

## TOUR OF BROOMFIELD

Start at the Cheerful Chai Café or Angel PH. Take the footpath to Main Road that is alongside the café and cross Main Road to enter School Lane.

### 1. MADELAYNE COURT



This is a 112 bed care home which specialises in dementia care. It was purpose built in 2006 and has generated mainly positive reviews from users. The name is said to have come from “the patron saint of Broomfield” ( according to its website) which, I guess, is a reference to St Mary’s Church. If so, that appears to be a confusion of two names: Mary Magdalene (or Madelayne) – who was never made a saint by the Roman Catholic Church – and Mary the Mother of Jesus, who was.

St Mary’s, Broomfield, as many churches in England, was named after the latter. However, it is good to remind ourselves that Mary Magdalene was the first to see Jesus alive after his death, and that her devotion to Him is noted in the earliest Scriptures (eg Luke 8 v 1-3) She helped provide for the Apostles’ needs and was vital for Jesus’ ministry. She is one of the few witnesses to Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

Continue along School Lane. On the right-hand side is:-

### 2. SCHOOL in SCHOOL LANE



St Mary’s Church allowed a school in its vestry from 1708. Later, this moved into Broomfield Place (the ‘New House’) and in about 1899 Annie Copland, then owner of Broomfield Place, gave the land this school is built on.

Continue along School Lane keeping to the right-hand side to just past Goulton Road. Look to your left to see:-

### 3. ALMSHOUSES in School Lane



These too were donated in 1899 by Annie Copland. They were named “Fair Havens” and were situated at Nos 77 – 83 School Lane.

Broomfield, by 1900 had become the home of several Quaker families who ran businesses in Chelmsford – eg. the Marriage, Christy, Norris, Fell, and Radcliffe families. They were successful in business because people appreciated their honesty and good workmanship. It is good to remember that Chelmsford was built up on such characteristics. We can but hope that honesty and conscientiousness will be our hallmarks for the future. “Many minds, one heart” used to be Chelmsford’s motto. Now the City’s motto is “One City, Bright Future” which at least has ‘accountability’ as one of its core values.

Retrace your steps back to Goulton Road and walk along that road to a footpath/cycle path ahead of you.

### 4. GOULTON Rd CYCLE PATH (ancient way)



*Southern end of Cycle Track off Goulton Road*

This path has only recently been made into a useful cycle path, but dates back to Medieval times. There is a record that Thomas de Mandeville, Lord of the Manor of Broomfield Hall in about 1294, gave rights of access over his fields to the Rector and his servants for the purpose of collecting tythes. This path may have been used from that time.

Continue along the footpath/cycle path until it curves to the right. Broomfield Hall is on your right, Church on left.



## 5. BROOMFIELD HALL

Now, the Hall is enveloped in a shroud of vegetation and it seems forgotten in time.



*Broomfield Hall – as it used to look*



*Broomfield Hall now*

The Manor of Broomfield Hall is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as being of 604 acres – so quite large – being only a small part of the lands William the Conqueror gave to his ally Geoffrey de Mandeville who thus took over the estate of Ansgar, one of King Harold's supporters, who had over 100 farms in Essex before 1066. The name 'Broomfield' is derived from 'field of Broom' which still grows wild in the parish. Geoffrey de Manville had two sons: Geoffrey and Walter. The latter Geoffrey was made the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Essex, his castle being at Saffron Walden – the seat of the de Mandevilles. It was Walter, who took over the estate after brother Geoffrey was killed in the Battle of Burwell in 1144 (a struggle between King Stephen and Queen Matilda for the crown). It is Walter who gave Broomfield Church to Holy Trinity Priory in London in 1150 founded by Queen Matilda (The remains of the Priory can be seen at 77 Leadenhall – an Aldgate office block)

In 1662 when the Hearth Tax was levied Broomfield Hall had 6 hearths, so it must have been a large building.

In the 1700s Will of the then owner of the Hall, Thomas Woollard, two cottages on Church Green were left 'for the benefit of the poor forever' Those cottages have gone, but the charity he set up continues today.

By 1904 part of the land that had belonged to Broomfield Hall was sold to Louisa Radcliffe who built the Edwardian Broomfield Court – now offices behind the hospital – as you will see later. She was the daughter of the Quaker Thomas Christy of Brooklands.

