

Main walk morning last checked	Main walk afternoon checked	Short cut to Chenies checked	Shorter start checked	Ending at Chalfont checked
21 December 2019	21 December 2019	20 September 2019	20 Sept 2019	20 September 2019
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## Chorleywood to Chesham

<b>Length:</b>	<b>Main walk</b>	16km (9.9 miles)
	<b>a) Short cut to Chenies</b>	saves 1.4km (0.9 miles)
	<b>b) Shorter start from Chorleywood</b>	saves 3.4km (2.1 miles)
	<b>c) Ending at Chalfont &amp; Latimer</b>	saves 6.1km (3.8 miles)

**Toughness:** 5 out of 10: several hill climbs, but with reasonably gentle gradients

**Maps:** OS **Explorer** 172 & 181. OS **Landranger** 165 & 166

### Features

The Chess Valley is one of the most beautiful and tranquil parts of the Chiltern Hills – which makes it all the more amazing that along its whole length it is never more than a couple of kilometres from the Metropolitan Line of the London Underground. This walk explores it thoroughly, starting in Chorleywood, whose station and common already have a very rural feel, and afterwards dipping in and out of the valley, with a number of fine panoramic views.

Early in the walk there is a short section affected by noise from the M25 motorway, but this soon fades into the background as you walk northwards. For lunch the walk climbs up to the village of Chenies, which has two possible lunch pubs, and just beyond it passes through a wood that is an absolute carpet of yellow celandines in late March and early April - see paragraph 79. There are also some bluebells in late April/early May - see paragraph 100 (main walk), paragraph 46 (on option a), paragraph 71 (option b) and paragraph 85 (option c).

Later delights include passing Latimer House and village, and then a pleasant walk high along the valley rim on a permissive path. Approaching Chesham there is a bravura finish over the hills that takes you right down into the heart of the town for tea.

Early in the main walk (paragraph 30 and 33) there are a couple of sections of lane that can be flooded after heavy rain. Option **a) Short Cut to Chenies** (see over) avoids these sections.

### Walk options

**a) Short cut to Chenies.** Starting in paragraph 19 of the main walk on page 4, this saves **1.4km/0.9 miles** off the morning of the main route, giving you a total morning walk of **4.5km (2.8 miles)**. It passes along a very pretty stretch of the Chess River not otherwise visited on the

walk and then takes a direct route over the hills to the lunch pubs. In late April/May it passes through a small bluebell wood.

**b) Shorter start from Chorleywood.** This gets you to the lunch pubs in Chenies in just **3.1km (1.9 miles)** from Chorleywood station, passing through a pleasant beech wood on the way, though missing the fine morning views. In all it saves **3.4km (2.1 miles)** off the walk, making a total walk of **12.6km (7.8 miles)**. In late April/early May it passes through a bluebell wood and an optional short diversion to explore this is included in the directions. See paragraph 56 on page 6 for directions for this option.

**c) Ending at Chalfont & Latimer** This option diverges from the main walk 1km (0.6 miles) after lunch and then takes you to the Metropolitan Line station at Chalfont & Latimer (also served by Chiltern Railways) in **2.4km (1.5 miles)**. The route is initially on a track with fine views, then through beech woods (with some bluebells on late April/early May and the rare coralroot flower during the rest of May), and down through suburbia to the station. In all this shortens the walk by **6.1km (3.8 miles)**, making a total walk from Chorleywood of **9.9km (6.1 miles)** - or less if you use option **a)** or **b)** above.

## Transport

The quickest way to get to **Chorleywood** is by **Chiltern trains** from **Marylebone** (every half hour Monday to Saturday, or hourly Sundays: 35 minutes), but you can also reach it by the **Metropolitan Line** of the Underground direct from Aldgate, Kings Cross and Baker Street (every fifteen minutes, journey time 42 minutes from Baker Street). Get a train that arrives at Chorleywood around 10.30, around 11.00 if planning to take option **a) Short cut to Chenies**, or around 11.30 if planning to do option **b) Shorter start from Chorleywood**.

