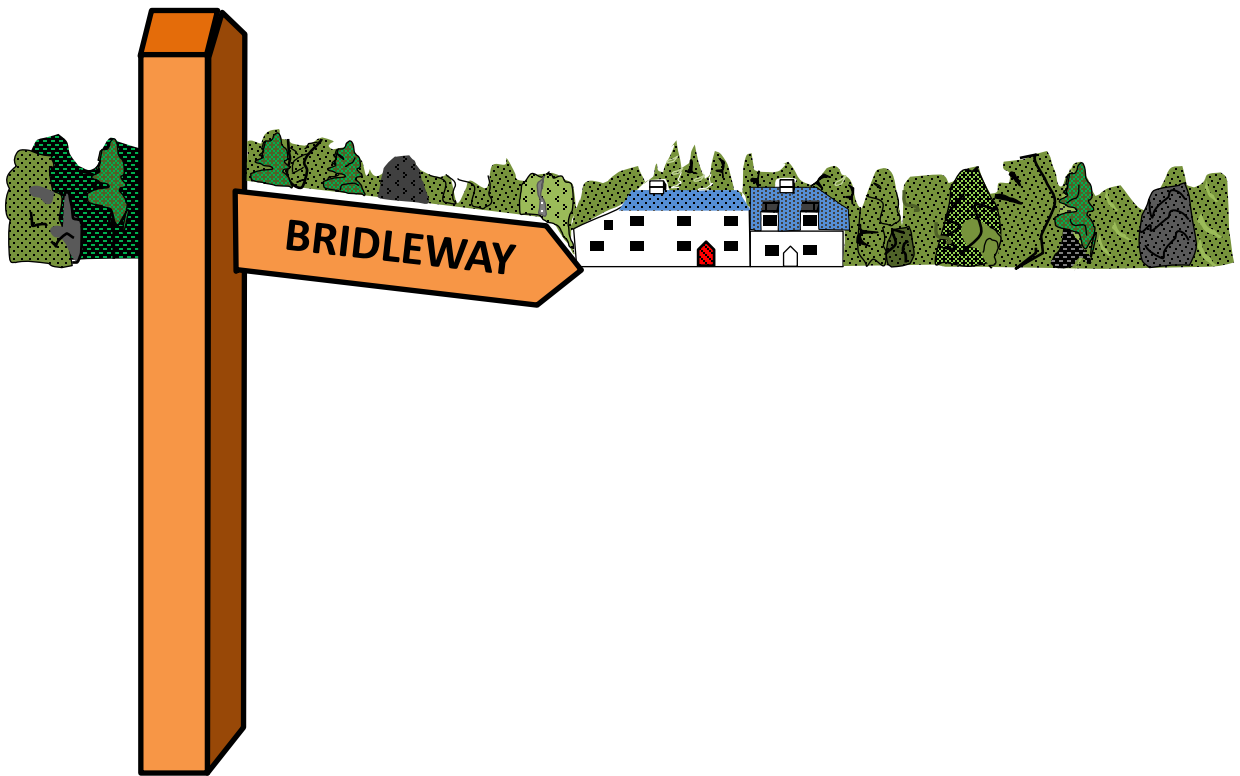












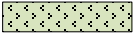













GUIDE TO THE FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS OF THE CHIGNALS



Key to Symbols

	ROAD
	FOOTPATH
	BRIDLEWAY
	PERMISSIVE BRIDLEWAY
	STILE
	FARMTRACK
	BUILDING
	BUILDING, BUILT BEFORE 1900
	CAR PARKING AREA
	LAKE
	TREES OR HEDGEROW
	COPPISED HEDGEROW
	NEWLY PLANTED TREES
	SPECIFIED TREE TYPE
	RIVER OR BROOK
	FENCE
	GATEWAY
	LANDSCAPE VIEWPOINT
	HIGHPOINT CONTOUR
	FOOTBRIDGE
	PARISH NOTICEBOARD
	RED TELEPHONE BOX
	INTERESTING BUILDING DESCRIBED IN TEXT
	OBSERVATIONS ON ROUTE

Introduction to maps and guide to the parish

Chignal Parish is a rural community which visibly retains many features of its agricultural medieval heritage. The main road circuit and footpaths are very similar to the roads described in the earliest detailed map of the area made by Chapman and Andre in 1777. The size of some of the fields and pastures may have been enlarged with increased mechanisation of farm work, but many of the fields retain their original shape. Field margins are mainly defined by hedgerows or by the mature trees which often surround drainage ditches or streams. The age of some of the hedgerows can be estimated by measuring the girth of mature trees, especially oaks which can live for over 500 years.

The parish is comprised of some 125 households grouped in small hamlets close to the road. This pattern can be seen in early maps and some early 16th Century houses still remain and have been modernised over time. The houses and farms described in these footpath maps are at least 100 years old, some are grade II (GII) listed, the churches are Grade II plus (GII*), others are described as properties of value to the parish by Chelmsford Council. The houses, farms and places of interest described in a later section may have been modernised but illustrate the parish life in the 19th century before infilling between houses began in the 20th century.

The guide to the parish is divided into different areas:-

Maps of footpaths and bridleways (pages 4 to 14).

Maps may overlap and are not all to the same scale.

Description of the history of parish houses, farms and places of interest (pages 15 to 18)

Description of houses and buildings over 100 years old

Landscape observation point guide (pages 19 to 21).

Maps of three areas within the parish where you can see distant features.

Tree walk (pages 22 to 25)

Short walk about St James Green to identify over 34 different trees.

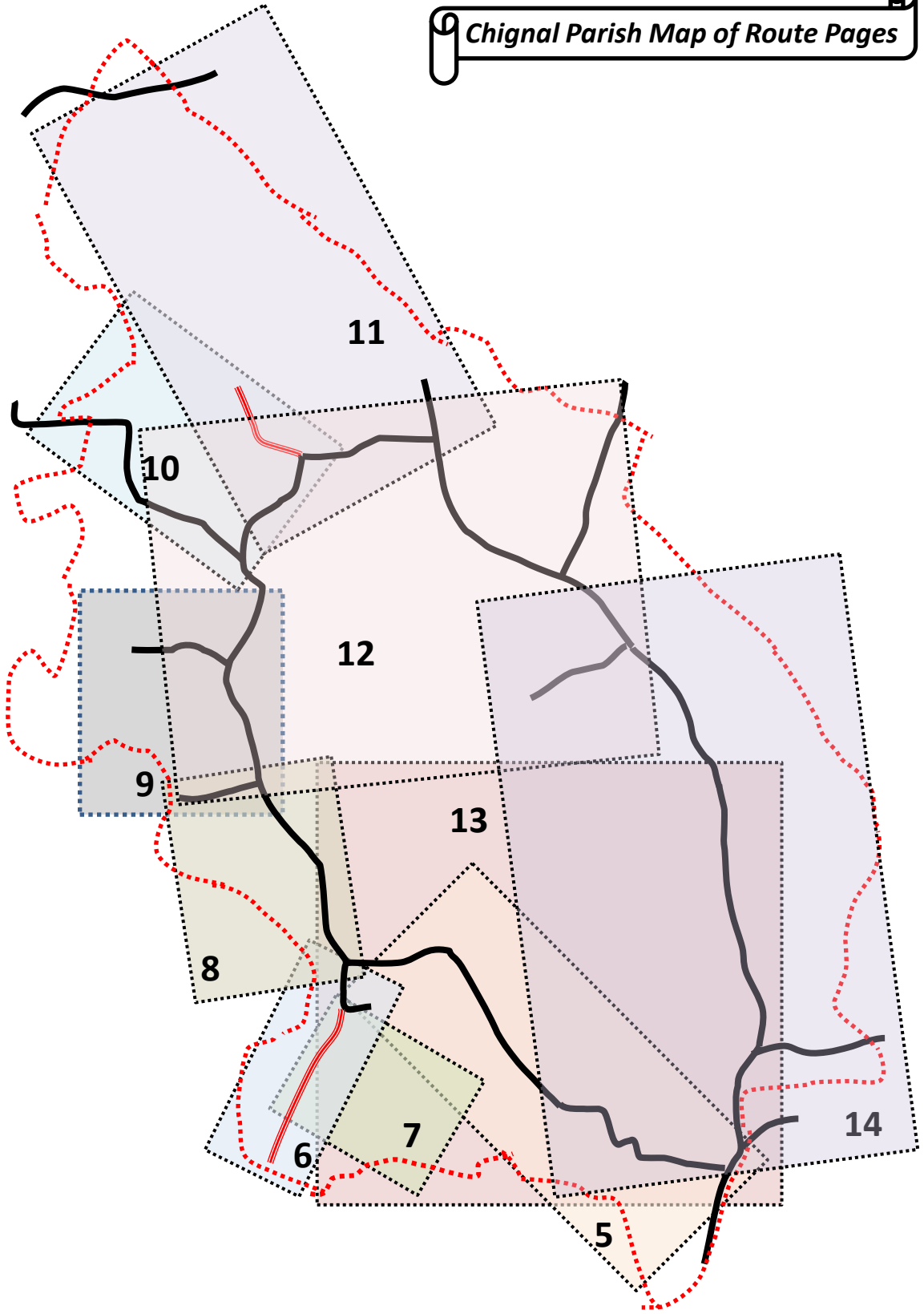
Bird and animal identification guide (pages 26 to 30)

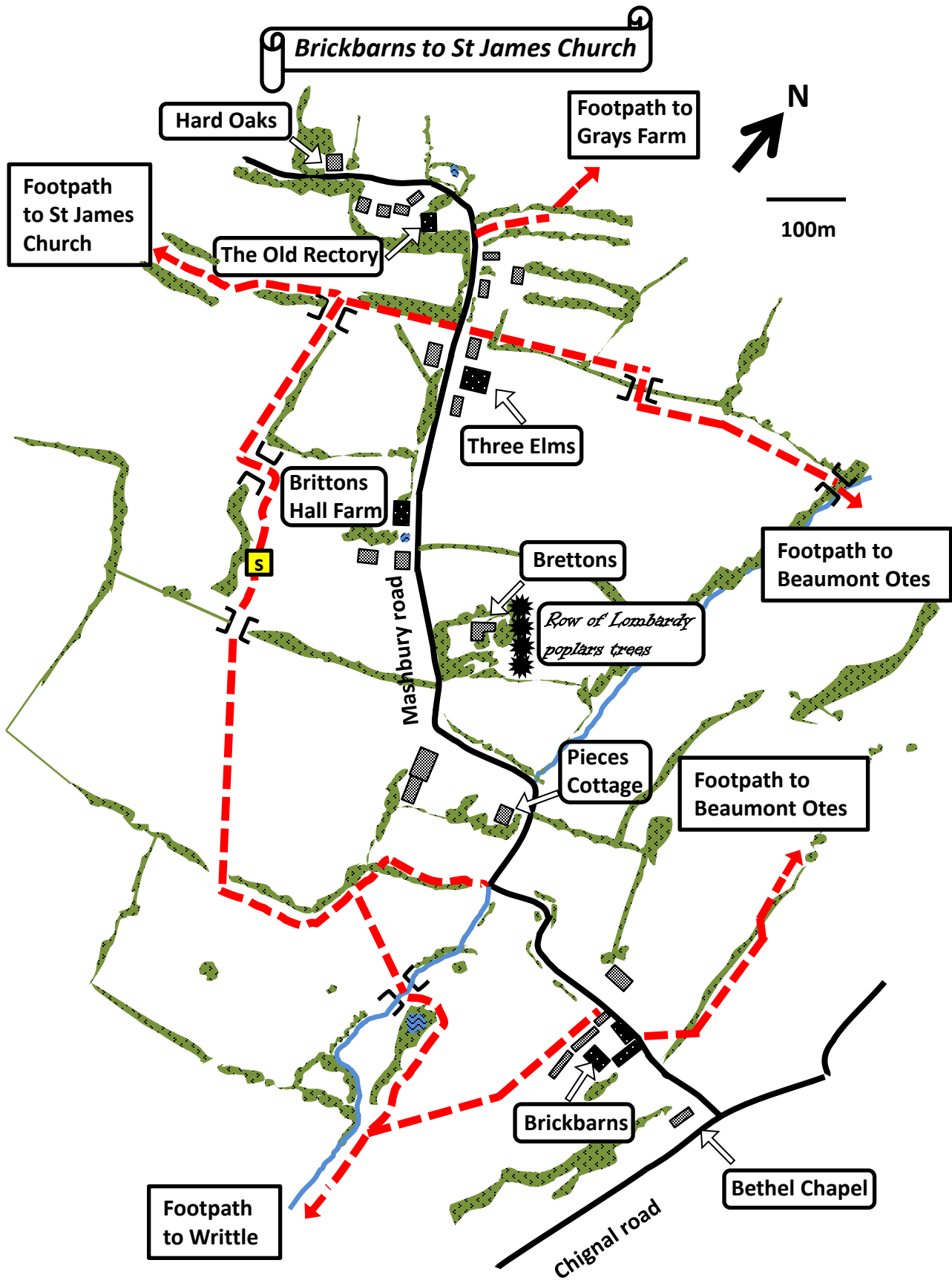
Brief comparison of similar birds or animals that you may see in the parish.