The Lordship of the Manor of Broomfield is, according to Ken Searle's book *Broomfield Buildings and People* (Page 166), now in the ownership of the Roman Catholic Church in the person of the RC Bishop of Northampton. However the documentary evidence for this was lost in a WWII air raid on a London firm of solicitors. So, it appears that the original owners of the estate in Saxon times have conveyed it, through their successors, back to their church!

Enter the Church via the lychgate

## 6. St MARY'S CHURCH



The Church of St Mary with St Lawrence, as the Anglican Church in Broomfield is known, has a distinctive round tower which dates from 1130. The south wall of the nave and chancel are original Norman. The Roman bricks probably came from a villa some distance away which also would have provided the stone that has been used.

Saint Lawrence was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Christian martyr. As Archdeacon of Rome he was responsible for looking after the treasures in St Peter's and for handing out alms to the poor. He was given 3 days to hand over the Cathedral's wealth in which time he made sure all of it was given away to the poor. It is said that he was executed during the persecutions under the Roman Emperor Valerian by being burnt alive on a gridiron. As well as being the patron saint of the poor, St Lawrence is also the patron saint of archivists and librarians because he was responsible for the Roman Cathedral Church of St Peter's library.

There is much that could be said about St Mary's Broomfield. If you can, please look up its history on the internet, or purchase a leaflet in the nave.



## 7. ROSEMARY RUTHERFORD STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

Inside the Church are some famous stained glass windows created by a Broomfield resident (whose father was a Rector here from 1930 to 1957)



Rosemary Rutherford's story is being celebrated in the Church at the time of writing this note. She worked as a nurse during WWII and was what we call a War Artist. While her father was Rector here, she was allowed by him to paint a fresco in the Church tower. After the Church was bombed in 1940, the Bishop arrived to survey the damage and saw the 'secret fresco'. He asked the Rector (Rosemary's father) "Have you got a faculty (ecclesiastical permission) for this?" The Rector replied: "Hitler didn't get permission before he did this lot!" The faculty was granted!

Leave the Church via the Lychgate and turn right to retrace your steps to the footpath/cycle path

8. Next, continue the walk along the cycle track going (north) towards the hospital and when you get there turn left through the wood and follow the roadway round the back of the hospital. Find the gardens and Broomfield Court ( a red-bricked building in the gardens) at the back of the hospital by turning right at the Crystal Centre and walking across the lawn and through the trees to the sunken garden. You may wish to sit there and purchase refreshment from the Friends of Broomfield Hospital shop just inside the entrance to Block A (the old main entrance to the TB hospital).

## 9. BROOMFIELD COURT and HOSPITAL GARDEN



Broomfield Court was built for the daughter of Thomas Christy of Brooklands. It is a fine example of Edwardian architecture. When the TB Hospital was built 1935-40 it became the nurses accommodation.

Part of the garden remains behind the house and is an oasis for staff and visitors alike. Return to the path you used to get to the hospital and follow it to the corner alongside the car park

Retrace your steps back along the footpath/cycle path that you used to get here. The School will be on your right.

## 10.CHELMER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Originally formed by combining Broomfield County Secondary School with Chelmsford Technical High School in 1975, the school has expanded to become an academy specialising in engineering. It is home to the Blue Falcons Acrobatic Team and the Pauline Quirk Performing Arts Academy which at weekends uses the Eastman Wing opened in 2012 for stage and music education.



*Entrance to Chelmer Valley High School*

## 11.PAULINE QUIRK ACADEMY

The Academy meets in Chelmer Valley High School.

Financed by charitable donations raised by actress Pauline Quirk, this school helps young people develop confidence in a range of performing arts. It is open at weekends and welcomes children of all ages.

Retrace your steps, south, back towards Broomfield St Mary's Church passing through the churchyard (keep the Church on your right) and pass out through a gate onto Church Green. Turn left after the gate and proceed to the War Memorial on Main Road.



## 12. WAR MEMORIAL



Strangely, there was no war memorial in Broomfield, apart from tributes in St Mary's, until the Royal British Legion Branch in Broomfield campaigned for one on this Green. It was dedicated in 1997 by the then Rector of St Mary's

Leave the War Memorial and walk along Main Road going southwards – passing The Kings Arms PH on your right

## 13. KING's ARMS PUBLIC HOUSE



The deeds for this building date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century when it was known as the Crutch House. A Crook or Crutched House is one with a curved beam which supports the roof and walls. The site has been used for various purposes over the centuries, including candle-making, grocery shop and finally a public house or inn. The present building has recently been refurbished after a period of neglect.

