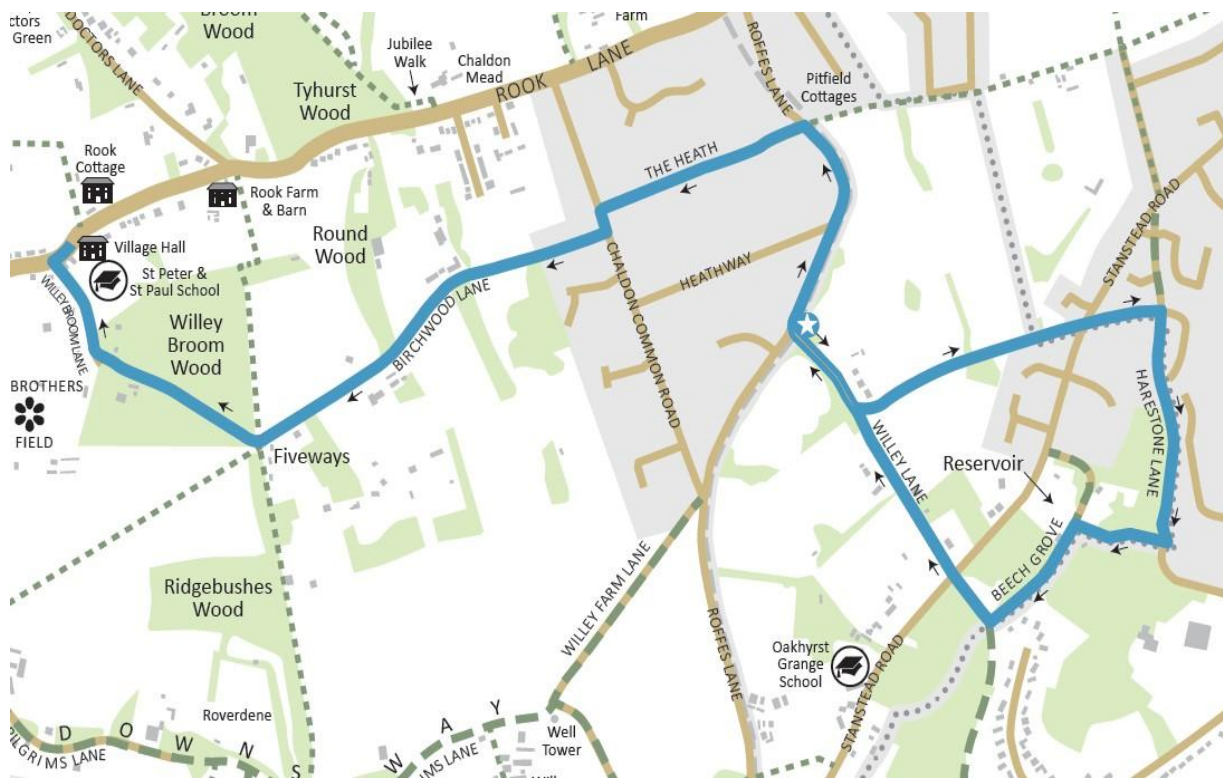


Chaldon Walks

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. 2023. Revised April 2026.

Chaldon Walk 7 – Junction of Roffes Lane with Chaldon Common Road, Willey Lane, Harestone Lane, Beech Grove, Roffes Lane, The Heath, Birchwood Lane, Willey Broom Wood, Willey Broom Lane. 2.7 miles, approximately 1 hour 20 minutes.



Map created by Martin Lubikowski, ML Designs, Chaldon

Starting at the junction of Willey Lane with Roffes Lane walk up Willey Lane passing three houses until you meet a Public Footpath sign pointing to your left.

Take the footpath left.

This land, originally part of Caterham Common, was unenclosed until 1853. From here you can see a line of trees which mark an ancient track north south from Plats Green, near The Harrow, to Hayes Lane in Kenley. It was referred to as the King's Highway and later known as Scrouchers Lane. Presumably, it avoided, in winter, a waterlogged Holliday's Bottom.