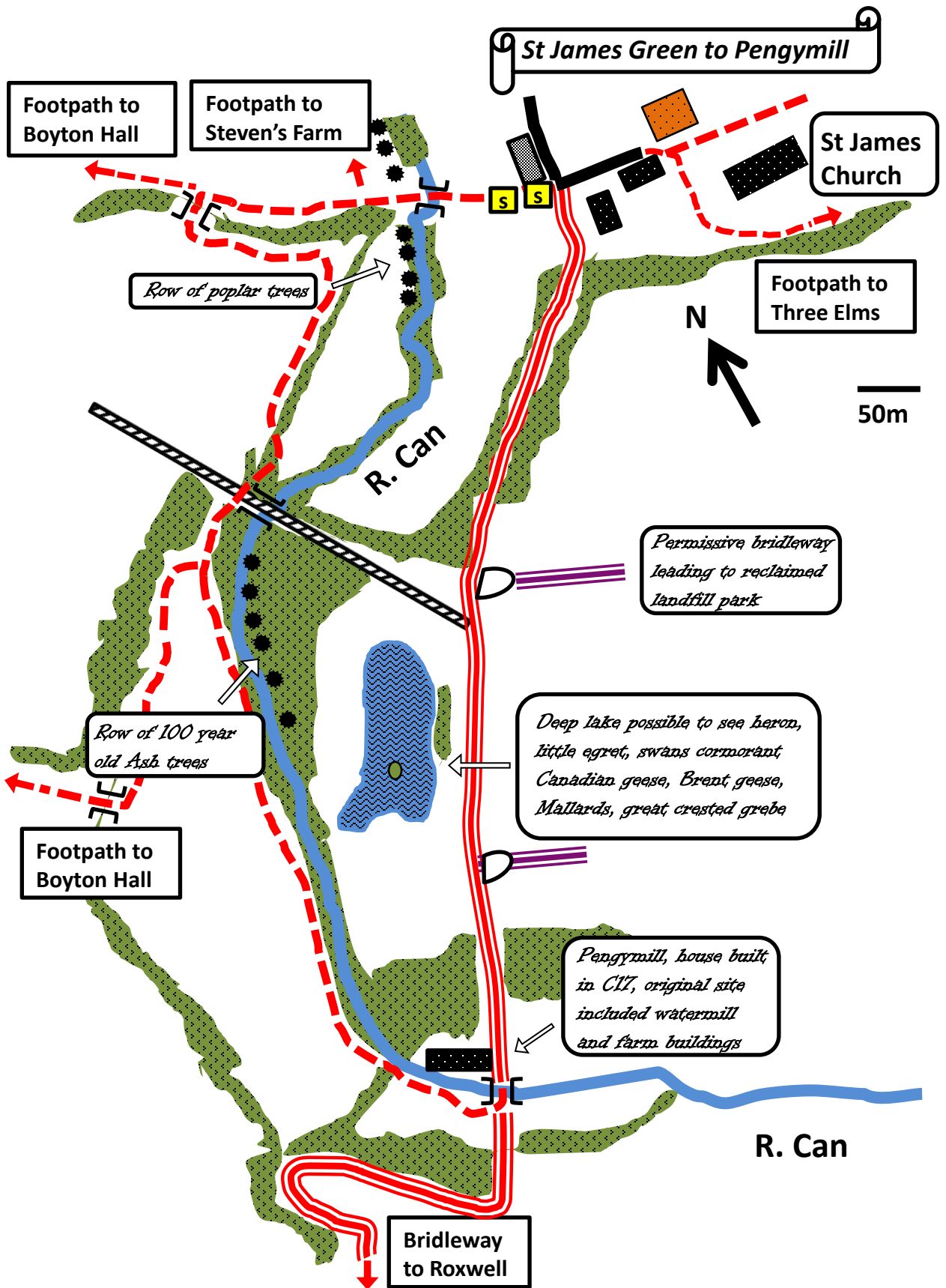
References to published books and websites used to compile the guide (page 31).

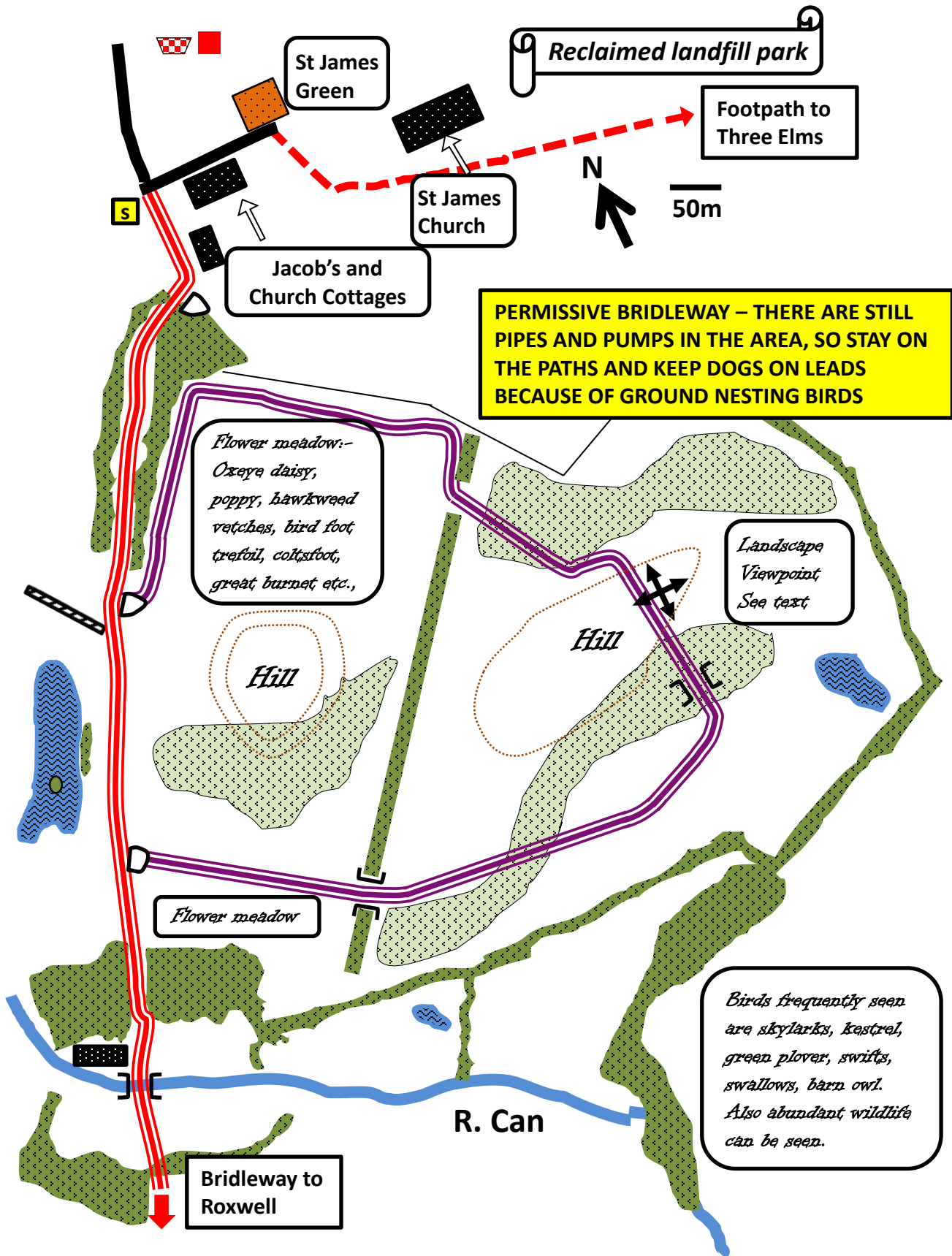
Maps and pages can be printed in grayscale if required. Individual pages can be printed as A4 pages, or whole sections or the guide as a booklet using two pages on each A4 sheet and also printed as double sided.

