



# The Hundred Parishes

## Circular Walks – number 181

### Little Hallingbury 5 miles (8 kms)

*This varied walk, entirely in the parish of Little Hallingbury, is on a mixture of lanes, footpaths and canal towpath. Some paths may be muddy, especially near the River Stort, so walking boots are strongly recommended. There is an opportunity for refreshment about a mile before the finish at the George Inn (01279 653900), but please check opening times before relying on it. The walk passes Little Hallingbury Church. There are several seats along the way. If you hope to stop for refreshment or to visit the church, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. There are no stiles.*

**Start and finish:** The route starts and finishes at the car park opposite Little Hallingbury village hall and post office. The car park is on the East side of the A1060.

(Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL503173 - Postcode: CM22 7RD).

The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 183 and 194.

A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Leave the car park and return to the main road, turning right along the pavement. In about 50 yards, cross a junction with care, passing Little Hallingbury's village sign and a large rock that was positioned here in 2000 AD. Opposite, on the left, the large building with large chimney stack is numbers 1 and 2, School Green Cottages, dating from the 17th century.

We soon come to another junction which we cross carefully and turn sharp right along the pavement, passing a primary school on the left. In about 20 yards, cross the road with care onto a small green to view the war memorial. Amongst the local names is that of G.H. Tatham Paton, VC. This First World War hero, awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery, was not a local man; unusually, his name appears on several war memorials around the country. He was the son of the managing director of Bryant & May, the match manufacturers. He somehow managed to get his son's name engraved on many memorials where there was some connection with Bryant & May although the connection here is not known.

Cross back to the pavement and continue, soon passing Little Hallingbury's parish church on the right. We will visit this later.

Opposite the church, on the left, are Malting Farm and then The Old Brick Malting, each dating from the 16th century. Behind them, the large thatched barn was erected in the 17th.

On the right, we pass the entrance to Little Hallingbury Place, built in the 18th century as the rectory.

On the left, the large weatherboarded barn set back in the field dates from the 17th century or earlier and is part of Monksbury Farm.

We cross Goose Lane on the left and continue ahead. Here, the pavement runs out so we should cross to the right to face any oncoming traffic.

We are now in the Little Hallingbury hamlet of Wright's Green and the road winds beside a green on the right.

On the right we pass Pynchon Hall and then thatched Wright's Green Cottage. We continue straight ahead with Wright's Green itself on the left, owned by the National Trust.

We ignore turnings off to left and right, continuing ahead past a good variety of houses, most relatively new.

The final house on the right, Cambria, displays the sign PASSOP VIR DIE HOND, a phrase in the Afrikaans language meaning BEWARE OF THE DOG.

We continue along the lane as it bears right, passing Motts Green on the left, another National Trust property.

At the end of the green, on the right we pass Motts Green Cottage which declares itself to be an English Listed Building, dating from 1483. The official listing is a little more cautious: "16th century or earlier".

Soon afterwards, we pass Thatched Cottage, whose 18th-century thatched element was augmented in the 20th century. Here, the lane becomes narrow and winding so please take extra care.

Within another 200 yards, the lane reaches the main road, A1060. Just to the left the road passes beneath the M11 motorway. We turn right, heading towards Bishop's Stortford and keeping on the pavement. If we were to continue along here for half a mile or so, we would return to the car park where we started, but we will turn off in about 400 yards. Along the way, we pass Old Forge on the right, some of which dates from the 16th century.

As we reach the Little Hallingbury and 30mph signs, we should cross the main road with care and turn left into Grinstead Lane, signposted towards Gaston Green.

We continue along Grinstead Lane for nearly half a mile, passing houses on the right and then on the left before the lane turns right to head uphill.

A few 21st-century houses on the right have been built on the site of a former coal depot. The coal merchant WCT Bayford had operated from the site from 1929 until 2018. One house subtly reflects the past, being called Colview.

