



# The Hundred Parishes

## An introductory article about TRANQUILLITY

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Residents living in the countryside of the Hundred Parishes are fortunate that the intrusive sounds of human activities are less when compared to those living within built up areas close to main roads or railway tracks or beneath regular flight paths. Even within our homes our ears are subjected to a cacophony of sounds: TV or radio programmes, ring tones, the hum of machines, barking dogs or noisy neighbours. Rarely are we surrounded by silence!

Appreciating tranquillity is an essential aspect of being in the countryside, where it should be possible to scan attractive views of verdant landscapes or cloudy skiescapes, hear natural sounds and catch glimpses of wildlife without intrusive background noises.

Evidence gathered over the past 15 years reveals that tranquillity is not just a pleasurable experience but is essential for human health and wellbeing reducing stress levels and lifting spirits.

In the early 1990's concerns were raised about the harmful levels of intrusive noise in daily lives. The Countryside Commission and the Council for the Protection of Rural England worked together to produce an Intrusion Map which highlighted areas that were most affected by human-induced noises.

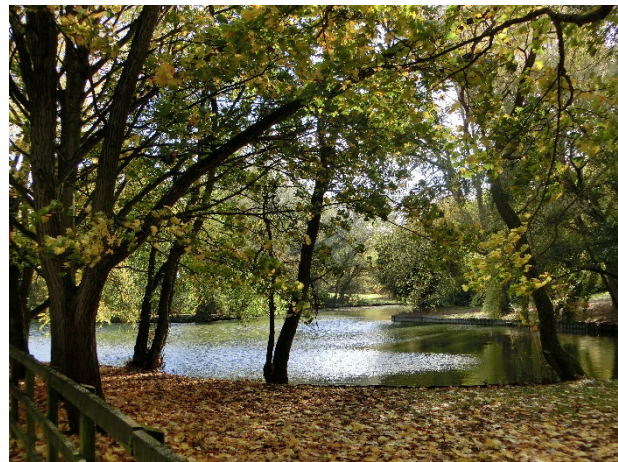
Since then, research has been undertaken by CPRE and others to develop suitable methodology for measuring noise and evaluate the visual impact of developments on landscapes.



In 2012, tranquillity gained recognition in national planning policy. Now studies are prepared to evaluate Landscape Character Areas and their Sensitivity to Change, and these are included in the reports prepared for Local Plans. They must include appropriate mitigation measures to help reduce intrusive noise to acceptable levels.



The walk descriptions listed on the Hundred Parishes website provide opportunities to appreciate the tranquillity of this part of the country, to hear bird song, sense the wind in the trees and view some wonderful rural landscapes.



Each photo accompanying this article was taken somewhere along one of the walk routes. On the first page, the pictures were taken in Manuden parish and in Hatfield Forest within Hatfield Broad Oak parish.



On this page, from the top, the views can be enjoyed in the tranquillity of Thundridge, Little Easton, Saffron Walden parish and Matching.



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Any comments or suggestions for improvement may be submitted by using the Feedback form on the website. The website has many short articles on various aspects of The Hundred Parishes, as well as introductions to individual parishes and to a number of local celebrities, and an extensive What's On section. More than a hundred walk route descriptions can be freely downloaded, with each of the hundred parishes featuring in at least one walk.