OUTSTANDING CHILTERNS



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Chilterns Walking Festival

NATURAL/LANDSCAPE

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- a pirate water feature*
- kiddie rides*

*additional charges apply



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WELCOME

to Outstanding Chilterns, our free annual magazine showcasing the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



In this edition, you can catch-up with the very latest news from the exciting 'Beacons of the Past' project aiming to use cutting-edge technology to uncover the secrets of prehistoric hillforts. And moving forward in time, we mark

the Royal Air Force's centenary by exploring its close association with the Chilterns. Plus we talk to the Creative Director of the newly established Chilterns Art Festival which has been an instant success.

And for those seeking a great family day out, we take a look at what the historic town of Tring has to offer. If you're intending to stretch your legs and take in some glorious views, we've also got great ideas for countryside walks too. We hope you will enjoy the magazine and perhaps you'll even be inspired to get involved in helping conserve and enhance the Chilterns.

www.chilternsaonb.org

The Chilterns AONB website has a wealth of information on the area, including hundreds of downloadable walks and cycling routes, an interactive map highlighting places to visit and places to eat, a local events listing and lots of information on the special features of the Chiltern



Victoria Pearce

About the CCB

Outstanding Chilterns magazine is published annually by the Chilterns Conservation Board. Established in 2004, the Board is a public body with two key purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB
- To increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB

In fulfilling these purposes, the board also seeks to foster social and economic well-being in local communities. It has 27 members drawn from across the Chilterns and a staff team based in Chinnor.



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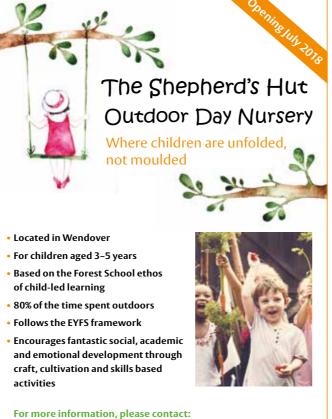












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CHIEF OFFICER'S LETTER

Welcome to the latest edition of 'Outstanding Chilterns'

The Chilterns is the most accessible protected landscape in Europe, offering residents and visitors alike a heady mix of beautiful views, amazing nature, vibrant market towns and open space in which to relax and take exercise. It's amazing to think that 1.6 million people live within 8km of the Chilterns. Health and well-being is important to every one of us, and no matter whether you like to walk, run or cycle, or prefer to simply sit down in a tranquil spot and take in the fresh air, the Chilterns has much to offer. The Chilterns is worth protecting not just because the landscape is incredibly rare and special but because it offers accessible green space where people of all ages can recharge their batteries, and if they are so inclined, be active in ways that have tangible health benefits. That's why I am delighted that our Walking Festival has been such a great success, and I would encourage as many people as possible to take part in the next festival in September. There are guided walks for all abilities, covering a very wide range of interesting themes.

So for me, highlighting the value to society of the Chilterns for our health and as a 'green lung' more generally is a big priority, as well of course as taking steps to preserve the special character of the Chilterns in the face of ever increasing development pressure. But that's my view – you may have a similar or very different perspective on what is important. Whatever your thoughts may be, we'd really like to know.

I was heartened recently by the Prime Minister's comment that she loves the Chilterns, and also by the Government's commitment in their 25 year Environment Plan to review the protection of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Chilterns Conservation Board would certainly welcome enhanced planning powers, equivalent to those of a National Park. In the face of immense development pressure, and given what is at stake here in the Chilterns, there would be significant benefits to having an overarching strategic plan that sets the priorities for sustainable development within the Chilterns AONB. Of course it's not just planning decisions that make a big difference to conservation and the general quality of life in the Chilterns. Local action can really help too. I would encourage people to volunteer for one of the many wonderful organisations carrying out work to enhance habitats, improve recreational access and raise public awareness. As I keep saying, we are all guardians of the Chilterns!

Best wishes, Sue Holden

THE CHILTERNS ARE **VERY SPECIAL...**

of woodland in the AONB is

known hillforts ancient woodland

531 important sites for wildlife

rare chalk streams

Sites of Special Scientific interest

National Nature Reserves

x3 Europeandesignated **Special Areas**

scheduled monuments

2149 listed buildings

of Conservation

94 conservation areas



SHEDDING LIGHT ON HILLFORTS



Hillforts have fascinated historians and archaeologists for centuries. Enduring and prominently situated, they stir the imagination through the tantalising glimpse they give of our ancient past.

here are plenty of Chilterns hillforts – fourteen in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and eight in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. And there could be even more waiting to be found. For example, an earthwork enclosure recently discovered in a woodland near Christmas Common in Oxfordshire may be an as-yet-unidentified hillfort.

Origins

The origins of hillforts lie in the late Bronze Age and the Iron Age, between about 1000 BC and the arrival of the Romans in the first century AD. Typically, their features include earthwork ramparts and ditches, but their differences are intriguing too, with some on open grassland and others in areas which, now at least, are covered in woodland and scrub. Despite the name, not all are on hills, as you discover the minute you arrive at Cholesbury.

What where they used for?