Stay on the lane until it reaches a road junction, where we turn right onto Sawbridgeworth Road, signposted towards Gaston Green. This lane can be busy, so generally we should keep to the right, facing oncoming traffic.

On the right, just before the lane turns right, The Hop Poles is a house of three distinct parts: the section nearest the road, with slate roof, was built in the 19th century; the thatched element furthest from the road dates from the 16th, and the bit in between with a red tiled roof comes from the 18th century. We are now in the Little Hallingbury hamlet of Gaston Green.

Just past the bend, The Old Mission Hall on the left was built in 1877 and served as Hallingbury Free Church until 2019. It is now privately owned and has a cemetery at the rear.

Soon afterwards, our route turns left, but you may like to keep ahead for another hundred yards to view Gaston Green's village pond and thatched cottages before retracing to turn right down Old Mill Lane, signposted towards Tednambury.

Old Mill Lane descends for about 200 yards to reach Hallingbury Mill on the right. Its near wall is hung with slate tiles and the rest of the main building has vertical weatherboarding - an unusual feature. There has been a water mill on this site, close to the River Stort, for about 400 years. The present building dates from 1874. After the mill stopped grinding wheat, it was renovated in 1968, serving as a restaurant for some years. It now appears to be residential. The large water wheel, 16 feet in diameter, is visible through bars on the right.

We keep straight ahead, past a marina on the right, and cross the footbridge over the River Stort. Here, we may see fish.

On the far side of the bridge, continue almost straight ahead, following the main walked route and heading towards a blue notice about 200 yards distant. Here, we are on a flood plain and the route can be somewhat boggy at times.

After a while, we bear right across a wooden footbridge with metal handrails. After the bridge, bear left and continue towards the blue notice board. As we get nearer, we see that the notice says "Tednambury Lock 4". It is the 4th lock south of Bishop's Stortford, where the navigable canal ends.

On reaching the lock, we turn right along the towpath beside Stort Navigation, passing Tednambury Lock on our left.

Over to the right, we get a different view of Hallingbury Mill.

After some 200 yards, we cross a bridge with handrails that passes over the entrance from the canal into Hallingbury Marina on our right.

We continue along the towpath for another half mile until the path rises to meet a lane. When safe, cross and continue along the towpath, signposted as the *Station to Station Riverside Trail*. [If you need a refreshment break, you could turn left along the lane for about 200 yards to the Three Horseshoes pub at Spellbrook. In 2022 it opened 7 days a week (01279 722849). From the pub, retrace and turn left to re-join the towpath.]

Continue along the towpath, immediately passing Spellbrook Lock 3.

After another 600 yards, we reach a robust bridge over the canal. Here, we will turn right, but a short diversion over the bridge would bring you to Thorley Wash Nature Reserve just on the other side.

Our route turns right, immediately opposite the bridge, onto a footpath which can at times be somewhat overgrown and/or boggy for a short stretch. The somewhat tricky section lasts less than 100 yards before the path rises. Should you wish to avoid this section, there is an alternative which adds around half a mile to the distance. To follow the alternative route, retrace to the towpath, turn right and skip to the description in the box on the next page . . .

After picking our way through the potentially muddy stretch, the path rises and then climbs a few steps up to a field. Here, we turn right, continuing to climb along the field edge with hedgerow on our right.

Immediately behind the hedgerow, but out of sight, is Wallbury, the site of an Iron Age settlement still surrounded by earthworks and protected as a Scheduled Monument. This protection means that excavation and metal-detecting, etc are not allowed. The protected site extends for just a little way into the field that we are walking beside.

We follow the field-edge as it bears left, passing a house just the other side of the hedgerow.

Be sure to keep to the path. It gently forks right (at a waymark) and leaves the field edge, now running beneath trees with the field close by on the left for a while.

Over to the left, there are glimpses of Bishop's Stortford.

