

North Downs Way

NATIONAL TRAIL



# Lost Landscapes

HERITAGE TRAILS

An ancient burial ground, a tiny medieval church (pictured right) and Britain's first orchard nature reserve. 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.

Chartham

The main trail takes you alongside the River Stour, past the tiny ancient settlements of Horton and Milton, then through ancient woodland, culminating with the spectacular views and prehistoric heritage of Chartham Downs. The second trail follows the North Downs Way through the northern part of the parish, focusing on local field names.

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 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.

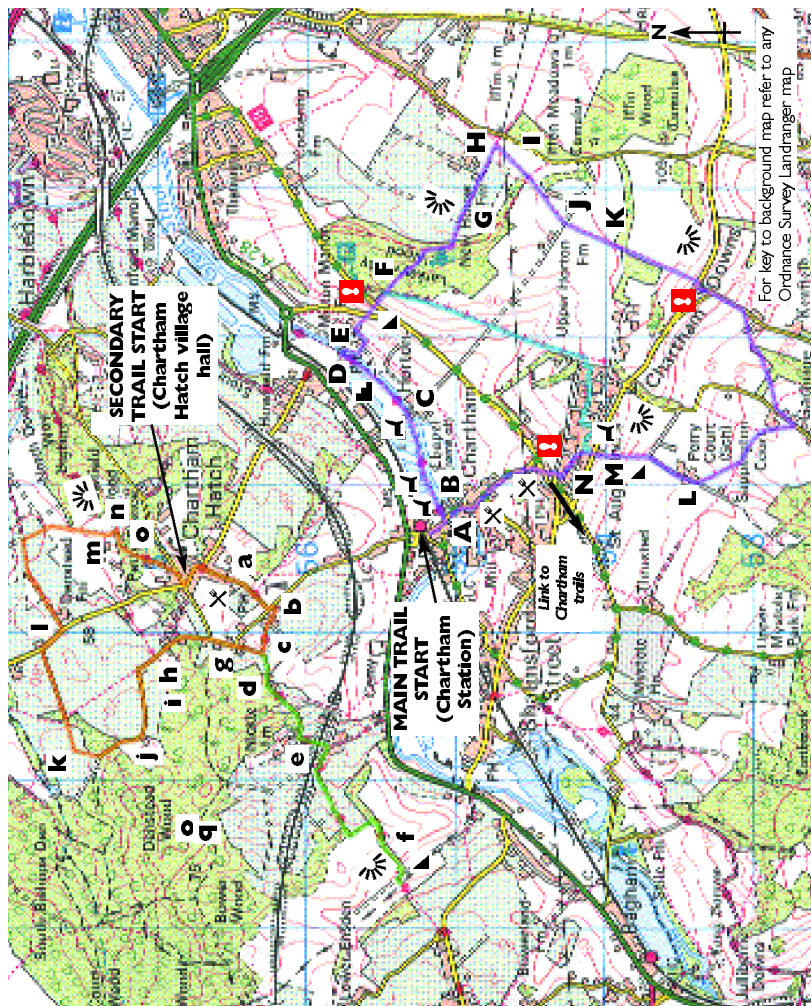
The Chartham Heritage Trails have been carefully designed to take in the best heritage features of the area. As you walk you will find that the history has been brought to life by the contributions of local people.

*Enjoy your journey back in time!*



**Terrain**  
 Unmade tracks through fields and woods. Muddy at times. Some steep climbs (marked on map).

**Distances**  
 Main trail (purple) - 6.35 miles (10 km)  
 Main trail using short cut (blue) - 4 miles (6.4 km)  
 Secondary trail (orange) - 3.5 miles (5.8 km)  
 Boundary and back diversion (green) - 2.8 miles (4.5 km)



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- Map key**
- Main trail
  - Secondary trail
  - Point of interest in text - main trail
  - Point of interest in text - secondary trail
  - CAUTION at this point
  - Pub serving food
  - Steep climb
  - Bench
  - Viewpoint
  - Steps

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 use Ordnance Survey maps of this area - Explorer nos. 149 and 150 or Landranger no.179.

**Getting to Chartham (main trail)**

By train - Chartham station is on the Ashford-Canterbury West line between Chilham and Canterbury West. For train times telephone 08457 484950.

By bus - service number 652 (Ashford - Canterbury via the A28, not Sundays). For bus times contact Stagecoach on 08702 433711.

By car - Chartham is located just off the A28 between Ashford and Canterbury. From Ashford: keep on A28 past Vye and Chilham; pass a right turn for Shalmsford Street and take the next right, signposted Chartham into Station Road; go over level crossing and park in village. From Canterbury: Take the A28 through Thanington Without, turning right at a roundabout; pass an industrial estate and turn left, signposted Chartham into Station Road; go over level crossing and park in village.

**Getting to Chartham Hatch (secondary trail)**

By train or bus - Walk up Hatch Lane from station or bus stop on A28 and join the trail at point B.

By car - Follow directions for main trail but take turning opposite Station Road called Hatch Lane. Go over level crossing then take second right (Town Lane) and follow into Chartham Hatch. There is some on-street parking in the village (please don't park in village hall car park and be considerate to residents).

**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 Chartham railway station.

**From start to point A**

*1. Walk into the village, towards the church, past a petrol station. Pass a large playing field on your left and a shop on your right. Pass the church on your right, and some public toilets and a car park on your left. Just before the road crosses the River Stour, look for a footpath signpost off to your left, opposite Arjo Wiggins Chartham Papers.*

**POINT A - PAPER MILL**

**Milling around for hundreds of years**

Chartham paper mill may look like a modern

industrial site now, but the history of milling here goes back centuries. The mill would have been one of five mentioned in the Domesday Book, used for grinding corn. An early reference, dated 1438, held at Canterbury Cathedral Archives, states that two millwrights agreed to construct a water-powered fulling mill where woven cloth was softened and smoothed.

