

North Downs Way

NATIONAL TRAIL



Lost Landscapes

HERITAGE TRAILS

A stone age burial mound shrouded in legend, a beautifully preserved water mill (right) and a long lost manor house. These are just some of the highlights on the Lost Landscapes Heritage Trails in this booklet - two new circular walks from the North Downs Way.

The main trail explores both sides of the Stour Valley, to the north and east of Chilham, past lovely traditional orchards, through the wonderfully named Old Wives Lees and on to the spectacular views and Neolithic heritage of Julliberrie Down. The second trail heads west, through Shottenden, to the dramatic Mount and ancient Perry Wood, returning through acres of orchards.

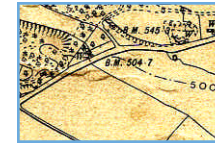
The main text of the booklet consists of detailed directions and information on points of interest for the main trail. The secondary trail has no detailed directions but the route is shown on a map and there are notes to help you and information on points of interest. The back pages of the booklet cover other local heritage themes.

The Lost Landscapes project

With grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund (through the Local Heritage Initiative) and the Rail Link Countryside Initiative, the Lost Landscapes project, organised by the North Downs Way National Trail, has been taking place in six communities along the North Downs. People in these communities have been looking into the heritage and history of their area and discovering what it is that makes their parishes special. Their contributions are the backbone of this series of trail booklets.

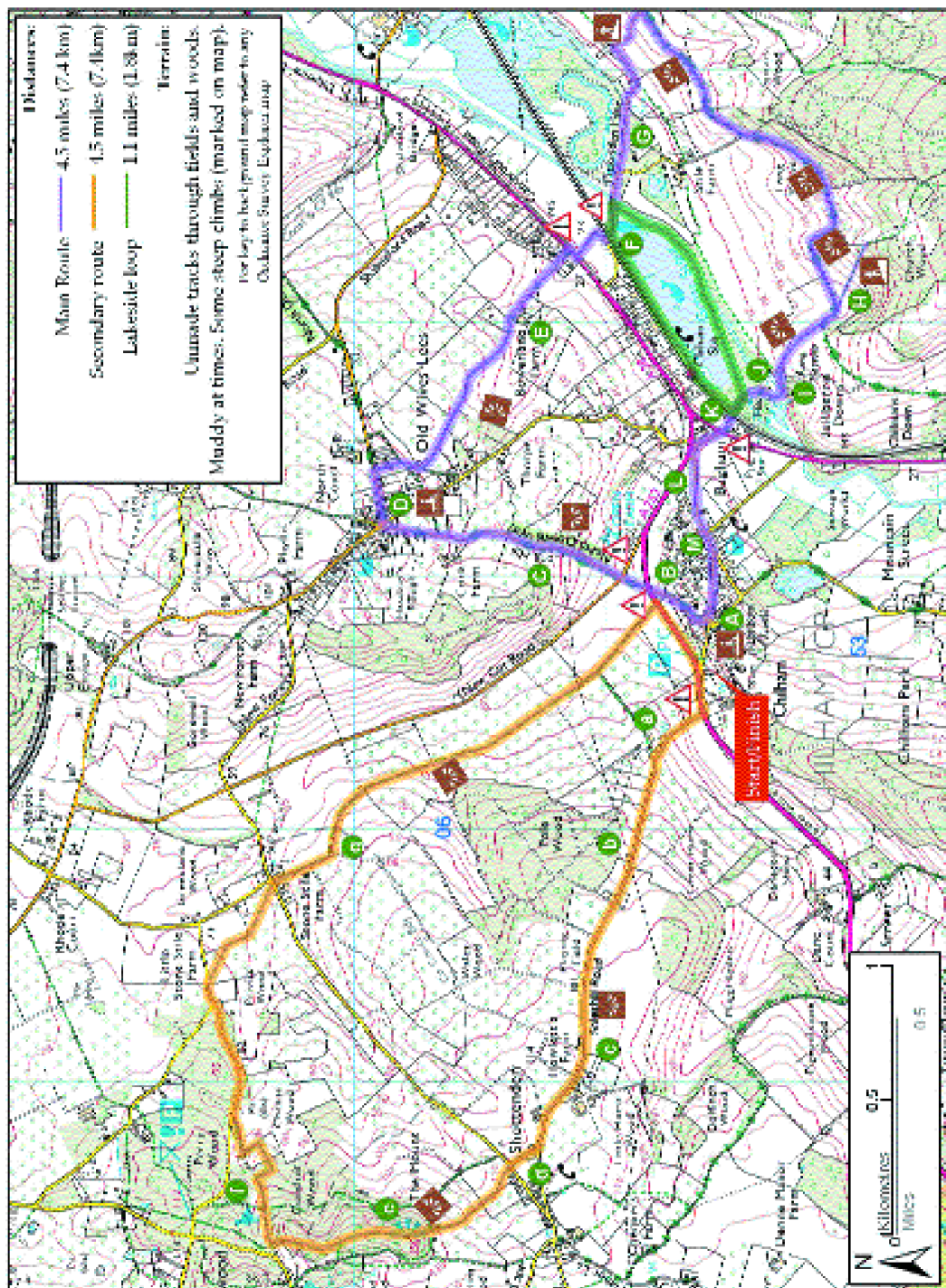
The Chilham Heritage Trails have been carefully designed to take in the best heritage features of the area. As you walk you will find that the history has been brought to life by the contributions of local people.

