

Footpaths and Walks in Barking

The Parish of Barking lies in the middle of Suffolk to the south west of Needham Market and the River Gipping, stretching along the B1078. It is unclear whether the name originates from the Anglo-Saxon for 'a place with birch trees' or a Berca tribe settlement. Those interested in its history are recommended to read 'The Manor and Woodlands of Barking' by J. Vane.

Comprising some 3500 acres Barking is well known for its Church, Tye and Medieval Woodlands. St. Mary's Church was the mother church to the Chapels at Darmsden and Needham Market. Saxon villagers worshipped here in what was probably a timber building. Around 1250 a flint building was erected, part of which survives to this day, but the church has been enlarged over succeeding years. There are 6 bells renowned by ringers throughout the land. A bridleway between Barking and Needham Market known as the 'Causeway' (corruption of corpse way) was the route taken by funeral processions from Needham, last used on 1914.

The Tye, a main feature of the Parish comprises some 45 acres. It was given to the Parish Council in 1959 by the Rev. John Bickersteth, the then Lord of the Manor. During the War it was ploughed up for food production and this continued until recently providing a source of revenue for the benefit of the Parish. Today it is left as meadow land attracting skylarks and many wild flowers.

The village sign denotes its history. The plough depicts the importance of agriculture. The trees represent the ancient woodlands, with the Ash tree the crest of the Ashburnham family, the last Lords of the Manor. The Cedars of Lebanon, still present in the church grounds, are associated with a former rector the Rev. Robert Uvedale, a great collector of plants from around the world. The Bishop represents the Abbey and Bishopric of the See of Ely owned by the Manor from 1020 to 1562. The Coat of Arms is that of St. Ethelreda who founded the Abbey.

There are some 24 miles of public footpaths in the Parish which afford some of the most splendid scenery in the county. The ancient woodlands of Bonny Wood, Priestley Wood, Swingens Wood, Park Wood and Ditch Wood are noted features of the area and are a natural habitat to flora and fauna including orchids, bluebells, deer and nightingales. Priestley Wood is now owned by the Woodland Trust and the general public are allowed to wander its many paths. Part of Bonny Wood is owned by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust with paths open to the public.

In 1998 the Suffolk Ramblers Association presented Barking with its 'Premier Pleasure to Walk Award'.

Recommended Walks

Walk 1 Distance 2.5 miles

START Barking Church Car Park

Walk down the lane in front of the old Rectory, turning left onto the bridleway (**The Causeway**). After 50 yards take the footpath signposted left over a stile and proceed through 3 paddocks and aiming for the stile in the far right hand corner.

Keeping the pond on your left, turn right through a gap in the fence and follow field boundary for a few yards around the corner. Turn right onto footpath which leads straight across the field heading to the left of the large oak at the far side.

Turn left at the signpost and follow the path to a footbridge and onto the B1078. Turn right and walk along the road for 200 yards and take the footpath signposted left which has a concrete apron at the field entrance.

Keeping the hedge on your left, walk to the very top of the field beside **Swingen's Wood**. A way marker indicates steps leading down to a sleeper bridge and across the ditch. Follow the path to the right until it enters a copse. At the signpost turn left along the edge of the copse and then alongside the edge of the field.

At the field boundary turn left and then almost immediately left again into a copse. Follow this path until it re-emerges, turn right and walk along the field edge until at a large oak tree, a waymarker indicates a left turn onto the path which crosses the field.

This will bring one to a hedge with an opening into a small field. The path runs down the left hand side of the hedge and leads into **Priestley Wood**. The wood is owned by the Woodland Trust and the public are allowed to wander through the woodland paths.

On entering the wood follow the path bearing left at the first marker but ignoring the the second pointing left and out of the wood. Continue on the main path, past a derelict crane, and exit the wood via a kissing gate onto the B1078. Cross the road and bear left back to the lane leading to the Church.