Metropolitan Line trains back from **Chesham** are every half hour, and now all run direct to Aldgate via Baker Street and Kings Cross, taking 57 minutes to Baker Street. There is no time saving from trying to change and connect with Chiltern Trains en route. If you particularly need to return to Marylebone, it is only five minutes walk from Baker Street.

Trains from **Chalfont & Latimer** - option **c)** - run three times an hour on the Metropolitan Line (47 minutes to Baker Street) or twice an hour by Chiltern Railways into Marylebone (40 minutes).

**Tickets:** Chesham is in London Transport **zone nine**, Chalfont & Latimer in **zone eight** and Chorleywood in **zone seven**, so you can use **Oyster** or **contactless** to pay for your journey. **Don't forget to tap out at Chorleywood**, which is easy to do as it has no automatic barrier: the tapping out point is at the top of the ramp after you have crossed the tracks using the underpass. **Freedom Passes** are also valid all the way to Chesham.

If you are travelling from Marylebone you can still use a Network Card at weekends to get a reduction on a day return to Chorleywood (or Chalfont & Latimer), and I am told (but have not tested personally) that this is valid for travel to Baker Street (but **not** other purely Underground stops). However if ending in Chesham you would still have to pay for a single Underground journey there to whichever station you bought the ticket to, so arguably it is not worth it.

## Lunch

**The Cock Inn** (01923 282 908) in Sarratt is a possible lunch stop just 3.6km (2.2 miles) into the main walk (*though **not** passed on the Shorter Start or the Short Cut to Chenies*). This walker-friendly traditional village pub is open all afternoon daily, serving food from 12-2.30pm Monday to Saturday and till 4pm Sunday. The very reasonably priced menu includes a good range of vegan options. The pub has a large, but rather bare, garden.

**The Red Lion** (01923 282 722) in Chenies, 6.5km (4 miles) into the main walk, reopened in August 2019 under new management and is now a smart, friendly pub with a somewhat gastro menu, served from 10am to 11pm daily. It has some outside seating in a sheltered courtyard.

**The Bedford Arms** (01923 283 301) [www.bedfordarms.co.uk](http://www.bedfordarms.co.uk) in Chenies is larger than the Red Lion and serves food in a table service restaurant from 12-2.30pm Monday to Saturday and 12-4pm Sunday, with a more limited menu available in its bar area and its very pleasant garden. It prides itself on its Sunday roasts.

## Tea

**The Drawingroom**, Frances Yard, Chesham (01494 791 691) [www.the-drawingroom.co.uk](http://www.the-drawingroom.co.uk) is a combination art gallery, music venue and cafe in a courtyard just off the pedestrianised part of Chesham high street (to the left, about 50 metres before the clock tower). It serves marvellous homemade cakes, a tasty hot chocolate, and tea and coffee in a very cosy and art-filled setting, with both inside and outside seating. It is open Wednesday to Saturday "till late" and on Sundays to 5pm.

Otherwise, there is the usual choice of chain outlets. The most obvious is **Caffe Nero**, which has a large establishment in the main square and opens till 6pm Monday to Friday, 5.30pm weekends, while **Costa Coffee**, 70 metres along the High Street, is open till 6.30pm daily.

For refreshment at **Chalfont & Latimer** - option **c**) - you have to cross to the other side of the station: if the barriers are closed this means walking down the station approach to the main road, going under the bridge, and coming up the other side. Here there is a pub, the **Metropolitan** and some shops.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

### **Chorleywood to Sarratt Mill** **(3.1km/1.9 miles)**

*This is the **main walk** start: for option **b**)  
**Shorter start from Chorleywood**, go to  
paragraph 56 on page 6.*

