



## TILLINGBOURNE TRAILS

# Abinger

This heritage trail takes in the idyllic village of Abinger Hammer, situated in the heart of the Tillingbourne Valley. Explore the sites of the former mills and historic houses in and around the village, taking in the scenic fields and country roads which run through what was once a booming and thriving industrial landscape.

Length 3.5 km    Duration approx. 1.5-2 hours

Easy level of difficulty

START in the centre of **Abinger Hammer village** (RH5 6RX). There is a small village car park on the B2126 (**Felday Road**), next to the bridge, but otherwise parking is very limited (if no parking is available in Abinger, it may be best to park at Gomshall station and start the walk opposite **Old Hatch Farm**, adding 1km to the walk).

If starting from the centre of the village and Felday Road (facing the **Post Office and Tea Room**), turn left and walk along the **A25**, with the Tillingbourne on your left.

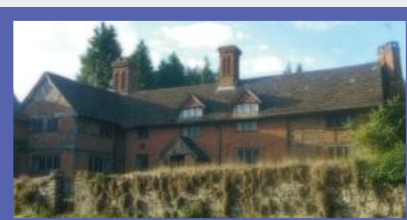


The forge at Abinger Hammer was likely situated on the extensive millpond where the 'Kingfisher' farm shop and watercress beds are today. The forge particularly flourished in the 16th century, and local tradition holds that guns were made there and used against the Spanish Armada. The Hammer Clock (in its present form) dates to 1909 and stands as a tribute to the village's ironworking tradition, featuring a carved figure of a blacksmith known as 'Jack the Hammer'.



Continue through the village, passing the **Hammer Clock** on your right and ponds on your left. Opposite **Old Hatch Farm**, turn left onto the marked bridleway No22.

Hatch Farm is a Tudor farmhouse likely on the site of a medieval manor house, and was known as Harms Hatch in the 13th century. It took the name Slarkes in the 18th century, named for its family of occupants.



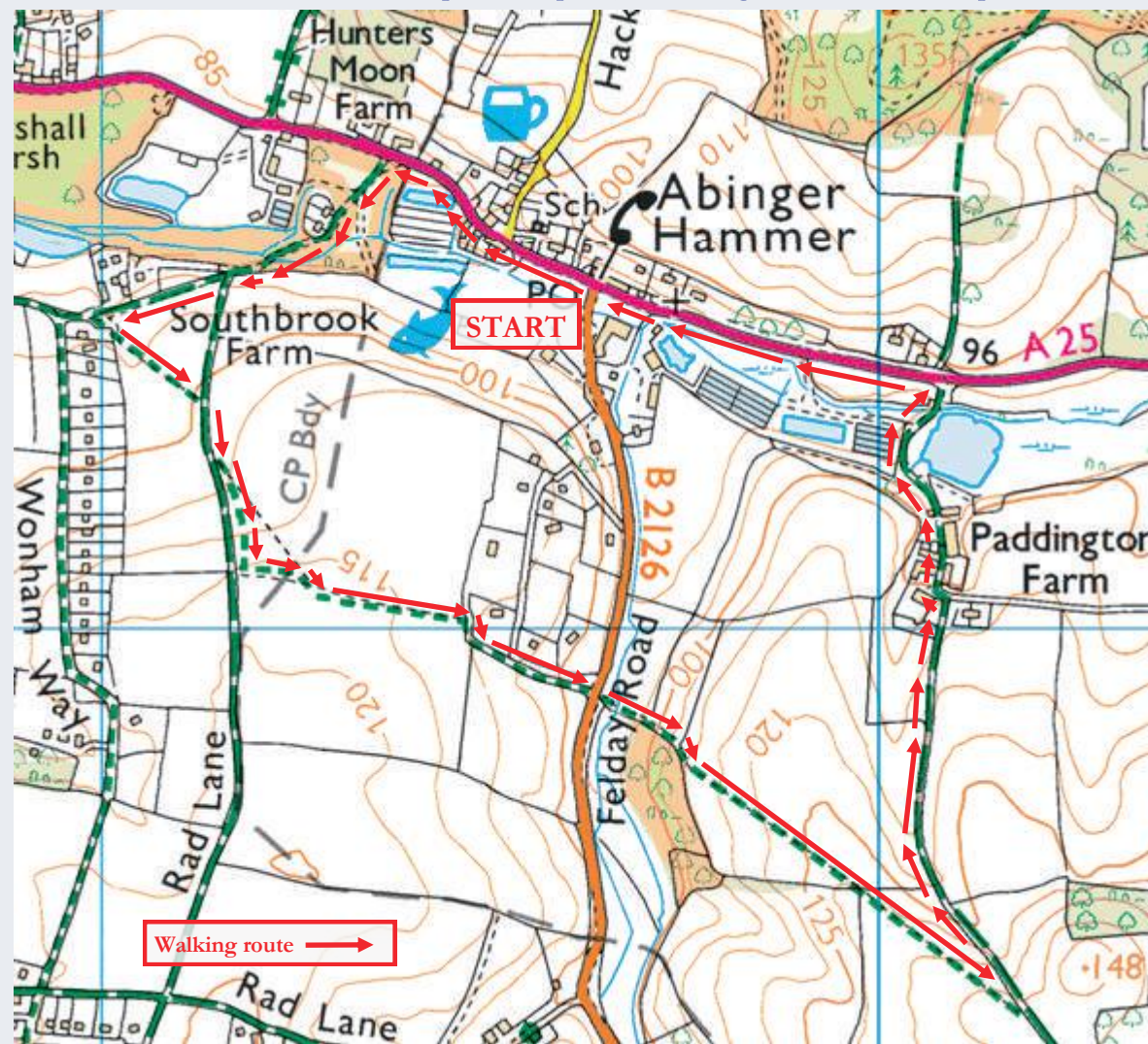
As you continue on the bridleway, you will pass two semi-detached houses on your right. Crossing the Tillingbourne you will come to a path junction just before a house gateway. Take the right-hand path, following the garden fence on your right.



