

Great Baddow

Walking Guide 3.

Maldon Road, The
Causeway & Bell Street



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 & Vicarage Lane
2. High Street & Galleywood Road
3. Maldon Road, The Causeway & Bell Street
4. Baddow Road & Beehive Lane

Maldon Road

This walk starts at the junction of Baddow Road, the High Street and Maldon Road. Valley Cottages stand on the junction with Maldon Road and the High Street. (see photo P4). Two gabled fronts now remain of this pretty timber-framed row, but there were originally three. Note the small carriage-way through the building allowing access to the rear.

Adjoining to the east is the block of Manor Lodge, Manor Place and Manor House a range of seven bays with a gabled wing projecting at the west end and another carriage way through to the rear. (See photo on front cover). A number of red brick chimney stacks poke through the tiled roof, along with five small dormer windows. There is a coach house to the rear of the building. Internally the houses have a wealth of exposed beams and interesting features. The block is Grade 2.

The origins of this fine building are believed to be 16th century, but according to the conservation study done around 1972 the present frontage is of 18th century. Manor Lodge is also called Manor Place Cottage in the study and is believed to have been used as servants' quarters for the staff of Manor Place/House, which is thought to have originally been one house. The owners prior to 1800 were Francis Abell and Saul White, who changed the building into two. Francis Abell came from a family of cutlers and Saul White was an innkeeper in Chelmsford. After 1800 the property was considered as 4 dwellings, the cottage and coach house having separate tenants.

Thomas Gilson was owner of the block in 1803-12, and he set up shop with a Mr Wenley of Bolingbroke and Wenley fame. He was also a trustee concerned with the rebuilding of St. Mary's church in Chelmsford, now the cathedral. The Gilson family were owners of Manor Place until 1881.

Next to Manor House is another 15th century building which has enjoyed a mixed history. The front of the building is now the offices of Tony Pennack, Undertaker and behind is a dwelling with a charming courtyard garden. Formerly the shop at the front was Parkinsons the chemist and before that it was a grocery shop belonged to the Carter family who owned the Bakery in the High Street.

A little further up the hill is Beech House (No. 5 Maldon Road), a 16th century timber framed building with a particularly showy red brick chimney stack with moulded shafts. It has recently been renovated to reflect its former glory, and extended (see photo P4).

The original farmhouse to Manor Farm formerly stood 20 yards up the hill from Beech House but this 17th century timber-framed house was demolished in the 1960s and replaced by a row of shops and flats. The farm buildings, pond, woods, fields and trees to the north are now under one large housing estate originally referred to as the Link Estate and comprising the easterly part of Longmead Avenue from the stream to the fire station together with Tyrells Way, Riffhams Drive and Lyster Way, which are named after former notable residents of the village.

Next comes the Parish Hall (the east part being the old school), adjacent to which is Jeffery's House (21 Maldon Road) with a neat red brick front of the 18th century. Jasper Jeffery built and endowed by will the school for 20 poor boys in 1731. Even to this day Jasper Jeffrey scholarships are granted to deserving pupils. (See photos P4)



Valley Cottages



Beech House



Parish Hall



Parish Hall & Jeffrey House



Jeffrey House & Baron's Store

No.23 Maldon Road (for many years known as Barons Stores but now Copsey's dental practice) is probably of 17th century origin but has been much altered. In the early 20th century this house was called Hill House, a private school run by Mrs Turnidge and then by their daughter, who was regarded as an excellent teacher. The photo on page 7 shows all the pupils, taken about 1918. She taught the essential subjects mainly by rote, but her former pupils will confirm that what she taught they never forgot.

Coplies is a fine old house behind 27 & 29. The next three houses (Nos. 27, 29 and 31) form an admirable group. (See photo P13). Number 27 Olspar and no 29 Coplier have good timber-work behind their plastered frames and inside some fine carved woodwork remains from the 14th century. They claim to be the oldest dwellings in the village. (One suggestion is that Olspar derives from a one-time owner Olive Sparrow). They are listed grade 2. Coplies and No. 31 belonged to the Linn family for many years. They were one of the three builders in Gt. Baddow and there was a builder's yard behind the cottages 33 to 37 as far as the Kings Head. Mr Linn senior is believed to have built the original wooden culvert which took the stream under the High Street early in the 19th century. After the floods of 1958 this culvert was replaced, having lasted 150 years.

Opposite are two short terraces dated 1892/3 and the RSPCA building once housed the grooms to the Coplies.

