



Chartridge ‘Hills and Vales’

Summary

To the west of Chesham are a number of parallel valleys which offer delightful views of the rolling Chiltern countryside. Along the valleys run tracks with curious names such as Herbert’s Hole and Blind Lane and roads that on some days are almost devoid of traffic. This walk goes out on one such track and then cuts across the valleys climbing to the top and then descending to the bottom. It returns through Chesham’s backdoor, Lowndes Park, and while crossing it the view of the town nestling in a hollow slowly comes into sight. The total length of the walk is 8 miles (13 km) but it can be shortened in various places. On route there is the opportunity to see the remains of an iron-age fort and to pass a house that was built in two parts, one either side of the road.



History and points of interest

- A Wright's Saw Mill:** Once a wood mill and tannery demolished in 1965.
- B Chesham 1879 Tennis Club:** One of the oldest clubs in the world.
- C Bury Farm:** The farm to the 16th century Bury Hill Mansion. The mansion was demolished in 1804, some say as a bet between rival families. Whoever lost had to demolish their house. In the 1930s the farm played host to the flying circuses of pioneer airmen Alan Cobham and Henry Seagrave. For 10 shillings (50p) locals could have a ten minute flight around the town.
- D Blind Lane:** An ancient packhorse trail between Chesham and Great Missenden.
- E Great Hundridge Manor:** Many of the place names on this walk derive from Saxon origins. Hundridge comes from ‘Hunda’s Ridge’ and is one of the ancient hamlets of Chesham. The manor was home to the de Broc family from the 12th century. They were a large and powerful family and were involved in the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Beckett. The current house dates from the 17th century and is Grade II+ listed. Attached to it is a 13th century former chapel which was dedicated to Edmund the Martyr. It was known as a ‘Chapel of Ease’ which is for people who could not travel to the local parish church.
- F Reddings Wick:** A well-preserved and impressive earthworks of a 12C manorial settlement with inner and outer moats. The main use for moats was not defence but to store water in dry areas or even for a display of wealth. This manor to belong to the nearby Missenden Abbey.
- G Pednor House:** Pednor is from the Saxon ‘Pedda’s Bank’ or ‘Slope’. Locals used to call the house Pednor Castle. Built in the 17th century as a farm house, it is timber-framed with 18th century casing and 20th century enlargement. In 1933 it suffered extensive fire damage and it remained unused in 1940



when the Royal Free Hospital in London took it over as a maternity hospital. Many a poor father turned up at Chesham Station only to find he had a long walk out to the house. Look for a Grade II listed dovecote in the centre of the courtyard.

- H Little Pednor Farm:** The site of a medieval moated farmstead known from 12th–17th century records. Owned by Missenden Abbey and later by the Weedon family. They were a very old local landowning family. In 1624 Thomas Weedon paid the sum of £350 to erect four almshouses for four good and godly women of the parish. To maintain the properties a hundred acres of land was purchased in Hundridge.
- I Chartridge:** Derives from the Saxon ‘Caerda’s Ridge’ and is one of the ancient hamlets of Chesham. In olden times families would take their names from the area so one of the earliest records is the name de Charterugge or de Chardrugge. In the 16th and 17th centuries, with the rapid growth in agriculture, many farms were built. By then there were at least 15 farms in the area some of which still survive and are listed buildings. Chartridge was made a civil parish in 1899.
- J The Bell Pub:** First licensed in 1862. In olden times most pubs were alehouses and didn’t serve wines or spirits. The beer and cider was brewed out back and sold out front.
- K Asheridge:** Derives from the Saxon ‘Essleie’ meaning ash ridge and refers to the large expanse of forest that once covered this part of the Chilterns.
- L Blue Ball Pub:** An 18th century ale house.
- M Asheridge Farm:** Just off the route it is a 15th century timber framed hall house with 17th to 19th century refacing and extensions. The home of Aneurin Bevan between 1954 and 1960.
- N The Rolling Pin:** An earthwork mound that is the subject of local controversy. Is it a prehistoric round barrow, a post-medieval garden feature or the site of an old flocking mill?
- O Lowndes Park:** A major historic feature of Chesham and donated by the Lowndes family in 1953. The land was first recorded in the 12th century.



