



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 171

### Great Hallingbury – 4.2 miles (7 kms)

*This walk is entirely in the parish of Great Hallingbury. The countryside route follows a mixture of footpaths and tracks with just a little on roads. Some paths may be muddy. There are no stiles to climb. There may be an opportunity to visit Great Hallingbury's parish church, so please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. There are no opportunities to purchase refreshment along the route. The close proximity of Stansted Airport and the M11 motorway will cause noise disturbance. There is one seat near the start and others along the Flich Way, around midway.*

**Start and finish:** The walk starts and finishes just south of Great Hallingbury Church. There is a generous unofficial parking area or lay-by beside the road on the opposite side to the church. The route starts from here.  
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL511195 - Postcode: CM22 7TZ – What3words: issued.scan.locate  
The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 183 and 195.  
A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

We start by walking gently uphill along the gravel lay-by. When we reach the road, and when safe, we cross the road and go through the gateway into the churchyard.

The church is rarely open except for services, so please take a look inside if it is open. If your boots are already dirty, please take them off or don plastic bags or boot covers. Great Hallingbury's parish church is dedicated to St Giles. It dates from Norman times although it was substantially rebuilt in the 19th century. The tower was built in the 14th century. Inside, and most unusually, it retains the original Norman chancel arch that was constructed in the 11th century entirely of recycled Roman bricks.

From the church porch, we turn left beside the church and then bear left to exit through another gate, a copy of the one by which we entered, dedicated to the memory of James Noble who died of cancer at the age of 23.

We go straight ahead on pavement that rises above the level of the road, passing a former Church of England primary school that was built in 1848. It is now private residences.

On the left, we pass a seat and a former telephone kiosk which is now labelled "GT HALLINGBURY" and houses an informal book exchange.

On the right, we pass two adjacent houses: 17th-century Centuries, which displays the date 1673 in the modern pargetting, and 15th-century Tudor Cottage.

After crossing the entrance to a lane on the left, we continue along the pavement, immediately passing Glebe House on the left, mostly out of sight behind trees.

On the right is Great Hallingbury Village Hall, erected in 1930, and the village sign. If safe, we might cross to inspect the inscription at the foot of the sign which was erected in 2011. Images on the sign include one of Hallingbury Place, a Tudor mansion that once stood about half a mile behind the village hall within Hallingbury Park. The mansion, estate and adjacent Hatfield Forest were owned in the 18th century by the Houblon family. One of their forbears, Sir John Houblon, had been the first Governor of the Bank of England in 1694 – his face appeared on £50 notes that were in circulation between 1994 and 2014. The mansion, Hallingbury Place, was demolished in the 1920s.

Returning to the pavement. We continue past the village hall car park on the right and then an entrance to The Grange. Soon, on the left, just before we reach white weather-boarded house number 125, we turn left onto a public footpath. The path goes between wooden fencing on each side and soon becomes a field-edge path with ditch and hedgerow on our right. We will stay on this path for about half a mile.

We become aware that we are close to the flightpath for Stansted Airport which is less than 2 miles ahead.

When the field on our left ends, we keep straight ahead on a clear path between fields, climbing gently.

As we come to the top of the climb, we reach an area of concrete hardstanding and a roadway that goes to the left. We ignore this and keep straight ahead on a path between fields and, later, with hedgerow on the left.

To our left we pass Harps Farm and to the right the distant houses are along the road that runs parallel with our route. This is the road that passes through Great Hallingbury and past the church.

After some time, we walk beside a garden on the right and then through a short, narrow passage between high wooden fences to emerge onto a road. With care, we turn right and keep to the right, facing oncoming traffic. We are now in the hamlet of Bedlar's Green.

Within about 100 yards, we pass new houses on the left and then cross the road with care to turn left beside a red-brick former public house. The building dates from the 19th century and in recent years it had been called both The Hop Poles and The Sir John Houblon, after the former Bank of England governor. The pub closed in 2015.

After the pub, we continue along the lane for a short distance – passing the small National Trust property, Bedlar's Green, on the right before taking the left fork onto a gravel track / public footpath. In 50 yards, we reach another fork where we also bear left on the main track. We are now heading in a north-easterly direction. On the left, we soon pass 18th-century Kowhai Cottage and then 17th-century, thatched The Pyghtle with a flintstone boundary wall.

After these few houses in Bedlar's Green, the path becomes narrower. It soon becomes a field-edge path with hedgerow on the left. We will stay on this path for some time, heading north.

About 200 yards after The Pyghtle, we follow the path as it kinks left through a gap in the hedge, briefly facing new houses in the distance at Tile Green. Immediately turn right to continue northwards, now following the hedgerow on our right.

Ahead, in the distance, we can see large commercial buildings at Start Hill.

