

Chilmark

The civil parish of Chilmark is found in the south-west of the county of Wiltshire and is approximately 12 miles north-east of the city of Salisbury and 13 miles south-east of Warminster. The parish is made up of the villages of Chilmark and the hamlet of Ridge, resembling a rectangle and is made up of 3,210 acres. It stretches for two miles east to west and for three miles north to south. The village of Fonthill Bishop lies immediately to the west and Teffont Magna to the east. The parish lies within the Nadder Valley.

The population of the parish has fluctuated over the last two centuries as would be expected in a rural parish of Chilmark's size. In 1801 there were 406 people living in Chilmark, and this figure had leapt up to 619 by 1851. Just 30 years later there was a decrease in population, falling to 554 by 1881. This was happening all over the country in the mid to late 19th century as people left rural communities and moved into cities. The decline in population continued, in 1901 there were 411 people living at Chilmark. The number stayed in the 400s for the next century; at the 2001 census there were 432 people recorded as living in the parish. The centre of the parish, primarily Chilmark village, was made a conservation area in 1973, with the northern boundary of this conservation area being marked by the Black Dog Inn.

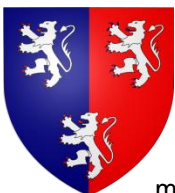
Some major roads enter the far north of the parish; there is a Roman road linking Winchester and Salisbury to the Mendip Hills at the north of Chilmark. A 'B' road runs east to west through the centre of the parish; linking Fonthill Bishop and Teffont Magna, it is now the B3089 or the Salisbury Road.

There is evidence of early settlement at Chilmark and archaeological discoveries have been found both in the north and south of the parish. Two Bronze Age tools were discovered in 1910 and 1912 at Chilmark Down. They are thought to date from the early Bronze Age or the early Neolithic Age. In 1940 there was a discovery of a Bronze Age razor just within the Chilmark parish boundary. Roman occupation is evidenced through the finding of Roman coins in some of the quarries for which the area is well known. Some Roman remains were found at Ridge, in the south-west, when Fonthill House was built around 1902.

It is thought that the name "Chilmark" derives from two Anglo-Saxon words; "Cild", meaning "Child" and "Mearc", referring to a boundary. Another thought on the derivation is that Chilmark comes from "Cigel Marc", "Cigel" meaning "peg" or "pole", perhaps referring to measuring poles.

Chilmark is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, known as "Chilmerc". Other spellings of the name over the subsequent centuries range from "Childmerke" from "Chelesmerke" to "Chylmerk".

In the Domesday survey of 1086, the parish is noted as belonging to the Abbess of Wilton and there was land for 14 plough teams. The population at this time would have been between 100 and 120. Interestingly, in addition to the usual ploughland, pasture and meadow, 10 acres of thorns are recorded. Wilton Abbey held Chilmark and Ridge from the time of William the Conqueror until Henry VIII and the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539. Subsequent Abbesses of Wilton held the advowson of St Margaret's Church, the right to name who would become rector. At the end of the 12th century a single tenant worked the whole manor. After the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII gave Wilton monastic lands, which included Chilmark, to William Herbert, who went on to become the Earl of Pembroke in 1551. In 1876 and 1885, 520 acres of land in the south west of the parish were acquired by Alfred Morrison. It is now part of the Morrison Fonthill House estate.



The association of the Earls of Pembroke with Chilmark and Ridge ended in the early 20th century when in 1918, Reginald, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, sold Ridge Farm and East Farm to the then tenant James Flower. The quarries and a farm belonging to the Earl of Pembroke were sold to the Secretary of State for Air in 1936; the majority of the quarries have since then been owned by the Ministry of Defence.

In 1377 there were 136 poll tax payers (people aged over 14 years) in the parish, which was probably below average for the wealth of this area. The main settlement in the parish has been Chilmark village, with marked attention paid to the Street. Chilmark Manor, the church and Old Rectory are all found near here.