Enjoy your journey back in time!



Chilham





Map key

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------|
| | Main route | | Steep climb |
| | Secondary route | | Bench |
| | Point of interest in text - main route | | Viewpoint |
| | Point of interest in text - secondary route | | |
| | CAUTION at this point | | |

The map to the left shows the trail routes, and the booklet contains detailed written directions in numbered steps, but you may find it useful to take an Ordnance Survey map for this area - Explorer no. 149 or Landranger no. 189.

Getting to Chilham

By train - Chilham station is on the Ashford-Canterbury West line between Chartham and Wye. For train times telephone 08457 484950. The station is approx. 3/4 mile from the start point at Taylor's Hill car park. You can also join the main trail by walking to the crossroads of the A28 and A252 at Bagham - start the trail at point K.

By car - take the A251 from junction 9 of the M20, signposted Faversham. Drive through the Eureka Science Park and a housing estate, keeping straight ahead. Turn left at some traffic lights. Stay on the A251 through Boughton Lees. Reach Challock and turn right at the roundabout, onto the A252. After about 3.5 miles, look for a turning on the right, signposted Chilham Village Centre and car park. Take this turning and immediately turn right into Taylor's Hill car park.

By bus - the 667 service from Canterbury goes along the A252, past the turning for Taylor's Hill car park. The 652 service from Canterbury to Ashford goes along the A28 and stops at Bagham.

Be safe, be prepared

Please take care when walking on roads (use pavement if available or keep to the right) and when crossing roads or railways. Points where caution should be exercised are highlighted on the map and in the text. Always wear suitable clothing and footwear. Allow plenty of time for your walk - about an hour for every 2 miles (more for elderly or inexperienced walkers). Always keep to the countryside code (see back of booklet).

MAIN TRAIL

This trail is shown in purple on the map opposite. Below are detailed written directions, and information on the main points of interest which correspond to capital letters on the map.

Start at the car park at the bottom of Taylor's Hill.

From start to point A

1. Leave the car park and turn right (onto Taylor's Hill) and walk uphill into the village square.

POINT A - THE SQUARE, CHILHAM

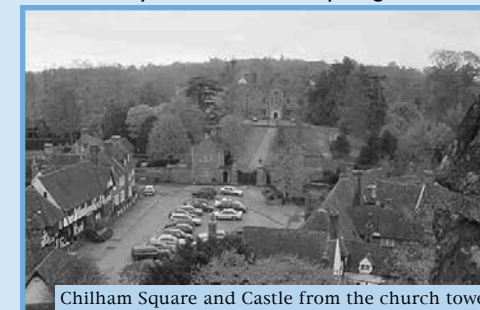
A square with history on all sides

Surrounded by timber and plaster buildings dating back to the fifteenth century, with an ancient castle and church at either end, the village square in Chilham gives a keen sense of this area's history.

However, as we shall see on our trail, not all the heritage of Chilham is so plainly on view. For example, as we stand in the square, dark doings may

well lay beneath our feet. Legend has it that a huge tunnel runs underground, connecting the fifteenth century Woolpack Inn to the castle, and that prisoners were once dragged from the castle to the inn, then the courthouse, to be tried for their crimes. Unfortunately, all that has been discovered beneath the earth is the remains of an old, large drain. Still, foul deeds of one kind or another!

Due to its commanding views of the valley, this area has seen centuries of human activity. One striking example of this is Chilham Castle. First mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086, its imposing Norman



Chilham Square and Castle from the church tower

keep still stands, dominating the village as it was intended to when first built. Local historian George Mabbitt, in his work, Chilham, The Unique Village recounts the story of its development:

“Sired of Canterbury was the last Saxon Lord of the Manor... He is said to have fought at Hastings with Harold, but then we hear no more of him, he may have fallen in battle... his manor was usurped by Fulbert the Norman. This was the most likely time for the castle to be built, maybe using part of the old Saxon structure...”

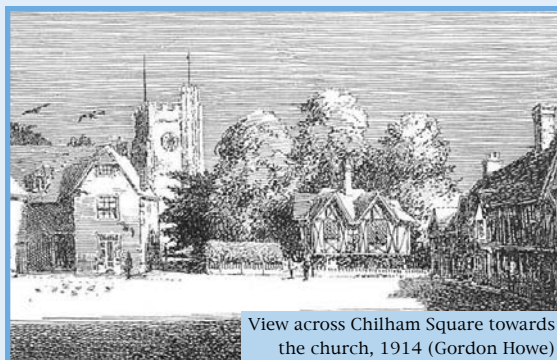
Built to house Fulbert and his entourage, the castle's other purpose was to serve as a symbol of domination over the local population, many of whom would have been forced to help construct it. Mary Carlton, a local resident of Chilham, has more recent and fonder memories of a less repressive castle, and its then owner, Lord Edmund Davies:



Chilham Castle

“He was very good to the village, and every Christmas a party was given at the old village hall. All the children at the school could ask for a particular present”

The adjoining mansion house incorporates the remains of an earlier eleventh century hall. It was designed by Inigo Jones for the then Lord Sir Dudley Digges, and was completed in 1616. The grounds have, over the years, been shaped by two of this country's finest landscape gardeners, John Trandescant in the 1620's, and Capability Brown in the 1780's.



