

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 4th June 2016

Families choose the Chilterns for activity and exploration, entertainment and education: located just 25 miles to the north west of London, historic market towns, tucked-away villages, manor houses, pubs, historic landscapes, chalk-fed streams and ancient woods all hint at exploring, tree-climbing, dressing-up, adventure-filled family days. Here are our Top 10 family experiences.



1. Chilterns Open Air Museum

This 45-acre natural park includes 30 buildings that would have been lost from the Chilterns landscape through natural decay or development. What makes this place special is these are not big houses or grand structures, but a working 19th century farmyard and a village with its green, cottages, forge and chapel. Animals and traditional machinery are still in use, and the museum stages a wide variety of family events that truly celebrates the Chilterns.

Admission charge. <http://www.coam.org.uk>

2. Natural History Museum Tring

A staple with local families, the wonderful galleries of this beautiful Victorian museum present everything from tiny dressed fleas to a smiling polar bear and domestic dogs. The fascinating range of animals was collected by Lionel Walter Rothschild, a remarkable character who kept an astonishing variety of live animals in the grounds around the Museum and in nearby Tring Park. Lionel Walter was a familiar sight in Tring, riding around town in his zebra-drawn carriage.

Free www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/tring.html

3. The Big Friendly Summer at the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre

Roald Dahl lived in Great Missenden for 36 years, weaving features of the village into many of his wonderful stories. The Roald Dahl Village Trail is a good way to look around, to visit Dahl's grave, enjoy a cream tea and to identify the models for such memorable places as Sophie's 'norphanage' in The BFG or the library visited by Matilda while her mum went off to Aylesbury to play bingo. Admission charge www.roalddahl.com/museum

4. Ashridge Forest

Ashridge Estate comprises 5,000 magnificent acres of woodlands, commons and chalk downland, rich in wildlife and offering splendid walks and cycle rides through outstanding scenery. Bluebells and autumn colour are seasonal highlights and June is the time to spot fallow deer flitting through the woodland glades with their new-born fawns. The Bridgewater Monument, visitor centre and café form the focal point of the estate, and are a good place to set up your base from where the group can explore by bike, climb trees, build a den, or spot a fairy on a toadstool perhaps....

Free www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ashridge-estate

5. A Chilterns larder

The Meads have been farming in the Chiltern Hills since before 1860; it is thought that the family came out from London to produce hay and straw for the working horses of London. Simon and Chris Mead are now the sixth generation to farm on this site. In fields of yellow, apple orchards and buzzing bees...a Chilterns larder wouldn't be complete without their artisanal products that go straight from field to bottle or jar. Mead & Sons Farm near Tring produce the versatile and award-winning Chiltern Cold-Pressed Rapeseed Oil, delicious local bee-pollinated honey amongst other products that are perfect for your Chilterns-inspired picnic. www.pemeadandsons.co.uk

6. Summer Adventures with Dragons at Hughenden Manor

The wily Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria's favourite Prime Minister, boosted his social status by choosing Hughenden Manor near High Wycombe as his country seat. Now in the care of the National Trust, Hughenden Manor has an excellent family events programme including the big tree climb, dragon trails and workshops and knights and castles workshops. NT membership or admission charges apply. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hughenden/documents/hughenden-events-summer-2016.pdf

7. Follow the Lapwing Trail at College Lake

College Lake Nature Reserve on the Upper Icknield Way near the market town of Tring, is a former chalk quarry that has been transformed into a thriving wildlife centre. It is a haven for migrating birds visiting the lake and notable for beautiful orchids and unusual cornfield flowers. Bring your binoculars, cameras and a picnic, or enjoy refreshments in the visitor centre café. Stroll along family-friendly easy access trails around the lake, visit the many bird hides, or take part in the holiday events programme. Donations welcome www.bbowt.org.uk/reserves/college-lake

8. Make a move in the Chess Valley

The Chess Valley has some of the most attractive countryside in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is a landscape rich in wildlife, with a long and fascinating history. You'll discover the site of a Roman farm-villa at Latimer, pass the 13th century Chenies Manor visited by Elizabeth I and see the watercress beds at Sarratt, the only commercial watercress farm left in the Chilterns. And when you're near the River Chess, keep an eye out for kingfishers, water voles, brown trout, orchids and dragonflies. You can reach the Chess Valley Walk from either Rickmansworth or Chesham stations. If you would like a shorter walk, you can access the walk from Chalfont & Latimer or Chorleywood underground stations. Pack your wellies, camera and a picnic. Free Download a copy of the walk here: www.chilternsaonb.org/explore-enjoy/interactive-map.html#381

9. River and Rowing Museum

Follows the story of rowing and the River Thames from Olympic heights to the minutiae of life on the river banks at Henley on Thames, the jewel in the Chilterns crown. Special exhibitions include The Wind in the Willows, a family favourite, or chose from a calendar of temporary art and photography exhibitions and a year-round calendar of nature trails, craft workshops and family days. This museum can be combined with a picnic along the banks of the River Thames. Admission charge.

<http://rrm.co.uk/visit>

10. Follow the Trail to find a Phoenix

Popular with the locals, this disused railway line that runs between the market towns of Thame and Princes Risborough, marks the Phoenix Trail, the perfect place to enjoy the Chilterns countryside, with views of the mysterious Whiteleaf Cross carved into the hillside above Princes Risborough and a very active Red Kite population, swooping and diving as they hunt for prey. Off road all the way, there is no worrying about four-wheeled traffic and young cyclists can get to grips with the sport. There is a wonderful collection of 30 original sculptures built by Angus Ross and six furniture students from Thame's Rycotewood College, which draw on the trail's railway heritage and the landscape towards the Chiltern Hills, but are subtle and sometimes easy to miss, as they are not all at head-height. Pack a picnic. Free

www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/route/phoenix-trail-princes-risborough-to-thame

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Notes to Editors

- This release has been distributed by the Chilterns Tourism Network, a not-for-profit company representing over 220 local Chilterns tourism businesses who work together to promote this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as a desirable place to visit.
- www.VisitChilterns.co.uk has loads of ideas and inspiration for your readers and a press room for you, the media: www.visitchilterns.co.uk/press.html
- The Chilterns stretches from the Thames in Oxfordshire through Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire to Hitchin in Hertfordshire, 23 miles north-west of London.
- Accessible on Chiltern Railways, London Midland and the Metropolitan Line on the Underground.
- For Chilterns events @VisitChilterns and on Instagram www.instagram.com/thechilterns/
- High-res images are available on the website. www.visitchilterns.co.uk/gallery or contact mary@VisitChilterns.co.uk
- A Chilterns press pack is available on request, and for further information or to discuss press trip opportunities, please contact Mary Tebje 07941 841058 or contact mary@visitchillterns.co.uk