

Great Baddow Walking Guide1.

Church Street, West
Hanningfield Road
& Vicarage Lane



BADDOW WALKS

Introduction

Baddow Walks has been prepared as part of The Historical Guide to Great Baddow. Four walks have been prepared, all starting from the centre of Great Baddow. They take the form of an architectural study 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

Church Street

We start this walk from the Village sign on our little village green. This new sign was erected in 2013, and commemorates the WW11 radar mast erected at Baddow Research Labs after the war. Note too the old drinking trough commemorating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897.

St.Mary's Church

As is often the case, this is the most important standing historical building in the village. See photo on page 4.

There is 12th century documentary evidence of the church. Possibly part of the chancel wall goes back this far, but there is no proof.

Parts of the interior can be dated to the 13th, 14th, 16th and 17th centuries. Details of the Church interior can be found in several leaflets available in the Church. Various elements can be related to Tudor, Early English, Renaissance, Gothic and Victorian periods. Victorian additions include dormer windows in the chancel and the north vestry paid for by Mrs Crabb of Baddow Place. There is a touch of humour bequeathed to us by a carver of a bridled head with chin and nose on a pillar near the tower, a warning against slander.

The fittings include a fine Jacobean pulpit of 1639, described

by Pevsner as the finest of its period in the county. There is a brass of Jane Pascall (nee Lewkener) who died in 1614. She was the wife of John Pascall and daughter of Edward Lewkener esquire. Brasses of the Gwynn sisters dated 1753 by Henry Cheere are in the south aisle. A slab to John Everard is in the chancel, plus a marble slab to Charles Adams.

Over the church arch are the Royal Arms of 1660 painted on wood, with the initials CR, surrounded with a moulded wood frame and surmounted with a pediment. Placed around the nave are coats of arms painted on canvas.

Eight 'hatchments' adorn the walls. These contain icons of former residents recounting their life. In times gone by a hatchment would have been carried ahead of the coffin in the funeral procession before being placed in the church.

Fragments of stained glass can be seen in the clerestory windows, which are said to be 14th century if not older. These fragments were probably part of the original Norman church.

There are 8 bells in the bell-chamber in the tower plus a bell under a little roof of its own jutting from the spire. Some of the bells bear inscriptions such as "I mean to make it understood that tho' I'm little yet I'm good".

The clock-face is on the south side of the tower and was presented in 1916 to the memory of Henry William Smithers of Baddow Court. Note the 13 decorative pinnacles above the parapets on the roof of the nave. These are unique in Essex. They were originally Tudor, and were replaced in the major refurbishment that took place in 1967.

St.Mary's Churchyard has a claim to fame in the records of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. It was a rallying point for the remnants of the Essex peasants, who had returned from London with assurances from King Richard II that their grievances would be resolved, that there would be an end to serfdom and that the punitive poll tax would be withdrawn.

St.Mary's Parish Church



Chantry School



Pontlands Hotel



The Old Vicarage



Now they had heard that the King had withdrawn all concessions and was sending his army to Essex to deal with the revolt. From Great Baddow the Essex men marched to Northey Wood outside Billericay where 500 were slaughtered and their lands confiscated. More detail of St.Mary's architecture and history can be found inside the church.

Behind St.Mary's church can be found the Church office. See Photo page 4. Margaret, wife of Thomas Coggeshall, founded it as a Chantry School in 1392. Chantry priests acted as schoolmasters when there was little education available.

Beyond the Chantry school is the former Church School, also called the National School on the map of 1874. It is dated 1837 and many residents of Great Baddow have recalled happy childhood days there. It was replaced by the State schools of Larkrise and Baddow Hall around 1950. It is now used as the Church Hall.

In the graveyard are 5 or 6 war graves and a war memorial.

Directly south of St.Mary's and on the other side of Church St. stands the Old Vicarage. (See photo on page 4) This fine red brick building was constructed early in the 18th century, and has a 5-bay 2-storey north front with a Doric porch, curved parapets (which are continued on the stable block to the SE) and several dormer windows in the tiled roof. Although much of its former grounds have been recently built upon, a substantial red-brick boundary wall still remains along Vicarage Lane.

