



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

SHEERING



Location: 3 miles east of Harlow. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL5013.

Postcode: CM22 7LX. **County:** Essex. **District:** Epping Forest. **Access:** Sawbridgeworth Station. B183.

Buses: 59 (Mon to Fri) between Chelmsford & Harlow; 347 (Tues and Thurs) one bus to Harlow.

Population: 2,838 in 2001, 2,905 in 2011, 3,100 in 2021.



Sheering parish has two main centres of population – Sheering and Lower Sheering. They are about a mile apart and have been further separated since the 1970s by the M11 motorway. Each settlement has a village sign that commemorates the mention of Sceringa in the Domesday Book of 1086. The unusual three-dimensional relief above the name includes the artist's impression of the three beehives, one mule and one ass that were recorded in Domesday. Sceringa's mule was one of only a few mules noted in Domesday.

The early place name Sceringa was probably Anglo-Saxon for the family or tribe ("inga") of someone called Scer or Scira who lived hereabouts.

There are few indications today of such early inhabitation, although Sheering Hall, to the south of the parish, away from today's main settlements, was built beside a ringwork, a protective earth bank that is believed to date from the 11th century. Sheering Hall actually comprises two hall houses dating from the 15th or 16th century. The Hall is amongst Sheering's 46 listed buildings but it is not visible from the public highway.

There is just one Grade I listing: the 13th-century parish church which is at the southern end of Sheering village. The church is usually locked, but inside are a Norman nave and some recycled Roman bricks.

The bell tower has two distinctive clock faces – the one facing north, just visible here, displays the advice *WORK AND PRAY* and the west clock proclaims *TODAY IS YOURS*. They may appear Victorian in sentiment, but were actually installed in the late 1940s as part of the parish's war memorial.



A more traditional war memorial stands at the junction of Church Lane with The Street, now classified as the B183. The memorial stands close to 17th-century Cock Inn, the parish's only pub.

Sheering village is the older of the two main settlements and there is a variety of listed buildings along The Street, sometimes set back a little from the main road. Daubney's Farmhouse, pictured here, dates from the 16th century and is nicely visible beside the long-distance footpath,



Stort Valley Way, just north of where it crosses The Street.

The parish's population has grown from around 500 inhabitants in 1901, to 2,000 by 1971 and nearly 3,000 in 2011. Expansion has been shared between Sheering and Lower Sheering. More than 100 council houses were built north of The Street soon after WWII.



The village of Lower Sheering evolved relatively recently following the opening of the Stort Navigation canal in 1769 and then the London – Cambridge railway in 1842 with its nearby Sawbridgeworth Station. Many industrial premises were developed here, in particular several large maltings that processed barley for London's breweries.



As that industry declined in the 20th century, new uses were found for the sites. Some of the buildings were converted into flats, as with 19th-century The Maltings, shown above.

The view on the right looks through the open gate of Sheering Lock and across the canal to 20th-century houses. They replaced a joinery factory owned by Walter Lawrence & Son Ltd. Wooden doors and other household fittings were normally made here, but during World War II production switched to the manufacture of wooden fuselages for hundreds of Mosquito aircraft. Sir Walter Lawrence lived just outside Sheering at Great Hyde Hall. His name lives on with the Walter Lawrence Trophy which he donated in 1934 and is awarded annually for the fastest century scored in first class cricket.



Towards the south of the parish are several substantial residences. Aylmers Farmhouse, pictured here, was built as a manor house early in the 17th century. A hundred years ago it was reported to be in poor condition, but it has been skilfully renovated.

Nearby, away from the road, is Sheering Hall, which has already been mentioned. This was the home for many years until recently of guitarist Steve Harris, a successful rock musician with the heavy metal band Iron Maiden. His departure coincided with the arrival of singer Rod Stewart following his purchase of 18th-century Durrington House.

Hospitality:

The Cock Inn, CM22 7LT – 01279 734229 - <https://www.thecockinnsheering.co.uk/>

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 151 which starts from the village hall car park. The route covers 5 miles of lanes and paths through Sheering and Hatfield Heath countryside.

Adjacent Hundred Parishes parishes:

Sawbridgeworth, Little Hallingbury, Hatfield Heath, Matching.

Links:

Parish Council: <https://e-voice.org.uk/sheering-parish-council/>

British History Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol8/pp240-249>