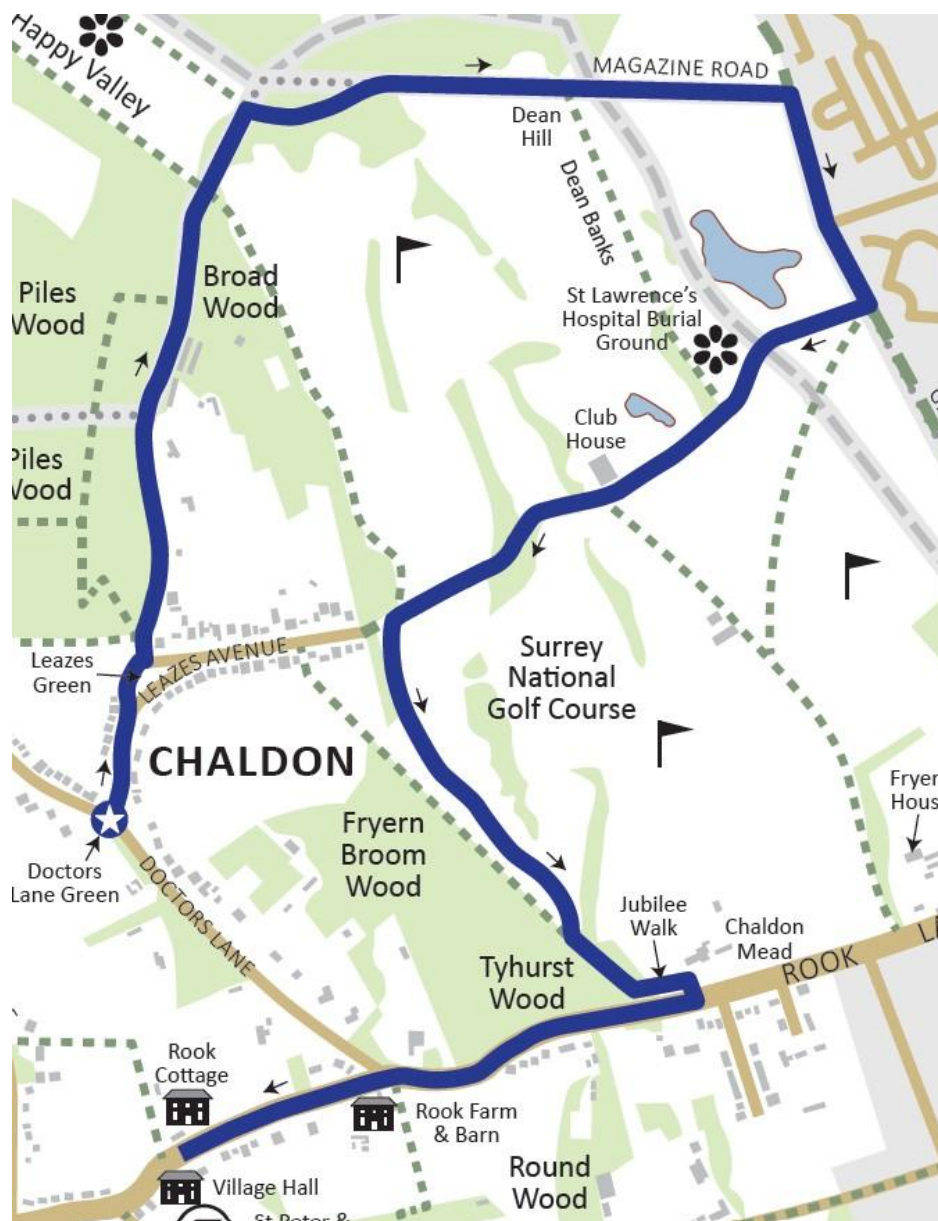


Chaldon Walks

Chaldon residents walked each of its footpaths regularly twice a year from the 1920s until a few years ago. There are seven walks of varying lengths designed to cover the network of official paths and bridleways within the parish. This is an attempt to preserve that tradition and provide some interesting detail. Put together by Liz Bonsall with contributions from Adele Brand, Madeline Hutchins and Lizzy Maskey. May 2020. Revised January 2026.

