Historic churches in
Bedfordshire
Essex
Greater London
Hertfordshire

gaze at
divine riches

visitchurches.org.uk/daysout
go treasure hunting

The counties of Bedfordshire, Essex, Greater London and Hertfordshire are rich with beautiful historic churches.

Some display their treasures proudly: a handsome stone tower, beautiful wall paintings or an ancient doorway. Some are more subtle: the first glimpse of a Medieval tower through winter trees, or the face of an alabaster tomb figure, whose presence lights an entire church. Explore the historic churches just a stone’s throw from London and discover unforgettable and unexpected riches.

All the churches in this leaflet have been saved by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust is a charity that cares for more than 340 churches in England. This is one of 18 leaflets that highlight their history and treasures.

For more information on the other guides in this series, as well as interactive maps and downloadable information, see visitchurches.org.uk
**West Bergholt, St Mary Old Church**

*Essex*

**A harmonious jumble of centuries past**

St Mary’s is believed to have Saxon origins. Though much of the church is 14th century, reused Roman bricks pepper walls and buttresses, and the north wall is 1,000 years old. There are two intriguing Royal Arms – one a rare survivor from the reign of James I; the other in cast iron, made by a Colchester foundry in 1816. The atmosphere of St Mary’s is wonderfully, curiously still, with nothing but birdsong to break the peace.

**Hall Road, West Bergholt, Colchester CO6 3DU**

→ 3m NW of Colchester off B1508  
Nearest railway station: Colchester (3 miles)  
Open daily, 10am-4pm

**Stanstead Abbots, St James**

*Hertfordshire*

**A local treasure unchanged for 200 years**

St James’ has been a landmark for seven centuries. Built on a hillside above the river Lea, its embattled buttressed tower was a steering point for those on the water and a waymark for those on the ancient route to London. The unspoiled Georgian interior has unusually high box pews and a three-decker pulpit.

**Roydon Road, Stanstead Bury, Stanstead Abbots, Ware SG12 8JZ**

→ 4m SE of Ware on B181  
Nearest railway station: Roydon (1 mile)  
Open Jun-Sep, Sun 2.30pm-5pm

**Little Hormead, St Mary the Virgin**

*Hertfordshire*

**A thousand-year-old haven of tranquility**

Some churches have an atmosphere disproportionate to their size, and so it is with St Mary’s, a tiny church in a churchyard encircled by trees, frothy with white blossom in spring. A grand Norman chancel arch links the 11th-century nave to the 13th-century chancel. There are also two Norman doorways – the original door of one, made with wood and ironwork over 1,000 years old, stands preserved inside the church.

**Little Hormead, Buntingford SG9 0LS**

→ 3m E of Buntingford off B1368  
Nearest railway station: Bishops’s Stortford (7.6 miles)  
Open daily
More churches to enjoy

Each CCT church has been saved because it is special. We can’t do justice to them all in one leaflet, so visit our website for more information on those only briefly described here.

Bedfordshire

Edworth, St George

This serene, secluded and beautiful Medieval church has many exquisite treasures – including exceptional Medieval glass, wall paintings and choir stalls carved with animals.

Edworth, Biggleswade SG18 8QX

→ 3m SE of Biggleswade off A1

Key available from Edworth Manor Farm

Farndish, St Michael

The gorgeous Early English doorway of this tiny church alternates bands of orange ironstone with grey limestone – and it opens on to a tranquil and serene 800-year-old church.

Farndish, Wellingborough NN29 7HS

→ 4m SE of Wellingborough off B569

Open summer weekends; at other times keyholder nearby

Knotting, St Margaret of Antioch

A magnificent country church of Norman origin, with 17th-century silvery oak pews. The chancel gates were built in 1637 to stop the chancel being used for betting and cock fighting – a pastime for which the rector of the day was defrocked.

Melchbourne Road, Knotting MK44 1AF

→ 8m N of Bedford and 2m S of Rushden, off A6 Bedford Road

For opening times call 020 7213 0660 or visit our website

Little Barford, St Denys

Tucked away down a private drive, this Norman church lies in a lovely meadow surrounded by willows. Windows feature glorious Victorian glass from a 19th-century restoration.

Little Barford, St Neots PE19 6YE

→ 2m S of St Neots off B1043

Open daily

Lower Gravenhurst, St Mary

Much of this charming 14th-century ironstone church has been unaltered for over 600 years – including the nave and chancel, the screen and benches, and the king-post roof.

Lower Gravenhurst, Gravenhurst MK45 4JR

→ 10m SE of Bedford off A6

Open daily

Essex

Berechurch, St Michael (Audley Chapel)

The dashing figure of Sir Henry Audley (d. 1648) reclines stiffly in his armour in this Tudor burial chapel to the former church of St Michael. The monuments – and the superbly carved and coloured hammerbeam roof – are breathtaking.

Off Berechurch Hall Road, Berechurch, Colchester CO2 9NW

→ 1m S of Colchester between B1025 and B1026

Nearest railway station: Colchester Town (2 miles)

Keyholder nearby, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Chickney, St Mary

This remote, atmospheric Saxon church is set within a ring of trees, beside a lane leading to Chickney Hall. The 14th-century tower is capped by an elegant, pyramid-style shingled spire. Many furnishings and fittings are Medieval.

Chickney, Broxted, Dunmow CM6 2BY

→ 4m SW of Thaxted off B1051

Open daily

Colchester, St Leonard-at-the-Hyte

The Medieval door of this old port church still bears the holes for muskets to go through during the English Civil War. Screens, woodwork and stained glass date from the 19th century.