View across Chilham Square towards the church, 1914 (Gordon Howe)

Of further interest is the heronry. Mentioned in a document from 1280, it was one of the oldest and largest in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century, with around 130 nests. George Mabbitt recounts the tradition that if the herons ever fail to return here by St. Valentine's Day, tragedy will strike the owner of the castle. This could well derive from the fact that herons were considered a delicacy in mediaeval times, and the tragedy would be of a gastronomic nature.

We now turn our attention to the church. Though mentioned in the Domesday Book, most of the present external structure of St. Mary's dates from the fifteenth century, while the interior was largely restored in the Victorian era.

The churchyard presents us with an interesting feature, that of the ancient yew tree. Probably planted in the seventh century AD, it has survived many hazards over the centuries, including having half of it being removed in 1792 so that the villagers could see the church clock!

NOTE: A leaflet on the many historic buildings in the Square (and elsewhere in the village) is available from the Tudor Lodge Gift Shop.

From point A to point B

2. Walk across the Square, towards the White Horse pub, then turn left down Church Hill. You are now on the North Downs Way.

CAUTION: This is a narrow road, and although not busy is open to traffic.

3. Pass the church on your right and reach the bottom of the hill. Stop before you cross the main road.

POINT B - BOTTOM OF CHURCH HILL

Fragments of the past and memories of childhood

The field to your right is traditionally known as 'Lower Orchard' - a name that tells us something about its past use. Local resident Don Poole made one of his many prehistoric archaeological finds in this field. His enthusiasm for archaeology had been sparked when he found an early Acheulian hand axe in his garden. He started field walking all over the local countryside and tells us that his collection represents "...a succession of periods from early Stone Age to Saxon times."

At the other end of time's spectrum, local resident John Clark has told us that in Lower Orchard used to be allotments belonging to the school, where the children grew their own produce. John, who grew up in Chilham, has many stories of the area. He remembers the mistletoe growing along Church Hill (you can still see it in the trees you have just passed) and tells the story of his uncle's rather unconventional method of obtaining it at Christmas time - using a shotgun to blast it out of the trees! During WWII, a B52 bomber crash landed just across the A28 from here. John tells us it was repaired in situ and remembers watching it take off across the fields.

From point B to point C

4. Cross the main road (A252 Canterbury Road) and walk up the lane directly opposite.

CAUTION: This main road is busy, please take care.

5. Come to a crossroads and go straight on (up Long Hill), following the North Downs Way sign.

CAUTION: This lane can be busy.

6. Reach the top of the hill and pass some large metal gates on your left. You will see an old orchard on your left.

POINT C - CORK FARM APPLE ORCHARD

Heritage grows on trees

On reaching Cork Farm we are presented with an opportunity to focus on some of the area's traditional landscapes.

Since 1993 this orchard has been part of a scheme called 'Countryside Stewardship' (now known as

Environmental Stewardship), which pays farmers to maintain important landscape features. The traditional management of this orchard has allowed an abundance of flora and fauna to flourish around the apple trees.

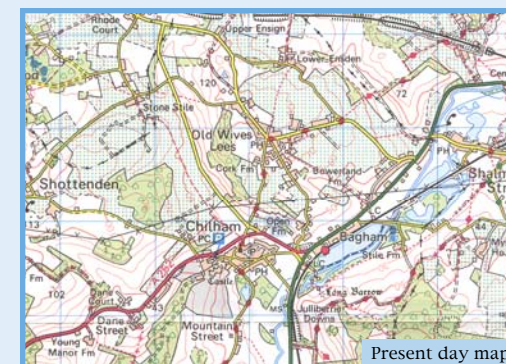
Growing on the branches, 38 different species of lichen have been recorded, one of which, *Parmelia acetabulum*, is a rare species, declining in the south-east of England. The holes and niches in the trees provide ideal nesting for various species of birds.

Last, but definitely not least, we must pause to mention the apples themselves, which are made up of about half Bramley, and half Worcester. Traditional fruit varieties are an important part of Kent's history as the Garden of England.

Chilham parish is still very much a fruit growing area. A comparison of a present day Ordnance Survey map with one dated 1945, sent to us by local resident Mrs B Busby, shows that there are actually more orchards now than then. This is very unusual in Kent - fruit growing has declined in most areas.



1945 Ordnance Survey map



Present day map

From point C to point D

7. Continue along this road, into a small settlement - Old Wives Lees. Come to a playing field with a play area on your right.

POINT D - OLD WIVES LEES

An old wives tale

Despite its name, Old Wives Lees has little to do with married ladies of a certain age. Research by George Mabbitt shows us that this area was originally a manor owned in the fifteenth century by a family named Oldwood, and 'Old Wives' is a later corruption of this name, the word 'lees' probably derives from the Anglo-Saxon lea, meaning meadow or open ground.

The historian Hasted, writing in the late 18th century, records that the manor was then called Olds Lees, but does make reference to its ancient name of Old Wood Lees. He also describes a small common or heath known as Old Wives Lees. Most of the buildings you see now are 19th century or later; as Old Wives Lees became a focus for expansion Chilham parish in this period.

