

THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

The 19th century was a period of great railway development. Several railways in The Hundred Parishes no longer exist although they played an important role during their hundred-year lifetime.

The Saffron Walden Railway was constructed in 1865. It branched off the London-Cambridge main line and ran from Audley End Station to Saffron Walden. In 1866 it was extended to Bartlow, to link up with the Stour Valley Railway. Following loss of passengers and freight from rail onto road, a report in 1964 by Sir Richard Beeching identified many lines that were now deemed uneconomic; many stations and miles of track were decommissioned, including the Saffron Walden line.

In Hertfordshire, a line ran from St. Margarets to Buntingford, including stations at Braughing, Hadham, Standon and West Mill. The Buntingford Line was closed to passengers in 1964 and goods trains a year later. Buntingford Station, off Aspenden Road, is now a private residence.

Braughing station opened in 1863 and closed in 1964. It too is now a private residence but retains many of the original features including the platform, signal box and signals.

Another line ran from Bishop's Stortford via Dunmow to Braintree. Much of this is now the Flich Way Country Park, a 15 mile route that was opened in 1994 and is largely maintained by a group of volunteers, Friends of the Flich Way. It is used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists and is part of National Cycle Network Route 16. The demise of the original rail line can't be blamed on Beeching - it closed in 1952 for financial reasons.

Our website www.hundredparishes.org.uk includes a fuller exploration of local railways under the Articles section, while the Walks section includes routes from current railway stations – plus a new series of Quiet Lane walks that do not use footpaths.