

THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

Since March, getting out in the countryside has been greatly encouraged.

Successive generations have shaped this fertile land. They have planted hedges and cut wood from ancient, coppiced woodlands, tended animals, planted orchards and harvested honey from bees. Profiting from this productive land, many constructed beautiful buildings that reflected pride in their locality. Today, a significant number of these are listed buildings. Our rich architectural tapestry is brilliantly recorded in *The Hundred Parishes: An Introduction*. There are a few copies still available by mail order from the Society's website or from local bookshops and Tourist Information Centres.

Museum collections of assorted artefacts and documents add another dimension to the human history of the area. Saffron Walden Museum opened in 1835 and houses a real treasure trove of historical and other material relating to the local area. A recent grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund is enabling the development of plans to attract new visitors to the museum and adjacent castle.

Smaller museums hold collections of agricultural implements, local artefacts and archive material. The Grade II* building of the Forge Museum in Much Hadham houses a collection of metal tools while striking medieval wall paintings reveal details of Tudor fashion. The Ashdon Village Museum has exhibits about life in the 20th century and the curator is updating information on the family trees of seventy local residents and preparing displays in anticipation of re-opening in the future.

We look forward to the time when our museums can safely reopen. Meanwhile, we can enjoy our heritage and celebrate the past by continuing to explore outdoors. With regular additions of new walks to the Society's website, we can use these descriptive routes, some as short as 1 mile, to explore the cultural landscapes that make up the Hundred Parishes.

Tricia Moxey, Trustee.

Photos:

Ashdon Village Museum

Barkway High Street

Forge Museum, Much Hadham

Little Dunmow – Barnston footpath

Saffron Walden Castle

Saffron Walden Museum