

Great Baddow Walking Guide 4 Baddow Road & Beehive Lane



BADDOW WALKS

Introduction

Baddow Walks has been prepared as part of The Historical Guide to Great Baddow. Four walks have been prepared starting from the centre of Great Baddow. They take the form of an architectural study of the buildings, with photographs and notes, and cover the following roads, (plus a few diversions):

1. Church Street, West Hanningfield Road and Vicarage Lane
2. High Street and Galleywood Road
3. Maldon Road, The Causeway & Bell Street
4. Baddow Road and Beehive Lane

Baddow Road & Beehive Lane

Introduction

Baddow Road is one of the urban corridors that have helped to turn Great Baddow from a separate village to a suburb of Chelmsford. An elderly resident who was born in Baddow Road remembers that Baddow Road had lots of big houses belonging to professional men and wealthy shopkeepers, whose families are still in the village. In the 1920s many of those Gt.Baddow residents went to London every day and travelled to and from the station in smart hansom cabs. Others stayed in London through the week and returned to Gt.Baddow for the weekend.

Another resident remembers cattle being driven down Baddow Road early in the morning of Market Day (Friday) to Chelmsford Cattle Market, which stood in Market Road, near the current multi-storey car park. In the late afternoon some of them were driven back along Baddow Road to Copsey's abattoir in the High Street. Residents made sure their garden gates were securely fastened on Friday mornings to stop the cattle getting into their gardens and either eating or trampling down the vegetables and flowers. Furthermore, if doors were also inadvertently left open cattle might even try and get indoors.

Most of the existing houses along Baddow Road were built in the early to mid 20th century, with a few constructed in the 1890s and even fewer earlier in the 19th century. There are a mixture of small terrace houses and cottages at the Chelmsford end of Baddow Road, with more substantial detached dwellings at the village end. Many of the houses have been renovated and extended in the last 100 years, though the original characteristics remain in the majority of cases, especially on the outside of the buildings.

Since 1950 much additional housing has been added on the Meadgate Estate and Baddow Lodge Estate. Recently there has been significant development of the Isolation Hospital site and the Quarry area off Beehive Lane.

Many of our green spaces and gardens are under threat from housing development, even Baddow Meads, which acts as the flood plain for the R.Chelmer, and which floods periodically.

Baddow Road

Our walk will take us from the junction with the High Street and Maldon Road towards Chelmsford. Although the front of the Blue Lion [Photo P4] is relatively modern, the public house has a long history and old timbers are still visible inside. Next to the Blue Lion is the site of Noakes Place, the name of which may refer to Peter atte Noke 1332 & Nokys 1485. This was a large Georgian house with a parapet, pilasters and slate roofs. It was home to George Clapham in the first half of the 19th century, Alexander Urqhart in July 1836, Arthur Curtis Veley (co-founder of Baddow Brewery) later in the 19th century, Dr. Ronald Lyster in the 1930s and 40s and neurosurgeon Mr.Buckley in the 1950s. Noakes Place was demolished in 1968 and Mr Buckley's name was perpetuated in the present Buckleys housing development built on the site.

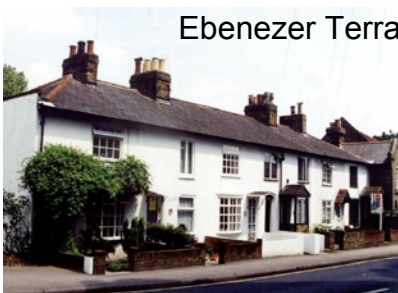
Some of the parkland and the 3 ponds belonging to the house survive and are now part of the Parish Recreation Grounds. A fourth pond was created in 1940 when a parachute bomb intended for the Hoffmann factory in Chelmsford was blown off course



Blue Lion Inn



Greenwood & Moss's Wall



Ebenezer Terrace



Baddow Lodge 1944



Albert Buildings

and landed in the park area, west of the third pond, where there is now a dip in the ground. Despite the crater being 200 yards from the rear of the Blue Lion debris was thrown over the Blue Lion and caused severe damage to the roofs of Ebenezer Terrace, Beech House and Manor Farm.