Whilst the name 'hillfort' implies a military purpose, it is likely that many of these locations may simply have served as secure living spaces for large populations or else may have remained empty, except at times when people living in the local area required refuge. Still others may have

only been locations for seasonal gatherings, much like later medieval fairs or livestock exchanges, where dispersed communities could meet for celebrations or religious festivals. It would have required considerable manpower to construct and maintain the enclosures, as well as effective organisation. Establishing a hillfort might well have been as much about expressing status through control of labour resources as about defending a position. It's also possible that a line of hillforts may have marked a boundary between two tribal areas. That said, standing on top of Ivinghoe Beacon it is hard not to simply assume that the principle benefit of the elevated positon was early warning of an enemy's approach.

On the ground and in the air

Running for three and a half years from 2018 and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Chilterns 'Beacons of the Past' Project will encourage and inspire people to find out more about the Chilterns' Iron Age hillforts and their prehistoric landscapes. Archaeologists Dr Wendy Morrison and Dr Ed Peveler have recently joined the Chilterns Conservation Board to lead the investigative work. Research and practical conservation

is expected to take place at five priority sites. The project will include the first aerial survey of the entire Chilterns AONB using state-of-the-art Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology. We don't know what results the survey will produce, but we believe it may reveal previously unknown features hidden within the landscape.

How you can get involved

Hillforts Project Manager on **01844 355525** or email wmorrison@chilternsaonb.org or epeveler@chilternsaonb.org

creadey@chilternsaonb.org.

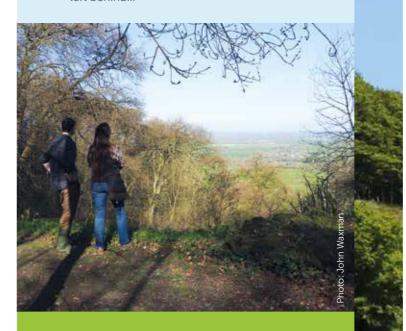




LiDAR

After the introduction of aviation in the early twentieth century, archaeologists noticed that, even where there was nothing physically present on the ground, shapes in the fields below were visible. Traces of past activity disturbed soils enough to affect crops that grow in them. Ditches and pits hold more moisture, speeding plant growth, whilst crops over stone walls grow poorly. Although the effect depends on the crop, this meant that previously unknown archaeological features could be identified, mapped and catalogued from the air without excavation. However, aerial photography cannot be used to reveal the archaeology of urban or heavily wooded areas. This is where LiDAR

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) can be used to record and observe archaeology on the surface of the ground that is otherwise obscured, such as by forestation. LiDAR instruments record landscapes in three dimensions by use of a laser ranger. An airborne device sends out small pulses of light at the rate of hundreds of thousands per second. They are reflected back from the objects they strike and the distance is measured and recorded. When the millions of measurements are combined by computer, then a digital three-dimensional image of the landscape is formed. From this image, objects can then be digitally deleted, thus an entire forest can be removed, revealing the ground surface, and all the humps and bumps ancient people left behind..



Special Events in 2018

CHILTERN OPEN AIR MUSEUM

xplore more than 30 rescued historic buildings, including an ron Age roundhouse, 1940s prefab, blacksmith's forge, Victorian earth cottage, and a working farm nestled in 45 acres



of woods and parkland. Featured in Downton Abbey, Grantchester and Call the Midwife

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Chiltern Open Air Museum is a registered charity (no. 272381)

and all proceeds go towards our valuable conservation work.

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WINGS OVER. THE CHILTERNS ----

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Royal Air Force, formed from the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service in 1918. The Chilterns has a close association with the RAF. A number of places have a strong historic connection, and several bases remain operational today.

AF Halton is located on the edge of the AONB, near Wendover in Buckinghamshire. The base sits below Wendover Woods, on land formerly owned by the Rothschilds family. It was used by the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War to train aircraft mechanics, so was already in existence at the time of the RAF's formation. Today it is one of the RAF's largest bases, training both military and civilian personnel in a wide range of specialist trades. The Trenchard Museum, (named in honour of 'the father of the Royal Air Force') is located within the base and tells RAF Halton's story. It is open to members of the public (on Tuesdays, by prior arrangement). The exhibition includes three aircraft and a number of aero engines. [See: trenchardmuseum.org.uk] RAF Halton has a grass airfield too, where the Royal Air Force Gliding and Soaring Association is based.

In an area of beech woods at Walter's Ash is RAF High Wycombe - the home of Headquarters Air Command (HAC). This location was selected just before the outbreak of World War II as suitable for a well-disguised base for RAF Bomber Command away from London. To help camouflage the new base from the air, as many trees were retained as possible and the military buildings were made to resemble civilian structures such as a manor house and a church. An underground bunker and a network of tunnels were also provided. During the war, the base was served by a small airstrip at Lacey Green, and Lord Arthur 'Bomber

Harris, RAF Bomber Command's chief, lived at 'Springfields' in nearby Great Kingshill.

Today replica World War II
Spitfire and Hurricane fighter
aircraft stand guard at the main
entrance. There is a newer
underground bunker, built in the
1980s to provide a safe haven for
operations in the event of a nuclear
attack on the UK. The bunker is
one of the most secret buildings
in Britain and remains officially
classified. As well as the main
administrative site, RAF High
Wycombe has a separate Officers'
mess site and a domestic and

codenamed 'Hillside'. Here, Air Ministry staff analysed aerial photographs of Germany and created maps for use on bomber raids. Exhibitions in the cellars and in the Ice House (where there is a wonderful recreation of the Air Ministry Photographic Unit) now tell this secret history.

The High Wycombe area has other links to the RAF too. Wycombe Air Park was formerly RAF Booker, and was used as a flying training school during the second world war, operating de Havilland Tiger Moths (see main picture) and Miles Magisters. After the war it was used by the University of London Air Squadron and Bomber Command

As a major centre for furniture production, High Wycombe also played a key role in the construction of the 'Wooden Wonder' – the de Havilland Mosquito, one of the RAF's most legendary wartime aircraft.

Not very far from RAF High Wycombe lies Hughenden Manor. This lovely National Trust property was once the home of Victorian Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, but its important connection to the RAF was, until quite recently, much less well known. In 2004 a volunteer Room Guide overheard a gentleman telling his grandson about being stationed at Hughenden during the war. Subsequent research by the National Trust revealed many details regarding Hughenden's secret past. During the second world war the property was requisitioned and became an intelligence facility

Communications Flight RAF before transferring to civil ownership in the mid 1960s. Air frame components were manufactured in the town by companies such as Dancer & Hearne, E.Gomme, J.B. Heath and Parker Knoll. Coincidentally, the man behind the Mosquito – Sir Geoffrey de Havilland – was born at Magdala House in nearby Terriers, where there is now a commemorative plaque on the wall.

To the South of High Wycombe, perched high on a plateau above the River Thames in leafy Medmenham, is Danesfield House. Now a hotel and spa, the house was used by the



photographs. Unarmed high speed reconnaissance aircraft flew dangerous missions over occupied Europe from RAF Benson, an airfield located on the edge of the Chilterns near Wallingford that remains operational (as a helicopter base) today. The reconnaissance photographs were then transferred to Danesfield House (known then as RAF Medmenham) for analysis. Intelligence staff from Danesfield House would often spend their off duty evenings at the nearby Dog and Badger Pub. After the war the house became the divisional headquarters of No.90 Group, RAF

Waltham and Woodley, and also as a place for final assembly and flight testing of Spitfires produced locally bydispersed manufacturers in the Reading area. In 1944 No.529 squadron, equipped with autogyros, moved to the basefrom RAF Halton. In the spring of 1945, they re-equipped with the Hoverfly helicopter, giving RAF

He lived at 'Gipsy House' in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire for 36 years. In the High Street there is now a Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre aimed at youngsters from 6 to 12 years.

Signals, before being sold to a dairy processing company in 1977.

Very little trace now remains of RAF Henley-on-Thames, a wartime grass airfield at the top of Crazies Hill, just outside the AONB boundary but alongside the Chiltern Way Berkshire Loop. The site, now a business park and farmland, was used as a relief landing ground for training aircraft from the nearby RAF bases at White Henley-on-Thames the distinction of being the first RAF station to host a helicopter squadron.

Phyllis Court in Henley also has an RAF connection. The clubhouse was requisitioned during the war and was used initially as a Women's Auxillary Air Force Officers' mess for RAF Medmenham, then to house a top secret unit working with aerial reconnaissance material, and finally by the American Red Cross.

The writer Roald Dahl was an RAF fighter ace who flew Gloster Gladiators and then Hawker Hurricanes during the early years of World War II. Dahl's RAF career features in the Museum's 'Solo Gallery' where there is a wooden reproduction of the forward fuselage of the Gladiator in which he was badly injured during an emergency landing in the Egyptian desert in 1941.

In Cowleaze Wood, near
Stokenchurch, a small memorial marks
the site where a 51 Squadron Halifax
bomber from a '1000 bomber' raid on
Nuremburg, crashed on 31st March
1944, killing all seven Canadian crew
members. It serves as a poignant
reminder of the sacrifice made by so
many RAF personnel in the name
of freedom.

Author: John Waxman



The Chilterns AONB is a very special place, a unique and accessible natural landscape on London's doorstep. But development pressure is increasing, bringing with it the threat of habitat loss, more noise and a reduction in recreational green space.

Responding to development proposals is an important part of our work at the Chilterns Conservation Board. We comment on new infrastructure plans, local plans, and the most significant planning applications. But unlike National Parks our role is only advisory and we do not make the final planning and infrastructure decisions.

There is much to occupy us currently:



- HS2 will cut through the centre of the Chilterns
- Luton airport has aspirations to grow to the same size as Gatwick
- Re-designing flightpaths for Heathrow's third runway could see more aircraft flying over currently tranquil areas of the AONB
- The electrification of the Great Western Railway has brought unsightly and intrusive overhead gantries to the Goring area
- Up to one million new homes along the Oxford Cambridge corridor by 2050, along with new road and rail infrastructure, could be constructed in the setting of the AONB
- Our 13 local authorities are under great pressure to meet housing needs with the risk that local plans prioritise housing above everything else.

What can you do?

We produce planning guidance and we would encourage everyone – developers, planning officers and members of the public with concerns about development proposals – to refer to this. Our guidance, interpreted and applied correctly, can help to reduce the chances of new development falling short of conserving and enhancing the AONB.

We have a well-respected Chilterns Building Design Guide which explains what good development, respecting local vernacular styles, looks like.

Our latest publication is Position Statement: 'Cumulative Impacts of Development on the Chilterns AONB'. It covers how incremental changes from many individual planning proposals could, cumulatively, result in the loss of the special qualities of the AONB, and erode its natural beauty, tranquillity and intactness. We explain how to assess changes across local planning authority boundaries to protect these special qualities for the long term.

We would advise architects commissioned to design new buildings in the AONB to first explore the 'art of the possible' by studying winning entries in the annual Chilterns Building Design Awards (see article on page 11 opposite). After all, an area of outstanding natural beauty deserves outstanding design solutions.

Learn more on planning in the AONB at www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development.html



DESIGNING FOR LIFE IN THE CHILTERNS

The Buildings Design Awards, run in partnership by the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Chiltern Society, champion great new designs that celebrate the distinctive character of buildings in the Chilterns.

A wide range of building projects are eligible: new builds, extensions, restorations and renovations. Nominations can be houses, workplaces, public buildings, farm buildings, bridges and more. Our most recent overall winner is the superb new Winery at Hundreds Hill Vineyard in the Stonor Valley. The design was commended by the judges for enhancing the site and locality, and completely

harmonising with the beautiful setting, using high quality local materials and vernacular detailing.

This biennial event is open to everyone associated with a building project completed within the past 3 years, so if you think your project is an exceptional example of design, why not take a look at previous winners and the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide on our website?



Enter your
design here
bit.ly/buildingsdesign-awards by
1st March 2019







- Selected Hillforts
- Active RAF Bases
- Former RAF Bases

River Chess

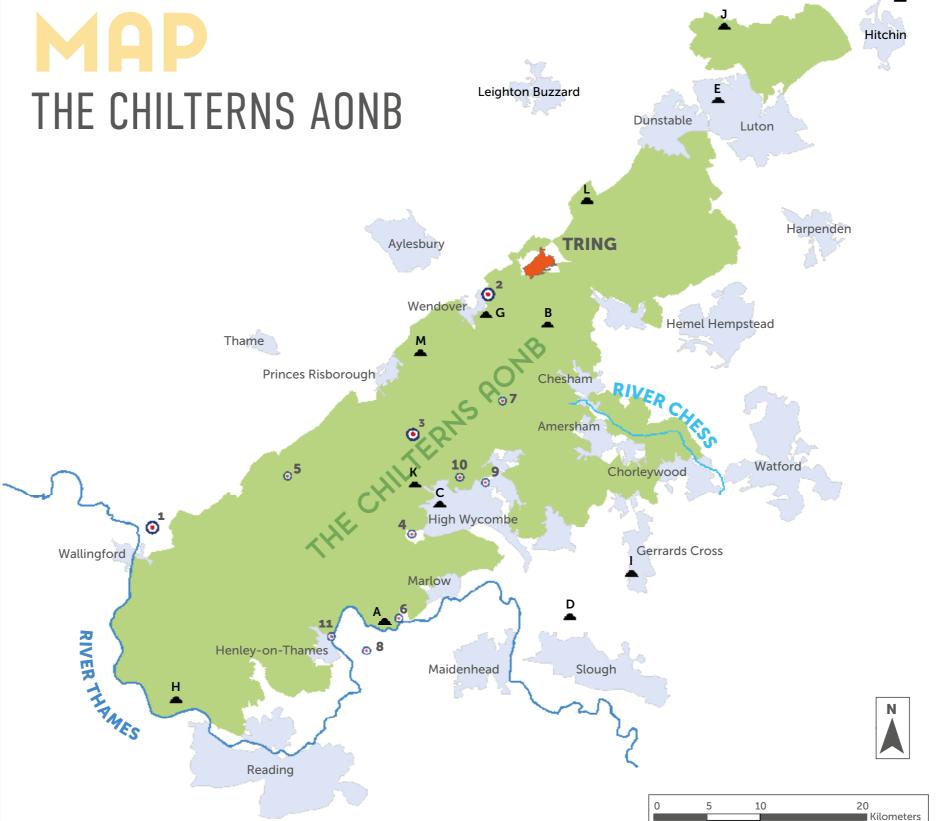
River Thames

HILLFORTS

- A Medmenham Camp
- B Cholesbury Camp
- C Desborough Castle
- D Seven Ways Plain
- E Waulud's Bank
- F Wilbury H
- G Boddington Camp
- H Bozedown Camp
- I Bulstrode Camp
- J Sharpenhoe Clappers
- K West Wycombe Camp
- L Ivinghoe Beacon
- M Pulpit Hill

RAF BASES

- 1 RAF Benson
- 2 RAF Halton
- 3 RAF High Wycombe (HAC)
- 4 Wycombe Air Park (formerly RAF Booker)
- 5 Cowleaze Wood (memorial)
- 6 Danesfield House (formerly RAF Danesfield)
- 7 Great Missenden (Roald Dahl Museum)
- 8 Upper Culham Farm (formerly RAF Henley-on-Thames)
- 9 Magdala House, Terriers (Geoffrey De Havilland birthplace)
- 10 Hughenden Manor
- 11 Phyllis Court, Henley-on-Thames





















CHALK UP SOME WALKS!

