



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

LINTON



Location: 6 miles northeast of Saffron Walden. 12 miles south of Cambridge. **Ordnance Survey grid square** TL5646. **Postcode** CB21 4JS. **County:** Cambridgeshire. **District:** South Cambs. **Access:** B1052. **Buses:** 13 and X13 (regular, each day) and 19 (Mon to Fri) each run between Cambridge & Haverhill; F29 (Tues) to Saffron Walden. **Population:** 4,412 in 2001, 4,525 in 2011, 4,500 in 2021.

Linton parish consists mainly of arable farmland on rolling chalk hills, with the village of Linton itself set in the valley of the River Granta which flows from southeast to northwest through those hills. Linton's known history stretches back several thousand years, with evidence of substantial Iron Age, Roman and Saxon settlements. Linton flourished as a market town from the 13th to the 19th centuries. Many of the fine timber-framed houses along the High Street were built during the prosperous Tudor and Stuart periods. The view of the High Street shown on the right appeared on postcards at the beginning of the 20th century.



A current view, below, is little different, albeit that the photographer now has to contend with parked cars rather than posing ladies. However, in the hundred years between these scenes, there has been a considerable process of change.



The railway came to Linton in 1865, providing connections to Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds, Colchester and beyond. A hundred years later, the increase in motor transport had made the railway uneconomic and it closed in 1967. The High Street was not suited to heavy motor traffic and it was bypassed in 1968 by what is now known as the A1307. Part of the High Street is now classified as the B1052. Without the heavy through traffic, Linton has thrived as a residential village and has continued its tradition of trade by providing retail and other services for the surrounding area.

The character of the ancient heart of the village is protected, with around half a mile square being classified as an Outstanding Conservation Area, the only such designation awarded by South Cambridgeshire District Council and a classification normally used only in Scotland.

Of all the villages in Cambridgeshire, Linton has one of the greatest numbers of listed buildings, more than 120. The High Street alone has 75, including the selection shown on the next page.

The High Street passes over the River Granta. It floods from time to time, the last major incident being in 2014. Either side of the bridge over the river stand these two 17th-century buildings.

On the east bank, Swan Cottages, shown on the left, was once the Swan Hotel. On the west bank, the Dog and Duck (shown on the right) continues to provide hospitality.



A little further west along the High Street, on the corner with Coles Lane, is the former home of the Cole family, corn chandlers. The building dates from the early 16th century and was bought by the Coles in 1675. The property, shown on the left and with a particularly wavy roof, has now been divided into four dwellings. On the opposite side of the High Street, Linton House is partly hidden behind the gate. The two elements of the house, one faced in red brick and the other with gault brick, were constructed in the late 17th century as separate buildings and were later joined. Linton House has extensive gardens which run down to the river.



Still further west is the colourful range of buildings shown below. They now comprise two dwellings, although they were once four. The blue house dates from the 16th century or earlier, while the other, part white and part cream, started life as a hall house in the 15th century.



The cream element has an interesting blend of pargetting, some new and some ancient.



The High Street is certainly not the only place to find Linton's heritage. Hundred Parishes Walk number 182 is available for free download from www.hundredparishes.org.uk and this will guide the visitor around much of the ancient centre of the village.

The next few photos are away from the High Street.

Church Lane heads south from the High Street towards the parish church and the Guildhall, each pictured below.



The 14th/15th-century parish church, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, is constructed of flint and stone. Inside, there are several ancient monuments, the grandest of which has been almost hidden since the Victorian organ was installed. A series of intricate carvings adorn the ends of some benches – they are known as “poppy heads”, a corruption of a Latin word *puppis*, meaning the poop or figurehead of a ship.

Standing opposite the church, The Guildhall was built in 1523 as a guildhall but has been a private house for 300 years. At one time it was the home of Sir John Kendrew who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1962.

Another church and cemetery may be found in Horn Lane, also just off the High Street: Linton Free Church, pictured below on the left, was built in 1818 as a Congregational Chapel. Its worshipers included many of the town's wealthier tradesmen whose families could afford the rather grand tombs to be found here.

The less fortunate of the 19th century were accommodated in the workhouse in Symonds Lane. The building was erected in 1836 to house up to 200 inmates. Later, the house and grounds served as a prisoner-of-war camp in the first World War and then as a hospital. Now, the building has been repurposed yet again as Symonds House Nursing Home, providing care for just 60 folk and shown on the right.