Further along Maldon Road is the King's Head PH, opposite the site of thatched Almshouses and a blacksmith's workshop, all now vanished. (See photo P13). The smithy was owned by a Mr Jackson and was one of two in the village. Kinghams, the flats which now stand here were named in 1978 after a former vicar of St Mary's, canon Jack Kingham. Charabancs used to leave here in the summer for trips to the seaside (See photo in front of Kings Head on P7). Just beyond the King's Head is Ronnie Crowe's, a shop selling tackle for country pursuits. When it was first built it was the first supermarket in the district, belonging to Hurrells (see photo P7). Behind this shop is Lorne Terrace, which is quite old and appears on the map of 1874. The tailor's shop and its immediate neighbour also date from pre-1900 but the attractive white painted cottages numbers 67-71 built in a style reminiscent of the 17th century were in fact built in the early 1980s using reclaimed material from the original cottages which stood here.(Photo P13)

The top of Longmead Avenue was once called Pitt Meadow. The fire-station moved here in 1970s, being previously situated in Church Street, using the offices of Essex Radiators as Fire Brigade HQ. Further east still, near to where the Maldon Road crosses the by-pass, on the Maldon side, once stood the lodge to Baddow Hall.

Baddow Hall itself has also been demolished and its parkland covered by the Baddow Hall Estate. It stood just to the north of what is now Barrington Close, approximately between the two parallel legs of Harrow Way. It was a large brick building on a U-shaped plan with two parallel wings running east west. On the ground floor of the north and south ends of the main block were bay windows and the west front had an Ionic portico. There were numerous outbuildings, greenhouses and even an icehouse (see Photo P7). To its south was Baddow Hall Farm (in the centre of Barrington Close) with a large pond.

The Pascall family, Lords of the manor, owned Baddow Hall from the middle of the 16th century until 1732. Jacob Houblon of Great Hallingbury, purchased the manor of Great Baddow in the 18th century but never lived in the village. Later residents included the families of McLachlan, Greene and Gilmore (the latter remembered in Gilmore Way). Baddow Hall Crescent is named after Baddow Hall, which was in its day the most important house in the village. In the centre of the square formed by the 'crescent' was a gravel quarry, filled in some years ago and subsequently used as a playing field. Numerous proposals have been made to build on this land, but so far the objectors to the development have won.

On the opposite side of Maldon Road is farmland belonging to new Manor Farm, which stretches down to the River Chelmer. The farm shop sits on the site of an archaeological site dating back to Saxon times, which was partially excavated in 1994. On this farmland, where it bears to the left at the junction with Molrams Lane stood an interesting relic of the Cold War, a nuclear radiation monitoring station, which comprised a sensor above ground, and measuring equipment below ground. This was removed in 1962. During the Second World War this was the site of an anti-tank gun emplacement. This apparently comprised a concrete bunker containing a fairly massive anti-tank gun pointing towards Danbury, the direction from which any invasion would come. In typical British fashion the bunker was disguised with plywood 'walls' to look like a shop, with the gun barrel poking through the 'shop window'. A Mars bar advert was stuck to the gun barrel to further disguise it! Six soldiers were based here, and the local residents took turns to provide them with a hot meal every day.



Vineyards Lodge pre 1955



The Queen's Silver Jubilee Party Fancy Dress Competition for New Road, Jeffrey Road & Crescent Road, 1977

Molrams Lane is named after one Molly Ram, who lived in these parts 200 years ago. She enjoyed her ale, was no better than she should be, and did not feed her husband as was expected in those 'good old days'. Legend has it that he came home after a hard day's work to find the house cold and dirty, with no meal ready and no wife to greet him. He found her in the Crown at Sandon 'conversing with the local clientele'. He dragged her out by her hair and she was found dead the next day in a ditch in Molram's Lane (which had previously been called Lover's Lane, much frequented by courting couples). What became of her murdering husband is not known, but for some years afterwards people who walked this lonely road after dark were aware of 'evil and foreboding' and an 'unfriendly presence' walking behind them.

If you are brave enough to walk this route you will pass Sandon School, opened in the 1970s before coming to Ladywell corner and joining up with Church Street, which is the subject of Baddow Walk number 1.

Meanwhile I wish to retrace my steps to The Causeway.

