabout towards the station. London bound platforms depart from the near platform 1.

**For the recommended route** past the cosy **Bell Inn**, continue down the road (initially without a pavement) in the same direction, in 150m *turn right* with the road, ignore the left turning morning route to reach the pub entrance in another 90m (entrance around the back through the car park). From the pub, *turn back right* along the road, in 90m *turn up left* with the road but [!] *turn right* in 40m along a car wide lane towards the church. In 50m *turn up left* through a wooden gate to follow a tarmac path through a grassy area which you leave in 80m through a wooden gate to the right of a double wooden field gate and a small car park area. In 20m you *turn right* along the opposite pavement of **Royston Road** at a T-junction and re-trace the morning route to the station (i.e.: *turn right* in 320m).

London bound platforms depart from the near platform 1.

For **The Fighting Cocks** continue ahead at the mini-roundabout instead of turning right towards the station and reach the pub in 270m at the **B1383 London Road**.

## Shortcut I

(cut 6.2 km, 46m ascent/descent and 1.6 km tarmac and concrete)

**Cut out the lunch destinations of Chrishall and Elmdon, two pleasant villages. Lunch is early, in Arkesden.**

In 160m [!] you *turn left* along a grassy bridleway between fence remnants, which veers right in 30m, and in 220m walk through a gap in the boundary trees to cross a stream (Wicken Water again) and to continue in the same direction along a car wide grassy field boundary with **Rockell's Wood** on your left (i.e.: ignore a right turning footpath). The boundary turns right, left, right and left again, until in 1 km – at the far upper corner of the wood – you continue in the same direction through some trees and *turn right* on the other side of the wooded strip along a car wide field margin. In the far distance across the winding valley you can spot the **M11 traffic**.

In 200m the trees discontinue and you continue in the same direction and in 150m you *turn left* with the boundary. In 130m *turn right* with the boundary and in 80m *turn left* along a car wide track. You walk to the right of some farm silos and buildings and in 320m *turn right* at a T-junction with the **B1039** by **New Farm**. In 240m *turn hard left* (almost back on yourself) along a bridleway (just after crossing **an unnamed stream**, with a broken concrete signpost down on the ground in the grass) and follow the stream along a field boundary. In 150m *veer right uphill* with the boundary away from the stream. In 1 km – at the top of the rise – you *turn right* at a T-junction with a car wide bridleway. In 60m another (concrete) bridleway joins from the left. This is the main walk. Continue in the same direction along the now concrete car wide track and pick up the directions in the main text at the triple asterisk \*\*\*).

## Extension

(add 2.0 km, 12m ascent/descent but cut 630m tarmac)

**Walk along a more westerly route and up to East Anglia's highest point, with some more fine views. Lunch is in Chrishall.**

You walk along a field boundary, gently uphill. In 800m, near the top of the rise and with **Knock'emdown Grove** on your left, ignore a footpath turning right across the field towards **Chardwell Farm**. In 110m the path turns right, then left, then right to follow the field boundary. In 150m, at the far corner of the wood on your left, ignore a footpath turning left. In a further 50m go through a gap (with a footpath marker on the left) and *turn right* in a field corner along the field boundary with a wooded strip on your right (**No Man's Grove**) and a quiet valley with some fishing lakes below on the left. In 110m you *veer right* into the next field to continue in the same direction. In 450m continue in the same direction with a marker post, now with a ditch and a hedge on your right. In 320m, where the hedge turns right, *turn down left* across a field with a footpath marker on your right along a (sometimes overgrown) path.

In 130m you walk down some steps through trees, to then *turn right* at a T-junction with another footpath between trees with a stream now on your left (a tributary of **The River Stort**). In 260m, after walking under some fallen trees, *fork left* into a field, following the field's left-hand boundary. In 500m go through a wide gap onto a track (**Beard's Lane**, on the course of a **Roman Road**) and *turn left* along it. Ford the shallow stream (may be dry in summer) on the lane and in 40m *turn right* through a wide gap in the hedge on the right to continue along a right-hand grassy field boundary with a ditch and a hedge on your right (265°). You are back on the **Harcamlow Way**.

In 450m ignore a footpath turning left across the field and in 140m *turn right* across a ditch and through a wide gap in the hedge, *turn left* immediately on the other side, in 20m *turn left again* through a wide gap in the hedge to *turn right* on the other side, now again with ditch and hedge on your right, and almost in the previous direction (300°). In 420m in the far-right field corner you go through a gate and continue along a path with a hedge on your right and in 60m go through a wooden kissing gate onto a tarmac lane. You *turn left* along the lane and in 100m *turn right* along a car wide gravel lane with a row of houses on the right and a community centre bungalow on the left. In 110m you *veer right* at a lane junction, to the right of the driveway of a **cream painted house** through a grassy area and in 30m *turn right* before a wooden field gate and in 30m you *turn left* to soon walk between young trees along a narrow path and in 40m continue in the same direction through some fenced off fields.

In 80m you walk into a large arable field and follow its right-hand boundary, with a church tower visible a few hundred meters to the left across the field (at **Upper Green, Langley**). In 270m at the corner of the hedge on your right you *turn right* and follow the right-hand field boundary with a ditch and a hedge on the right, now with some fine **views into Hertfordshire** on your left. In 450m, in the far field corner and with a wood ahead, you *turn left* along the boundary. In 160m you follow a yellow marker on a wooden pole and **[!]** *veer right* into trees (ignoring the signed **CLA Welcome**-path continuing ahead). In 40m you emerge from the trees to the right of a redundant wooden field gate. You are at the (unassuming) **highest point in Essex**, and therefore East Anglia, at 147m above sea level.

The views from here are not spectacular, as they are fringed by woods in three directions, but they will get better soon. Continue along the field boundary with narrow wooded strips on your left (10°). In 370m go through a wide gap and continue in the same direction along a car wide grassy path with arable fields either side, gently descending. You now have **High Wood** a few hundred meters to your right, the upper end of the valley formed by **the unnamed stream** that runs to Wendens Ambo ahead of you, with **Chrishall** – the lunch destination – and its church up on a rise on the other side, and a corner of **Cambridgeshire** on your left. In 1 km – upon reaching **Chiswick Hall** – you *turn left* before a wooden fence (following a yellow marker) and in 75m you *turn right* with the farm track between fences and in 60m walk through a narrow gap to the left of a metal field gate to continue along the farm's driveway.

In 600m *turn left* at a T-junction with a tarmac lane. In 20m *turn right* with a concrete footpath signpost over a new two-railed steel footbridge across that unnamed stream and continue uphill along a grassy margin between large fields, towards **Holy Trinity Church, Chrishall**. In 400m you reach a four-way junction of footpaths at the churchyard gate. The path from the right along the garden fence of **The Vicarage** is the main route. Walk through the gate into the churchyard and pick up the directions in the main text at the asterisk \*).