Every spring and autumn during our Walking Festival, a willing team of knowledgable and enthusiastic walk leaders volunteer to guide people around some of their favourite

CHILTERNS LOCATIONS.



or 15 days, a packed event programme covers entertaining and informative walks which might explore scenic landmarks, heritage crafts or local customs. No matter where you are based in the Chilterns, there will be walks happening in the vicinity, as well as chances to venture into pastures new. Assisted by the walk leaders, you can find out more about wild bees, bluebells, trees and meadows, follies, famous people and folklore. For a real treat why not combine fitness with reward and sample local scones, a pub supper or craft beer?

The festival is currently funded by the Leader Programme and by our sponsors: Compete Outdoors, Brakspear, Inghams and the Chiltern Society. It's thanks to this generous support that we can offer the festival largely free of charge to the public.

Step back to the Iron Age

With funding now in place for our Hillforts project, we are taking extra steps to make visitors aware of these amazing historical finds – located literally right under our feet! So this year's Walking Festival includes a number of trails that focus on Iron Age Hillforts. Led by our guides, you can walk in the footsteps of Iron Age people who inhabited this area and learn to interpret the prehistoric lumps and bumps visible along the ancient drover trails, which make the Chilterns landscape so unique. One such trail is the Pitstone Hill Archaeological Walk

led by volunteer John Glover, which follows part of the ancient Ridgeway north of Tring and covers six miles in around three hours. This section of the Ridgeway forms an elevated white path, carved out of the grassy chalk ridge along the edge of Pitstone Hill, and offers views of Aylesbury Vale far below. With John's help visitors will discover the earthworks tracing the existence of the fort and may even spot pieces of flint, which still litter the grass.

If you are drawn particularly to the hillforts, you might like to explore
The Iron Age Fort Walk at Cholesbury, located half way between Tring and
Chesham. The fort consists of a large ditch with ramparts crowned by beech trees. It is one of only two in the county

Walks galore

For those not able to visit during the Walking Festival, do remember that the Chilterns Conservation Board has a permanent collection of self-guided walks and trails available on its website. Search the interactive map to locate walks across the Chilterns and print information leaflets provided to guide you.

To discover more about the Walking Festival and year-round Chilterns trails, have a look at the information box opposite. If you'd like to explore walking as a regular hobby, Chilterns AONB partners local clubs and societies that also organise hikes around the Chilterns. The Ramblers Association has two local clubs: Chiltern Young

If you are drawn particularly to the Hillforts, you might like to explore The Iron Age Fort Walk at Cholesbury, located half way between Tring and Chesham.

within which is situated a church. The area is rich in wildlife including muntjac deer, woodpeckers and barn owls. Whether you choose the longer 5 mile circuit or the shorter 2.5 mile walk, a warm welcome awaits you in the 17th century pub, The Full Moon, back in Cholesbury.



Walkers and Chiltern Weekend Walkers, which between them cater for all ages. the Chiltern Society is another charity we work alongside which produces a quarterly magazine describing walks across the Chilterns, amongst many other local activities. Chilterns AONB thrives on the support of volunteers and encourages those interested to get involved. There are lots of ways you can support us, whether you have limited time or wish to offer a bit more help. Do take a look at the Volunteer Box adjacent to discover the sorts of opportunities available.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE WALKING FESTIVAL

It's simple to join in – start by reviewing the event programme online at: www.visitchilterns.co.uk/walkingfest

All the walks are listed in date order, with details of location, timings, and level of difficulty, including details about accessibility for the disabled, and suitability for children and dogs. Most walks are free of charge, but for some there is a small fee payable. Select the walk and book your place; there is no limit to how many you can enjoy.

...and year-round Chilterns trails...

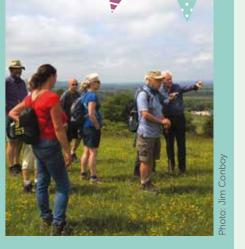
Chilterns Conservation Board has a permanent collection of walks and trails available on its website at www.chilternsaonb.org

Discover Chiltern Young Walkers at: www.chilterns2030s.org.uk

and Chiltern Weekend Walkers at: www.chilternsww.co.uk

Explore the Chiltern Society at: www.chilternsociety.org.uk





CHILTERNS AONB VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

Do you care deeply about our treasured landscape?

Could you spare a few hours to support us?

4 – 6 hours per month?

We are looking for enthusiastic individuals to become volunteer ambassadors. You'll promote events in your area by displaying posters, distributing leaflets and mustering local support.

4 – 6 hours per week?

If you're an experienced walk-leader, here's your opportunity to play a crucial role in the Walking Festival!
We're looking for volunteer leaders for September as well as the Spring & Autumn festivals in 2019.

Flexible hours based at our Chinnor Office?

We're also looking for administrative support including contact management, updating our website, social media work and blogging. If you're handy with a camera we'd also love to hear from you.

Contact **office@chilternsaonb.org** for more information.

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Although situated deep in the Chilterns countryside, Tring has always been linked to London: by the Roman Akeman Street, the Grand Union Canal and railway into Euston station. But perhaps its most timeless connection is with the Rothschild family, who have forever left their legacy imprinted on this pretty town.

ypical of a Chilterns market town, it is surrounded by features that make the region so unique – chalk grassland, undulating fields, ancient woodland and important wildlife habitats. Tring Park, a ten-minute walk from the high street, is one such place. Landscaped by Charles Bridgeman in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the extensive parkland includes a stretch of the Ridgeway National Trail which passes through a handsome avenue of lime trees known as King Charles Ride. Once grazed by wallabies introduced by the Rothschilds, there are beautiful views from here of the town and surrounding countryside as far as lvinghoe Beacon.

