

## 1000 Years in the History of Chesham

The trail starts at **Chesham station (1)** which was opened in 1889. The design of this Metropolitan Line station is typical of a country branch line terminus. From the station forecourt turn left and go down STATION ROAD. Cross over EAST STREET and at the bottom of STATION ROAD turn left and walk down the HIGH STREET.



Lacey's Yard

Half way down, look out for **Lums Yard (2)** two of the many yards off both sides of the street. The **George & Dragon inn (3)**, on the right, was the departure point for stagecoaches, before the arrival of the railway. Continue into MARKET SQUARE where you will see the clock tower built in 1992, a replica of the 19th century original. At No. 15 is **Chesham Museum (4)** which holds many items of historic interest. The **Chesham Building Society (plaque A)** was established in 1845 and merged with the Skipton Building Society in 2010.



Francis Yard

Now head back up the HIGH STREET and turn right into **Francis Yard (5)**. Note the 17th century timber-framed house, currently an art gallery and cafe. Cross over EAST STREET at the top. Ahead you will see the fine **Botley House (6)**. Turn right along EAST STREET. At the junction with TOWNFIELD is the **Old British School (plaque B at 18a RED LION STREET)**. This was Chesham's first Free School founded in 1828 with 150 pupils. The bricks show scoring by the pupils' slate pencils. Walk up into TOWNFIELD. At the corner, notice the steep flight of steps known as **Jacob's Ladder (plaque C on right of first steps)**. This leads up to **The Balks (7)** – cultivation terraces made by the Saxons so that they could farm land unaffected by the springs and marshes below. The Balks can be seen more clearly from **Lowndes Park (24)**. Avoid climbing the steep steps and instead continue along TOWNFIELD, past the raised flowerbed, the site of **Townfield Chapel (plaque D)**, a place of worship for the Particular Baptists from 1820 to 1927, and along the narrow brick footpath to the cobbled PUNCHBOWL LANE. At the top of the lane is the site of the **Ropewalk (plaque E on wall)** where twine was twisted for rope making.

Turn left at the bottom of the lane by **The Forelands (8)**, a fine example of 18th century architecture, and along RED LION STREET

## Chesham Heritage Trail

Chesham Walks  
1

2 miles



17th century chimney in the High Street

attractive Edwardian houses further on. Continue onwards until you see the **Mosque (31)** on your left, a new building opened in 2005. Go through the Chesham Cemetery entrance opposite and take the lower path below the **Cemetery Chapel (32)**. A diversion to the top of the Cemetery will give you a great view over the north side of the Town. (If the Cemetery is closed take SUNNYSIDE ROAD).

At the end of the path turn right into BROAD STREET. Note the 19th century **Emmanuel Church (33)**, with its modern extension. Take the pedestrian crossing opposite the **Salvation Army building (34)**, built in 1898. Cross here and double back towards the town. Take a further pedestrian crossing over WHITE HILL to enter the upper HIGH STREET by the arch. Walk down the HIGH STREET and shortly before THE BROADWAY you will pass the old Post Office building on the left, now the **Misty Moon public house (35)**, built in 1625 – note its particularly fine chimney; also the **United Reformed Church (36)** on the left, rebuilt in 1886. Pass through THE BROADWAY, with the **War Memorial (37)** at its centre. Continue on to STATION ROAD, the first turning on the left, to take you back to where the trail started, **Chesham Station (1)**.

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church you pass through an iron gate beside which you can see a boundary stone to the Lowndes Estate – marked WL, William Lowndes. The Lowndes family presented the lower part of the Park to the town in 1953. Before turning right into the main churchyard entrance, notice the small enclosed area of land to your left, the burial ground of those who died in an outbreak of typhoid in 1871. The main features of the church are described on the map overleaf.

Return to the Park and turn left to walk up the footpath to the site of **Bury Hill House (plaque O on Guide Hut)** which belonged to the Skottowe family, owners of the Park in the 18th century. Head back down to walk across **Lowndes Park (24)** via the long avenue known as RUE DE HOUILLES. Notice the hillside across the valley – **The Balks (7)**, described earlier. At the end of the avenue, take the path down to **Skottowe's Pond (plaque P on far wall)**.



Bury Hill House in the 18th century

Now take the pedestrian crossing over ST MARY'S WAY and walk straight ahead to **Broadway Baptist Church (26)**, built in 1902; the first Baptist Chapel on this site was erected in 1712. Opposite is **No.1 Blucher Street (27)** where you can walk through the cobbled passageway to re-emerge in ELGIVA LANE. The car park of the Sainsbury's store to your right is known as **Saffron Meadow (plaque Q on right-hand corner of Library)**, as autumn flowering crocus was grown here to produce a dye. **The Malt House (plaque R on brick arch opposite Library)** stood on this site until 1998 and housed the offices of the Town Council. The building's name recalled the town's brewing history.