The land was part of Caterham Manor, owned by the Rowed family in the 18th century, later by Charles Day, and the fields were used for arable crops. The railway came to Caterham; big houses appeared for city gents and various enterprising Victorians invested in land seeking opportunities to make money. One plan, in 1882, was to build a railway which would have crossed the allotments and terminated near the waterworks on Stanstead Road. This did not happen.

The land was put up for sale in the early 20th century. Caterham & Warlingham Urban District Council (C&WUDC) bought the land between 1904 and 1917 and created allotments on part of it just after WW1.

In 1926 Hugh Mitchell bought most of the fields you can see so that he could construct a golf course. This was known as Caterham Golf Club and its heyday was in the late 1920s and the 1930s. It was a 9-hole course on 48 acres of land bordered by Roffes Lane, Willey Lane, Park Avenue and the footpath from Queen's Park to The Heath. The club went into liquidation after WW2.

From 1946 -50 various schemes for housing were turned down and in 1951 the land was auctioned. C&WUDC reserved 6.45 acres for allotments which never materialised. Caterham School bought 8.25 acres in 1952, and the rest is now privately owned.

Stop at Stanstead Road and note the house name Scrouchers. See the Chaldon Village sign.

Cross the road and follow the footpath opposite. This leads to Harestone Lane.

At the junction turn right and walk down the lane. Before 1860 the route from Caterham Hill to the valley was along Pepper Alley, now Harestone Lane. It was also the route from The Harrow to St Lawrence's Church and the Hill. The houses on the right-hand side are in Chaldon.

The lane narrows and on your left is what remains of the hamlet of early 18th century flint cottages called Harestone Farm. The farm buildings housed the only permanent residents in the valley, in 1851 being just fifteen men, women and children. An original part of the farm survives but has been extended to twice its original size.

Peter Gray describes the building as 'a timber-framed 2-bay 2-storey end chimney house c1700 and originally thatched'. There are several good photos to be seen in the History Centre at Caterham Valley Library.

Shortly after the flint cottages turn right to climb a short very steep bridleway to Beech Grove and then Stanstead Road. This track was the route of a major water pipeline from the Caterham Spring Water Company's pumping station that was south of Stanstead Road.

At the top of the hill is Beech Grove and straight ahead of you is the site of the waterworks and a Highways Depot. George Drew owned this land in 1859, and he saw that there was a desperate need for a water supply to newly built houses. He chose this spot to sink private wells and in 1862 to build a massive pumping station and waterworks four stories high at a cost of £12000. He was also one who may have bought into the idea of a railway terminating near his waterworks.

By 1885 the Caterham Spring Water Company became the East Surrey Water Company, today SES.

Turn left and follow the track as it then curves to the right and reaches Stanstead Road. Notice East Surrey Water Company stone marker and other evidence of the reservoir. After the curve in the lane notice the large ash tree clearance that took place in 2024/25.

Cross Stanstead Road to the southern end of Willey Lane. This is the point at which the track known as Scroucher's Lane led towards Hayes Lane.

Walk down Willey Lane to the start point at its junction with Roffes Lane.

Turn right and walk on the pavement along Roffes Lane, passing Heathway on the left and then The Heath.

Stop opposite The Heath and look to the right. You can see a terrace of 19th century cottages. These were once known as Pitfield Cottages, Holliday's Bottom. (Pitfield because of a gravel pit close by.)

The cottages stand on the site of older buildings. In 1681 there was a cottage higher up the hill. In 1722 George Matthews lived there with 5 daughters. One daughter married James Halliday and later inherited the land. By 1826 two more cottages were added but all pulled down in 1871. Flints and limestone were reused in the Pitfield Cottages built in their place.

In local history terms these cottages are interesting in that they housed several of the oldest families in Caterham – Harmers, Burnells and Skinners. In 1916 the 7 cottages were the only occupied dwellings in this road.

Cross the road and notice the stone Public Footpath marker on the right-hand side verge.

The Heath is a private road maintained by the residents, but Public Footpath 17 runs the length of the road, is 39' wide between fences, 10' of which is a metalled surface.

Willey Heath was enclosed by Sir William Clayton in 1862/64 and, as there had been a route east-west across the common, the Commissioners of the Chaldon Common Inclosure Award of 1865 set out and appointed a public footpath over land which was allotted to Sir William George Hylton.

