

The Chesham Outer Ring

Summary

This walk skirts the outer fringes of Chesham, so that although the total length is 7.5 miles (13kms) there are a number of places where it is possible to shorten the walk by returning directly to the start. The walk passes three pubs where refreshment can be taken. Although never more than ½ mile (1km) from the edge of the town, at times the route seems to be in the depths of the countryside, with outstanding views across valleys and farms. The walk passes a farm with unusual livestock and also explores the area's brickmaking industry. There are some steeper parts to the walk as it cuts across many valleys that converge on Chesham but the first half is almost stile free.



History and points of interest

A Wright's Saw Mill: On this site stood Wright's Saw Mill. To meet the growing demand for wood for the London market, a number



of woodware manufacturers were established in Chesham. In 1842 Thomas Wright took over a former bark mill to make cricket bats, hoops, toy spades, spoons, bowls etc. The logs were dragged up the river to the mill. It eventually closed in 1965 after a devastating fire.

- B 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.
- C 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?
- D Pednor Vale:** The name Pednor is derived from the Saxon Pedda's Bank or Slope. In the 1920s, Lowndes Park and Pednor were used once for English National Cross-Country Championships. The town raised money for the Chesham Cup and it has been presented to the winner ever since.
- E Mount Nugent farmhouse:** This area of the Chilterns has many farms built in the 16th and 17th centuries when there was a rapid growth in agriculture. Mount Nugent is a Grade II listed timber-framed house probably first built around 1620. Somewhere on its land is reputed to be the site of the vicarage belonging to the ancient rectorial manor of Chesham Woburn. The farm used to belong to a local character, Harry Wing, who was landlord of the Golden Ball pub in Chesham, owner of the knackers yard next door and an animal expert.
- F H G Matthews:** Just to the northwest of Ramscode Woods and one of the three remaining brickworks in the area.
- G D H Lawrence:** Between Ramscode Wood and the brickworks are the 17th century Grade II listed Bellingdon Farm Cottages. D H Lawrence lived there from August 1914 to January 1915.
- H Ramscode Woods:** Chesham was long known as the town of the four Bs; Baptists, Beer, Boots and Brushes. Another B is bricks. Artefacts of the industry dating back to the 13th century have been found. Most of the buildings in the town and surrounding area were made of local bricks. Between the wars there were 23 brickworks in the Chesham area and this walk passes a number of them. At the entrance to Ramscode Woods was the Baker family brickworks, which it is said made the finest bricks in Chesham. They were used in the construction of Park Royal Underground Station.
- I Pathfinder Ostrich Farm:** Started in 1992 and one of the largest suppliers of ostrich meat in the UK.
- J Vale Road:** The vale is a dry valley where a spring is one of the headwaters feeding the River Chess. In the 1930s the road would regularly turn into a river after torrential rain and the flood



even reached Chesham. The problem was largely overcome by the building of a pumping station further up the Vale to supply Aylesbury with water. However recent heavy storms still cause flash flooding.

- K Black Horse pub:** An old coaching inn which was first licensed in the 17th century. The current building dates from the 18th century. Mind your head on the low beam.



- L Pressmore Farmhouse:** Grade II listed early 18th century house with 17th century timber-framed barn.
- M Lye Green:** Name derived from the Saxon 'leah' which means clearing or meadow.
- N Black Cat pub:** Once upon a time Chesham had one pub for every 100 men, women and children. The Black Cat was first licensed in 1838. Church meetings were once held in its sitting room.



- O Brockhurst Farm:** At the entrance is the old granary dating from the 17th or 18th century. They are often raised to keep the grain dry and away from rats. In a nearby field there is the site of an old brickworks.

- P Botley:** Derived from the Saxon 'Botta's clearing'.
- Q Hen & Chickens pub:** It occupies a row of 17th century cottages. Some of the original timbers can still be seen inside.
- R Tylers Hill:** At the top of Tylers Hill Road is an ancient wood, part of a complex of woodland known as Cowcroft Wood. The clay soil has been worked for three centuries to supply material for the local tile and brickworks. (See Walk leaflet 3).
- S Dungrove Farm:** Where Thomas Harding, a nonconformist martyr and the last of the local Lollards used to farm.
- T Thomas Harding memorial headstone:** Located on White Hill and near to the site in the Dell where he was burnt at the stake in 1532.

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 2

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



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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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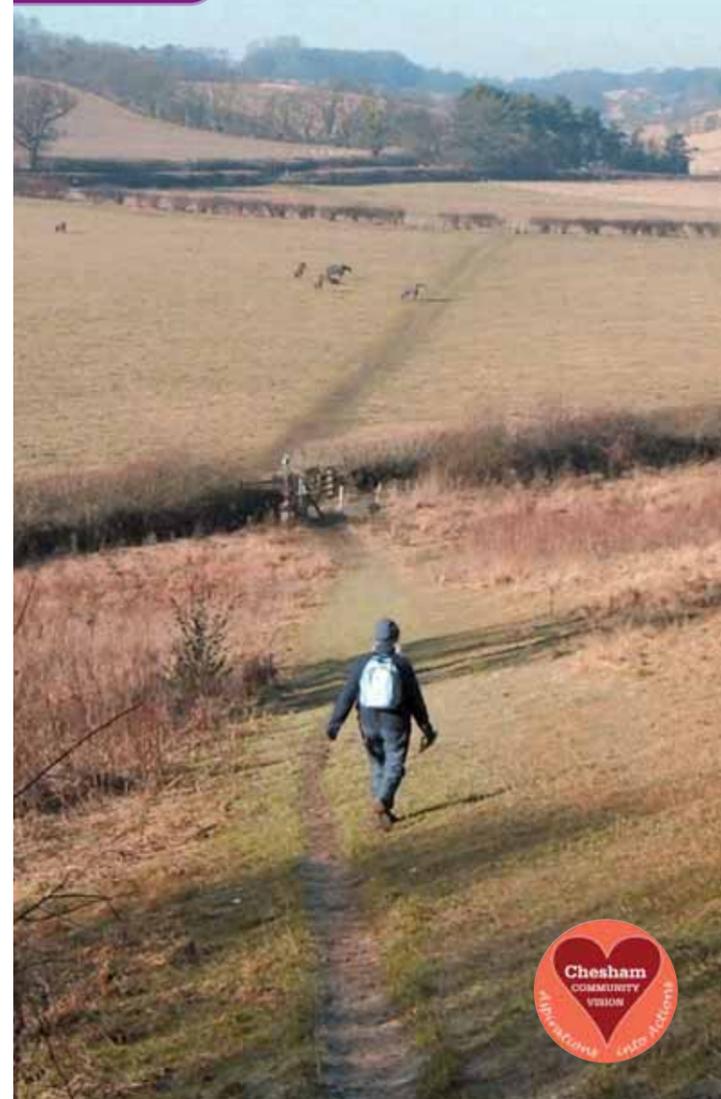
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The Chesham Outer Ring

Chesham Walks
2

7.5 miles



The Chesham Outer Ring

Chesham Walks 2

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. Turn right to reach Wey Lane.

- 1 At Wey Lane, turn right past the Queen's Head pub and right again into Church Street. After 200m cross the road and take the path to the right of the entrance to The Bury, a former manorial house of the Lowndes family. Go through two sets of iron gates, passing on the way St Mary's Church (a listed building) and into Lowndes Park.
- 2 Turn immediately left up the hill and just after the Town Council Maintenance Depot turn right and climb up to a mound near the top. From here there are excellent views over Chesham. Leaving the view behind, bear half left down the hill to rejoin the original footpath as it enters a small wood. *Note the way the grassland has been managed for the benefit of wildlife.* On exiting, keep right as the path contours around the hill to reach a kissing gate. Ahead are lovely views over Pednor Vale. *In spring look for the peacock butterflies defending their territories. During June and July good numbers of marbled white butterflies can usually be seen feeding on the downland wildflowers.* Follow the field

edge to pass through a disused gate and continue uphill between gardens to a small road. Follow this uphill to meet Chartridge Lane.

