



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

ALBURY



Location: 4 miles northwest of Bishop's Stortford. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4324.
Postcode: SG11 2LW. **Access:** north off A120. **Bus:** 20 (Mon-Sat) to Bishop's Stortford.
County: Hertfordshire. **District:** East Herts. **Population:** 595 in 2011.

Albury is an attractive parish lying between Little Hadham and the A120 to the south and Furneux Pelham to the north. It is a very scattered parish with more than 50 listed buildings and includes the hamlets of Albury, Albury End, Clapgate, Gravesend, Patmore Heath and Upwick Green. It is recorded in early documents as *Eldeberei*.

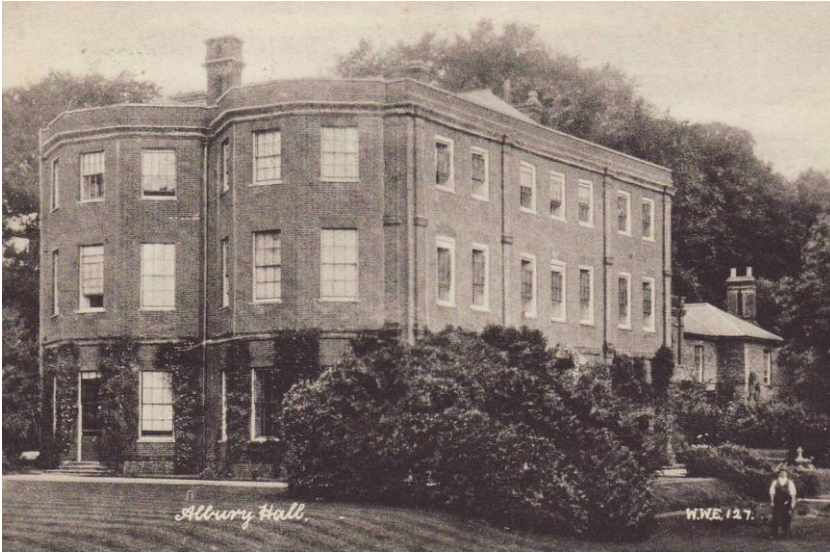


Albury Church was built in the 13th century but of this period only the chancel remains. It is thought to have older foundations. The nave dates from the 14th century and the rood screen from the 15th. The tower with its Hertfordshire Spike was erected in the 15th century and contains a fine peal of six bells – three from the 16th century and three from the 20th. In the 19th century the vestry and organ chamber were added. The effigies in the north aisle are thought to be of Sir Walter de la Lee and his wife Margaret; he died in 1396. The costume and armour worn by the figures are considered to be fine examples of the period of King Richard II who reigned from 1377 to 1399.

Albury once boasted no less than five public houses but these have gradually disappeared. The buildings of the Fox, Labour in Vain, Royal Oak and Jolly Butchers have been converted to private houses. Now the only one that remains is the Catherine Wheel in Gravesend. The original thatched pub dated to about 1765 but in 2004 it was completely destroyed by fire. Three years later it reopened in the present modern building, shown below.



The lane beside the Catherine Wheel leads to Patmore Heath, where many of Albury's listed buildings skirt a 7 hectare - 18 acre - Site of Special Scientific Interest ("SSSI"). It is a fine example of grass heathland, now a scarce habitat in the southeast of England, and is home to many rare species of animals and plants. In particular it is noted for having all three native species of newt: great crested, smooth and palmate. The heath is managed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.



To the west of the parish once stood Albury Hall, a three-storey manor house built around 1780 after an earlier house was demolished. The Hall and its estate were bought and sold fairly regularly, whilst continuing to provide employment for many generations of Albury residents. The army requisitioned the house and grounds during World War II, and it was demolished around 1950. Some of the farm buildings and the walled garden have survived. The

estate includes a number of woodlands that were given unusual but topical names at the time of their planting, each apparently relating to a disastrous event in British history – Ypres (during WWI), Munich (before WWII) and Suez (1956).

The Harcamlow Way long-distance footpath crosses the parish from West to East, passing close to the site of Albury Hall, crossing the River Ash and then the road between Clapgate and Gravesend, skirting Patmore Heath and passing Bogs Wood on its way to Farnham.

In springtime, Bogs Wood is carpeted in wild daffodils, a wonderful and unusual sight.



This undulating 3 mile (5 km) stretch of the Harcamlow Way, some of which is pictured above, forms part of Hundred Parishes walk number 18 – see below.

Hospitality:

The Catherine Wheel – 01279 771191 - www.thecatherinewheelalbury.co.uk

Included in Hundred Parishes walk:

18: Between Ware and Stansted Mountfitchet stations (17 miles).

Adjacent parishes: Little Hadham, Braughing, Furneux Pelham, Manuden, Farnham.

Links:

Parish Council: www.alburyvillage.org.uk

Patmore Heath: www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/patmore-heath

Photos & history: www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/places/places-a/albury/albury.htm