



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 114

### Bartlow – 1.1 mile (2 kms)

*This short clockwise walk around the heart of Bartlow visits two unusual places: a round-towered church and almost-unknown burial mounds from the period of Roman occupation. It is a fairly flat walk but sometimes on uneven ground. The route passes The Three Hills pub and restaurant. There are no stiles. This walk could be combined with walk number 111, which covers 1.5 miles around nearby Hildersham.*

**Start and finish:** The route starts from a small area that should be suitable for parking one or two cars. This is in quiet Bartlow Road, just west of the chicane beneath the former railway bridge. Bartlow Road runs eastwards off Ashdon Road, from the junction 200 yards south of Bartlow's crossroads and 150 yards south of Bartlow's pub, The Three Hills.

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL581450 - Postcode: CB21 4PW.

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 209.

A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Before setting out, please reflect on what was once here. On the other side of this lane is an embankment that once carried a railway line from the Cambridge area, which is to our left. To the right, just after crossing the bridge over the road, the railway line forked. One track continued in an easterly direction towards Haverhill and the Stour Valley. The other turned south, heading along the field edge behind us, towards Saffron Walden and London. Between the two tracks was Bartlow Station. The two lines closed in the 1960s after operating for a hundred years.

Now let's see what else Bartlow has to offer. Pass between the brick pillars of the former railway bridge and continue along Bartlow Road with the Stour Valley line embankment on the right. Before the end of the road, cross to the left. At the junction turn left into Ashdon Road.

Pass The Forge on the left. This dates from the 16th or 17th century.

Cross over a stream, the River Granta, and pass The Three Hills pub and restaurant on the right. This dates from the 17th or 18th century. Soon afterwards pass the former Bartlow Post Office.

At the cross roads, note the Bartlow village sign diagonally opposite. It depicts the three hills that we will soon encounter.

Turn right, signposted towards The Camps. Pass several houses on the right and, after about 200 yards, turn right through the gateway into the churchyard of Bartlow's Grade I-listed St Mary's Church.

This is one of only two round-towered churches in The Hundred Parishes. The church was built around 1100 AD and is worth visiting. It has some interesting 15th-century wall paintings including a dragon and St Michael weighing souls. There is an informative interpretation panel.

From the church porch turn right. Immediately to the left is an unusual conical memorial whose inscriptions are no longer legible. It is believed to date from around 1800.

Continue through the churchyard and then follow the public footpath (part of the long-distance Harcamlow Way). Soon, there is a good view of the church to the right. Continue along this path for over 200 yards with an ugly corrugated iron fence on the left.

The iron fence ends just before the path crosses a bridge over the old Stour Valley railway line. Immediately after the bridge, the path of the railway can be seen below on the left. Immediately on the right is a tall earth mound or hill. Continue a little further and you will find two more. These are known as the Bartlow Hills. There are wooden steps up to the top of the tallest hill.

Turn right between the second and third hills. To the right is an interpretation panel which tells the history of these ancient mounds.

They are some of the finest Roman burial mounds in Europe. The site is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The tallest mound stands 40 feet high and is probably the tallest Roman mound in western Europe. Originally there were six mounds, possibly seven, but only three clearly remained after the railway line was constructed.

The mounds were investigated before the railway. Cremated human remains were found in a glass vessel along with many artefacts from around 100 AD. The finds were removed. Most were stored at Easton Lodge, Little Easton but were destroyed when the mansion burned down in 1847. Other artefacts are held at Saffron Walden Museum.

With your back to the interpretation panel, head away from the Three Hills towards a fence. Bear left through a gate onto a narrow path that descends with a fence on either side.

When the path reaches a road, turn right. On the far side is the entrance to Booking Hall, a private house that was once Bartlow Station. The road soon passes beside the remains of another railway arch.

When safe, cross the road and turn left, signposted towards Hadstock. This is Bartlow Road. Retrace our steps back to where we parked. We have covered only a mile through one of Cambridgeshire's smallest parishes.

You can read more about Bartlow on [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk).

This route description, last updated 10 July 2020, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com).

A diagram covering this route, based on the Ordnance Survey map, is shown below. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

