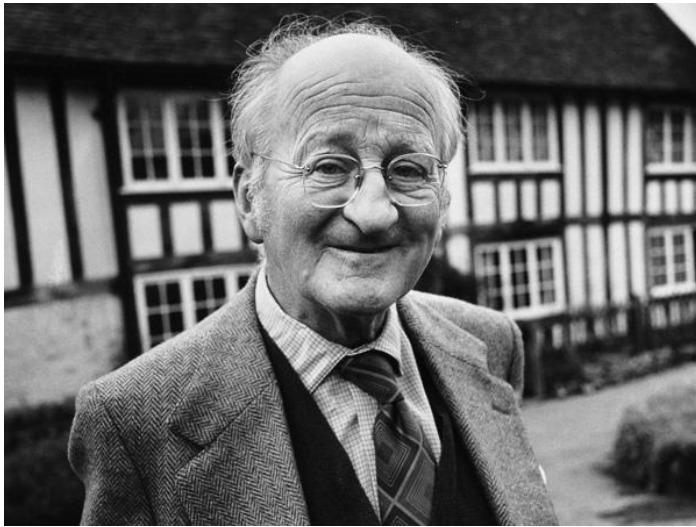




The Hundred Parishes

An introductory article about
NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

The Hundred Parishes has an exceptional depth of ancient buildings. More than 6,000 are “listed”, meaning that they appear on the National Heritage List for England. Each property listing includes a description and many of these descriptions take their text from the guide books produced by one exceptional man, Nikolaus Pevsner.



Pevsner, an architectural historian, was born in 1902 in Leipzig, Germany, the son of a Russian-Jewish fur merchant. In 1933 he moved to England and settled in Hampshire. Following the outbreak of World War II, he was taken to an internment camp but was released three months later.

Work on his series of architectural guide books, *The Buildings of* England, began in 1945. The edition covering the whole of Hertfordshire was published in 1953; Essex and Cambridgeshire followed in 1954.

Most of the ancient architecture in *The Hundred Parishes* is mentioned by Pevsner in these three editions, either in general terms or in great detail. One example in Essex is Manuden (shown here), which he describes as follows: “Manuden has a specially pretty, short village street with timber framed cottages with oversailing upper floors near the church and a small assortment of Georgian houses a little further west”.





Also in Essex, he describes Arkesden as “A pretty small village by a tiny stream”.

Watts Folly, shown here, stands between Arkesden Church and Wicken Water.



Henham has the accolade “Specially pretty village green” and in Newport “The village street is of uncommon charm”.

One of Henham’s many greens is shown on the left, with Newport’s The Old Vicarage below.



In Cambridgeshire, Pevsner described Ickleton's church, shown on the right.

Referring to the interior, he said, "As a parish church interior of the Early Norman decades, Ickleton has few equals in the country. It is far too little known".



In his introduction to Buntingford, he states "The little town possesses an enjoyable High Street, one architecturally very remarkable church and the stateliest almshouses in the county".

These are the almshouses that were founded in 1684 by Seth Ward who served as bishop of Exeter and then of Salisbury.



Also in Hertfordshire, Pevsner notes "The main street in Much Hadham is a delight from beginning to end". Pictured below are Laylock Cottage, on the left, and The White House, both in Much Hadham's High Street.



At Great Amwell, Pevsner says, “The space north of the church is one of the most delightful spots in Herts”. He was referring to the New River and its islands, pictured here.



Nikolaus Pevsner was granted British citizenship in 1946, appointed CBE in 1953 and knighted in 1969 “for services to art and architecture”.

In total, he was responsible for 46 county-wide guides. In 1957 he was a founding member of the Victoria Society, a charity for the study and protection of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. He was appointed chairman in 1960.

Pevsner died in Hampstead, London in 1983.

www.hundredparishes.org.uk has more than a hundred walk routes whose descriptions draw attention to some of the listed buildings along the way – many of them were visited and described by Nikolaus Pevsner.

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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, introductions to individual parishes and to local celebrities, as well as 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.