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- Chess Valley Walk
- ○ ○ ○ ○ Permissive route
- \*\*\*\*\* Links to railway stations
- ..... Other rights of way
- P** Parking

1. The River Chess begins its journey deep in the aquifer, the underground store of water held in the chalk rock of the Chilterns. The river emerges above Chesham and flows to the River Colne near Rickmansworth.
2. The area now known as 'The Moor' is actually a large island. It was created in the 10th century by Lady Elgiva who diverted the Chess and built a mill here, as recorded in the Domesday Book.
3. The bottling plant here is on the site of old watercress beds.
4. From the 1st Century AD, for over three hundred years, Latimer Park Farm was the site of a Roman Farm Villa.



Roman Villa, Latimer Park

5. Latimer House (1838) is on the site of the original manor house, dating from at least the 16th century. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown is thought to have been involved in the design of the surrounding parkland.



Flaunden Church, approx 500 years ago

6. The brick tomb surrounded by iron railings marks the resting place of William Liberty, who died in 1777. He asked to be buried alone, out of fear that he would not be able to identify his bones when the time came to be resurrected! Many of his family are buried at the site of Flaunden Church, between here and the river. The rest of the village was relocated to the north during the early 19th century and by 1840 the site, including the church, was abandoned.
7. Mill Farm, Chenies, has a small shop next to the farmyard, which sells ice-cream and farm produce. The brown cattle you may see are pedigree Guernseys.
8. 13th century Chenies Manor has attractive gardens which are open to the public.



Water rail

9. Unimproved water meadows such as Frogmore Meadows are now very rare. Their distinctive plants, such as ragged robin, marsh marigold and meadowsweet cannot survive the agricultural drainage that so many meadows have suffered over the years. This is a Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust Reserve and access is limited to permit holders. Call 01727 858901 for more information.
10. Sarratt Bottom Watercress Beds, the last active watercress beds on the Chess, rely on the clean, warm water of the river. The 'beds' support their own wildlife, notably herons, grey wagtail and the elusive water rail.

11. The terraced field rising up the valley side is thought to date from the 9th century. The characteristic steps, or 'strip lynchets', formed by the action of ploughing along the slope, may have been the site of mediaeval vineyards.



'Strip lynchets'

12. Opposite the lynchets, Sarratt Bottom water meadows are still home to a wide variety of birds and other wildlife, including the increasingly rare water vole. Stand on the bridge for 10 minutes and you may be lucky enough to see one. The watercourse here is really the millrace for Sarratt Bottom Mill. The original line of the river, now almost dry, follows the far side of the valley.



Water vole

13. Chorleywood House Estate is an area of open access land owned by the local council. The house itself is now in private ownership, but the grounds provide an ideal place to stop for a picnic. The Edwardian sunken garden, historic parkland, woodland and meadows offer a range of fascinating features and wildlife habitats. From here, you can walk to Chorleywood railway station in about half an hour, passing Chorleywood Common on the way.
14. Rickmansworth was once the paper making centre of Hertfordshire. The mill at Scotsbridge was used for paper making in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is now a pub and restaurant.

Rickmansworth Station



# The Chess Valley Walk

*A 10 mile walk in the Chilterns  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

Discover the Chess Valley



## Getting There & Back

The Chess Valley Walk is approximately 10 miles long and can be completed in a day or followed in short sections. You can return to the start points by train from the Metropolitan Line stations at Chalfont & Latimer, Chorleywood or Rickmansworth.



For information on train times and fares, phone London Travel Information on 020 7222 1234. Bus and train information can be obtained from Traveline on 0870 608 2608,

## Finding Your Way

The route can be followed in either direction and is clearly waymarked. Most of the route is on public footpaths but there are short sections on roads. Take extra care at these road crossings, as some of them can be busy.

## Parking

Parking in the Chess Valley is limited, so if you need to drive it is best to leave your car at one of the railway stations or another town centre car park.



Paintings by Richard Allen  
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## The Chess Valley

The Chess Valley has some of the most attractive countryside in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is a landscape rich in wildlife, with a long and fascinating history. You'll discover the site of a Roman farm-villa at Latimer, 13th century Chenies Manor House & Gardens and historic Latimer House & parkland. The water meadows, ancient field systems and old watercress beds at Sarratt offer a glimpse of the agricultural past of the valley. Mills played an important role in the history of the Chess and some of them can still be seen straddling the river. The site of old Flaunden village and its long derelict church is a potent symbol of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the valley over the centuries.



Canon's Mill, Chesham c.1900

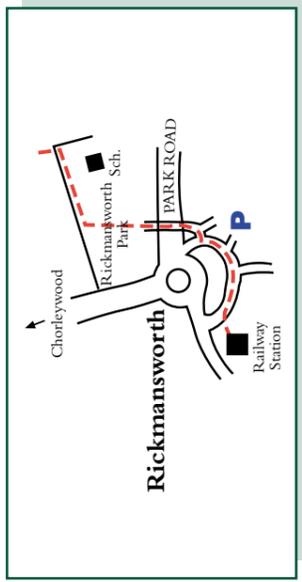
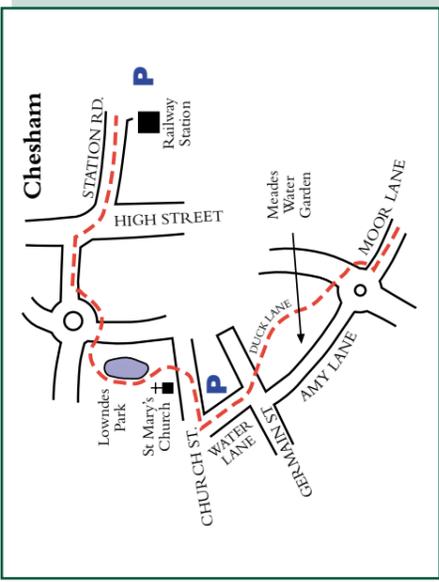
The wildlife of the Chess Valley is as diverse and exciting as its history. You might see kingfisher, water vole, brown trout, grey wagtail and several species of damself and dragonflies, amongst many other types of birds, plants and animals. The leaflet, "The Wildlife of Chilterns Chalk Streams", available from the Chilterns AONB Office, will help you identify these creatures and many others.



Brown trout

## Routes Through Town

The route of the walk through Chesham & Rickmansworth.



## Other Local Walks

Herts Countryside Management Service (0208 447 5466), Bucks County Council (01296 383114) and the Chiltern Society (01494 172500) have details of other walks in the area. Alternatively you can use OS Explorer maps 172 & 181 to plan your own walks.

## A 'Chalk Stream'

The Chess is a 'chalk stream'. Chalk Streams are fed by groundwater, which is stored in the aquifer - layers of chalk rock which work like a sponge, soaking up water until it emerges at ground level. Regular winter rainfall is needed to recharge the aquifer and keep the chalk streams of the Chilterns flowing throughout the year.

Typical chalk streams, like the Chess, Misbourne, Ver and Gade, are shallow, narrow streams, with gravel beds and clear, warm water.

We take our water from the aquifer too, so we need to use water wisely in order to reduce our impact on chalk streams and their wildlife.

## The Caring for the Chilterns Code

- Enjoy, Understand and Care for the Chilterns
- Show respect to other users of the countryside
- Support the local economy - buy local products and services
- Don't disrupt the activities of those who make their living from the countryside
- Can you visit the Chilterns without using your car?
- Support local conservation organisations
- Take pride in the Chilterns - Follow the Country Code