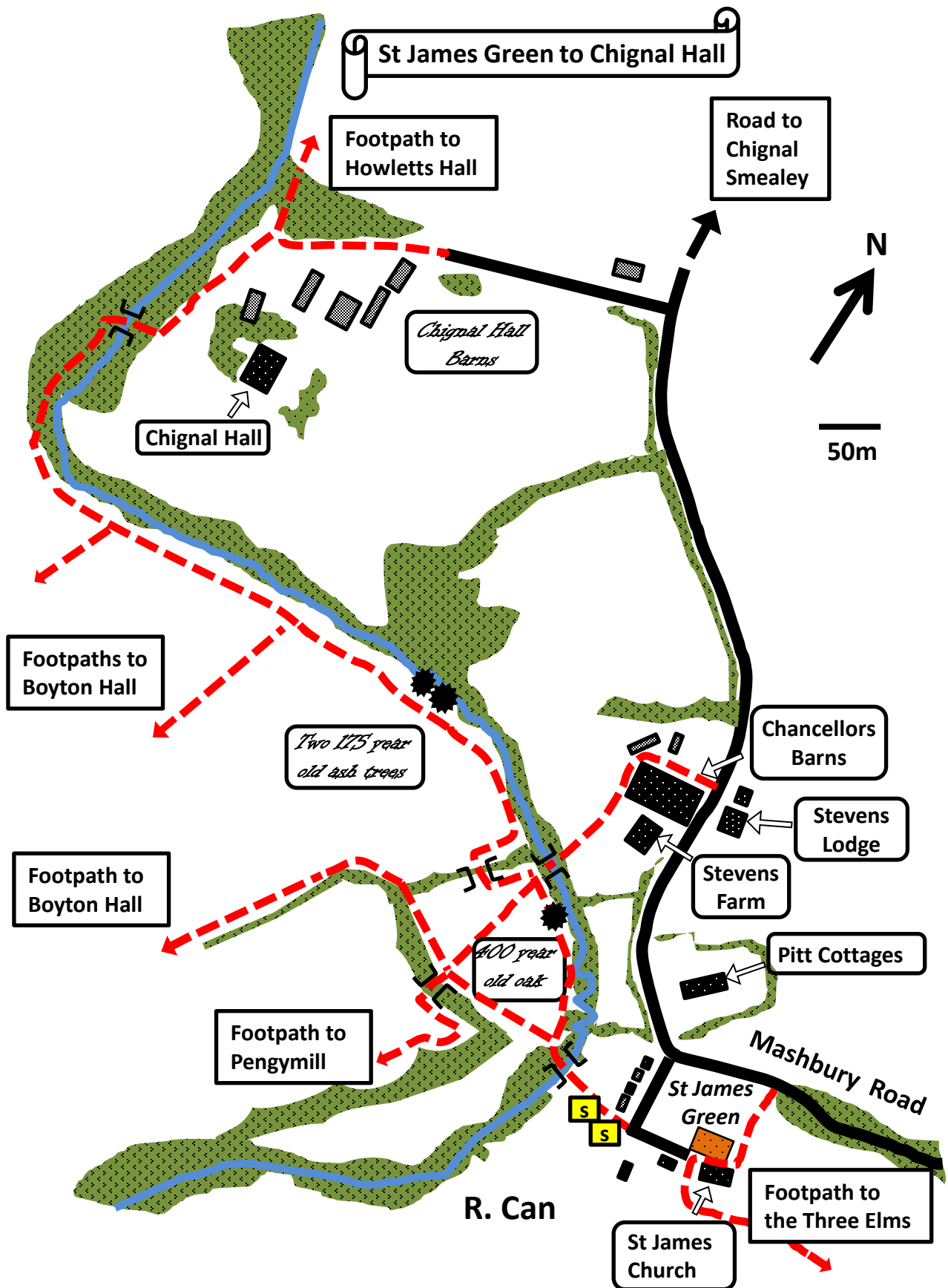
Chignal Parish Map of Route Pages

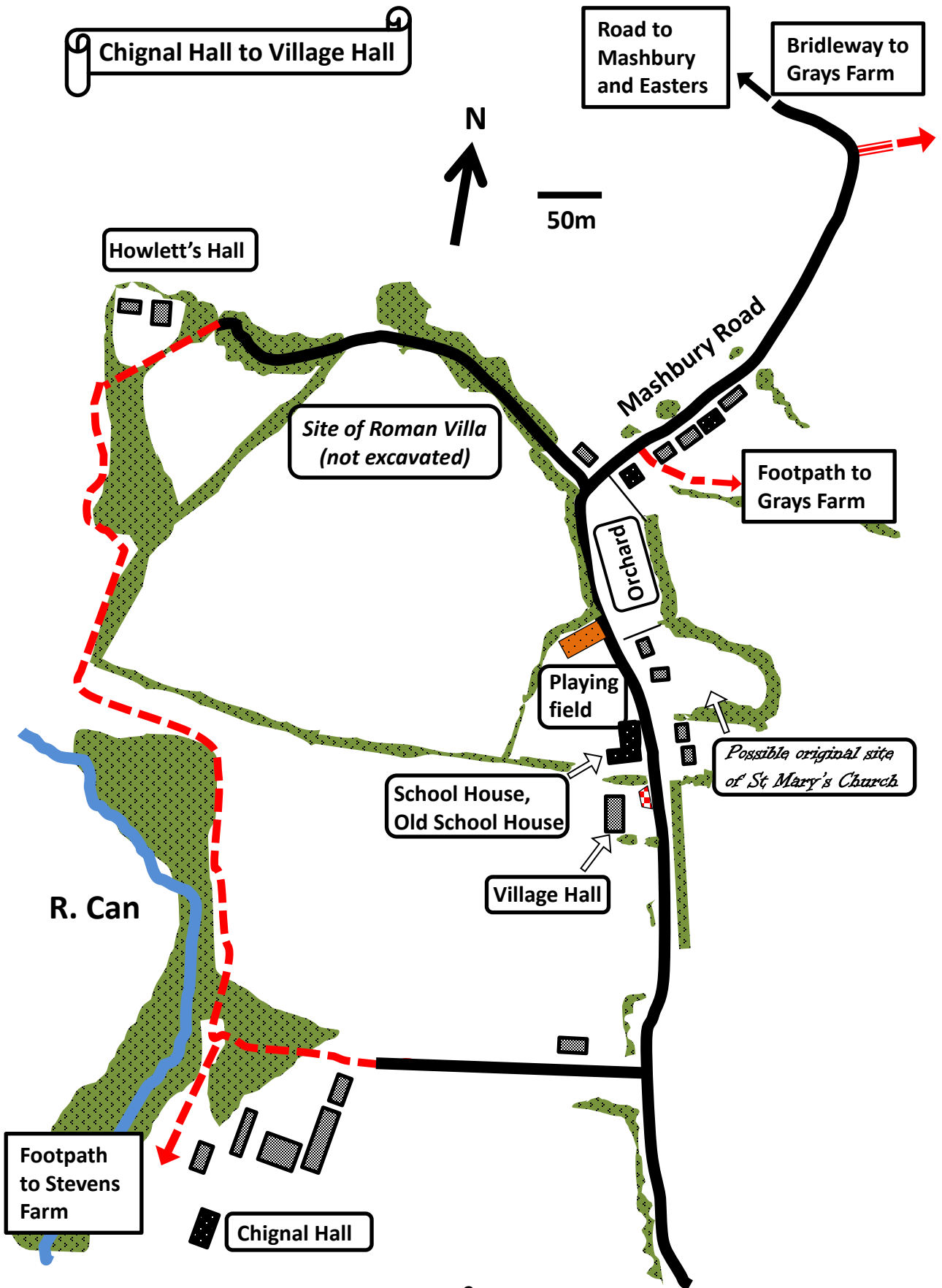


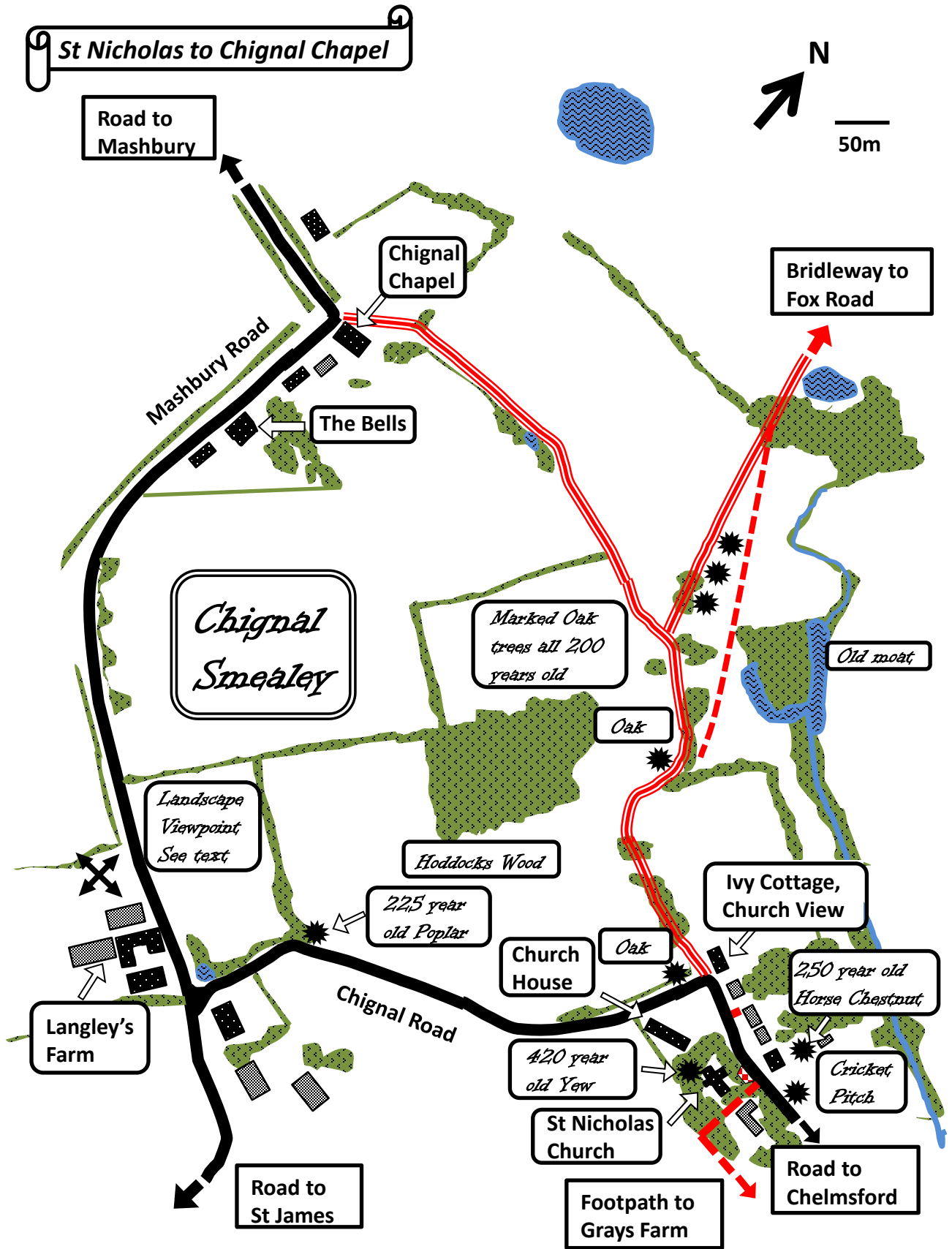




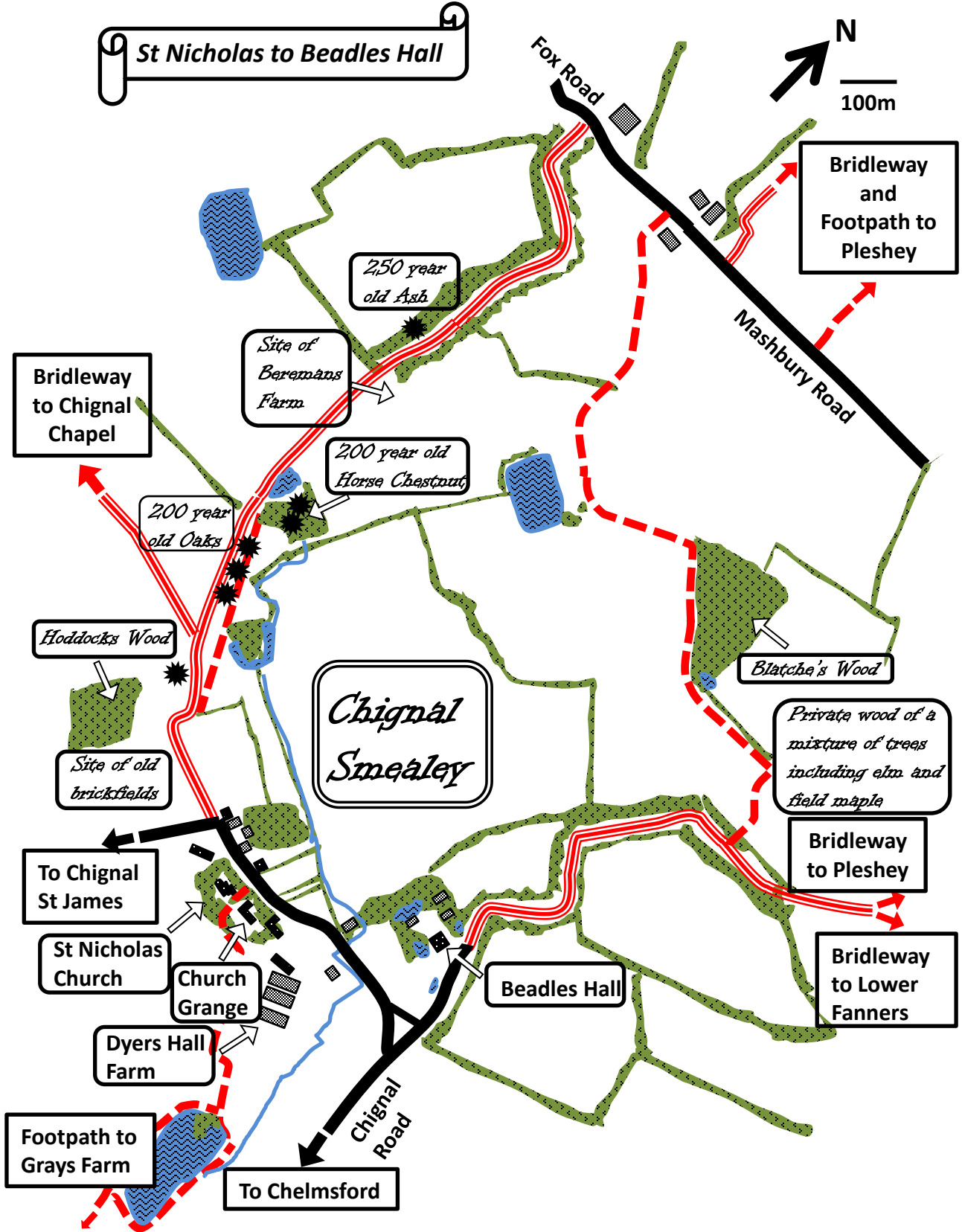


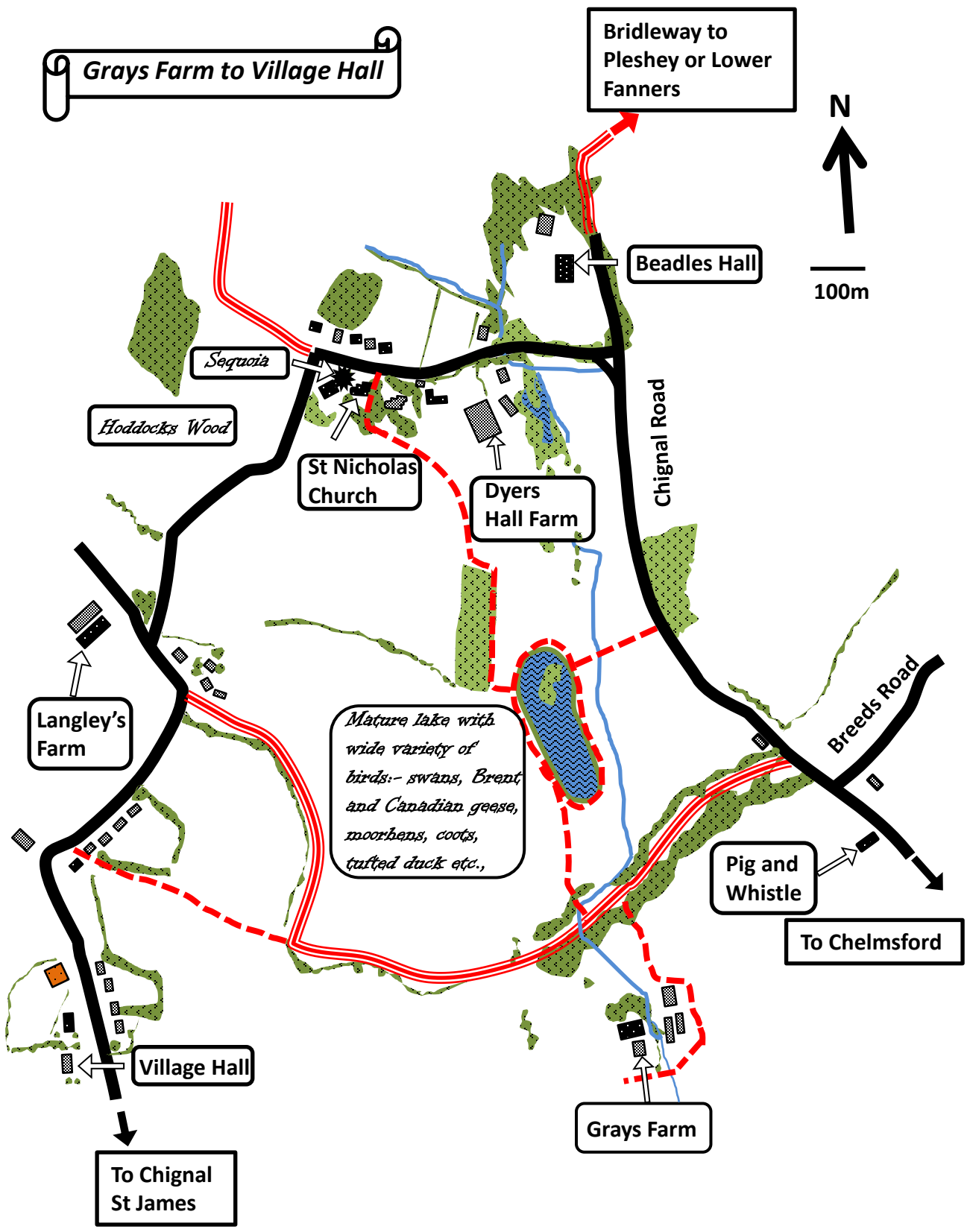


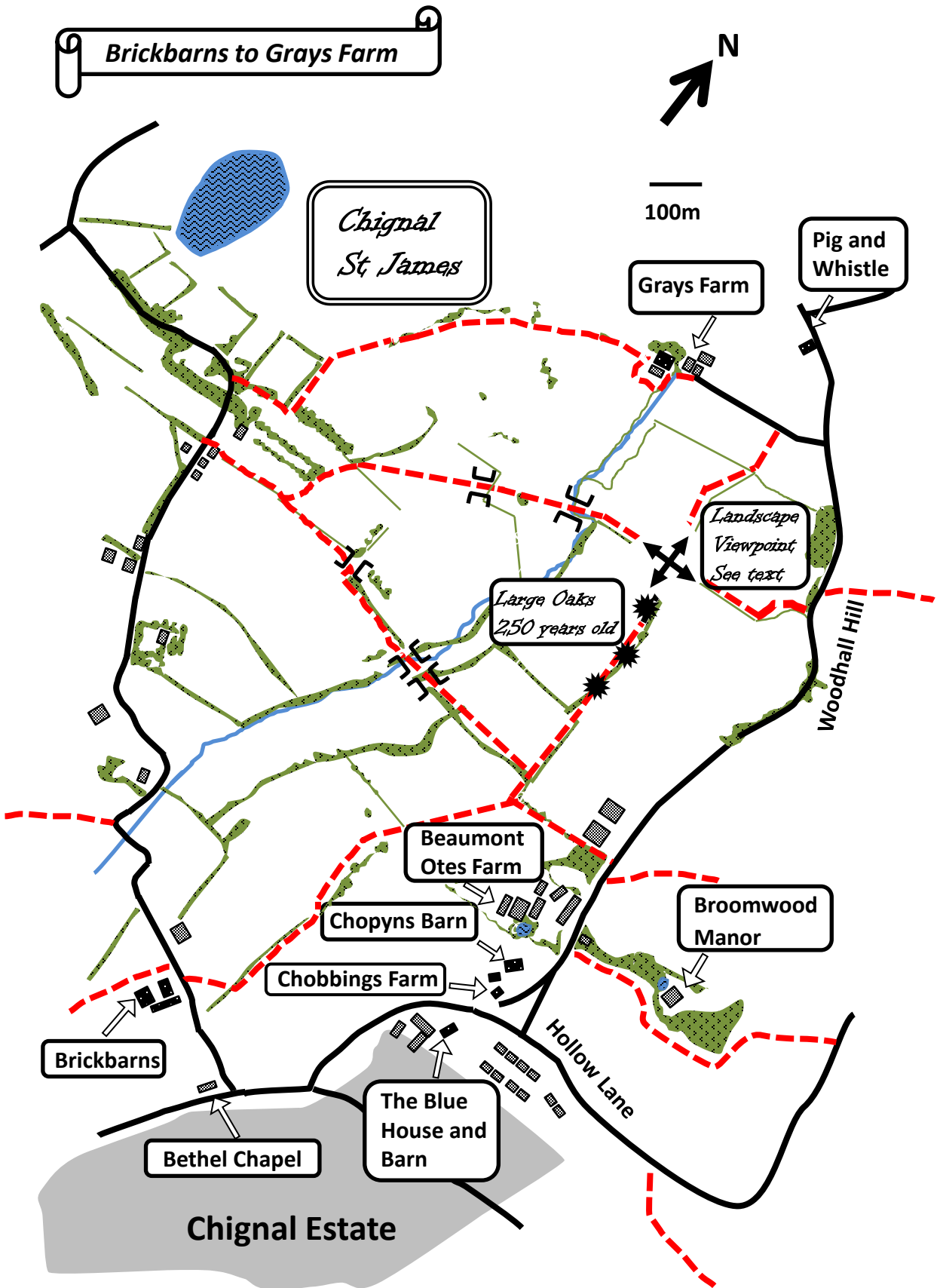


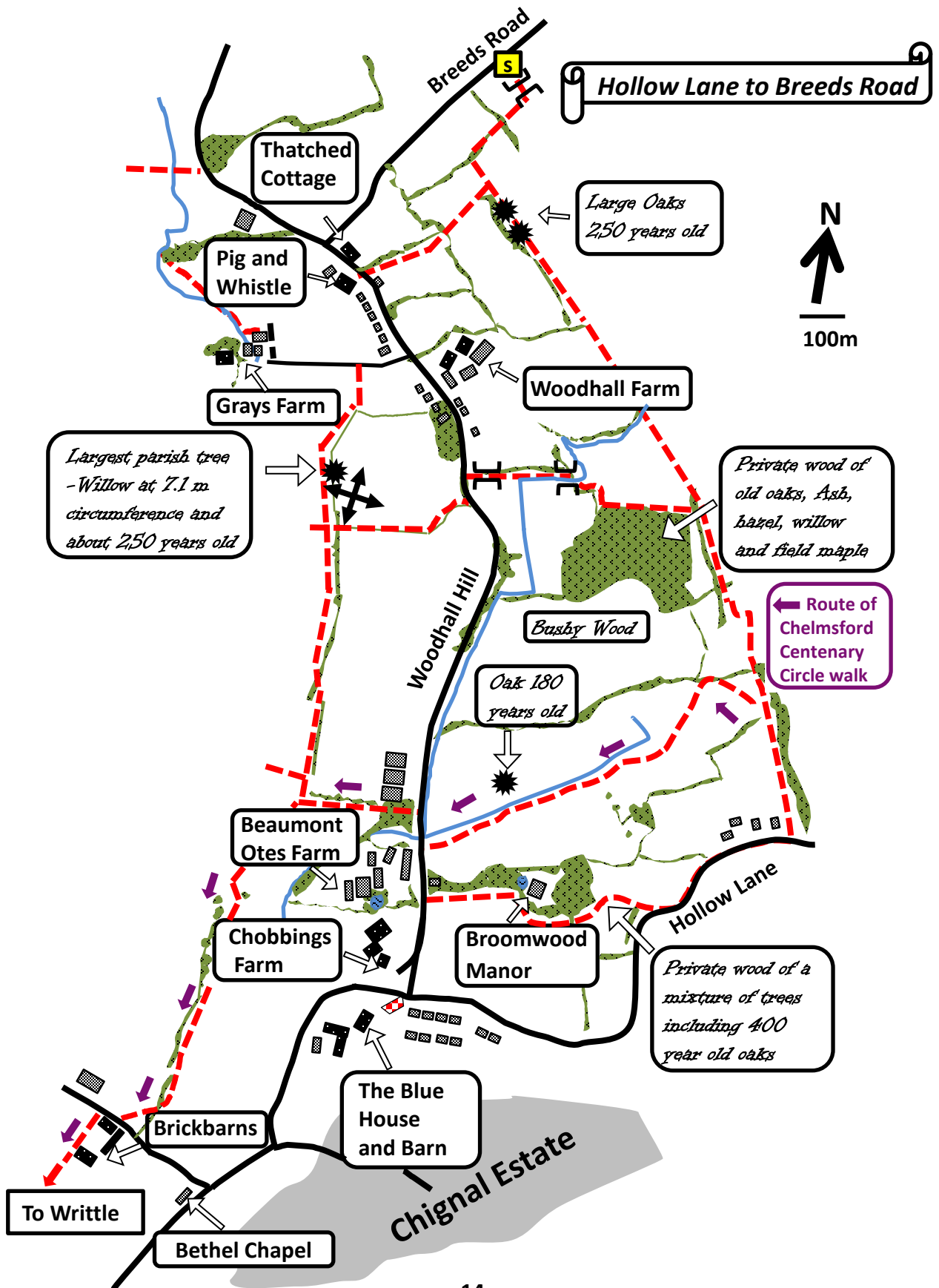


St Nicholas to Beadles Hall









A Brief Description of Houses, Farms and Places of Interest in the Parish

The places of interest are described in a clockwork order to compliment the different footpath maps.

Bethel Baptist Chapel - The small green painted tin chapel can be found at the entrance to the Chignal Parish and the start of the field system. The chapel has been in active use since its original construction in 1926 and is currently used by the Skylark Church.

Brickbarns Farm and Barns - Originally built in 17th century, the house (GII) has been modernised. More recently the wooden barn facing the road and old brick barn with gable dovecote have been converted into modern homes. The brick barn (GII) is of historic interest as probably the only example of an existing gabled end barn with dovecote in Essex.

Pieces Cottage - Originally 6 terraced houses for farmworkers. either converted or replaced as a single house. Currently part of a horticultural business.

Brettons - A large detached house setback from the main road. The row of ten Lombardy poplars behind the house can be seen from numerous places within the parish.

Brittons Hall Farm - Built C18, typical farmhouse, land associated with this farm was used for gravel extraction then infilled with refuse from Chelmsford. The farm house has the original metal C20 fingerboard sign.

Three Elms - A C17 building used as a pub since 1833 but recently closed and now awaiting developments. Built of timber construction with a pebble dash finish.

Old Rectory - Built in 1830s using yellow brick as a vicarage for St James Church, converted to a house in 1950s.

St James Church - Built of flint rubble and stone in the 13th or 14th century, St James Church (GII* - grade II plus) was converted into a house in 1960s. The church retains many features from later centuries.

Church Cottage and Jacobs Cottage - Weatherboard C18 pair of houses both Grade II listed. Church Cottage was once an alehouse.

Reclaimed Landfill Park - A place of interest, as after gravel extraction the land has been infilled with refuse from Chelmsford and now restored for use as nature reserve. The site is still being managed so the bridleway is permissive and can be closed if there is ongoing work on the site. Most of the land is planted either as a wild flower meadow or with a variety of trees. Lots of wildlife use the area including skylarks, swallows, swifts, kestrels and green plovers.

Pengymill - C15 Clapperboard house (GII), the original farm buildings that were on the paddock to the south of the house have been demolished. Wood copse to the north of the house is a recent planting during formation of the gravel pit/landfill.

Pitt Cottages - Built in 1842 on the site of an old gravel pit as six farmworker's cottages for Stevens Farm. Converted to three houses in 1960. Stock brick used were from the Smealy brickworks.