Tring Natural History Museum was built in 1889 to house the vast private collections of Walter Rothschild, a keen zoologist and eccentric. When he died, the building and collections were gifted to the nation, and are now part of the Natural History Museum London. Much of the interior retains its original charm with collections presented as the Victorians would have known and enjoyed, including the museum's infamous collection of stuffed dogs and circus fleas.

First recorded in the Doomsday Book in 1089, the lovely church of St Peter and Paul on the high street is open every day. Visitors can learn about the building's architecture, the medieval Tring Tiles that are now displayed in the British Museum, the Victorian Gore Memorial, and also a connection with George Washington. Once known as a busy centre for straw making and apple orchards, in 2015 Tring celebrated its 700th year as a market town. The Friday Charter market still trades in the same place on the high street. The high street is full of independent shops including a traditional butcher's, bakeries, delicatessens, pubs and coffee shops popular with cyclists and walkers as they pause on their Chilterns' routes.

A growing number of restaurants take pride in serving locally sourced and produced food and drink. One such local producer is Puddingstone Distillery which has captured a sense of place with a gin distillery located in the nearby hamlet of Willstone. very popular with locals, their expanding range can be tasted at the distillery shop that is open Fridays and Saturdays where Campfire Gin and seasonal specials can be tried and purchased.

Tring Brewery is another independent brewer offering the biggest selection of locally brewed cask, keg and bottled beer. A proud small business within the Chilterns community, the brewery offers very popular tastings and tours from team members, who provide complimentary samples of a wide range of styles and strengths to try before you buy.

Surrounding the town are many reservoirs that attract large numbers of breeding and migratory birds, making the waterways a valuable wildlife habitat. College Lake Nature Reserve is one of Tring's best kept secrets. This former chalk quarry has been repurposed into a birdwatching reserve – popular with visitors and the migratory birds that can be spotted from the many hides that are dotted around the lake. During the summer months orchids and wildflowers grow on the chalky banks.



The mighty Ashridge Estate, with its ancient trees in beautiful woodlands, is within easy reach of the town, and popular with walkers on the Drovers Trails from the town and railway station, that lead up into the forest and on to lyinghoe Beacon.





Wilstone, Tring, Herts HP23 4NT

www.puddingstonedistillery.com



16

9.30am - 5.00pm

THE CHILTERNS CORNUCOPIA OF CULTURE

The Chilterns Arts Festival – held for the first time in February 2018 – celebrates the diversity of arts across the region through a rich and ambitious programme of music, art and literature. Nicole Russell talked to founder and Creative Director Naomi Taylor about this exciting new venture and its strong focus on local participation.

Why did you decide to create a new festival in the Chilterns and what is its main aim?

When I moved to Berkhamsted a couple of years ago, I knew I wanted to start some sort of festival that would allow me to exercise my creative side. Initially I thought I'd start small and go for a weekend of events in and around Berkhamsted itself, but as I started to explore the Chilterns, I discovered all of these beautiful towns and villages with their gorgeous churches, and I decided I'd aim for something a bit more ambitious! I spoke to Christopher

"I understand that the wide range of performance spaces across the region attracted people to parts of the Chilterns they may have previously been unfamiliar with." Glynn, our Artistic Partner, at a very early stage, and I was delighted when he agreed to help me plan the artistic programme. Our aim here was to bring some of the big names in classical music out of the capital and into the Chilterns, giving people access to world class art without the trouble of a journey into London.

It's been wonderful to hear people say that they've discovered new parts of the Chilterns – as indeed have I in creating the Festival! Over the next year we hope to develop the partnerships with local businesses and attractions we've initiated this year in order to give people more reasons to explore an area around a venue.

In what ways are you encouraging young people to become involved?

We launched our young artist platform scheme, which gave young professional ensembles the opportunity to compete for a performance in the Festival. We plan to continue developing this scheme for young professionals, but also to open it to younger ensembles, encouraging children and young people to take part in different parts of the competition.

This year the opera company, who presented one of Mozart's early operas at the fantastic new facility at Pipers Corner School, also ran workshops and open rehearsals for the students at the school.

Our Discovery Days, which pioneered this year with a Music of WW1 Discovery Day are designed as Family Days, with events and activities for all ages, encouraging adults and children alike to explore the context around certain kinds of music.

What are the future plans for the festival?

The festival itself next year is in its early planning stages, but I can say that we have some fantastic events on the cards... so watch this space and join our mailing list to stay informed. Our launch weekend – when we announce the full programme, and tickets go on sale – is the last weekend in September. We will be announcing the programme for that very soon.

And finally, where is your favourite place in the Chilterns?

Gosh what a difficult question! Busy, beautiful Marlow is high on my list... and lovely sleepy Great Missenden too. But one memory that will stay with me for a very long time is the day I discovered Holy Trinity Church in Penn Street. That beautiful little church with its imposing spire, nestled on the edge of the woods... there's something pretty special about it!

