

THE CHILTERNS

Jon Scourse

The old Saxon word for chalk is *chilt*. It is therefore no surprise that the range of chalk hills that flanks the Thames Valley and forms a natural barrier to the north west of London is called the Chilterns. The Chiltern Hills are an exceptional area of England and wherever you visit you will find rolling hills, wooded valleys and exceptional brick and flint villages.

The Chilterns have a rich history, with evidence of Neolithic Man, Roman occupation and a prosperous medieval economy based on wool. From the eighteenth century, the area's proximity to London made it a favoured location for the country estates of the rich, and more recently for the home-base of city commuters. Being close to the capital, it is now also a very popular setting for films and television, including *Midsomer Murders* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

Although this accessibility has brought with it significant pressures, the Chilterns still offer great opportunities to explore a quintessentially English landscape. Once away from the motorways and major roads, the red kites foretell a quieter pace of life with small lanes bordered by deep beech hedges, wonderful woods and beautiful villages, most with a pub and a church. It is quite possible to just meander off the beaten track and to stumble across country houses and sudden views across the valleys.

Jon Scourse offers an authoritative view of this precious landscape, heavily illustrated with more than 200 colour photographs specially taken for this book. Although convenient, the car is not always the best way to explore. Far more can be seen by going slowly, by bike or on foot and Jon Scourse offers suggested routes so that the reader can use this book as the ideal on-the-ground guide or just as the perfect armchair memento of England at its best.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Scourse lives close to the River Thames near Wallingford, with easy access into the nearby Chiltern Hills. As a keen walker, he developed a strong interest in landscape photography and this is reflected in his work, especially of the changing seasons. His photography has included work in Tuscany, Brittany, Exmoor and the Scilly Isles, but his primary interest is the Chilterns and Thames Valley.

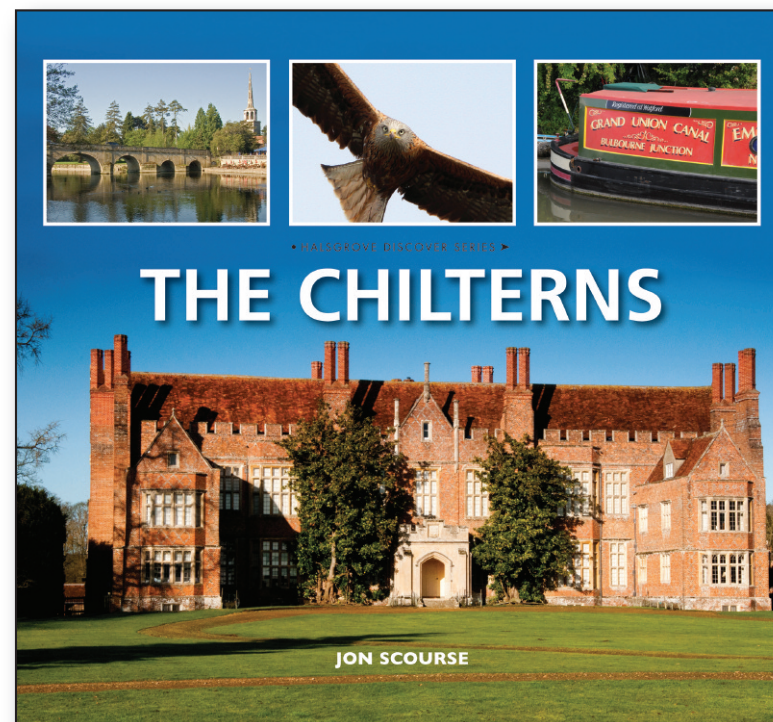
Jon started his career in the shoe industry before spending twenty years in the charity sector. In addition to his landscape photography, he continues to work as a consultant within the charity sector and is also the Chairman of The Mitchemp Trust and a Trustee at the Trust for Oxfordshire Environment.

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THE CHILTERN S



Beautiful gardens surround the almshouses and church at Ewelme.



Dragon boats race on the Thames at Temple Island.



The canal wharf at New Mill in Tring.



Right: Ashridge House, now a Management College.



Poppies in the evening near Woodcote create an almost Italian vista.
Left: Example of a double-page spread