Chaldon Walk 2 – Junction Leazes Avenue/Doctors Lane via Piles Wood, Happy Valley, Magazine Road, Green Lane, the Burial Ground, Golf Course and Rook Lane. 2.3 miles, approximately 1 hour. The walk can be picked up at various points on the circuit.



Map created by Martin Lubikowski, ML Designs, Chaldon

Liz Bonsall, October 2020, revised February 2026

Start by the post box on Doctors Lane. The post box was moved to this position from Church Lane in 1946. The area around the post box is reputed to have been the smallest common in England and appears on the 1837 Chaldon Tithe map as one of five commons in the Parish. In 2020 the Village Council began to recover the area and create a wildflower verge and wildlife habitat. **Walk behind the post box through to Leazes Avenue.**

Leazes Avenue started as a straight track off Doctors Lane. On early maps, before any modern development, a route is shown as a footpath continuing straight to Coulsdon church. By 1918 the road is shown as 18ft wide and the left hand side was lined with trees. It is likely that in earliest times the path continued in the other direction to Chaldon crossroads joining the track from Farthing Down to the south.

In 1938 Caterham & Warlingham Urban District Council declared Leazes Avenue to be a “new street” subject to local bye-laws and this would have been the start of the development of the area. The first house on your right was built in 1948 and the following houses to your right c.1946.

Walk along Leazes Avenue. You will reach a fingerpost on Leazes Green (Bridleway 76 Happy Valley) where the road forks left and right. Keep to the left hand road with Leazes Green to your right. In 2007 the Village Council supported a Road Verges Improvement Programme in liaison with Surrey County Council Highways and Surrey Wildlife Trust. Some trees were removed from the Green but it was decided that basically it should remain as a play area. Replacement trees were donated by Leazes Avenue residents and some by the Village Council (and its predecessors). You can see field maple, robinia, red hawthorn, malus, flowering cherry and walnut. A seat was originally installed on the Green by the Chaldon Parish Council in 2006 and replaced in 2022.

Standing by the seat look right (east) down the length of Leazes Avenue. Most of the houses on the left of the road were built after World War 1 and started life as modest bungalows with lots of land. You can see an historic line of giant trees, *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (giant sequoia; also known as giant redwood, Sierra redwood, Sierran redwood, Wellingtonia or simply big tree). Here they are known as the Leazes Avenue Wellingtonias.

The trees were planted in the 1880s by James Banks Taylor, a tea merchant, who owned the Fryern Estate and all the lands that are now the golf course and as far as Doctors Lane. It is said that he planned a grand entrance to Fryern. There seem to have been twelve originally with eight remaining. Sadly, one of the trees was felled in July 2020. The last one in the line, at no. 43, was measured in 2020, and its girth (at 1.5 metres) was 6.44 metres and its height was 27.5 metres. If you walk to the first one you can appreciate the size and majesty of these trees.

From the seat continue from the road into The Bridlepath (private road). You will pass three modernised properties on your right and Piles Wood on your left. Piles Wood is designated by Natural England as semi-natural ancient woodland, although it does not show clearly on maps before 1805. It does have many ancient woodland indicators and is famous for its bluebells. In the wood is a mix of native trees, including hawthorn, sycamore, holly, wild cherry, oak and hazel. Dormice and

a variety of bats are likely to live there as well as abundant birds, including great spotted woodpeckers, nuthatches, jays and owls and a cuckoo was last heard here in 2019. You can also see evidence of past woodland management, with multi-trunked hazels showing that they have been cut to ground level, or coppiced, to allow the harvesting of wood in a way that allows the tree to regrow to be harvested again and again (this was an important industry in Chaldon in the 17th century). You may see silver birch, rowan and goat or pussy willow at the edge of the wood. **At the end of the shingled track you reach Broadwood where you enter the wood to your left and take a narrow path downhill.**

As you follow this track look up at the magnificent high trees, including oaks, beech and pine. You can see laurel, a non-native, has 'invaded' the woods and on the ground spot the uprooted trees that are where they fell during the 1987 hurricane. Piles Wood links Chaldon with Happy Valley and in spring is carpeted with bluebells. In 2013 Merstham Estates undertook some woodland management and the restricted paths within the wood date from this time.

