



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

GREAT HALLINGBURY



Location: 2 miles southeast of Bishop's Stortford. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL5119.
Postcode: CM22 7TT. **County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Access:** south off B1256. National Cycle Route 16 (Flitch Way). **Bus** 315 (Mon to Sat) to Bishop's Stortford.
Population: 679 in 2001, 713 in 2011, 770 in 2021.

Hallingbury means a 'burh' or fortified area or dwelling belonging to the Heallas tribe. The reference is probably to Wallbury Camp, an Iron Age encampment whose mounds and ditches still overlook the River Stort, just over the parish boundary in Little Hallingbury. Wallbury Camp pre-dates the Romans, who were also here and left their mark. The parish church, dedicated to St Giles, has an early Norman chancel arch built entirely of Roman bricks.

The Domesday Book of 1086 records the manor of Great Hallingbury with eighteen villains, four bordars and one serf (18 villagers, 4 smallholders and 1 slave). The manor lands were held by two freemen and the then heavily-wooded land supported 600 swine. The manor house was The Hall, beside the church. The present Hall on the site dates from the 16th century.

Robert de Morley of Norfolk came to Great Hallingbury in the 14th century and was the first of a long line of Morleys who were lords of the manor for more than 300 years. At one time the village was known as Hallingbury Morley. In the 16th century, their Hallingbury Park hunting ground was transformed by the building of a large red-brick mansion, Hallingbury Place.



The village's farms and cottages developed around the perimeter of the Park and that is still the nature of much of Great Hallingbury today. Whilst Hallingbury Place no longer exists, the parish has many well-maintained and listed properties dating from the 15th century. The parish includes part of Hatfield Forest and the hamlets of Start Hill, Tilekiln Green, Bedlars Green, Howe Green, Anvil Cross and Woodside Green.



Hallingbury Place and the adjacent Hatfield Forest were acquired in 1729 by the Houblon family. The Houblons were Huguenots who came to England in the 1560s to avoid religious persecution. They became wealthy merchants and financiers in the City of London and were instrumental in founding the Bank of England in 1694 with Sir John Houblon (1632-1712) as its first Governor. His image appears on £50 banknotes that were issued between 1994 and 2011.

Several generations of Houblons lived at Hallingbury Place, enlarging and modernising the mansion. In the latter part of the 19th century, John Archer Houblon was a leading figure in the civic affairs of nearby Bishop's Stortford and he was very much a benefactor and a builder in the villages serving his estate.

John Archer Houblon's legacy includes the renovation of St Giles' Church in 1874. The church is usually open to visit on Wednesday afternoons from 2pm to 4pm during the summer. Houblon also bought the manorial rights of Hatfield Forest, enclosed it in 1854 and carried out a huge drainage programme, some of which is still evident and operational.



During the First World War, Hallingbury Park was taken over by the army. King George V was entertained there in February 1915 when he reviewed 33,000 troops before their departure to France. In 1923 the great house was demolished, its materials and contents auctioned off and the estate broken up.

In the 1970s, the M11 motorway was constructed, cutting through the western side of the parish. In December 1999, a Korean Airlines jumbo jet cargo plane, taking off from nearby Stansted Airport, crashed with the loss of all crew in Hatfield Forest, just 150 yards beyond the nearest houses in Great Hallingbury.

The village boasts a well-appointed and well-used village hall (pictured here), built in 1930 and with a good car park. Although the parish comprises just 300 or so houses, there are many activities: Brownies, Carpet Bowls, Dog Club, an annual Flower and Craft show, Friendship Club for older residents, the Local History Society that has published several books (listed below), Table Tennis, Toddlers Group, WI and a weekly Yoga class. There is a quarterly village publication *Great Hallingbury Highlights* and St Giles' Church has its own monthly magazine.



Accommodation:

Great Hallingbury Manor Hotel, CM22 7TJ - 01279 506475 - <https://www.suryahotels.co.uk/greathallingburymanor/>

Refreshment:

Thremhall Park Coffee Shop, Start Hill, off B1256, CM22 7WE – 01279 874503 - <https://order.storekit.com/the-coffee-shop/menu>

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 171 – a countryside route of 4.2 miles within Great Hallingbury parish.

Circular walk 176 – a varied walk of 5.2 miles, mostly in Thorley parish + some Gt Hallingbury.

Quiet Lane walk 304 – no footpaths on a 4.0 mile loop in Great and Little Hallingbury

Adjacent Hundred Parishes parishes:

Little Hallingbury, Hatfield Broad Oak, Takeley, Stansted Mountfitchet, Birchanger, Thorley.

Links:

Parish Council, including history: <https://e-voice.org.uk/great-hallingbury-parish-council/>

Hatfield Forest: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest

British History Online: www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=63846

Further reading (all published by Great Hallingbury Local History Society and available for purchase from the parish clerk): *When the Busy World is Hushed*; *The Great House of Hallingbury*; *Great Hallingbury Village – The Years of Change*; *Parish Invasion Committee*; *The Magnificent Shire*; *Great Hallingbury School*; *St Giles' Church*; *Forty Five Years as a Parish Councillor*; *'Pepys' of the Past*; *Amongst the Stubble*.