It was transformed into a paper making mill in 1730, described in a newspaper at the time as...

"...containing two engines, two vats and all other utensils and conveniences necessary for the making of paper, together with a very good dwelling house"

By 1857, it was in the possession of William Weatherley, who helped transform not only the mill, but the whole paper making process. He diverted the watercourse, and installed the first air drier ever to be used in paper making at a cost of £8,000, as well as building The Grange, a beautiful house with landscaped gardens. By the 1860s the mill produced 8 tons of paper per week.

The Howard family acquired the mill in 1871, and by the 1880s the output had risen to 20 tons per week. It had one of the best reputations in the country for the production of high quality paper; used for writing, account books and banking, and had been brought up to date with a major overhaul of the paper making machinery.

In the 1930s, as a result of a mistake made when too much vegetable starch was added to the paper mixture, translucent paper was produced. This became the basis for the high quality Gateway Natural Tracing Paper that the mill is so famous for today.

#### From point A to point B

2. Follow the footpath sign along the riverside. Follow the riverside path until you come to a weir and the confluence of two branches of the river.

#### POINT B - TUMBLING BAY

### A lost port?

This point, where the mill leat rejoins the Great Stour is known locally as 'Tumbling Bay', once a popular place for local children to swim. Local resident Veronica Litten relates the tale of a local boy named Faulkner who rescued his friend from drowning here. In recognition of his bravery he was given an award by the Boy Scouts, while his picture hung for many years in the village school.

Two fields not far from here, on the other side of the river, known locally as Ship and Port Field seem to further hint at a history of the Great Stour as a navigable waterway as Veronica Litten writes in her book Chartham's Heritage...

"The land where Stour Road and Stour Close now stand was called Ship Field. When building commenced the remains of an ancient boat were uncovered, but as soon as it was exposed to the air it disintegrated. Was this once the site of a port?"

It seems that this is more than local folklore. Landscape heritage expert Dr Nicola Bannister backs up the stories:



Tumbling bay

"River Stour - this was probably navigable up to Wye in the early medieval period..."

Stour Valley Historic and Archaeological Landscape Assessment

#### From point B to point C

3. Continue along the riverside path, which soon takes you into a more open area. Pass two lakes on your left. (These are dis-used gravel pits.)

4. Stay on the riverside path, just past a carved bench made from a tree trunk, look on the other side of the river for a weir then a group of buildings close to the river. The large old house is Horton Manor. Walk a little way further, keep looking across the river and you will glimpse the bellcot of Horton Chapel behind and to the left of the house (it may be difficult to see in summer).

#### POINT C - HORTON

### Graves and gables at the filthy farmstead

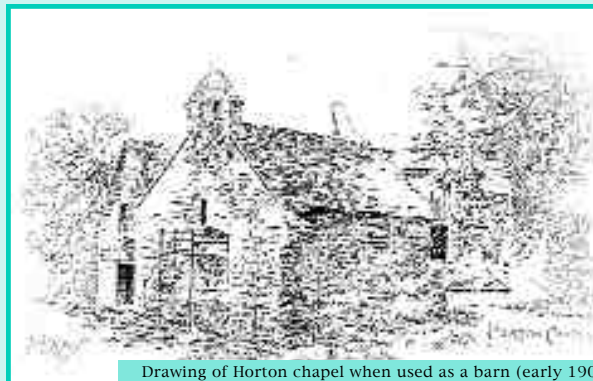
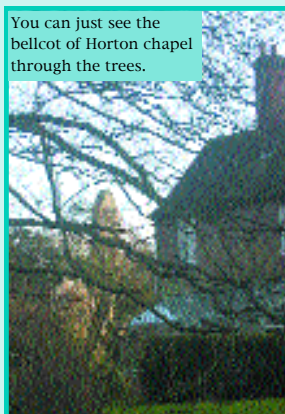
Earliest written records of this farmstead date back to 874 AD, where it is recorded as Horartun, from the Old English hohr tun meaning a muddy or 'filthy' farmstead.

Interesting archaeological finds have been unearthed in this area, including a bronze cruciform brooch, believed to date from the fifth or early sixth century.

Further excavations have revealed evidence of a cemetery and traces of a building. Three of the six graves found were examined, revealing typical Saxon grave goods, whilst pottery from the remains of the building suggested it had been abandoned sometime in the eleventh or twelfth century.

The current manor house, which is the large, old building you can see on the other side of the river, though undergoing refurbishment and re-facing in the nineteenth century, actually dates from the late

You can just see the bellcot of Horton chapel through the trees.



Drawing of Horton chapel when used as a barn (early 1900s)

fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The central hall, possessing some fine oak beams and crown posts, are of this earlier period.

The flint chapel, which can be glimpsed behind and to the left of the manor house, dates from about 1300. In a decree from 1380, it was given permission to celebrate most privileges as those of the mother church in Chartham, a rare case for a private family chapel to be allowed to perform almost all religious rites except burials.

It has not been used as a place of worship for almost 300 years, though it was not wholly neglected, a hop oast being added to the rear, and the interior being used as a barn during this period of disuse.

Though today it is in much need of repair, a trefoil-headed piscina can still be found inside, while outside a rare double-arched bell gable still exists. It is the bell gable you will be able to see from this position.

#### From point C to point D

6. Continue straight ahead, on the riverside path, through a metal kissing gate and into a field.

7. Continue alongside the river until you come to an embankment. Climb the steps up the side and back down again. Go through a metal kissing gate.

#### POINT D - FLOOD PLAIN GRASSLANDS

### Lost meadows of the Stour

At one time the riverside land you have been walking through would have been managed as meadows - full of wild flowers and insects in summer and flooded in winter.

