



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

MANUDEN



Location: 1 mile northwest of Stansted Mountfitchet. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4926. **Postcode** CM23 1DD. **Access:** west off B1383. National Cycle Route 11. **Bus:** Shopper service only to B Stortford (M, Thur, Sat). **County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Population:** 677 in 2011.

Magghedana appears in the Domesday Book of 1086, its name probably Saxon and meaning “Valley of the people of Mana”. Manuden village lies on the flood plain of the River Stort, which flows from north to south close to the eastern parish boundary. The parish extends westwards to higher ground and the border with Hertfordshire. The tiny, isolated hamlets of Uppend and Mallows Green, in the southwest of the parish, are accessible only by a single country lane.

A quotation from Nikolaus Pevsner, the 20th- century architecture historian, provides a suitable introduction: “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”. Here is one section of The Street, as viewed from either end.



The 17th-century building on the right was a maltings until the early 20th century before being converted into a house. Most of the centre of Manuden is protected as a Conservation Area and almost every individual building along The Street is listed. The parish has a total of 72 listings, all Grade II except the church at Grade II*. Whilst the overall number is exceptionally high, the lack of higher ratings may be due to the fact that almost every one has been somewhat modernised to give the cared-for look that prevails today.



The church, which originated in the 12th century, was mostly demolished and rebuilt in the 1860s. Its most outstanding internal feature is the ornately carved 15th-century oak choir screen. Also inside is an elaborate wall tablet commemorating Manuden’s most famous former resident, Sir William Waad (1546 – 1623), who is probably buried inside the church.

Waad (pronounced *Wade*) was a high-ranking official during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. From 1605 to 1613 he was Lieutenant of the Tower of London, where he was the custodian of prisoners who included Sir Walter Raleigh and Guy Fawkes.

Waad supervised the interrogation and torture of Fawkes and his fellow conspirators who were then hung, drawn and quartered for their part in the "Gunpowder Plot", a failed attempt to blow up Parliament. When not in London, Waad lived at Battles Hall, a mile north of Manuden village.

Manuden seems to have a long history of involvement with activities now regarded as barbaric. An early Manuden vicar, Thomas Bagley, was found guilty of heresy and burnt at the stake in London in 1431. Sir William Waad's grandson, Captain William Waad, was murdered close to Battles Hall in 1677. And in 1789 Richard Savill was found guilty of murdering another Manuden man and hanged on Manuden Downs in sight of his mother's cottage. In the 19th century, when there was widespread protest by farm labourers who were unhappy with their pay and fearful of the increase in mechanisation, Manuden had one of the worst records for rural arson. Targets were usually haystacks and barns, but in 1888 Manuden Hall was almost completely destroyed by a fire in another suspected case of "incendiarism". The rebuilt Hall retains just the original chimney stack and some of the Tudor brick gables.

Life is now more peaceful and it is safe to visit and view the parish's many fine buildings. There is even a stretch of listed early 19th-century wrought iron railings on either side of the road outside Manuden House, whose grounds are dominated by giant Wellingtonia trees planted in 1855. In the 19th century the owner, John Thomas, moved the road further away from the house and demolished several cottages that spoil his view, replacing them with a row of six pairs of almshouse cottages south of the church.



Benrose, the 16th-century house with exposed timber-framing shown here, stands beside the churchyard. It was once a series of four small cottages.

The parish website (see link below) has a description of a walk through the village, with a more detailed history. A good selection of postcard images shows subtle changes over the last hundred years. There is further excellent coverage in the Conservation Area appraisal (see below).

Most of the parish is still agricultural, with five working farms, but today's Manudenites are far more likely to be

commuters than agricultural workers. The village is proud of its primary school, built in 1877, and has several active organisations including a cricket club and history society. A new community centre was opened in 2014 as part of a residential extension to the north of the village.

Hospitality:

Yew Tree – 01279 814279 - www.yewtreemanuden.com

Included in Hundred Parishes walks:

1: Circular route from Stansted Mountfitchet railway station (11 miles).

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

Adjacent parishes: Farnham, Aldbury, Furneux Pelham, Berden, Ugley, Stansted Mountfitchet.

Links:

Parish Council: www.manuden.org.uk - see particularly: Organisations – Local History.

Conservation Area appraisal: link from www.uttlesford.gov.uk/caa

Manuden and Berden History Society (including publications): www.manuden.org.uk/mhs.asp

History: www.recordinguttlesfordhistory.org.uk/manuden/manuden.html

Further reading:

Sir William Waad, Lieutenant of the Tower and the Gunpowder Plot, Fiona Bengsten, 2005, Trafford Publishing.