Hythe Hill, Colchester CO1 2NP

→ 1m E of the town centre on Hythe Hill

Nearest railway station: Hythe (200 yards)

Open Saturdays, 11am-3pm; at other times keyholder nearby

Colchester, St Martin

A spectacular Medieval church with a massive truncated tower. Its treasures include a wagon roof, Jacobean woodwork and a green man carving.

West Stockwell Street, Colchester CO11HN

→ Colchester city centre

Nearest railway station: Colchester Town (0.25 miles)

Open Sun-Fri, 10am-4pm; Sat 9am-dusk; at other times keyholder nearby
Greater London

Kingsbury, St Andrew Old Church
Possibly of Saxon origin, St Andrew’s nestles in a wooded grove south of its Victorian successor. It has wonderful brasses and memorials from the 16th to the 19th centuries.
Old Church Lane, Kingsbury, London NW9 8RU
➔ W of Brent reservoir, off Blackbird Hill A4088
Nearest tube station: Wembley Park (1 mile)

Little Stanmore, St Lawrence (Chandos Mausoleum)
This early 18th-century church is one of the glories of English Baroque architecture. The Trust cares for the lavish Chandos Mausoleum, added to the church in 1736 – it has a magnificent monument by master carver Grinling Gibbons.
Whitchurch Lane, Little Stanmore, London HA8 6RB
➔ Between High St (A5) and Honeypot Lane (A4140)
Nearest tube station: Canons Park (0.25 miles)

Hertfordshire

Buckland, St Andrew
A handsome 14th-century church lit with Victorian stained glass featuring New Testament scenes. Carved stone angels play instruments; mortals must content themselves with the beautifully decorated organ.
Rectory Close, Buckland, Buntingford SG9 0PT
➔ 4m S of Royston off A10

Oxhey Chapel
A tiny chapel built in 1612 that today stands amid 20th-century housing. It has many original 17th-century fittings, and restoration work in 1897 maintained its Jacobean atmosphere.
Gosforth Lane, South Oxhey, Watford WD19 7AX
➔ 2m S of Watford off B4542
Nearest tube and train station: Carpenders Park (400 yds)

Under the Commons and Guilds, please visit churches.org.uk/joinus to become a supporter.
Finding our churches

The map opposite shows the location of each of our churches in Bedfordshire, Essex, Greater London and Hertfordshire, together with other nearby attractions and CCT churches in adjoining counties.

Our website, visitchurches.org.uk, has much more detailed information to help you plan your trip.

Other local heritage attractions

- Colne Valley steam railway
- Colchester Castle Museum
- Hyde Hall Garden – Royal Horticultural Society
- Sutton House – Tudor house and courtyard
- Ashridge Estate – woodland and downland walks
- Woburn Abbey – house, gardens, safari park

Ordnance Survey ref

1. West Bergholt, St Mary Old Church (cover image) TL 954 281
2. Stanstead Abbotts, St James TL 399 111
3. Little Hormead, St Mary the Virgin TL 398 291
4. Edworth, St George TL 222 407
5. Farndish, St Michael SP 928 638
6. Knotting, St Margaret of Antioch TL 004 636
7. Little Barford, St Denys TL 178 569
8. Lower Gravenhurst, St Mary TL 11 352
9. Potsgrove, St Mary SP 951 298
10. Berechurch, St Michael (Audley Chapel) TL 993 219
11. Chickney, St Mary TL 575 280
12. Colchester, St Leonard-at-the-Hythe TM 013 247
13. Colchester, St Martin TL 996 255
14. East Horndon, All Saints TQ 636 894
15. Halstead, Holy Trinity TL 808 305
16. Little Bromley, St Mary the Virgin TM 092 278
17. Stansted Mountfitchet, St Mary TL 521 242
18. Vange, All Saints TQ 715 867
19. Willingale, St Andrew TL 596 073
20. Kingsbury, St Andrew Old Church TQ 206 868
21. Little Stanmore, St Lawrence TQ 18604 91369
22. Buckland, St Andrew TL 350 339
23. Oxhey Chapel TQ 113 934

CCT churches in neighbouring counties. For details, go to visitchurches.org.uk or see the relevant county guide.
Welcome to a thousand years of English history

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk.

We’ve saved over 340 beautiful buildings which attract more than 1.5 million visitors a year. With our help and with your support they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities.

Visiting information

Go to visitchurches.org.uk for detailed directions, local maps, information on disability access and up to date opening times.

For other enquiries, call us on 020 7213 0660 (Monday – Friday, office hours), or email welcome@tcct.org.uk

Please take care when visiting our churches. Floors may be uneven/worn or slippery, and interior lighting may be low.

Assistance dogs are welcome.

For full disabled access information, see our website.

Unsure about the ‘keyholder nearby’ access? You will find details at the church or call us in advance.

Parking is available at most churches – see the website for more details.

The closest station for each church is shown in the guide.

For bus routes, see traveline.org.uk

Cyclists welcome! For cycle routes, go to sustrans.org.uk

Help us save historic churches

The CCT needs to raise an additional £1.5million every year just to cover essential repairs. If you enjoy your visit please leave a donation at the church, or go to visitchurches.org.uk/donate for details of how you can help.

Find out more

Our website has a host of additional information that will help you plan and enjoy your visit, including:

- Interactive maps
- Filterable lists of all our churches
- Up to date opening times
- Visitor comments
- Downloadable guides
- Image galleries
- Event listings

Go to visitchurches.org.uk to access all this and more.