



Walk No. 5 – Circular via Clifford Street to Hams Barton and Waddon

This is walk number five in a series of historical walks around Chudleigh and the surrounding countryside compiled by Alan Brunton for the Chudleigh History Group. Each walk commences from the Town Hall. The historical content of the walks is mainly brief, but further information can be found on our website and in The Chudleigh Book, available in the library.

Walk 5: Distance approx. 3 miles. Time 1.5–2 hours. Quiet roads and footpaths. Easy walking.

From the Town Hall cross the road into Clifford Street, formerly named Mill Lane. Many of these cottages were occupied by mill workers at the Chudleigh Mill at the bottom of the street. Pass the old Methodist Chapel, in the latter half of the 20th century a meeting place for the Plymouth Brethren, and walk down to the junction with Parkway. This is an area of particular interest in the history of Chudleigh. Hereabouts, from the 14th to early 17th centuries, was the hamlet of Wych. Wychalse was a prominent family name during this period, thought to be named after the Wych elm trees which were prolific in Chudleigh many years ago, especially around the churchyard, all lost now due to the Dutch elm disease. In the censuses of 1851–61–71 Wych features, but ten years later there are no records. Subsequently the hamlet was owned by John Williams, a generous Chudleigh benefactor. Upon his death in 1869 Ellis Gilman purchased it, having also acquired the advowson (the right to appoint a vicar). The name Wych seems to have disappeared and between 1875–1905 Gilman built the large houses in Parkway. One of these houses, Hurstbourne, was bought around 1930 by Stephen Partridge, owner of the Chudleigh Electric Light Company, who used his home address as his office and converted the ground floor into a showroom.

Just a few yards into Parkway down an alleyway is a row of modernised cottages, now numbered 6–11 Parkway, but previously known as Honeywill's Row until the 1850s and Bromley Row in the 1861 census, later Saunders Cottages. Before modernisation they were some of the oldest dwellings in the parish having housed mill workers from the local works. At the beginning of the 20th century five of the six cottages were owned by the Shears and Ponsford families. Two sons of the former were Desmond and Graham Shears who both became prominent business and tradesmen in the town, one as a plumber, the other as an electrician. Sadly both passed away quite recently.

Continuing down Clifford Street, an alleyway to the right brings you into Glebelands. The large Glebe House was the vicarage from the early seventeen-hundreds until 1948. The main entrance was a driveway from Parkway passing Hurst View where,



during the Second World War, lived Major General Robert Elliott Urquhart, Commander of the 1st Airborne Division, who was involved in the planning and undertaking of Operation Market Garden in September 1944, also referred to as The Battle of Arnhem. Incidentally, a place name with Glebe included has, or had, connections to the church. Now return to Clifford Street and turn right.