George Mabbitt also tells that the Manor of Oldwood was the venue of an annual foot race instigated in the seventeenth century by the then Lord of Chilham Manor, Sir Dudley Digges. The princely sum of £10 was awarded to the winners of the race, a man and a 'maiden' aged between 16 and 24, held every 19th May. It appears that the race was still being held in the late eighteenth century, but alas not today. As Mr Mabbitt says:



Old Wives Lees in 1908

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"There doesn't seem to be a record of how and when the races were stopped, the prize money came from a charitable trust tied up with some property in Faversham, so perhaps this was sold off and the money was lost. If you are between the ages of 16 and 24, it might be worth your while investigating the lost races. If the trust is still in existence, the prize money may be worth considerably more than the £10 awarded in the 17th century!"

From point D to point E

8. Continue along this road and reach a crossroads. Turn right, following the North Downs Way sign, down Lower Lees Road. Pass a post box and a North Downs Way marker on a telephone pole.

9. Continue along this road until you come to a right hand turn called Bowerland Lane.

10. Turn right down Bowerland Lane, and follow the lane as it bears right. Reach a metal field gate and two way-marked footpaths by an orchard. Take the left-hand path.

11. Continue on this path, which passes between various hedges and fences. Reach a metal field gate and go through into a field.

12. Go straight ahead, along the edge of the field with a shelter belt of trees on your left. Head towards some farm buildings - this is Bowerland Farm.

POINT E - BOWERLAND FARM

A snapshot of agriculture a century ago

Where Bowerland Farm now lies was once the small manor of Boreland. George Mabbitt tells us that records for the manor date back to the reign of Henry VIII, when, in 1539, it was owned by one Sir Matthew Brown.

A map and accompanying key, dated 1905, provided by local resident Roger Pearson, presents us with a snapshot of how this land was managed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many fields were arable, but there were also substantial orchards and hop gardens, one five acre pasture and a number of small woods, including one called The Alders alongside the River Stour. Buildings included cottages with gardens, an oast house, and of course the main homestead.



The large field through which you approached the farm was a mixture of arable, fruit and hops, with the evocative name of Dingle Dane. At its centre was a small woodland called Round Wood, since lost.

As well as the land around the farmstead, the farm included holdings on the other side of the A28, between it and the railway, which at that time was a relatively new feature of the landscape.

From point E to point F

13. The paths now skirt the edge of a farmyard. Go through some large metal gates (please remember to leave gates as you found them) and onto a narrow lane.

14. At a junction, go straight ahead and come to the main road (A28 Canterbury Road). Cross the road to the pavement on the other side and turn right.

CAUTION: This is a very busy road, please take care.

15. Take the next footpath off to the left, and walk between two hedges. At the end, cross a stile into a garden. Walk through the garden, towards a small timber gate. Go through the gate onto a road, turn left and go over a level crossing. CAUTION: Take care on the level crossing. You will see a metal security fence on your right. Come to a gate in the fence.

POINT F - CHILHAM LAKE

From pasture to pit to pond

Chilham Lake was initially dug as a gravel pit in the 1950s. It was later purchased by Mid Kent Water who transformed the area, invested almost £200,000, and opened it as their first lake in 1991. It now covers an area of some 26 acres, having features for wildlife such as islands, gravel bars and reed beds. Mid Kent Water manage the lake, and a mill on the other side of the lake (as we shall see later in the trail).

The lake is stocked with carp, catfish, pike, trout, tENCH and bream, some fish weighing in at the 40 lb mark! Tufted duck and great crested grebe are just two of the many species of bird that frequent the waters.

Local resident Mary Carlton recalls how this land was used before the lake's creation:

"Where Chilham Lake is used to be water meadows for the dairy farm cows at Bagham. The cows crossed over to the farm across the railway."

And Jim Smith, who lived at Bagham Farm, also remembers a herd of 35 Shorthorn cows using this area...

"A level crossing gave access to marsh land which is now a lake, and also walking the cows past the mill to the land behind Julliberrie's Grave..."

You now have three options on your route:

Continue on the main route: stay on the road (Pickleden Lane), going straight ahead.

Follow the Lakeside Loop: go through the gate on your right, turn left, follow the lakeside path right round the lake and end up back here.

Take a short cut: go through the gate on your right, turn left and follow the lakeside path past the lake and onto a lane, turning right to rejoin the main route at point 24.

From point F to point G

16. Continue along this lane and cross a bridge over the River Stour. Come to a right hand turn.

POINT G - PICKLEDEN LANE

Pausing near 'The Splash'

Local resident Mary Carlton has childhood memories of this location:

"Sometimes we went the other way, down Gypsy Lane, to Stile Farm and Pickleden, to the left. I was nervous of the gypsies, but nothing ever happened."

Stile Farm, which Mary mentions, is at the end of the dead end road on your right. Records for this farm date back to 1695, when it was in the possession of a Peter Webster.

Mary continues: "To the left, to Pickleden, was 'The Splash', and we took jam jars and collected newts."

From point G to point H

17. Continue slightly uphill, past two sharp bends and a footpath off to the right. Pass a footpath off to the left at a sharp bend.

At this point it is possible to link to the Lost Landscapes trails in Chartham, as shown on the route map.

18. Continue uphill, and at the top reach a crossroads. Turn right onto a Byway, following a sign for the Stour Valley Walk. Walk between two hedges. (There are lovely views of the Stour Valley here.) Follow this byway for about 1 mile.