Photo of The Bell pub, c.1900, courtesy Chesham Museum

How to get to Chesham

Chesham is an ideal location for ramblers, cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts. It is well served by public footpaths and has good connections with the extensive path network of the local Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Visit www.chilternsaonb.org and www.chesham.gov.uk.

By train or bus

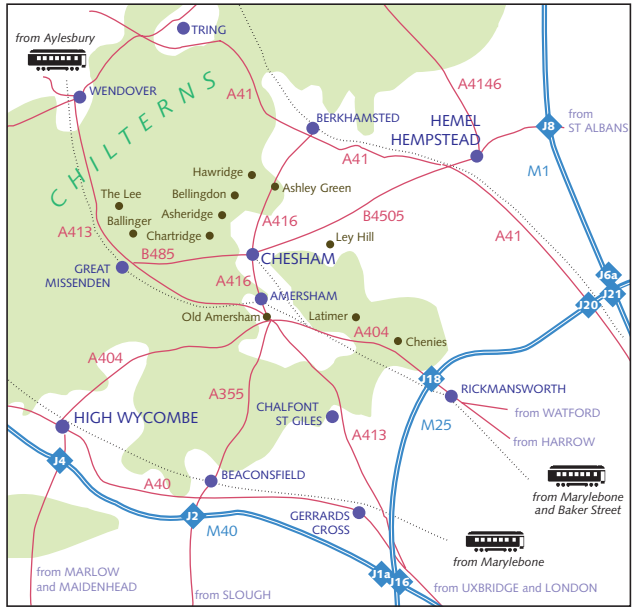
Chesham is only 55 minutes (approx.) from London – Baker Street (Metropolitan Line) and Marylebone (Chiltern Line). Change at Chalfont & Latimer for Chesham station, unless stated otherwise; see www.chilternrailways.co.uk or telephone 0845 748 4950 for more details and train times. Bus services are available and can be checked at www.buckscc.gov.uk/travelinfo or www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk or by telephone on 0870 608 2608.

By road

The town is less than 30 miles from Central London and easily accessible from the M1, M25 and M40 motorways, with scenic drives through countryside to the town.

Maps to accompany Walk 5

O/S Explorer Map Chiltern Hills North (181), Chiltern Society Footpath Map (8).



© Chilterns Conservation Board



Red kite in flight



Marbled white butterfly

The Chesham Community Vision (tel. 01494 774842) has launched the following new walking routes in 2008:

- 1 The Chesham Heritage Trail (2 miles)
- 2 The Chesham Outer Ring (7.5 miles)
- 3 Tylers Hill, Ley Hill and the Chess (5 miles)
- 4 Chesham Bois and the Beech Hangers (4 miles)
- 5 Chartridge ‘Hills and Vales’ (8 miles)
- 6 Ashley Green ‘Farms, Forts and Fighters’ (8.5 miles)

