



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

MUCH HADHAM



Location: 3 miles southwest of Bishop's Stortford. **Ordnance Survey grid square** TL4218.
Postcode SG10 6DF. **Access:** B1004. **County:** Hertfordshire. **District:** East Hertfordshire.
Buses: route 351 (Mon to Sat) between Bishop's Stortford and Hertford.
Population: 2,000 in 2001, 2,087 in 2011, 2,200 in 2021.

This is one of Hertfordshire's oldest and most picturesque villages. The earliest record of Hadham is dated 946 in the will of the Saxon Queen Aelfleda, wife of King Edmund. She and her sister inherited land at Hadham from their father. They in turn bequeathed the land to the Bishops of London in whose hands it was at the time of the Domesday Book and for over 800 years.

Much Hadham can rightly claim to have nurtured the founder of the Tudor dynasty as it was the birthplace of Edmund Tudor. After the death of Henry V, his widow Katherine married Owen Tudor. Their son Edmund was born in 1430 in the Bishop of London's palace in Much Hadham. In 1485, Edmund's son became Henry VII. The palace, now a private residence, can still be seen adjacent to the church.



Today the village High Street is one of the longest in the country, extending for over a mile along the valley of the river Ash with many well-preserved houses, the earliest dating from the 15th Century. Although most of the traditional village tradespeople have disappeared their former location is indicated by the names of some of the houses, e.g. "Old Bakery" and "Collarmaker's House". The forge which operated until 1983 is now part of the Forge Museum which also features fascinating Tudor wall paintings.



Shown above are the 1866 almshouses and then 15th-16th-century Morris Cottage, bought in the late 19th century by textile designer William Morris for his sister.

On the right, the street scene includes 16th-century Batemans in the foreground. Below it is The White House, also dating from the 16th century.



The imposing parish church of St Andrew was begun around 1220. The tower, with its tall stiletto-like spire known as a "Hertfordshire Spike", had been added by 1404, but the roof and south porch were not added until the 15th century. The tower has six bells dating from 1595 to 1750. The oldest feature of the church is a weathered door which has now been moved inside and is thought to date to about 1225. The church is notable for being shared between the St. Andrew's Church of England congregation and the Holy Cross Roman Catholic Congregation. At the entrance to the church are two sculptures "Heads of a King and Queen" by Henry Moore. The village also has a Congregational church and a Church of England-maintained primary school.



The village has many impressive 18th-century buildings including The Hall (shown here) and Moor Place, each of which has a Grade I listing.

Also noteworthy is the Red Lion coaching inn (now converted into private houses) which has existed since the fifteenth century. It was a coaching stop on the old road from London to Cambridge.

In modern times Much Hadham is probably best known for being the residence of the world famous sculptor, Sir Henry Moore. He lived a mile outside Much Hadham village in the hamlet of Perry Green from 1940 until his death in 1986 and is buried there in St Thomas's Church beside his wife, Irina. Their gravestones are notable for their simplicity.



The Henry Moore Foundation cares for his studio complex and many of his famous works. The centre in Perry Green is open to the public during summer months and displays many of Moore's works in a rural setting. The Foundation was established by Moore himself in 1977 to promote appreciation of the visual arts. As well as caring for the studio, the Foundation funds exhibitions and research and also awards grants to arts organisations in the UK and worldwide.

There are many good walks here. The High Street is always full of interest, while the Hertfordshire Way south of the village is particularly popular in the spring, passing through bluebell woods as it follows the River Ash. See below for suggested Hundred Parishes routes: one passes Henry Moore's giant *Reclining Figure* and another goes through the bluebell woods.



Hospitality:

The Bull Inn, High Street, SG10 6BU - 01279 841100 - <https://www.thebullmh.co.uk/>
The Hoops Inn, Perry Green, SG10 6EF - 01279 843568 - <http://www.hoops-inn.co.uk/>
The Prince of Wales, Green Tye, SG10 6JP – 07966 474730 - www.thepow.co.uk
Cafe at Henry Moore Studios & Gardens, Perry Green (seasonal opening) – see Links below.
High Hedges B&B, Green Tye, SG10 6JP – 01279 842505

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 122 of 2.2 miles around Much Hadham village.
Circular walk 168 of 7.8 miles across country to Standon and back.
Circular walk 172 of 5.5 miles of great variety on the east side of the parish.
Station walk 20 covers 12 miles from St Margaret's Station to Sawbridgeworth station – it could be joined at Perry Green on page 3 or 4 of the description, catching trains from Sawbridgeworth to St Margarets, and then completing the route back to Perry Green.

Adjacent parishes:

Widford, Wareside, Thundridge, Standon, Little Hadham, Thorley, High Wych.

Links:

Much Hadham Parish Council: <https://www.muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk/>
Henry Moore Studios and Gardens, Perry Green, SG10 6EE – 01279 843333 - <https://www.henry-moore.org/visit>
The Forge Museum, High Street, SG10 6BS – 07483 113345 - www.hadhammuseum.org.uk
History, old photos, etc:
www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/places/places-m/much-hadham/much-hadham.htm

Further reading:

Much Hadham, a Millennium Scrapbook by Jean Page.

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