



TILLINGBOURNE TRAILS

Chilworth

This heritage trail takes in the extensive site of the Gunpowder Works at Chilworth, which boasts possibly the most prominent (and famous) remains of the Tillingbourne mills. Explore not only the gentle series of paths within the Middle and Upper Works, as far as Waterloo Pond, but also the spectacular views from high atop St Martha's Hill.

Length 4.5/5 km

Duration approx. 1.5/2.5 hours

Moderate level of difficulty (steep climb)

Start at top of **Vera's Path** on the left side of Chilworth C of E Infant School (GU4 8NP). Parking on road (A248).

Note the leaflets for the Gunpowder Mills Heritage Trail, available at each entrance, which will provide more detail on the remains and structures themselves



Cross over the bridge into the Gunpowder Works and picnic area and follow the path to the right, which follows the old tramway, before veering to the right and running along the **New Cut** stream.



You will pass the **incorporating mills** on your left, which you can go down into and explore. Continue on this path until it reaches the gate (and eastern entrance to the Middle Works).

Turn right onto the road, and cross the stile on the opposite side, over into the field.

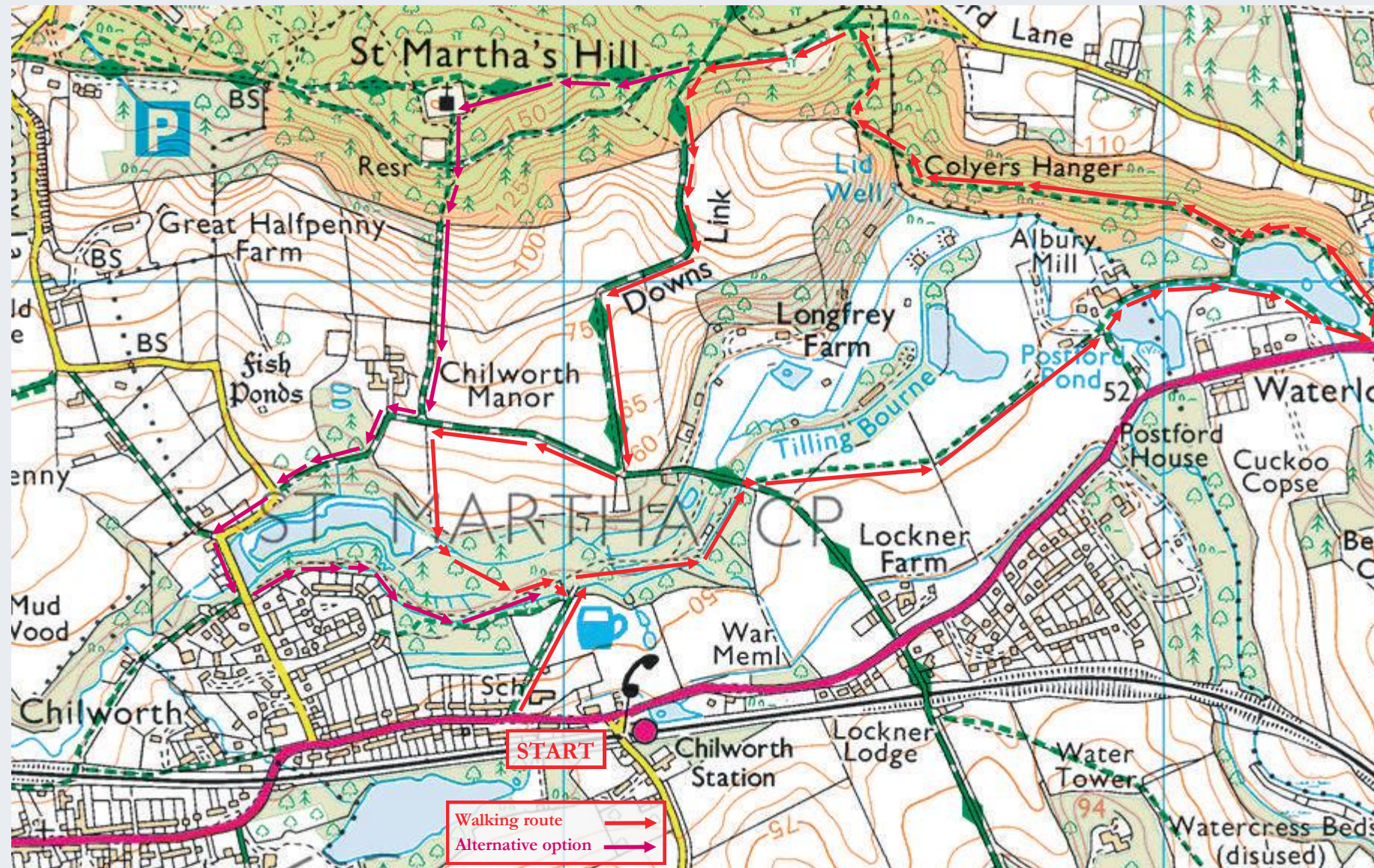


Take the small path diagonally across the fields, crossing the stile at the other end.