Opposite the Blue Lion is Ebenezer Terrace, which comprises a row of seven early Victorian terrace house built around 1850 [photo] – No.7 at the east end is of particular interest and less modified than the others. It has Grade II listed building status. The cottages had a humble beginning, being owned by Manor Farm and let to their farm-workers and to staff working at Baddow Lodge, a large 19th century house, which stood on the north (or right hand) side of Baddow Road. [photo]

Many good quality houses built between the 1930s and 60s cover the grounds of this mansion, which stood approximately where Lodge Avenue now meets Tabors Avenue. It was knocked down in the 1930s. The estate was sold to make way for all the houses between Baddow Road, Longfield Road, Longmead Avenue and Tabors Avenue. Former owners are remembered in the street names of Tabors Avenue and Britten Crescent. Lodge Avenue also commemorates this fine mansion.

A Mr. Britten rented Baddow Lodge, and his coachman lived at 413 Baddow Road, which was the lodge house to Baddow Lodge; this was built about 1900, having a grey slate mansard roof.

No. 401 Baddow Road, called Chelmer Cottage, was built in 1822. It has also been known as Oldbury Cottage, and was for a while during the war years used as a kindergarten. This had been run pre-war by a Miss Ida Ratcliff in Chelmerton Avenue, before moving to Oldbury Cottage (which was named after a large field nearby called Old Berries).

Large Edwardian villas stand along the south side of the road. It is believed that Christopher Cockerel, the inventor of the hovercraft, lived at No. 452 during WW2 when he worked as a design

engineer at Marconi Research. Another is called Cannon House, so named because Solomon Samuel Jackson, the owner in the early 1900s, acquired a Boer War cannon that graced the front of the house. Later, at the beginning of WW2, when the call went out for any metal that could be melted down and made into guns, Mr Herbert Jackson, the son of Solomon Samuel Jackson, who then owned it, gave the cannon for the war effort. The Jackson family owned the Carriage Works cum Garage in Church Street, mentioned in Walk No.1 and another branch of the family lived in New Road and ran a taxi in the 1940s and 50s and later ran a small holding. (Mr.Jackson would only sell plants to you if he thought you could care for them properly).

The mid 19th century housing on the north side is contrasted by later red brick Victorian work, typically in white brick on the south side. Note the carving on a wall at the boundary between numbers 385 and 383 Baddow Road, dated 1809 which states: "This wall belongs jointly to Thomas Greenwood and James Moss" (photo P4). Thomas Greenwood is remembered as a partner in Sparrow's Bank, and one of the five dissenters (non-conformists) who around 1840-50 formed the Chelmsford Company, which bought much of the Mildmay Estate west of Moulsham Street and created New London Road, as we know it. They laid down very strict rules for the buildings, most of which were built using 'Mildmay bricks', made locally. Thomas lived in either Baddow House or Baddow Lodge .

Numbers 383 to 387 Baddow Road were extensively altered about 15 years ago and now comprise luxury flats (photo P4) They were part of the former Albert Buildings, the Essex Industrial School and Home for Destitute Boys, founded by Joseph Brittain Pash in 1872 (according to Hilda Grieve). The boys came from poor backgrounds, were given training in basic skills, and some were given apprenticeships locally or in London. Some even emigrated and made a name for themselves in the USA.

Orchard Villa stood at the entrance to Chelmer Lea.



Chelmerton Villa



William Joyce -
Lord Haw-haw



Meadgate
Farmhouse



Carpenter's Arms



Quiots Pitch

Next on the North side of the road are 2 white buildings which are believed to be Victorian. Number 371 was probably the Chelmerston Villa named on the map of 1897. Number 367 was called Chelmerston Lodge (although the name on the gatepost is now Penmark Lodge). [photo P7]. Presumably Chelmerston Avenue was named after these houses. The caption of the old black & white photo P7 showing the Lodge reads: "Chelmerston Lodge, Baddow Road, c.1900, was an attractive Victorian house, which originally backed onto open fields and the Chelmer Valley. It has been substantially altered and today it would be quite impossible for the children to play with their hoops in the busy road." [From "Changing Chelmsford" by John Marriage.] I note that number 404 Baddow Road has now adopted the name of Chelmerston Lodge.

During World War I a canteen was set up for the soldiers who kept their horses in the area now occupied by the recreation ground and Chelmerston Avenue. German prisoners of war were housed next door to Orchard Villa. William Joyce (Lord Hawhaw) [photo P7] is believed to have rented the house at the corner of Chelmerston Avenue and Baddow Road in the late 1930s. He hosted meetings of the British National Party in their characteristic black-shirts, with provisions bought at Mrs Boreham's grocers shop on the corner of Beehive Lane. He moved to Germany in 1939 to work for the Nazis just before the police caught up with him. He was returned to England in 1945 for his trial and execution for treason, escorted by Military Policemen from Great Baddow. More middle-class houses of the early to mid 1900s can be found in this part of Baddow Road.

