



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

LITTLE HALLINGBURY



Location: 3 miles southwest of Bishop's Stortford. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL5017.

Postcode: CM22 7PX. **County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Access:** A1060.

Buses (Mon – Sat): 305 between Bishop's Stortford & Stansted Airport; 325 to Bishop's Stortford.

Population: 1,403 in 2001, 1,582 in 2011, 1,700 in 2021.

Little Hallingbury is a relatively small parish, around 3 square miles, but one with a wide variety of landscape and many opportunities for the photographer. Its western boundary is defined by the River Stort and from there the land rises to the east to the hamlet of Gaston Green, then the main settlement of Little Hallingbury village, and then its hamlets of Mott's Green and Wright's Green.

There are more than 60 listed buildings spread throughout the parish, two-thirds dating from 1700 AD or earlier. First among these must be Wallbury Camp, overlooking the Stort valley and one of the earliest visible signs of habitation within the Hundred Parishes. It is believed that the site of some 30 acres, surrounded by banks and a ditch, was created more than two thousand years ago. Its precise original purpose is unknown, but it appears to have been to afford protection.

Below Wallbury, narrow boats ply the Stort Navigation, opened in 1769 to allow commercial boats to reach Bishop's Stortford, a little to the north. Today's craft are pleasure boats, their occupants sharing the tranquillity with fishermen, walkers and cyclists using the towpath. At Spellbrook Lock

there is access to Thorley Wash Nature Reserve, a protected area of wildlife between the canal and the London – Cambridge railway line. Although within Essex, the reserve is managed by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.



A little further south, Hallingbury Mill, pictured here, stands beside the River Stort, 200 metres west of the canal. This 19th-century water mill once ground corn, and was, until recent years, a hotel and restaurant. Much of its original machinery, including the 5-metre diameter water wheel, is visible inside. The mill can be approached on foot from several directions, but there is only one road access – from the pretty hamlet of Gaston Green where a wide variety of architectural styles include red brick 18th-century Gaston House, shown below on the left, and several picturesque thatched cottages.



Little Hallingbury village stretches for a mile and a half (two kilometres) along the A1060, a busy road between Bishop's Stortford and Chelmsford. Here you will find the rest of the hospitality venues listed below. They include Bonningtons B&B, shown below on the left, and the George Inn on the right, both listed buildings dating back to the 17th century.



Further south along the A1060 is the community-run Post Office, beside the village hall and opposite the village car park. The car park also serves the parish church, just off the main road.

The footpath between the car park and the church passes through an unusual private cemetery, the final resting place for former residents of a substantial London almshouse called 'Suttons Hospital in Charterhouse'. This cares for elderly men and was founded in 1611 by Thomas



Sutton, an extremely wealthy civil servant and businessman who also founded Charterhouse School. He owned much land locally including the manors of Little Hallingbury and also Littlebury, Hadstock and Castle Camps within the Hundred Parishes. Sutton considered founding the school and hospital in Little Hallingbury, before deciding upon the London location. The Hospital held property in the parish until 1924. Its governors still have the right to appoint a rector to the parish church. The Church of St Mary the Virgin, pictured here, dates from the 12th century and is built mainly of flint. Its 14th-century wooden porch leads to a Norman doorway constructed of Roman bricks.

Nearby, the war memorial gives the names of 33 men from this parish who died in the First World War. The fallen include C H Tatham Paton whose bravery was recognised by the award of the Military Cross and also the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross, the highest military honour.

Opposite the church stand these two 16th-century buildings – on the left Maltings Farm and on the right Malt House which once operated as a maltings.



Beyond the church, the lane passes more fine buildings as it twists and turns to Wright's Green and then on to Mott's Green, each hamlet having a blend of old and new homes. Here, peace is disrupted all too often either by aircraft from nearby Stansted Airport or the rumble of traffic on the M11 motorway which cuts through this and many more parishes within the Hundred Parishes. The oldest home in Wrights Green is probably Romans, pictured below on the left. It dates from the 16th century or earlier and is named after the Roman settlement that was once nearby. On the right is 18th-century Thatch Cottage, one of the newer buildings in Mott's Green.



In the southeast of the parish is Little Hallingbury Park. This private estate is approached by an impressively-long, tree-lined drive that leads from the A1060. The 16th-century house was badly damaged by fire in 1982 and then rebuilt. It is still a listed building, together with two barns and a granary that are part of the estate.

Whilst this introduction has included photos of several attractive buildings, there are many more examples of local heritage that have been sympathetically converted for modern living.

Accommodation & Hospitality:

The George – 01279 653900 - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057404141376>
 Bonningtons B&B, CM22 7SP – 01279 507472 - <https://www.bonningtons.mobi/>
 Latchmead B&B, CM22 7PQ – 01279 758278 - www.latchmead.co.uk
 Pitstop B&B, CM22 7RA – 01279 725725 or 01279 725007 - <http://the-pitstop.net>

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 181, a 5-mile varied route entirely within Little Hallingbury, starting from the car park opposite the village hall.

Station walk 8, a 5-mile route from Sawbridgeworth Station to Bishop's Stortford Station. It could be joined in Gaston Green on page 2 of the description, then catching the train from Bishop's Stortford to Sawbridgeworth before walking back to Gaston Green.

Circular walk 152 covers 4 miles from Hatfield Heath and includes rural elements of Little Hallingbury.

Adjacent parishes:

Great Hallingbury, Hatfield Broad Oak, Hatfield Heath, Sheering, Sawbridgeworth, Thorley.

Links:

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

British History Online: www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol8/pp124-131

St Mary's Church: www.hallingburychurches.co.uk/st-marys.html

Thorley Wash Nature Reserve: www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/thorley-wash

Wallbury Camp: <http://esah160.blogspot.co.uk/2013/09/wallbury-camp-great-hallingbury.html>

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