Then cross the second field, following the left side of the ditch. As you look left, you will see a row of triangular roofs amongst the trees, part of the **Admiralty cordite works**.

Only foundations remain of most of the Admiralty buildings, which were largely demolished after the First World War. Some of the 1890s smokeless powder works survive though, including the kneading and press house.

For more details (including alternative route), download the printable pdf (www.tillingbournetales.co.uk/places/trails)



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Cross the small stream at the stile and footbridge, following the path between the fences to **Postford Pond**. Looking left, you can see a small pond with the remains of more of the works on the far shore.

At the road junction at Postford Pond's corner, turn left and follow around its left side. Note the mill channel on the left as you cross over the water.

Carry on with the pond to your right.



The Postford mills are best known for their 19th century paper mills, though were part of the 17th century Upper Gunpowder Works, with four powder mills at Postford and one at Pens (now Waterloo) pond. The paperworks, which began producing banknote paper in 1809, flourished until their decline in the second half of the century, becoming first a flock mill (making furniture stuffing from textile waste), before its fire in 1886, and later the Bottings corn mill, which only closed in 1991.

As the road continues to **Waterloo Pond** (bending to the left), take the right path (with the pond on the left and the Tillingbourne on the right).

At the road junction (A248), turn left onto the drive signed footpath, past the houses, with the pond on your left.

Then take the paved path into a front garden, which is a right of way. Follow the slab path through the garden and past the greenhouse to the back of the garden.



Carry on following the path into the woods, over the stile. At the road end, turn right onto the plank path, passing a house on your left.

Follow the path through the woods, with the Tillingbourne and Works below.



Continue as the path climbs steeply up the hill, eventually turning into a sandy track, which will end at a junction at the top.

Turn left, and follow the path, passing the WW2 pillbox (part of the North Downs defence line).



As you continue along this path, you will come to the junction of the **Downs Link**.

Option here to extend the walk and continue to St Martha's Church. You can also carry on to the church but then return to this point, taking the Downs Link down the hill. Please note that the longer option's path downhill by Chilworth Manor is extremely steep

Turn left to follow the Downs Link downhill through the woods and between the fields to the track junction at the bottom. Turn right and follow the path along the edge of the vineyard.



At the vineyard's corner, turn left down the path between the two fences, carrying on and through the gate back into the Gunpowder Works. Follow the path over the **pack horse bridge**.

Fork left on the path to the track junction, and then left again, arriving back at the picnic area.

Take the right path back to the bridge, crossing over it to return up Vera's path to the Start Point (refreshments suggested at the **Percy Arms**).

Find out more...
 Crocker, Glensy (2005), *A Guide to the Chilworth Gunpowder Mills*
 Crocker, Glensy and Alan (2000), *Damnable Inventions: Chilworth Gunpowder and the Paper Mills of the Tillingbourne*
 Schupke, S.A. (1994), *A History of Chilworth*
 Surrey Archaeological Society (1978), *Discovering Guildford: Penley Down, St Martha's and Chilworth*



1st ed Ordnance Survey map 1870

1940 - Pillbox line established along Tillingbourne Northumberland
 1920-2 - Works closed and site sold by the Duke of Northumberland
 1915 - Cordite factory built by the Admiralty
 1901 - 'Great Explosion' at corning house which killed six men, making it the worst on record at Chilworth
 1896 - Working men's club for the Gunpowder Works converted for worship, becoming St Thomas' Church
 1895 - Fire at Unwins' printing works
 1890 - Friars come to Chilworth and establish site
 1873 - Chilworth C of E Primary School opened
 1849 - South Eastern Railway comes to Chilworth, leading to re-routing of road to Godalming (now New Road)
 1845 - Manor purchased by Henry Drummond and passed by marriage to Duchy of Northumberland
 1704 - Lower Works converted to paper mills
 1652-4 - Middle Works built at time of First Dutch War
 1636 - Upper Works built
 1626 - Mills built by East India Company at Lower Works
 1086 - Domesday lists Celeorde (Chilworth) with the manor of Bramley as having a mill

