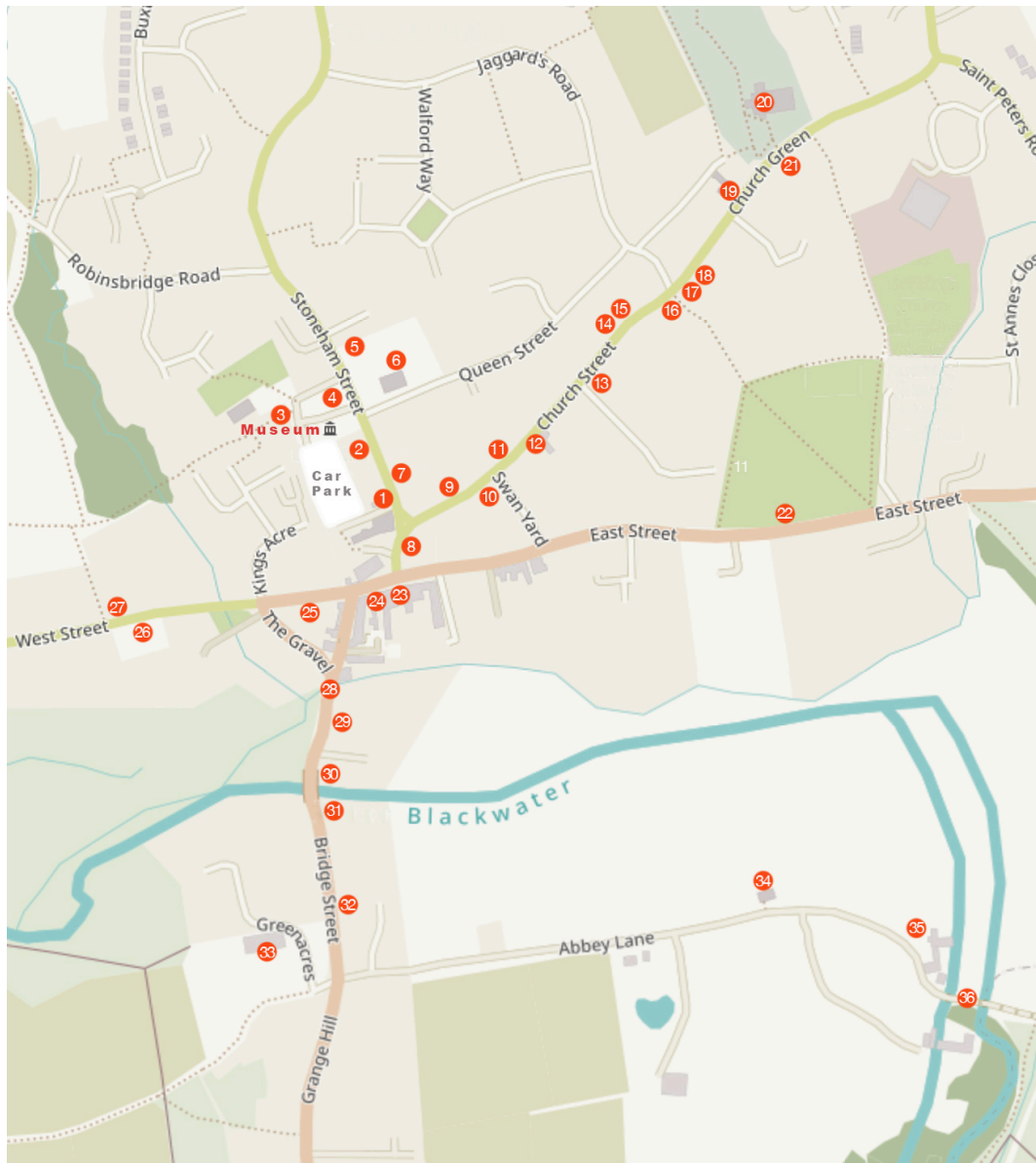


Coggeshall Town Walk



The walk starts at Market Hill (1) in the centre of Coggeshall. The right to hold a market here was granted under Royal Charter by King Henry III in 1256 and a small chapel and later a market house, stood in the centre. In 1376 the Chapel Inn was the residence of John Sewell, High Sheriff of Essex and in 1381 the house was ransacked by peasants who passed through Coggeshall to join Wat Tyler's revolt.

The Clock Tower was heightened in 1887 and a new clock bought to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Crane House, the attached premises, once housed the Hitcham Grammer School which later moved to purpose-built school in West Street.

Walk up Stoneham Street past the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, now a Montessori school, (2) and you will see the small alley leading to the Village Hall, which was once a brewery, the Public Toilets and the Museum.