Back on the north side of Church St. we pass a few pleasing 17th to 19th century cottages and Gerrards, a 19th century house, now a hairdressers. This shop has also been a general store and a DIY store. Dale Hire was next on the site of Jackson's garage, now occupied by 3 attractive houses set back. (Mr Jackson owned one of the few taxis in the village in the 1900s.)

The Indian restaurant next door, formerly called Gerrardo's consisted of two adjoining

buildings, which are of quite different character and age. No. 23 (formerly Pound House) is a timber-framed structure dating to the 17th century, though it has been much altered since. (One suggestion is that on this site was a tithe barn, in which the tithes due to the church were stored in the form of corn and other produce). No. 25 (formerly called Friars Hall Restaurant) is an early 19th century house of gault brick. It has a 5-bay street front with a central door and fanlight and a hipped slate roof.

Immediately next to the restaurant is a delightful little group of 17th to 19th century timber-framed and plastered houses (Nos. 27, 29, 31 and 33). (See photo) One of the shop bays (No 31) has the words 'Taber, Dealer in Coffee, Tea, Tobacco and Snuff' around the top. The owner discovered this ancient lettering recently during routine repainting. A Smithy used to stand just east of No. 33 Chestnut Cottage.

The turning into Seabrook Road (S side of Church St.) marks the site of Branwoods, a large 18th century house. The L-shaped outbuilding, which stood just west of the main block, was believed to be the stables. This building is overlooked by flats and has recently been converted into usable accommodation. The name Branwoods is probably associated with one John Braynwode, mentioned in 1345. It was home to the Gilson family in the 19th century. Note the coat of arms on the factory wall facing Church St. and the motto 'finis coronat opus' meaning 'the end crowns the work'. Do these arms belong to the Gilsons or the Braynwode family, I wonder?

Back on the north side of Church Street and opposite the site of Branwoods stands Badow Place. See photo. The 5-bay 2-storey front of gault brick that dates to the early 19th century hides an earlier timber-framed house. There is a central Doric porch, end pilasters and a parapet to the slate roof with dormer windows. The rear is more irregular, with a raised terrace and



a tunnel to the brewery (possibly to allow the owner to pass between work and his home unnoticed, and unmolested if he was carrying money). For more than 100 years Baddow Place was home to the Crabb family, who first arrived in Gt.Baddow at the end of the 18th century. It is said that Henry Crabb used a telescope from one of his upstairs windows to check on his workers in the brewery nearby. Mary Louise Crabb, the last of the family to reside there, died in 1929. A memorial stone can be seen in the church lych gate to her dated 1930. Later owners include Mr. Foxon who (in the 1960s) was, like Henry Crabb before him, a Church Warden.

Just east of Baddow Place is Adstocks, with an early 19th century stuccoed front to an earlier building. It was home to Thomas Smee of the brewery. He died in 1881. The neat colour-washed building has a doorway with a semi-circular fanlight and a parapet and cornice. Note the carved gatepost.

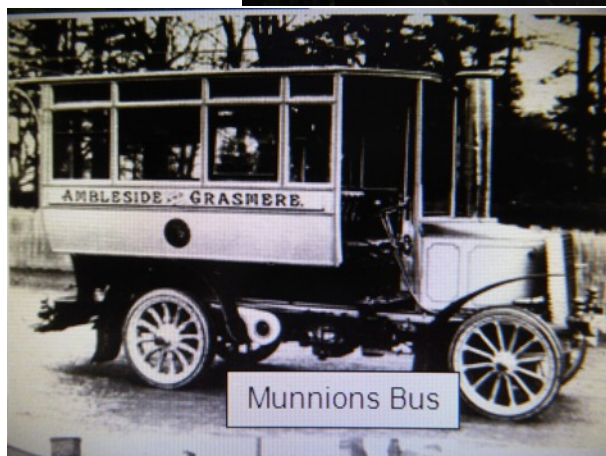
Houghton's, of similar date, stands opposite Adstocks on the south side of the road. At the end of the 19th century it was home to the Prior-Johnson family, considerable landowners at the time. It was formerly called Friars Hall.