1. Coming off the northbound platform, go under the underpass to exit the front of the station (remembering to touch out at the top of the ramp if using an Oyster card or contactless). Emerging from the station turn left downhill on the road.
2. In 170 metres turn right across the zebra crossing and go uphill on a tarmac path following a footpath sign.
3. Keep on this path as it climbs steeply uphill and in 50 metres becomes a road. In 200 metres more, at the top of the hill, cross Old Common Road onto **Chorleywood Common**.
4. Take the leftmost of the three faint paths you see fanning out in front of you – the one which aims to the right-hand end of the houses you can see in the distance to the left.
5. In 200 metres, when the path has nearly converged with the road, veer left onto a gravel path.
6. In 40 metres, just past a pond right and level with a lamp post left, veer right off the gravel path onto a faint grass path, heading for a gap in the trees ahead. (*Note: **NOT** the larger gap directly to the right when you are level with the end of the pond.*)
7. In 80 metres or so, as you approach the gap, it is apparent there are two, both broad avenues through the trees. Take the leftmost one (more or less straight ahead), heading for a white building visible at its very far end.
8. In 400 metres you come to a busy road and the white building is revealed as the lodge of the **Chorleywood House Estate**. Cross the road with care and go on up the driveway of the estate.
9. Carry on down the driveway, passing a parking area on the right and in 80 metres tennis courts on the left.
10. In another 200 metres the driveway enters the trees. 40 metres after this, at a T-junction, go right on a gravel car-wide track, following the sign to River Chess.
11. In 30 metres, just before the end of the parking area veer left onto a footpath down an avenue of trees (pink chestnuts, which flower in May) (ie leaving the track, which also becomes a path forking right).
12. In 300 metres, where the avenue ends, ignore paths left and right, but 5 metres further on, where the path forks, bear left through a wide gap into an open field, ignoring the right fork which goes downhill through the woods.
13. Keep on downhill on the right-hand edge of this field, with a fine panoramic view of the **Chess Valley** ahead (and unfortunately also a glimpse of the M25 motorway ahead to the right).
14. In 200 metres, at the bottom corner of the field, go through a rusted metal fieldgate, and turn left on the path

beyond (ignoring a gravel track 10 metres ahead - possibly less visible in summer).

15. In 300 metres go through a gap in a wooden fence and **turn right across a footbridge** over the Chess river, ignoring a more obvious path straight ahead.
16. Beyond the footbridge, continue on up the path, with a field to the right.
17. In 150 metres follow the path as it turns left along the left-hand edge of another field.
18. In 150 metres more go through a kissing gate and cross the road beyond, to carry on up a car-wide gravel path.
19. In 200 metres there is a car-wide track to the right and you have a choice.
  - To do option **a): Short Cut to Chenies** and get to its lunch pubs in 2km (1.2 miles) from this point, *go straight ahead*, and continue with paragraph 42 on page 5.
  - **To continue with the main walk** (3.4km/2.1 miles to lunch from this point, though in 500 metres on this route you come to the **Cock Inn**), *turn right uphill*, and continue with the next section.