The Causeway

At the junction of The Causeway and Maldon Road is a small shop now used as a charity shop by the RSPCA. Previously it was a paper shop, and further back in time it served as a petrol station. (See photo)

Next door stands Vineyards Lodge, (see photo) which has no connection with the current Vineyards Shopping Parade, being the Lodge associated with the old Vineyards mansion, which was built in 1740 and knocked down in the 1960s to make way in 1968 for the shops, flats, offices, banks and car park, to the great regret of many residents at the time. The Lodge and the Vineyards are shown in the photos on P10 as they were before the development, views of the latter being copied with permission from a January 1911 issue of Country Life, when the house was in its heyday.

At that time Baddow was famous for "brick walls and old maids", since many of the fine houses of that era were surrounded by very high brick walls and occupied by lady owners. These ladies tended to be formidable matriarchs who demanded due respect from the villagers, especially the children. Remains of the wall around the Vineyards can be seen from the ramp approach from the High Street to the shops, where the grounds border 'The Limes'.

The grounds of the Vineyards contained several magnificent trees and beautifully kept gardens, with roses, an orchard, soft fruit, a bowling green, flowers and vegetables. The house contained several ceilings in Robert Adams style, a magnificent staircase and many fine rooms. It was used during the war by the MOD, and from the late 40's to the early 60's it was a hotel. The Marconi Company made good use of it for engineers working at the Research Labs.

The present Vineyards development provides the retail hub of the village, and the shops and bank have replaced a variety of shops situated around the village, particularly those which were in the High Street. The development has been much criticised, particularly the flats and offices, but no doubt Great Baddow would be worse off without the shops, and some effort has been made to improve the visual appeal of the area (see photo). However, from an architectural viewpoint there is plenty of room for further improvement. The exterior of the flats were renovated recently.

Where the low wooden fence now stands fronting onto the Causeway stood one of the old village water pumps, used by many residents as their sole water supply prior to the introduction of mains water in the village around 1920. Other residents had their own wells, served by the many springs which are evident on the old maps of the village.

Westbourne House opposite the Vineyards dates from 1908, and Causeway House dates from 1914, being built by S & H Jackson, Carriage, Cart & Van builders.

Nearby is the entrance to New Road. Needless to say this road is not new, being evident around 1900, when many of the houses on the south side of the road were built. In one of the houses on the right hand side going up was another Mr Jackson, who in the 1920s and 30s managed to combine a smallholding with a taxi service.

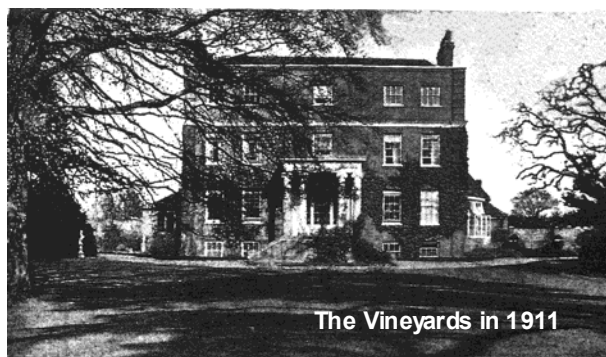
The area to the North was given over to allotments until the 1930s when this area began to be developed for housing. At the top of New Road we have a few Alms Houses followed by Baddow Hall School. This school replaced the village school behind the church in 1968. The junction here with the Bringey provides access to Church Street, and via an underpass beneath the Baddow bypass to the new housing developments off Gilmore Way.



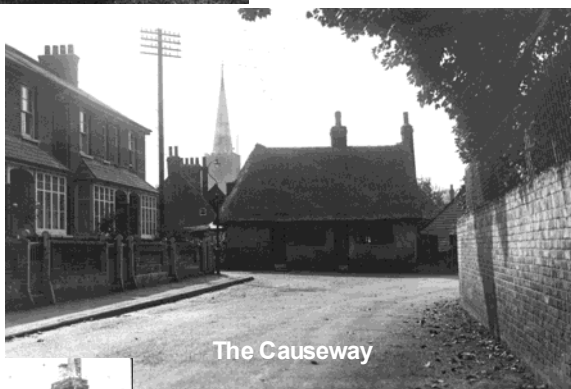
Jackson's garage, Maldon Rd, 1920



Vineyards drawing room
with Adam ceiling



The Vineyards in 1911



The Causeway



Cottages in the Chase

Retracing our steps to the Causeway we can continue a short way to the Chase, which is a new development of town houses and maisonettes leading up to the Church. This is on the site of a charming but rundown collection of old cottages which were earmarked for redevelopment in the 1972 Conservation Study by the County Planner.(See photo P10) This area once included a pub called The George & Dragon. There used to be almshouses for the poor of Baddow here. In one terrace the upstairs and downstairs contained different widowed tenants. One cranky 'lady' was in the habit of disagreeing with her neighbour downstairs and would then pour a bucket of water on her own floor. There being no proper ceiling the water would seep through the cracks and fall into her neighbour's living room, no doubt causing just a little annoyance! Near the Church is an interesting old house called Inglots.