19. Reach a right hand bend, with a large open field on your left with a footpath running diagonally across it.

To visit Broadham Down Nature Reserve, follow this path. You will see signs at the entrance to the reserve. Feel free to explore but keep to marked paths and do not disturb grazing animals (dogs on leads). Return to this point to continue the main route.

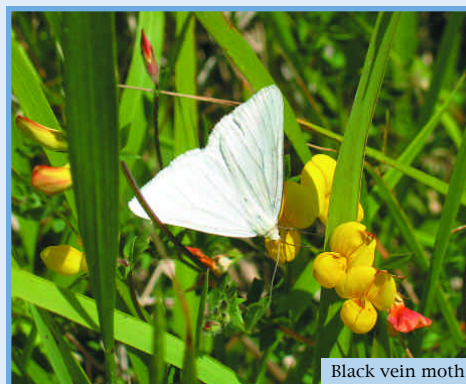
POINT H - BROADHAM DOWN

Restoring a special grassland

Initially an area of chalk downland, Broadham Down was donated in 1997 to the Kent Wildlife Trust, who undertook a program of scrub removal and fencing.

Their management of this 16 hectare site has been aimed at reclaiming an open habitat and restoring the chalk grassland which had been lost. Goats have been used to graze the reserve - they will tackle the scrub quite happily and make an ideal natural management tool.

The reserve is home to many valuable plants, including the pyramidal and man orchids. You may see evidence of badgers in the area, or an adder basking in the sun. The rare black veined moth, has recently re-colonised the reserve. It is thought to have done so via a 'corridor' of open habitat created to link Broadham Down to nearby Down Bank - one of only four sites in the UK where it had been recorded.



Black vein moth

Walk a little further into the woods beyond Broadham Down and you will come to the site of some lost cottages, shown on a 1784 Ordnance Survey drawing but not on any subsequent maps. There is little evidence of dwellings here, but there is a deep well in this area which may have supplied them with water.

From point H to point I

20. Continue along the Byway, reach a left-hand bend and a stile on the right. Cross over and follow the footpath round the edge of the field (there are good views of the village from the top of the field).

21. The path veers right, out of the field, through a hedge. Reach a waymarked crossroads of paths. Turn left, follow the path as it bends to the left and emerges into a field. Turn right and walk for a short distance. You will find yourself at one end of a long mound with bramble and scrub on it.

POINT I - JULLIBERRIE'S GRAVE

Who is buried at Julliberrie?

We now arrive at a site steeped in legend, history and a little mystery. How long this area has been called Julliberrie's Down, and the Neolithic long barrow called Julliberrie's Grave, is unknown, but these names date back to at least the eighteenth century.

The generally accepted origin of these names is that a Roman general, one Quintus Laberius Durus was killed in a battle in the surrounding countryside during Julius Caesar's first attempted invasion in 55 BC. He was believed to have been buried here, and hence the name was derived:

Julius's Laberius = Julliberrie

George Mabbit, in his history of the area, raises questions as to the validity of this story, citing evidence that the likely situation for any battle between Romans and Britons would have been at Bigbury Hill Fort, near Canterbury. Indeed, in Judith Glover's book, *The Place Names of Kent*, another possible origin of the name is suggested.

This is *Cillan Beorg*, which is Old English for 'Cilla's mound'. Further evidence for this theory was the existence of a settlement nearby with the name *Cillan Ham*, which was, of course, *Chilham*!

No matter what is the true origin of the name, this earthwork dates back far earlier than Roman times. Local resident Don Poole tells us that excavations have revealed...

"Humanly struck flint cores, flakes and scrapers and a fine but damaged polished flint axe of a type characteristic of the Nordic Regions of Scandinavia, North Germany and Holland. The 1987 hurricane felled several large trees in the vicinity revealing more Neolithic flint material and a small piece of human skull and bone. Very recent field walking around the long-barrow has produced even more flint cores, flakes, blades and scrapers."

The monument is actually a long barrow dating from the early Neolithic period (approximately 4000 to 2000 BC). Don describes the period for us...

"The earliest of our ancestors, who could have been here a couple of hundred thousand years ago or more, were hunter-gathers, leading a nomadic existence in a wilderness environment. It was during



the Neolithic, the latest Stone age that change accelerated. They benefited from an additional migration of peoples from Southern Europe who proved culturally ahead, so that small settled communities developed, tilling the land and harvesting crops, keeping and breeding livestock, domesticating horses and dogs, cooking with pots and pans, building shelters and homes, hunting with ever more sophisticated weapons and tactics, using spears and harpoons, bows and arrows, nets and snares..."

Another major feature of the early Neolithic is the construction of long barrows, and here we have one which archaeologists categorise as a Wessex type. Its present length is some 144 feet, with a maximum height of 7 feet, and though no ditch is visible now, one can be traced around the barrows northern end. Generally believed to be communal burial sites, the motives of the people who originally constructed them have yet to be fully understood.

However, the Roman connection supposed in the name is not all fancy. Often these ancient sites were reused over the millennia, as a way perhaps for successive generations to mark their claim on the land and its people. The excavation of 1937 yielded the discovery of a significant Roman presence.

George Mabbit relates that as well as Roman coins and pottery shards, four Roman burials were interred in the mound. All dated from about 40 AD, and he summarises the finds for us...

