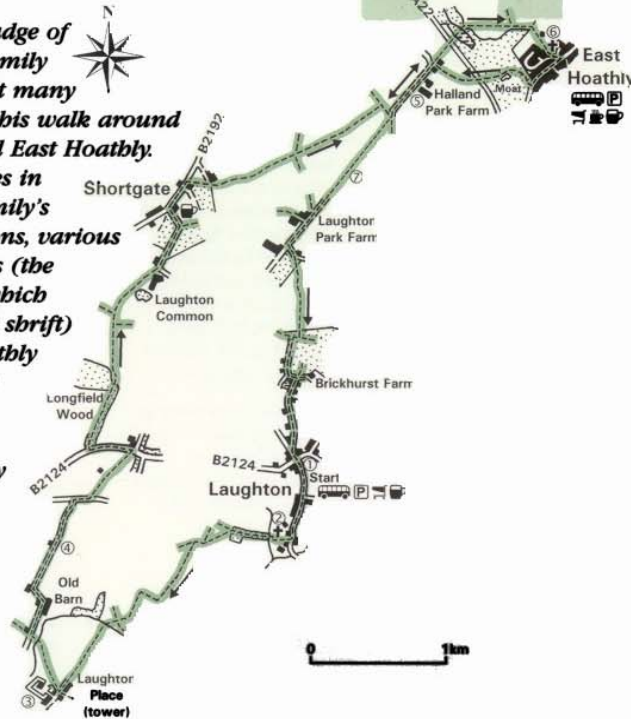




"Pelhams, Parks and POACHERS"

The buckle badge of the Pelham family can be seen at many locations on this walk around Laughton and East Hoathly. The walk takes in two of the family's many mansions, various hunting parks (the poachers of which got very short shrift) and East Hoathly church where Sir Thomas Pelham was almost shot by a one-eyed assassin.



Length 9 Miles = 14½ Kilometres

Approximately 6 hours – Grade 3

START – Laughton Post Office situated at the junction of the B2124, Church Lane and Shortgate Lane. (O.S. Explorer 16 – NGR 503132)

ACCESS – Car – Parking in layby on north side of B2124 adjacent to village shop or by village hall in Church Lane
Bus – 20
Train – Nil

PUBLIC TOILETS – East Hoathly

REFRESHMENTS – Pubs at Laughton, Shortgate, East Hoathly
Tea Rooms at East Hoathly
Village shops at Laughton, East Hoathly

CAUTION – This walk includes two crossings of the A22

9
Miles



"Pelhams, Parks and POACHERS"

"What time ye French Sought to have Sackt Seafoord
This Pelham did Repell them back Aboord"

- This poem and the buckle on a sign in the middle of the green, represent the colourful Pelham family, whose own history dominates that of this area. During battle in 1356, Sir John Pelham managed to capture the king of France. The English king was so impressed that he removed the buckle of his sword belt and handed it to Sir John as a reward. It henceforth became the badge of the Pelham family and can be seen throughout this walk on houses, churches and even milestones.
- Below Laughton church lie the remains of over sixty Pelhams including two Prime Ministers. One of these, the Duke of Newcastle, rebuilt the chancel and donated a new set of bells to the church in 1724, which he had cast on the spot by a travelling founder.
- The Pelhams brought the moated manor of Laughton in the 14th century. In 1534 Sir William Pelham decided to rebuild the outdated medieval house in the latest style – brick. He constructed a large manor house, the tower of which still survives. The house was also notable for its terracotta mouldings, amongst the best in the country. However, it was never finished. Sir William died in 1538 and by 1595 the family had completely abandoned the waterlogged site and moved to Halland.
- Surrounding Laughton Place was the "old park", the first hunting park of the Pelhams, the eroded boundaries of which can just be located today. In 1541 Lord Dacre of Herstmonceux Castle and others "did illegally conspire in what manner they could best hunt in the Park of Nicholas Pelham... with dogs and nets". On the way they attacked three of Pelham's men near Hellingly, one of whom subsequently died. Pelham pushed for the full penalty of the law and got it. Lord Dacre was executed, the first member of the gentry to be so punished for the murder of a commoner.
- Following their 1595 departure from Laughton Place, the Pelhams constructed another brick mansion at Halland in a somewhat drier location. Today this house too is in ruins. A farmhouse survives among the crumbling walls of the manor and the fine stable is now converted to a dwelling. The death of a family servant here is alleged to have caused problems, as the head of his deathbed was in Laughton parish and the foot in East Hoathly. Both parishes claimed the funeral (and the associated fees), judgement being given in favour of the head.
- In 1633 one Thomas Lunsford was caught poaching on the Pelham estates. He managed to keep his head but was fined the huge amount of £1750. The following year as Sir Thomas Pelham was emerging from East Hoathly church the one-eyed Lunsford opened fire with a pistol. The bullet missed Pelham (did Lunsford close the wrong eye when firing?) and lodged in the church door. Lunsford fled to France but was eventually caught and this time fined £8,000.
- Surrounding Halland House was another hunting park, the "new park", now fields farmed from Halland Park and Laughton Park farms. The route passes down the long, straight remains of the tree-lined path leading to the house.

9
Miles