



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

FLITCH GREEN



Location: 2 miles east of Great Dunmow. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL6620.

Postcode: CM6 3FF. **Access:** B1417. National Cycle Route 16 (Flitch Way).

Buses: 133 Stansted Airport – Braintree and 16 Chelmsford - Wethersfield

County: Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Population:** 2,190 in 2011.

Flitch Green is something of an anomaly among our Hundred Parishes. It is tiny and it is very new. In fact it is the smallest parish in area and the most recently constituted parish of the hundred – and without doubt quite different from any other. Established officially in only 2009, it has nothing of the history of its surrounding parishes, but whence it came and whither it goes is a rather intriguing question.

Flitch Green started life as a housing development in 2000 in an area just half a mile south-east of the village of Little Dunmow in mid-Essex. An estate which came to be known as Oakwood Park, it was built on the site of a former sugar beet factory. The sugar beet industry developed as a result of shortages of sugar during the First World War, which awoke the nation to its need for its own domestic supply. A number of sugar beet processing factories were built in East Anglia during the 1920s, of which Felsted Sugar Beet Factory was one.



Although not actually in the parish of Felsted, it took its name from the close proximity of the parish and large number of workers employed from that area. It opened in 1926 and was productive from the outset, reaching its peak of production in the mid-1960s. However, entry into the Common Market and the increased international competition that ensued spelled its eventual demise. Production declined through the 1970s and it was shut down in 1981. Standing derelict for many years, the factory was finally demolished in 1999 and the new build started in 2001. Extensive consultation among the residents during 2005 and 2006 established overwhelming support for a separate parish to be formed, to give a distinctive voice to the community of Oakwood Park. It was awarded parish status in late 2008, becoming Flitch Green in the process.

The rather curious name is taken from the well-known Flitch Trials associated historically with the adjacent parishes of Great and Little Dunmow. The Dunmow Flitch is a side of bacon which is traditionally awarded to a local couple who have been married for at least a year and a day and who can offer the most convincing claim never to have had an argument during that time. The ceremony can be traced back as far as the 12th century. It has waxed and waned over the centuries since that time, but is alive and well today and celebrated every four years in a leap year in the village of Great Dunmow.

The development at Flich Green now has a primary school (pictured here), which is very proud of its transition to an academy in 2011, and a newly built community hall.



At its northern edge it is bounded by The Flich Way, the country park and 15-mile footpath which runs between Bishop's Stortford and Braintree. So, despite

the modern urban patina of the village itself, the wild-life sites, ancient woodland and the Victoriana of the old Braintree railway line are right next door for any who wish to avail themselves of them. It may be new, but it is earthed in history.



The newness of Flich Green among its many neighbours, most of which have been parishes for centuries, begs an interesting question. Our discussions of every other parish in this compilation stand looking back. We usually know a little (or sometimes a lot) about their origins, and we know what they have become. Our standpoint on Flich Green is unique - to be there at the beginning and to look into the future. What will it become?

Adjacent parishes: Barnston, Little Dunmow, Felsted, Great Waltham.

Links:

Parish Council: www.essexinfo.net/flitch-green-parish-council

The Dunmow Flich Trials: www.dunmowflitchtrials.co.uk

The Flich Way: www.visitessex.com/what-to-do/Flich_Way.aspx

Friends of the Flich Way: www.friends-of-the-flitch-way.org.uk

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