For more information about the Chiltern Arts Festival visit: https://chilternarts.com/festival and follow them on Twitter **@chilternarts** and on Facebook **@chilternartsfestival**



ASH DIEBACK

The fungal threat

irst confirmed in Britain in 2012, ash dieback is caused by a wind dispersed fungus called Hymenoscyphus fraxineus. In the last couple of years this disease – widely known as 'Chalara' – has become noticeable in woods across the Chilterns, especially in young ash saplings. Symptoms include leaf loss, wilted/shrivelled up leaves in mid to late summer, crown dieback and bark lesions, plus discoloured brown younger shoots. Sadly, once a tree is infected the disease is usually fatal: either directly, or indirectly by weakening the tree so other fungi attack it too.

The importance of ash

Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), is a very important native broadleaved tree in the Chilterns AONB. It is especially numerous in fields, hedges and around the villages, where its loss to disease will be most obvious and where it will be harder to replace. Ash has also become a more important woodland tree on some soils such as the chalk scarp, where it has replaced beech. Many Chiltern woods were restocked with ash following storm damage in 1987 and 1990. Ash regenerates and coppices freely, provided that browsing animals such as deer are kept off the young trees.

Natural resistance

There is likely to be some genetic variation, so the hope is that not all ash will succumb to Chalara. The ash is prolific in seeding, so if some trees survive and the disease dissipates over time, it should eventually recover as a species. But this may take hundreds of years. Scientists are studying the genetic factors which make resistance possible so that tolerant ash trees can be bred for the future.

Please remember that if you want to fell ash trees you may need to get a licence from the Forestry Commission, or consent from the District Council if the trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or are in a village Conservation Area.

The Forestry Commission has identified human activity as a key factor in the spread of some diseases. The simple biosecurity actions set out on the Commission's Keep it Clean pages can help reduce the spread of pests and diseases generally: www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/BEEH-A6THMS



SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Don't panic get advice if you think you have ash dieback.
- Be patient there's no rush to do anything unless it is dead, dying or dangerous and in a high risk location.
- Assess the risk are ash trees near roads or buildings? If yes their health should be monitored.
- Never move ash leaves from an infected area.
- Consider sale of ash firewood and timber as part of planned management.
- Don't plant any more ash, but do think of planting suitable replacements, again get advice.
- Plant a mixture of alternative species
 e.g. small leaved lime, rowan, wild cherry,
 walnut, oak, yew.
- Manage existing woods to favour species other than ash when thinning.
- Work with existing ash natural regeneration and hope that genetic diversity means that some trees are immune or recover from this fungus.
- Control deer numbers to reduce the amount of browsing of seedlings and saplings.
- Control of pests, such as grey squirrels, will be even more necessary in future so that other native trees such as oak, beech, hornbeam, maples, birches, hazel have a chance to develop.

If you are concerned about ash in a woodland or want to consider planting trees in hedges etc contact John Morris at the Chiltern Woodlands Project for advice and assistance.

Email: woodlands@chilternsaonb.org

The latest information and advice on various tree pests and diseases is on the Forestry Commission website: www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases

For more information on Chalara see www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR THE LANDSCAPE

Landscape Partnership Schemes are Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) initiatives supporting heritage, people and communities in a defined landscape character area. Each scheme is made up of a number of individual projects, often grouped under themes.

halk. Cherries and Chairs is an exciting new Landscape Partnership Scheme currently being developed by the Chilterns Conservation Board together with over 30 local groups and organisations including Bucks, Berks and Beds Wildlife Trust, Bucks New University, Chalk Streams Partnership, Chiltern Rangers, Chiltern Society, the National Trust, and Wycombe Museum. The name of the scheme reflects the landscape, land use and industrial heritage of the Chilterns.

The scheme will focus on the ancient wooded and farmed landscapes of the Central Chilterns, most of which lie within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It covers 264 km2, following the Rivers Wye and Misbourne, and will link the towns of High Wycombe, Wendover, Amersham, Chalfont St Giles and Princes Risborough. There will be three themes made up of many projects to deliver long-lasting benefits.

The scheme aims to:

- restore, enhance and record wildlife habitats, landscape features and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns:
- create new opportunities for people to investigate and celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of the Chilterns, inspiring a wider range of people to become stewards for their local heritage; and
- strengthen the capacity of local communities to take action for their local landscapes and heritage

The partners have created a plan to encourage people to get involved with protecting the Chilterns, increase volunteering and promote the investigation and celebration of local heritage. A major injection of conservation effort will leave a legacy of: better connected, managed and more resilient wildlife habitats; land managers and volunteers will have the skills and understanding to care for a changing landscape; people will discover and



The HLF has awarded a development grant of £185,600, enabling the production of detailed plans that will be submitted in summer 2018 with the aim of obtaining a full grant of £2.18m.

map ancient track ways and walk in the footsteps of those that used them; a strengthened partnership will ensure the legacy lasts. As well as running a survey, the project team held a series of public meetings to raise awareness of the projects and talk to local people to gain input and feedback.

Inspiring local people to participate in projects and feel more connected to the area will certainly be key to the scheme's success. Participation can take many forms – for example, the creation and maintenance of community orchards, celebrating the landscape through artistic and cultural activities, or systematically recording local heritage or wildlife to assist conservation efforts. Anything indeed that can encourage future positive management.