The route is shown on the 1868, 1896 & 1912 OS maps as a footpath. In 1924 an agreement between the Chaldon Parish Meeting & local landowners listed this as a public highway, it was included in the 1932 Rights of Way Act and in 1952 on the Definitive Map for Surrey.

As you walk up the hill note house no.5 on your left. This was once Chaldon Common Road Post Office and the house was called the Nutshell. The store was managed by Johnny Walker.

Walking along the path notice the last 4 to 5 houses on your right. They were the first to be built. The whole area was sold by Lord Hylton in 1920 to Percy Harvey. He then sold the land as building plots.

Pass through the gate at the end of The Heath then pause on the grass verge and look to your right. About 1740 Sir Robert Clayton hedged off one and a third acres and had five cottages built to house some of the poor. They became known as Beggars Lodge and were rented to Chaldon Parish in 1837 for use as a Poor House. What remains of Beggars Lodge can just be seen to the right and above the trees.

At the end of The Heath turn left into Chaldon Common Road then turn right into Birchwood Lane. Birchwood Lane was at one time a major track from west of Chaldon to Caterham and once one of the best wildlife watching areas in Chaldon. With housing development and animal grazing this is sadly no longer the case. Walk along this undulating lane with houses on each side. As you reach the end of the houses on your right you will see an open field and looking north you see the houses at the end of Mount Avenue cul-de-sac. An application to build 30 houses in this field was made in November 2025. To your left open fields grazed by sheep and horses stretch southwards to the North Downs Way. After six more houses you will pass Mark's Farm on your right. The wood to your right is Roundwood, another semi-natural ancient woodland.

Walking slightly uphill there are more open fields with giant fir trees around Roundwood Cottage on the right and Homestead on the left. Homestead is on the site of one of the first houses in the lane. Downhill again there is a cul-de-sac to the left. You then pass Rose Cottage and further along some corrugated pig barns and stables on the left.

In front of you is a signpost known as Fiveways, a great local landmark and major hub of the Chaldon footpath network. As you approach Fiveways, on the right you will see a line of silver birches which may have given the road its name. It is possible to see buzzards, bullfinches and woodpeckers in this area.

Follow the sign to Willey Broom Lane ¼ mile. Walking through Willey Broom Wood, an ancient woodland, notice several large uprooted trees, casualties of the 1987 Great Storm. The wood is heavily carpeted with bluebells in spring. After a short distance, the path passes between two posts signed with a yellow footpath arrow. This takes you onto a fenced and very narrow path. When you emerge into the open onto Willey Broom Lane look left where you will see the gate to Six Brothers Field, the smallest property of the National Trust. *If you take a diversion into Six Brothers Field you will see the Scout Hut and Cricket Pavilion as well as a*

restored meadow and field margins managed for wildlife. An Information Board tells the story of Martin Coles Harman who gave the site to the people of Chaldon who use it for various community events throughout the year.

Turn right along Willey Broom Lane, and the first bungalow is called Puffin. Puffins live on Lundy Island which was the home of Martin Coles Harman from the late 1920s. He declared himself King of Lundy issuing his own puffin coins and stamps. He was responsible for making Willey Broom Lane a public footpath for the use of children walking from other parts of Chaldon or Caterham to school at the end of the lane. Follow Willey Broom Lane and towards the end of the private road, on the right, you will see the backs of the Old Schoolhouse, Goswell Cottage, the Village Hall and glimpses of St Peter & St Paul's Primary School.

At Rook Lane (B2031), for the purposes of the historic walk, you turn right towards the Village Hall and its car park. If you follow this direction you will pass the front of the Old Schoolhouse and notice the school bell mounted on the wall. The building was a school until 1965. The next house is Goswell Cottage, one of a few dwellings along this road until after WW1. You then reach Chaldon Village Hall, on the site which was given by Martin Coles Harman. The Hall was built as a Peace Memorial after WW1 by public subscription, part destroyed in WW2 and rebuilt with the generosity of the people of Chaldon. The car park was added in 1932.

Walk up the slope to the Hall entrance and read the inscription on the Legrew Memorial stone.

End of Walk 7.

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