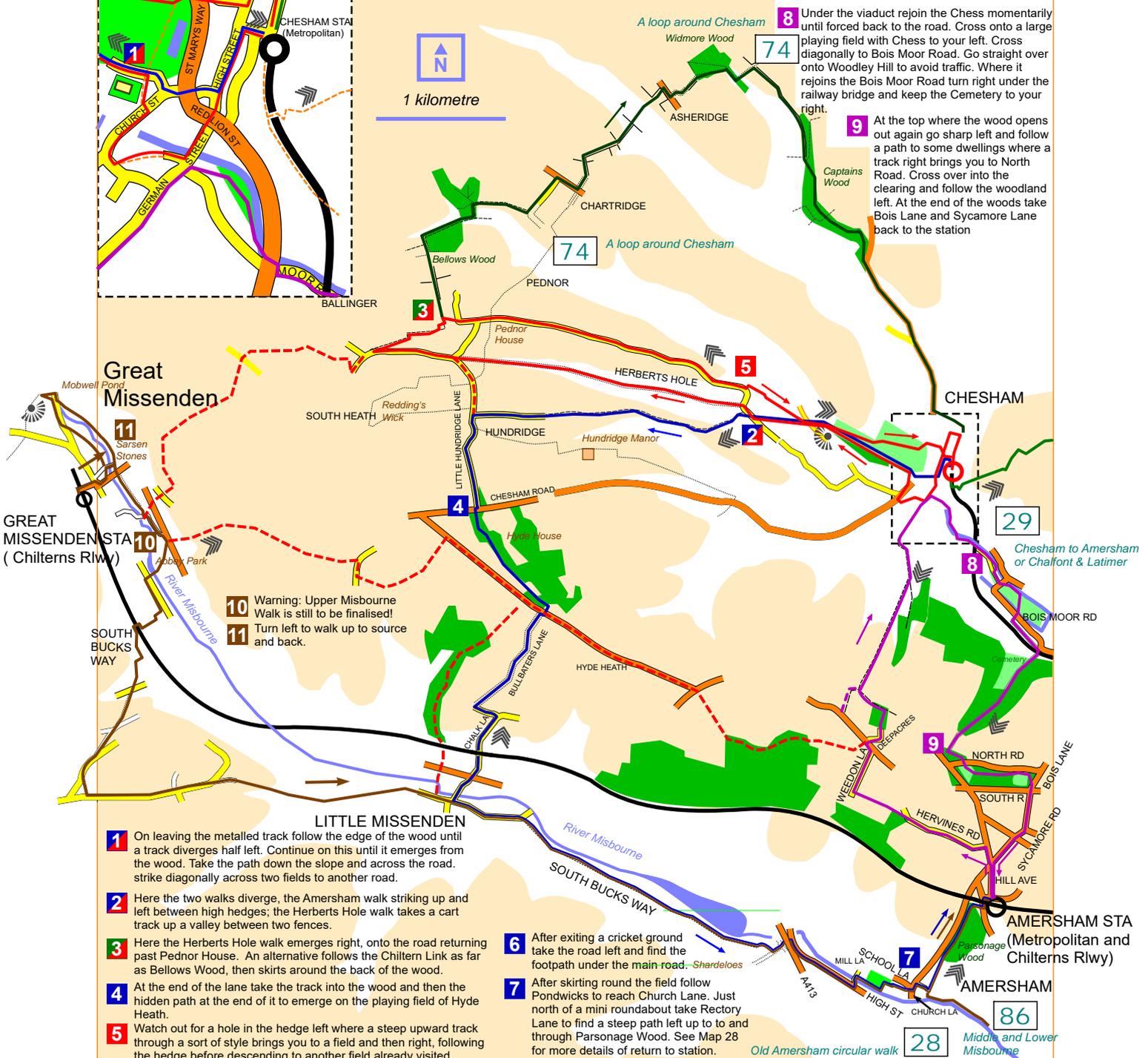


See page 29 for walks east of Chesham

# Chesham walks west



**10** Warning: Upper Misbourne Walk is still to be finalised!  
**11** Turn left to walk up to source and back.

- 1** On leaving the metalled track follow the edge of the wood until a track diverges half left. Continue on this until it emerges from the wood. Take the path down the slope and across the road. strike diagonally across two fields to another road.
- 2** Here the two walks diverge, the Amersham walk striking up and left between high hedges; the Herberts Hole walk takes a cart track up a valley between two fences.
- 3** Here the Herberts Hole walk emerges right, onto the road returning past Pednor House. An alternative follows the Chiltern Link as far as Bellows Wood, then skirts around the back of the wood.
- 4** At the end of the lane take the track into the wood and then the hidden path at the end of it to emerge on the playing field of Hyde Heath.
- 5** Watch out for a hole in the hedge left where a steep upward track through a sort of style brings you to a field and then right, following the hedge before descending to another field already visited.

- 6** After exiting a cricket ground take the road left and find the footpath under the main road - *Shardeloes*
- 7** After skirting round the field follow Pondwicks to reach Church Lane. Just north of a mini roundabout take Rectory Lane to find a steep path left up to to and through Parsonage Wood. See Map 28 for more details of return to station.

KEY	
	Busy road
	Quiet road
	Farm track
	Bridle way
	Footpath
	boundary fence/wall/hedge
	Brook
	Railway
	Woodland
	145 m contour
	Upper Misbourne walk 13 km
	Herberts Hole walk 10.9 km
	Chesham to Amersham walk 13.7 km
	Chesham Amersham circ walk 9.4 km
	Gradient pointing up
	Connecting walk
	Direction of walk

## walk notes

### **Chesham Walks West**

*All that is really needed is the OS map. There are so many rights of way. This map records some favourites. Some of the information is taken from a series of leaflets available from: [www.chesham.gov.uk/walks](http://www.chesham.gov.uk/walks)*

### **Great Hundridge Manor**

Many of the place names on these walks derive from Saxon origins. Hundridge comes from 'Hunda's Ridge' and is one of the ancient hamlets of Chesham. The manor was home to the de Broc family from the 12th century. They were a large and powerful family and were involved in the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Beckett. The current house dates from the 17th century and is Grade II+ listed. Attached to it is a 13th century former chapel which was dedicated to Edmund the Martyr. It was known as a 'Chapel of Ease' which is for people who could not travel to the local parish church.

### **Reddings Wick**

A well-preserved and impressive earthworks of a 12th century manorial settlement with inner and outer moats. The main use for moats was not defence but to store water in dry areas or even for a display of wealth. This manor to belong to the nearby Missenden Abbey.

### **Pednor House**

Built in the 17th century as a farm house, it is timber-framed with 18th century casing and 20th century enlargement. In 1933 it suffered extensive fire damage and it remained unused in 1940 when the Royal Free Hospital in London took it over as a maternity hospital. The dovecote in the centre of the courtyard is Grade II listed.

### **Little Pednor Farm**

Little Pednor Farm is the site of a medieval moated farmstead known from 12th to 17th century records. Owned by Missenden Abbey and later by the Weedon family. They were a very old local landowning family. In 1624 Thomas Weedon paid the sum of £350 to erect four almshouses for four good and godly women of the parish. To maintain the properties a hundred acres of land was purchased in Hundridge.

The area around Pednor is a good spot to see Red Kites.

### **Hyde House**

Hyde House is a Grade II listed early 18th-

century country house. It had previously belonged to Woburn Abbey and was known as Chesham Woburn Manor. Hyde House was owned by the politician and barrister Robert Plumer Ward in the early 19th century. Ward retired to Hyde House in 1823 to write his novel *Tremaine, or The Man of Refinement*. The writer and scholar Isaac D'Israeli rented the house during the autumn of 1825, and his son, Benjamin Disraeli, later claimed that he wrote his novel *Vivian Grey* at the house before his 21st birthday in December 1825. Pevsner describes Hyde House as having the "proportions of a late c17 or c18 house hidden behind the stucco and sashes of the early c19.

### **Missenden Abbey**

William de Missenden founded Missenden Abbey in 1133. He endowed it generously with lands, woods and tithes to provide. Others benefactors followed and the Abbey became wealthy, with extensive properties around Missenden and as far afield as Huntingdonshire, Hampshire and the Suffolk coast. The Abbey was dissolved in 1538 and the chapel deliberately smashed. Elizabeth 1 gave it to her favourite, Robert Dudley. He sold it to William Fleetwood whose family lived there for 200 years, modifying the building and demolishing a substantial part of it. It is now part of Buckinghamshire New University.