Stevens Farm - Victorian farmhouse (GII) named after an old Chignal family Steverne. Internally the house retains some Victorian features such as reset wooden shutters.

Chancellor's Barns - Designed by Frederick Chancellor and built in 1858 for William Crush of Stevens Farm possibly for use as cattle sheds or grain storage. Brickwork used Smealey stock bricks. Converted into three houses in early 2010s, all grade II listed.

Stevens Lodge – Built in 1844 as house and granary. Modernised house with a connecting timber granary built on saddle stones - the 'stone mushrooms'.

Chignall Hall - One of the oldest buildings in the parish as originally built in 16th century of timber and plaster. The moated hall (GII) has been modified over the years from its original H shape. There is evidence of a Saxon settlement between the Hall and the River Can. The separate granary building is also listed as grade II.

Village Hall - A modern building constructed in early 2010 by grant money from Tarmac/Lafarge. The air conditioned building replaced a former WW2 barracks used as the village hall and is widely used within the parish for functions and by various clubs.

The Old School House/Old School - The school and schoolmaster's house were built in 1849 and were in use as a school up to late 1960s, then converted into two modern houses in the 1990s. One shows signs of damage from a WW2 doodlebug, a flying bomb.

Village Playing Field - The playing field has a parking area, a football goal, croquet pitch and gazebo shelter. The field is routinely used by local villagers and by the whole Parish for the annual village fete.

St Mary's Cottage – set in the grounds of the old St Mary's church. Originally the third church in the parish in the hamlet which was known as Chignal village.

Village Orchard - A relatively recent development, but planted with a variety of heritage apples, pears and quinces. The centre of the orchard is kept as a wild flower meadow. Visitors are welcome to sit or look around at the trees and flowers.

Roman Villa - There is nothing visible to see! The villa was identified from crop markings and has not been excavated because it lies underground within the field and is not under immediate danger of damage. The cemetery related to villa and its workers has been investigated and the study reported in the Essex Records.

Hillside Cottages - Built in the C18 with clapperboard frontage, now modernised.

Howlett's Hall - A modern house on the grounds of a C18 demolished hall.

Chessins - Built possibly in 18th century.

Langley's Farm - A working farm, originally built in 18th century. Large house with double pile gabled tiled roofs. A number of C19 barns and outbuildings comprise the farm complex.

Chignal Chapel – Built in 1842 and the manse added in 1877. The chapel still has weekly services and is part of the United Reformed Church.

The Bells - Originally built in 17th century as a single dwelling, once used as a pub called The Five (or possibly Six) Bells. At one time converted to three cottages, currently a modernised single dwelling.