Burial One

Inhumation, child 5-7 years, bronze bracelet on right arm and bronze brooch

Burial Two

Inhumation, girl 17 years old, with pottery vessels

Burial Three

Inhumation and cremation, young adult. Pottery vessels

Burial Four
Cremation, adult, urn and dish

Though later than the first Roman incursions into this land, these finds clearly show a substantial Roman presence in the early history of this area, and a connection between Julliberrie's Grave and Roman invaders.

From point I to point J

22. Retrace your steps back to the crossroads and turn left. Walk downhill. You will see the River Stour below you to your right. Come to a gravel drive with a large white building on the other side of the river.

POINT J - CHILHAM MILL

Not a 'run of the mill' mill



Chilham Mill in disrepair before its restoration (Mid Kent Holdings)

The Domesday Book records that there were a total of six and a half mills in Chilham (the 'half' would have been a seventh mill under construction). Today, this is the only mill building left. It dates from the 19th century, but George Mabbitt's research shows: "It is almost certain that this mill is on, or near the site of an original Saxon mill."

The present building is widely regarded as the best preserved water mill in the South East of England. It is often referred to as the 'French mill', due to the French origin of the six pairs of grinding stones that were once used.

We turn to Mr. Mabbitt again for a description of this remarkable site and its buildings:

"The building is large for a rural mill consisting of five stories, together with the miller's house, stables and a wagon shed; and in the prime of its life it worked six pairs of mill stones (and) during this time a steam engine was installed to work in conjunction with the water wheel... The main structural beams are of oak, with the first floor being bricked between the timbers, and the upper floors are weather boarded. Most of the machinery can still be seen, and it doesn't take much imagination to visualise the great water wheel turning the mill stones again."

The mill finally ceased operation in 1934, the last miller being a gentleman name Joe Jordan who had worked as a miller for almost seventy years. It then lay idle until 1976, when it was purchased by Mid Kent Water, who are the present owners.

They undertook a costly renovation and conversion programme, and now its purpose is as a pumping station for the high quality chalk water present in the area.

Credit must be given to Mid Kent Water for blending in so well the modern day pumping equipment with the character of the original building. Indeed, it may have escaped your notice that one of the buildings is not original, but was recently constructed by Mid Kent Water to house their diesel powered alternators.

Also of note in the area are the famous water cress beds. Mary Carlton's childhood memories of these beds and

the mill paint an evocative picture of the working economy of this site:

"I remember the mill working and seeing the men covered in white dust from the bags of flour as they came down. We loved watching the big wheel come round... On the other side there were wonderful watercress beds. We could buy a huge bunch for a few pence. Mr Barratt was the watercress man and he was helped by Sid Kennett. They loaded up a pony trap and sent it to London on the train."

Jim Smith also remembers Mr. Barratt and Mr. Kennett working the cress beds...

"A nursery growing area was in a chalk hole, to the right of Mill Cottage gardens, the main beds are still identifiable. It was hard work, all day knee deep in water; either planting or cutting. Baskets of cress went off by rail, presumably to the London markets."

From point J to point K

23. Turn right and follow the drive over a bridge. Pass the Mid Kent Fisheries offices and cross another bridge. Reach a sign reading 'Chilham Nature Walk'.

24. Walk towards a level crossing and go over it.

CAUTION: Take care on the level crossing

25. Walk past some light industrial buildings and reach the main road (A28 Canterbury Road). Cross the road and walk up Bagham Lane, directly opposite.

CAUTION: This is a very busy road, please take care.

POINT K - BAGHAM

Farming moves with the times

On reaching Bagham we turn again to the memories of Jim Smith, who moved to Bagham Farm in 1944. The farm was then rented from the Castle Estate, and covered 145 acres. Cows were kept, "...housed in cowsheds at night in the winter; machine milking with churn collections by Sharps Dairies of Ramsgate."

After an outbreak of foot and mouth in 1952, the farm moved from dairying to other production:

"Landrace pigs were the fastest producing baconers... Chickens producing large numbers of eggs... Hops were (also) grown here at Bagham, up the New Cut, but that ceased in the 1930's, and the top of the kiln had gone before our time."

Mr. Smith also remembers a thriving pub here called The Alma (now a private house), and a servicemen's club known as The Adolf Club. There was also a prisoner of war camp: "...the field where the rec. is now, but I don't know how much use it got."

From point K to point L

25. Stay on this road as it bends through 90 degrees, passing a right hand turn.

CAUTION: Use the pavement on the right hand side of this road.

POINT L - THE AVENUE

When the landscape changed overnight

The Great Storm of 1987 which did so much damage to the Kent countryside, drastically altering its landscape in a few short hours, did not spare Chilham. The Avenue, where you stand now, was not excluded from the destruction wrought that night. Local resident Graham Swan recorded the damage and destruction of many other trees in the village, including two which stood in the square at the junction with School Hill, and many in the church yard. The ancient yew tree we saw at the start of our trail was also damaged, though thankfully not destroyed.

Not far from here was found yet more evidence for substantial Roman activity in the Chilham area. In 1962, whilst laying a pipe line here, council workmen discovered various shards of pottery and what appeared to be the burnt remains of bone. Subsequent investigation revealed that these were actually Roman cremation burials, dating from the second century AD.