Pump Hill was formerly named Well Street, and at sometime last century was called "Slut's Hill" by the locals! At the top of Pump Hill stands Ducking Stool Cottage (see photo P16). A ducking or 'cucking stool', refers to a variant on the medieval stocks, being a stool into which a gossip woman or a dishonest tradesman would be strapped and subject to the jeers of bystanders, or conveyed to a pond or river to be ducked. The pond was believed to be at the top of the hill near the cottage, although this seems a bit illogical. Apparently the old village lock-up stood on the site now occupied by Ducking Stool Cottage garage. The pump was near the bottom of the hill.

A well associated with Well Street was on the other side of the road, at the bottom of the hill, in the grounds of a mediaeval house called 'Foxholes', which was replaced in the 1960s by the town houses. The name Foxholes lives on in the road opposite and in the subtly named flats called 'Reynards Court'

Bell Street

This little street contains a wealth of interesting buildings, being in the oldest part of the village. Starting from the Causeway the first historical building we find is Mary Brittern Cottage, built in the traditional Essex boarded style. But who was Mary Brittern? According to the deeds, shown to me by the present owner, Mary Wilding Bitten (not Brittern) was the owner around 1900. Later the house was tenanted, then owned from 1900 to 1954 by the Hurrell family, who are still well-known in Gt.Baddow. The cottage has in the past been two cottages, but is believed to have been built 400 years ago as a farmhouse. It is listed Grade II (See photo P16).

Most of the cottages here are interesting, and Banville and Bancotts are known to pre-date 1800. Where do these names originate I wonder?

The Barn at the rear of Chapel Cottage, Bell Street was converted about 1980 into Russell's Restaurant, at which time it was listed Grade II. It is late 15th Century, being an aisled barn, with arch bracing and haunched storey posts. Originally it had a thatched gambrel roof supported by crown posts. This has been reconstructed above tie beam level. It was at one time used as the Tithe Barn for the Parish Church, where the mandatory one tenth tithes levied on the farmers and villagers were kept. A "tally man" lived above the barn, and it was his job to visit the farms at harvest time and stick his "tally sticks" into every tenth sheaf of corn or every tenth barrel of apples. In the mid 20th century the barn was used to store the builder's material for the original Mr Russell, who operated from the shop at the entrance to the yard. The restaurant has recently been refurbished yet again, and the wealth of internal beams gives a good idea of its original construction. The owner pre-1900 was a Mr Ruffell (possible alternative spelling to Russell).

According to the directory of listed buildings Banstreets is Grade II and is of 17C origins, greatly altered in 18C/19C. It has 2 storeys, attics and cellars, is L-shaped, timber framed and plastered with tiled roof. It has a moulded wood cornice to the South front and the West side facade is of painted brickwork, with 3 window range of double hung sashes and 3 dormers. The South side has 3-window range. Next door is Bell House, named in 1986, and now used as offices.

The narrow passageway to the church and the two houses adjoining Bell House are known as The Munnions, which is an interesting name. The dictionary gives the meaning of munnion or mullion as the vertical partition between mediaeval windows. An alternative meaning offered to me for 'Munnions' is Monk's Kitchen, which is intriguing. No.1 and 2 the Munnions, where Bell Street and the High Street join are listed grade II, being of 16/17C date, altered 18C/19C. They have 2 storeys, attics and cellars. The building is L-shaped, timber framed and plastered, with a tiled roof. Moulded wood cornice to S and W. Painted bricks on front with 3-window range of double sashes and 3 dormers.