Walk all the way down ELGIVA LANE and exit the car park to the side of Sainsbury's, turn right along ST MARY'S WAY. Use the pedestrian crossing to reach the car park of the **Elgiva Theatre (28)**. This building is named after The Lady Elgiva, who created the first record of Chesham in bequeathing her estate of Ceasteleshamm to the abbey at Abingdon in 970 AD. Take the footpath, called **Parrotts Path (plaque S on brick pillar)**, which runs along the right-hand side of the Elgiva Theatre car park. This was the site of the Town's End, where the hamlet of Bellingdon bordered on Chesham. At BELLINGDON ROAD turn left until you see the **Friends (Quakers) Meeting House (29)** and burial ground on the left, The Meeting House was built in 1786 and is typical of its period except for a small modern extension. Retrace your steps along BELLINGDON ROAD noting the **Methodist Church (30)** on your left and the



Walk a short way back up CHURCH STREET and turn right into BURY LANE. Note the **Sixpenny Houses (plaque N)** on the right before arriving in **Lowndes Park (24)**. Turn left towards **St Mary's Church (25)**. On your way to the first Police Station.

Turn left and walk past many old buildings, several of which were once shops. CHURCH STREET was, until the beginning of the 19th century, Chesham's main commercial street. The back of No.80 used to be a brewery. You can see **The Bury (21)** as you pass its main gate. No.73 was once a boot factory and No.54 is Chesham's oldest house, dating from the 14th century. Continue along the street, past St Mary's Church Rooms on the left, formerly the **National School (plaque L on side of building)** and on to **Ebenezer Cottages (22)** where you can see the site of the **Bidwell (plaque M on low wall)**, an ancient holy well, where parishioners would wash before entering the church. The cottage just after the **Temperance Hall (23)** once housed the town's

Opposite the **Queen's Head (18)** cross CHURCH STREET and enter PEDNORMEAD END, which you should follow into PEDNOR ROAD. Pass the entrance to **Chesham 1879 (19)**, one of the oldest Tennis Clubs in the world, and carry on to **The Bury Farm (20)** at the junction with DRYDELL LANE, where there is a view into the Pednor Valley, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Return along PEDNOR ROAD to CHURCH STREET noticing to your left a sight of the west elevation of **The Bury (21)**, a fine example of a Buckinghamshire town house.

Continue along the path to the **Queen's Head (18)**. Note the meadow at the bend of the river) which gave Chesham its name. car park occupies the site of the Hamm (an enclosure of water low wall), once a wood mill and a tannery, demolished in 1965. The grass to your right. This is the site of **Wright's sawmill (plaque K on here)**. As the path turns to the left, you will see a large open area of follows the course of the Bury Brook, as the River Chess is known Before the **Town Bridge (plaque I)** turn left into WATER LANE, which workhouse noted against a plan to move them to Amersham.

workhouse and later a grammar school. In 1835 the inmates of the **School (16)**, and **Weylands (plaque J)**, which once housed the parish **House (17)**, which was replaced by what is now **Thomas Harding The Old School (plaque I)**. You will pass on the left **The Old School** Turn right into GERMAIN STREET, cross over and head back towards

At the Red Lion pub turn left into GERMAIN STREET. A short way down on the left you will see the old three-storey offices of **The Bucks Examiner (13)**, a newspaper first published in 1892 as 'The Chesham Advertiser'. The terraced cottages lead to DUCK ALLEY and the **Town Bridge (plaque I)** which crosses the River Chess. On your left is a fine Georgian townhouse, **The Meades (14)**. Turn left into KING STREET, named after the old **Arms pub (15)** on the corner and cross over, passing on your right a row of 17th century cottages. Walk all the way along to a point opposite the entrance to MEADES LANE, then double back along NEW FOOTPATH to GERMAIN STREET passing on the left **Thomas Harding School (16)**. At the junction, look left up FULLER'S HILL, an ancient road with large puddings sunk deeply into its banks. In front of you is VEY LANE, where examples of Roman pottery have been found, indicating settlement between the 1st and 4th centuries AD. On the corner, in what was once part of the workhouse garden, are now some of the best kept allotments in town.



Trinity Baptist Church

Walk along this side of RED LION STREET to the plaque on the wall of Blaser Mills Solicitors which marks the site of **Nag's Yard (plaque H)**. The Nag's Head inn's yard was used as a cattle and sheep market, and later housed a skating rink. Look across to the opposite side of the road and you get a good view of both the Hinton Chapel of **Trinity Baptist Church (11)**, built in 1897 on land once occupied by the Punchbowl beerhouse, and further along the old **Zion Chapel (12)**.

Ahead of you are the **Meades Water Gardens (10)** where there is an interpretation board explaining the river restoration project.



Meades Water Gardens

Now follow the right hand fork, AMERSHAM ROAD. Before the petrol station on the left is **Mineral Cottage (plaque G)**. This was built in 1820 by a committee trying to establish Chesham as a spa town, to accommodate visitors coming to take the iron-rich waters. Return to the mini-roundabout and cross the road using the traffic island. Ahead of you are the **Meades Water Gardens (10)** where there is an interpretation board explaining the river restoration project. This is the site of **The Pound (plaque F)** where stray animals were impounded until a fine was paid.