Traditionally, meadows were sited where the land was prone to regular flooding because the hay cut

was used to feed livestock through the winter, and flooding substantially increased the hay yield, depositing fertilising nutrients over the meadow. Meadows were usually permanent and highly valued, because the establishment of really high yielding grassland took many years before the arrival of modern fertilisers.

In the early medieval period, the amount of meadow land was probably relatively small. The fact that meadows get special mention in many Anglo-Saxon charters suggests this. The Domesday book confirms that most places had very

small amounts of meadow, located mainly on floodplains. The amount of meadow is thought to have increased into the late mediaeval period.

The earliest maps, of the 16th century, show that by this time almost every floodplain, even those of small streams, was occupied by meadow. There were both privately owned and common meadows, the latter being divided into strips called 'doles', defined by stakes or stones, often re-allocated to commoners annually by a draw.

Many meadows were lost during the 20th century, 'improved' by drainage and artificial fertilisers, ploughed up or, as is the case with many in the Stour Valley, turned over to pasture.

#### From point D to point E

8. Continue on the riverside path with a lake on your left. Come to a metal bridge over the river and cross it.

**CAUTION:** You are about to enter an aggregates processing site. Keep strictly to the marked path, following signs for FP487 and beware large vehicles.

9. Follow the signs back along the river a short distance then left up some steps. Cross a very small metal bridge. Go straight ahead towards a stile.

10. Cross the stile and turn left, following the edge of a field. You will see a flint church on your left.

#### POINT E - MILTON

### The uses of flint - ancient and modern

Although the manor house no longer stands, having been demolished in 1959, the manor of Milton dates back at least to 1044, when it was known as



Milton church

Melentun. In the thirteenth century it was held by Sir Robert de Septvans, a crusader knight. A tiny flint church dedicated to St John the Baptist dates from this period.

According to a story related by Veronica Litten, the churchyard contains the bodies of the German poet, Hermann Storer and his wife. They were found in a nearby wood, and an inquest decided the poet had shot his wife through the head, then committed suicide. Some 300 people witnessed the burials.

By the 1980's, with only six residents in the parish of Milton, services were abandoned and the church fell into disuse.

This part of the Stour Valley has been transformed significantly by the development of the aggregate extraction industry. By the 1950's, the company A.H. Hooker was employing 29 men, quarrying aggregates (sand and gravel), for use as construction materials. Some excavation pits went down to depths of 20 feet.

In 1979, Robert Brett and Sons opened their works here, using a converted timber framed barn at Milton Farm as their offices. According to historian, Paul Tritton, the works here processed aggregates from



Milton manor c. 1900

quarries all around the surrounding area. Flint, the material used to build Milton's ancient church, is now processed at this works into pebble dash for Kent's newest buildings.

The Brett Company has helped with the landscaping of many of the pits that were flooded and became the lakes you passed earlier on this walk, with the creation of islands and the planting of trees. Other pits were filled in to their former height and returned to agricultural use.



Brett's Milton Manor works, with the church in the background

#### From point E to point F

11. Continue along the edge of the field, then as you approach a timber gate, veer right, between two posts, one of which has a yellow marker.

12. At a marked junction, turn right, uphill, along the edge of a recently landscaped area. Continue straight ahead, into some trees, and walk steeply uphill.

13. Continue along this path until you reach a metalled road (Cocking Road). Cross a stile, cross the road and go over a stile opposite. CAUTION: This is a very busy road. Continue straight ahead, uphill, reach the top and cross a stile onto a byway.

**To take a short-cut back to Chartham village:** Turn left, along the byway, follow it through the woods then



The famous brass of Robert de Septvans in St Mary's church, Chartham

out into open fields. Keep straight ahead, crossing a small valley. Stay on byway until you see a play area on the left and new houses on the right. Turn right and cut through to Chestnut Close. Turn left and go through bollards and under the archway ahead. Go straight ahead into Godfrey Gardens and keep ahead past the Water Tower and a shop. At end of road go straight ahead on path between houses. Turn left at the end into Little Copse Close and right into Magnolia Drive. Then left into Lime Close and follow path through the woods. At end of path turn right onto tarmac path. Now follow directions from step 37 on page 10, which will take you back to Chartham.

#### To stay on the long trail:

14. Turn right, then take the next left - a bridleway into the woods

#### POINT F - LARKEY VALLEY WOOD

### A regenerating woodland

In 1932, Larkey Valley Wood was donated to the people of Canterbury by the Mayor, Alderman Frank Hooker. This area, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, has a mixture of chalky soils with acidic clays, and these differences produce contrasting vegetation throughout the wood. Of particular note is the spectacular display of woodland flowers during the spring, including bluebells and wood anemones.

One species of orchid, *Orchis purpurea*, is found almost exclusively in the Kentish chalk woodlands. It is known more commonly as the lady orchid, due to the resemblance of the flowers to ladies in bonnets and crinolines.

Like much of Kent, this woodland was damaged during the great storm of 1987 but thanks to the power of nature, and the efforts of Canterbury City Council, much of this area has undergone considerable regeneration.

The northern area is managed as coppice and the chalky banks (which lost many beech trees) have been left to regenerate naturally. Here a mix of trees such as ash and hazel has emerged, whilst on the more acidic soils of the central ridge, hornbeam and sweet chestnut predominate.

In the south of the woods, many of the destroyed trees have been left to decay where they fell, providing an extremely useful habitat for all the flora and fauna which flourish in this area.

#### From point F to point G

15. Keep straight ahead through the wood unless markers tell you otherwise. Reach a T junction and turn right. Pass a

large beech tree then take the next footpath off to the left.

16. Emerge into a large field and walk straight ahead towards the end of a long hedge/shelter belt. (This is a good viewpoint.)

#### POINT G - CREMATION BURIAL SITE

### A Roman's last resting place

Not far from here a Roman urn and a Samian patena were unearthed in 1949. A patena was a religious ritual dish for the drinking or offering of drink to the gods as part of the libation ritual.

