

## WALKS IN CHOLSEY & BRIGHTWELL

carefully. You are back on the outskirts of Wallingford and will follow this path until you reach Fir Tree Avenue.

7 Cross the road, then turn left across the zebra crossing and take the path to the left between two high brick walls. Follow this tarmac footpath for 500 yards, across three roads until you reach a dirt footpath. Some steps lead up to the right over the Saxon fortifications

**2 Walks in Cholsey** - one a gentle stroll around St. Mary's Church watching the trains and the other, slightly longer, to show a little more of the village.

### Walk 3 Distance 1.5 miles

#### A delight for all railway buffs

1 St. Mary's Church was an abbey church founded in 986 AD by Ethelred the Unready but little remains of the original building. Start by walking past the church on your right and then going ahead between the gravestones, where the asphalt path goes left, to the corner of the cemetery. As you approach the two yew trees, you will see, to the right, a large headstone and a plaque on the brick wall which marks the grave of Agatha Christie. After due reverence here, walk on to the stile and then turn right towards a farm track.

2 Turn left here but as you do so, glance to the right and you will see a beautiful old barn. Continue down the track towards the railway line and over the bridge, being sure to stop and wave to the trains as they go by. Carry on past Lees Farm and, as the farm track bears right, walk straight ahead to the hedge and stream.

3 Turn left and continue along the path with the stream on your right. You can still see St. Mary's church and the railway line to the left. After about 400 yards, the path turns right over a bridge but still continues with the stream on your right.

4 You eventually come to a long narrow tunnel under the railway. You might want to stop by the bridge over the stream for a moment and enjoy the sound of the crystal clear water before you make your way, very carefully, over the uneven cobbles through Bulls Hole tunnel.

here but we will continue ahead past the ditch and steep earthworks until we reach a main road. Turn right into Castle Street, walking past All Hallows Cemetery and the Castle Gardens on the left (both are worth a detour if you have time) a hundred yards before the traffic lights. Go across the lights and return to the Town Hall for the end of the walk.

This walk can be very muddy in parts.

At the next bridge, just before a small, square tunnel, turn left and follow the path over a small footbridge and then, after a few yards, through a kissing gate. Continue on this path and suddenly St. Mary's tower comes into view, with the main railway line on your left and the Bunk (the local Wallingford /Cholsey line) on your right. Walk along this path towards the church, crossing a footbridge and going through a kissing gate, until you reach the entrance to the newer part of the cemetery. Follow the path back to the car park.

### Walk 4 Distance 2.5 miles 1 hour+

1 Start from the car park at St. Mary's church but return to Church Road and cross over to the footpath to the left of the field opposite. Cross the field diagonally to the right towards the railway track (This is the Bunk run by local enthusiasts) and 2 short round metal towers just beyond. Go over the stile there and follow the path alongside the railway track to another stile, then on for a few yards before crossing a further stile and footbridge. Walk to the next footbridge.

2 Just before the footbridge, turn right through a white metal gate and cross the railway tracks very carefully. (The trains run only at weekends) Continue ahead down a wide grassy track with a stream on the left.

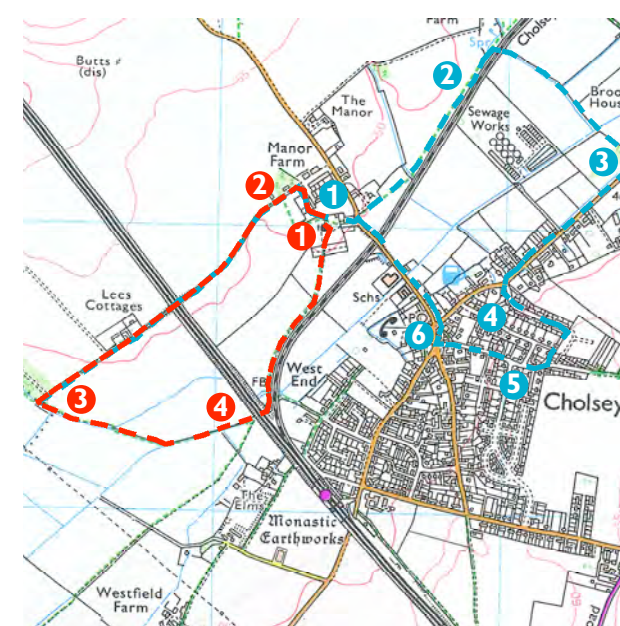
3 When you reach the main road, turn right and walk into Cholsey village and then take the first road on the left which is Caps Lane. Go down here for only a few yards

and turn right into Blacklands Farm. Keep going straight ahead until you reach a wide gateway with a 'Conservation Walks' board on the left hand gatepost

4 Walk on along a narrow concrete road which curves round to the right and soon reaches Larkmead Veterinary Centre.

5 When the concrete road ends, turn right onto a small asphalt road which becomes wider and is called Ilges Lane. Follow this into the village. You are now reaching the older part of Cholsey.

