



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

STOCKING PELHAM



Location: 5 miles northwest of Stansted Mountfitchet. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4529. **Postcode** SG9 0HT. **Access:** off B1038.

Buses: 27 (Monday & Wednesday) to Royston and 20 (Monday to Friday) to Bishop's Stortford.

County: Hertfordshire. **District:** East Herts.

Population: 162 in 2001 - 163 in 2011 - 195 in 2021.

The Domesday Book of 1086 refers to just one Pelham, but by 1300 there were three - adjacent parishes on Hertfordshire's border with Essex: Brent Pelham in the north, Furneux Pelham in the south and Stocking Pelham in between. Stocking Pelham is the smallest. Indeed, it is one of the smallest parishes within the Hundred Parishes with an area of around one square mile. The name Pelham may originally have meant the homestead of a man called Peola, while Stocking seems to have come from an Old English word meaning "made of logs".



Each of the three Pelhams has a parish church dedicated to St Mary. Stocking Pelham's, pictured here, dates from the 14th century.

The church is quite small, no doubt reflecting its need, for Stocking Pelham's population has probably never varied greatly from the figures recorded in recent censuses.

The church was originally built of flint, although part of the chancel, the near section in this photo, was rebuilt in brick in the 19th century.



The nave, beyond, was originally the same width as the chancel but was enlarged in the 14th or 15th century. The roof was raised and the south wall was moved out, as can be seen in the photo above, while the north walls of the nave and chancel (out of the photo) remained in line.

The south-facing porch, pictured on the left, was probably added somewhat later.

A stained-glass nave window in the north wall probably dates from the 14th century and contains fragments of glass from that time.

The bell tower houses just one bell, thought to have been cast in the 15th century. Its Latin inscription declares that its business is to drive away all evil things.

Behind the church is Stocking Pelham Hall, today the location of several small businesses, and a 17th-century barn that is much larger than the church. The barn, which has been converted to provide residential accommodation, is one of the parish's seventeen listed buildings.

The Hall and church stand on one of only two roads that pass through the parish – both minor. The road past the church comes from Brent Pelham in the west. Five hundred metres further east it meets Ginns Road which comes from Furneux Pelham and Albury in the south and then bears east to Berden.

The two roads meet at what may be described as the centre of the parish, close to the village hall.

For many years, another focal point of the village stood beside this road junction - the Cock Inn.

This centuries-old thatched pub was destroyed in a blaze in 2008. The former landmark is pictured here.

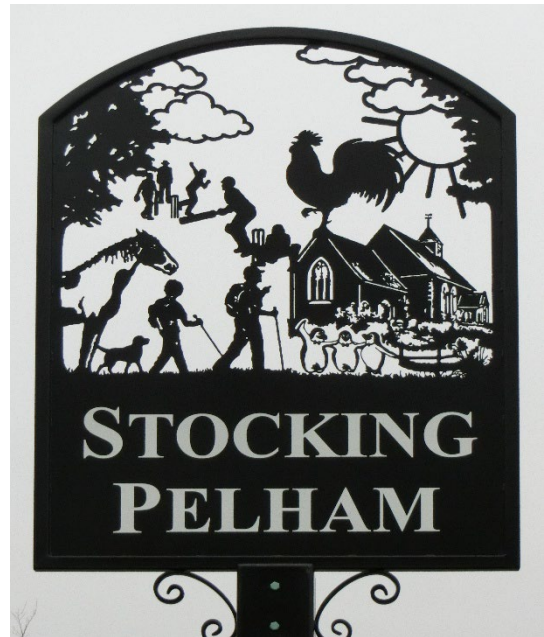


Planning permission was granted for the construction of a replacement public house. The new “pub” building, looking remarkably like a house, remained unoccupied. A proposed change of use to a residential dwelling brought a flood of objections and was rejected by the planning authority in 2017. It is to be hoped that Stocking Pelham will soon regain its local.



Beside the road junction, the former telephone box has been converted, like many others, into a miniature lending library.

A village sign was installed at the junction in 2024, largely funded by The Hundred Parishes Society.



Just around the corner, in Crabbs Lane, is the 17th-century thatched cottage shown on the right, Silver Birches.

Crabbs Lane leads to Crabb's Green, an area of common land.



Stocking Pelham has a good variety of building styles going back to the 17th century and possibly earlier. A selection is shown here. Immediately below on the left is 18th-century Old Rectory Cottage with Grove Cottages on the right, probably 20th century.



Crabbs Green Farm is shown below on the left and The Cottage, also at Crabbs Green, on the right. Both probably date back to the 17th century.



The photo on the right was taken at the start of the drive and public bridleway that lead to Stocking Farm, a 17th-century farmhouse shown below. It has been renovated since it was known as Rooks Farm in the 1970s.



This became a much-visited crime scene when the temporary owners, the Hosein brothers from Trinidad, were thought to have kidnapped Mrs Muriel McKay and demanded £1 million for her release. She was the wife of a newspaper executive and had apparently been mistaken for the wife of the newspaper owner, Rupert Murdoch.

The kidnap and demand for a ransom went terribly wrong and Mrs McKay was murdered. Her kidnappers were jailed for life. Her body has never been found despite a number of searches here and elsewhere.

In the southeast corner of Stocking Pelham parish, just beyond Crabb's Green, there is a rather unsightly, but important, installation that straddles the boundary between the Hertfordshire parish of Stocking Pelham and its neighbouring Essex parish, Berden.

On the perimeter fence is the unusual sight of two county signs side-by-side and facing in the same direction.

The fence guards a major National Grid electricity substation. It receives power and redistributes it throughout much of the Hundred Parishes along six high voltage overhead transmission lines whose pylons stride across the countryside.



A battery storage unit was installed next to the substation in 2017 and connected to the National Grid; at that time it was the National Grid's most powerful battery. In 2026, the website for Pelham Storage claims that it is capable of powering 110,000 homes for an hour – more homes than in the whole of the Hundred Parishes.

Despite its modest size, Stocking Pelham might claim to be the centre of power for the Hundred Parishes!

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STOCKING PELHAM

Adjacent parishes: Furneux Pelham, Brent Pelham, Berden.

Hundred Parishes Society walks include . . .

Circular walk 143 which starts in Berden and covers 5 miles including much of Stocking Pelham.

The route could be joined in Stocking Pelham at the top of page 3 of the description.

Publication: *Stocking Pelham – Facts, Fiction & Foul Deeds* by David Bailey, 2000.

Links:

Parish Council: <http://www.stockingpelhampc.org.uk/>

Photo of Cock pub before it was destroyed by fire: www.geograph.org.uk/photo/209179

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