Chilmark is very well known for its stone; quarries for extracting the stone were even in existence in Roman times. In 1685 John Aubrey wrote: 'At Chilmark is a very great quarry of freestone, whereof religious houses of the south part of Wiltshire and Dorset were built.' They were mainly found about a mile south of the village of Chilmark. The stone is a form of limestone and takes on a particular green-grey character. Stone was taken from the ground until the 20th century, with the 13th and 14th centuries seeing the height of the industry. At that point, the quarries were part of Chilmark manor and were therefore looked after by the Abbey of Wilton and then the Earls of Pembroke.

Most stone quarrying from Chilmark ceased after the building of the Kennet and Avon canal, which meant Bath stone could be easily transported, eclipsing Chilmark stone, for it became too expensive to use owing to the heavier transport costs. Quarrying did continue until the early 1930s, and steam powered compressed air drills were used instead of drills manned by young children, as was the case in the Middle Ages. Two of the main firms quarrying in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were Levi Bowles (which began working in Chilmark in 1885) and T. T. Gething and Company (who began work in 1914). They later became the Chilmark Quarry Company, T.T. Gething had been the London agent of Chilmark stone and his company was based in Warwick Road, Kensington. He then moved his family to Chilmark and built a house with the local stone, known as Quarry House.

Quarries in the parish were taken over by the Ministry of Defence (M.O.D) in 1936, as storage facilities. This use has ceased in the 21st century. After centuries of extraction, the quarries at Chilmark came to resemble an underground world full of twisting tunnels and crevices. In the Middle Ages and later, men of the parish worked in the quarries in near darkness, with only small, smoky oil lamps to light their way. They were often injured and were treated by the Knights Hospitallers at nearby Ansty. It is thought those treating the quarrymen had learnt the art of medicine while on Crusades to the Holy Land.

Pamela Street, in *An Illustrated Portrait of Wiltshire*, writes: 'Maybe because this valley is the home of the famous Chilmark quarries, it possesses more than its fair share of beautiful stone houses.' Stone from quarries in Chilmark was used to build the local, but world famous, Salisbury Cathedral. Stone was extracted from Chilmark and Tisbury and then taken the 12 miles to Salisbury by cart. It is, according to author Ralph Whitlock, 'a pure product of Wiltshire.' It is estimated that it took 75,000 tonnes of Chilmark stone to build the cathedral. The spire of Chichester Cathedral in West Sussex is also made of Chilmark stone.



There are a number of listed buildings within the parish, with many of these buildings being built out of Chilmark stone. Many of the Grade II listed buildings are cottages in the residential areas of Chilmark and Ridge. These include Greystones, The Dial House, Inglefield House, Rose Cottage, Ridge Farm and Corner Cottage. Many of the small, older houses along Salisbury Road and The Street are quite similar and a typical house would be two storeys, with brick chimneys and plain tiles.

The manor house at Chilmark is Chilmark Manor, which dates from the 17th century. It is in the north west of the parish and is a Grade II listed building, being Georgian in style and was built by Frederick King. An east and then a north wing were added to the house in the 18th century, and the house was further altered in the 20th century. The farm buildings attached to the Manor were demolished in the 19th century.

A number of council houses were built in the 1970s; 26 council houses had been built by 1978, and 32 other new houses had also appeared and these were built around at Claybush at the south of the village. Many of these houses were built fairly quickly after the end of World War II.

Ridge, the hamlet to the south west of the parish, has always been small. In the 18th and early 19th centuries it comprised of between five and 10 isolated farmsteads, of which only a few survive. In the middle of the 19th century there was a flurry of building work in Ridge. A new farm, several farm buildings and two cottages had

appeared by 1886. A few years later, three rows of terraced houses were built and Fonthill House was built between 1902 and 1904.

Quarry workers were actually the minority of labourers in the parish throughout the years; farming was still the main form of employment. However, during severe winters, farm labourers did do some casual work in the quarries. In 1811, there were 97 houses in the parish, with 406 people. Out of these 406 residents, 111 were agricultural workers. In the 19th century, the majority of agriculture in the parish was the traditional sheep and corn farming. Since then, dairy farming became the main source of agriculture, although there is some arable farming to the north.