At the top of the rise, we pass buildings on the right and then on the left before turning right beside a metal gate onto a gravel track for about 100 yards. We pass a house called Latchmead on the right and immediately afterwards turn right onto another gravel track. *Here, our route is joined by the extended route option in the box below.*

*To avoid the muddy section, continue along the towpath for nearly a mile until it meets a lane (Pig Lane), immediately before Twyford Lock 2. Turn right onto the lane and in just 20 yards, as the lane turns left, bear right onto a footpath.*

*Ignore a tarmac track to the right and continue ahead between paddocks.*

*In about 100 yards, pass through a metal gate and follow the public footpath across a footbridge over a stream, through a gate and then through a garden, passing close to thatched 17th-century Millers Cottage on the right.*

*Pass through a double gate and stay on the footpath, heading uphill on a clear path between fields.*

*At the top of the field, turn left onto a lane and almost immediately right onto a gravel track, re-joining the 'official' route below.*

The gravel track is signposted towards Silver Pines. We continue straight ahead, after a while keeping (straight ahead) to the left to follow the footpath rather than the gravel drive immediately on the right.

The path descends gently, between paddocks or through woodland, reaching a gravel drive where we turn left.

After only 10 yards, we reach a road. When safe, cross to the pavement and turn left, soon passing Bonningtons on the left, a guesthouse that dates from the 17th century.

We soon reach the main road, A1060, opposite the George Inn (01279 653900), also dating from the 17th century and a last opportunity for refreshment before the final mile of this walk.

Our route turns right, beside thatched, 17th-century George Green Cottage, onto the main road. Keep to the pavement on the right and along the slip road beside George Green Bungalows.

On re-joining the main road, when safe, cross to continue along the pavement on the left for just a few yards. Soon, just before the entrance on the left, we turn left onto a footpath, passing through a wooden gate.

We follow a grass path, gently downhill beside hedgerow on the right. Ahead in the distance, we can see traffic on the M11 motorway where it passes through Little Hallingbury parish.

At the bottom of the field, we cross a wooden footbridge with metal handrails and then turn right along the field edge. We follow the field-edge round to the left but may like to pause on the corner, beside the footbridge, to read the inscription on a small memorial to two Canadian airmen who died in 1944 when their plane crashed nearby.

We ignore the footbridge and continue along the field edge, ignoring a second footbridge over the ditch on our right.

When the path reaches a gravel track we turn right. Just to our left, behind the trees, is a small reservoir. Having turned right onto the track, we cross over a stream and head uphill.

At the top of the hill, we follow the track round to the right, passing farm buildings on the left. Stay on the track as it turns left (with Little Hallingbury church spire ahead) and then right, passing Monksbury Farm on the left.

We pass through a gateway onto a lane, with Little Hallingbury parish church ahead. Turn right onto the pavement and, in just a few yards, cross when safe and pass through the gate into the churchyard. Turn right and then keep the church immediately on the left to reach the porch.

The church dates from the 12th century and is largely built of flint. The 14th-century porch leads to a Norman doorway constructed of Roman bricks. You are encouraged to visit the church, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, first removing or covering boots if they are muddy.

On leaving the church, turn right from the porch and head along the path beside several lampposts.

At the end of the path, turn left through a lychgate into an unusual private cemetery. This is the burial ground of former residents of a London almshouse called Suttons Hospital in Charterhouse. The almshouse residents are all single men and are referred to as Brothers. The burial ground was once owned by Thomas Sutton, a very wealthy civil servant and businessman who founded Charterhouse almshouse and also Charterhouse School around 1611 AD. He owned substantial property locally including the manor of Little Hallingbury.

Pass through this neatly regimented private cemetery and through the gateway into the car park where we started this walk.

This route description, last updated 09 July 2022, was downloaded from [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk) where you will find many more walks and further information about the parish of Little Hallingbury.

Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to [hundredparishes@btinternet.com](mailto:hundredparishes@btinternet.com).

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