Baddow Brewery towers over Adstocks on the north side of Church St. and was rebuilt in 1868 by Crabb, Veley, Veley and Smee. (See photo) It was designed by Frederic Chancellor and replaced an older brewery. It is a tall eleven-bay building of polychromatic brick in a loosely Gothic style. It has been modified somewhat over the years, the tall chimney, painter turret and central arched gablet or small gable having been removed. The pilasters for the gablet still remain. The monograms of the owners may be seen between the first and second floors on the Church St. frontage, and a stone containing their names can be found at the rear of the main building. The well in the brewery yard is believed to be 300 ft deep. In the mid 19th century Baddow Brewery, partly owned by the Crabbs, employed a large number of local people.

The brewery ceased production in 1928. Eventually the brewery passed down to 3 sisters, who were granddaughters of Henry Crabb, the founder. They were committed members of the Temperance movement, so the Brewery was doomed. (The other more mundane suggestion was that the wells ran dry). The brewery was sold by auction in 1930, and has been used since for a variety of businesses.

Note the attractive architecture of the former Corona factory opposite the brewery, and the monograms of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, dated 1902, rescued from the previous Mineral Water Works built in 1874. The frontage was rebuilt ten feet back in a road widening scheme in the 1970s.

Past the Bringeys footpath stands Baddow Court, one of 4 buildings in the parish described as 'a mansion' in the 1838 Tythe Award. The house was built earlier in the 19th century. See photo. (A painting of it dated about 1840 viewed from West Hanningfield Road can be found in the Bringeys Antique Centre nearby). In plan the house is L-shaped with the main block facing SE and a smaller wing to the NW. It is constructed of gault brick and the hipped roof is of slate. The 5-bay SE front has a fine central pedimented doorway and a good Venetian window at the rear. Unfortunately adjacent modern housing in Smithers Drive has blocked the commanding view the house once enjoyed over open parkland to the SE. (This road is rather ironically named after a former owner of Baddow Court, Henry William Smithers, who died in 1916). He was chief brewer at the Baddow Brewery next door. The McIntyre family owned the building from 1928 until the Second World War, when it was taken over by the Army. The McIntyres moved into Baddow Court Cottage, previously used by the coachman. This cottage is now a thriving tea-room. Baddow Court was in a run-down state after the hostilities and was bought and converted into 8 flats by Jesse Pryke in 1945. In the late 1980s Gavin Suttle upgraded it into luxury apartments.



The Bringeys Antiques centre between the Brewery and Baddow Court has been in being since 1969, using premises that were previously farm buildings belonging to Baddow Court, The Antique Centre enjoys wide publicity outside the village.

Opposite Baddow Court is a site owned by Essex Radiators, including buildings that were once part of the Brewery. The building fronting Church St. was a stable, and inside can still be found the rings used for tying up the the brewers' dray horses. In the 1930s the building was taken over by Munnions and Sons, who built car bodies, and who also converted standard vehicles into fire engines used by the Essex Fire Brigade. See photos. The Great Baddow Fire Station was on this site from the 1940s until the early 1970s, when it was replaced by the present fire station, which is at the junction of Maldon Road and Longmead Avenue. The former brewery buildings became a chicken farm, but in 1955 became the home of Essex Radiators, plus more recently Shepherd Motors, a dance studio and various small businesses. The Essex Radiator's office was the Fire Brigade HQ.

There are a few more buildings of interest to the East of the West Hanningfield Road junction. Almost on the junction itself is No.58, a small weather-boarded cottage. Although modernised, the building retains much of its charm. Further out of the village and of much greater character is the 18th century Pitt Place. The street front is of 2-storeys and 5 bays, with a parapet and 2 dormer windows. A wing to the South is embellished with an Ionic portico and has another dormer window. All the brickwork has been colour-washed a mellowing yellow. In recent years the house has been extensively renovated.

Pitt Cottage is next, a very attractive building formerly attached to Pitt Place, with extensive gardens. See photo.

The undeveloped land on the opposite side of Church Street now occupied by a few houses was formerly part of the Baddow Court grounds, and was used as a land-fill site after the 2nd World War, having been a deep pit containing a pool.