Beremans Farm - Demolished in 1940s along with farm buildings, one of a group of demolished houses, halls or farms on the roadway, now bridleway, linking Chignal Smealy to Fox Road.

Church House - Timber framed and plastered house (GII) originally built in C15 or C16.

Red Telephone Box - This is of historic interest as used for communication before phones were mobile. The boxes at Smealy is still working and designated as Grade II but the St James K6 box is not listed and was bought by the parish for £1. Both maintained as landscape markers.

Church End Cottage - Timber framed and brick fronted house (G11) built in 16th century, formerly a pub or alehouse called the Wheatsheaf in 1800s.

Orchard House - Former village shop until 1971, originally built in early 19th century.

Chignal Grange - Former rectory for St Nicholas Church, built in 1868 to a design by Frederic Chancellor. Brick built and converted into a private dwelling in 1968.

St Nicholas Church - C16 brick built church (GII*) extended in 1847 using bricks from Smealy brickyard. St Nicholas is only one of two brick built churches in Essex. The church still in use for religious services for the whole of Chignal Parish.

Dyers Hall - Currently used as a stables. This was the original site of Dyers Hall which was demolished in 1900s, but had been documented back to medieval times when it was known as Dyves Hall.

Beadles Hall - Named after family Bedels whose generations lived on this site for 400 years. Current house dates from 18th century has a rare two story brick porch.

Thatched Cottage - Built in 17th century. There was a bakehouse oven within the grounds dated 1646.

Forge Cottage - Modern house on site of old smithy which was demolished in 1971

Pig and Whistle - Pub and restaurant built in C19. The name Pig and Whistle is not widely used in England and is one of seven so named pubs.

Grays Farmhouse - Originally a C15 or C16 moated house (GII) altered over the years into 2 houses but still retains some original features. Still used as a working farm.

Woodhall Farm - Originally a timber framed and plastered C18 farmhouse, now converted into 2 cottages. Farm has a variety of buildings on the site including a five bay C18 barn considered to be of historic interest.

Broomwood Manor - Elizabethan style looking building with wooden purlins between brickwork. The house was actually built in 1913 for Christy Miller, a local historian. The grounds are extensive and include a range of trees including old oaks and are a haven for wildlife, as not farmed and grounds enclosed by a fence. Broom Wood is shown on the 1777 map of Essex.

Beaumont Otes - A collection of farm buildings including old weatherboard barns and some brick buildings. The buildings were originally part of a farm which included Beaumont Otes house or hall owned by the Petre family. A detailed map of the farm and farmland made in 1599 is available from Essex Records.

Chopyn's Barn - A grade II listed clapperboard barn from 17th century.

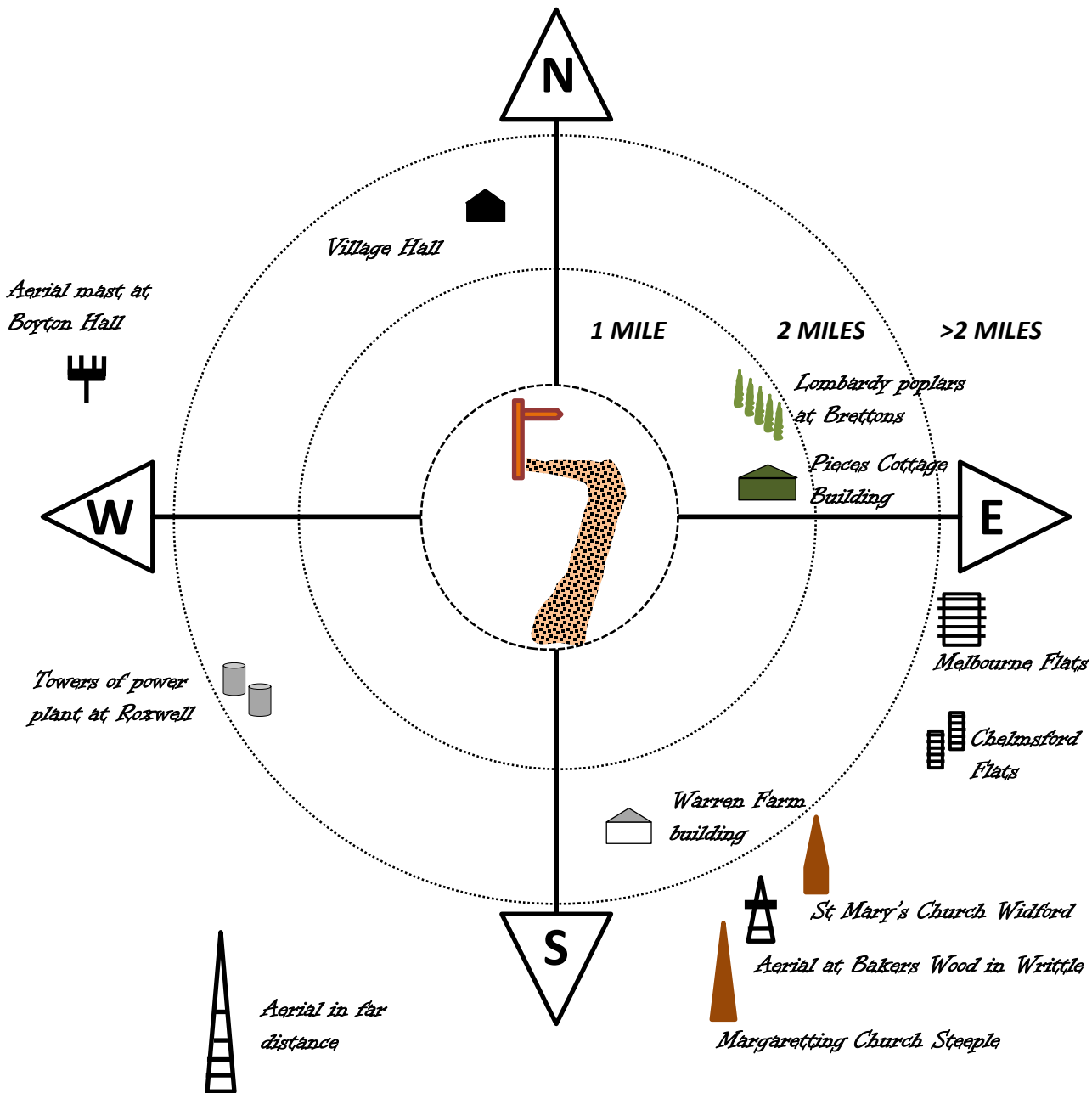
Chobbings Farm - Grade II* listed. The farm was built in C14 as a barn and later converted to a house, of interest because of the timber framed chimney stack. Separate granary from C17, is grade II listed as a typical example of the era.

