



# Tylers Hill, Ley Hill and the Chess

## Summary

This 5 mile/ 8 kilometre walk to the east of Chesham explores the network of paths in beautiful rolling countryside lying between Chesham and the cluster of villages of Tylers Hill, Ley Hill and Botley. This area is so quiet and peaceful that it is almost unbelievable you are within a few miles of the M25 and London .Tylers Hill has a number of old cottages and has been brickmaking country for centuries. In Ley Hill there are pubs for refreshment and an opportunity to explore a large common with varied habitats. The walk passes the Cowcroft Wood nature reserve where bluebells and wild orchids can be found during the early summer and through a Woodland Trust beechwood. The latter part of the walk is along the river Chess, one of the best chalk streams in the world.



## History and points of interest

- A Metropolitan Railway:** The Metropolitan Railway came to Chesham on May 15th 1889. It was originally planned to extend the route to Tring. In the 1920s and '30s it was used to carry freight from Chesham including wooden goods and watercress. See Chesham Shuttle by Clive Foxell (privately published)
- B White Hill Centre:** A Victorian school building now used as an activity centre for the town and houses the office of the Chiltern Society on the first floor where maps of walks are available.
- C Thomas Harding memorial headstone:** On the site in the Dell where Thomas Harding, a nonconformist martyr and the last of the local Lollards, was burnt at the stake in 1532.
- D Dungrove Farm:** Where Thomas Harding used to farm.
- E Tylers Hill:** The name relates to the past tile-making industry here, utilising the London Clay.



- F St George's Church, Tylers Hill:** Built in 1871 as a mission church from Christchurch, Waterside. The two churches are only a mile apart as the crow flies, up a country lane and over the fields. In the old days the vicar used to travel from one to the other on his horse!

- G Cowcroft Wood and Nature Reserve:** An ancient wood, part of a complex of woodland known as Tylers Hill. The clay soil has been worked for three centuries to supply material for the local tile and brickworks. Oak and beech are predominant but other species include wild cherry, ash, birch, sycamore and hornbeam. The ground flora includes wild orchids, bluebells, male fern and occasional bramble in the more densely shaded areas with ground ivy, lesser celandine, dogs mercury and occasional primroses.



- H The Crown Public House:** First licensed in 1822, rebuilt in 1932 after a fire.
- I The Swan Public House:** Dates from 1520 and modified in 1680.
- J Ley Hill Gallows:** This was known as the Tyburn Tree and was sited on the triangle between Jasons Hill and Botley Lane. A last request for the condemned was a pint from The Swan pub.
- K Canon's Mill, Canons' Mill or Cannon Mill:** A corn mill, which got its name because it was owned by the canons of Missenden Abbey. Last worked in 1937 and demolished around 1960.
- L Lord's Mill:** There has been a corn mill on the site since Saxon times. The last one was built in the 17th century and ceased milling in the 1950s. It was demolished in 1988.
- M Amy Mill:** First known as Amen Mill. Dismantled before 1900 when new steam mill built. The last remnant, a mill cottage, was demolished in the 1970s.
- N Meades Water Gardens:** Originally the pond for Amy Mill; later adapted to watercress beds.
- O Duck Alley:** Old footpath alongside the Chess River connecting Germain Street with the Amersham Road.



Duck Alley © the collections of Buckinghamshire County 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](http://www.chilternsaonb.org) and [www.chesham.gov.uk](http://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](http://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](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/travelinfo) or [www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk](http://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 4

O/S Explorer Map Chiltern Hills East (172), O/S Explorer Map Chiltern Hills North (181), Chiltern Society Footpath Maps (6 & 17).