It seems highly likely that this was the site of a Romano-British cremation burial, dating from roughly 100 AD. The pottery is now in the care of Canterbury Museum, but unfortunately further excavations in the surrounding area produced no other finds.

#### From point G to point H

17. Pass the shelter belt/hedge, and keep straight ahead, now on a tarmac farm track. Walk past a house on your left and keep straight ahead at a cross-roads.

#### POINT H - NEW HOUSE FARM

### New House four hundred years old

Although the building on the left is known as New House Farm, it in fact dates from the seventeenth century, Veronica Litten writes...

"The building is unusual in that it is supported entirely on beams. In the scullery is a well 190 feet deep. Two farm workers' cottages were built in 1890 beside the bridleway. These now have been converted into one dwelling."

#### From point H to point I

18. Keep straight ahead, with a hedge on your left and a fence on your right. When the fence meets a tall hedge at 90 degrees, turn right onto a footpath, walking alongside the tall hedge.

#### POINT I - IFFIN WOOD

### An abandoned manor in an ancient woodland

The woodland you can see across the fields to your left is Iffin Wood. The presence of spindle, whitebeam and Midland hawthorn all indicate that this is a long established woodland, and the area as a whole, which includes Little Iffin Wood, includes at least 32 ancient woodland indicator plant species. The ground flora



Midland hawthorn

includes several species of orchid such as early-purple, greater butterfly and lady orchid.

Iffin Wood also contains three significant ancient archaeological features. Firstly, there are various earthworks relating to a deserted medieval manorial settlement. Documentary evidence for the manor of Iffin exists for the years 1086 to 1465, but by the end of the fifteenth century all records cease, indicating it had been deserted by this time.

The earthworks is a large, rectangular banked and ditched enclosure covering an area of about a hectare, containing four other similarly enclosed areas. The smallest of these is found in the south-western corner, and contains a raised mound and the remains of a flint walled chapel dedicated to St. Leonard, dating from the twelfth century. A slightly larger area to the east is thought to be the site of the principle domestic buildings. The remains of a road runs south westerly, and surrounding the whole is a complex arrangement of other earthworks, probably associated with the economic and agricultural activity of the manor.

The two other archaeological features represent activity from a far more ancient time. Both are bowl barrows, used as funerary monuments, dating from the period 2400-1500 BC.

The first lies in the northern part of Iffin Wood, where five inverted Bronze Age pottery vessels, each containing a cremation burial were found. The barrow has a mound that today is 1.3m high, surrounded by a partially infilled ditch. The second barrow is situated in the south of the wood, about 100m east of New House Lane. Again surrounded by a partially infilled

ditch, it is 0.75m high with a diameter of 13.5m. Despite the passage of time, and the activities of successive generations of man (and animals), both these prehistoric monuments have survived comparatively well.

**Please note: There is no public access to Iffin Wood, which is privately owned.**

#### From point I to point J

19. Continue along this path, with the hedge on your right, and go under a pylon line. Come to a T junction and turn right. Almost immediately, turn left. Walk across the field towards a gap in a hedge and go through, past yellow tape markers.

20. Emerge into a field and walk across on a slight diagonal. Reach a metalled lane.

#### POINT J - UPPER HORTON

### Where the wise birds live

We now arrive at Upper Horton Farm; to the right is Horton Manor. Although it may appear to be quite an old building, it was in fact built in 1957, albeit on the site of a much older dwelling. Veronica Litten has told us about a charming local name for this area: "This part of the parish was known as Owls Home, so named because of the many owls that made their homes in the woods roundabout."

#### From point J to point K

21. Cross the lane. The footpath continues straight ahead across the field, along the left hand side of a shelter belt.

#### POINT K - OLD CARRIAGE ROAD

### A pleasant drive in the downs

The footpath here, in the fields just past Upper Horton Farm, follows the course of a dis-used carriage road, as Veronica Litten describes...

"This old road climbs up from Kenfield Hall and crosses the Downs Road. It runs through a shave of trees and then beside Redwood Lees... in parts the path is quite wide and one can imagine the carriages rattling down from Kenfield Hall and Petham."

Evidence of far older human activity was unearthed in the area of Upper Horton Farm in 1952. Whilst ploughing in a nearby field, local farmer Mr Given discovered a finely polished axe made of flint, later confirmed to be Neolithic dated around 4,000 – 2,300 BC.

#### From point K to point L

22. Continue along this path, into a small woodland. Reach a dirt track and turn left. Emerge into a field, walk along the edge, with woodland on your right. Reach the corner of the wood. (This is a good viewpoint.)

23. Keep straight ahead. The path goes downhill and into a strip of woodland. Walk through the wood and reach a main road. (Before you cross the road, look down to your left and you will see a small stone marker with a letter C carved into it. This marks the Chartham parish boundary - you are now leaving Chartham and entering Petham parish.)

**CAUTION:** This is a busy road with fast traffic.

24. Cross the road, turn right and immediately take the lane on the left, signposted Kenfield Hall and Petham.

25. Walk downhill, reach a T junction and turn left. Follow this lane until just before 'The Grange', where a footpath crosses the lane. Take the path off to the right.

26. Walk diagonally across the field, heading to the left of a large modern barn. Cross a farm track and a stile into the next field.

27. Walk diagonally across the field, uphill, towards the end of a narrow strip of woodland and a stile.

28. Cross the stile and walk along the side of the woodland, uphill, with the woodland on your left, then cut diagonally across the field towards a gap in the trees.

29. Walk through a strip of woodland and into a field. Keep straight ahead, across the field and reach a road.

30. Cross the road and walk up a drive directly opposite. Follow the drive past some houses then towards a gap in a wall.

31. Cross the metal bars across the gap and walk down some steps into a field. Walk straight ahead, cross a stile, then walk across the next field at a slight diagonal, towards another stile.

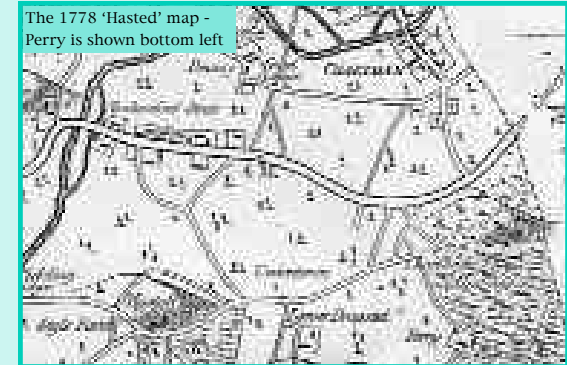
32. Cross the stile and go straight ahead across the field. Reach the corner of two hedges at 90 degrees, look downhill to your right and you will see a stile and a gate with a yellow marker. Go through the gate and diagonally across the field towards some farm buildings.

33. Reach a stile and cross it onto a rough flinty track. Turn right and follow the track through the farm.

#### POINT L - PERRY COURT FARM

### Farming by the stars

Perry Court Farm dates back at least to the sixteenth century, when it was known as Pery Farm, possibly a reference to the growing of pears on the land. A map of 1778 shows the farmstead marked simply as 'Perry'.



The 1778 'Hasted' map - Perry is shown bottom left

In 1953, the farm was taken on by the Brockman family. They began to manage the land according to a system known as 'bio-dynamic' farming and as their website says...

"The land has now been free of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides for up to five decades, during this period the soils have improved, showing higher organic matter levels as well as increased biological activity and improved soil structure."

Other methods employed on this farm include the planting and harvesting of crops on dates specified in an astrological planting calendar and the use of homeopathic treatments for livestock.

In 1976, the Brockman family helped in the founding of the Perry Court Steiner School, donating many of the farm buildings to it. Based on the teachings of Rudolph Steiner and his 'anthroposophical' beliefs, it opened with just 14 pupils and 4 staff. Today there are almost 250 pupils.

#### From point L to point M

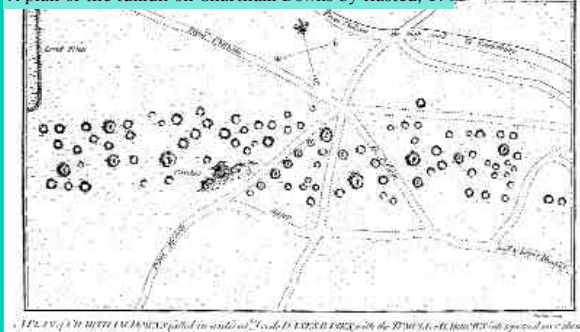
34. Continue on this track, which becomes a metalled lane. Reach a sharp bend to the right and take a footpath off to the left, crossing a stile. Walk diagonally across the downs, steeply uphill. (There are excellent views from this escarpment.)

## POINT M - CHARTHAM DOWNS A burial place for 600 years

Though there are no extant remains visible, this area was the site of a very ancient cemetery. It originally contained about one hundred barrows, about twenty of which were excavated in the eighteenth century.

In one barrow, a Roman glass bottle (now housed in the British Museum), a brooch and some coins of the Lower Empire were found. Cremation appears to have been practised in this cemetery, but there are a considerable number of later graves that have no objects deposited in them.

A plan of the tumuli on Chartham Downs by Hasted, 1798



This dates the cemetery as being in use from about the fifth to the early eleventh century, and the change from furnished to unfurnished graves (i.e. from graves with goods to graves with no goods in them) almost certainly shows this site's later use as a Saxon Christian burial ground.

### From point M to point N

35. Reach the top of the downs and cross a stile onto a pavement alongside a main road. Cross the road and take the footpath directly opposite. CAUTION: This is a busy road with fast traffic.

36. Follow this path into a housing estate. At a junction, keep straight ahead, pass a carved bench.

## POINT N - ROMAN QUARRY SITE A very ancient murder mystery?

During the construction of the housing estate you are walking through, much evidence was unearthed

showing activity here during the Romano-British period, roughly 40-410 AD.

It seems the area was used in that period as a chalk quarry, initially being abandoned, with work resuming again later in the second century. It appears the quarry was finally abandoned in the late third or early fourth century.

In the northern end of the quarry, possibly its entrance, numerous finds were discovered, including building debris, pottery, coins, metalwork, quern stones (most often used for the grinding of grain for flour), tile, animal bone and other small finds. The building debris indicated the presence of a large masonry building, possibly a farmstead or a villa that was here during the whole period the quarry was in use, though it appears to have undergone some structural alterations.

During the time when the quarry was first abandoned, roughly 75-125 AD, a single cremation burial was inserted into the back-fill. Analysis of the bone fragments contained within the urn show it was female, and found with the urn were a flagon and a bowl.

The second burial discovered dates from the period when the quarry was finally abandoned, and represents the final evidence of human activity in the quarry. Situated in the south-eastern

side, it consists of the burial of a young adult. Examination of the body showed that the individual had probably lived quite a strenuous life, had bad teeth, and, due to the bowing of the legs, spent a considerable time horse riding. Though no grave goods were present, archaeologists dated the burial as late Roman.

Of more interest, perhaps, was the general nature of the burial. The apparent casual disposition of the body seemed to suggest the burial was somewhat of a hurried affair. Also the fact that it was buried in a quarry and not in a cemetery all lead to the suspicion of foul play of one form or another.

### From point N to start

37. Keep ahead on path to cross a road and keep on to enter a cul de sac called Jasmine Close. Go left again on path through houses to emerge by the Fagge Arms public house. At roundabout turn right onto Cockerling Road and second left into Rattington Street. Beware traffic and stay on this road into Chartham and on to the station.

## 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. These points correspond to lower case letters on the map.

The trail focuses on the traditional names of fields along the North Downs Way, with text taken from 'Memories, Myths and Maybes' by Veronica Litten.

Start at Chartham Hatch village hall. Take Howfield lane until you reach New Town Street on the right.

## MEMORIES MYTHS AND MAYBE

Unravelling the meanings of field names along the North Downs Way through the parish of Chartham.

## INTRODUCTION

The North Downs Way National Trail crosses the Chilham/Chartham boundary in a field called Dane, part of the land of Lower Ensdon Farm.

From the Chilham boundary the North Downs Way wends its way through Chartham to its boundary with the parish of Harbledown, passing through farmland, orchards and woodland, all bearing their own names which have been passed down through the ages. All have their own identity, sometimes handed-on from generation to generation and sometimes locked up in secrets of the past. Some names are predictable, others need much research in the hope of coming to the correct conclusion and others remain a mystery.

*"Travel along Chartham's North Downs Way, admire the beauty of today and peep into the past along the way."*

## POINT a - New Town Street

The North Downs Way follows the metalled road which most probably got its name from a new way to a farm. Town is often derived from *tone*, an old word meaning farm. Locally this lane is called Dipping Tank, after the tank sunk into the ground used for spraying crops and treating hop poles. It was filled-in during the mid 1980s. Being deep and adjacent to a Public Right of Way it was deemed a potential danger.

## THE CHAPTER ARMS

This establishment has been a hostelry for nearly 200 years, formerly part of Primrose Farm, earlier it was the property of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral, hence its name and sign IX-Jesus Christ.

Field on the same side of the road as the pub:

## OAK FIELD

So named because it is adjacent to the Royal Oak Public House.

Fields on the opposite side:

## HOME ORCHARD

Refers to land close to the Farmhouse of the former Chapter Farm.

## TWELVE HUNDRED

This field name dates back from the days when hops grew here and refers to the number of hops planted to the acre. Normally there were no more than a thousand.

## Point b - Hatch Farmhouse and Hatch Green

The North Downs Way now passes the rear of Hatch Farmhouse with its attractive dove cote. The farmhouse, also a 'Listed Building' was built in the 18th century, or earlier. Hatch Farm was once a separate holding, now part of Nickle Farm. Since the demise of hop growing the Oast has been used as a cold store for fruit and later acquired by Hoppers Farmhouse Bakery. This enterprise enjoyed great success, but outgrew the premises and was forced to move elsewhere. The Oast has since been converted into five dwellings. The conversion kept many original features including the cowls which are a landmark for many miles around. The building is said to be haunted.

Hatch Green developed where the hatch, the opening through the woods, was crossed by the ancient trackway used by traders, travellers and pilgrims following the ridge of the North Downs. Gradually dwellings were built here and later across a wider area. On this green was a pond from the local water supply. It is now part of the landscaped garden of Hatch Green Cottage. On nearby rising ground stood a windmill.

Field on the left side of North Downs Way:

## TRIAL FIELD (on the left)

A comparatively modern name referring to the testing of crops.

## Point c - Choice of routes

**At this point, you have a choice of two routes: To take the 'Boundary and back' diversion, stay on the North Downs Way, straight ahead.**

**To stay on the secondary route, follow the footpath off to the right, at the end turn left onto Hatch Lane. Go to point g in the text.**

## 'Boundary and back' diversion

*This is a linear diversion along the North Downs Way to the Chartham parish boundary and back*

### Point d - Fright Wood and Puddledock House

**FRIGHT WOOD** (on your right)

The name is taken from the Old English *fyrho* meaning woodland.

### PUDDLEDOCK HOUSE

Nearby springs running down from the woods formed pools for water dipping. The house was formerly three cottages built in 1723, said to have been built on the site of a former priory. (The large orchard on your left is also called Puddledock.)

*Where the North Downs Way crosses a track*

**NOOK** (field to the right cut into the woodland)

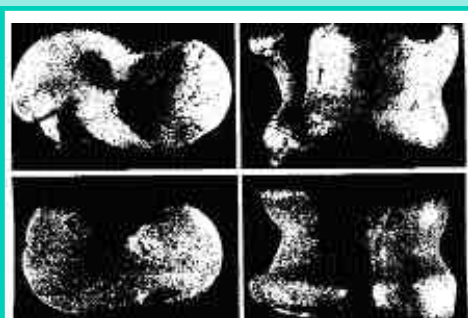
Named after its shape of a recessed corner cut out of Fright Wood behind A. A map of 1841 refers to it as Duckpits pasture.

**GALLAS** (on your left)

Sometimes referred to as Gallows. Older local residents remember it as Galus Meadow where local lads played football. There is no evidence of gallows here. Perhaps Galus is a shortened form of *Astragalus*, a plant of the vetch family or a game played long ago using heel bones from sheep as dice.

**NICKLE HILL** (beyond the cross-roads, on the left)

When climbing the enclosed path beside Hunstead House it will become obvious why the opposite field is called Nickle Hill!



Sheep's heel bones used as dice

### Point e - Nickle Farm and the Railway

It is said that at the cross tracks here (where the North Downs Way turns left) the supposed route of the Pilgrims Way joined Nickle Farm Road, having climbed from Chilham, Bowerland Farm and behind Shalmsford Manor to a path which certainly has the characteristics of an ancient sunken road and is now designated as part of the North Downs Way.

### NEARBY OASTS

One has been converted into a B&B establishment the other is no longer recognisable as a former Oast, having been converted and used as the farm's offices and now the office of the publication Kent on Sunday. The building has been named Hunstead House, after the woodland that stretches behind Nickle Farm. In its day the Oast was called the Bogey Oast. Was this from some engineering term, or was it so named because of its position surrounded by dark conifers?

**TANK PIECE** (on the right before the railway bridge)

Field possibly named after a tank which stood here. Farms often contained tanks used for spraying crops and dipping hop poles in creosote to preserve the wood.

### THE FAVERSHAM - CANTERBURY RAILWAY

This line, opened in 1860, crosses the land of Nickle Farm after leaving Selling Tunnel and entering the wooded area of Highfield Springs, Lower Ensdon Farm.

**OAST FIELD** (on left as you walk alongside the railway)

Situated behind an oast house built in 1897, one of several within the farm.

**DUNNINGS** (on your left after the path bends away from the railway)

Possibly named after an early land owner named Nigel de Duding.

**GREATIS MAN** (Opposite Dunnings)

The meaning is obscure, but might mean a large meeting place, common land or a homestead. On a map of 1683 the area is shown as Greatmostman.

**HIGH FIELD** (Opposite Dunnings)

Named after a wooded area at the top of a bank where several springs rise.

**COW LEAS** (On left as the path turns a corner)

A reminder of the days before the orchards, before the hops, when cattle were grazed here.

### Point f - Near the parish boundary

**TURKEY BANK** (large sloping field on your left)

Local residents say the name comes from the shape of the hillside which resembles the breast of a turkey! This is fanciful. The landowner says it was where turkeys were dried on their way to market. This explanation seems logical as the field is on a south west facing slope. Which market? Canterbury, Chilham or Wye?

It is said that the turkey is the only animal that hasn't the sense to seek shelter in order to keep dry in wet weather.

**MOON'S BANK** (large sloping field on your right)

As this name implies this field is on a bank, a very steep bank - climbing up it certainly feels as though one is climbing to the moon, but actually the name is derived from Muns, a former landowner. Chartham Parish Council, with the aid of the Kentish Stour Countryside Project, installed a bench near the top, where the views are splendid.

**DANE** (at the valley bottom)

From the Old English for 'Land in a deep wooded valley'.

The North Downs Way crosses a valley here, no doubt once more deeply defined and flowing with water descending from the nearby hills. This would have made a natural division of land ownership, creating the boundary of the two parishes.

The land is no longer wooded and has seen many changes in cultivation, including hop growing which gradually gave way to fruit, cereal, oilseed rape, flax and more recently, lavender.

In 1998, relics of the days of hop pickers, with their primitive huts and facilities were discovered, when, after scrub clearance two earth closets were revealed. These have since been removed.

## 'Boundary and back' diversion ends

*Please retrace your steps to point c then continue on the secondary route to point g.*

### Point g - Fields and buildings near Hatch Green

*Field on the left as you walk back to Hatch Lane:*

**HAZZARDS**

Possibly a derivation of hazels. Hazel trees were

coppiced and much used for hurdles, fencing, pegs for thatching and basket making. There is an old sunken road which runs from Lower Ensdon, through Hunstead Wood and Fright Woods. It lays hidden, covered in foliage and fallen trees and is difficult to trace, particularly when beguiled into falsely following loggers' tracks. The woods and the old sunken road continued on across Hazzards to Hatch Green. When older fruit trees were grubbed out and the field bare before replanting, the line of this sunken road could be discerned.

### BUILDINGS NEAR HATCH GREEN

By studying the buildings around Hatch Green it will be seen that this is the oldest part of what is now known as Chartham Hatch:

**The Royal Oak:** This Public House, now temporarily closed, has remains of a medieval timber-framed building which are now encased in brick.

**Sayes Court:** Built in the 1700s. The front portion, called Hatch House, was built in 1820.

**Primrose Cottage:** This thatched timber framed cottage, formerly aptly named Pilgrims Cottage, was built in the 1600s or earlier.

**Mount Cottages:** These cottages of red brick with grey headers were built in the 18th century.

**Orchard Mount:** This was once three cottages and bears a date stone 1725. It stands opposite Mill Field the site of the former windmill of which there is now no trace except a slight mound, possibly where the mill stood.

All the above buildings are 'Listed', marking their architectural importance.

### Point h - Seed Mill

Two contributors to Lost Landscapes have told us about this lost building.

"The seed mill, built in 1704, was used for thrashing turnips, swedes etc. It was an impressive building, three storeys high, standing beside the mill pond..."

From *Chartham's Heritage* by Veronica Litten

Neil Morris, warden at nearby Hunstead Wood Nature Reserve, uncovered some intriguing references to the mill in old newspapers:

"Work on Chartham Hatch Seed Mill was in



The seed mill (Hopper family)

progress...when in May 1791, the Kentish Gazette recorded a 'shocking accident' in which one of the workmen digging the drain was buried alive...

"A sale advertisement in the Gazette of 1820, after describing the mill's machinery, adds that it was 'fitted up as a flour mill at a very considerable expense but for want of sufficient power has never been put in motion'. The following February the mill was being offered for letting or sale with 3 acres of hop ground and a double cockle oast...Mr Hambrook, the entrepreneurial miller and seedsman also leased from the Dean and Chapter the 72 acres of Hunstead Wood adjoining his property. The coppice there would have been put into service producing charcoal to fire the oast and providing the large number of hop poles employed at that time..."

#### Point i - Hunstead Wood

The longstanding warden has done much research into the history of this ancient woodland nature reserve:

"Hunstead first appears in the expense accounts of the Cathedral Priory in 1251...The same forester was responsible for Hunstead and Denge Woods and it seems likely that at the time the two woods joined...Being church land it is quite possible that Hunstead served the monks at the hospital in neighbouring Harbledown. They would have prized the sphagnum moss from the bog as a wound dressing with natural anti-bacterial properties, a useful commodity when you are running a leper hospital..."

From *Hunstead Wood - Its History Explored Through Physical Features of the Wood* by Neil Morris.

