The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

CHRISHALL

Location: 5 miles west of Saffron Walden. **Ordnance Survey grid square**: TL4439.
Postcode: SG8 8QL. **County**: Essex. **District**: Uttlesford. **Access**: Off B1039.
Buses: school buses 31 to Cambridge and 444 to Saffron Walden in school term time. Also covered by the DaRT service: https://www.travelessex.co.uk/dart-landing/dart-299
Population: 507 in 2001, 555 in 2011, 580 in 2021.

Chrishall (pronounced *Chris - Hall* with emphasis on the *Chris*) is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The village name has other derivatives in some historical references such as *Christhale*, *Chrisshall* and others.

Chrishall lies in the far northwest of Essex, with half of the parish boundary also being the border with Cambridgeshire. It is also close to the Essex border with Hertfordshire. The parish is notable for the fact that it includes the highest point in Essex, 147 metres (482 feet) above sea level.

Although the parish is home to fewer than 600 residents it has a well-maintained Grade I-listed church as well as a pre-infant and junior school. The former Methodist chapel has been converted into a village hall.

As you enter the village, up Church Road after leaving the B1039 road from Saffron Walden, Holy Trinity Church is situated high on the hill to the right.

The original church dates back to the 12th century and, while little remains of the original fabric, the current building was constructed through the 13th to 15th centuries, with substantial renovation in the 19th.

The view back from the church includes this line of matching crosses and then 17th-century Church Cottage.

Inside the church, there are several interesting treasures including an ancient tombstone, the coat of arms of King George II who died in 1760, and a large copy of a Rubens painting.

A number of brasses record past events and people. One in memory of Sir John de la Pole and his wife, dating from 1380, can be seen near the entrance and is pictured on the left.

Opposite the entrance to the church car park (which invites walkers to leave their cars here) is Glebe Farmhouse, a timber-framed and plastered house dating from the 16th or 17th century. It is pictured below.

The main route through Chrishall village divides, where it meets the pub, into Church Road and High Street.

The pub, The Red Cow, pictured on the right, includes a barn that is believed to date from around 1500 AD and would therefore be the oldest building in the parish apart from the church. At one time, a small shop was situated in front of the Red Cow. The thatched barn is dominated by a thatch finial of a cow, shown below.

The location and elevation of the village have probably contributed to its continued relative seclusion. It has the feel of a village community, no more so than in springtime when all the lanes have vibrant displays of daffodils.

Jigneys Meadow is home to the Chrishall cricket team, and here a pleasant summer's afternoon can be whiled away listening to the sound of leather on willow.

Chrishall has several small ponds. Original ground water pumps remain dotted about the village, harking back to a simpler time.

The range of domestic properties within the parish includes many traditional thatched cottages, along with flint and brick constructions nestling next to more modern developments sympathetically positioned around the village's lanes. A selection is shown below . . .

The photo on the left illustrates how far can be seen from Chrishall's high ground – with the white buildings of Cambridge on the horizon about 10 miles away.

Chrishall parish is crossed by the Icknield Way, a broad pathway that is thought to be the oldest road in Britain, and also by the Harcamlow Way, a 20th-century route. The Icknield Way generally follows the higher ground and offers views in all directions. Two of the Hundred Parishes walks listed below, numbers 123 and 164, follow part of the Harcamlow Way and the two views below can be seen from Walk 123.

The view on the left is of Chrishall Church from the Harcamlow Way, approaching from the south. The photo on the right looks out from Chrishall Church.

There is a wealth of information about Chrishall's past on the Chrishall History website – see the link below.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CHRISHALL

Hospitality: The Red Cow, SG8 8RN - 01763 838792 - https://www.theredcow.com/

Hundred Parishes Society walks can be downloaded from this website. They include two circular routes that start from the parking area at Chrishall Church: number 123 covers 8.1 miles to the south and west and number 164 covers 4.5 miles to the north and east. The website also has two "quiet lane" walks that avoid footpaths and explore Chrishall: number 323 (2.8 miles) that starts in the village and 337 (12 miles) that includes Chrishall in a wide loop through five parishes.

Adjacent parishes:
Elmdon & Wenden Lofts, Langley, Great & Little Chishill, Heydon, Duxford, Ickleton.

Links:
Parish Council: https://www.chrishall-pc.gov.uk/our-parish-council/
Chrishall History: https://chrishallessex.co.uk/
Recorders of Uttlesford History: www.recordinguttlesfordhistory.org.uk/chrishall/chrishall.html

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This page, last updated 14 March 2026, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk