

Cholesbury Camp walk

With **Andrew Clark**

The highlight of this walk is a visit to **Cholesbury Camp**, a well-preserved Iron Age hillfort. You will also discover a fascinating past including historic buildings, a generous vicar and a local hero who fought at the **Battle of Trafalgar**.

START: The Full Moon PH, Cholesbury HP5 2UJ.
Grid ref: SP 935 070

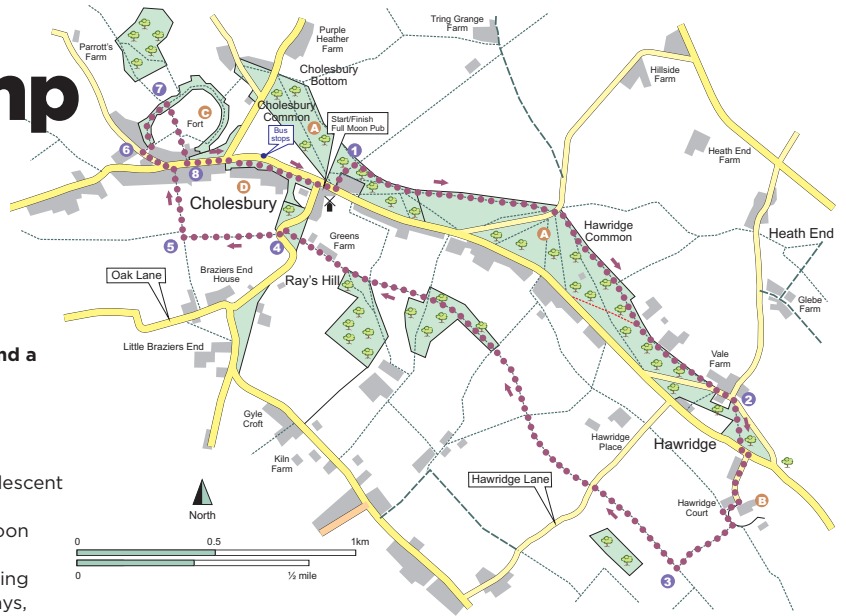
DISTANCE: 3.9 miles, with 300ft of ascent

TERRAIN: An easy walk with two short ascents and one steep descent

MAPS: OS Explorer 181 and Chiltern Society 8

REFRESHMENTS: None on the walk, but the landlord of the Full Moon would be delighted to serve you some refreshments

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Buses 149/194 run between Chesham and Tring on Wednesdays, and between Chesham and Cholesbury on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.



Map: Glyn Kuhn

Route

From the pub entrance, cross directly over the road to the common. Take the footpath down to a wide bridleway at the bottom.

1. Turn right along the often muddy bridleway for c800m to a lane. Turn left along it and, before the bend, take the first path on the right. Stay on the path for about c1km as it becomes a rough lane and continue to reach a road junction by Vale Farm. Take the lane towards Chesham.
2. After a few steps, take the path on the right. Climb up to a road. Cross it and walk along Church Lane to reach St Mary's Church and Hawridge Court. Take the path to the right of the entrance to Hawridge Court and go through a gate. Bear left round the corner and follow the hedgerow to a gate. Do not go through it, but turn right and follow the edge of the field to the next gate. Go through it, stay in the same direction through another gate, then drop down the steep slope to a crossing path on the valley bottom.
3. Turn right through a gate and follow the path for c430m to go through another gate at a rough lane (Hawridge Lane). Cross it and stay in the same direction, ignoring all paths left and right, for c1.5km to reach a road. (En route you will go over two stiles and through one gate, generally following the line of the overhead power cables).
4. At the road, turn left and then immediately right. Ignore the path on the left and continue straight on over two stiles into a field. After a further c75m take the stile ahead left into the next field. Follow the fence on the right over another stile to reach a double gate by an electricity pole.
5. Go through the first gate and then right through the second. Follow the path up the hill, through a gate at the top and between houses to Cholesbury Lane. Bear left over the lane into Parrotts Lane. Walk along for c100m and then turn right on the gravel track towards the church.
6. Go through the wooden gates and turn immediately left through a kissing gate. Go up the slope ahead and walk along the top of the bank of Cholesbury Camp to a crossing path.
7. Turn right through the opposite bank to an information board and gate. Go through it into a field and straight across to Holy (Holly) Pond. (Turn right to visit the church). Go over a stile to the left of the pond and then straight ahead through two gates to a road by the Village Hall.
8. To return to the Full Moon, turn left and take one of the grassy tracks that run on either side of the road.