### **The Misbourne**

Misbourne is a chalk stream. Chalk streams are a globally rare habitat, home to a wide range of wildlife, including some of the UK's most threatened species.

The Misbourne is one of eight chalk streams that rise in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It flows for 17 miles (27km) from Mobwell Pond through the Missendens, Amersham, the Chalfonts and Denham to its confluence with the River Colne. Chalk streams are fed from water held within the underlying chalk rock and are characteristically shallow, clear and fast flowing. They have intermittently flowing upper reaches, known as *winterbournes* that flow after winter rains and dry up during summer. Unlike the Chess, do not expect a healthy flowing stream. The Misbourne is unusual in that along with its winterbourne, it also has an intermittently

flowing middle section. A change in the underlying geology south of Amersham causes the river to become 'perched' above the water table and as a consequence, the river loses water through its porous river bed. Flow along this section is particularly vulnerable to drought, abstraction and to disturbance of the river bed. See also [http://www.bucksgeology.org.uk/pdf\\_files/Walk5\\_Great\\_Missenden.pdf](http://www.bucksgeology.org.uk/pdf_files/Walk5_Great_Missenden.pdf)

### **Great Missenden**

Great Missenden lay on a major route between the Midlands and London. Several coaching inns, particularly the Red Lion and The George (which still exists), provided for travellers and their horses. The first railway line in the area was, however, routed alongside the Grand Union Canal to the east. Once the coaches stopped running, Great Missenden declined in importance and prosperity, becoming an agricultural village. Following the arrival of the Metropolitan Railway in 1892, Great Missenden became a commuter village for London with writers, entertainers and even Prime Ministers among the passengers. Great Missenden railway station is now on the Chiltern Railways line and offers fast services running into London Marylebone. Roald Dahl was a well-known resident and his museum is here.

Nobody knows when the first church was built at Great Missenden. There appears to have been one on or near the site of the present church of St Peter and St Paul when the Abbey was founded in 1133. Of the earlier buildings nothing is known, the present one being largely from the 14th and 15th centuries with 19th century extensions and restorations. Watching over the approach to the church is the bold and strangely asymmetric tower. Sometime after the Reformation in the 16th century this tower was extended southwards, resulting in a wall nearly 14 feet thick, and a new belfry was built. Browne Willis states that the tower was altered to accommodate five large bells formerly in the abbey at the foot of the hill. Today, there are eight large bells hung for full circle ringing and one very small 'Sanctus' bell set in a small window high up on the west face of the tower. Close inspection will reveal that much of the tower is made up from recycled material, including windows,

probably from the demolished medieval structures of the abbey.

### **Shardeloes**

Shardeloes is a large Palladian style 18th century country house. A previous manor house on the site was demolished and the present building constructed between 1758 and 1766 for William Drake, the Member of Parliament for Amersham. The architect and builder was Stiff Leadbetter; designs for interior decorations were provided by Robert Adam from 1761. Built of stuccoed brick, the mansion is nine bays long by seven bays deep. It was constructed with the piano nobile on the ground floor and a mezzanine above. The north facade has a large portico of Corinthian columns. The terminating windows of the piano nobile are pedimented and recessed into shallow niches, as are the end bays of the east front. The original plans of the house by Leadbetter show a design closer in appearance to Holkham Hall, with square end towers. Adam cancelled this idea, but embellished the front with the portico. The interior of the house has fine ornamental plaster work by Joseph Rose. The entrance hall by Adam has fluted Doric pilasters and massive doorcases in the north and south walls. The dining room has stucco panels and an oval panel in the ceiling. The library was designed by James Wyatt in a classical style and has painted panels by Biagio Rebecca. Humphry Repton was commissioned to lay out the grounds in the classical English landscape fashion, in the lee of the hill upon which the mansion stands. Repton dammed the River Misbourne to form the lake which we pass.

### **Chesham Bois**

The earliest references to Chesham Bois are c 1200. By that time Chesham had been divided into three manors, one of which was Chesham Bois, held by William de Bosco, or Boles, or William de Bois. In 1213, a legal document recorded the right of himself and his successors to appoint a chaplain for his chapel, outside the bishop's jurisdiction. That chapel is still in use today as the chancel of St Leonard's Church and William's house must have been nearby. Why the church is dedicated to St Leonard, (the patron saint of prisoners-of-war and women in labour), is unknown.