### **Sarratt Mill to Chenies** **(3.4km/2.1 miles)**

20. In 40 metres pass through a gate and carry on uphill up the left-hand edge of the field, with a fence to your left.
21. In 300 metres the fence to your left becomes a hedge. (There is a fine view of the valley if you turn around here)
22. In 150 metres pass through a kissing gate to exit the field. Cross a tarmac drive and keep straight on, still with a hedge to your left. In 20 metres more follow a path between hedges.
23. In another 20 metres pass through a kissing gate onto a road.
  - **For the Cock Inn**, a possible early lunch stop, turn right on the road to find it on the right in 70 metres.
  - **To continue the walk without stopping at the Cock Inn**, immediately turn left off the road into the churchyard
24. In 40 metres turn left in front of the church to follow the gravel path round its left-hand side.
25. In 50 metres, at the far end of the churchyard, pass through a kissing gate and a metal gate to emerge into a field. Turn left, to keep to the left-hand edge of the field, ignoring a faint path crossing the field diagonally.
26. In 200 metres pass through a metal gate and keep to the right-hand edge of the next field on a car-wide path under trees.
27. In 200 metres emerge into a large open field and veer slightly left down across it, aiming NOT for the far left-hand corner, but for a point about two thirds of the way up on its far side.
28. In 180 metres pass through a metal gate and keep on the left-hand side of the next field.
29. In 120 metres pass through a metal kissing gate and turn left downhill on a road, ignoring a driveway left to Cakebread Cottage.
30. In 80 metres, at the bottom of the hill, turn right at a T-junction along Sarratt Bottom. (*This lane can be flooded after heavy rain.*)
31. In 200 metres, where the lane turns right just past a row of cottages on the right, turn left onto a concrete farm road, signposted as a public footpath to Latimer.
32. In 70 metres follow the farm road as it curves right. In another 400 metres, **where the driveway curves sharp right** to a farmhouse, **keep straight on**, heading for a gap in the hedge with the river visible beyond (ignoring a footpath through metal barriers about 25 metres to the right).
33. When you get to the gap, you can see a footbridge over the river. Cross this and keep on up a narrow tarmac lane beyond. (*This lane can be flooded after heavy rain.*)
34. In 120 metres ignore a footpath to the left and curve right with the lane.
35. In another 450 metres, about 50 metres after the top of a rise, **turn left up steps** and go through a kissing gate into a field.

(**If you miss this footpath**, stay on the lane as it turns left steeply uphill: follow it to the top, and continue from paragraph 38 overleaf.)

36. Once in the field turn half right and walk diagonally uphill following a fence to the top corner of the field 200 metres away.
37. At the top of the field, turn around to enjoy the fine view, then pass through a kissing gate and merge with a road going uphill.
38. At the top of the hill, ignore fieldgates left and ahead, and curve right with the road, still gently uphill. You soon get glimpses of a view to the right.
39. In 100 metres more ignore a kissing gate to the right, but **turn left** on a signposted footpath, passing through a kissing gate in 7 metres onto a path up the right-hand edge of a field.
40. In 100 metres the path passes between hedges and in another 100 metres you pass through a kissing gate onto a road. Cross this and carry on through another kissing gate onto a path that crosses the fields between fences.
41. In 150 metres pass through another kissing gate and in 40 metres more you emerge onto the road right next to the **Red Lion** pub, one of the two possible lunchstops. Turn right on the road to find the **Bedford Arms**, the other lunch option, in 200 metres.
- After lunch refer to paragraph 76 on page 7 to continue the walk.*
- Sarratt Mill to Chenies**  
**(short cut) 2km/1.2 miles**
- These are the directions for **option a**) **Short cut to Chenies**, which saves 1.4km (0.9 miles) off the main walk route.*
42. Having ignored the right turn in paragraph 19 of the main directions, keep on down the track for another 20 metres. Just before the track passes between hedges, veer left onto a footpath down the left-hand side of the hedge and in 10 metres pass through a kissing gate into an open field.
43. Keep straight ahead on a broad grass path across the field, with the River Chess to the left.
44. In 300 metres, where the field ends at a tree boundary, turn left down an embankment. Ignore a kissing gate to the right and keep on across the footbridge 25 metres ahead.
45. On the far side of the footbridge keep straight ahead to cross another footbridge in 100 metres. Beyond this, carry straight on up a fenced path.
46. In 50 metres ignore paths left and right to carry on for another 10 metres and pass through a wooden kissing gate into woods. (Some **bluebells** here in late April/early May)
47. 10 metres beyond this turn right through another kissing gate and veer left with the path to emerge into a field corner in 40 metres. Carry on diagonally across the field.
48. After 50 metres you should see a hedge on the far side. Keep straight on towards the centre of this.
49. In another 150 metres you reach the hedge and turn left along it.
50. In 130 metres, at the top corner of the field, turn right through a gap into the next field, keeping along its left-hand edge with a wood to your left.
51. In 150 metres pass through a kissing gate to the left of a fieldgate and on up a gravel track, with a hedge to your right and a big open field to your left.
52. In 130 metres there is a fieldgate and barns ahead, but the path veers to the left around this farm complex, with a fence left and a hedge right.
53. In 80 metres the path merges with a tarmac drive and you carry on along it.
54. In 250 metres you pass through some formal metal gates. In another 100 metres, **turn left through a kissing gate** up a signposted footpath.
55. In 150 metres pass through another kissing gate, and in 40 metres more you emerge onto the road right next to the **Red Lion** pub in Chenies, one of the two possible lunch stops. Turn right on the road to find the other lunch option, the **Bedford Arms**, in 200 metres on the right.
- After lunch refer to paragraph 76 on page 7 to continue the walk.*