Nearly opposite Chelmerston Avenue is a pathway through to Meadgate Farm. The Land was owned by John de Made in 1327 and later by the Petre family. Mr. Fred Spalding (the famous Chelmsford photographer) was the owner around 1900, when he tried his hand at farming. More recently his grandson Reg was well known as a local character who farmed the land between Baddow Road and the river Chelmer, including Baddow Meads. Reg was abruptly thrown into farming at 16, when

his father died unexpectedly.

No doubt this was a difficult area to farm, as it included the flood plain for the river Chelmer, often under water for part of every winter. He relinquished the land now called the Meadgate Estate in the early 1960s, (bought by compulsory purchase), but until he died he continued to farm an area beyond the Baddow bypass, access to which is via a subway near Meadgate Infant and Junior School. He was informed in 1925 that a bypass was imminent and bought another farm in Suffolk as a standby. Forty years went by before the bypass happened! Meadgate farmhouse is still there in the middle of the estate [photo P7], but the farm is likely to be redeveloped for yet more housing..

The Carpenter's Arms [photo P7] started life as a carpenters and part-time undertakers, hence the name of the pub. In those early days a licensee could not make a living from selling alcohol! The licensee in 1937 was a Mr Hockley, whose son Aubrey played quoits for the local team on a pitch behind the pub. He also played for Essex and England. At that time quoits was a National Sport, played with a metal ring weighing 5 pounds that was hurled at a pin 18 yards away. It could be lethal, as a badly aimed quoit caused serious injury to spectators on a number of occasions. The winner was judged on distance from the pin. [photo P7]. The former pub has been converted into an Indian restaurant.

Opposite this hostelry near the mini-roundabout is the Co-op Funeral Parlour, formerly a car tyre shop. In "Great Baddow Oral History" Dora Norrington describes the grocery shop run by her mother Mrs Boreham, with Dora in charge of the associated Post Office. They had the middle shop of three. A butcher's shop was on the corner and a greengrocer occupied the third. Radford's Paper Shop was also in existence near here.

It is believed that the Beehive public house [cover photo] has always been a pub, but previous owners who kept bees in their private garden gave the pub its name. The pub in turn gives its name to Beehive Lane. Various road names in Beehive Lane such as Honey Close continue the apian connection.



Beehive Lane
Quarry

Lathcoats
Farmhouse



St. Paul's Church

New Estate on
former Isolation
Hospital Site



Apple Harvest



Threshing the wheat



Victorian Terrace houses near Army & Navy



Boreham's Butchers

Beehive Lane.

A detour along Beehive Lane is appropriate here. On the Chapman and André map of 1777 this was called Gravelwood Lane, leading to Gravelwood Hall on the East of the lane and Gravelwood House a little further along on the West side. Gravelwood Hall, near Abercorn Nursery is used by Essex CC for an Environmental project. Roman pottery was found in this area, and there are many reminders of sand and gravel quarries on both sides of Beehive Lane. On the left going away from Baddow Road is a small industrial site, which occupies a former gravel pit owned by Mr Snow. (photo P10). Aggregate from here was used in the construction of Marconi's New Street factory around 1914. On the right of Beehive Lane part of the quarry was until recently occupied by the Eastern Electricity offices, recently replaced by flats.

The owner of the quarry, Mr Jackson, lived in Beehive Lane, in the house called Tower View (so named because you could see the large water tower behind the Carpenter's Arms). He also owned the terrace opposite, let to his workers. The gravel workings stretched from Beehive Lane to Princes Road.

In 1965, as an employee of Marconi Communications, I worked at their Beehive Lane factory built at the bottom of one of the quarries west of Beehive Lane in the Industrial Estate that still exists. The area had formerly been used for landfill. Marconis were then producing a real-time computer called Myriad using some of the earliest microcircuits ever made. These were developed at Baddow Research Labs, and for testing purposes I needed to find a good earth for my test equipment. It was necessary to drive a copper spike down more than 20 feet through the miscellaneous rubbish that constituted the 'subsoil' to find a good earth. Myriad computers were used for many years on various radar projects, plus Air Traffic Control at West Drayton (for Heathrow), also controlling a Nuclear Power Station in Wales and for road traffic control in Glasgow

Further up Beehive Lane a police house and girls' school occupied houses between the industrial area and Loftin Way around 1930. The houses in this area, including Winchelsea Drive and Loftin Way were built just before WW2 by local builders, one being a Mr Loftin. St Paul's church was built in 1959, partly with money provided by local parishioners hosting parties every week at two shillings and sixpence a time. (photo).