At the bottom of the hill you reach a fingerpost showing three directions. Look to your left and you look through Happy Valley to Farthing Downs. Happy Valley has SSSI status and in 2019 was designated a National Nature Reserve, which reflects its huge importance for biodiversity.

Listen carefully and you will hear running water. This comes from the main sewer that runs along the bottom of the valley. **Take the path to the right going uphill signposted to Dean Hill.** Take care not to fall as the ground is littered with bits of glass and china. This area was once a Council rubbish tip and rain constantly washes the soil to reveal more fragments.

Continue up the hill ignoring small paths to left and right. On your left you will pass an old water tank. On your right look for an ivy-covered tree and shortly after you will notice a path to the right and some old Victorian iron railings. Ignore this path which follows the slope of Dean Banks.

Continue straight ahead and you are now on Magazine Road. The 1837 Tithe Map shows that the area left and right was all part of Dean Hill. From the 1930s until the 1960s the land to your left was the Council Rubbish Depot, known as The Grove Tip, and a Sewerage Works. Much of the area had been requisitioned by the War Department in 1939 and an original footpath closed then subsequently obstructed by tipping operations. The Right of Way was reinstated in 1971 after Caterham & Warlingham Urban District Council (pre Tandridge District Council) took advice from the Chaldon Footpaths Committee.

You are now walking along the boundary between Chaldon and Caterham. It goes down the middle of Magazine Road. You will reach a tree leaning dramatically across the bridleway. At the next gap in the right-hand side hedge look to your right across the golf course and you can see the Surrey National Golf Clubhouse. Walking further along, to your left was the Caterham Guards Depot Rifle Range and you can see that the land here was once open space, now rather overgrown and scrubby.

As you reach the end of this lane you will see a number of large stones with the letters WD engraved with a number. WD stands for War Department. On some OS maps you can see WD markers covering this whole area and it is likely that the ones we see placed together on Magazine Road have been gathered from other locations at some time. More recently, in July 2020, someone has cleared the undergrowth to reveal more of the stones.

At the end of Magazine Road in the hedgerow opposite is a fingerpost. It indicates a Public Bridleway in three directions and Tandridge Border Path north/south.

Turn right onto Green Lane. Green Lane is an ancient route from Bletchingley, through Stanstead and Roffes Lane to Coulsdon and since 1933 part of it serves as the boundary between Chaldon and Caterham.

Continue straight ahead on Green Lane. Almost immediately to your left you will see a pedestrian entrance that leads into The Village. The Village is a Conservation Area formed on the 19th Century Caterham Guards' Depot. Continuing along Green Lane you can see to your left some of the carefully designed buildings in the style of the former military buildings. At the next left turn there is another access to The Village, leading towards Tesco, built on the site of the old Parade Ground. Continue along Green Lane passing Elizabeth Court, a nursing home, on your left. This was once the site of the Guards' Depot Commandant's House, built in 1901.

As you reach the end of the nursing home's high fence you will see another left turn. This footpath leads to Wellington Road and Coulsdon Road and was once the dividing land between the Guards Depot and St. Lawrence's Hospital. On your right was once a footpath towards Chaldon, diverted in the 1880s. Today you can see the Golf Club lake and the woods of Chaldon. The houses on your left are those built on the site of St Lawrence's Hospital.

Look for a fingerpost pointing west (to your right). Turn right onto Bridleway 78. There is a straight track between two hedges. Look left across the huge patch of nettles and brambles and this is Public Footpath 75 that crosses diagonally across the fairways to link with Public Footpath 74 towards Rook Lane. It is not advisable to use this path!

Walk along the path between the hedges for about 100 metres. The ancient path was several metres to the south with this straight route in use since 1996 and officially designated as a Right of Way in 2011. The land between the hedges belongs to Chaldon Village Council and leads to the second burial ground for the former St Lawrence's Hospital, defined by the black pines that can be seen ahead of you. At the first crossing over the track look left across the golf course and you can see the Radio mast high on the North Downs. To the right is the lake. At the second crossing look left and you can see the houses of Oak Grove, built on the last remaining site of St Lawrence's Hospital. Until 1996 the skyline was dominated by the stark outline of the Victorian hospital. Today's houses provide a softer impact.