## **Chorleywood to Chenies** **(direct) 3.1km/1.9 miles**

*These are the directions for option b)*  
**Shorter start from Chorleywood.**

56. From the northbound platform on Chorleywood station go down under the underpass to exit the station (remembering to touch out at the top of the ramp if using an Oyster card or contactless). Turn left down the road.
57. In 180 metres turn left under the railway bridge. 50 metres beyond the bridge, at a zebra crossing, turn right up Whitelands Avenue.
58. In 100 metres, where the main road curves left and becomes Blaketts Wood Drive, keep straight on up Whitelands Avenue, now a residential street.
59. In 150 metres ignore Brushwood Drive to the left and in another 100 metres or so Carpenters Wood Drive to the left. But in another 100 metres, just past house number 59, take a signposted footpath left.
60. In 70 metres you emerge into **Carpenters Wood**. Ignore a path immediately to the right along the fence, and instead in 40 metres fork right up a much larger path through the wood.
  - For a slightly longer **bluebell diversion** through the wood in late April and early May - see paragraph 69 opposite.
61. Follow this path (indistinct after recent leaf fall), more or less due northwest up over a hill, ignoring a path forking to the left at the top of it in 150 metres, then gently downhill with a large hollow to the right and along the bottom of a dip – another 300 metres.
62. The path then turns right and climbs a slope for 70 metres to a T-junction with a level path, with wooden barriers 20 metres to the right. Here turn left, still heading roughly northwest.
63. In 350 metres you come to the far corner of the wood. Turn right under a railway bridge.
64. Beyond the bridge carry on up a bridleway for 900 metres to a main road.
65. Cross this busy road with care and go on up the side road beyond, signposted to Chenies.
66. In 60 metres, just beyond four garages to the right, turn right up a footpath. Follow this path along the right-hand side of two paddocks.
67. In 170 metres go through a kissing gate and carry straight on for another 250 metres through two more fields and down the left-hand side of a cricket pitch to reach a road.
68. Turn left on the road. In 80 metres the **Red Lion** pub, the first of two possible lunch stops in on the right. In another 200 metres you pass the **Bedford Arms**, another possible lunch stop.

*After lunch to continue the walk refer to paragraph 76.*

## **Bluebell diversion through Carpenters Wood**

*This is a slightly longer route through the wood to take in the best of the bluebells in late April and early May.*

69. In paragraph 60 ignore the fork to the right and keep on straight uphill, with the fence to your left.
70. In 70 metres, fork right on a path leading away from the fence. Follow this path as it meanders up through the bluebell wood.
71. In 250 metres you come to a corner of the wood with a field beyond. Veer slightly right here with the wood edge and field to your left.
72. In another 250 metres, where the field ends left, you come to a five-way path junction, with a footpath post and various information boards. Take the second path to the right – the one just beyond the footpath post – directly downhill.
73. Follow this path for 170 metres down into a dip and then on up the slope beyond.
74. In a further 100 metres you come to the top of a rise and carry on with the wood edge to your immediate left.
75. In 300 metres you come to a railway bridge. Pass under this and continue with the directions in paragraph 64 opposite.