At the end of a long field, shortly before the commercial buildings, we pass through shrubs and turn left onto the Flitch Way, now heading west. This 15-mile bridleway and country park runs from East to West along the trackway that once carried a single-track railway line between Braintree and Bishop's Stortford. Steam engines hauled passenger and freight trains along here for a hundred years until the line's closure in 1972. The route has been preserved and protected and is popular with walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders.

About 100 yards to our right, the B1256 runs parallel with the Flitch Way. The B1256 was previously classified as A120 and was originally called Stane Street following its construction by the Romans. In recent years, the gap between that road and our route has been largely filled with commercial premises, conveniently situated within 1 mile of Junction 8 of the M11 motorway, albeit very close to Stansted Airport's flightpath. We will stay on the Flitch Way for half a mile and part way along we will pass directly beneath the flightpath.

In due course, after about half a mile, we pass over a lane on an old iron railway bridge. Very soon after the bridge, we turn sharp left onto a path which takes us down to that lane. On reaching the lane, we turn right, staying on the right to face oncoming traffic.

In about 200 yards we turn right onto a gravel drive, signposted as a public footpath. Immediately on our right is a house called Lewismead which dates from the 16th century. We go straight ahead through a gateway (there is a pedestrian gate to the left of the main gate), past small industrial premises, and then through another gateway. After a few brambles, we come into a field and continue ahead along a field-edge path with hedgerow on our left.

The path climbs gently.

At the top of the climb, to the far right we can see the M11 motorway and service buildings near junction 8. We also see lots of trees that hide Bishop's Stortford Golf Course. What we cannot see is Bishop's Stortford itself: the town of some 40,000 people begins only a mile away, just beyond the golf course, but it is situated on the other side of the hill.

Here we are close to the airport flightpath. If planes are landing from the south west, they will be coming towards us, quite low to the left of the hedge. If planes are taking off towards the south west, the more usual direction, they will overtake us at greater altitude.

When we reach an oak tree on an 'island', we ignore the track that leaves to the left (towards Harps Farm). We keep ahead, kinking slightly left, and now with the hedgerow on our right. Our route now follows a wide gravel track. Away to our left, we can again see houses strung out along the road between Great Hallingbury and Bedlar's Green. Ahead and to the left, we should be able to see the spire of Great Hallingbury Church.

After a while, the track switches to the right of the hedgerow and then gently bears to the right to head towards the M11 motorway.

Around 50 yards before the bridge that rises over the motorway, we reach a patch of woodland on the right. Just a few yards later, we bear left off the track, down an unsignposted path that runs between rows of tall trees, perhaps poplars.

After about 50 yards, the path bears right, still between poplar trees. In another 50 yards, we reach a fence that runs alongside the motorway boundary. Here we turn left, keeping the fence immediately on our right.

Quite soon, we pass beside a stile and go through a gap into a field. Straight ahead, we can see the spire of Great Hallingbury parish church. Having entered the field, we turn right and follow the field edge for about 100 yards.

When the field edge bears left, towards the church, we bear right to continue along the footpath with fence and motorway close by on the right.

The path passes beside an old stile and then bears left, away from the motorway, heading gently downhill with woodland on the left.

At the bottom of the descent, we go over a wooden footbridge with metal handrail and low metal barriers at each end. At the end of the footbridge, we come into another field where we turn left onto a field-edge path, keeping hedgerow on our left and again heading towards the church spire.

At the end of this field, we do not follow the field edge round to the right – instead, we go straight ahead through a hedge into a new field. Here we turn right, with hedgerow on our right.

After another hundred yards, at the end of this field, we turn left, now with hedgerow on our right and heading directly towards the church spire.

After about 300 yards, at the end of the field, we ignore the gate and stile just ahead, turning right into the next field. Almost immediately, we turn left and then left again to a gateway. We bear right through the gate into the churchyard and keep to the right. One of the gravestones beside the path commemorates Norman Mead, MBE, 1927 – 2008, a long-term resident of Great Hallingbury who for many years headed the organisation that fought against expansion of Stansted Airport. But for that campaign, the proposal for a four-runway airport might have succeeded with devastating impact on this area.

We pass beside giant yew trees, a hut on the right and the church on the left to reach the church porch.

If you didn't visit earlier, please consider doing so now – after removing or covering boots if they are muddy.

From the church porch, we go straight ahead, past more giant trees, to leave through the gate by which we originally entered at the start of this walk. This brings us onto pavement where we turn right. When safe, cross the road to the lay-by where we parked.

You can read more about the parish of Great Hallingbury on [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk).

This route description, last updated 04 November 2025, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com).

A diagram covering this route, based on the Ordnance Survey map, is shown below. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

