

**The Parish of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards** in Buckinghamshire can be found to the north-west of Chesham. It stretches almost 4½ miles and at its highest point rises to over 230m within the Chiltern Hills, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is evidence of prehistoric settlements and the area is mentioned in 8th century records. The four 'hilltop villages' that make up the present-day Parish (Buckland Common, Cholesbury, Hawridge and St Leonards) evolved during Saxon times from upland pastureland of so-called 'strip-parishes' associated with villages downhill in the Aylesbury Vale, subsequently becoming detached hamlets and then villages. Together with the outlying areas of Braziers End, Heath End, Lanes End and The Vale they have constituted the civil parish since 1934.

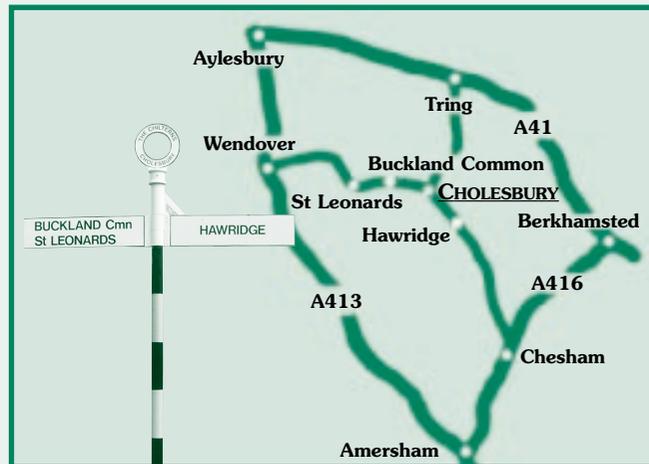
**Buckland Common** - (OE Bocland meaning 'a land held by charter') was previously part of the Parish of Buckland.

**Cholesbury** - (OE Ceolweald's Burg indicating a remote plateau camp) was a separate parish prior to 1934. Historically it is connected with Drayton Beauchamp (pronounced 'Beecham'). The manorial rights at Cholesbury, giving it some autonomy, go back to at least the late 1600s.

**Hawridge** - (OE Haurige meaning 'Hawk ridge') also had its own parish meetings. Prior to the 1600s the village had been part of the Parish of Marsworth but separated by a narrow strip which is in Hertfordshire.

**St Leonards** - (derived from a 12<sup>th</sup> Century chapel of that name) now incorporates lands historically part of the manor of Dundryge. Prior to 1934 it was associated with Aston Clinton.

## DIRECTIONS



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards:-

Local History Group

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Parish Map Artists

The Walking Team and Field Name Advisers

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# Jubilee Walks in the Hilltop Villages



# 1

CHOLESBURY HILLFORT  
& BUCKLAND COMMON



Time 2 to 2½ hrs  
Distance 3 miles or 5 km

# Jubilee Walks in the Hilltop Villages

*This is the first in a series of walks produced to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II in 2002 and the 40th Anniversary of the Local History Group. These walks aim to illustrate the local and natural history of the Parish.*

**The Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group** was founded in the 1960s to stimulate interest in the Hilltop Villages. A regular feature has been the talks by guest speakers, be they acknowledged experts or enthusiastic amateurs, and the emphasis is naturally on subjects local to the Chilterns. The meetings take place on the first Friday of each month from October to May. Outings to places of historical interest are arranged each summer. The group also carries out research on the history of the Hilltop Villages and maintains an archive of items of historical interest. New members and visitors are always welcome.

**Cholesbury Hillfort** (locally known as the Camp) dates from the late Iron Age between 400 and 100BC. It has been the site of intermittent occupation. The site can be visited all year round. Interpretation Boards provide visitors with additional information about the site.

It consists of a double rampart (or vellum), enclosing a large ditch and originally supported by wooden posts.



Of the present four main entrances to the site, only one (to the north-west) is thought to be original and would have been heavily fortified with a palisade of staves. A vast area of oak or elm woodland would have been cleared (estimated from other sources to be between 10–15 thousand trees) to supply the wood.

The earthen ramparts are now crowned by a belt of magnificent beech trees which encircle all but the southern quarter, where the banks and ditches have been replaced by houses and gardens.

Excavations in the 1930s uncovered well-preserved prehistoric remains including hearths indicating iron smelting, a clay-lined oven and associated fragments of pottery from the Mid to Late Iron Age. There is unconfirmed evidence to indicate Saxon occupation.

**The Full Moon** was formerly known as The Half Moon and The Moon. It dates from around 1700. At one time the villages had 14 pubs - now only four remain. On December 5th 1906 the licensee Geo. Winkworth was fined £2.0s. or 1 month's imprisonment for permitting drunkenness.



**Cholesbury Village Hall** was built in 1895 on land given to the people of Cholesbury by Frederick Butcher of Tring. Initially it was just one room, used in the early days by the men of the parish.



**Cholesbury Windmill** was originally built as a smock-mill in 1863. It was rebuilt as a tower-mill in 1884. It has associations with artists and writers including J M Barrie and D H Lawrence who are known to have visited. It is now a private house.



**Horseshoe Cottages** were built by the Rothschilds of Tring Park in 1915 for estate workers. These replaced an earlier row of cottages which fronted on to the road, accounting for their unusually long front gardens.

**Little Twye Cottages** were also built by the Rothschilds between 1901 and 1913. Notice they are numbered from the far end as the postmen used to deliver first there when coming up from Tring.

**Church of St Laurence** the 900 year old church at Cholesbury has an 18th Century bell turret and saddleback roof, and an early English south doorway, where medieval weddings were performed in full view of passers-by.



## How to contact us -

Please visit our website at [www.cholesbury.com](http://www.cholesbury.com) or contact us on 01494 758890 for further information.