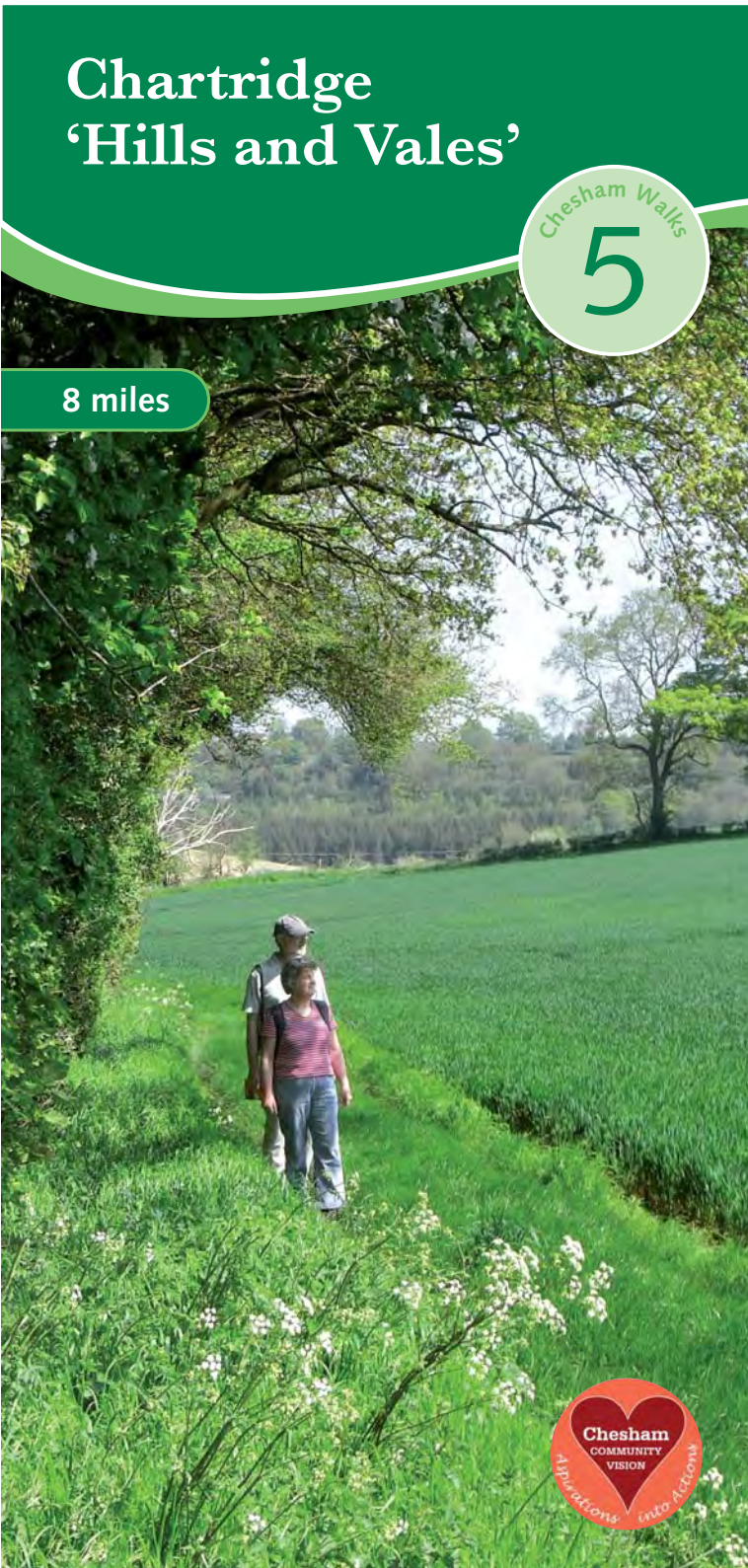


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Chesham Walks
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Starting points

- **From the Underground Station:** Take the first left down Station Road and turn left into the High Street. At the far end take the pedestrian crossing to Germain Street, continue ahead, over the Town Bridge and turn right down Water Lane. Follow the river past the rear of the Water Meadow Car Park to Wey Lane.
- **From the Water Meadow Car Park:** Exit at the rear of the car park to a footpath and turn right to reach Wey Lane.

Route description

- 1 In Wey Lane, turn right past The Queen's Head pub to Church Street. Taking great care, cross and walk along Pednornmead End to its junction with Pednor Road. Here turn left and continue for 600m.
- 2 Turn left up Drydell Lane and follow this quiet country lane for just under a kilometre. *Look for yellowhammers moving along the hedge line.* Take the first bridleway on the left just past a metal five bar gate. This is Blind Lane and it can be muddy especially in the winter. Go steadily uphill through an avenue of trees and continue ahead noting the views on either side. The bridleway emerges onto a farm track and on the left are views across to Hundridge Manor. Keep straight ahead past Little Hundridge Orchard to a road, Little Hundridge Lane. *(Optional route 1 starts here).*
- 3 Turn right along the road. Just past the entrance to Reddings Farm take the path on the right through a squeezer gate into a wood. Follow downhill, through two further squeezers and then sharply uphill to pass between a fourth one.

Look around for red kites or buzzards overhead. Continue ahead to a lane, Hollow Way. The route continues straight ahead over the stile opposite, but take the opportunity to see Pednor House, a few paces to the right.

(Optional route 2 starts here).

