



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

ARKESDEN

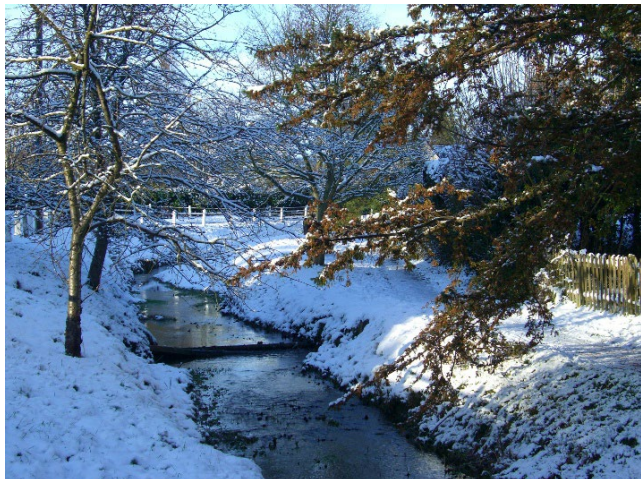


Location: 4 miles southwest of Saffron Walden. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4834.

Postcode: CB11 4BX. **County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Access:** B1038 or B1039. **Rail:** 3 miles from Audley End Station. **Bus** No regular bus other than daily school buses.

Population: 363 in 2001, 366 in 2011, 380 in 2021.

The small, picturesque village of Arkesden, like so many in the Hundred Parishes, is steeped in history, with evidence of settlement here since the Bronze Age. It appears as *Archedana* in the Domesday Book. Today it has almost forty listed buildings, many of them thatched and several dating from the 17th century, like Watts Folly, pictured below.



Arkesden is considered one of the prettiest villages in Essex.

In springtime, aconites, snowdrops, hellebores, periwinkle, violets, bluebells and hosts of golden daffodils can be seen around the parish and its footpaths.

Wicken Water, seen here in winter, meanders between weeping willows along the length of the village, passing thatched cottages as it makes its way to the River Cam.



Wicken Water flows past the part-thatched Axe & Compasses pub, one of several local hostleries to appear in the long-running television series *Lovejoy* in the 1980s and 1990s.

Sadly, it was badly damaged by fire in March 2022 but was rebuilt and reopened 18 months later.

Opposite the pub, a redundant red telephone box has been turned by the parish council into a library where villagers and visitors can swap books and magazines.

There are many lovely footpath walks in and around Arkesden, linking to neighbouring parishes. Much of the parish appears on both of the overlapping Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 194 and 195, but you will need both to be sure to find all the footpath options. Several suggested walk routes are listed near the end of this introduction.

The handsome Church of St Mary the Virgin, dating back to the 13th century, stands on foundations of a Norman predecessor. St Mary's is a much-loved building, well cared for and maintained by Arkesden's residents.



The church was extensively restored in 1855 and houses elaborate 17th-century marble sculptured monuments. The most spectacular tomb, pictured here, is a colourful Elizabethan memorial to Richard Cutte, who died in 1592, and his wife, Marye.



Many young families live in Arkesden and, on most days, local children can be heard in the playground or at the cricket nets on Millennium Field. Numerous communal events bring the residents together, on Millennium Field near the church or in the nearby village hall, especially through the spring and summer months. Every summer there is an annual Sports Day and Camp Out with cooked breakfast in the morning for all campers!

Arkesden's war memorial stands in the church grounds – constructed from a huge puddingstone. Further "Hertfordshire" puddingstones are to be found around the village and the area generally.

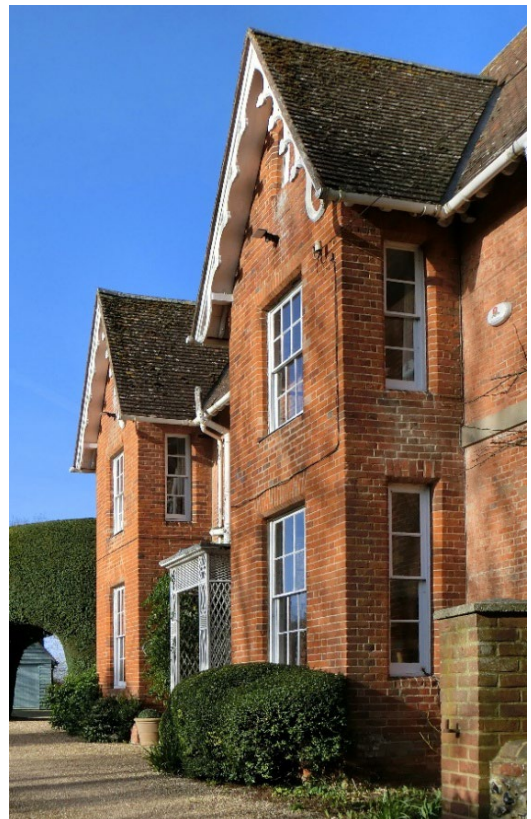
While Arkesden may be known largely for its thatched cottages, there are other styles of residential property. They include Hill House, shown below on the left, an 18th-century, three storey timber-framed and plastered house.

Below on the right is The Old Maltings, dating from the 17th century, with exposed timber framing and surmounted by its original brick chimney stack.



The Old Vicarage, on the right, dates from the 17th century.

There are a number of older properties within the parish but outside the village. Most are not so easy to photograph, but below is a token view of 16th-century Great Becketts – its attractive weather vane which recalls farm life a century ago.



Farming and local trades still flourish and still have a great impact on the character of the parish. However, due to its proximity to the M11 and Audley End station, which connects directly into Liverpool Street, Arkesden is home to many who commute to London.

This charming corner of Arkesden is especially colourful in springtime. The cast iron signpost was manufactured in 1934 at Maldon Iron Works in Essex.



Hospitality:

Axe and Compasses – 01799 550272 - www.axeandcompasses.co.uk and https://www.facebook.com/axeandcompasses?locale=en_GB

Timeless Teas (available only if pre-booked) – 01799 551048 or 07976 779768 - <https://timeless-teas.co.uk/> - Applebees Cottage, Hampit Road, CB11 4HJ – what3words: aunts.odds.correctly

Included in Hundred Parishes walks:

Number 149: circular walk of 5 miles within Arkesden parish.

Number 336: circular quiet lanes walk of 2.7 miles within Arkesden parish.

Number 305: circular quiet lanes walk of 10 miles including Arkesden.

Number 11: 10 miles between Newport and Audley End stations passes through Arkesden.

Adjacent parishes:

Clavering, Langley, Elmdon & Wenden Lofts, Wendens Ambo, Wicken Bonhunt.

Links:

Parish Council and all village organisations: www.arkesdenvillage.com

This page, last updated 12 June 2026, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk