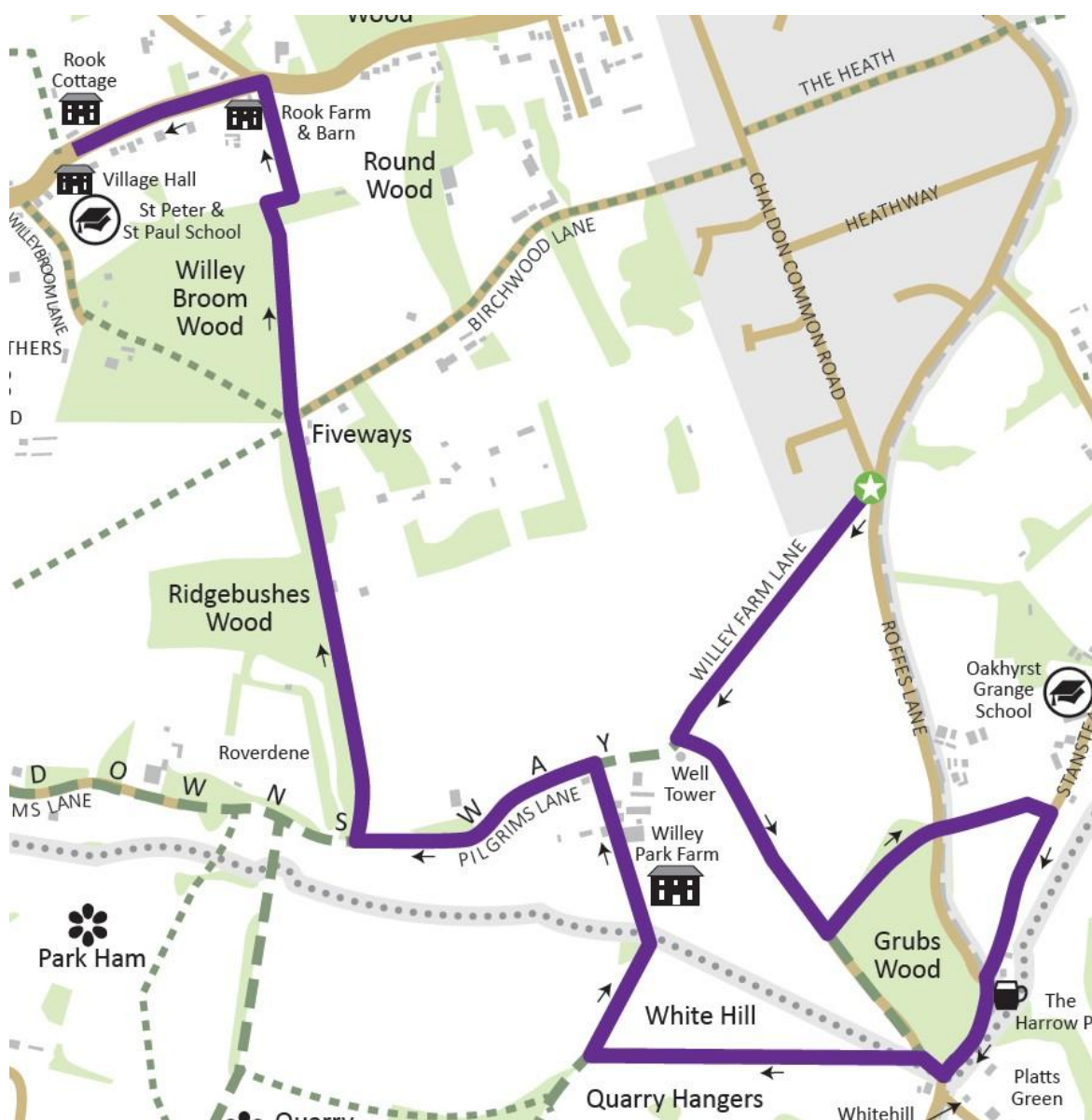


Chaldon Walks

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 April 2026.

Chaldon Walk 6 – Junction Roffes Lane/Chaldon Common Road

2.3 miles via Willey Farm Lane, Grubs Wood, Stanstead Road, White Hill, Willey Park Farm, North Downs Way, Rook Farm and Rook Lane, Village Hall.



Map created by Martin Lubikowski, ML Designs, Chaldon

Liz Bonsall October 2020, revised April 2026

This walk starts at the junction of Chaldon Common Road with Roffes Lane.

Walk up Willey Farm Lane. At the end of the row of houses the lane becomes a track. There are open fields to the right which in 1970 were proposed as a new site for Eothen School but turned down on the grounds of inaccessibility. In 2025 an application was made to build over 80 houses.

At the junction there is a fingerpost. Before you follow the track to your left, see the information board at the top of the hill, provided by Chaldon Village Council in 2017. At this point on a clear day you can see the London skyline.

With your back to the board, Willey Park Farm House can be glimpsed from here, and looking towards it, on the right-hand side of the track, in the trees, is the site of one of Willey Farm's ancient ponds.

There is still an ancient farm pond in the woods in the junction of the tracks, and if you stand near the telegraph pole, you can see glimpses of it through the hedge, together with a flint built, round Water or Well Tower with a conical roof, a Grade 2 listed building.

Go back to face the information board, then turn right onto the North Downs Way. As you walk, to your left across the fields you can see two red brick large houses which are on Stanstead Road. The left hand one is Oakhyrst Grange, a well-known local school. The house to the right is Upton House. Ahead of you is Grubs Wood. Shortly after reaching the corner of the wood there is a fingerpost with a Public Footpath signposted left to Roffes Lane.

Turn left at the finger post and enter the wood following the path north-east. This is Grubs Wood, semi-natural ancient woodland thickly carpeted with bluebells in spring. The tall trees include oak, beech, birch, wild cherry, sycamore, and rowan. When you are nearly at the other side of the wood, there is a left turn in the path marked by yellow arrow way markers. The path brings you out onto a sunken lane. This is Roffes Lane, an ancient route from Godstone to Coulsdon.

The footpath continues opposite. Cross the lane with great care and walk uphill on the narrow path, firstly through high hedges, then open fields. The wildflowers here include white flowered yarrow. The buildings to your left are part of Upton Farm and the large house higher up is Upton House. Note the splendid Blue Cedar tree and interesting chimneys. You are walking through an area once known as Stanstead. It is bounded by Stanstead Road, Roffes Lane and Willey Lane. The name Stanstead means "stony place" and appears in records as early as 1247.

You now come to Stanstead Road, an ancient Roman road leading from Bletchingley to Caterham. To the right of the path, you can see an old Public Footpath stone marker. **Cross the road, then turn right and follow the path in the grass verge.** To your left is an area once known as Hog's Trough Green. In 2025/26 this area was sadly cleared of its woodland destroying the valuable wildlife habitat that had existed.

Continue along the path. On your left you pass two houses. These are on the site of what were Lashmar Cottages, and next door is The Harrow Inn. In 1736 the inn

was part of Lashmar Cottages but The Harrow was also marked on an early map. The Harrow is Chaldon's only public house, becoming part of Chaldon in 2000. The triangle of land in the junction of Roffes Lane and Stanstead Road once had a cottage, shown on the Inclosure Map of 1853 but it disappeared shortly afterwards.

Continue past The Harrow and you reach an area once known as Platt Green, once common land and one-time venue for the Old Surrey Hunt. The area was not enclosed until 1865.

Cross to the right side of the road to a narrow path along the south-east edge of Grubs Wood.

You will reach the (back of the) Chaldon Village sign where, looking left across the road, you can see a derelict tower, in the grounds of Tower Farm. This is White Hill Tower, a folly, built on this high ground by Mr. Jeremiah Long in 1862. The land is 750ft above sea level and the story goes that he built the tower in commemoration of his son who drowned at Shoreham. Jeremiah wanted to see the sea from his tower.

Notice on the right the tall red brick gate pillars which mark the entrance to Willey Park Farm. These were built in 1960s.

Turn right between the pillars and then bear left onto a narrow bridleway leading west. You are now in the parish of Bletchingley although the ancient parish of Chaldon until 1933. Keeping a tall laurel hedge on your left look right, to the north, where you can see Willey Park Farm on the hilltop.

As you follow the bridleway there is a long gap in the native hedging giving extensive views to your left, and the spire of St John's Church, Redhill and the two masts on Reigate Hill can be seen, as well as the South Downs in the distance. A bit further on, looking right, on a clear day in the distance you can see the London skyline. There are some surviving patches of chalk downland flowers along the verges in the summer (e.g. common centaury) but generally horse culture and wild flower diversity are not compatible. In 2025/26 these views have been marred by illegal storage and disposal of waste.

Most of the land here is now used for horse grazing and you can see upwards of a dozen horses at any one time. In the Middle Ages, the land stretching from Willey Heath (Chaldon Common) in the north to Spring Bottom in the south and as far west as Rook Farm, was a detached part of the Abbot of Battle's Manor of Limpsfield. William the Conqueror gave thanks for his victory in 1066 by setting up an abbey (Battle Abbey) on the field of conflict. The abbot was given the manor of Limpsfield to provide income for the abbey. Willey was a sub-manor and included its valuable stone quarries. In the 18th Century it was owned by Sir William Clayton, a wealthy landowner with estates in Godstone and Bletchingley.

In the left-hand hedge, you may notice Victorian iron railings continuing for some distance. **Follow the path until you reach a junction. Turn right** (unless you are adding the extended walk *)

***A circular addition to the walk can start here.** The route is very steep and can be slippery after rain. The route follows paths that until 1930 were part of Chaldon Parish.