After the second crossing notice the two parallel lines of concrete across the path. This is a concrete channel and a remnant of a Victorian field drainage system, other parts surviving amongst the Golf Course lands and visible on other walks. On the

right are the iron gates of the former St Lawrence's Hospital Burial Ground, since 2012 owned and managed by Chaldon Village Council.

Walk through the gates to the Information Board where you can read about the history of the site. If you have time take a walk around the Burial Ground, an area that changes with the seasons and where you can, at times, experience peace and tranquillity amongst the wildflowers and wildlife. The Downlands Management Project works here three or four times a year with Chaldon volunteers, annual tree surveys are carried out and an annual tour and talk takes place in June as part of the Caterham Festival. At some times of the year the flowers and nettles will appear high but do not worry. The management regime has resulted in an increase in wildflowers and in summer can be seen lesser yellow rattle, bird's-foot trefoil, vetches, rosebay willow herb, ox-eye daisies, buttercups, bedstraw, clover, common spotted orchids and pyramidal orchids.

Return through the gates, turn right and follow the bridleway downhill. At the bottom of the hill you can clearly see Surrey National Golf Clubhouse ahead of you. To your right is a permissive path which will return you to Magazine Road. Ignore this and walk uphill, passing a man-made lake to your right. The Golf Course was opened in 1996 and the landscape sympathetically designed retaining many of the splendid trees and woodlands. Dormice live in the hedgerows and occasionally you can glimpse birds such as linnets, redwings and green woodpeckers. The ponds attract toads, moorhens and the occasional heron.

Climb the hill. Almost at the top of the hill, adjacent to the Clubhouse, pause to look back. You will see some tall black pines and these define the Burial Ground that you have just visited. In between the trees you can see the tops of houses at the Village, once the Guards Depot. To the right you can see the houses of Yorke Gate, Hambledon Park and Oakgrove. **Continuing up the hill you reach a junction with the car park to your left and clubhouse to the right.**

Cross the road to the fingerpost and continue straight ahead towards the hedge.

Once again take the path down a steep hill through woodland. On your right is a quarry like area, heavily wooded. This was once a lime quarry for the farmlands. **Follow the path uphill between two hedges.**

As you near the top of the hill you will walk over a crossing. Continue for about 20 metres then go through the small gap on the left hand side (opposite the fingerpost pointing from Leazes Avenue to Footpath 3/Rook Lane). This takes you onto the Golf Course and you must keep to the right and to the very edge of the mown area, being aware of golfers coming towards you and the possibility of golf balls landing near where you are walking. You will walk along the golf course track for about 20 metres then move to the right of the mown area. You will pass a solitary oak tree and then quite soon another large oak tree on your left with two smaller trees opposite. Continue along the edge of the mown grass until you see a post pointing to a gap on the right. **Turn right** then pause to look back at what was lower Happy Valley. Remember to be aware of flying golf balls which could come unseen from your right. Continue on the path and almost immediately you will be on

Footpath 3. With your back to the Golf Course and the fingerpost turn left.

There is a tree over the path here with a very bizarre branch that folds to and fro.

You will walk through Tyhurst and Fryern Broom Woods with the golf course to your left. In the woods, you will see more coppiced hazels (as in Piles Wood), and in the spring some of Chaldon's loveliest bluebell displays. The area to the west of the path is listed as Fryern Fields potential Site of Nature Conservation Importance. There are some wonderful trees beside and stretching over the path. Look up into the canopy of a few of them. There are oaks, and wild cherries. The wild cherries have strong horizontal banding in their bark, and lovely white blossom in the spring. Tawny owls, bank voles and weasels live in the woodland.

You will reach a high fence on the left. This shields the footpath from Chaldon Mead, once the site of a hostel for some of the residents of St. Lawrence's Hospital. In 2012 it became a private site of five executive homes. On your right the woods were cleared in 2025 and a dead-hedge defines the boundary with the path. At the end of the path is a gap to the road. To the left the path continues parallel with the road and leads east towards Caterham. The short length of path is known as Jubilee Walk and was constructed by the Village Council in 2012.