A few buildings can be found beyond the Great Baddow bypass, now designated the A1114. Along Ladywell Lane leading up to Gt.Baddow tennis club is Ladywell House, where a Mr & Mrs Maud lived. They translated all the works of Tolstoy into English. Two Victorian houses are on the slip road to the Southend Road, followed by 2 old cottages. On the opposite side of the dual carriageway is a collection of buildings that appear on the current map as Pontlands Farm. The Grove is also on this site.

A short deviation North along Molrams Lane is worthwhile, noting Newport House. See photo page16.

I suggest that to make the walk into a circular tour you retrace your steps a little and then proceed south via West Hanningfield Road, the turning for which is just opposite Baddow Court, then west through Maltings Estate to Vicarage Lane.

West Hanningfield Road.

Pontlands Park was once the seat of Walter Mildmay, a great nephew of his more famous namesake who was Chancellor of the Exchequer and founder of Emanuel College Cambridge in 1585. The house was rebuilt in 1879 for the Thomasin-Foster family to loosely Jacobean design by the distinguished Chelmsford architect Frederic Chancellor. It is the only building in the parish to retain its parkland. On the

WEST HANNINGFIELD ROAD



BAE Systems Advanced
Technology Centre (formerly
Marconi Research Labs)



'Home Radar' Mast



Pontlands



Chapman and André map of 1777 it is referred to as Pondland. It is now a country house hotel plus a private swimming club. See photos.

Further South, at the current limit of urbanisation, stands the Marconi Research Laboratories (now called BAE Systems Advanced Technology Centre). These opened in 1939, two years after the death of Guglielmo Marconi, but the main building dates from 1957. The 350-ft high mast in the grounds is a well-known Baddow landmark. It was originally used in WW2 as part of the Chain Home Radar system and was situated at Canewdon on the Essex coast. It formed an important part of the Battle of Britain defences. The labs have remained at the forefront of Electronics Research ever since, and Christopher Cockerell did early development of the hovercraft here. Peter Wright known as 'The Spycatcher' also worked here for some years. He wrote the controversial book about MI5 and subsequently emigrated to Tasmania. See photos page 13.

Return along West Hanningfield Road and turn East into Maltings Road, then via Crescent Road and Park View into Vicarage Lane. The Maltings estate was built in the 1930s and 1940s and includes "prefabs".

Vicarage Lane

To the South beyond the Marconi mast is Little Seabrights Farm and the Lawn Cemetery is at the edge of the village. Further south, at the village boundary stands Whiss Stocks cottage, which is believed to be 250 years old.

Returning north along Vicarage Lane we find a number of houses built between the 1930s and the 1980s, typical of that period. Millers Croft is built on land which formed part of the Baddow House grounds. The Spires is built on land formerly part of the Vicarage grounds.

Baddow House itself is a fine house which stands between

Vicarage Lane and Galleywood Road and has been saved from demolition by being converted into luxury flats. See photo.

A few more steps brings us back to the village sign and the end of our walk.

The following buildings near the A12 bypass are no longer in the parish of Great Baddow, but were formerly considered part of the village, so they have been included for completeness.

Great Mascalls is a smart, late Georgian white brick house with a 3-bay porticoed front. Behind the house is an ancient homestead moat, considerably altered from its original form.

Great Sir Hughes (photo page 16) was a fine timber framed home of early 17th century date, but demolished before 1940. A 16th century barn remains to accompany the modern replacement of the house.

Little Sir Hughes (photo page 16) which overlooks the little valley of Sandon Brook to the East has a nice front with a strongly rusticated central doorway and pediment above. Largely 18th century, the building is probably earlier in parts.

Little Mascalls is another 18th century building, but this time just a single storey of red brick with a tiled Mansard roof.

Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed your walk, which forms part of an Historical Guide to Great Baddow. Please enquire at our local library for a copy.

Acknowledgement is hereby given to Mr.David Emery who furnished much of the architectural detail for this walk and to Mr Alan Willis who provided many of the photographs.

OUTLYING HOUSES (not on walk)



Gt. Sir Hughs



Duffield House



Little Sir Hughs



Seabrights, rear view