© Chilterns Conservation Board



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 (3.5 miles)
- 5 Chartridge 'Vales and Bottoms' (8 miles)
- 6 Ashley Green 'Farms, Forts and Fighters' (8.5 miles)



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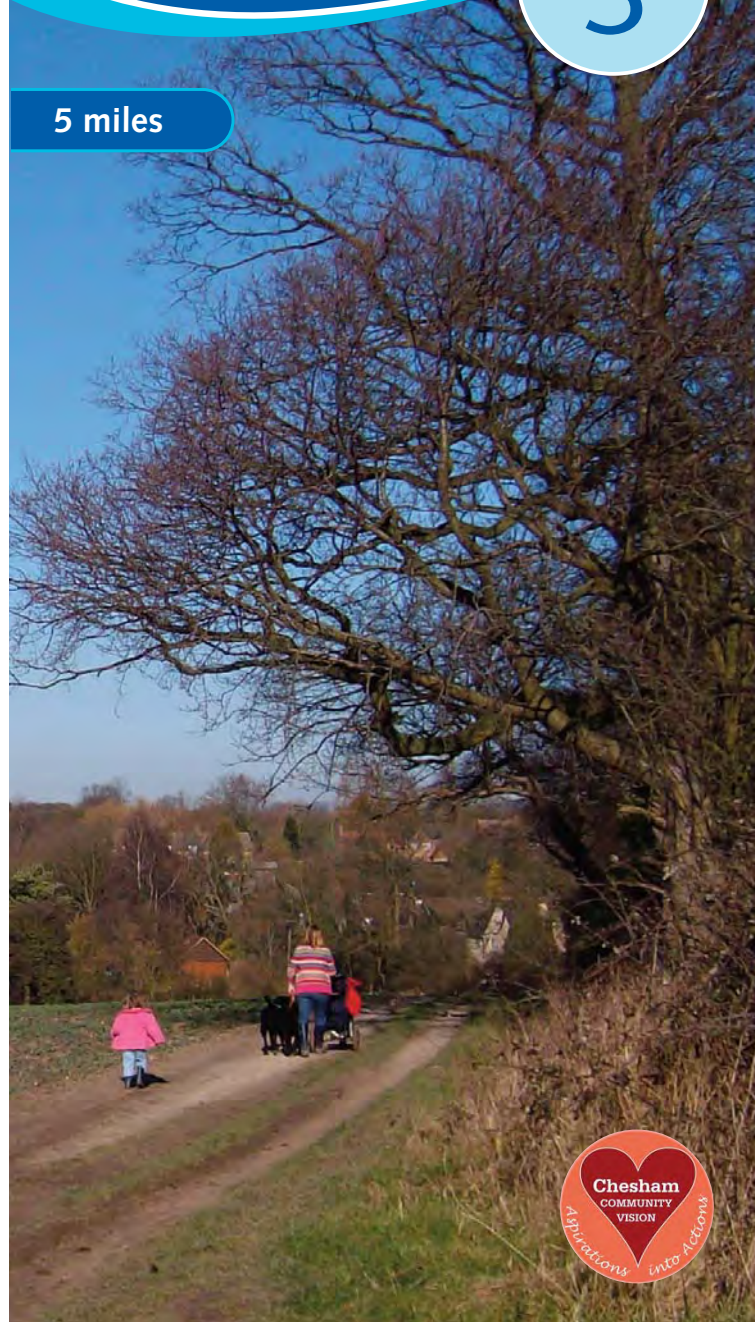
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Chesham Walks  
3

5 miles





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3

## Starting points

- **From the Water Meadow Car Park:** Leave by the left hand pavement at the entrance and walk around to the pedestrian crossing. Cross over, bear left and immediately right. Turn left along the High Street, right up Station Road towards the Underground Station and then left into The Backs past the car parks to White Hill.
- **From the Underground Station:** From the station entrance walk straight along The Backs past the car parks to White Hill.

