

## CHART SUTTON PARISH LOCAL WALKS... (No. 4)

**GOAT WALK: 5.7 miles**



Chart Sutton is, with Sutton Valence and East Sutton, one of the 'Three Suttons'. The parish is situated some three miles southeast of Maidstone on the edge of the Greensand Ridge, overlooking the Weald. It is a sparsely-populated rural parish of some 885 hectares with an electoral roll of about 700.

Chart is the modern word for the Saxon 'Caert' meaning heathland. The Saxon King Coenwulf gave a charter to the parish in AD814. The area was on the route used by the North Kent tribes when they took their stock south to fatten on the rich forest lands. A settlement around a church provided shelter and rest for the travellers, but no trace remains.

The church was rebuilt in Norman times, but the surrounding village was probably abandoned after the plague of 1300.

The present village was established much later.

## PLACES of INTEREST along the ROUTE

### 1. Amber Green

At the point where **KH568** meets Back Lane was thought to be the junction of the Roman roads from Rochester to Hastings (now the line of **KH568**) and another running west to east as far as Ham Street and lying slightly north of the line of Amber Lane/Chartway Street.

### 2. KM110 – Earthwork

This is one of several in the Boughton Monchelsea/Coxheath area thrown up for defence when there were large military encampments housing up to 15,000 men at Coxheath and in the area to the east from 1756-1816.

### 3. Footpaths **KM110** and **KM109**

These follow the edge of former ragstone quarries which stretch through Boughton Monchelsea and Loose. They were in use from Roman times for road-making and building. Stone was produced for the walls of Roman London and numerous villas. In medieval times stone was supplied for Westminster Abbey, Rochester, Cooling and Queenborough Castles, parts of the Tower of London, many Kent churches including Chart Sutton and Boughton Monchelsea, and 7,000 cannon balls for Henry V's army and later armaments. Furfield Quarry (next to **KM110**) continued to yield large quantities of stone until the early 1960s. In recent years, all the quarries have been filled in.

### 4. Old Tree Lane: Lime House

Grade II listed – rear C16th, front early C18th.

### 5. **KM120**

Shortly after joining this path (part of the Greensand Way) look to your right for views of Boughton Monchelsea Place: a fine Tudor mansion with an ancient deer park. It is worth a detour down Church Lane to view St Peters Church (C12th onwards, with Victorian additions following a fire). There is a magnificent C15th lychgate and also a good view of the enclosed deer park below the peaceful churchyard. Traditionally there are always some white deer amongst the herd.

### 6. Wierton Place

Sits to the right of the footpath but is not easy to see. Wierton was one of the lesser manors of Boughton Monchelsea (C13th onwards). The present house was built in 1896 by Herman Kleinwort, a London banker. At that time the estate covered large parts of Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton. A number of cottages were built for estate workers in both parishes and adjoining Staplehurst and can be picked out by being marked with the entwined initials 'HK'.

### 7. Buttercups Goat Sanctuary

Goats everywhere! Bob and Valerie Hitch started homing unwanted, neglected or ill-treated goats in 1989 and now care for over 100. This is a registered charity: more volunteers and fund-raising always needed.

### 8. After passing through the Goat Sanctuary

Two Grade II listed houses can be seen on the left: Wierton Hall Farm Cottage (east end circa 1500, C18th and C19th additions at west end) and Wierton Hall (C17th with Georgian façade).



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Park on Back Lane and begin the walk at the junction with **(KH568)**, Brishing Road and Back Lane/Amber Lane.

At the road, turn left, then immediately right into Brishing Road, which you follow to the crossroads (B2163). Much care is needed to cross this busy road, then continue straight over, still in Brishing Road. Keep following this road and then up the hill past Mount Pleasant Farm (0.8 mile). When you see a housing estate on your right, there will be a footpath **(KM115)** on the left leading into common ground. The path leads downwards, and at a large tree (no fingerpost) you veer right **(KM110)**. Continue along the path, keeping left with a fence on your right.

Follow this descending path, with the stream on your left, then right, and take caution with the trees that have hanging branches. At the very busy Brishing Lane take great care when crossing over to reach the next foot/bridle path **(KM109)**. You will eventually pass a wood-yard on the left and arrive at a crossroads. Turn left into Old Tree Lane.

Follow this uphill lane for 0.5 mile, and on reaching the crossroads, go straight over into Gandys Lane. Continue to the T-junction and cross over this very busy road (B2163) to the kissing gate opposite and footpath **(KM117)**. Keep following this woodland path, crossing over a tarmac road until you come to another kissing gate. Go through this and turn left into Church Lane. Carry on down the hill until you reach a high stone wall. On the left will be the entrance to footpath **(KM120)**, which is part of the Greensand Way. Walk up the incline, through a small wooded area to a gate. Go through that gate, across the car park to another gate and through it to an open meadow.

## KCC FOOTPATHS:

**KH568/KM115/  
KM110/KM109/  
KM117/KM120/KM122/KH553/KH568**

Proceed straight ahead, keeping the large conifer on your right and then, with fantastic Wealden views to your right, continue until you reach the stile within a small wooded area and then back into the open meadow again. Follow this path for some distance (there might be many breeds of goat in the field on the left) until you reach a tarmac drive. Bear left across the drive to a kissing gate and proceed across the top end of a field with all sorts of goats grazing within (unless they have been moved to allow the grass to recover). This is the Buttercups Goat Sanctuary (see overleaf).

At the end of the field, go through the two gates, turn right and follow the road, quickly bearing left. Shortly after passing a post box, there will be a gate on your left. Go into the field and continue down the right hand side until you come to some steps down into an orchard. Turn left and follow the track **(KM122/KH553)**, and still part of the Greensand Way, until you come to some very steep downward-leading steps. Carefully descend these steps; at the bottom turn

left and follow the track **(KH568)** until you reach your original parking place at the junction with **KH568**, Brishing Road and Back Lane/Amber Lane.

