Walk to Cowlinge (and maybe the Three Tuns) and back

Following this route and walking at gentle pace to Cowlinge will take around 90 minutes. The newly refurbished Three Tuns Pub in Cowlinge is about to open but details are not available at time of writing. For the return journey retrace your steps to Fairstead Farm and then follow the road to Farley Green and cut back across country to Attleton Green. This circuit, including the loop to the church, is around seven miles. Explorer map 210 Newmarket & Haverhill shows the whole route.

Leave your car in the car park beside Wickhambrook Social Centre. Enter the recreation ground by the ramp in the corner of the hall and head towards to the lone beech tree adjacent to the right-hand hedge. Pass the tennis courts and turn right to take the lane beside the school. Reach and cross the road and head down a minor road opposite.

At the bottom turn left and follow this slightly busier road as is twists and turns through a junction (do not turn left or right) past a bench on a small green (Attleton Green) and through a variety of houses and bungalows. As you leave habitation and just after Melford House on the right, take the footpath in a field entrance on the left. Keep a ditch and mature hedge on the left. In the corner bear right now with a younger hedge on the left and a ditch on the right. In the next corner bear right again now with a hedge and ditch to the left. Continue until you have just passed a group of mature trees in a copse. Turn right and follow the edge of an arable field. There will still be a hedge on your left but separated by a wide, but narrowing, grass strip. You will soon meet a vehicle track in front of a wood and you need to turn left. Follow this track around a couple of large puddles until you eventually reach a road at a small grass triangle. Turn right and continue to the corner by Fairstead Farm. Leave the road here, turn left at the footpath sign and follow another track which goes to the right of a corrugated barn cum workshop, then soon after left in front of a brick barn with many arches. The track continues straight, more or less, to Cowlinge. On reaching the road turn right and a few more paces will bring you face to face with the Three Tuns. This is a seventeenth century hostelry with log fires in the winter and is all round cosy.





If you wish to add another 50 minutes it is possible to walk to the church and back. Go back over the sleeper bridge, a few paces from the road, turn left and follow the ditch on the left. You eventually arrive at a gated entrance to a grassy paddock with an obvious path crossing diagonally right towards the church. At the far end you will find a small wooden gate and then after a few more paces a memorial gate. Go through both and turn right to reach the church. The St Margaret of Antioch parish church was built some 650 years ago and boasts mediaeval graffiti and wall paintings. Under the east window there is a small grilled opening that probably ventilated a charnel chamber. Churchyards were re-used in the Middle Ages and bones from earlier burials were removed to charnels for safe keeping. At the west end of the north isle is an unusual local seating arrangement. Four plain backless forms are stepped one above another and these accommodated the keeper of the Cowlinge House of Correction and his prisoners, probably in the coldest and draughtiest corner. Details of the key holders can be found in the porch, if the church is closed.

Having visited and admired, drop to the main road, turn left and follow the road round to the left into Cowlinge 'high street'. Pass the war memorial and return to the pub.

To find your way back to Wickhambrook return to Fairstead Farm, turn right at the road and continue along that road until you eventually reach Peacocks Farm. This distance is around half a mile but it is a quiet road. Soon after passing the entrance to Peacocks Farm on the left and just before you reach Farley Green House you will find a squeeze stile in the hedge on the left. Go through this to enter a small meadow. Head diagonally left to find a kissing gate and then right (follow the new waymarks) to accompany the perimeter hedge to a footbridge in the far corner. Join the headland of a large field and stay with a ditch on the left. At the next footbridge continue in the same direction still with the ditch on the left. Cross a culvert, now with the ditch on the right, and enter an enclosed section still walking in the same direction. You will reach the road at Attleton Green. Turn right and retrace your steps to the recreation ground and car park.

Roger Medley November 2026