



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

LITTLE HADHAM



Location: 3 miles northwest of Bishop's Stortford. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4322.
Postcode: SG11 2AW. **Access:** A120. **Buses:** 20 (Mon to Fri) to Bishop's Stortford; 27 (Mon & Weds) to Royston; 351 (Mon to Sat); to Stortford & Hertford; 386 (Tue & Thur) to Stortford.
County: Herts. **District:** East Herts. **Population:** 1,081 in 2001, 1,157 in 2011, 1,200 in 2021.

The parish comprises eight separate hamlets, straddling the River Ash and the A120 between Standon and Bishop's Stortford. Before the opening of the bypass in 2021, Little Hadham was probably best known for the delays at its traffic lights on the A120 which, in Roman times, was called Stane Street.

Scattered between the eight hamlets, Little Hadham has many fine timber-framed cottages and farmhouses, but the most notable building is of brick. Hadham Hall, seen here, stands on a site first settled in pre-Roman times by the Catuvellauni tribe. In 1076 William the Conqueror gave the manor to the Baud family who built the first hall and owned it until 1504 when it was sold to the Capel family. The present splendid Elizabethan mansion was built by Henry Capel between 1572 and 1578 and the Hall remained in the Capel family until 1900. In 1948 it was purchased by Hertfordshire County Council who opened it as a co-educational school catering to the children of the area with some boarders until its closure in 1990. It is now divided into several private homes.



Older locals remember a celebrated group of Little Hadham residents of more recent times. In the late 1960s, the folk-rock band Fairport Convention lived in a former pub called the Angel at Little Hadham's crossroads; many of their most successful songs were written and rehearsed there. They sealed their place in village life by playing free of charge at concerts for the church organ fund and famously at a big outdoor show for the Police Orphans Fund.



Both Hadham Hall and the nearby parish church of St Cecilia are now a little way from the village centre which over the centuries moved towards the river valley. The church was founded in the 13th century but it was mainly built in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. It probably stands on the site of an earlier church that fell within the bounds of the manor of Hadham Hall. An ancient footpath that leads from Hadham Hall directly to the transept's east door suggests it was purpose-built for use by the numerous occupants of the mansion. Close to the main door is the grave of Captain William Harvey, one of only seven men to have accompanied Captain James Cook on all his three voyages of discovery.



There is now only one pub in the parish, the Nag's Head, to the right in the photo above. The building dates to 1595. The pub was originally owned by Rayments and Co Brewery, based in the local village of Furneux Pelham. In 1916 beer was sold here for just half a penny a pint! Today, the Nag's Head serves Indian food.

Together with other commerce, a number of pubs have disappeared: the Fox, the Hen and Chickens, the Angel and the Cock; but some of the names have been preserved in the names of the houses.

On the last Saturday of the month there is a popular farmers' market in the village hall. This brings together many residents from the parish's outlying hamlets.



Hospitality:

The Nag's Head, SG11 2AX – 01279 771555 - <http://www.nagsheadlittlehadham.co.uk/>

Hundred Parishes Society walks include two circular routes through Little Hadham. Walk 115 starts from St Cecilia's Church and covers 4.1 miles by lane and footpath through three of the parish's hamlets. Quiet Lane walk 315 (2 miles) starts at Bury Green and does not use footpaths.

Adjacent Hundred Parishes parishes:

Much Hadham, Standon, Albury, Thorley.

Links:

Parish Council: <http://littlehadham-pc.gov.uk/>

History of Hadham Hall: www.stortfordhistory.co.uk/thorley/hadham-hall/

Fairport Convention http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairport_Convention

Captain William Harvey:

www.scribd.com/doc/58299522/Captain-Cook-s-Midshipman-William-Harvey

Miscellaneous History:

www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/places/places-l/little-hadham/!-little-hadham-frame.htm

Further reading:

Little Hadham, 1900-1914, FG Harris, published 2014 by Little Hadham Parish Plan Group, available by mail order from Mike Smith, Fox House, The Ford, Little Hadham SG11 2AY for £12 including P&P.

Conservation area appraisal 2014 - see <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation-areas>

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