Hunstead is enclosed by ditches, including an unusual double ditch on its southern boundary with Fright Wood. Neil has explored the function of these ditches:

"The interpretation of the name Hunstead as 'the place where the hounds are kept' has bolstered the theory that deer were hunted in the Blean in medieval times and that this ditch system is the remains of a former pale...However, any evidence of verderers being employed by the church to look after deer management in the forest is completely lacking..."

He goes on to put forward three possible explanations for the double ditch on the southern boundary. The first is that it was a 'radfall' - "a woodland track made between two banks, made for the purpose of moving cattle". The second is that it was a defensive ditch, constructed during the Iron Age as an 'annex' to nearby Bigbury hill fort, or even by the Romans as a temporary defensive earthwork during their advance into Kent. The third theory is that it is an "ancient sunken road" that joined with an old trackway a mile to the west.

Hunstead Woods is part of a large block of woodland known as South Blean, which is in turn part of the larger ancient Blean Forest that encircles Canterbury. Despite its conifer plantations and commercially managed chestnut coppice, this woodland contains many good wildlife habitats. In particular, boggy and heathy areas occur on acidic, sandy soils, characterised by heather, gorse and rare mosses. In contrast are grassy rides on chalkier soils with plants such as yellow-wort. In spring bluebells abound and nightingales can be heard.

#### Point j - Primrose Hill

Veronica Litten, in her book *Chartham's Heritage* recounts a number of local people's stories and memories about this lane:

Primrose Hill was nicknamed Plum Alley because of the fruit that fell from the line of bush plums planted as a windbreak. It was also called Cook's Hill after the family that lived there. At the top of the hill was a very old holly bush, always laden with berries at Christmas time. The wooded area behind was a favourite haunt for children. They would try to catch robins there and sneak into the orchards stealing apples and cherries...

Apple Tree Corner was by the bend in the lane and was so named...because one lone apple tree grew there. Many sheep were kept in the field and the man who tended them had great difficulty when required to make a count of his flock. He would count up to five or six and then continue 'And there goes another one, and there goes another one.' In the end the job was left to the farmer..."

#### Point k - White Walls

At this junction of paths is the location of a lost farmstead. A 1784 Ordnance Survey drawing records it as Whitehall Farm. Cottages survived here into the early 1960s, known locally as 'White Walls'.

The long straight track ahead has the traditional name of Sandyway - you will soon see why - and was difficult to use for carts whose wheels slipped in the sand. In the small valley to your left runs the tiny River Cranburne, known locally as Running Water. Veronica tells us it was once a larger watercourse where poachers fished for trout.

#### Point l - Denstead

We now arrive at the distinctive Six-Cowl Oast at Denstead. This impressive local landmark is testament to the extent of the hop growing industry in this part of Kent. The favourable climate and soils, and a ready supply of chestnut coppice made Chartham parish ideal for hop gardens.

Denstead was once a separate ville. It was part of the estate of the Crevequer family, who gave it, in the reign of Henry III, to the Priory of Leeds. It remained a manor belonging to the Priory until Henry VIII took it into his possession. Today the timbered farmhouse with its stately chimneys is still to be admired.

#### Point m - Petty France

The old Petty France Farm, meaning little farm, once stood on the parish boundary between Harbledown and Chartham. Nothing is left of the old farm, but an ancient oak tree stands alongside the North Downs

Way marking where the line of the boundary left the fields of Petty France Farm to run down the middle of the track to No Man's Orchard.

#### Point n - No Man's Orchard

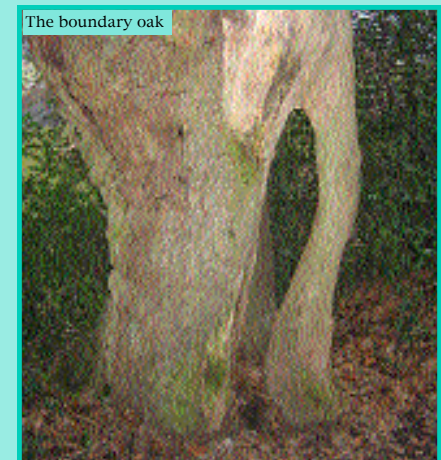
Traditionally any land that straddled more than one parish was called No Man's, meaning no one man's land. At No Man's Orchard the boundary between Chartham and Harbledown leaves the North Downs Way crossing the centre of the orchard.

This traditional bramley orchard was purchased by the two parishes in 1996 with the help of grants and donations. The ten acre site is also a site of Nature Conservation Interest, designated by Kent Wildlife Trust, mainly because of the number of lichens and mosses present.

Canterbury City Council has designated the orchard a local nature reserve in recognition of its wildlife value and to encourage its educational use. This was the first orchard in the UK to be designated as such.

#### Point o - Boundary oak

Local resident Jim Sanders told us about "an ancient pollarded oak which is said to be a parish boundary marker." Look for its distinctive trunk with an arch as you follow the North Downs Way away from No Man's Orchard. A local superstition has it that any young woman of the parish who passes through the arch three times will improve their chances of becoming pregnant



The boundary oak

# Contributors

We would like to thank the following contributors to this booklet (in alphabetical order):

Chartham Parish Council  
Chartham Society History Group  
Norton Harries  
Veronica Litten  
Neil Morris  
Jim Sanders

We would also like to express our gratitude to all the other local people who took part in meetings, walks and research.

Thanks to Ken Law from Cuxton for checking the route directions.

Main trail text written by Andrew Hudson.

Secondary trail field names text written by Veronica Litten.

This booklet was edited and designed by Clarity Interpretation (01303 249501 [clarity.interpretation@virgin.net](mailto:clarity.interpretation@virgin.net)).

## 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 Chilham.

For further information about Lost Landscapes and walking opportunities along the North Downs Way visit [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/northdowns](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/northdowns) or e-mail [northdownsway@kent.gov.uk](mailto:northdownsway@kent.gov.uk) or telephone the Trail Office on 01622 221525.




For further walking opportunities in Kent please visit [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://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.

