

ALPHAMSTONE

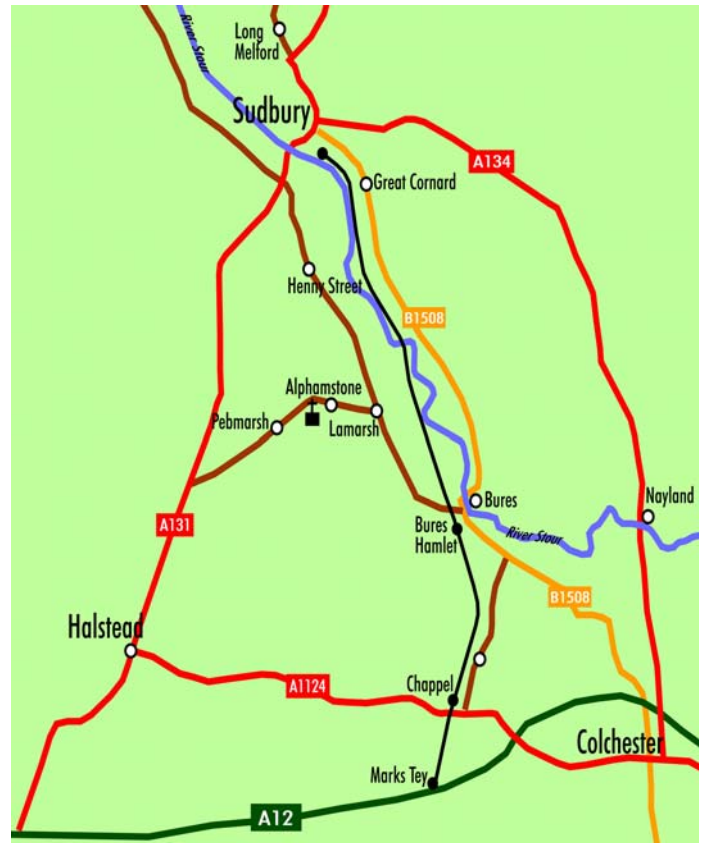
Mentioned in the Domesday book as Alfemestuna (a union of Alfemes – a Saxon man's name and Tun, meaning an enclosure), the name is recorded as having as many as seven different spellings before becoming accepted as Alphamstone. It is a small parish, the circumference of the boundary having been measured at 15 miles. It sits 2 miles north-west of Bures, on the Essex side of the River Stour. Situated, as it is, on the shoulder of the river valley, most of the village is about 70 metres above sea level.

The population, currently, is 183 of whom approximately 44 are over 65 and 36 are under 16. They live in 75 separate properties. There are 18 listed structures in the village consisting of 10 houses, the church, 2 walls, 3 barns, the village pump and the telephone kiosk!

Evidence of a Bronze Age settlement was identified, around 1900, and three cinerary urns taken from a burial mound can be seen in Colchester Museum.

In, and around, the churchyard are a number of sarsen stones (one being built into the church foundations). These must have been brought up from the valley during Saxon times and were almost certainly of religious significance. In a meadow below the church, the remains of a Roman Villa lie re-interred and the immediate vicinity boasted two brick kilns.

The church itself shows some signs of its early Norman origins but mostly dates back to the 14th century. The combined piscina and sedilia in the south wall are of particular interest. The font, of Purbeck marble, is thought to be 12th century. The three bells were all cast between 1500 and 1550.



St Barnabas Church, Alphamstone