If you continue on across the road to the car park you will find the Millennium Garden (3) and just down the adjacent footpath is the Doubleday Garden, named for the town's most prominent Quaker family. Both gardens are open for all.

The Friends Meeting House (4) erected in 1878, is now Coggeshall's library. The Quakers had a place of worship in Coggeshall from the late 1600s and on this site from at least 1747.

A little further up the street is Coggeshall's youngest church, the Catholic Church of St Bernard of Clairvaux (5) which was built in 1929.

One of the principal buildings in Stoneham Street is Christ Church (6) previously the Congregational Church, which dates from 1715. There has been a Congregational community in Coggeshall since 1662 when the Reverends John Sames and Thomas Lowry were ejected from the Church of England. The Congregational community is now united with the Baptists and Wesley Methodists.

Back towards the Market Hill you pass on the left the one-time public house, the Black Horse (7) now a private house called Old House. This was the headquarters of the Coggeshall Gang who terrorised the whole area in the 1840s. They were eventually caught, tried and transported to Australia.

As you reach Market Hill again, look across to the corner to what was once a large house, now shops (8) which was the home of Thomas Hawkes, a Protestant martyr who was burnt as a heretic on Vicarage Field just off West Street in Coggeshall in 1555.

Turn left into Church Street where during your walk you will see fine old buildings, although looking closely there are much older buildings hidden behind later façades. On the left hand side of the street look for the carpenter's marks (in Roman numerals) on the studwork of the jettied upper storey of the shop (9).

Opposite on the right hand side of the street is the butchers (10) which for over a century was a hardware shop with a huge padlock

hanging outside. This sign is now in Coggeshall's museum.

Further on the left is a row of three buildings, the last one of which is called **Saunders (11)**. This is all that remains of a 16th century merchant's house that once covered the whole site and was called the Great House. In the 1800s the back room was the workplace where women sat at frames and made Coggeshall (or tambour) lace.

Opposite is **Spooners (12)** with its carved woodwork and bearing a plaque with the date 1467. Parts of this house date from the 14th century but the carving is early 20th century and by one Coggeshall wood carver. Next to Spooners is the three-storey 17th century **Constitutional Club (12)** once the home of John Buxton whose relations owned Paycocke's House. It later became one of Coggeshall's maltings and breweries. On the opposite side of the road is another of Coggeshall's non-conformist places of worship, the old **Baptist Chapel (12)** built in 1855. There had been Baptists in the town from 1772 but the chapel closed in 1989 and is now a small business centre

Further on is **The Manse (13)** which, together with the adjoining run of houses, was built in the mid -1500s and recent suggestions are that it was all one house. The carved frieze dated 1565 is original and the size of the building indicates the prosperity of the town.

On the other side of the road are 16th and 17th century buildings with exposed beams, as well as a 15th century house called **Hutleys (14)** the home of a family of hauliers and carriers who were also responsible for Coggeshall's first bus service.

Next door is the timber-framed building called **Cockerells (15)** which was built in the 16th century and, although its present appearance dates from restorations in 1800 and particularly of 1922 which was by the same wood-carver responsible for the restoration of Paycocke's.

Opposite Weathervane Cottages, is **Woodlands (16)** a 16th century house which in 1793 was the home and maltings of Fisher Unwin, a Coggeshall brewer, whose brewery was at Market End.

A narrow passage called Horn Lane leads to the Recreation Ground and next to it is **The Cedars (17)** with its belvedere and which includes part of a 17th century building.

Coggeshall House (18) with its attractive half-timbered exterior, is next door. This property was first recorded in the 1492 Manorial Court Rolls. Once called 'The Lawns', it was owned by George Beaumont who wrote the 1890 'History of Coggeshall'. Later it became a Convalescent home but is now a private house and until recently the home of the late Lord Newton.

The Woolpack Inn (19) has been a licensed inn since 1708. Prior to that it was the home of the Rev Lowry and from here he ministered to the Independents after his ejection from the Church of England.

The 15th century Church of St. Peter-ad-Vincula (20) is the third largest church in Essex and built from the wealth of the cloth trade. Inside are the Paycocke Brasses and a memorial to Mary Honeywood who had over 360 living descendants. Part of the church and the tower collapsed after it was hit by a bomb in 1940.

On Church Green, opposite the church, is Coggeshall's town sign (21) which was erected for the year 2000. Made of oak, it depicts things that contributed to Coggeshall's past prosperity.

