



The Hundred Parishes

An introduction to

ARKESDEN



Location: 4 miles southwest of Saffron Walden. **Ordnance Survey grid square:** TL4834.

Postcode: CB11 4BX. **County:** Essex. **District:** Uttlesford. **Access:** B1039. National Cycle Route 11. **Rail:** 3 miles from Audley End Station. **Bus** No regular bus other than daily school bus.

Population: 363 in 2001, 366 in 2011, 380 in 2021.



The picturesque village of Arkesden, like so many in the Hundred Parishes, is steeped in history, with evidence of settlement here since the Bronze Age. It appears as Archesdana in the Domesday Book. Today, it has more than 30 Grade II listed buildings, many of them thatched and several dating from the 17th century.

Arkesden is considered one of the prettiest villages in Essex. Wicken Water meanders between weeping willows along the length of the village, passing thatched

cottages and the part-thatched Axe & Compasses pub, making its way to the River Cam. The Axe & Compasses, star-rated in many national food guides, was one of several local pubs to appear in the long-running television series *Lovejoy* in the 1980s and 1990s. Sadly, it was badly damaged by fire in March 2022 but was rebuilt and reopened 18 months later.

Opposite the pub, a redundant red telephone box has been turned into a library by the parish council. Villagers and visitors may borrow books and magazines.



There are many lovely footpath walks in and around the parish, linking to neighbouring parishes (including Hundred Parishes walk 11 – see below).

Much of the parish appears on both of the overlapping Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 194 and 195, but you will need both to be sure of covering all the footpath options.

Villagers and the parish council have developed a wildlife area out of an old council lay-by. Walkers can rest and take in the view across the fields. In spring, aconites, snowdrops, hellebores, periwinkle, violets, bluebells and hosts of golden daffodils can be seen around the village and its footpaths.



The handsome Church of St Mary the Virgin, dating back to the 13th century, stands on foundations of a Norman predecessor. It was extensively restored in 1855 and houses elaborate 17th century marble sculptured monuments. The most spectacular tomb is a colourful Elizabethan memorial to Richard Cutte who died in 1592 and his wife, Marye. St Mary's Church is a much-loved building, well cared for and well maintained by many Arkesden residents. Church services are generally held each Sunday at 10.00am and everyone is welcome.

In the church grounds stands Arkesden's war memorial – constructed from a huge puddingstone. Many more puddingstones are to be found around the village.

Due to its proximity to the M11 and Audley End station, which connects directly into Liverpool Street, Arkesden is home to many who commute to London. Farming and local trades, however, flourish and still have a great impact on the character of the village. Many young families live here and on most days local children can be heard playing in the playground and cricket nets on Millennium Field. Every summer there is an annual Sports Day and Camp Out for the village with cooked breakfast in the morning for all campers! Numerous communal events, on the field or in the village hall, keep villagers entertained especially throughout the spring and summer months.



Hospitality:

Axe and Compasses – 01799 550272 - www.axeandcompasses.co.uk and https://www.facebook.com/axeandcompasses?locale=en_GB

Included in Hundred Parishes walks:

Number 149: circular walk of 5 miles within Arkesden parish

Number 11: 10 miles between Newport and Audley End stations passes through Arkesden

Adjacent parishes:

Clavering, Langley, Elmdon & Wenden Lofts, Wendens Ambo, Wicken Bonhunt.

Links:

Parish Council and all village organisations: www.arkesdenvillage.com
