

## St Mary the Virgin Bocking

Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee Walks series, circular walks around Bocking.

### Walk No5 Rayne and the Fitch Country Park

<http://umap.openstreetmap.fr/en/map/anonymous-edit/737235-BWtCALu4wyGQV-3wv22sJKxK6pl>

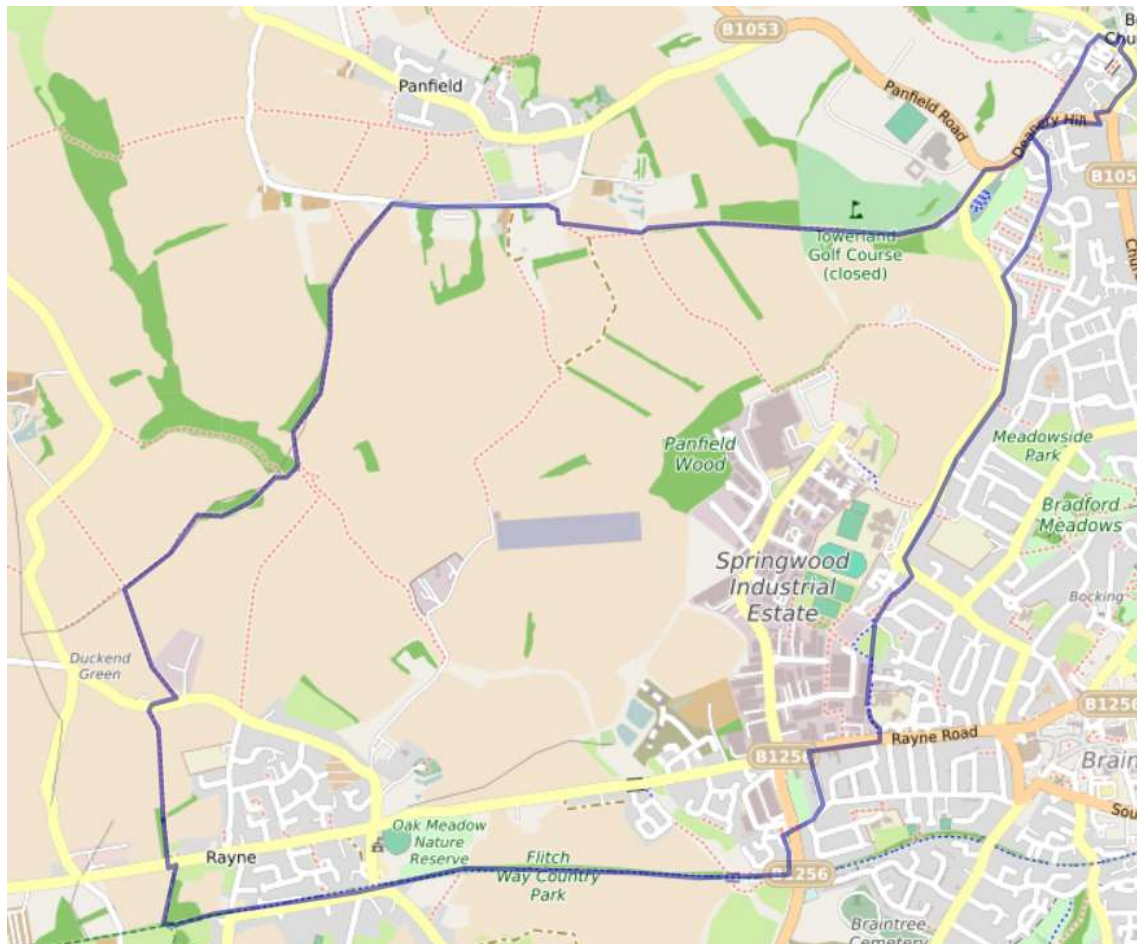
#### Description:

Distance 8 miles, 3-3 ½ hours of comfortable easy-going walking, a few sections of road walking.

Description: Countryside walk on footpaths, tracks and short sections of main road. Footpaths can be muddy, wear clothing and footwear suitable for the weather. Follow the countryside code (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>), stay on the paths and keep dogs on a lead, as you may encounter livestock and some of the abundant wildlife.

Start and finish at St Mary the Virgin Bocking. The Church is normally open and is well worth a look inside. Any donations help to preserve the fabric and character of this wonderful building. Refreshments can be found at the Retreat public house and in the Coop in Church Street. Toilets are available in the church hall if open, or in the Retreat if you are a customer. Public transport is the 38 bus which stops by the church and links with Braintree town centre and for the nearby railway station, also Halstead.

Sights: Farm land, abundant wildlife (see Bocking and beyond on Facebook for some wonderful pictures), the Fitch Way Country Park, Carriage Museum and Bocking Hall Café.



