



# The Hundred Parishes

## An introductory article about THE PELHAM BUCKLE

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One aim of The Hundred Parishes Society is to exchange information so that we might better appreciate our local heritage. We are hoping somebody may be able to shed further light on the name Pelham.

Emma Blowers, who wrote a history of Cold Christmas in the parish of Thundridge, is currently seeking more information on the Pelham family and also the “Pelham Buckle”. The buckle story goes back to the Hundred Years War when the English defeated the French at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. The French king, Jean II, was captured and the buckle of his sword belt was awarded to one of the English knights, John Pelham. The design of the buckle was adopted as the Pelham family emblem and it appears on several buildings and milestones around the former Pelham family estates in Sussex. Three Sussex churches have ‘Pelham towers’ donated by the family; until 2022, there was a pub in Crawley, Sussex called The Pelham Buckle.

The Pelham family may have originated from the area of Hertfordshire which appeared in the Domesday Book of 1086 as simply Pelham. Part of Pelham became known as Burnt, or Brent, Pelham after a disastrous fire in the 12th century and we now also have Furneux Pelham and Stocking Pelham.

Emma’s interest arose from a “Pelham Buckle” stone on the tower of the ruined Thundridge Old Church. All that remains of the church, its tower, is pictured on the right. The stone, shown below, is positioned about eight feet off the ground on the south wall.

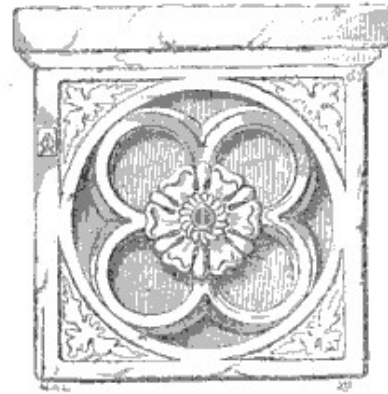


The carving, more than 1 foot square, seems to be a Pelham Buckle and is believed to date from around 1400AD.

A sketch of the stone appeared in an article published in 1853. It is shown here.

Although the stone is now more eroded, it is still clearly visible.

So, getting to the point of this story, does anyone have any information about the Pelham family in our area or know of any other local appearance of the Pelham Buckle motif? If so, please let us know by using the Feedback form on our website, [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk)



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Any comments or suggestions for improvement may be submitted by using the Feedback form on the website. The website has many short articles on various aspects of The Hundred Parishes, as well as introductions to individual parishes and to a number of local celebrities, and an extensive What's On section. More than a hundred walk route descriptions can be freely downloaded, with each of the hundred parishes featuring in at least one walk.