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)

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

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 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 Adrialty cordite works.

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

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’s are best known for their 19th century paper mills, although 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 rock mill (making furniture stuffing from textile waste), before its fire in 1886, and later the Bottington corn mill, which only closed in 1991.

At 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).

At 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. 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.

Park 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).
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 ginger-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 countrytoutes@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.surreyhills.org/society

Other links
Chilworth2gether - chilworth2gether.org.uk
St Martha’s Parish Council - www.stmarthapharishcouncil.co.uk
Surrey Hills AONB - www.surreyhills.org
Surrey Heritage (Exploring Surrey’s Past) - www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk
Tillingbourne Tales HL project - www.tillingboursetales.co.uk

Chilworth

Chilworth Gunderwater Works

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