

I Spy in Chilham

Here are details of all of the photographs on the children's worksheet, I spy in Chilham. There are further items of note on your walk round the village. Stand over by the White Horse Inn; this is where the ghost of one of the vicars resides in the fire place warming his hands. Across the road from the White Horse is a house which if you look at the side of it you can see how it has been faced with bricks. This was once very fashionable. Originally it was or still has a timber framed but the front is covered over by red bricks. As you walk along the road at the bottom of the hill Hambrook Lane there is a new house on the right hand side which stand up high, this house is totally sustainable with a ground source heat pump, PV's and many, many more eco friendly facilities.



The turrets on Chilham Castle

The Jacobean building, now known as the Castle, was constructed in 1616 for Sir Dudley Digges, reputedly to a design by Inigo Jones. It is one of the finer mansions in the South-east and commands exceptional views across the Stour Valley. The gardens, originally laid out by John Tradescant, were redesigned in the 18th century under the guidance of Capability Brown and include a fine terrace leading down to a fishing lake. The walls to the grounds also date from this time (1720), although the two gatehouses were only added in the present century.

The Norman Keep of the Castle, which is the oldest building in the village and still inhabited, dates from 1174 and was built for King Henry II. but archaeological excavations carried out in the 1920s suggest that it stands on the foundations of a much older Anglo-Saxon fortification, possibly dating from the 5th century, and there is evidence of earlier Roman habitation in the vicinity.



Norwich Union Fire insurance mark on house between 4 & 5 on left hand side of square

These were lead or copper plaques embossed with the sign of the insurance company, and placed on the front of the insured building as a guide to the insurance company's fire brigade. They are common in the older areas of Britain's and America's cities and larger towns. They were used on the eighteenth and nineteenth century in the days before municipal fire services was formed. The UK marks are called 'Fire insurance plaques' the first to use the mark was the Sun Fire Office before 1700.



Well Cottage No 3 on the directions. Chimney of Well Cottage the first building up the hill from the car park on the right. Built around 1549 and probably got its name from the well which can be seen in the garden toward the square.



School Hall No 30 at the top of School Hill on the right

This was once an oast house connected to the farmhouse which is the next house on the corner of the square, Belke House Farm. It was gifted to the school in perpetuity by Sir Edmund Davis.



The Old Butchers Shop No14 in the High Street,

You can see the timber on the outside above the window where the hooks used to hang. Once there were two butchers in Chilham the other is the first house as you leave the car park on the left hand side of the hill. The date on the first floor is 1681; it is thought that this may refer to the age of the brick work not the house.



This sign is for the North Downs Way

It can be seen at the bottom of School hill. The North Downs Way is a National trail which starts in Farnham and follows through to Canterbury with a circuit round through Wye to Folkestone and Dover to Canterbury. It follows a lot of the Pilgrims way but is much older. The Pilgrim's way is Victorian.



Elephant House No 28

At the bottom of School Hill on the left is Elephant house, it is said that two elephants were housed here when they were brought from India to help clear forests on the Castle estate. The owners of the Castle at the time had connection with the East India Company. There are two archways the other side of the house which are 14feet high.



Clements Cottage No 10

This cottage opposite the Castle and next to the entrance of the church was the village saddler's house; he was nicknamed Nannyba Clements because of his goatee beard. This window is typical of Elizabethan style, which can also be seen in the other house round the square.



Sun Union Fire insurance mark on Chrisholme on right hand side of square next to the Peacock

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Cumberland House (1470-1510), No 17

Also in the High Street on the left hand side nearly opposite the post office. It is a particular distinguished building and there is some evidence to suggest that it was at one time a royal hunting lodge. In the walls of this house you can see where the mullion windows were once there used to be diamond bars running from top to bottom of the window. There are several which can be seen in the building.



The School No 29

This was built in 1861 and there were no changes made until 1999 when a new building was added. It was funded originally by Emily Wildman and her four sisters from a collection of sixpences the equivalent of 2.5p of today's money. There is a number of water colours which were painted by Emily Wildman including one of Belke house Farm and the oast house which is now the school hall. The Wildman tomb can be seen in the church at the far left hand side by the altar.