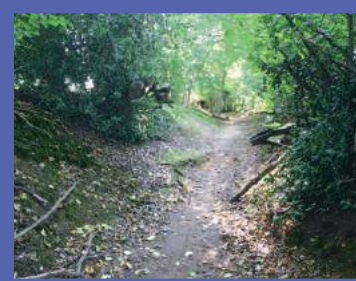
As the path goes up the hill past **Southbrook Farm**, continue along it to the top of the rise. A small path then doubles back on your left and traverses across a field, which you should follow.



For more details, download the printable pdf ([www.tillingbournetales.co.uk/places/trails](http://www.tillingbournetales.co.uk/places/trails))



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Cross the field and enter the woods on the other side. Turn immediately right and continue on the path.



Turn right and continue alongside the side of the field, running parallel to the woods. In about 100yds, take the unmarked path on the left, towards a large oak tree in the middle of the field. At the other end of the field, cross the stile and turn right.



After 50 yards you will see a stile on your left. As you cross over, you will come out of the woods and arrive in another field.

Continue on this path as it veers right, past the side of a house, and then left, carrying on until you reach Felday Road (**\*note the road is very busy\***). Cross directly over the road and climb the stile to the footpath opposite.



Continue along the path, crossing over the stream via the bridge, and then as it ascends upwards past **Oxmoor Copse** on your right. At the fence corner is another stile which you need to cross.

In the next field there is a clump of trees and hedge at the far right corner, at the field's top end. Follow the path towards it (this path may not be visible all year) and the gap between the fields and marker. Turn immediately left by the stile over the low fence into a triangular-shaped field.



Follow the path alongside the fence on your right until you reach the field's corner and T-junction with public bridleway signs. Turn left to go down the hill, enjoying the fabulous views of the North Downs.

At the bottom of the hill you will come to **Paddington Farm**. Go left and then right through the farmyard between the barns until you come to a tarmac road. As you carry on down to the road towards the A25, you will pass **Paddington Mill** on your left and millpond on your right.



When you reach the A25, turn left at the village sign, and take the footpath verge next to the road (**\*be careful along this narrow path\***). You will pass **Kingfisher Farm Shop** on the left and its watercress beds, before eventually



returning to Felday Road and the Start Point (refreshments suggested at Tea Rooms by Post Office).

Though there was likely a Domesday corn mill at Paddington, the present building dates to c. 1840 and was run by nearby Paddington Farm. By 1915, however, it was used as a stable and even later as a store for watercress containers, and is now converted to residential use.



## Wildlife of the Tillingbourne



## Crayfish

The white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) is a small bronze-coloured crustacean which has pale undersides on its claws.

As the only native freshwater crayfish to Britain, the white-clawed variety has been in decline since the introduction of the North American signal crayfish.

The crayfish inhabits shallow freshwater streams and hides underneath stones and rocks in small crevices where it forages for such food as invertebrates, carrion, water plants and dead organic matter.



The Surrey Wildlife Trust manages almost 8,000 hectares of land in Surrey (5% of the county) with the aim of creating a better future for the local wildlife, and for the enjoyment of local people.

To get involved, whether through volunteering, donating or adopting species to protect, please find out more and visit [www.surreywildlifetrust.org](http://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)



## Get involved

The Surrey Archaeological Society is an active group which has been unearthing the history of Surrey since 1854, with a well-stocked library and diverse research collection at the Abinger Research Centre.

To find out more about the work of SyAS and how to join, please visit [www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk).



The Surrey Hills Society is an independent charity which encourages people to explore, protect and enhance the local landscape, including that of the Tillingbourne. In order to do this, volunteers are needed to help organise and support walks, talks and events for members, as well as various conservation projects within the AONB.