By 1631 the majority of open fields and common land to the south of the parish had been enclosed; this was about 135 acres of land. There were four remaining open fields, named north, west, east and south fields. Lands on chalk to the north were slower to be enclosed; it took until the 18th and early 19th centuries for this to happen.

Common husbandry took longer to die out in Ridge than it did in Chilmark. In the Middle Ages there were two open fields, which had become six by the 16th century; the remaining fields were used primarily to raise sheep. By the mid 17th century half of these open fields were enclosed. The rest of the land at Ridge was not enclosed until the Act of 1814.

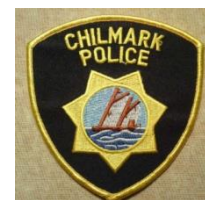
The village reading and recreation room was built in 1910 and was given to the village by Hugh Morrison of Fonthill Bishop. It was modernised in 1968, but still only had the capacity to hold 70 adults, so villagers were sometimes restricted in what they could do in the room.

The Black Dog Inn serves the parish and is found on the Salisbury Road in the very centre of the parish. It was built in the 15th century and is now a Grade II listed building. It was a public house from at least the early 18th century and there was an extension to the rear of the building in the 19th century. Previous inns which have been in the parish are The Red Lion and The Bridge Inn. The Red Lion was found on the corner of the Street and Beckett's Lane and was a public house by 1757. The Bridge Inn was found to the south of the Street.



In the early 19th century there was a brickyard near Knap Lane in Ridge. The Harvey family made bricks until 1875. New owners took the business over and continued making bricks until the start of the 20th century. A lime kiln was in Mill Lane at the end of the 19th century. There was a mill in Chilmark in 1086; this is thought to have been run by the Abbey of Wilton. A water mill was in the parish from 1327 until the time of the Dissolution. It was known as Stoford Mill. It is thought that this mill stood on the Nadder, but was part of land transferred from Chilmark to East Tisbury in 1885, when it became a corn mill. Much of it was destroyed by fire in the 1890s. For many centuries most of the employment in the parish was in the quarries or fields. Kelly's 1907 Directory of Wiltshire lists only a beer retailer, shop keeper, carpenter and blacksmith as alternative occupations.

The village's connection with the Chilmark in Massachusetts in America - people from Chilmark in Wiltshire emigrated there in the 16th and 17th centuries, hence the name - continued until the 20th century. In 1957, a replica of the Mayflower, the Pilgrim Fathers' ship, sailed from Brixham to America to recreate the original sailing. Within the ship were goodwill documents and letter from Chilmark in Wiltshire to Chilmark in Massachusetts. The reply to the English villagers was signed by a descendent of Thomas Mayhew, one of the original settlers from the original Chilmark to the new one, and hangs in the church of St Margaret of Antioch.



A big part of Chilmark's cultural history is the fair; the earliest reference to this fair was in 1619 and the fairground was to the north west of the church. It was probably used mostly for selling animals; John Aubrey refers to a sheep fair being held there in the 17th century. Clothes were traded in the 18th century and cheeses and horses in the 19th century. It is thought the fair ceased in 1874.

There was a Royal Air Force base within the parish; it closed in 1995. The majority of RAF Chilmark is below ground and is made up of 13 acres of tunnels and vaults; these are the remnants of the quarries worked in

Chilmark for hundreds of years. It was initially used to house explosives and bombs. It was the home of No. 11. Maintenance Unit and in the end of the 1930s a railway was built to link the quarries; there were nine miles of tracks, most of them underground.

Chilmark was once home to a well known hunting pack of dogs. The "Chilmark Beagles" were the only private pack in the country and was founded in 1950, by Charles Hardwick, who was master of the hunt. The dogs were kept at The Old Rectory and Mr Hardwick won prizes for breeding the beagles.

Since 1878 there has been an Annual Flower Show within the parish, it involved the church and school as well as other residents. The Women's Institute was founded in Chilmark in 1938.