Points of Interest

Cholesbury & Hawridge are two of four villages that make up the parish of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonard's. The villages were established through gradual separation from Drayton Beauchamp and Marsworth-cum-Hawridge. Cholesbury was associated with Drayton Beauchamp and Hawridge with Marsworth. For many centuries the local economy was based on agriculture, woodworking and, more recently, brick making. In the 19th century women and children were employed in the straw-plaiting trade. A notable person in Cholesbury's history was the Rev Henry Jeston. In the 19th century Cholesbury was suffering due to the effects of the Poor Laws and became bankrupt. Rev Jeston not only lent money to the parish, but also provided evidence to Parliamentary Commissioners who proposed legislative reforms.

A Hawridge & Cholesbury Commons: A 40 hectare area of deciduous woodland and grassland managed by The Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society. On the left, after crossing the road from the Full Moon, are an obelisk and three pudding stones. The obelisk was erected in 1898 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and is placed on the boundary between the two parishes. The pudding stones were moved there in 2012, to the site of the beacon which was lit to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. Just after the start the route crosses Horseblock Lane. It's been said that the name derives from an incident during the Civil War, when the Parliamentarians used the bodies of dead horses to form a barricade during a skirmish with Royalist forces. There is, however, no historical evidence to support this.

B Hawridge Court and St Mary's Church: Hawridge comes from the Anglo Saxon 'Aucrug' a ridge frequented by hawks. Hawridge Court was home to the Lords of Hawridge Manor. The current house was built in the 18th century, although there are older buildings on the site. The most notable feature is the ringwork, possibly dating from the Bronze Age. St Mary's Church was first recorded in 1227, but fell into decay in the 17th century. In 1856 the church

architect William White restored it using some of the original materials, in a style very unusual in churches known as 'polychromy' - the use of many colours in decoration.

C Cholesbury Camp and the church: The Camp is believed to date from the mid Iron Age and is some 2,500 years old. One of the most visually impressive prehistoric settlements of the Chilterns, it's oval shaped with a high surrounding bank and ditches, and covers c10 acres. The first excavation in 1932 found evidence of a kiln and iron smelting. A geophysical survey carried out in 2001 by Chess Valley Archaeological & Historical Society revealed evidence of other possible smelting sites. There is also evidence of a small deserted medieval settlement close to the church. Within the camp is Holy or Holly Pond, reputed to have supplied good, clean water even in the most severe droughts. The church of St Laurence was built in the 12th century and has an 18th century bell turret and roof. In the graveyard is a stone commemorating David Newton, a marine who fought at the Battle of Trafalgar. He died in 1878, having lived well into his 90s.

D Cholesbury contains a number of interesting buildings. The Village Hall was built in 1895 by Frederick Butcher, a keen supporter of the Temperance movement. To the left of the hall is the 16th century, Grade II listed Cholesbury Manor House. The Bury used to be the Bricklayers Arms, one of eight local pubs that traded in the 1900s. The best-known building is the windmill. A smock mill was built in 1863, but was replaced by the current tower mill in 1883. It ceased trading in 1912 and was rented the following year by Gilbert Cannan the novelist and dramatist, and his wife Mary, who entertained many well-known creative people such as D H Lawrence, and Katherine Mansfield who lodged next door at The Gables.

These history notes have been compiled with the assistance of Chris Brown of the Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group. For further information go to www.cholesbury.com.