

It is a steep walk up Baulk Lane, but well worth the effort. From this wide grassy track, there are views up and down the valley and to the village below. Notice as you climb that the soil becomes thinner and the chalk and flints more visible.

The Chalk Hills Walk

Chalk has influenced many aspects of rural life around Lilley, and explains the distinctive rounded shape of the hills. In a field behind Church Farm is an old pit from where chalk was dug up and burned to produce lime. This was used for mortar, and for spreading on fields as a fertiliser.

Lilley Hoo was once a sheep grazed common, but in 1944 much of it was ploughed up due to wartime food shortages. The only area of downland that remains is on Telegraph Hill, where you may still see Cowslip (pictured on the front cover) and Common spotted orchid. Other chalk loving plants can be found away from the nature reserve; look out for Devil's-bit scabious and for Travellers joy. This wild clematis adorns hedgerows throughout the Chilterns, and is also known as Old-man's beard due to its fluffy winter seed-heads. On top of Lilley Hoo, a thin cap of clay is present, and where arable crops are now farmed, heather and gorse used to grow.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a popular race course on top of Lilley Hoo. George IV is said to have attended meetings there along with nobility from far and wide.

The hills around Lilley are part of the chalk ridge that runs across Southern England, linked by Britain's oldest 'road', the Icknield Way. First used in neolithic times by flint traders, the 195 km (120 mile) Icknield Way Path can still be enjoyed by walkers today.

This is one of a **series of walks** through the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It follows **rights of way** most of which are waymarked as follows:



Footpath (walkers only)



Bridleway (horse riders, cyclists and walkers)



Byway (open to all traffic)



Please be considerate in the countryside – keep to footpaths, especially through crops, and leave farm gates as you find them.

The Lilley Arms has an a la carte menu, with food served at lunchtimes and all evenings except Sunday. There is accommodation above the pub, and a garden with animals for children to enjoy. Cyclists and horse riders welcome (hitching rail provided).



The **Countryside Management Service** works with communities in Hertfordshire and north London to care for and enjoy the countryside.

For more information contact us at:

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Supported by the Chilterns Conference

Chilterns Country

Pub Walk: The Chalk Hills Walk, Lilley



Walk Description:

Short route 3.2 km (2m) up and down hill, no stiles
Long route 8 km (5m) rolling countryside, 2 stiles

Start and Finish:

The Lilley Arms, Lilley

Walking time:

Short route 45 mins to 1 hour
Long route 2 to 2½ hours

How to get to Lilley

The 101 bus runs between Stevenage and Luton via Lilley on Mondays to Saturdays. On Sundays the 97 and 99 between Letchworth, Baldock and Luton can be used. For details phone the Hertfordshire Traveline on 0845 7244344. If you need to come by car, please park in the Lilley Arms car park (not Cassel Hall which is used for functions).

Notes on the walk



The Lilley Arms. Turn right out of the pub and then left into East Street. After 200 metres take the bridleway on the right.



It is possible to walk from here to Telegraph Hill, but paths shown on the map may be ploughed at certain times of the year.



The kissing gates along this section of the walk were put in by CMS volunteers, to replace stiles and make the walk easier for the less agile.



Turn right here for a detour (of 1.3km) to Telegraph Hill, where there are fine views across Bedfordshire, and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust manage a chalk grassland reserve.



Take care on this stretch, where you have to walk on a grass verge by the road for 0.5 km. You are now on the route of the Icknield Way Path.



To the west is Galley Hill where Early Bronze Age graves (circa 2500 to 1500 BC) have been excavated.



In the summer months the byway along Wardswood Lane can be used as a short cut, but parts may be muddy in winter.