### **Chenies to the celandine wood (1km/0.6 miles)**

76. Coming out of either lunch pub, turn right on the road. If coming from the **Red Lion**, you pass the **Bedford Arms**, on your right in 200 metres
77. 100 metres beyond the Bedford Arms you come to a road junction at the centre of the village. Here ignore the busier roads forking left and turning right, and instead keep straight on up a much quieter road across a green. In 50 metres keep on up the gravel driveway (signposted Chenies Manor House).
78. In another 150 metres you come to the gates of **Chenies Manor**. Just before them turn right up a signposted footpath, passing between high walls to the left of the church

**Chenies Manor and Latimer House** (passed later in the main walk) were both once part of the same estate, which was known as Isenhampstead. But in 1326 it was split between two barons. Chenies became the seat of the Russell family. Then in 1547, as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Henry VIII gave them Woburn Abbey, which became their principal seat. At the same time they were created Earls of Bedford, becoming Dukes of Bedford in the 17th century.

The family owned - and still does own - large amounts of land in Bloomsbury in London, which accounts for street names there such as Russell Square, Bedford Square and Woburn Place. There is also a Chenies Street between Goodge Street station and Gower Street.

After the Russells moved to Woburn Abbey, Chenies Manor fell into disrepair and one wing fell down, as you can see if you inspect the current house closely. The manor was sold by the family in 1954 to pay death duties, but is still in private hands. It is open Wednesday, Thursday and bank holiday afternoons from April to October.

The **Church of St Michaels** at Chenies has a private side chapel – the Bedford Chapel – where the Russells were buried. It is not open to the public, but their tombs can be glimpsed through the glass windows.

79. In 250 metres pass through a wooden barrier into a wood. Here curve left to follow the path along the top of the wood. (Very indistinct in autumn after fresh leaf fall: in late March or early April, this latter part of this wood is thickly carpeted with yellow celandines.)
80. In 300 metres exit the wood via a wooden kissing gate onto a track. Here you have a choice:
- For option **c) Finishing at Chalfont & Latimer** (2.4km/1.5 miles from this point) go straight ahead on the track and continue with the directions in the next section.
  - To continue with the main walk (8.5km/5.3 miles from this point) **turn right through a metal field gate** to leave the track. Turn left after the gate along the top of the field: continue with the directions in paragraph 92 on page 8.

### **Celandine wood to Chalfont & Latimer (2.4km/1.5mi)**

*This is option c) Ending at Chalfont & Latimer.*

81. Staying on the car-wide path, keep straight on, with a view of the valley to the right initially.
82. In 500 metres the path enters a wood.
83. In another 250 metres you come to a road. **Cross this with care** - it is busier than it looks initially - and turn right downhill on its far verge.
84. In 70 metres fork left up a path into the woods, a public bridleway signposted as Chilterns Cycleway.
85. Follow this path along the top edge of the wood. After a while there are some **bluebells** to the right of the path in late April/early May and the rare **coralroot** flower - found only in the Chilterns and parts of the Weald - may also be found here during May.
86. 400 metres after the road, the path curves up towards the very edge of the wood, with playing fields ahead and houses visible beyond then. Ignore a path onto the playing fields and instead turn right to keep inside the upper edge of the wood as before.
87. Ignore ways off until in 450 metres you come to a path intersection marked by two footpath posts on the

right-hand side: two paths join from the right here, but your route is to **fork left** along a wooden garden fence to emerge in 25 metres on a gravel track with houses on either side of it.

88. Go straight up the track, which becomes a tarmac road in 70 metres.
89. In another 250 metres go straight across a crossroads with a busier road (the busier road being Elizabeth Avenue, while you stay on Chenies Avenue, though the street name signs here are confusingly placed.)
90. In 150 metres, at a T junction, go left.
91. In 180 metres turn right into the car park of **Chalfont & Latimer** station, climbing steps to get to the station forecourt. It is this side for trains to London.

**For refreshment options** you have to cross to the other side of the station. Unless the station ticket barriers are open or you have a pass that will get you for free through them (in which case you can cross via the station underpass), you have to go left down the station approach to the road, turn right under the railway bridge, and come up the other side. Here you will find some shops and 60 metres beyond the point where the station approach joins the main road, the **Metropolitan** pub.

**Chalfont & Latimer** station was known as Chalfont Road when the line opened in 1892, a common Victorian name for stations that were not particularly near the places they purported to serve. The village of Chalfont St Giles is actually 2.5 miles away, and the station of Seer Green on the Beaconsfield line, built 10 years later, is nearer to it. The housing you now see around the station dates to the 1920s and 1930s.

### **The celandine wood to Broadwater Bridge** **(4.3km/2.7 mi)**

92. In 130 metres pass through a metal kissing gate and on down the fenced-in path towards a wood.
93. Follow the path around the top of the wood. In 300 metres there is a field to your right.

94. In another 130 metres pass through a kissing gate into another field. Carry on diagonally down across this between fences (possibly temporary), heading for a kissing gate in its far corner.
95. In 250 metres pass through this gate – there is a glimpse of Latimer House on the hill ahead – and descend the steps to the road. Cross this main road (Latimer Road) with care, and carry on up the road on the far side, signposted to Flaunden and Latimer. Take a bit of care on this road, as some traffic comes slightly too fast along it.
96. In 100 metres cross a bridge over the Chess River, and carry straight on, ignoring a signposted footpath to the right.
97. In 150 metres ignore a bridleway to the right, but in 20 metres more, turn left through a wooden kissing gate on a signposted footpath. Ignore a faint grass path forking left and instead follow the one going straight ahead up to the crest of the hill.
98. In 200 metres, at the top of the hill, go through a metal kissing gate, across a track, and then through a wooden kissing gate to keep straight on along a path fenced off from a field.
99. In 200 metres you are level with **Latimer House** to the right. The estate's farm in the valley to the left is on the site of a Roman villa.

**Latimer House** has a long history as the home of the barons Chesham, but the current house only dates from 1838, when it was rebuilt after a fire. In the Second World War it was used for interrogating captured German pilots and U-boat captains, while from 1953 to 1971 it was the National Defence College. It is now a country house hotel used for weddings and conferences.

100. Beyond the house keep on along the path for another 1.3km, with the way never in doubt – simply keep the wood edge to your right (turning right uphill with it after 500 metres, then left again in 70 metres to resume your former direction). There is a fine view of the valley to your left, and later some **bluebells** to the right.
101. Eventually **the slope starts to descend steeply**. You can switch here to a path just inside the wood (beyond



the wire fence) or stay on the field edge: if the latter, then at the bottom of the hill a sign saying 'Private: no public right of way' blocks your way: just before this turn right over a stile and turn left on the path just inside the wood.

102. In another 150 metres you pass through a wooden gate into a field. Carry on along the left-hand side of this and the next two fields.
103. In 500 metres, at the end of the third field, carry on into a farmyard. Follow a track to the left of a barn to reach a road in 180 metres.
104. Carry straight on along the road. In 40 metres turn right up a gravel drive to Blackwell Lodge, ignoring a drive to Blackwell Hall House and Blackwell Garden Cottage immediately to the left of it.
105. In 40 metres, just before a garage, turn left. Where the gravel ends in 40 metres keep on up the grass to pass through a wooden gate in 40 metres. Keep straight on along the left-hand edge of the field beyond.
106. In 100 metres pass through a gate and keep straight on.
107. In 300 metres pass through two gates and along the left-hand edge of the next field.
108. In 130 metres, at the far end of the next field, pass through a kissing gate and turn **right** uphill onto a bridleway, leaving the Chess Valley Path.

