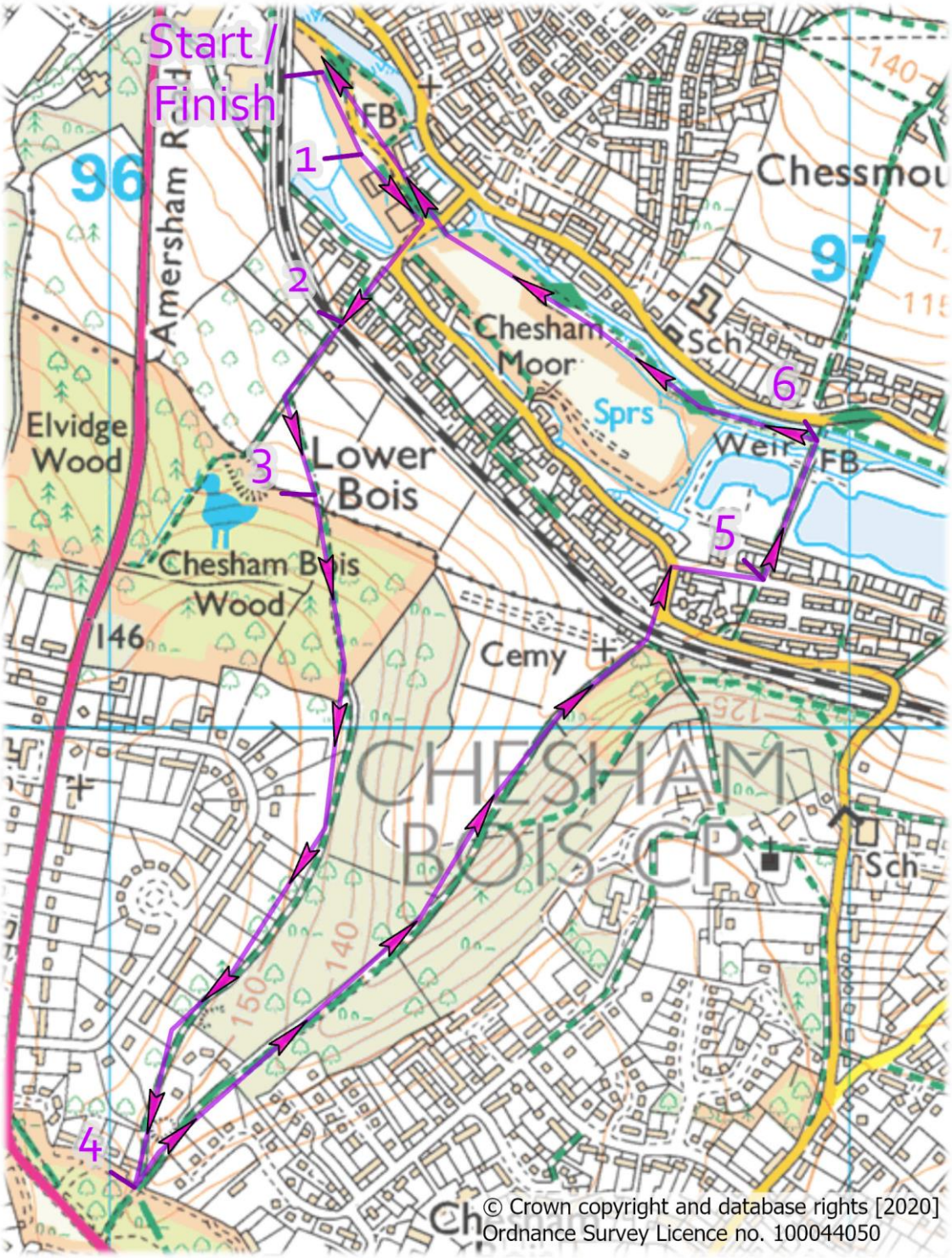
Chesham Riverside and Woodland Walk

By Andrew Clark, Chiltern Society and Chesham Walkers are Welcome

Summary

The Chilterns are well known for their beech woodlands. This gentle stile free walk goes through some of the best of them enabling you to appreciate their beauty and take in some lovely views over the Chess Valley. Along the route there are interesting historical sites and a wide range of flora and fauna.



Length: 2.5 miles

Terrain:	Easy walking on good paths some of which can be muddy after rain. One moderate climb up through the woods. Two gates
Start & finish:	Chesham Moor car Park, Moor Rd, Chesham HP5 1SE. GR SP963008
Food & drink:	At Waypoint 6 turn right on to the small section of Moor Road, instead of heading past the tennis courts. Turn right on to Waterside and after a few minutes find The Pheasant pub on the right. Wide range of drinks to buy; lovely riverside garden and you can take your own food. Also Chesham Moor sports centre has a cafe serving hot and cold drinks and snacks.
Maps:	OS Explorer Maps 172 + 181 and Chiltern Society Maps 6 + 17
Parking:	As above
Local transport:	There are various bus services to Chesham from Aylesbury, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, High Wycombe and Uxbridge. Chesham is also served by direct trains from Baker Street on the Metropolitan Line

Route

Leave the car park towards the Chesham Moor sports centre.

Waypoint 1 – Walk past the Chesham Moor sports centre and tennis courts, turn right along Bois Moor Road and, at the bend, stay ahead up Hodds Wood Road.

Waypoint 2 - Go under the railway bridge, continue uphill and go through a gate on the left. Follow the path up through the field to the next gate at the top left-hand corner.

Waypoint 3 – Continue straight ahead up through the wood and follow the path for over ½ mile to drop down to a lane.

Waypoint 4 – Turn left downhill, bear right between concrete posts and follow the lovely woodland path all the way down and under the railway bridge to a road. Cross, walk along the pavement, turn right into Cresswell Road and proceed as far as the post box on the right.

Waypoint 5 – Cross the road to the footpath directly opposite and follow the path between the lakes to a waterfall and the remains of Canon's Mill.

Waypoint 6 – Take the path to the left of the waterfall, cross a wooden bridge, follow the river and go over the bridge to a road (Bois Moor Road). Cross it past the tennis courts to return to the car park and the end of the walk.

Points of Interest

Waypoint 1 - Chesham Moor swimming pool was erected in 1912. Upgrades were carried out in 1933 and 1964 and 2024-25. It is spring fed.

Waymark 2 - The Metropolitan Railway came to Chesham on May 15th 1889. It was originally planned to extend the route to Tring. In the 1920s and '30s it was used to carry freight from Chesham including wooden goods and watercress.

Waymark 3 - The gate into the woods is the place where Thomas Harding, Chesham's martyr, was arrested in 1532. He was a nonconformist, the last of the local Lollards and was burnt at the stake. Hodds Wood and Great Bois Wood are ancient deciduous woodlands owned by the Woodland Trust. In the past, strip woodland, roundalls or clumps known as beech hangers were either purposely planted or incorporated into the landscape and remain today on the hillsides in many parts of the Chiltern Hills.

Waymark 6 - The lakes are old worked out gravel pits. Canon's Mill got its name because it was owned by the canons of Missenden Abbey. Last worked in 1937 and demolished around 1960. The River Chess is a chalk stream. These are rare habitats only found in southern England, northern France and New Zealand. The Chess has some of the purest water of any such streams as it emanates from the many groundwater springs along the chalk outcrop in the slopes of the 'dry valleys' that run down into Chesham. The Chess is also unusual in that it takes its name from the town.