

Chesham – Waterside

Distance: 2 miles with a 1.5 mile option

Chesham Walks
11

Start Point - The Clock Tower, Market Square, Chesham HP5 1HG.

Introduction

This walk looks at the history of the Waterside area of Chesham. It was referred to as a hamlet of the town in census returns and, even today, people who have lived in Waterside have a strong sense of loyalty to the area. The road that follows the river valley is probably very ancient as it provided a level route between the town and the wider world. Central to its history has been the River Chess which has supported a number of industries for more than 1,000 years including milling, watercress, duck breeding, lace making and straw plaiting. The walk also passes the sites of three water mills.

Market Square – For the history of the Market Square see Walk 13 – Chesham Town Centre.

Red Lion Street - For the history of Red Lion Street see Walk 12 – Chesham Old Town.

Walk from the Clock Tower and turn left into Red Lion Street. Cross over East Street and Punch Bowl Lane continue into Waterside at its junction with Amersham Road.



The Pound - At the junction of Waterside and Amersham Road is where the pound used to stand. Throughout the middle ages, any animals found straying were impounded here. To release them the owner had to pay the Lord of the Manor one penny for a small animal or two pence for a large one.



Weedon's Almshouses – They were erected in 1624 by Thomas Weedon, draper of London, whose father farmed in Pednor.



No. 71-79 The Bagnall Project – This large building used to be the Hayes Boot Factory. Subsequently, it was a printers, and is now a health centre.



No. 98 – The site of the Foresters Arms which closed in 1933 to become a lodging house.

The Motor Depot – It was built for Thomas Wright's woodwork business in the 19th century.

Waterside Business Park – Formerly Reynolds Yard, it was once the site of a steam saw mill. The trunks of trees were drawn up the steep slope, by cart horses and were cut up for the woodware industry.



Waterside Court – The site of the New Inn pub. For many years it was run by WWI hero, Alfred Burt VC.

Silverson – The area to the right just after the railway bridge was once watercress beds which closed in the 1960s.



Chiltern House - This was the toy factory of HG Stone who was famous for their 'Hugmee' bear.

Hospital Hill – The large housing block on the left was once the site of the Chesham Gas Works. Before the days of natural gas from the North Sea, each town made their gas from coal. This was brought by horse drawn cart from Berkhamsted until the Metropolitan Railway arrived in 1889. At the top of the road used to stand Chesham Cottage Hospital. It was built in 1869 but



shortly after opening had to deal with a major outbreak of typhoid. The hospital was extended in 1923 as a memorial to those who died in WWI. It closed in 2005.

Gordon Rd – This used to be the site of Shutes silk mill that drew water from artesian wells. The site was taken over by the Royal Bucks Laundry for about 100 years.

Straw plaiting – In the 1841 census there were 64 straw plaiters in Waterside alone, mostly women and children working from home. No.153 is thought to have been a straw plait school run by a Miss Cherry. By 1899 the industry was almost finished through competition from Chinese straw plait.

No. 185 – Once the Elephant & Castle pub. The pub sign still remains.

No. 264 – The site of the Rose & Crown pub which dated back to 1830.

Duck breeding – This was a major industry in Waterside with many breeding shacks and cottages on the current site of Riverside Court.

No. 282 – Was the Five Bells pub. Lower down on the left is the old cellar door.

Christ Church - Grade II listed built in 1864 constructed of local flint and Bath stone.

Trapps Lane – Was the start of an old route to Boxmoor and Hemel Hempstead.

Kitty's Bridge – Built to allow safe passage across the river to Christ Church. It was named after Kitty Rose, the wife of a local councillor.



Corner of Waterside & Moor Road – Here once stood Lords Mill which was built in Saxon times, probably by Lady Elgiva, who diverted the Chess to form a millpond. It was manorial mill of the Manor of

Chesham Higham. Tenants had to take their corn there, and paid for the milling with a proportion of their corn or flour. It was the last working mill on the Chess, it ceased production in the 1950s and demolished in 1988. The slope down to the river opposite was used to allow the horses to drink.

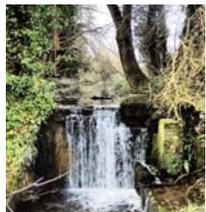
Shorter option – The walk can be shortened by proceeding along Moor Road and rejoining the main walk by the Chesham Moor Gym & Swim.



The Pheasant – Popular riverside pub which dates from 1860.

No. 458 to 464 – In front is an ancient box tree which is a relic of the garden of the long since demolished Black Horse pub.

Continue along Waterside to its junction with Hill Farm Road. Taking great care, cross over Waterside and walk down the slope to the remains of Canon's Mill.



Canon's Mill – A mill on this site was recorded in the Domesday Book (1086). It gets its name from the ownership passing to the canons of Missenden Abbey in the 13th century. Last worked in 1937 and demolished in 1960.

Turn right just after the waterfall and follow the Heritage Trail and riverside walk back towards Chesham.



Chesham Moor - Chesham Moor was originally swampland and manorial waste and had little value to the community. In Victorian times it became a rubbish tip but is now a popular recreational area and is designated as common land.

Take the small concrete footbridge at the end, go over Bois Moor Road and walk past the tennis courts and swimming pool.



Chesham Moor Gym & Swim - Bathing in the stream on the Moor was an old Chesham custom, but then local residents complained about "the bathing nuisance". In 1912 the first swimming pool was erected and in 1933 it had a

facelift. In 1964 the whole building was reconstructed and the pool was made deeper. It is fed by spring water.

