



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

UGLEY



Location: 2 miles north of Stansted Mountfitchet. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL5128.
Postcode CM22 6JW. **County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Access:** B1383; Regional Cycle Route 60. **Bus:** 301 (Mon-Sat) between Saffron Walden and Bishop's Stortford.
Population: 402 in 2001, 449 in 2011, 470 in 2021.

The name is possibly derived from the forest land, or *ley*, of someone called *Ugga*. The Domesday Book of 1086, records it as *Uggheleam*. Subsequent spellings have included *Uggele*, *Hoggele* and *Oakley*, the latter being in use as an alternative spelling in the 19th century and as recently as postcards published in the 1920s. Today's parish of Ugley includes Bollington which appeared separately in Domesday and once had its own church, some of whose ruins were used to build Ugley's church.



Ugley is most visible along the Cambridge Road, the B1383, with the former Chequers pub and a scattering of houses, but Ugley's population of around 400 (little changed over the last century) and its 38 listed buildings are spread about the parish's several hamlets including Patmore End, Ugley Green, Bollington, North Hall Road, the Square and Snakes Lane. Many little gems are hidden down narrow country lanes that are probably best explored on foot or by bicycle.



The Church of St Peter is well tucked away down the lane that winds its way eastwards from the Chequers. The church dates from the 13th century and has a 16th-century red brick tower that was also used as a dovecote until the early 20th century. The church has a well-preserved ancient parish chest of wood and iron. The Chequers, shown here, was an inn since at least 1789 when it had its own brew house, stable yard, gardens and orchards. It is now closed.

Until the 1970s there was another pub on the Cambridge Road, a mile further south – the White Hart. This photo of The Square, taken at the start of the 20th century, shows the White Hart on the far left and the Stores on the right.

The buildings are little changed today, but they are now all private houses.



Further south along the main road stands Orford House. This was built by Admiral Edward Russell, a distinguished 17th-century naval commander and First Lord of the Admiralty who was later created Earl of Orford. He apparently never lived here, using the house as a stopover en route between London and his main home in Cambridgeshire.



For much of the 20th century Orford House was the home of the Tennant family, who were generous benefactors to the village and instigators of many village activities. The gardens of Orford House were opened on alternate Sundays for the enjoyment of Ugley residents and all the village's children were invited to the House for a Christmas party each year. Before World War Two, however, Ernest Tennant was the secretary of the Anglo-German Fellowship and a friend of Joachim von Ribbentrop, who visited Orford House. Ribbentrop was German Foreign Minister from 1938 to 1945 and was the first to be hanged for war crimes after the Nuremberg trials.

Ernest Tennant's niece, Nancy, was a long-term stalwart of village life and particularly of its branch of the Women's Institute. She served as vice chairman of the national WI. Nancy died in 2002 at the age of 105. Her memoirs recorded a brief private meeting with Adolf Hitler in Berlin in 1932. She described him as having a hypnotic presence and recalled her wish to get away as quickly as possible.

Orford House was purchased in 1979 by Home Farm Trust to provide a home for around 20 adults with learning difficulties. Subsequently, new buildings were developed and the big house was sold to raise funds after dividing it into three separate residential properties.



Between the Square and Orford House is the village hall, built in 1920 by Stansted firm H Levey & Sons and funded by the Tennants in memory of members of their family and other men from Ugley who died in the 1914-1918 War. The hall was badly damaged by a German bomb in 1941, but government compensation enabled it to be rebuilt and improved after the war. The village hall is well used for many social activities, the most famed being the regular meetings of the Ugley Women's Institute.

Between the village hall and Orford House, Pound Lane leaves the B1383 and meanders eastwards, passing Linnets Wood, much of which was planted in 1997, to the hamlet of Ugley Green. Here stands the pump that once served this part of the parish, together with a large puddingstone that used to be in the middle of the green.

The village school was built here at Ugley Green in 1848. It catered for 40 to 50 children, a number that was matched by London evacuees during the Second World War. It closed in the 1970s and was converted to residential accommodation.

The lane was extended from Ugley Green to Elsenham Station in the 1930s. That was also the time when mains water and electricity first came to the village. Not all "progress" has been welcomed, particularly the M11 motorway that cut through the parish in the 1970s, although this did significantly ease the volume of motor traffic on the Cambridge Road.



Despite the motorway, Ugley has preserved its rural charm and is full of delights such as those shown here: above, one of several 18th-century thatched cottages in Patmore End and then 17th-century Fieldgate Farmhouse. Below is 16th-century Parsonage Farmhouse.



Hospitality:

None – see adjacent parishes.

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 160, starting at Ugley village hall. The 4-mile route explores much of the parish.

Circular walk 148 starts from Rickling Green. Options of 7 miles or 5 include some of Ugley.

Circular walk 157 starts from Manuden and this 5 mile rural walk comes into Ugley.

Station walk 1 is an 11-mile circular route from/to Stansted Mountfitchet and includes Ugley.

Station walk 4 covers 7.5 miles from Stansted Mountfitchet to Newport stations, passing through Ugley.

Adjacent parishes:

Stansted Mountfitchet, Manuden, Berden, Quendon & Rickling, Widdington, Henham, Elsenham.

Links:

Parish Council: <https://ugleyparishcouncil.info/>

IWM interview with Nancy Tennant: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80016793>