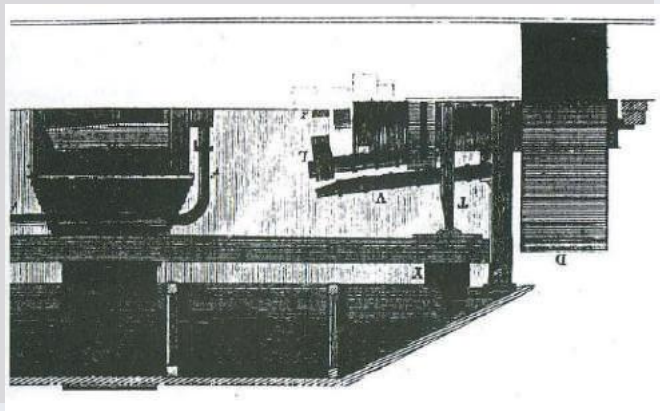
For more info, see [www.surreyhill.org/society](http://www.surreyhill.org/society)

### Other links

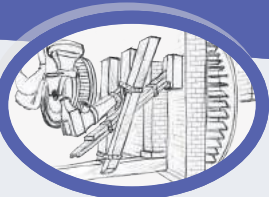
Abinger Parish Council - [www.abinger-pc.gov.uk](http://www.abinger-pc.gov.uk)  
Surrey Hills AONB - [www.surreyhill.org](http://www.surreyhill.org)  
Surrey Heritage (Exploring Surrey's Past) - [www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/](http://www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/)

Tillingbourne Tales HLF project - [www.tillingbournetales.co.uk](http://www.tillingbournetales.co.uk)

## Abinger Hammer Forge



Elevation of a water-driven trip hammer, showing waterwheel and its connecting axle wheel, which raise the cast iron hammer head, before the counterweight and ash wood spring reflect it back down to strike the anvil (from *Pantologia* 1813 vol. VI). The head would have weighed up to 400 kilograms and struck the anvil about every other second.



Tip hammer reconstruction



Smith on village sign

The co-existence of water power from the Tillingbourne and plentiful timber for fuel made the manor of Abinger ideal for the growing iron demand in the 16th century. Both the smelting and smithing required large amounts of wood for charcoal (it is estimated that turning a ton of raw iron into cannon required two tons of charcoal, or four times as much wood), and as a result royal edicts were put in place to restrict the felling of trees for iron-working. However, it is doubtful that smelting ever took place at Abinger, with the raw iron coming instead from Sussex, to be converted into malleable wrought iron.

Shere forge, as it was first called, became the most northerly mill of the Walden iron industry by 1557, when the forge was built by Edward and Thomas Elington, possibly used for the making of cannon. The forge would continue in some form until 1787, when the southern iron industry could no longer compete with the new processes and raw material available in the

midlands and north of England.

### TIMELINE

1086 - Paddington, like Abinger, had corn mill worth six shillings

1349 - Inhabitants of Paddington virtually disappear during the Black Death

1557 - Iron mill built on site of former corn mill by the Elington brothers of Willesden

1574 - Seven 'colliers' (charcoal burners) from Abinger involved in near riot in Shere

1586 - Hackhurst Farm Cottage built by William Longhurst

c.1622 - Timber-framed and brick-dressed Crossways Farm constructed

1783 - Re-building of Abinger Hall by Matthew Pitts after its predecessor (Daniells) was pulled down

1877 - Roman villa discovered in field behind Cocks Farm

1880s - The Coe brothers expand their watercress business, with 25 acres of beds extending down to Chilworth by 1888

1891 - Original and smaller Hammer Clock erected in memory of Thomas Henry Farrer of Abinger Hall, who is considered the creator of the modern village

1913 - Barn for the Abinger Arms dismantled and road widened by twelve feet

1959 - Final Abinger Hall mansion (erected in 1872) pulled down

1982 - First Teddy Bears' Picnic held on village green

1st ed Ordnance Survey map 1870



### Find out more...

Abinger Hammer School (1982), *Some Glimpses from the Past*

Coke, Shirley (1992), *Crossways: a Brief History of a Seventeenth Century Farm*

Coke, Shirley (1993), *Abinger Hammer, a Short History and Guide*

Crocker, Alan (1999), 'Paddington Mill, Abinger: a Survey of a Derelict Corn Mill', *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 86, 73-103

Hammer Jubilee Abinger Committee (1977), *Abinger Hammer, a Guide to the Village and Surroundings*

Abinger Hall under James Scarlett, Esq., c. 1850 (courtesy of Surrey History Centre Robert Barclay Illustrations)



18th century forge and smith's tools



- ♦ Born c. 1661, location unknown, to Daniel and Susannah Dibble
- ♦ Married (1) Alice and (2) the widow Mrs Combers in 1721
- ♦ Had five children, including John (b. 1685) and Daniel (b. 1688), who followed father in the forge business
- ♦ Owned lands in Shere and Abinger and lived in original Abinger Hall, known as Daniells
- ♦ Tenant of Abinger forge c. 1716-22 and timber merchant, as well as MP for Okehampton (1705-13)
- ♦ Buried on 25 January 1728 in St James' parish, Abinger

### John Dibble

*Smith at Abinger Hammer Forge* 1661-1728



TALES & TRAILS  
of the  
TILLINGBOURNE VALLEY

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## Abinger



Explore more than 4km of historic houses, millponds and scenic countryside in the heart of the Tillingbourne valley

1st edition 2016