- 4 On return, go over the stile into a field and continue in the same direction keeping to the left of the fence. Cross the next stile and take the diagonal path over the field to a further stile. Following the left hand fence, the path eventually drops down through two more stiles to meet a lane, Pednor Vale. Cross, climb steeply, and over a stile to the top of the hill. Look back to lovely views. Continue to a stile in the top left hand corner of the field. Follow the path ahead and then around to the right to another stile. Cross, turn immediately left and continue along the field edge towards a school. The path then bears half right across an often muddy field to a stile at the top right hand corner. *Before crossing check for butterflies along the hedgerow on the left.* The path now emerges opposite The Bell pub in Chartridge Lane. *(Optional route 3 starts here).*
- 5 Turn left along the pavement, cross the lane at the Chartridge Mission Church and take the Chiltern Heritage Trail to the left of it. The path drops down into a small wood and then up to follow the tree line until it emerges into a field. *The path passes a hazel hedge which could support a colony of the native dormouse.* Continue ahead down to a large open field, cross that and walk up the hill the other side to a gate and Asheridge Road. For The Blue Ball pub turn left for 100m.
- 6 From the gate, turn right along Asheridge Road and then left into Widmore Farm. Walk through the yard and out of the gate at the back onto a concrete track. Follow it into a wood

and immediately branch right downhill. *The wood is a good area for celandines and bluebells in the spring and fungi in the Autumn.* At the bottom turn right along a wide path and after 300m turn left up to the brow of the hill. *Another excellent opportunity to see red kites, buzzards or kestrels overhead.* Turn right and maintain level all the way along to enter Captains Wood.

Follow the path uphill and along as it levels out. Just past a gate to Mount Nugent Farm the path bends to the left. Here, turn right downhill through the wood past the painted way arrow on the oak tree, cross over a bridleway and exit the wood to see some fine views over Chesham. Go down the hill to meet Asheridge Road.

- 7 Taking care of the traffic, turn left and just before Portobello Farm turn right through two gates into a muddy field. Bear diagonally right up the hill to a stile, cross it and follow the path along to emerge onto Chartridge Lane. Turn left, over Berkeley Avenue and cross the road opposite 240 Chartridge Lane. Take the farm track to the left of it and walk down the hill. Where the track bends to the right continue ahead on a gently descending footpath, to reach a disused gate at the entrance to a field. Follow the path as it contours around the hill. *This is an excellent habitat for the superb marbled white butterfly in the summer months.* Go through a kissing gate on the way and eventually enter a small wood to emerge into Lowndes Park.
- 8 Bear half left up the grassy track to the top of the hill to see the excellent views over Chesham from the 'Rolling Pin' mound. *The grass here is specially cut for the benefit of wildlife.* Bear half right down the hill to rejoin the path to the right of hedgerow. Keep ahead and just past the Guides HQ turn right through large iron gates towards St Mary's Church. At the entrance turn left down a paved road to Church Street. Taking care, cross over and then walk left along the pavement to St Mary's Way.

● **For the Underground Station:** Go over the pedestrian crossing at St Mary's Way, ahead into Church Street, left into the High Street and right up Station Road.

● **For the Water Meadow Car Park:** At St Mary's Way, turn right and follow the pavement to the entrance.

Option: 1: a chance to visit the medieval settlement at Redding Wick

Just before Little Hundridge Farm turn left through a gate. Continue ahead, past two further gates to enter the wood. Go in the same direction to the far end. The remains of the settlement are on the right. Turn right on a crossing path and after a short distance turn right again to return in the direction of Little Hundridge Farm. At the end of the wood bear left to cross a stile. Follow the path over three stiles around Reddings Farm and to its driveway. Here, turn left and then left at the lane to rejoin the main walk.

Option 2: to return to Chesham

From Pednor House continue down the quiet country lane for nearly 2km. Where the lane bends downhill to the right, look for a footpath in the hedge on the left. Go up through a squeezer gate and into a field. Turn right and follow the field edge to a kissing gate in the hedgerow. Go through and cross two fields and two gates to reach Pednor Road. Take the path and gate opposite, bear right uphill and then into the wood to join the main route back to Chesham.

Option 3: to return to Chesham

Turn right opposite The Bell pub and follow the pavement all the way to rejoin the main walk at Berkeley Avenue or continue back into Chesham.

