

CHIEVELEY-FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND BYWAYS

This leaflet gives descriptions of the footpaths, bridleways, byways and restricted byways in the parish of Chieveley, Berkshire. Chieveley lies some four miles (six and a half kilometres) north of Newbury and, like so much of West Berkshire, is in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village lies on the dip slope of the Berkshire Downs. The parish is a mixture of large open fields, woods and coppices. The path network is very extensive with forty nine paths of various classifications and many links to other parish networks. The paths offer walks and rides over differing terrains such as Ancient Woodlands, old coppices, across fields and along dry valleys.

For more information on the wider network you should use the Ordnance Survey Explorer map 158 Newbury and Hungerford) This map shows all Public Rights of Way. Similar leaflets to this one have been produced by the Parish Councils of Frlsham, Yattendon, Ashampstead, Hampstead Norreys and Basildon. They illustrate the path network to the east of Chieveley.

A team of parishioners wrote the route descriptions and production of the leaflet was funded by the Parish Paths Initiative. This scheme aims to encourage local people to become involved in looking after and promoting their path network. It provides local councils and groups with the necessary funding, help and advice to complete projects like this.

CHIEVELEY

Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways



THE HISTORY OF CHIEVELEY

Downland Parishes, in common with many Chieveley Parishes, has a rich history. The place name derives from the Old English Cifa's Leah which means The field or clearing of Cifa. Although there was certainly settlement here long before the Saxon Period, the archaeological record shows that this high waterless ridge was less intensively settled than the more fertile valleys on either side. A water supply will always have been a problem. Bussock Hill Fort was built in the Iron Age (about 500BC) and its small size indicates a small population. Even in the Roman Period there seems to have been only a limited amount of settlement although the area was certainly exploited. The area was probably cleared of woodland at an early date and it is possible that by the Roman Period there was less woodland in the landscape than there is now. The medieval parish originally included Leckhamptstead and Winterbourne as well as Chieveley, Curridge and Ore. It is likely that populations have always been small due to the difficulty of providing a reliable water supply. Domesday Book (1086) records 28 farmers, 10 smallholders and 3 slaves for Chieveley, probably making a population of about 200. Leckhamptstead had a very similar community. Curridge had 2 freeholders, 2 farmers and 7 smallholders.

The underlying geology is chalk, but this is generally overlain by very acid clay with flints. The pits visible as hollows in some fields and woods provided chalk which was ploughed into the soils in large quantities to break down the clay. Other pits were dug for gravel and for brick making materials. The woods and hedges are home to roe and muntjak deer and to growing numbers of badgers. Buzzards and red kites are commonly seen.

NATURAL HISTORY

Path 1. Runs from School Road between houses to the Churchyard entrance. Pass through the Churchyard and Lychgate to join Church Lane. Note the village War Memorial.

Path 2. Passes between the former Wheatsheat pub, now a private residence, and the Mount. A narrow, well used track with trees to the right and a view over a paddock.

Path 2a. starts at the High Street between Woodlands and Chieveley House as a narrow alley between brick walls widening to a well used path. Chieveley House was built c 1700. Note the canopy of Lime trees and a Strawberry tree.

Path 3. A short, unremarkable path passing from Green Lane behind the Red Lion public house to emerge at the top of Graces Lane.

Path 3a. A short, narrow track linking Green Lane and Horsemoor.

Path 4. Runs from East Lane across a field to Graces Lane. The different levels caused by ploughing show that this is an ancient boundary. Links Path 7 to the Vantage Road at Bussock Mayne. These fields were Chieveley's Common Fields. The brideway bridge was built when the M4 junction was improved in 2004/05. Path 5a. is often muddy in winter. It runs through Bussock Wood which hides an Iron Age hillfort. Path 6a. Byway through Horsemoor area linking to Green Lane.

Path 7. Green Lane was the original north-south road through the village. It now ends at the M4.

Path 8. Leads across arable fields to Radnall's Farm and the A34. Look for the badger tunnel under the A34. Footways link to the M4 Services and beyond.

Path 9. is part of the ancient track to Snelsmore East Common. See path 36.

Path 10a. Links Paths 11 and 12.

Path 10b. The southern end follows an ancient winding hedge which existed in 1761.

Path 11. The junction of 10 and 11 provides a good view to the south and west. The species poor hedges and the name New Road probably mean that this is an Enclosure Award road and about 200 years old.

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