Continue ahead through the parking area and under the railway bridge.



Lords Mill Pond – The River Chess used to flow along what is now Moor Road but was diverted to feed Lords Mill.



Railway Bridge - The railway line to Chesham was built as part of Edward Watkin's grand plan to have a direct route between London and Manchester. However it got no further than Chesham Moor until the town paid to extend it into the town.

At the Junction with Amersham Road, cross over to the brick wall of Friedrichsdorf Corner.



Friedrichsdorf Corner – Named after one of Chesham's twin towns but is also the site of the old Amy Mill. Possibly one of the four Chesham mills mentioned in Domesday Book. Owned in 19th century by the Rose family, who, in 1845, opened a new steam mill (Canada Mill) across the road.

Turn right at the wall, after a few paces, left over a wooden bridge into Meades Water Gardens. Follow the riverside path through the Gardens to emerge into Germain Street.



Meades Water Gardens - Originally the location of the millstream for Amy Mill, of which only the sluice gate now remains. The site was converted for use as watercress beds, and later, ornamental gardens. In 2008 the river was restored as part of a project to regenerate the gardens.

Turn right into Germain Street and take the pedestrian crossing over to the Market Square to finish the walk.



Route Map

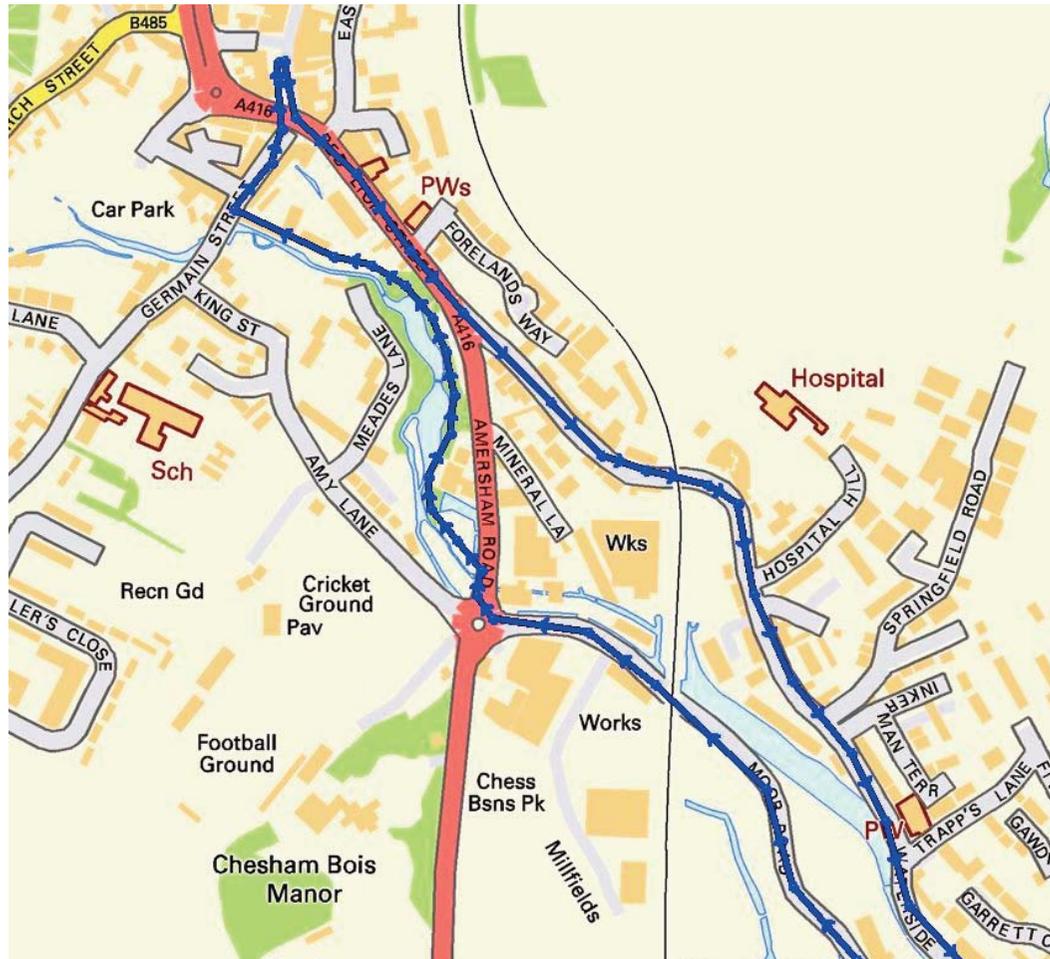
This series of history walks have been produced in conjunction with Chesham Museum and their walk leaders - www.cheshammuseum.org.uk

Current Chesham Walkers are Welcome walking routes:

- 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)
- 7 Little Chalfont to Chesham (6 miles)
- 8 Chorleywood to Chesham (8.5 miles)
- 9 Great Missenden to Chesham (6.1 miles)
- 10 Amersham to Chesham (4.5 miles)
- 11 Chesham – Waterside (Historical)
- 12 Chesham – Old Town (Historical)
- 13 Chesham – Town Centre (Historical)
- 14 Chesham – Thomas Harding (Historical)

Visit www.chesham.gov.uk (click on the Walkers are Welcome tab) and www.chilternsaonb.org

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Lords Mill prior to demolition in the 1980s.