27-31 Maldon Road



King's Head

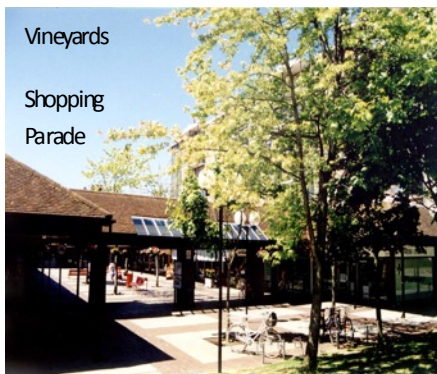


Maldon Road Cottages

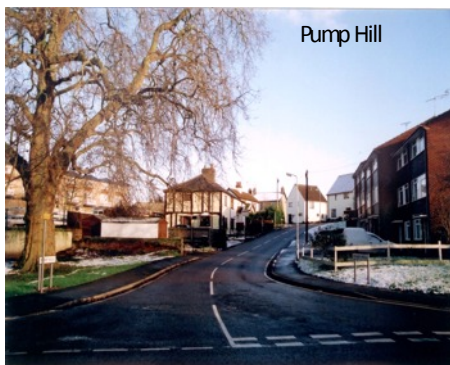


Vineyards

Shopping
Parade



Pump Hill



No.1 was once a shop, and the outline of the shop window can still be seen. Prior to that it may have had some connection with St.Mary's Church and the aforesaid monks. I have it on good authority that there were once tunnels across the High Street from one of the Munnions to what is now the Essex Carpet Centre. Perhaps they were used as escape routes for priests after the Reformation, but this is romantic speculation. The tunnels are now bricked up. The whole block from The Munnions to Russell's deli is supposed to be haunted, but no recent sightings have been reported!

During the Second World War the village had its own British Restaurant (as it was known) in Bell Street, in the long wooden building. The red brick part was used as the Fire Brigade Radio Headquarters. We know this as the Bell Centre. (See photo P16).

A typical menu during wartime would be: shepherd's pie and carrots 6d., soup 2d., fruit tart 2d., rice pudding 2d., bread and butter 2d., cup of tea 1d. (the equivalent of 6 new pence for the whole meal)

In 1953 part of the same building in Bell Street was used as the library and accommodated overflow classes from the village school, plus their canteen. By 1968 the pupils and staff had vacated the premises for their new school - Baddow Hall County Infant & Junior. At this time the library took over the entire building for the next twenty years or so.

Councillor Paul White, Chairman of the Essex County Council, opened the new library on September 5th 1991. In 1995, the building now known as the Bell Centre was acquired by the Parish Council on lease from the County Council to be used by a number of organisations. One of these is a Youth Café for the young people of the village to meet on Tuesday evenings. It is also used by the local U3A (University of the 3rd Age) for various activities on a regular basis.

At the corner of Bell St. and High Street stood the Bell pub. It was demolished in 1930 because buses had difficulty passing down High Street.



The Bell.

The chapel on Bell Street opposite the Bell Centre and next to Russell's delicatessen was once used by a religious group called the Peculiar People. The name comes from **1 Peter 2:9** which says:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

The Peculiar People were an offshoot from the Methodists. They broke away in the mid 19th century. They had a very strong belief in the power of prayer, to the extent that when a sick member died on an operating table around 1850 as a result of a slip of the surgeon's knife, they resolved to trust in prayer alone, and rejected the medical profession. This caused many lawsuits to be brought against them by the authorities. However, in the books written about the P.P.s there are many records of "miraculous" cures brought about by certain members of the Peculiar People who apparently had the gift of faith healing (also known as laying-on of hands). Some of these cures applied to persons who the medical profession had given up for dead. The PP sect was confined to the Eastern counties, especially Essex (which reached into the East End of London). One of their elders was a Mr. George Collins, who lived in The Hollies, on the High Street, opposite the new library. He was a well respected man and ran the village taxi service. His father was the village carrier, who transported goods between Chelmsford and Gt. Baddow. If you placed a card in your window he would collect items from town for a charge of three old pence. The chapel is now a C of E building, being used for various social activities by St. Mary's Church.

Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed your walk, which forms part of an Historical Guide to Great Baddow.

Acknowledgement is hereby given to Mr. David Emery who furnished much of the architectural detail for this walk, to Mr. Alan Willis who provided many of the photographs, and to the residents who furnished me with details of their house and who lent me their precious old photographs.

A. Buckroyd,
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Originally written in May 2002.

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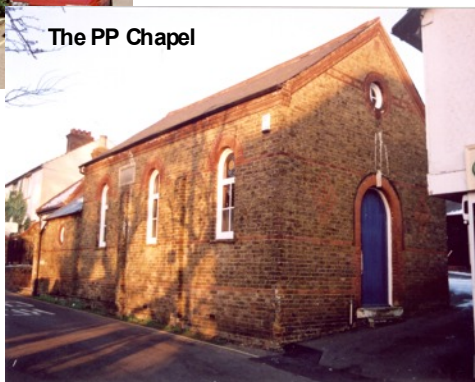
Ducking Stool Cottage



Mary Brittern Cottage



The Bell Centre



The PP Chapel