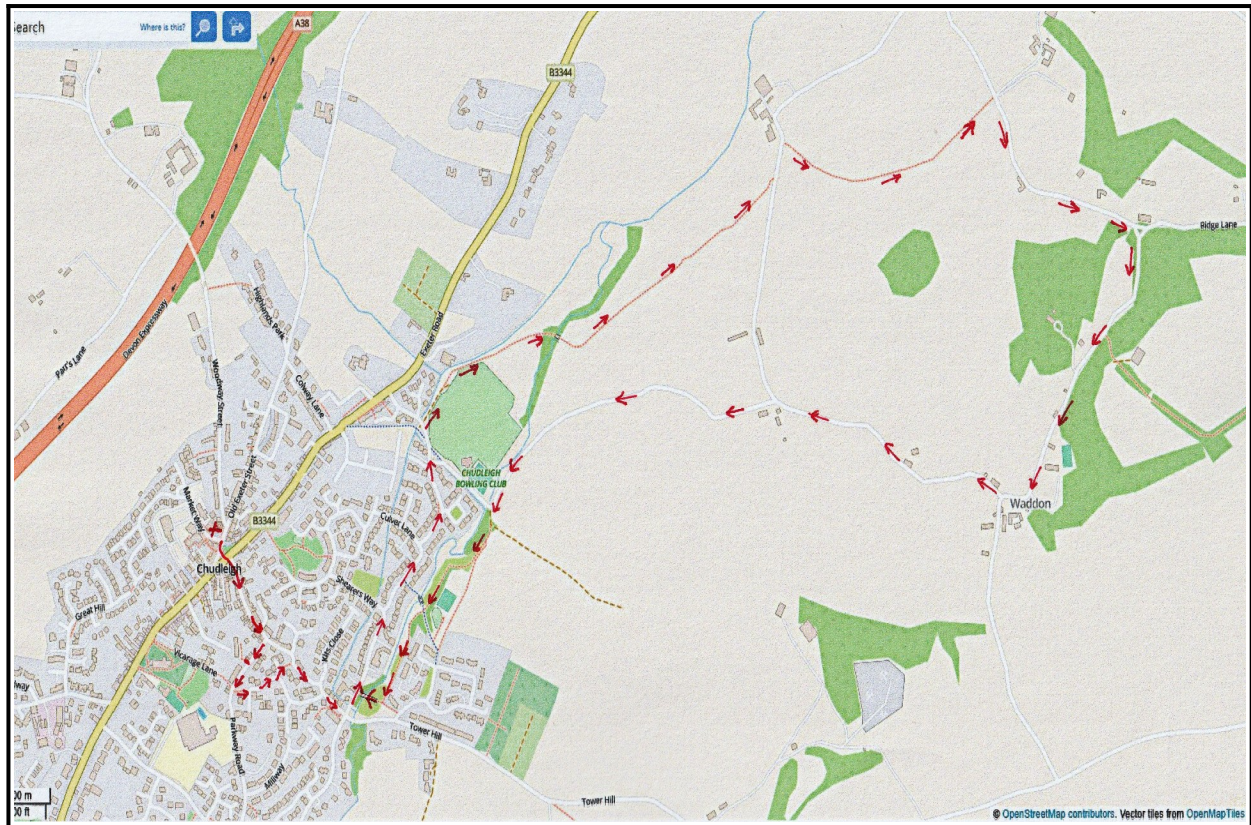
Kits Close, built in the 1960s, used to be the drying fields for the Chudleigh mills woollen trade and opposite to the entrance to the Close in the stone wall is the letter C, as detailed in Walk No. 1.

Turn left into Millstream Meadow and just after the bus shelter look over your left shoulder to the backshot waterwheel, 20 feet in diameter. Follow Millstream Meadow to the Sports Centre and take the footpath across the top of the sports ground with the leat to your left which runs behind the houses of Cricketfield Close and Chapel Court. Cross the little footbridge over Kate Brook, follow the path through two fields to Hams Barton. Just before the property, and opposite a copse of horse chestnut trees, is a small gate to a footpath across two more fields. Take this path which brings you to a quiet road and opposite the driveways to three properties, including two Upcotts. Turn right and walk up to a road junction just above Amberley.

To your left is a long wooden building which used to be one of two chicken houses. The late Des Shears, a wonderful source of local history, told me that during the 1960s a terrific rainstorm resulted in water pouring down the roadside gullies here into one of the chicken houses drowning several birds. The road to the left is Ridge Lane and all the way up on the right can be seen how much quarrying was done here years ago. However, ignore Ridge Lane and turn right to Waddon, noting the old hamlet remains just before the converted barn (Ash Barn), Waddon Spring and Mill (remains of the wheel still are visible to the left of the building), Waddon Barton and Waddon Thatch Cottage.

Follow the road to the right past Waddon Thatch and uphill with stabling at the top. Descend to Brimley Corner and more stables; maintain left direction to the Bowling Club. On the way the road passes over the watercourse of a spring which rises above Waddon Spring and the old Waddon Mill and runs into the Kate Brook, a few yards before the Old Kate Bridge by the club. From here you can either take the road up and past Cricketfield Close and then to the town centre or follow the rugged path to the children's play areas and then up to Culver Gardens and the Town Hall.

Throughout the parish it is noticeable how many equine facilities there are. Farmers are finding it more profitable to rent or sell their fields for stabling and horse grazing than traditional farming. A sign of the times?



Route of Walk No.5 (map source: OpenStreetMap)