An additional £605,000 in match funding will be secured to deliver the project. We are currently seeking corporate sponsors.



If you would like to be involved, please contact Claire Readey, Development and Funding Manager, on 01844 **355506**, or by emailing creadey@chilternsaonb.org

You can sign-up to the Chilterns Conservation Board e-newsletter by emailing ccc@chilternsaonb.org



TRIBUTE TO ROSS OSBORN 29th May 1942 – 19th March 2018



Ross was a passionate advocate for the Chilterns and an active volunteer with the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Woodlands Project over

Ross first got involved with a project to record special trees and woods of the Chilterns. He went on to join the Chilterns Commons Network and became one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Chilterns Commons Project. He was also involved with many projects to improve access, most recently leading the way on an initiative to record lost rights of way.

To say that Ross was a long-term volunteer is true – but does not fully capture his contribution. The truth is Ross cajoled, inspired and made us laugh in equal measure to get things done. He will be sadly missed.

GOOD NEWS FOR RATTY

A recent survey has revealed that one of Britain's rarest mammals – the water vole – is thriving in the Chess Valley. A significant number have been found along the River Chess between Chesham and Chorleywood.

The survey, organised by the River Chess Association with support from the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project (CCSP), is the ninth to have been carried out on the River Chess since 2001. The water vole (Arvicola terrestris), familiar to many as the character 'Ratty' in Kenneth Grahame's classic book 'Wind in the Willows', is sadly now the UK's fastest declining mammal. It vanished from the majority of its native ranges in the last century, and where it has managed to retain a foothold, its numbers have reduced by 30% in the ten years from 2006 to 2015. The dramatic decline has been driven primarily by fragmentation and loss of habitat, pollution of waterways, the widespread use of rodenticides, and predation by North American mink, a non-native species introduced to the UK though the fur trade.

Until relatively recently water voles were a common sight along many of the Chilterns rivers, the lush vegetated margins, soft, earth banks and stable, clean waters historically providing the voles with an ideal home. Today only two rivers support water voles but even these populations are under threat.

One of the two rivers that remain a key stronghold in the Chilterns is the Chess. When the river was surveyed by the CCSP in 2001, there was a healthy population. However, a repeat survey just two years later revealed that numbers had crashed by 97%. In 2004, a water vole recovery scheme which included an integrated programme of mink control, habitat restoration and biennial surveys, was launched to try to reverse the situation. The scheme, run by a partnership which included landowners, the CCSP, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and more recently the River Chess Association, began to turn the situation around and by 2011 the population had returned to levels not seen since 2001

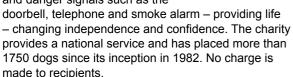
Unfortunately, the 2013 survey revealed that the population had declined once again as mink returned to the catchment. By 2015 the population was just 36% of its 2011 size. Following these disappointing results, the mink control scheme was overhauled and enhancement works were carried out to link sections of good water vole habitat together. Last year, volunteers from the River Chess Association supported by the CCSP and BBOWT undertook the latest survey of the river which revealed the exciting news that the decline in the water vole population had been halted and numbers had increased significantly.

The population is now at 64% of the 2001 population. Allen Beechey, the CCSP Project Officer said: "The Chess population is the last remaining in the AONB and so to see that it is bouncing back is great news and is testament to the hard work and support of the RCA, its volunteers and of course, the landowners, without whose help this project would not be possible."



Local charity on the search for dog - lovers in Buckinghamshire

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People trains clever dogs to alert deaf people to household sounds and danger signals such as the



Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is actively recruiting dog lovers who would like to take care of their adorable puppies and dogs in Buckinghamshire. Local Volunteer Puppy Trainers Peter and Sharon Shepperd, say:

"Volunteering for Hearing Dogs will help create life changing partnerships for deaf people and it will change your life too. It's certainly changed ours and we now can't imagine a life without these wonderful dogs. We are so privileged to be Hearing Dog Volunteers."

To find out more about volunteer opportunities, please contact the volunteering team: volunteer@ hearingdogs.org.uk, 01844 348122 or visit www.hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer

> Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire, HP27 9NS



Dog lovers wanted!

We are looking for local dog lovers to take care of our gorgeous puppies and dogs in their own home.

Do you have:

· A house with a secure garden?

- Plenty of time to spare?
- · A love of dogs?

If so, please get in touch to find out how you could help change lives, provide a dog with a loving home and meet lots of friendly, like-minded people along the way.



Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

T 01844 348122 E volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk www.hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer

> Registered charity in England and Wales no. 293358 and in Scotland no. SC040486



Take a walk in the Chilterns Countryside

From the chalk grassland of Coombe Hill, to the vast woodland estate at Bradenham, the National Trust cares for sites throughout the Chilterns. Visit the Chilterns Countryside website to discover a whole host of walks to download. Whether a gentle stroll or an invigorating hike, you'll find great views along the way.

National

Call 01494 755573 for details nationaltrust.org.uk/chilterns-countryside

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BEDROOMS



AFTERNOON TEA



DINING





SPECIAL OCCASIONS



MEETINGS & CONFERENCES



CHRISTMAS PARTIES



LEISURE FACILITIES



WEDDINGS & CELEBRATIONS









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