Mistletoe

I seem to like Chilham since it grows in many of the trees, this bunch is above the new Pilgrim interpretation next to the castle gate entrance. Have a look around the churchyard and you will see it growing in the lime trees. We believe that because the proximity to the river Stour and the fact that we are in a small series of valleys; there is a micro climate which is beneficial to the growth of mistletoe.



Another North Downs Way sign at the entrance to the church

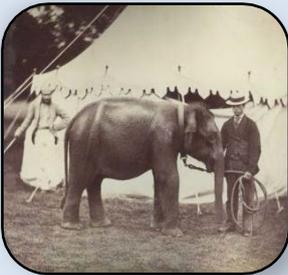
This is the main route to Canterbury which passes the front door of the church; we believe that it is the only church on the route where it passes so close. In the Church you can see in the back left hand corner near the altar a tomb. If you look carefully you will see the indentation of a cross on the top. It is said that it is the tomb of St Augustine however it is empty and it is thought that he was buried elsewhere during the time of the reformation to save him from Henry VIII.



St. Mary's Church No 11.

The church was mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. It is built on land once owned by an Anglo-Saxon called **Sired** who fought for King Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. In King Stephen's reign in 1153 the church belonged to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Bertin, at St. Omer in France and was associated with the Priory at Throwley, 5 miles from Chilham. Then from 1444 until 1539 it belonged to Syon Abbey at Isleworth, Middlesex. It is now part of the Rural Deanery of West Bridge in the Canterbury Diocese.

The tower is 68 feet tall and has a magnificent view of the Downs, the beautiful Stour Valley, and even of the Bell Harry Tower of Canterbury Cathedral. The clock was made in 1727 but only had the hour hand until 1790. The fine peal of 8 bells weighs nearly 4 tons altogether.



The Elephant with his keeper

This is one of the elephants which worked on the Castle estate standing with his keeper. As you can see he was very small. The Hardy's were resident in the castle at this time. The children monument in the church just beyond the organ known as The Hardy Boys Monument represents Arthur and Edmund (d. 1858) sons of the Sir Charles Hardy Family. This monument was moved to the church in 1918. No other church monument shows children's toys, it is sculpted by Alexander Munro.



Burgoyne No 16

After the Castle Keep, the two oldest houses in the village are thought to be the one in the Square now occupied by the Tudor Lodge Gift Shop and Peacock Antiques and Burgoyne's in the High Street; both are Wealden hall houses, the former dating from 1370-1410 and the latter from 1450-1480. It was once a yeoman's house and latterly it had a bakery to the back through the archway. You can imagine the hall way in the centre and the two rooms which over hand to either side as the sleeping quarters of the house hold.

Fire Brigades & Fire Marks

On the front wall of old buildings, there is sometimes displayed a fire mark showing the badge of a company which used to provide insurance against fire. Before municipal & county fire brigades became the norm, some insurance companies ran their own. It is often said that, long ago, when few houses displayed names or street numbers, these fire marks identified the buildings where the relevant company's brigade would fight a fire – presumably leaving all others to burn to ashes. Such alarmist tales were not discouraged by insurance companies – they did no harm to business! However, the prime purpose of a fire mark was advertising - to attract more insurance premiums. Confronted with a burning building, surely no brigade would refuse to help if the fire mark of its own company was nowhere to be seen (perhaps obscured by smoke or dislodged by the consuming blaze). Every fireman would be more concerned with dousing smoke & flame (& saving lives & property) than looking for a small metal label on the building's wall. The essence of insurance has always been mutual assistance. In 1890, when fire broke out in the vicarage stable at Selling, both Faversham's brigades, (the Kent Fire Office & the Sun Insurance Office) turned out. Minutes of a Kent Fire Office meeting dated 26th April 1808 tell us that one of its founding directors was James Wildman (owner of Chilham castle 1794 - 1816). The rate for insuring Mr Wildman's castle was fixed at 2s 3½d per cent (about 11.5p). By comparison, the rate for churches was 2s 9d % (just under 14p) & for thatched farmhouses 4s 7d % (about 23p).

Chilham castle's fire pump used to be displayed to visitors in its own fire station within the park. Nowadays, regardless of fire marks & private fire pumps, we all depend upon the bravery & expertise of Kent Fire & Rescue Service, including of course Chilham's own dedicated brigade.