Turn left down the hill. Take care on a steep slope. Here there is horizontal old iron estate fencing on both sides of the path. You will reach a pedestrian gate on your right and on your left are steps downwards.

Take the steps to the left where you will walk along Quarry Hangers and downhill very steeply. This path can be very slippery in winter and do take care if you slip not to grasp the fence (when it starts) on your left as it is unstable, can swing at you and has two strands of barbed wire at the top! The fencing on the right is for the Downlands Management Project and you may see sheep or goats in this area. Almost at the bottom of the slope, you may see to your left the top of a house called Quarry Hanger, formerly Hillside, formerly the Barbara Edith Home for Convalescent Girls funded by Paul Kohn-Speyer who owned most of the land on either side of Spring Bottom Lane in the early 20C. In these hillsides were the stone quarries mined since medieval times but no longer accessible here.

As you approach the lane you will walk down more steep steps. At Spring Bottom Lane turn left, and after a short distance, cross the road to see two ponds, slightly below you in the field by the road. The first one is fed by a spring from the hillside, and this was in the past a source of water for Chaldon. Turn and walk back the way you came. To your left, hidden in the trees, is Quarry House built on the site of an earlier house demolished in 1953. It had been the home of the Broad family. One son, Alfred Evans Broad, was a casualty of WW2 and is commemorated in Chaldon Church. A little further and you will see The Barn. Notice the stonework. This is likely to be Merstham stone quarried from the hillside.

Walk along the road then take the first turning on the right, signposted as a Public Bridleway. Follow the path to the right where you will see an Information Board, then follow the track uphill. This takes you back over Quarry Hangers, on a path above the one you took down the hill, where you can appreciate the steepness of the hill and see how the Downlands Management Project have been clearing the hillside to enable the chalk grassland to recover. Wonderful wild flowers abound in spring and summer and on clear days you can see (over the M25) as far as the South Downs. You will reach the junction again with a pedestrian gate to your left and the steep steps to your right. Keep walking on the main track uphill, keeping left all the time to join the main route.

Having turned right you are now approaching Willey Park Farm along an ancient track. As you leave the grass track for a gravel track look left and westwards on a clear day you can see Box Hill and Leith Hill. You are also walking on what is thought to be an ancient Iron Age field system. Ahead are the farm buildings of Willey Park Farm. Walking through the farmyard you have what is called the old Granary to your left, converted into habitable buildings, and the arch of the old coach house to your right leading to stables. Everything here indicates extensive horse management.

As you walk on you can glimpse, on your right, the original Willey Farmhouse. The house itself, the earliest parts of which are thought to be early 17th century, and the cluster of buildings are Grade 2 Listed.

At the end of the track notice the flint and brick building with huge corner buttresses added.

Turn left onto the North Downs Way, commonly called The Pilgrims Way. In 1949 this part of the Surrey Hills was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and there are outstanding views to both north and south.

You will pass horse schools on your left and right and then reach a gate on the right. At one time the ancient path towards Chaldon Church crossed the field diagonally north-west from here. The path was closed during WW2 and finally extinguished officially in the 1990s. During WW1 trenches were built on this high ground at Willey and during WW2 an anti-aircraft battery was sited along the ridge.

Continue west on the North Downs Way until you reach a fingerpost in the hedge on the left pointing right towards Rook Lane. This is just after a wide often very wet part of the track.

Take the right turn to Rook Lane. Passing through the remains of a stile the path is bordered on one side by woodland and on the right by fields. After a short distance, on the left, look for a gap in the hedge where you will see a fire pit site by a huge oak tree. This is part of the Roverdene campsite where several generations of local people have learnt their camp craft with the Scout/Guide Association. Continuing along the path there is a high fence on the right. The start of this fence is where the original path from Pilgrims Way emerged by the woodland. On your left is Ridgebushes Wood, an ancient woodland with signs of heavy coppicing. Eventually you will reach Fiveways, a junction where routes meet to and from Chaldon Common Road, Willey Broom Lane, Hilltop Lane, Rook Lane and North Downs Way.

Continue ahead towards Rook Lane. The path takes you along the edge of Willey Broom Wood where once again you can see multi-stemmed hazels, evidence of coppicing. As you reach the end of the path you can see the back of Rook Farm, an 18C flint house worked as a farm until around 1950. The path originally continued ahead through the farmyard but now takes two right angled turns. Along this stretch are farm animals, pigs, sheep, goats and horses. The path ends with a narrow concrete track to reach Rook Lane.

Turn left and you see the 17th century five bay timber framed thatched barn of Rook Farm which is a conspicuous feature of this part of Chaldon. Notice the rook perched on the roof. Continue 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 breed 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 6.

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