



# The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

## WHITE RODING



**Location:** 8 miles southeast of Bishop's Stortford. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL5613.

**Postcode:** CM6 1RJ. **Access:** A1060. Bus: 59 Harlow - Chelmsford

**County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Population:** 327 in 2011.

White Roding is one of a cluster of eight settlements in west Essex, collectively known as The Rodings. The northern four Rodings fall within the Hundred Parishes. The Rodings is believed to be the largest group of villages in the country to bear a common name, having originated as a single community in Anglo-Saxon times as the Hrodingas, after its chieftain Hroda. It appears in the Domesday record as Rodinges in the Hundred of Dunmow, but by the 14th century the main boundaries of the eight villages had been established. The river Roding, also named from Hroda, flows south from its source in Dunmow and meanders through most of the Rodings parishes on its way to the Thames.

The Essex historian Peter Foley had this to say about the area:

'This is indeed an enchanted place, this land of The Rodings, a place of sudden hills and unsuspected hollows, seldom flat but gently undulating. He who seeks contentment, here let him go. He will need no better company than his thoughts. Nor will he find reason to doubt the wisdom of a Saxon's choice.'



White Roding is the largest and the most westerly of the Rodings parishes and has in bygone centuries been known as Magna Rodyngs and Blanche Rong. The 'White' of White Roding is thought to have derived from the parish church of St Martin, a flint rubble 11th-century church whose tower was constructed using a paler colour of rubble than that which predominated in the area as a whole. Craftsmanship from every century is represented in this building, from medieval stone carving, through 15th-century timber-framed porch and 16th-century embattled tower, to the relatively modern 19th-century vestry. St Martin's is tucked away off the main road through the village and not immediately obvious, but there is much to commend a visit, and it clearly remains a focal point of village life.



The parish of White Roding now embraces a further Roding which once stood separately to the north. This was Morrell Roding (see 'Further reading' below), named after a lord of the manor and owner of Cammas Hall, now a fruit farm. Morrell Roding was recognised as a separate entity well into the 20th century, but there are no obvious indicators of its presence today.



In addition to St Martin's Church and the 16th-century Cammas Hall, there are a further 46 listed buildings in and around the parish of White Roding, a good number for such a small area. Most are Grade II or II\* and a large number of them are moated. One such is the lovely 16th-century Colville Hall, originally a manor house, now a wedding venue. There are some beautiful houses and cottages to be viewed across the parish, and many examples of thatching, but probably the most distinctive building is the windmill, built in 1877 on a site occupied by an earlier post mill since 1609. Its working life came to an end in the 1930s, and probably its greatest modern-day claim to fame is that it was briefly owned by the actor Sir Michael Redgrave.

As with all the Roding parishes, there is an abundance of footpaths and quiet lanes in White Roding for walkers. Those requiring a challenge might want to try part (or possibly all) of the Three Forests Way, a 60-mile long-distance path linking the ancient woodlands of Hatfield, Hainault and Epping. The path bisects the parish north-west to south-east from its origins in nearby Hatfield Forest.

Refreshment en route can be obtained from Bretts Bar Bistro, on the site of Bretts Farm Shopping Village, or the Black Horse pub, both on the Chelmsford to Bishop's Stortford road.

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### Hospitality:

The Black Horse, Chelmsford Rd, CM6 1RF - 01279 876298

Bretts Bar Bistro, Chelmsford Rd, CM6 1RF - 01279 876571 - [www.brettsbarbistro.co.uk](http://www.brettsbarbistro.co.uk)

### Adjacent Hundred Parishes parishes:

Hatfield Heath, Hatfield Broad Oak, Aythorpe Roding, Leaden Roding, Matching.

### Links:

Parish Council: [www.essexinfo.net/whiterodingparishcouncil](http://www.essexinfo.net/whiterodingparishcouncil)

Three Forests Way:

[www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?path\\_name=Three+Forests+Way](http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Three+Forests+Way)

### Further reading:

White Roding Parish Plan: obtainable from the Parish Council website (above).

*The Rodings: Eight Ancient Parishes of Essex and a Lost Hamlet*, Peter Foley - downloadable from: [www.4devines.com/the\\_rodings/](http://www.4devines.com/the_rodings/)

*Lost in Time: A Short History of Morrell Roding*, Ken Searles – downloadable from:

[www.essexinfo.net/aythorpe-roding/roding-memories/morell-roding/](http://www.essexinfo.net/aythorpe-roding/roding-memories/morell-roding/)