Blue House and Barn - The farmhouse (GII) dates from 17th century and is timber framed and plastered, recently decorated with pargetting. The barn (GII) is five bays in size and has a thatched roof.

Chelmsford Centenary Circle – A 21 mile walk around Chelmsford which starts at Galleywood Common Car Park. The walk from Broomfield, includes the Beaumont Otes and the Brickbarns footpaths and then goes on to Writtle. The circular walk shape is similar in profile to the heads of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II, and commemorates the 1888 declaration of Chelmsford as borough.

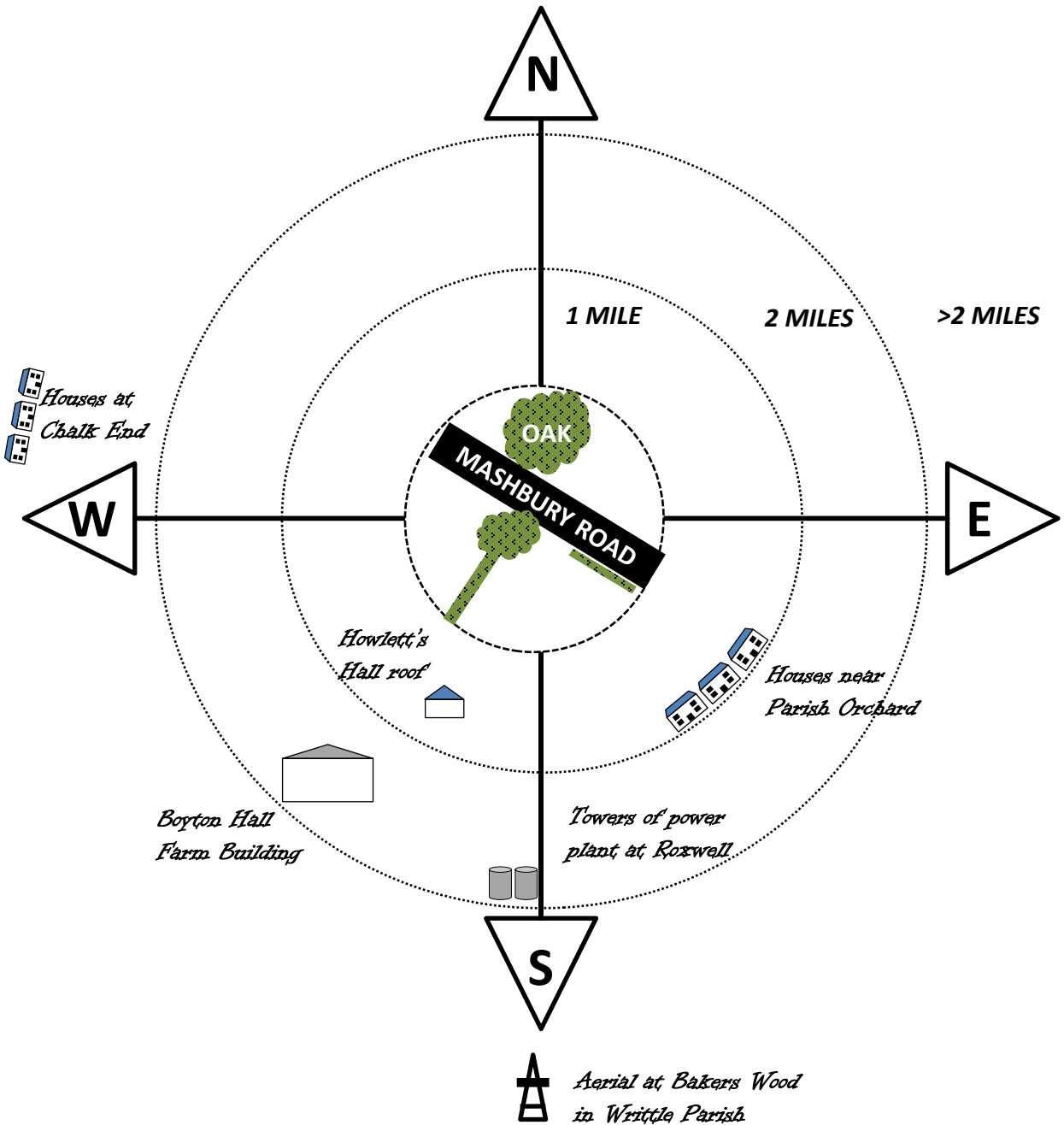
Parish Field Names – in the 1890s there was a toll or tithe that had to be paid to the church by landowners. Originally it was paid by goods such as wheat, etc., but it was decided that the church tithe should be paid in cash. The whole of England was accounted for, and every landowner charged the appropriate amount. The interesting fact about this tithe is they recorded all the fields and their landowners on a map which included the field names. You can learn the names of all the parish fields such as bushy bottom, bitteris, hully, ladyworks, ridden, little watermans, billy brights, etc., and still compare their size and shape to existing fields today. See the James Kemble 2013 article for Essex Records Office available on the internet.

LANDSCAPE VIEWPOINT FROM RECLAIMED LANDFILL PARK



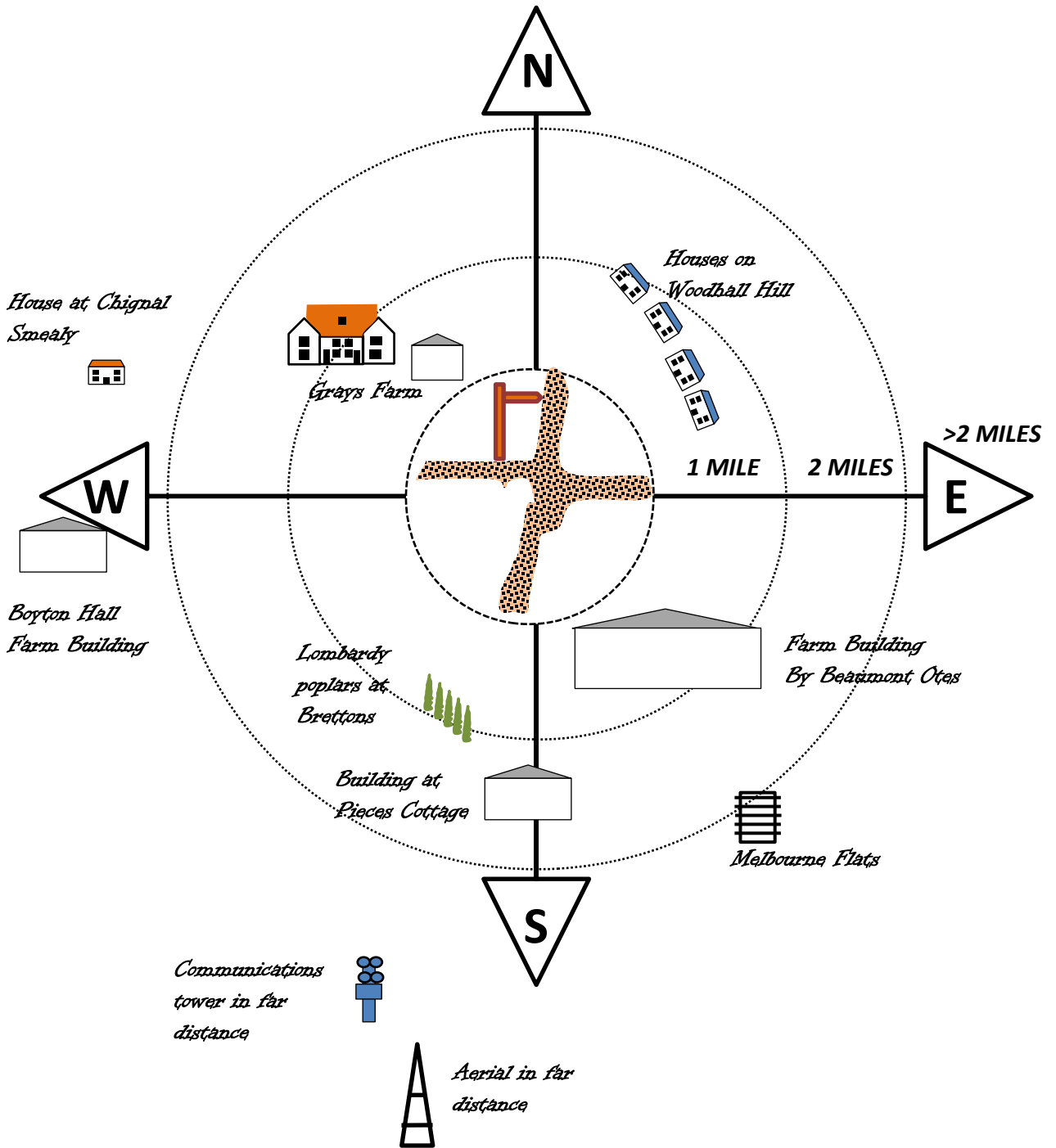
View of the different features may be partially obscured during the summer by trees, which have not been shown on page. This position of this landscape viewpoint is shown on Reclaimed landfill Park map. Exact location about 20 yards from footpath signpost on the path towards the bridge on the south side of the hill.