From point L to point M

26. Continue along this road, coming back into the outskirts of Chilham. Pass a right hand turn (Felborough Close) and keep straight on into the village. The road bends slightly to the right as you pass the Woolpack Inn. Reach a turning for Heron's Close

POINT M - HERON'S CLOSE

Lost by a stone-age hunter

Our final point of interest on this trail is here, or more precisely in one of the gardens at Heron's Close. For it was there that the occupier unearthed a leaf-shaped Neolithic flint arrow head, 5.1 cm long and 1.8 cm wide.

A poignant moment to finish our journey through Chilham's heritage, taking us right back to the beginnings of human activity in this land.

From point M to start

27. Walk on, uphill, along The Street, and back into The Square. Cross the Square and retrace your steps down Taylor's Hill, back to the car park.

SECONDARY TRAIL

This trail is shown in orange on the map at the front of this booklet. There are no detailed written directions. Below is information on the main points of interest and notes on the route at points where it may not be clear where to go. These points correspond to lower case letters on the map.

Start at the car park at the bottom of Taylor's Hill.

Point a - Soles Hill Farm

Records for Soles Hill farm date back to 1750, and on the east side is the probable site of the archery butts in the village. One possible origin of the name is that it comes from the Old English 'sol', meaning muddy pool.

Point b - Pole Wood

Pole Wood, meaning a pollarded wood is mentioned in a 1338 inquisition post-mortem. Sometimes known as escheats, these were inquiries, undertaken after the death of a feudal tenant in chief (that is, a direct tenant of the crown), to establish which lands were held by the deceased, and who should succeed to them. They survive from around 1240 until the Restoration in 1660, when feudal tenure was abolished.

Early Ordnance Survey maps show an aviary in the wood - perhaps part of the castle grounds.

Point c - Howlett's Farm

Referred to in a 1327 subsidy roll (a Medieval tax record) the name Howlett's Farm derives from William Hughelot mentioned in that record.

In 1993, a collapsed chalk chamber was discovered in an orchard on this farm. It measured 3.7m deep, and 4.3m long, and at its eastern end was a filled in shaft. Subsequently filled in, this structure is an example of what is known as a 'dene hole'.

The origins and precise use of dene holes has been the subject of much speculation over the years. They were once thought to be holes dug to shelter from Danish invaders, 'dene' being a corruption of Dane, or as sites for the underground storage of grain. Local folklore has it that they can open up in the night and swallow anyone unlucky enough to be in the area, and that an individual known as Clabberknapper lives in them.

Recent research shows that they are most likely the remains of small chalk mines. Studies of tools and

marks on the walls have lead to this conclusion, and chalk would have had many uses, especially as an agricultural soil improver.

Dene holes are extremely common in the chalk landscape of Kent, and at least two others have been found nearby at Shottenden, including one with an unusual series of foot holes spiralling up in the chalk.

Point d - Shottenden

Earliest records for the ancient hamlet of Shottenden date back to 1175. Situated close to the highest point in the Parish of Chilham, it was then known as Sotindona, and it is likely that the name derives from the Old English *sceoting dun* meaning shooting or projecting hill.

A local resident whose father lived in Shottenden in the 1930's, lived through many changes in the hamlet, and lists a number of buildings and businesses that have changed use or disappeared...

"Baptist Chapel, Missionary Chapel (which was the school house), Public House (Plough Inn), Post Office, blacksmiths, undertakers and a local builder (Horton family)."

One fascinating local story relates to an attack during the Second World War when a shell from the infamous German gun 'Big Bertha' is said to have hit the village. According to the story, a gypsy was injured in the explosion, having two fingers blown off, one of which was a ring belonging to the King of the Gypsies. The ring has never found.

One can be forgiven for thinking that the gypsy's ring is the stuff of folklore, but in fact that is not the only dubious aspect of this tale. Although 'Big Bertha' was an enormous howitzer, weighing some 75 tonnes, and able to fire a 2,100 lb shell over 9 miles, Shottenden would have been well out of its range, and it was used during the 1914-1918 war, not World War II. As to the whereabouts of the Gypsy's lost finger, its location has yet to be nailed down.



The missionary chapel, Shottenden

Point e - The Mount

This prominent and unusual geological feature, visible for miles around, is known as 'The Mount'. This hill of pebbly soil, clad with pine and bracken is an outcrop of acidic sands and gravels. Situated at the top is a mound measuring 13m east to west, 16m north to south and 2.2m high. Surmounting this is a wooden viewing platform, that offers a spectacular panorama of the surrounding countryside. Looking East, Canterbury Cathedral may be seen, and on a clear day, the view can extend to the sea at Pegwell Bay.

The history and origins of the mound are somewhat obscure. While flint tools have been found nearby, it is not a barrow, and it is too small to have been a mound for a windmill. Some believe it was constructed for preachers to use, and it is known locally as 'The Pulpit'. It is also thought to have been part of the semaphore communication system connecting Deal to the Admiralty in London. However, its most likely origin is as an ornamental feature, possibly built by one of the Earls of Sondes to survey his land.



View from The Mount

Point f - Perry Wood

Perry Wood contains the remains of a Neolithic earthwork in the woods to the west. Excavations carried out in 1967 unearthed arrowheads, tools and various cooking utensils, revealing an area of considerable activity during that period.

The woodland itself consists of traditionally coppiced sweet chestnut, which has provided ideal conditions for the growth of many wild flowers, including bluebells and wood sage.