The Marconi Sports and Social Club was built on the site of Gardener's Farm in the 1960s to bring together the disparate leisure facilities 'enjoyed' by workers at the dozen or so Marconi factories that existed in the Chelmsford area at this time. When the lease ends soon the club will be rebuilt and this valuable green area will be built over, like so many other areas. The garden of nearby Hampton House (used by Marconis to house important visitors) already contains a small development of superior dwellings.

Number 100 Beehive Lane was Sawkins Farm, and the various street names around here commemorate this farm.

A mile or so along Beehive Lane is Lathcoats Farmhouse, a timber framed building, white with red tiled roof and jettied wing probably 16th Century (photo P10). The farm is one of the few remaining fruit farms in the district, providing a pick-your-own service and selling local produce at the farm shop. During WW2 the valuable crops produced here were used by the wartime government to demonstrate how Britain was doing its bit to be self-sufficient (photo P11). All this area is occupied with fruit trees. A little further on is Deadman's Lane, the border with Galleywood. I wonder where the name came from?

Baddow Road continued

Returning to Baddow Road, we continue west towards Chelmsford. Just beyond the Beehive was a Mission Hall, roughly where the BP petrol station now is. This was referred to locally as "the tin tabernacle". In 1959 it was replaced by St. Paul's Church.

One resident remembers being taken to the Isolation Hospital, (which was situated behind The Beehive, recently developed into a housing estate) Many local residents remember coming here with scarlet fever or other contagious diseases, now luckily rare in this country. Family visitors were not allowed inside; they could only look through the windows. The houses of the sick and their bedding had to be fumigated with noxious chemicals before the cured patients were allowed to return home.

On the left of Baddow Road is Pitfield Road, which was the approach to the quarry. Pitfield House was occupied by the owner of the quarry at one time. In the early 1900s traction engines were based in the quarry, hired out to local businesses as required. At harvest time they worked all hours to thresh the cereal crop for all the local farmers. (See photo P11). During WW2 this site was used by the Home Guard as a firing range.

In the early 1900s No. 306 Baddow Road was Boreham's butchers (photo P11), but is now a hairdresser's shop, so it has changed from dealing in hares to dealing in hair. The Boreham brothers moved from Danbury in 1905, but one brother later branched out into market gardening, selling soft fruit into the London market. He and his family moved across the road around 1914 to The Cottage (No. 213). It is believed to have been named Mafeking Villa in the early 1900s, to commemorate the relief of Mafeking in the Boer war of 1899/1900.

On the South side of the road the houses are called either Terrace or Villa, the popular Victorian terms used for lower middle class houses of the early 20th century. These include: Linton Villas, Devon Villas, Florence Terrace, Brixton Villa dated 1893, Dora Terrace, Maldon Villas, Erin Villas, Portland Villas, Duntrune Villas dated 1894 and Lancaster Terrace.

No 210 Prospect House predates most houses in the road, being mentioned on the 1874 map of the area (available in the Essex Record Office).

The Star pub is thought to date from the 19th century [photo P16]. The shape of the frontage suggests it was once two houses.

For many years until 2006 a cycle shop called Deals on Wheels was situated next to the Star pub. There used to be a laundry behind these buildings in the first half of the 20th century, which was converted into Computer World a few years ago. Adjoining this shop are several smaller houses, formerly “workers’ cottages”, now referred to as “starter homes” [photo P11]. Many of these are on the official town map of 1897.

Beyond the modern semi-detached houses we find the Church of the Latter Day Saints built about 30years ago. This is approximately on the site of The White House, which appears on the map of 1897. Behind the White House on the North side was Whitehouse Farm, occupied in 1912 by George & Alfred Miller. Another later owner was an eccentric part-time farmer named Elijah Sorrell who kept his savings in the form of gold sovereigns in the proverbial tin box, because he did not believe in banks. He worked for the Council during the day, and farmed the land after dark by the light of hurricane lamps.

Near the bottom of Baddow Road was the original Army & Navy pub. (see photo P16). This site has been converted into more flats. It seems a sad coincidence that the old Army & Navy pub and the more recent pub of the same name on the roundabout itself were both destroyed within a month of each other.

The modern sign indicating the boundary of Gt.Baddow is just to the east of the Army & Navy roundabout so let us finish our walk here.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement is given to the residents who gave me details of their houses and loaned me their precious old photographs

A.Buckroyd

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Old Army &
Navy pub



The Star PH

Terrace houses built about 1900