LANDSCAPE VIEWPOINT NEAR TO LANGLEY'S FARM

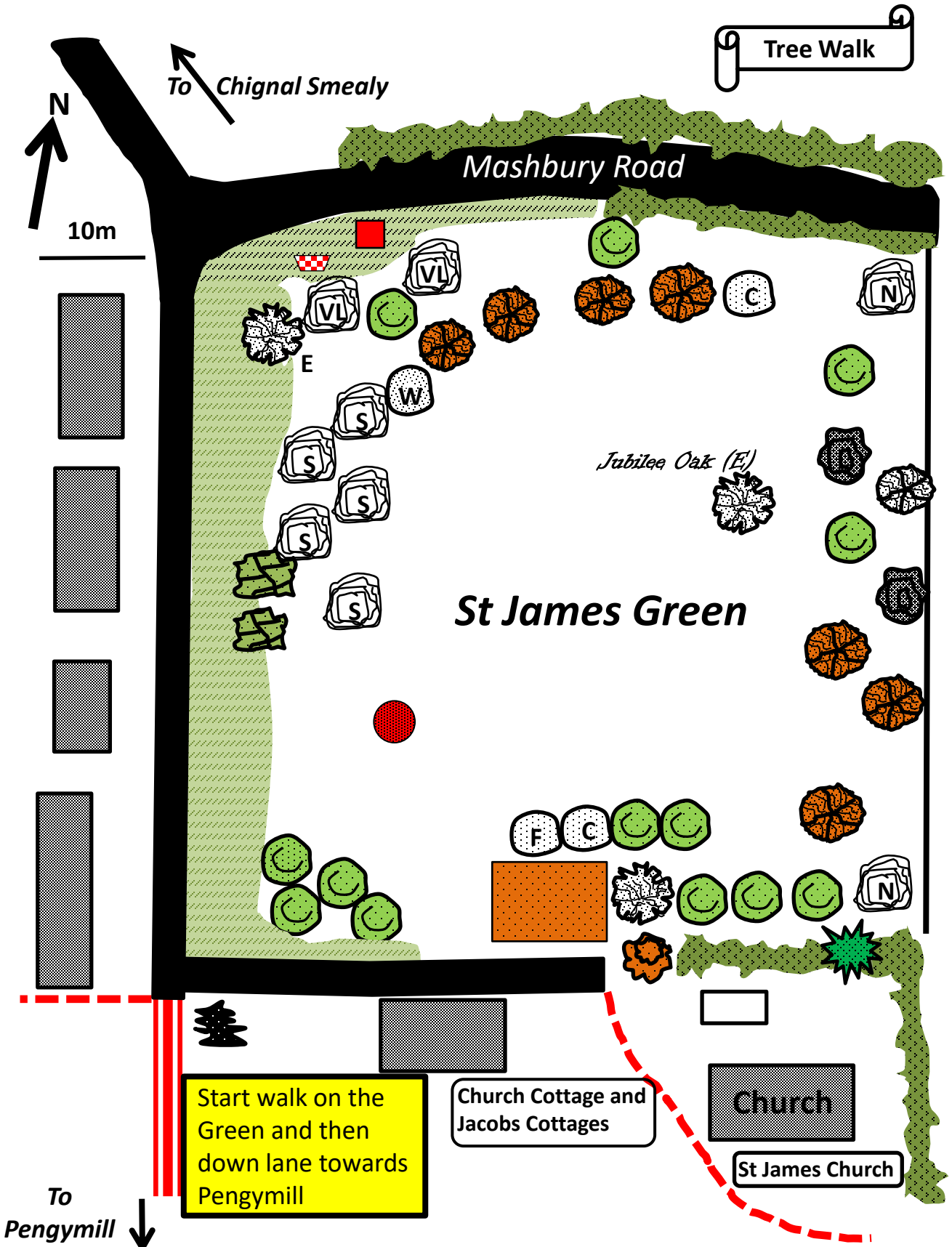


View of the different features may be partially obscured during the summer by trees, which have not been shown on page. This position of this landscape viewpoint is shown on Chignal Smealy to Chignal Chapel map. Exact location about 300 yards up from Langley's Farm on Mashbury Road leading to the Chignal Chapel.

LANDSCAPE VIEWPOINT FROM GRAYS FARM FOOTPATHS



View of the different features may be partially obscured during the summer by trees, which have not been shown on page. This position of this landscape viewpoint is shown on Brickbarns to Grays Farm and Hollow Lane to Grays Farm maps. Exact location is where the two footpaths meet close to a footpath signpost.



KEY TO SYMBOLS



OAK English oak - smooth lobate leaf (by telephone box)
northern pin oak - sharp pointed leaf (by church)



ASH pinnate (5 sets of paired leaves plus one in front)



MAPLE palmate, different varieties distinguished by leaf shape
S = silver, N = norway, VL = vine leafed



HORSECHESTNUT palmate (5 separate fingers) leaf, conkers



LIME oval leaf with sharp pointed tip, serrated edge to leaf



HORNBEAM oval leaf with slight pointed tip and serrated leaf
F = fastigate, W = weeping, C = common



WALNUT oblong leaf with rounded tip



CHERRY bright green oval leaf with slight pointed tip



SYCAMORE similar to maple palmate leaf, but red stalk



ELM oval leaf with small pointed tip, serrated edge to leaf



HOLLY shiny, dark green with spines on edge of leaf

Identification of the different trees by their leaf, bark or fruit can be helped by using a free phone app - British Trees by the Woodland Trust



50m

St James Green

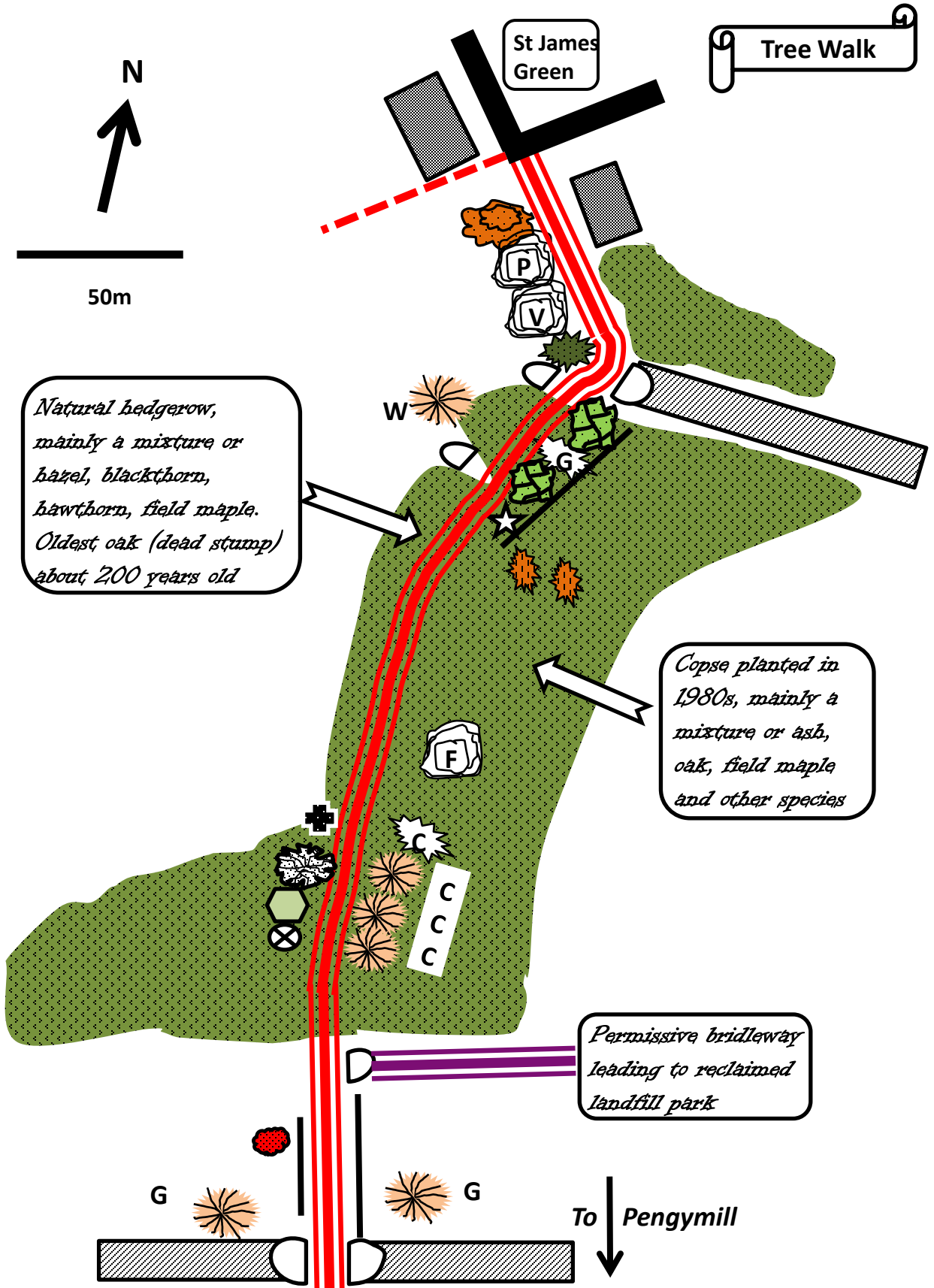
Tree Walk

Natural hedgerow, mainly a mixture of hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, field maple. Oldest oak (dead stump) about 200 years old

Copse planted in 1980s, mainly a mixture of ash, oak, field maple and other species

Permissive bridleway leading to reclaimed landfill park

To Pengymill



KEY TO SYMBOLS



WALNUT oblong leaf with rounded tip



MAPLE palmate, different varieties distinguished by leaf shape
V = variegated, P = purple, F = field – small leaf



HAZEL oval leaf with sharp pointed tip, serrated edge to leaf



ASH pinnate (5 sets of paired leaves plus one in front)



WILLOW W = white, long pointed leaf, white underside
C = crack, very long pointed leaf , G = goat, round leaf



POPLAR G = grey, oval with lobate edge and white underside
C = Canadian green heart-shaped leaf



ALDER irregular edge to leaf



SILVER BIRCH silvery coloured smooth bark



HAWTHORN small lobate leaf, fruit haws



ELDER palmate leaf with large white flowers or purple fruit



BLACKTHORN small oval leaf, fruit sloes



OAK English oak - smooth edged lobate leaf



CHERRY bright green oval leaf with slight pointed tip

Identification of the different trees by their leaf, bark or fruit can be helped by using a free phone app - British Trees by the Woodland Trust

Wildlife Identification Guide and Tips

This section gives some tips and help on how to distinguish between some species of animals and birds. The wildlife described is often seen in the parish and could appear on any of the walks. For further details of the animals and birds see appropriate books or via internet Apps.

Swifts and Swallows

Swifts fly continuously and even sleep on the wing, so if the bird is on a phone or electrical wire it will be a swallow. In flight, swifts tend to fly higher than swallows and swifts have a more curved wing pattern. Close up, swallows have a white chest and red face; swifts are very dark brown and appear black. Martins (house and sand) are similar to swallows but these are rarely seen in the parish.

Hawks

Big hawks wheeling around high up in the sky are either buzzards or red kites. Red kites have a distinctive V shaped tail and narrow wings, buzzards have a fan tail and broad wings. Other large hawks may be seen in passage through the parish but the most frequently seen is the buzzard. Buzzards have a distinctive call, especially when flying in groups, described as 'whee-eur'.

A smaller hawk could be a kestrel or a sparrowhawk. Kestrels are frequently seen hovering in the sky and then swoop down or fly off. Sparrowhawks are generally seen flying past at speed, they have incredible flying skill and will fly between trees and branches at full speed. If you spot a collection of bird feathers on the ground look for downy feathers as sparrowhawks pluck their kill before eating.

Owls

We have three owls in the parish that are seen or more often heard. The little owl is tiny, about the size of a blackbird and will perch on the top of telegraph poles and give their distinctive 'kiew' call. Barn owls fly at dusk and dawn, appear white at this time of day, and fly without making any sound. They can be seen quartering fields and paddocks looking for mice or voles. Barn owl calls are a very eerie shriek. Tawny owls are the ones that fly at night and give the toowhit, toohoo calls, actually the male calls toohoo and the female toowhit. These cries are often heard in early winter as the newly fledged birds learn to hunt. There are a number of owl nestboxes around the parish that have been put up in the bigger trees. Owls tend to nest in holes in trees and can occasionally be seen during the day close to the trees. There are other owls in the country but they are rarely seen in the parish.