Continue south along Main Road and cross it using the pedestrian crossing  
Until you come to Mill Lane. Just past Mill Lane is The Gables.

## 14.THE GABLES



This used to be a public house called The Plough but Thomas Christy (living next door) thought it was ‘a most demoralising place for the youth of the village’ So he purchased it in order to close it!

15.If you have time, walk along Mill Lane to view Broomfield Mill. It is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Main Road but worth a visit. The Marriage family have milled wheat and other grains for over 200 years in Chelmsford, starting off in this water mill.



*Broomfield Mill set in beautiful fields*

Getting back to Main Road turn left – pass The Gables – and continue until you reach the Library on your left. Bridgemarsh and Brooklands are in the side road to the left of the Library.

## 16.BRIDGEMARSH and BROOKLANDS



*Bridgemarsh Home*



*Brooklands*



It may not be possible to view the front of Brooklands which lies behind the Bridgemarsh Care Home run by Essex Social Services. Brooklands was the home of Thomas Christy the father of a dynasty whose members grew various engineering, building, and electrical equipment manufacturing businesses in Chelmsford.

## 17. LIBRARY and ANGEL PH



*The Library*



*The Angel Pub*

The Library was designed to be the prototype of rural libraries throughout Essex. The Angel Public House dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and was originally a typical hall house with a wing on each end at right angles to a hall between them. It has been altered many times over the years. This is the latest version. Its garden to the north is a pleasant area in which to partake of refreshments and the interior speaks volumes of the building's history. To the north, lies the much extended home of the village cobbler

Cross over Main Road at the pedestrian crossing outside The Angel PH and turn left a few yards. Broomfield Place will be on your right.

## 18. BROOMFIELD PLACE



This was the home of Annie Copland who was a strong supporter of the Temperance Movement. Her father, however, loved his wine cellar which at the time of his death was full of valuable wines, spirits, and beers. One of the first things Annie did when her father died was to order the butler to pour all the drink down the drain! The King family, who owned the house before the Copland's, were Roman Catholics and built the RC Church of the Immaculate Conception in New London Road – the first RC Church in Chelmsford.

Cross back over Main Road and turn right. Follow Main Road to just past Post Office Road. The Methodist Church will be on your left.

## 19.METHODIST CHURCH



The commemorative stone in the front wall of this building, erected in the 1960s with money raised from the sale of the old Chelmsford Methodist Church, mentions Miss Vellacott whose name is remembered in a road off the Main Road south of the Church. Her mother gave generously towards the construction of the present building which was opened in 1963.

Continue south along Main Road until you reach Clobbs Yard on your left.

## 20.CLOBBS YARD and the BROOMFIELD 'SUTTON HOO' BURIAL



*Clobbs Yard*



*Possible site of burial off Saxon Way*

In 1888 workmen in a sand quarry at the end of Clobbs Yard dug up an Anglo-Saxon burial similar in its contents to the one at Sutton Hoo. Because it was excavated by an amateur archaeologist, it has never been given much publicity. The artifacts were later catalogued by C H Read of the British Museum and the finds are now stored there. There is a good display about the burial in Chelmsford Museum.

Continue south along Main Road until you reach these homes on your right (before the KFC and shopping parade at the Patching Hall Lane traffic lights)



## 21.FREDERICK FRENCH MEMORIAL HOMES



Although now no longer in the civil parish, these homes were built in 1956. Some of the residents were employed by Frederick J French (Contracts) Ltd. Frederick French was an employer who looked after his employees. He himself lived in Coval Hall (now the offices of Strutt & Parker estate agents) in Chelmsford town centre.

This is the end of the Tour. We hope you enjoyed it!

*Produced by the Methodist Church in Chelmsford*

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*Thanks are due to the owners of the various sources:-  
Chelmsford City Council – their “Broomfield Register of Buildings of Local Interest” and “Our Chelmsford, Our Plan”  
St Mary’s Church website,  
Legacy East Almshouse Partnership website  
Chelmsford Methodist Circuit website*

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