Walk 2 Distance 3.75 miles (additional .5 mile around Round Wood)

START Barking Village Hall

On leaving the **Village Hall**, turn right and walk along the B1078 for 400 yards until the footpath sign (partly hidden by willow tree) indicating a path to the right and running down the right hand boundary of a house. Follow this across 2 fields until you come to a bridge.

Do not cross the bridge but take the path which follows the right hand side of the ditch and eventually comes to a cart track with signpost. Take the path directly ahead for some 45 yards, turn right and after 15 yards turn left over a sleeper bridge and up the steps.

Carry straight on keeping a line of willow trees on your left until you come to a wooden bridge, turn left over the bridge and continuing up the edge of the field keeping the ditch on your right hand side you will come to a sign with an old gate to your left.

Bear right through the hedge and turning left keep the copse on your left until you come to another sign where you turn right and follow the cart track. To the right is an old hedge with numerous wild flowers and on the left is **Bonny Wood**. The track eventually becomes tree-lined on both sides with some fine oaks.

Where the track emerges from the wood (wood store and chicken house in view) turn left at the signpost and follow path around the edge of **Bonny Wood**.

At the next signpost, those interested in a longer walk can bear right and follow the path around **Round Wood**, taking care not to miss the path on the last stage where a waymarker indicates a left turn through the hedge. The alternative is to turn left into the wood where the path emerges on the far side with the path indicated by waymarkers on an old tree stump and where the longer walk rejoins. Turn left.

Follow this path around the edge of **Bonny Wood** until it comes to a wooden bridge.

Take the path across the bridge, branching right onto the old cart track.

This path heads towards **Tarston** with a fine old hedge to your left. At the wooden bridge turn left and take the path over the field to the corner of the wood. Bear right keeping the wood to your left (see if you can see the site of the old moated woodsman's cottage) until it eventually meets a track.

Take the path directly ahead into the copse and the same at the next waymarker. It eventually leaves the copse over a sleeper bridge and makes its way straight into the field for some 300 yards before turning left, aim for the hedge, where it joins up with a farm track.

Keep to this track passing **Overhall Farm** on your left and back to the B1078 where you turn right with the Village Hall some 400 yards along the road.

Walk 3 Distance 3 miles

START Needham Lake Car Park

On leaving the car park turn left onto the B1078 past Bosmere Mill and turn right at the river, following the River Gipping Valley Footpath, passing **Bosmere Hall, Riverside Farm** and **Pippins**.

At the first footpath junction continue on the main footpath until you have walked 1 mile and come to

Pipps Ford. At this junction take the footpath to the right and follow the path, taking care crossing the main railway line until you reach te B1113.

Turn right and follow the road for about 150 yards then turn left at the bus shelter onto the path which crosses the field. Follow this path until it joins the private road to

Darmsden (a public footpath). Turn left going past **Darmsden Hall**, through the hamlet to **Darmsden Church**.

At the church take the track to the right across the fields and at the top of the rise turn to the right keeping to the path running along the field edge.

At the next junction bear right and continue down past the chalk quarry on your right.

At Grinstead Hill turn right onto the B1113 road, crossing over the road at this point and continue on, going under the low railway bridge to return to **Needham Lake**.

Walk 4 Distance 8 miles

START Barking Village Hall

On leaving the **Village Hall** turn right onto the B1078 for about 400 yards and turn left at signpost indicating a footpath alongside the right hand boundary of a row of houses.

Follow this footpath until it emerges onto the Battisford Road.

Turn right and then left some 50 yards down the road. Follow this path along the field edge until you come to a sleeper bridge. Take the path almost straight ahead over the bridge and which crosses the field. At the far side cross another sleeper briedge and turn left following the path alongside a hedge until it comes to the entrance to **Bungeons Farm**. On the opposite side of the drive is a path waymarked running down the right side of a hedge. Take this path, bearing right at the junction until the 'T' junction. Bear left in front of **Paddington Hall** and follow this path across the meadows. At the stile bear left and take the track down to an unmade road, turn left making your way back to the Battisford Road.