## Route description

- 1 At the junction of The Backs and White Hill, take the steps immediately right and follow the footpath uphill past the White Hill Centre. Alternatively cross over White Hill to see the Thomas Harding memorial headstone. Afterwards return to the footpath by White Hill Centre.
- 2 Climb up the steep slope for 60 metres and turn right through a steel kissing gate. *The hedgerow forms a very important habitat for wildlife.* Then, go straight up over the field to the gate. Here, pause to take in the great view over Chesham town. Continue uphill to the lone 200 year old oak tree at the crest of the hill where there is a wider panoramic view of Chesham and its surrounding valleys. From the tree, continue in the same direction towards another kissing gate in the hedge, go through it and turn left to another gate in the corner of the field. On the other side, turn right along the hedgerow towards Dungrove Farm and go through a further kissing gate. *On warm summer days butterflies may be seen in the hedgerow.*

- 3 Turn left away from the farm, and go over the field to the next kissing gate on the farm access road. Cross the road and follow the left hand field margin to the next field. *Note the remnants of traditional hazel coppicing in the hedge.* At the waymark post either follow the left hand margin or continue straight ahead across the middle of the field. On the other side look for a further waymark post by a disused stile in a hedge. Go through the gap, descend the slope and cross the bridleway at Bottom Lane to climb up the footpath on the other side of the valley to the right of a hedgerow.
- 4 At the top of the hill take a few moments to enjoy the views of the countryside on the right towards the Chess Valley. Then turn left on the Heritage Trail, continue ahead to pass through two more kissing gates to reach Tylers Hill Road. *Look out for Holly Blue butterflies alongside the path.* Here turn right, walk past St Georges Church and in front of the gates of Cowcroft Grange turn left along an often muddy track. Follow this past Cowcroft Nature Reserve to join Kiln Lane and onwards to Ley Hill Common and the Golf Course. To the right are The Crown and The Swan pubs.
- 5 These pubs are in Blackwell Hall Lane. Turn right along it for about 100m and after a row of houses turn right again onto a concreted farm track. Follow this for 300m and where it swings to the right continue straight ahead along the field edge to the left of a hedgerow. Pass two squeeze gates and enter the south side of Cowcroft Wood. *In spring look out for the bluebells.* At the Woodland Trust notice board turn left and follow the bridleway, which after about 150m, goes gently uphill alongside the boundary fence. Ignore the footpath leading back into the wood and soon after passing a concrete triangulation point and emerging from the wood, turn right through a gate into a wide field with many oak trees. Bear diagonally left across it to the

corner of Ladies Wood and then to another gate after which turn right into Green Lane. *Count the number of molehills in the edge of the field.*

- 6 Continue straight ahead on this wide bridleway towards Bottom Lane. To the right is Ladies Wood and to the left good views over the Chess Valley. The track then narrows as it goes downhill. At the junction with Bottom Lane turn right towards Botley. After about 75 metres take the stile on the left signposted to Hill Farm. Climb the steep hill and go over 2 further stiles. *Look out for Red Kites soaring above the valley.* Cross the field to the right of the barn and mound to meet a stile at Pump Lane.
- 7 Turn left, pass through Hill Farm and follow the road downhill to Waterside taking in the views over Chesham Moor. *The farm provides an excellent habitat for bats, owls and in the summer, swallows.* Taking care, cross Waterside and turn left down the slope to the site of Canon's Mill. A board nearby tells its history. Turn right just after the waterfall and follow the Heritage Trail and riverside walk towards Chesham. *Keep an eye ready for the stunning blue flash of a kingfisher as it flies along the watercourse.* At Bois Moor Road, cross in front of the tennis courts, turn left over the bridge and then right into Millfields. On the right are allotments and disused watercress beds. *Here, a Little Egret may be paddling around in the shallows of the chalk stream.* After passing underneath the railway bridge turn right and then immediately left to reach the A416 Amersham Road. Turn right and at the roundabout, cross it and also over Amy Lane.
- 8 Just past the red brickwork of Friedrichdorf Corner and its millennium artwork, turn left and follow the winding path through Meades Water Gardens and then up Duck Alley.

- **For the Underground Station:** At the end of Duck Alley, turn right and walk along Germain Street to the pedestrian traffic lights. Cross to the Market Square, continue along the High Street and turn right up Station Road.

- **For the Water Meadow Car Park:** At the end of Duck Alley, turn left over the Town Bridge, then right along Water Lane and right again into the rear of the Car Park.