Woodpeckers

There are two species of woodpecker seen locally. The green woodpecker are often seen on the ground searching for ants. The greater spotted woodpecker are black and white birds with a red head that can be seen on trees or poles. Greater spotted woodpeckers are the ones that make the drumming sound in spring by pecking at trees. The lesser spotted woodpecker is rare and smaller than the greater spotted.

Crows, rooks and jackdaws

All three are black in colour and therefore can be difficult to distinguish. Rooks tend to group together on land and waddle along looking for food in pastureland. Rooks are highly gregarious nesting birds and will form rookeries during the breeding season or roost together in winter. Rooks often have bare faces around their beaks especially when old. Jackdaws are smaller than rooks and have a dark grey chest and neck. They tend to pair up in summer but are seen with rooks in winter. The carrion crow is usually seen singly or in pairs. Blacker than the rook and has smooth trousers whereas the top of rook's legs have a more shaggy appearance.

Jay and Magpie

Obviously different close up, magpies are black and white and jays have a pink coloured body. Because both birds are easily disturbed or hide in trees it is more usual to hear their harsh screeching call. In flight both birds have black and white tails. Magpies more common in the parish but jays are a recent arrival.

Cuckoos and Pigeons

We are all familiar to the repetitive call of the cuckoo which begins in April and finishes in late June. The birds then return to South Africa. You can see cuckoos in flight; they rarely call when flying, but look very similar to wood pigeons as both appear grey at a distance. Cuckoos have a barred grey and white body whereas wood pigeons are grey with white patches on their wings. In flight, the long kestrel-like tail of the cuckoo may help distinguish these birds. Collared Doves can look like wood pigeons at a distance when perched on trees or wires. The collared dove has a light brown coloured body. Calls distinguish these birds; collared doves repeat call sounds like 'united - united' wood pigeons calls are more complex. Wood pigeons can often be seen in large groups on fields, doves normally singly or in pairs.

Heron and Little Egret

The heron is grey in appearance, very large and frequently seen standing stock still next to a lake or streams waiting to catch fish or amphibians. It is possible to miss the bird when seen straight on as they are very narrow in width. Flight is slow and ponderous with the legs and feet held back beyond the tail. White egrets are all white! They are relatively large heron-like birds and can be seen stalking wet meadows or close to water looking for food.

Hedgerow birds

These are a nightmare to recognise, especially the small brown birds! Yellow head and chested birds are probably yellowhammer, small pink area on chest and brown backed birds probably linnets. Chiffchaffs are named after their call and when seen are small yellowish green birds incredibly similar to the willow warbler or wood warbler. Other brown backed birds with black strips on wings are female linnets, hedge sparrows (also called dunnocks) or a bunting or a warbler.

Reed birds

Often when walking past reed beds you can hear the constant singing of a bird, but you will not see it, as the bird will be deep down in the reeds. If you wait you may just catch sight of the singing bird. If it has a black skull cap and a brown and white body it is a reed bunting, if it has a greenish/yellow body it is a reed warbler. If you do not have the patience to wait you can record the song on the voice record app of your mobile phone and then compare to songs on the Internet.

Canadian and Brent Geese

In flight both species of birds fly in V formation with lots of calling. Close up, Canadian geese have a black head and neck with a white patch around neck. Brent geese have a dark brown neck and top of body. Both species can often be seen grazing on land, sometimes mixed together.

Moorhens and Coots

Both seen on lakes, coots are the black birds with white beaks and foreheads, moorhens the brown backed with a grey chest and red forehead. If you get close enough, coots have pale green legs.

Other birds to look out for are:-

Lapwing can be seen on the reclaimed landfill nature reserve as they wheel about in the air with distinctive black and white wings with large square wing tips often giving their 'peewee' call. Dark green coat on back but appears black in flight.

Skylarks, these are the birds that fly high up but constantly sing above fields and pastures. They appear to fall down when going to ground; on land a dull brown bird with small crest.

Look out for kingfishers around water; normally you just see a flash of electric blue as they fly away.

Tree creepers, tiny brown and white chested birds who can walk down tree trunks. Firecrest is another tiny bird similar to wren in size but with a yellow and black crest on head.

Fallow and Muntjac Deer

Fallow deer are normally reddish brown with white dapple spots on their flanks and sides, but they can be almost black or almost white. Generally seen in the breeding season in small groups of three to five animals, in winter or late summer can be in groups of over twenty animals. They can be seen in open fields but prefer field margins or copses during daylight. Muntjac are smaller than fallow deer and are all mid brown in colour. They tend to be seen singly in fields or in the edges of fields grazing. When moving away, muntjac has a distinctive white tail which they raise vertically.

Stoats, weasels or polecats

All these animals are brown coated with long tails and are mainly nocturnal so not often seen. Weasels are the smallest and have a brown coat and tail with a white or creamy chest. They feed on rats, mice or voles and hunt using speed to catch their prey. Stoats have a white chest, brown tail

with the last third black. When on the move they can be seen bouncing up and over long grass. They may be small but will hunt and kill rabbits which are twice their size. Polecats are the largest of the three and resemble ferrets.

Otter and Mink

Otters have been seen in the parish but are rare; they are large animals about the same weight as a cat. Otters are light brown in colour with a long smooth tail, whereas mink are dark brown with bushier tails when dry. Mink are now more common than otters; they are about the same size as a ferret or polecat so much smaller than an otter.

Rats and Water Voles

Both brown, both probably glimpsed as they disappear into the undergrowth but the water vole has the shortest tail. Unfortunately the number of water voles is in dramatic decline so chances are the animal is a rat.

Fox and Badger

Obviously different if you see them, fox is the reddish brown animal with long brush tail with black tip, badgers black and white. They are in this guide so you can distinguish signs of their habitat rather than description of the animal as badgers are nocturnal and foxes hide in undergrowth. Badgers live in setts, basically big tunnel systems generally built in woodland and often reasonably close to water. The entrances to the setts are a number of large holes with large amounts of dug earth in front. Rabbit holes are smaller with less earth. Foxes like living in undergrowth or under cover of suitable buildings. The other distinguishing feature is their poo! Badgers use latrines, small holes dug in the ground often found close to footpaths, foxes poo look similar to dog, but often have seeds or fruit stones as foxes are omnivorous.

Hare and Rabbit

The hare is larger than the rabbit and much, much faster when running at full speed. Both are brown with whitish chests but rabbits have white flags on their tail. The hare has larger black tipped ears that stand up when the animal is watching for predators. Rabbits tend to lop along when moving slowly whereas the hare has a straighter back and have a more purposeful movement. Rabbits live in burrows but hares breed and live on the ground.

Adders, Grass snakes and slow worms

We do have adders in the parish; they are generally not dangerous as they disappear as soon as they get disturbed. Contrary to general belief, hardly anyone has died of an adder bite in this country in the last hundred years since the development of anti-venom serum, more people die of rat related Weill's disease or bee stings. Adder bites are dangerous and can cause severe reactions so seek medical help if you or your dog is bitten. Adders have a black zigzag stripe down their back; grass snakes have a creamy or yellowish neck collar. Grass snakes are not venomous but can live

in the same areas as adders, so to be safe do not pick up any snakes. Young smaller snakes could be confused with the smaller slow worms which are actually legless lizards and not a snake. Slow worms generally dark brown and have a thicker body than snakes. Again if not sure, leave alone.

Frogs and Toads

Often seen in large numbers close to ponds or lakes in the breeding season, but found singly at other times. Frogs have smooth wet looking skin; toads have warty looking skin and drier-looking in appearance. Both species have mottled brown, green or yellowish skin. Frog spawn is seen as clumps of single black eggs surrounded by clear jelly, toad spawn as long strands of clear jelly with lines of black eggs. Frog tadpoles are larger than toad tadpoles and are brownish in colour.

Newts

Normally found in water. Britain has three species of newts:-smooth, palmate and greater crested. Smooth newts are brown backed and the males have a crest on their backs during the mating season. Smooth newts have a yellow/orange belly with small black spots, but no spots under the throat. Palmate newts are rarely found in this area, they are very similar in appearance to smooth newts but have black spots under the throat. The greater crested newt is found in the parish and is a protected species. This newt is nearly twice as large as the other species and measure up to 7 inches in length. They have very dark brown backs and deep orange underparts with black blotches. The easiest way to find out if your pond or a local pond has newts is to look for them at night using a torch. The adults are air breathing so during the day surface quickly for air about once every two or three minutes, but at night they stay closer to the pond surface.

Bats

There are 17 different types of bats native to Britain and one European visitor. Bats fly at dusk and hunt using echolocation. The most common bat is the common pipistrelle. They appear quite large when flying around but are tiny mammals weighing 3 or 8g (about the same weight as a 20p coin). They only appear in the summer and on warm days. Bats hibernate during the winter in roosts either in roofs of buildings or in crevices in trees. They are a protected species and should not be disturbed. Identification of the different types bats is rather a specialist's job, but mobile bat detectors can pick out the echolocation call frequency which may be distinctive for different types of bat.

References and Articles for Further Reading

Parish History

The Chignalls Village Design Statement written in 2007 (www.docplayer.net) gives a very good short history of the parish and some of parish buildings. The statement also gives the parish council's views on development within the parish.

Listed Buildings (www.historicengland.org.uk), lists all Grade II buildings in the parish and described the unique features that have led to the buildings being listed.

Register of Building of Local Interest (www.chelmsford.gov.uk), this document covers the parish buildings considered to be 'of interest' as most of the buildings are at least 100 years old.

Three Parishes in Mid Essex by AJ Wilkins, a book giving detailed history of both Chignalls and Mashbury.

C.P. Clarke, 1998. 'Excavations to the south of Chignall Roman villa, Essex 1977-81. East Anglian Archeology 83. Details of the cemetery dig below the Roman villa (www.eaareports.org.uk).

Maps of Interest

Chapman and Andre map of Essex 1777 (www.map_of_essex.uk). Detailed map of the parish showing the buildings that existed then and includes some buildings that have demolished in the last 250 years.

Ordnance Survey maps of the parish from 1842 to 1952 (www.maps.nls.uk). A series of maps through the ages on the National Library of Scotland web-site. Comparison of maps from different ages shows new or demolished buildings.

James Kemble 2013 document for the Essex Records Office lists and maps all the names of the fields and paddocks within the parish for the late 1890s tithe (essexrecordoffice.co.uk). The document includes the names of all the owners of the fields and how much they had to pay the church tithe.

Internet Apps

PRoW Essex (www.essexhighways.org). This is an interactive app of the Public Rights of Way from Essex Council. It can be downloaded onto phones and used as a practical footpath map when walking.

British Trees (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk). Identification guides to trees using either their leaves, fruit of bark to identify a large number of native British trees.

Tree age calculator (www.tree-guide.com). This app will convert the diameter or circumference of the specified tree into an approximate age of the tree e.g. English oaks that are 2.5m in circumference are about 200 years old; oaks with a circumference of 5m about 400 years old.

The Countryside Code

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others when narrow

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit, take all litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep dogs under effective control
- Dog poo – bag it and bin it

Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures

From Natural England Countryside Code

Chignal Parish Advice

- There are no footpaths bordering the road, so wear something bright
- Cyclists do not travel side by side as traffic can be wide and fill the road