Cross the road and take the path in the field opposite keeping the ditch on your right. About 600 yards along this path it bears left and continues until a waymarker directs you into a copse, '**Clipper Jimmys**'. Emerging, the path crosses a field, over a sleeper bridge. Follow the path with the hedge on your left, then cross the field making for the waymarker diagonally to your right, at which point turn left and make your way down the track to **Lower Farm**. Where the path meets **Barking Tye**, turn left and head back towards the B1078.

Cross over the road and turn right, continue to the drive of **Overhall Farm**. Follow the path down the drive bearing left at the farm buildings. At the signpost indicating 4 footpaths, turn right, follow the path directly ahead for some 45 yards, turn right and after 15 yards turn left over a sleeper bridge and up the steps. Keeping a line of willow trees on your left until you turn left over a wooden bridge and continuing up the edge of the field keeping the ditch on your right hand side you will come to a sign with an old gate to your left. Bear right through the hedge and turning left keep the copse on your left until you come to the 'T' junction.

Turn left and follow this path, passing the entrance to **Bonny Wood**, and at the next signpost turn right. This path will take you along the side of the wood on your right crossing a field and then a bridge to turn right onto a cart track. Follow this track along side an ancient hedge and then along the outside of **Bonny Wood**, until you come to a bridge.

Take the path to the left and follow the field edge until the signpost indicating to the right. Walk on the left hand side of the ditch, following this path over a bridge and stile onto **Strawberry Hall**. At the next stile turn left and follow the road down to **Crow Hall**, which you pass on the right, continue straight ahead into a wonderful tree shrouded old green lane. This leads to a tarmacked lane to **Winneygreen Farm**, where you turn left and follow the track all the way to **Tarston Farm**.

Here you bear left then right back onto an old cart track. Continue on this track until the next signpost where you turn left, following the path along the field edge before bearing left. Ignore the first waymarker right, turning right some 10 yards further on. Continue on this path and bear left at the next signpost along a tree surrounded path. At the 'T' junction turn right over a sleeper bridge, out of the wood and onto the path which crosses the field making a left turn after some 300 yards which will carry you back to the track leading to **Overhall Farm**. At the signpost indicating footpaths turn right keeping the ditch on your right. Do not cross the footbridge but take the path diagonally left which brings you onto the B1078. Turn left and return to the **Village Hall** some 300 yards down the road.

Walk 5 Distance 3 miles (longer walk 4.5 miles)

START Barking Church Car Park

Walk along the path in front of the Old Rectory, bear right and down onto the B1078. Turn left continuing along the road until the footpath sign on the right. Do not follow the path but enter **Priestley Wood**, owned by the Woodland Trust, by the 'kissing gate' to the left of the sign.

Follow the path, keeping the woodland boundary on your right, ignore the waymarker just past the derelict crane and bear right at the next one. Follow the path which runs between **Priestley** and **Swingen's Wood** until the next waymarker.

Follow the field edge until a wide gap between hedges and as indicated by the waymarker, go straight across the field to the oak tree opposite. Turn right following the field edge and then left through the small copse indicated by waymarkers. On emerging from the copse turn left and then almost immediately right and continue until you reach the signposted 'T' junction. Turn left and proceed to next signpost at **Priestley Cottage**. Take the footpath straight ahead, keeping Priestley Cottage on your left, through another 'kissing gate', until signposted 'T' junction just before **Botty's Plantation** on the right. (Those interested in a longer walk should turn right at **Priestley Cottage** and follow the cart track until it meets the Darmsden Road, turn left and continue until **Darmsden Church**, turn left, follow the cart track until you reach the 'T' junction, turn left towards Botty's Plantation and rejoin the walk at the next signpost).

Turn left to Titley Hill and rejoin the B1078 and proceed left back to the church.

FOLLOW THE COUNTRY CODE:

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

**This Guide was produced jointly by Barking Parish Council
and the Parish Paths Partnership April 2008**