Cross the road with extreme care and turn right. Walk west up Rook Hill. On your left is Highwood, once home to Cllr. Eleanor Marshall, O.B.E. (1905-2004). Miss Marshall managed a chicken farm at Highwood. Her reminiscences of life in Chaldon can be read in the Bourne Society's Chaldon Village History. On your right is Tyhurst, the woodlands once open meadowland and the house once the home of notorious Sir Leo Chiozza Money (1870-1944), a parliamentarian involved in the Hyde Park Scandal (1928).

At the top of the hill you reach Rook Farm, an 18C flint house worked as a farm until around 1950. The five bay timber framed thatched barn is a conspicuous feature of this part of Chaldon. Notice the rook perched on the roof. **At this point you can continue the walk to the Village Hall or take the right turn into Doctors Lane and back to your starting point *(see below).**

To walk to the Village Hall continue along the pavement with the flint and brick wall on your left and look for the date engraved in the first brick pillar of the wall at the corner of the barn. Just past the bus stop and to your left is a small copse planted by residents as a small wildlife haven. The grass verge between the footpath and the road is planted with daffodils and wild flowers. On your left are the fields of Woodside where you can see rare sheep, goats and alpacas.

As you walk along the pavement you will see a lower pavement. This was extended in 2015 to improve safety and access for children attending St Peter & St Paul School. In 2026 there is a project to create parking bays in this wide verge to accommodate the needs of the school, now enlarged from an Infant to a Primary School.

Further and to the right you will notice another thatched property, this time Rook Cottage whose upstairs windows just peep above the hedge. The house is late 16C, timber framed with Merstham stone on walls and chimney. It was newly thatched

c.2015. Rook Cottage was the home of the first school in Chaldon with Sarah Russell listed as School Mistress in the census of 1851. Her grave is marked in the churchyard with a wooden grave board, one of very few remaining in Surrey. A little further and you come to St Peter & St Paul Primary School on your left and then the Legrew Memorial Hall, known as the Village Hall. The clock on the north face was installed in 1949 as a memorial to the men of Chaldon who lost their lives in WW2, their families and the people of Chaldon. In 2015 the Village Council paid for the clock to be automated, the original mechanism needing to be wound each week.

Before leaving make sure you walk towards the front door of the Village Hall and read the memorial stone to the Legrew family on the left of the entrance.

Cross the road to the car park and before you leave look back to the right of the Hall. Goswell Cottage was built in 1878. Notice the latticed windows. Next to it is the old School House, built in 1871, in use as the school until 1965 and now a private house. The old school bell still hangs on the outside wall.

End of walk.

***Cross the road** into Doctors Lane being wary of traffic. A metal sign points the way to Chaldon Church. As you walk down Doctors Lane you can notice that you are walking through woodland. The name, Doctors Lane, appears on early maps long before there were any buildings. Its origins have remained elusive.

Doctors Lane was a track through Fryern Broom Wood stretching from Bletchingley towards Chaldon Church, Farthing Downs and Coulsdon. As you walk notice the majestic beech trees, splendid in spring and autumn. Bluebells are prolific in spring and the canopy of trees in summer are important for wildlife. As you reach the end of the first very narrow section of the lane the first house on your left is Woodcote, on the site of an early 1900 dwelling. To your right are two large bungalows set back from the road. These were built in the grounds of Tyhurst c.1957 and until the 1980s the gardens were unfenced and open. To your left is Hawk Hill, a much extended property, once with a main entrance from Rook Lane. It was built for the Rev. Greenland, chaplain to the Metropolitan Asylum and father of one of Chaldon's WW1 casualties, Charles Greenland. It was the home of a small school in the 1950s. Broomwood, on the right, was an early house in the lane, built in 1923, and the office for the selling of houses in Chaldon. The next three houses were built in the 1920s.

To your left is Chaldon Cottage, behind a high gate, once called Chalvedune, an ancient name for Chaldon. A little further along the lane the area behind the high fence was once a stables but now a bungalow. At one time there were pleasant views across the fields towards the Chaldon Conservation area. On the right hand side, as you approach the post box and your starting point, are houses built from 1948 onwards.

End of walk.

To learn more about the history of Chaldon visit www.chaldonhistory.org.uk