TIMELINE

Expense magazine - building which stored materials between manufacturing stages



West Lodge - gatehouse check point, including inspection for materials which cause sparks

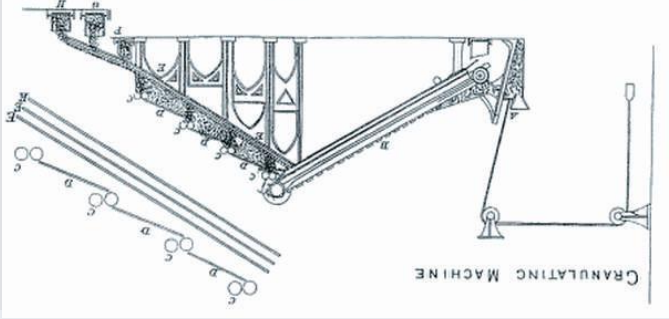


The industry continued to expand and become more mechanised, including the use of steam engines and water turbines from the 19th century. The surviving structures from the 1880s-90s are most prominent, including the tramway, steam incorporating mill and corning house. By 1915 the Works were taken over by the Admiralty, leading to the production of cordite in the factories.

Both the Civil War and First Dutch War gave Chilworth a prominent source to supply gunpowder to, leading to the establishment of the Middle Works to the east (c. 1652), which would replace the Lower Works as the main area of powder-making (the Lower Works converting to paper mills in 1704). Six further incorporating mills were clustered around Postford and Waterloo Ponds by 1677 (becoming the Upper Works), though they fell into disuse after the departure of Sir Polycarpus Wharton c. 1700.

Possibly the most distinctive mills of the valley are the gunpowder works at Chilworth, first established in 1626 by the East India Company, and not fully closing until 1920. Prior to the gunpowder mills, both a fulling and corn mill existed at the Lower Works (the latter recorded in Domesday), as well as a short-lived wire mill which was set-up in 1603.

19th century granulating machine (from W.H. Wardell's 1888 *Handbook of Gunpowder and Gunotton*). There would have been a similar machine in the corning house which exploded in 1901.



Steam incorporating mills (c. 1880s), the most prominent buildings of the Middle Works



Victorian houses along New Road

Coming house remains, post-1901 explosion caused by a spark from a hobnail boot



♦ Lived at Halfpenny Farm until his father's death, and then moved to 113 Chilworth New Road (by 1901)

♦ Died in 1951 (age 71) and ashes buried in Busbridge (St Anthony's Green Lane) on 12 December



♦ Born to James Durbridge (farm labourer) of Cranleigh and Elizabeth Durbridge of Hambleton
 ♦ Christened on 7 November, 1880 in Shalford
 ♦ In 1907 (at the age of 26) married Frances Annie Stoner of Horsham in St Saviour's Church, Stoke-next-Guildford
 ♦ Had two children, Joseph Leslie (b. 1908) and Evelyn Annie (b. 1910)
 ♦ By 1898, at the age of 20, he was a 'labourer at gunpowder works'. In 1911, he is listed as a 'cordite worker'

Job Durbridge
 1880-1951
Gunpowder Worker at Chilworth

Chilworth Gunpowder Works

Wildlife of the Tillingbourne



Dormouse

The dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), also known as the Hazel Dormouse, is a small mammal (much smaller than a squirrel) which has gingery-brown fur, large black eyes and a fluffy tail.

The dormouse is mainly nocturnal, and therefore rarely seen. As agile climbers, they can spend their entire lives up in the branches, where they consume buds, hazelnuts, berries and insects.

Hibernating in the winter, the dormouse can mainly be found from April to October. In the summer they build nests of stripped honey-suckle bark, in which the female can give birth to up to seven babies.



Get involved

With dozens of walkers passing through the site everyday, maintaining trails and clearing structures of weeds and removing invasive species is contributed to by the valuable hard work of volunteer parties assisting Guildford Borough Council Countryside Wardens.

To find out more about how to help, please contact the wardens at countryside@guildford.gov.uk, or the team at Chilworth2gether.



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

Other links
 Chilworth2gether - chilworth2gether.org.uk
 St Martha's Parish Council - www.stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk
 Surrey Hills AONB - www.surreyhill.org
 Surrey Heritage (Exploring Surrey's Past) - www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/
 Tillingbourne Tales HLF project - www.tillingbournetales.co.uk

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



TALES & TRAILS
 of the
 TILLINGBOURNE VALLEY

TILLINGBOURNE TRAILS

Chilworth



Explore more than 5km of scenic countryside and historic sites, including the remains of one of the earliest gunpowder mills in the country

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