Return to The Cedars and walk down Horn Lane, the narrow lane leading to the Recreation Ground on which stands Coggeshall's War Memorial (22) bought by public subscription in 1920. The whole area is designated as a war memorial and an open recreational space in perpetuity. Now on to East Street and apart from the new Co-op supermarket, the townscape has changed little over the years although the opening of a by-pass in 1983 eased the traffic here.

At Market End are two buildings (23) which were once a bank and the Post Office. The older building was a public house during the reign of Elizabeth I and later, the brewery of Fisher Unwin. Cross the road to Doubleday Corner, for two centuries the site of general store owned by the Quaker family of that name and scandalously demolished in 1963. From there you can admire the coaching inn, the White Hart (24). There has been an inn here since 1675, but earlier the building was owned by the Paycocke family.

Moving westwards, the area near the former Cricketers public house (25) was once known as The Shambles, a district noted for the sale of meat. The wide channels beside the roadway on the other side called The Gravel were used as a system for sewage disposal in the past, as recently as 1906!

Further along West Street stands Paycocke House (26). Built in the early 16th century the house itself stands directly on top of the Roman road which leads from Colchester to St. Albans. The Paycockes were clothiers and were instrumental in building the wool trade which brought prosperity to the town for many years. In 1584 the house passed to the Buxton family, remaining in their possession until 1746. In the late 1800s, in a state of deterioration, the house was sold for demolition. Fortunately, the sale was cancelled and in 1904 Edward Noel, later Lord Buxton, a descendant of the original Buxton family acquired the property. The house was restored by local craftsmen and in 1924 was presented to the National Trust.

The old Fleece public house (now a private home) which adjoins Paycocke's is about the same age and was the home of the Richolds, also wealthy clothiers related by marriage to the Paycockes.

The building opposite was once the Sir Robert Hitcham School (27) and is now a small business centre. Hitcham was a self-made man who became a senior officer of state and lived in Framlingham Castle in Suffolk. He bequeathed money for the education of Coggeshall children in his will of 1636. It was in the field behind here that Thomas Hawkes met his death at the stake.

Return past the development called King's Acre, once the site of the famous seed firm of J K King, to the junction of Market End and Bridge Street, turn right down Bridge Street and walk past Foundry House, to the iron bridge, known since medieval times as Short Bridge (28), which spans a stream. This was the original course of the River Blackwater and was for centuries used as a sewer - creating the infamous 'Coggeshall Stink'. The initials 'LC' at the base of the bridge marks the boundary between Great and Little Coggeshall.

A little further on is the site of Gardner's Brewery the last of Coggeshall's many breweries. The brewery chimney (29) is still there, the other buildings having been converted into dwellings.

Carry on past Bridge House, once the 'Kings Arms' public house, to Stephen's Bridge named after the king during whose reign Coggeshall Abbey was founded. The malthouse of the abbey once stood on the site of the residential area called The Maltings and adjacent is Rood House (30) where a great cross once stood to mark the entrance to the Abbey lands.

The bridge arches contain some of the oldest post-Roman bricks in Britain, dating from the 12th century. It was built when the river was diverted by the monks to provide a head of water to drive their mill. The bridge, originally quite narrow, had a ford running along side it. Monkwell (31) on the south bank, was one of Coggeshall's silk mills in the early part of the 19th century and the French émigré Drago who introduced tambour lace making around 1812 also lodged there.

Half way up the hill on the left is the collection of warehouses built by E W King (32) the 'Sweet Pea King' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The firm moved to Monks Farm just two miles away and are still very much in business. The old warehouses are now in residential use.

At the top of Grange Hill on the right is the 12th century Grange Barn. (33) With its massive timber frame and king post roof, it is one of the finest and largest examples of early timber-frame construction in Europe. After many years of neglect leading to near complete collapse, it was saved due to the stalwart efforts of local people. The barn was restored and is now in the care of the National Trust.

On the other side of Grange Hill is Abbey Lane and this leads to the Chapel of St Nicholas, (34) the gatehouse chapel of Coggeshall Abbey. This dates from 1220 the exterior is of rough flint and early brick and the window surrounds contain fine examples of the moulded bricks made nearby nearly 900 years ago. The chapel was used as a barn for almost 360 years but was eventually restored and is still used for services, but usually kept locked when not in use.

A little further on are the remains of Coggeshall Abbey (35) founded in 1140 and where the chronicler Ralph of Coggeshall was once abbot. Although little survives and it is in private ownership, parts of it may still be seen from the footpath of the Essex Way long distance path which runs through the farmyard (look for the signs on the posts).

The water mill (36) to the south of the Abbey is also in private ownership but can be seen from the Essex Way. It was once a silk mill, later converted to grind corn and is still in working order.

Tour Ends