- 3 Cross, turn left along the pavement, go over Berkeley Avenue and almost immediately turn right at the footpath signpost. Go down and take the footpath to the right of the last house. Continue along it to cross a stile at the top of a field and then, keeping to the left of the fence, drop down to two kissing gates at the bottom right hand corner to join Asheridge Road, by Portobello Farm. There are sweeping views along the Asheridge Valley on the way down. *This is a good place to look for birds of prey, including buzzards, red kites and kestrels.* Turn left along the road for 200m and just before a sharp right-hand bend take the path to the right. Climb up the hill towards Captains Wood, taking the opportunity to see the views towards Chesham. The hill in the far distance is the route back into the town. After a few paces in the wood bear right and follow the yellow markers uphill. Near the top turn left onto a crossing track and follow it and the edge of the wood for 250m, past a kissing gate, to reach a stile on the right. Cross into a field and up to a gate to the left of Mount Nugent Farm. *Farms are often good places for swallows to nest in the summer months.* Turn left on the farm drive to reach Mount Nugent Road.
- 4 Cross, go through a kissing gate opposite and follow the path round to the left. After 200m, turn right on a wide path, past a field gate to cross a stile into Ramscoat Wood. *On the way look out for some of our more common butterflies on the brambles including small tortoiseshell and peacock.* Go straight ahead. Shortly, as the main track goes downhill,

branch right to exit the wood at a field edge. Follow the fence down to a kissing gate and onwards to meet a byway. Ahead and left is the ostrich farm. Turn right onto the byway to reach Vale Road. *The byway provides a very good habitat for bats to feed at dusk and through the night.*

To return to Chesham from this point please refer to the map

- 5 A short diversion to the left leads to the Black Horse pub. Cross straight over Vale Road to a kissing gate. The path then climbs through the yard of a riding stables to meet another gate. Continue uphill, ignoring a path to the right. Near the top look back to take in the wonderful views up the Vale towards Cholesbury. Go through a kissing gate and over two stiles to reach a small lane. Continue ahead and then bear right to the A416, Ashley Green Road.
- 6 Taking great care, cross to a pavement, turn left and immediately right through a kissing gate. Keeping to the left of the hedge follow the path ahead and as it bends to the right to meet a footpath marker post. Here, turn left straight across the field to a gate at the corner of a wood. Enter, keep straight ahead ignoring all paths to the left and right, pass an electricity sub-station to reach Lycrome Road. Further along the road to the left is the Black Cat pub.
- 7 Cross the road and take the path signposted to Hilltop and Lye Green Road. Go over the stile and keep straight ahead. *Check for butterflies along the hedgerow.* Where the hedgerow ends, bear half right across the field to a stile near to overhead transmission cables. Do not cross, but turn left to a stile to the left of houses. Go over to meet Lye Green Road.

To return to Chesham from this point please refer to the map

- 8 Cross the road and turn left on a wide grassy verge. After a few paces turn right on a path signposted to Botley. Pass through a kissing gate and continue ahead in the same direction to the right of a fence. Go over two stiles, down a track and on to Botley Road.
- 9 Cross the road and turn right along the pavement. Opposite the Hen & Chickens pub, turn left down Tylers Hill Road and at the foot of the hill turn right into Bottom Lane. *In Springtime look for the bright yellow flowers of the lesser celandine.* Just before the lane divides, turn right uphill on the Chiltern Heritage Trail.
- 10 At the top go through a gap in the hedge by an old stile and bear half right straight up and over the field to a waymark post at the end of the field hedge. Keep straight ahead as the path follows the right hand edge of a second field. *Note the remnants of traditional hazel coppicing in the hedge.* Go over the access road to Dungrove Farm, through a kissing gate and cross the field ahead. On the other side take the right hand gate and after a few paces left through a further gate. *On warm sunny days butterflies may be seen in the hedgerow.* Follow the path along the right hand side of the field and turn right through the next kissing gate.
- 11 Do not turn left or right but proceed straight across the field and down the other side. From the large oak tree there are panoramic views left to Bois Wood, half left to Lowndes Park and Pednor Vale, ahead to Asheridge and Captains Wood, right towards Cholesbury and of course Chesham below. Continue downhill through two more kissing gates and after the second, take the steps down to a tarmac path. *The hedgerow forms a very important habitat for wildlife.* Turn left down the hill, past the White Hill Centre towards the town.

- **For the Underground Station:** Turn left at the bottom of the steps and go along The Backs. At the far end is the Station.

- **For the Water Meadow Car Park:** Continue to the bottom of the hill and turn left along 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 to the rear entrance of the car park.

