

## The Chess Valley

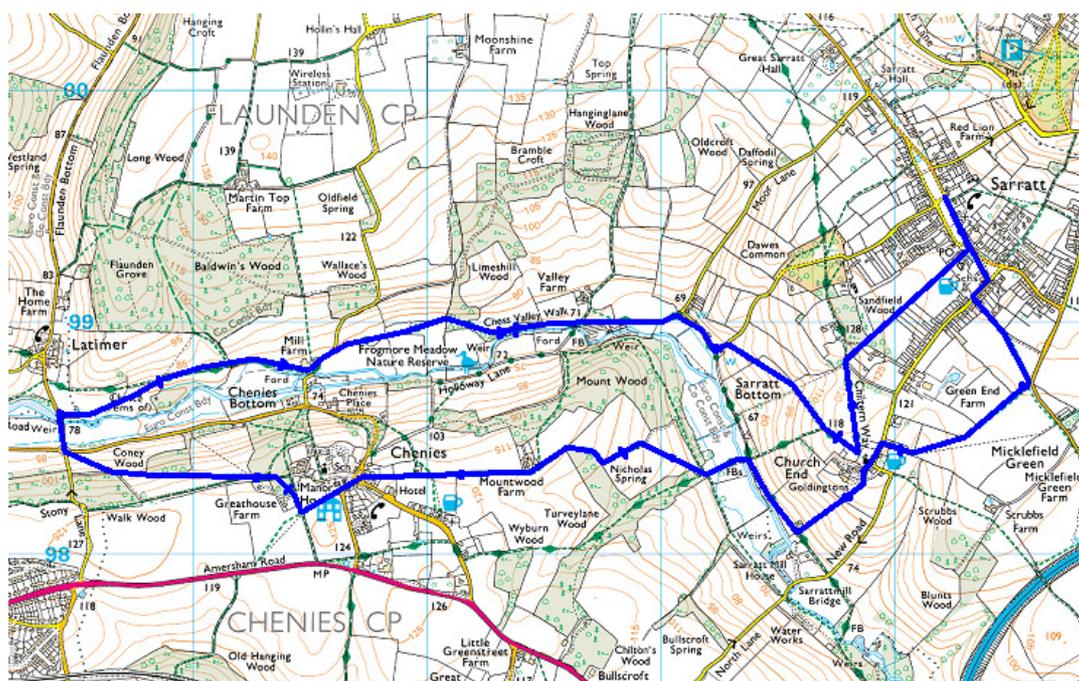
This lovely walk comes to us from Roger Housechild of Watford & Three Rivers Group.  
OS Map 172 – start point TQ042995.

Length – 7 miles; shorter option 5 ½ miles (see \* below for info).

The walk gives you views of the Chess Valley from both sides and for one stretch you walk along by the River Chess. The highlights include the 12th century church at Church End, Chenies Manor (15th century) and Village, a nature reserve and water cress beds. If you wish, a short detour takes you into the attractive village of Latimer with its 17th and 18th century cottages (see + below).

Start at Sarratt near The Boot PH – cars can be parked on or near the short road that crosses The Green (Dawes Lane). Walk South on the Green past the village pond with its Information Board and pass The Cricketers PH. Right into Church Lane and after a short distance turn left at Adams Nursery on a footpath leading to a field. The path starts next to the fence but in a little while it cuts across to a stile in the far corner. Turn right on to the road and then immediately right into a field keeping the hedge on your right. After ¼ mile the path bears right and then through a small wooded area into the car park of The Cock Inn at Church End.

Turn left crossing the road as soon as possible and follow the wall of the churchyard. One of the graves near to the footpath is that of Tommy Sopwith, the well known 1930s aviation pioneer and yachtsman. By the end of the wall, there is a footpath that drops down into the Chess Valley. Turn right at the bottom on to the Chess Valley Walk. Turn left at a footpaths 'crossroads' on to the Chilterns Way.



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Cross the River Chess to another 'crossroads'. Go straight on but within 20 yards turn right through a gate and head off at 45° across a field. The footpath then meets a fence and bears left alongside it into the corner. (The beaten down grass shows that many people go straight to the corner.) The path turns right (at Nicholas Spring) and follows the edge of a wood bending left and passing Mountswood Farm. Take the private road into Chenies. Cross the road on to the green and bear a little left towards the bus shelter and road beyond. (Do not take the unmade road towards the church.) After some 30 yards the road turns left but you go straight on an unmade road that passes in front of Chenies Manor. Turn right at the next footpath junction and then, by a board showing Platts Cottage, bear left and go over a stile into some woods. After a few more yards, go over a stile and turn left on to a track.\*

Immediately as you come out of the woods, turn right and go through the gate ahead of you. Then bear left heading gradually downwards and towards Coney Wood. Looking almost straight ahead in the distance, you can see the village of Latimer and Latimer House (19th century, on the site of an Elizabethan house).

The path comes out at a crossroads. Cross the road and follow the road signposted Flaunden and Latimer, crossing the River Chess. Turn right on the next footpath<sup>+</sup> which then merges with the Chess Valley Walk. Follow the this Walk through Mill Farm\*, pass Frogmore Meadow Nature Reserve on your right, and pass a ford where there are water cress beds. The footpath comes out at a right angle bend on a lane. Turn right along it and follow round another right angle bend (to the left). After a few yard take the footpath on the right. The path climbs at an angle up the valley side across three fields. In the last field the hedgerow is immediately on your right. In the corner of the field turn left, almost doubling back on yourself along the Chiltern Way. Exit at the field corner and cross the roadway (noting the ornamental metal 'owl' gate) on to a footpath initially through some woods, then fields. When the footpath comes out on The Green in Sarratt turn left back to the start point.

Both The Boot and Cricketers serve good lunchtime food, as well as drinks.

\* Shorter option: At this point do not turn left but go over the opposite stile on and follow the path downhill. At the bottom cross the road into the minor road opposite to cross the River Chess. Go past Mill Farm and turn right on to the Chess Valley Walk. Rejoin main walk at \*.

+ Detour into Latimer: Stay on the road to visit the village and then return and turn left on to the Chess Valley Walk.