Mill Lane leads south from the High Street to Linton Mill which was built in the 18th century on a site that has been used since the 13th century by a succession of mills tapping into the power provided by the River Granta. Linton Mill ceased to operate in 1972 and has been converted into residential accommodation.



Linton was first granted the right to hold a market in 1246 AD. The market was held originally on what is now part of Green Lane, running south from the eastern end of the High Street. The thatched cottage below on the left dates from the 17th century, having been built on part of what was the original market site. The market later moved to the western end of the High Street into Market Lane. The market moved again before closing in 1864. Market Lane now has an interesting mix of properties including the two 17th-century thatched cottages shown on the right.



More thatched dwellings are to be found along The Grip. *Grip* is an old name for ditch or watercourse that sometimes dries up. This busy route once ran from the western end of the High Street towards Saffron Walden. Part has been bypassed, but the B1052 that heads towards Hadstock and Saffron Walden still passes along a stretch of The Grip where these 16th and 17th-century cottages stand.



A little further south, The Grip becomes Hadstock Road where Linton Zoological Gardens is an unusual attraction, one that was first opened in 1972.

Between The Grip and the Zoo, a high, brick-built arch once crossed Hadstock Road, carrying the Stour Valley Railway. The line ran between Sudbury and Shelford, south of Cambridge, for a hundred years before closing in 1967. The brick arch was demolished but Linton Station has been repurposed as offices and is shown on the right.



The Icknield Way long-distance path passes from south to north through Linton. From the south, the path enters the parish almost 2 miles southwest of the village, descending right through the middle of Linton Grain Store, shown here. This is a major installation, handling 150,000 tonnes of crops per annum and serving farmers and consumers for many miles around.



The Icknield Way passes through the village, passing Linton Cemetery and then climbing steadily up Rivey Hill. There are fine views from the summit, which is distinguishable for many miles around because it is the location of a 12-sided red-brick water tower. It stands 100 feet (30 metres) tall and was built in 1936. The tank at the top of the tower still provides water to Linton.

Beyond Rivey Hill is Chilford Hall with an 18-acre vineyard, planted in 1972.

Beyond that is a former Roman road that seems to follow a straight line between the major Roman cities of Colchester and Chester. The ancient route marks Linton's northern parish boundary, almost 2 miles north of Linton village.



Thought to be the only parish in England with both a zoo and a vineyard, Linton is not only a visual treat but also a working environment without losing its rural background.

Several small businesses offer local employment, while many residents commute to Cambridge, 12 miles away.

Linton has four excellent schools, a sports centre, a health centre, post office, library, fire station, a children's centre and a wide range of shops and recreational and sports facilities, etc.

USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT LINTON

Attractions:

Linton Zoo, CB21 4NT - check for opening times: 01223 811308 - <https://lintonzoo.co.uk/>
Chilford Hall Vineyard, CB21 4LE – 01223 895600 - <https://www.chilfordhall.co.uk/>

Hospitality:

Dog and Duck, 63 High Street, CB21 4HS - 01223 890349 - www.dogandduck-linton.co.uk
Crown Inn, 11 High Street, CB21 4HS - 01223 891759 - www.crownatlinton.co.uk
Waggon and Horses PH, 110 High Street, CB21 4JT - 01223 893636 - <https://www.facebook.com/thewaggonandhorseslinton>
Linton Tandoori, 6 Bartlow Road, CB21 4LY – 01223 890030 - www.linton-tandoori.com
Linton Kitchen (coffee shop), 30 High Street, CB21 4HS – 01223 894949 - www.lintonkitchen.co.uk

Accommodation:

The Crown Inn – see above
Cantilena B&B, 4 Harefield Rise, CB21 4LS - 01223 892988

Hundred Parishes Society walks include the following . . .

Circular walk 182 covers less than 2 miles, taking in much of the ancient centre of the village.
Circular walk 187 covers nearly 4 miles including the village and Rivey Hill.
Circular walk 109 covers 6 miles between Hadstock and Linton. The route description starts from Hadstock but could be joined in Linton from page 2 of the description.
Circular walk 174 starts in Linton and follows a loop of 9.5 miles to Great Chesterford and back.

Adjacent Hundred Parishes parishes: Great Chesterford, Hildersham, Bartlow, Hadstock.

Links:

Parish Council: <https://linton-pc.gov.uk/>
Linton Village Directory: <https://www.lintonvillagedirectory.com/>

Further reading:

Linton in Pictures – a Photographic History, Garth Collard and Norman Dann
Linton – the Story of a Market Town, published in 1992 by Linton Parish Council