### **Broadwater Bridge to Chesham (4.2km/2.6 miles)**

109. Follow the bridleway uphill. In 600 metres, ignore a signposted bridleway to White End right, and fork left, signposted to Ladies Wood, with a fenced-off field to the right.
110. In 250 metres, at the end of the field, turn left at a T-junction on a bridleway to Bottom Lane.
111. Follow this bridleway for 400 metres to the bottom of a valley. Here ignore a footpath over a stile to the right and curve left with the main path.
112. In 60 metres, at a three-way path junction, turn right on the "Bottom Lane to Botley" path.
113. In 80 metres, at a footpath crossroads, go left uphill through a kissing gate, signposted to Hill Farm.
114. In 220 metres, at the top of the field, enjoy the fine backwards view and then pass through a kissing gate into the next field. Carry on up the right-hand edge of this field to exit it in 100 metres in its far corner.
115. Carry straight on across the field beyond with a farm complex surrounded by a grassy bank to your left.
116. In 200 metres, at the far end of the field, pass through a kissing gate and turn left on the track beyond.
117. In 20 metres go right through a kissing gate into a field. Keep to the right-hand edge of this field, with a fine view to the left.
118. In 150 metres, at the far end of the field, curve left with its edge downhill, with houses to the right.
119. In another 100 metres turn right at a three-armed footpath sign to exit the field in 10 metres through a metal kissing gate.
120. Carry on down a path between gardens to come to a road in 40 metres. Keep straight on along this.
121. In 80 metres at a crossroads (with Pheasant Rise ahead) turn right uphill.
122. In 10 metres **fork left** onto a path between hedgerows/tall trees.
123. Ignore minor gaps in the hedgerow but in 400 metres turn left through a car-wide gap marked by a three-armed footpath sign and carry on up the left-hand side of a large field.
124. In 200 metres pass into the next field, and carry on down its left-hand edge.
125. In 100 metres cross a track to a farm left and carry straight on through a kissing gate to the left of a fieldgate.
126. In another 50 metres go through the **second** of two kissing gates on the left and carry on down a fenced-in path, with a field to the left.
127. In 80 metres, at the corner of the field, go left through a kissing gate (which blocks the way, so there is no alternative) and on down the right-hand edge of a field
128. In 100 metres turn right through a kissing gate and go straight ahead

across the field to an oak tree 100 metres away.

129. Beyond the tree keep straight on downhill, with a panoramic view of Chesham ahead.
130. In 130 metres go through a kissing gate and keep straight on downhill to another in 80 metres. Beyond it turn left downhill on a tarmac path.
131. In 80 metres cross a tarmac drive and keep on downhill on a tarmac path.
132. At the bottom of the path, go down steps and keep downhill on the main road, ignoring a turning to the left to Waitrose (*unless you want to go **direct to the station** without having tea, in which case this road leads directly to it in about 200 metres*).
133. In 100 metres turn left into the pedestrianised high street of **Chesham**.
134. In 200 metres you come out into the main square of the town, with **Caffe Nero** on the right across the square.
135. Keep straight on and in 80 metres you come to a junction with a road (Station Road) on the left.
  - **For the station**, turn left up this road and follow it for 100 metres to the top of the hill to find the station on your right.
  - **For more tea options**, carry on into the pedestrianised area. **Costa Coffee** is in 70 metres on the left and **The Drawingroom** café in a courtyard (Francis Yard) to the left in another 100 metres, 50 metres before the clock tower.

You will not be surprised to learn that **Chesham** is the furthest Underground station from central London and that it is the one with the most infrequent service – just two trains an hour. From here to Chalfont & Latimer is the biggest distance - 6.3km (2.9 miles) - between stations on the system.

If you wonder why this branch exists, it is because Chesham was the original terminus of the Metropolitan Railway, which reached here in 1889. There was a plan to continue the line to Berkhamsted to link up with trains to the north of England, but instead in 1892 the line was extended to Amersham and Aylesbury, turning Chesham into a branch line.