A windmill once stood in this area. Local historian George Mabbitt in his work, *Chilham, the Unique Village* describes it thus:

"Sometimes known as Selling mill or Shottenden mill, it is shown on a map prepared by Philip Symonson of Rochester, as one of the 39 windmills of Kent in 1596. A mill was still working as a flour mill on the same site in 1910, but like other mills, it was allowed to decay, and was finally pulled down in 1920."

Point g - Shillinghold Manor

Writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Kent historian Hasted states that there was ...

"... a manor here, situated about half a mile north-west from the church, adjoining to Selling (which) was once of eminent account, though now almost sunk into obscurity."

The manor he describes is that of Shillinghold; its manor house is thought to have stood in the field to your right, now an orchard. It was first recorded in 1087 as Cherinchehelle, from the Old English *scillinga hield*, meaning slope of the shield bearers or warriors. It eventually came directly into the possession of Edward VI in the fifteenth century, but in 1538 it was granted by Henry VIII to the Hawkins family, who still owned it at the turn of the eighteenth century. However, by the end of that century, Hasted is describing the ruins of the once substantial manor house...

"... in the wood still known by the name Shillinghold Wood, being part of a farm called Stone Style in Selling. In this wood there still appear among the various entrenchments... evident marks of large buildings having once been erected in it"

Although there are no longer any visible signs of the house, archaeological investigations suggest this was the site of the manor house. The rather complex earthworks, situated on a slight gravel ridge, consisted of a large, almost triangular enclosure which was bounded by two low banks. In the western half of this area were found various features of note: As well as some enclosures and two wells, footings of flint walling, some up to three feet thick, indicated the probable sites of several buildings. There was also a large irregularly shaped earthwork that was surrounded by a deep dry ditch; tiles, bricks, coins and urns were also discovered. In the eastern half, traces of small fields or crofts could be made out. Comparisons to a recently excavated medieval settlement in Joydens Wood, Dartford, point to it being highly likely that this is the site of Shillinghold Manor as described by Hasted.

Special woodlands

Glance at any map of this area and you will quickly see that Chilham is quite a well-wooded parish. Much of this woodland is 'ancient', but what does this term mean?

Natural England's definition is: "An ancient woodland is one that has existed since at least 1600 A.D. and possibly much longer. Prior to this date, planting of woodland was very uncommon which suggests that if a wood was present in 1600 it is likely to have been there for some time previously, and may be a remnant of the original 'wildwood' which once covered most of Britain ..."

You can also find clues about whether a woodland is ancient by looking at various aspects of the woodland environment. For example, certain plants are known as 'ancient woodland indicators' - if a number of them can be found in a wood, that is evidence for it being ancient.

Conservationists regard ancient woodland as the closest thing to 'natural' woodland that we have in the managed landscapes of Britain. Those with rare habitats and species are often designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) by Kent Wildlife Trust. Chilham is fortunate in that many of its ancient woodlands are SNCIs. The map below shows which woodlands in the area are ancient and which are SNCIs.



'A Canterbury Tale'

In 1943, film maker Michael Powell returned to Canterbury and the east Kent countryside in which he had spent his boyhood more than 25 years earlier, to make his most heartfelt and haunting movie, *A Canterbury Tale*.

Powell, and his partner Emeric Pressburger, set their story in 'Chillingbourne', a fictional village a few minutes by train from Canterbury. Several scenes were filmed at places we can easily visit today in and around Chilham.

Hortons' Yard, Shottenden, was the location for a scene in which local wheelwrights and blacksmiths appeared with Sheila Sim (now Lady Attenborough) and Sgt John Sweet of the US Army. Episodes were also filmed in Chilham Square, on School Hill and along Old Wye Lane, and the exciting 'battle on the River Stour' was fought by two gangs of local schoolboys at Chilham Mill.

The gang leaders and the GI later have a pow-wow on Julliberrie's Grave, and Sheila Sim and Eric Portman's memorable 'scene in the long grass' was filmed on Chilmans Down near the distinctive roundel copse.

During the Lost Landscapes project, we found there was a great deal of interest in this wartime classic, both locally and further afield. The Powell and Pressburger Appreciation Society organises annual walks around the locations used in *A Canterbury Tale*, the 2006 tour being attended by an estimated 80 people! To find out more about the tours, the film, and its makers, go to www.powell-pressburger.org.



ABOVE LEFT: Horton's Yard, Shottenden

ABOVE RIGHT: The 'battle on the River Stour' filmed near Chilham Mill.

LEFT: The 'scene in the long grass' filmed on Chilmans Down.

Contributors

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Useful information

This circular route is one of a series of Lost Landscapes Heritage Trails that have been developed in the following parishes along the North Downs: Cuxton, Detling/Thurnham, Hollingbourne, Charing and Chartham.

For further information about Lost Landscapes and walking opportunities along the North Downs Way visit www.nationaltrail.co.uk/northdowns or e-mail northdownsway@kent.gov.uk or telephone 08458 247600.




For further walking opportunities in Kent please visit www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent or telephone 08458 247600.

The Countryside Code.

Be safe - plan ahead and follow arrows or signs
Leave gates and property as you find them
Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
Keep dogs under close control
Consider other people

Waymarking

During your walk you will see arrows marking various public rights of way:

-  Footpath (on foot only)
-  Bridleway (on foot, horseback or pedal cycle)
-  Byway (all traffic)

Please tell us about any problems concerning the paths by using the Kent Report Line - 0845 345 0210.