6 Just before you reach the shops, turn right down a footpath called Little Lane and follow this to a roundabout. Cross the road here and carry on walking ahead along Church Road. This will take you past the Day Centre and then the junior school before going over a very sharp humped backed bridge over the old railway before you return to St. Mary's Church.



© Crown Copyright and/or database right. All rights reserved. Licence number 100050118

This project is being part financed by South Oxfordshire District Council and South East England Development Agency.  
Produced by Wallingford Partnership Limited  
Photographs by kind permission of M.T. Phillips



# Walks in Cholsey & Brightwell

Four Walks –  
One round the village of Brightwell cum Sotwell and one from Wallingford to Brightwell. In Cholsey, the shorter walk takes in Agatha Christie's grave and the longer one goes beside the old railway line to Wallingford before returning back through Cholsey village.



## WALKS IN CHOLSEY & BRIGHTWELL

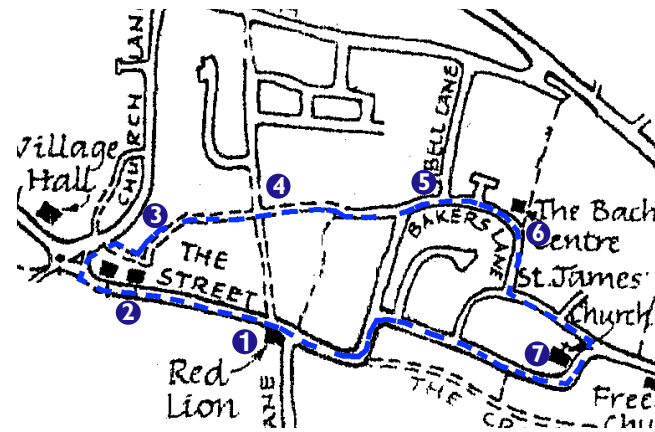
### Walk 1 Brightwell cum Sotwell 1 hour

This is a gentle stroll through a picturesque village with chocolate box cottages and a sense of history

**1** Start at the Red Lion which is a 16th century building, but not entirely original because its thatched roof was burnt down and had to be replaced. Opposite is the beautiful white thatched Moat Cottage, which is of 17th century origins. With your back to the Red Lion, turn left and walk along the Street to Vine House on the left, a most elegant cream building. Further down the Street on the right is the Haldane Stewart Memorial Hall, built to commemorate a much loved rector who died in 1879. It has now been converted into a private home, the money from its sale in 1974 going towards the conversion of the old school into the present village hall. We will have a look at this later. Continue past the Old Rectory and then note The Woodman with its single storey extension on the right hand side which, until 1988, was a bakery with a coal fired bread oven. Mr. Kew, the baker would give children 'tommy rolls' to eat while their mothers chose their bread.

**2** When you reach the War Memorial at West End, go to the left past the entrances to two houses and on through the gateway to St. Agatha's Church, some parts of which date back to 12th century. Walk past the church into the churchyard and cross towards the yew tree, noting the old cob wall on the right. If you look back and to the left you will get a glimpse of Brightwell Manor. This house with the church and the old rectory just north of the church were once surrounded by a moat which encircled the castle, which was probably erected in the time of King Stephen. From the yew tree, follow the path which turns right past some allotments and into the newer part of the cemetery and exits onto the Street.

**3** Turn right here and after 50 yards, looking up Nursery Lane to the left you will see another thatched cottage called Woodleys which is probably the oldest house in the village and is of cruck construction. Continue along the street and see the old rectory on the right, now converted to two houses, St. Cecilia's and Fairlight House and on the left the new village hall converted from the old school in 1975.



**4** Opposite the memorial, turn left into the Square and then take the footpath to the right of Swan Cottage which leads to Little Lane Cottage and Old Priory, the latter being of 16th or 17th century origins. Little Lane turns right and brings you into Church Lane with Old Priory cottage on the right hand corner. Turn right and walk down the road until you reach, on the left, the beautiful Abbot's House, with its delightful conifer garden.

**5** Turn left onto the footpath immediately past this house which then zigzags around some bends and goes past tennis courts and a playground on the left until you reach a cross roads where you will take the path that goes slightly to the left and ahead. Continue along here past the school playing fields on the left until you reach a small pond, known as Wellsprings on the right, and the pathway merges onto a gravel lane. As you go past Snail and Spring cottages on the left, you will see, across a field on the right, Sotwell House, where the village fete is held biannually. Continue ahead and bear left at the T junction and then, as the road turns left, go straight ahead into Bakers Lane past the Knowle and keep on this lane until you reach, on the left, Mount Vernon, home of the Bach Centre.

**6** Dr. Edward Bach was famous for his remedies made from essences of flowers and now used all over the world. Continue down the road to a T junction and turn left and follow this road until you reach, on the left, Sotwell Manor which dates from 15th century. Turn right here onto a footpath which leads past the church of St. James. The foundations of St. James date back to 12th century but it was almost completely rebuilt in 19th century. You might want to browse in the churchyard here but then continue on the path down to the Street

and turn right.

**7** This road can be very busy so please take care as you walk along admiring Dobsons, which was used by smugglers in the past and also has a ghost and also the Priory which, in 19th century was the village bakery, butchery and general store. As you reach the entrance to Sotwell House in front of you, turn left and follow the moat and the ducks round the corner and back to Moat Cottage and the Red Lion.

### Walk 2 to Brightwell cum Sotwell 4.5 miles 2 hours or more

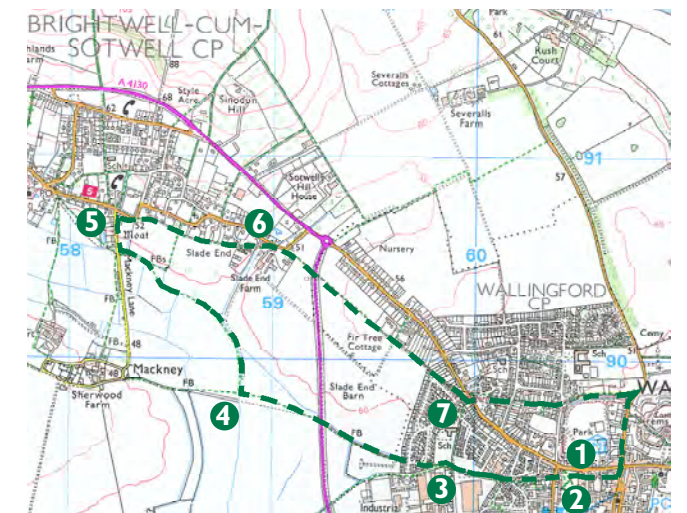
**1** Start at the Town Hall and cross St. Martins Street to the Old Post Office. Walk down Church Lane, which is to the left and continue across a narrow road, past some old cottages and the Coach and Horses pub on the left and onto the Kine Croft.

**2** Keep going in the same direction, across the Krinny, through the Saxon earthworks, over a footbridge and, after slaloming through metal barriers, cross the road into Croft Villas. Continue until you reach a T junction and cross over the road and turn right. After 50 yards, turn left onto a tarmac footpath between the houses and continue on this for about a third of a mile.

**3** On reaching a road (Fir Tree Avenue), turn right and after 75 yards after house number 62, turn left at the footpath sign. Take the narrow path to the right of the gates to the allotments and continue west past the allotments, over a footbridge and across the rugby pitches, following the electricity wires to a stile onto the bypass. Cross very carefully to a stile, footbridge and another stile into a field. At last, you are in the country. Cross the field to a footpath junction.

**4** Turn right over a metal stile signposted to Brightwell cum Sotwell. Follow the path, keeping the stream on your right until you eventually reach a small metal kissing gate. Go across the sports field, past the swings to the road and turn right. Walk along the road to the Red Lion Pub at the next T junction where you might need to take some refreshment.

**5** From the pub, cross to the telephone box and turn right and walk a few yards to the duck pond. Where the road bends left, cross over carefully and take the footpath ahead. Follow this path for nearly half a mile, past old walls and cottages on the left and open fields on the right. At a metal barrier, cross a lane and go past a delightful thatched cottage on the left and turn left at a brick wall to a gap onto the road.



**6** Turn right and, as the road bears left continue ahead between two cottages and towards the bypass. Go through the kissing gates and, again, cross the road very

PTO