



# The Hundred Parishes

## An introductory article about RELIGIOUS HOUSES

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Before the “dissolution of the monasteries”, instigated in 1536 by King Henry VIII, the Hundred Parishes area had its fair share of religious houses – monasteries, convents, abbeys and priories. The remains of some can still be seen today.



Tilty Abbey is one. It was founded for Cistercian monks in 1153 and prospered mainly due to the wool trade before being dissolved. In 1220 a chapel was built outside the abbey gates for use by visitors. The chapel survives and today functions as Tilty's parish church – shown here on the left.

Little remains of the other abbey buildings but the site can be visited; interpretation boards inform the visitor and give an artist's impression of what the site would have looked like.





Little Dunmow Priory was founded in 1104 and was home to Augustinian monks until the Dissolution. Most of the priory church was demolished but the southern aisle survived. It is now used as the parish church.

The brick turret was added in the 1870s on the base of a former tower.

Several of our larger hospitality venues were developed on sites of former religious houses: Hanbury Manor in Thundridge (below on the left) was once Poles Convent, and Down Hall in Hatfield Heath (below on the right) evolved from a 14th-century monastery.



Leez Priory in Felsted (pictured on the right) became the home of Richard Rich through his leading role in dissolving the monasteries.





In Saffron Walden, Audley End House was built on the site of Walden Abbey, founded in the 12th century and whose lands were granted in 1538 to Sir Thomas Audley, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor. The present house was built some 60 years later by his grandson Thomas Howard.



While we tend to think of religious houses as a bygone era, Pleshey has one that is relatively new and active: its House of Retreat, shown here, was founded as a convent in the early 1900s and became the first Diocesan Retreat House in England in 1927.

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