Start: St Mary's church, at the church gates facing the Church Hall turn left and cross Bovingdon Road, turn right and walk past the Church with its Castellated wall, turn 2<sup>nd</sup> on the left into Dyers Mead, into Samuel Courtauld Avenue, cross the river by the bridge



and walk along Samuel Courtauld Avenue a short distance to a path on the right, take this path between the housing and Care Home, based in the grounds of the original Deanery for St Mary's. Keep to the path that goes straight on and you emerge into countryside.



In a short distance you emerge on to Deanery Hill, cross the road and walk to the right to the junction with Panfield Lane.



You have just walked through the area of the Old Courtaulds Bocking Mill which ceased production in 1980. Courtaulds' were famous for the manufacture of mourning crepe popularised by Queen Victoria. Bocking and Braintree have many buildings etc endowed by the Courtauld family. St Mary's benefited both from the Church Hall which was the workers Canteen building, and from endowment of the East Window, Rood screen, Reredos and panelling.



Church, Courtaulds Mill and the Pant Valley 1937

On the left, at the junction the now famous ( Beth Shriever Olympic champion ) BMX track. At the Junction cross the road, Panfield Lane, and follow a short stretch of road walk along Panfield lane to the footpath by the houses.



Take the footpath and follow it between initial gardens and then a woodland edge with the now disused golf course. The golf course and equestrian centre is now zoned for housing.



You pass a pond on the right.



Follow the path there are signs which indicate that wandering onto the old golf course is not permitted.



The path exits the edge of the golf course and follows the field edge with woodland edge on the right-hand side.



Head straight on toward the shelter belt of trees in the distance. Follow the path through the gap and continue along the field edge. As you leave the wooded edge you can see views of Panfield Hall on the right.



The path crosses the farm track and heads diagonally across the field through the crop.



Through this gap in the hedge and follows in between paddocks and hedges is quite narrow and then opens out to exit onto to a quiet lane, Hall Lane.



You can take a breather on the bench, head left down the lane (Hall Road), ignore the first fingerpost and Bridle way on the left. Go past the speed limit signs.



to find after a further distance a second path indicated on the left take this path.



This is the start of a long section of field edge walking.

Eventually the path leaves the field edge to cut across a small section of the field.



Where it re-joins the hedge line, look to the right to see a small bridge over the Pods Brook. We cross Pods Brook again later as a bigger stream renamed as the river Brain.

A short distance further on the path turns right through the hedge line



Almost immediately after you are through the scrub turn left, and follow the hedge line on the left, a willow plantation on the right.



In a short while the path forks take the path straight on not field edge on the left.



Along the path under the power transmission lines. Then take the next path on the left to the field corner. Cross the next field through the crop towards the gate in the fence.



Take the gate and pass through the Orchard attached to Goulds Farm.



Exit the Orchard onto the lane at Duck End. Turn right and road walk look on the left for the next fingerpost for the path to take.





Walk the field edge and then the track towards the old A120 or Stane Street the course of the east West Roman Road from Ermine Street in the West to Colchester in the East.



Cross the road and look to the left to see the fingerpost and path, go through the large gates to field edge walk towards the Flich Way Country Park.



At the Flich turn to the left. If you look behind you there is a rather nice avenue of Oak trees to provide shade in high summer. There are runners, cyclists, dog walkers so take care to share.



Follow the Flitch Way through Rayne Station. Here you can find refreshments, and a toilet at the Booking Hall Café and the Carriage Museum (Limited opening times).



Follow the Flitch Way past the housing and under the old brick road bridge. On the Left is Rayne Park, the Village ( Swan Pub) and a little further on the Oak Meadows LNR.



Continue on the Flitch Way ignoring all paths left and right until you come to a bridge high over the fast flowing, River Brain, just after and before the path rises to cross the Pods Brook road by a Bridge take the path on the left, passing between the housing and the road.



Take the path up the steps and over the bridge across Pods Brook Road and pass into Clare Road.



Take the first road on the left (Francis Road)



and walk down to the Junction with the busy Rayne Road.



Turn right and walk along Rayne Road towards Braintree town centre. Look for an opportunity to safely cross Rayne Road.

Once across the road, ignore the first fingerpost and pass by the Ambulance Station, then take the path on the left, with the Medical centre and Local Hospital on the right hand side.



Follow this path past the housing on the right until it opens onto the playing field. Cut across the field diagonally take the path between the housing, it winds its way to meet Panfield Lane, just before the Leisure centre and Tabor School.



Cross Panfield Lane and walk towards and then past the school. Continue on Panfield Lane for some distance until the junction with Churchill Road. Take Churchill Road and walk the entire length of the road until the Junction with Deanery Hill.

Turn right at Deanery Hill and walk down the hill towards Bocking village and Kings Bridge.

Take care in crossing Deanery Hill at the Old Deanery to then continue down towards Kings Bridge, once across the bridge, you will see the Church gates and the end of the walk.