



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

STOCKING PELHAM



Location: 5 miles northwest of Stansted Mountfitchet. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4529. **Postcode** SG9 0HT. **Access:** off B1038. **Buses:** 27 (Monday & Wednesday) to Royston and 20 (Monday to Friday) to Bishop's Stortford. **County:** Hertfordshire. **District:** East Herts. **Population:** 162 in 2001, 163 in 2011, 200 in 2021.

The Domesday Book of 1086 refers to just one Pelham, but by 1300 there were three adjacent places on Hertfordshire's border with Essex: Brent Pelham in the north, Furneux Pelham in the south and Stocking Pelham in between. Stocking Pelham is the smallest. Indeed, it is one of the smallest parishes within the Hundred Parishes with an area of around one square mile. The name Pelham may originally have meant the homestead of a man called Peola, whilst Stocking seems to have come from an Old English word meaning "made of logs".



Each of the three Pelhams has a parish church dedicated to St Mary. Stocking Pelham's, pictured here, dates from the 14th century.

The church is quite small, no doubt reflecting its need, for Stocking Pelham's population has probably never varied greatly from today's total of 163.

The church was originally built of flint, although part of the chancel, the near section in this photo, was rebuilt in brick in the 19th century. The nave, beyond, was originally the same width as the chancel but was enlarged in the 14th or 15th century.



The roof was raised and the south wall (shown here) was moved out, whilst the north walls of the nave and chancel remained in line.

The south-facing porch, shown here, was probably added somewhat later.

A stained-glass nave window in the north wall probably dates from the 14th century and contains fragments of glass from that time. The bell tower houses just one bell, thought to have been cast in the 15th century, possibly even the 14th, and one of the oldest in Hertfordshire. Its Latin inscription declares that its business is to drive away all evil things.

Behind the church is Stocking Pelham Hall, today the location of several small businesses, and a 17th century barn that is much larger than the church and now provides residential accommodation. The barn is one of the parish's seventeen listed buildings.

The Hall and church stand on one of only two roads that pass through the parish – both minor. The road past the church comes from Brent Pelham to the west. 500 metres further east it meets Ginns Road which comes from Furneux Pelham and Albury in the south and then bears east to Berden. Ginns Road is named after Thomas Ginn, a 19th-century curate and schoolmaster.

The two roads meet at what may be described as the centre of the parish, close to the village hall. For centuries, another focal point of the village stood beside this road junction - the Cock Inn, a centuries-old thatched pub that was destroyed in a blaze in 2008. It was not until 2015 that a replacement public house (looking more like a residential property) was built on the site and at the time of this review it remains in search of a landlord.

The parish has a great variety of building styles going back to the 17th century and possibly earlier. A selection is shown here.



Just west of the road junction, Crabb's Lane leads to Crabb's Green. Beyond the Green is a rather unsightly, but important, installation that straddles the boundary between Stocking Pelham and its neighbouring Essex parish, Berden. This is a major National Grid electrical substation. It receives power and redistributes it throughout the Hundred Parishes along six high voltage overhead transmission lines whose pylons stride across the countryside.



Adjacent parishes: Furneux Pelham, Brent Pelham, Berden.

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 143 which starts in Berden and covers 5 miles including much of Stocking Pelham. The route could be joined in Stocking Pelham at the top of page 3 of the description.

Publication: *Stocking Pelham – Facts, Fiction & Foul Deeds* by David Bailey, 2000.

Links:

Parish Council: <http://www.stockingpelhampc.org.uk/>

Photo of Cock pub before it was destroyed by fire: www.geograph.org.uk/photo/209179

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