

The Whitchurch Maze



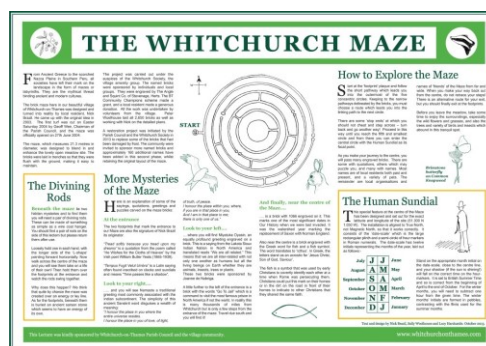
The Whitchurch Maze lies close to the junction of Hardwick Road and Muddy Lane. Local resident Nick Brazil came up with the idea for a brick maze in 2003. The first turf was cut in April 2004 and the maze was opened with a big party on Sunday 27th June that year. Nick wrote an account of the original project, which can still be read [here](#). There are over 2,200 bricks, 646 of which are now engraved with names.

The maze is 21 metres in diameter and is designed to blend with the meadow site. The bricks are laid flush with the ground for ease of maintenance. Inside the maze there is a human sundial.

The original project was carried out under the auspices of the Whitchurch Society and named bricks were sponsored by individuals and local groups. A BT Community scheme made a grant, and a local resident made a donation. The work was done by volunteers from the village. Pete Woolhouse laid the bricks, as well as working with Nick on the layout. Since then, Pete has regularly mown the grass and led the monthly working parties to maintain the Maze and its surroundings.

An information board was erected at the site in 2005 (*right*). Click [here](#) for an enlarged version

Since the original work in 2004, there have been two projects to restore frost-damaged bricks and to add names, master-minded by Jim Donahue in 2013 and Leslie Prater in 2018.



Frost damage to the bricks became apparent after the first few winters, despite claims by the manufacturer, and a restoration project was set up in 2013 by the Parish Council and the Whitchurch Society to remedy some of the damage. Members of the community was invited to sponsor more bricks and around 160 names were added. A more frost-resistant type of brick was used.

In 2018 Leslie Prater, living nearby in Eastfield Lane, organised and kindly helped to finance a second campaign of restoration, in which a further 149 named bricks were installed and 660 damaged bricks replaced by local bricklayers Phil Wise and his son Alec.



Aerial view by David Bowen, December 2018

In January 2021, Sally Woolhouse and Geoff Weir, who had been involved with the Maze from the beginning, took on the task of recording the name and location of every engraved brick, so that it would be possible for anyone to locate a name. Their [Guide to The Maze](#) has now been published, providing a layout map and a catalogue of all the names. To search for a name, press Ctrl F.

The Whitchurch Society has now taken over the Maze archive. Laura Lucas, chair of the Society, is the [contact](#) for queries on the Maze and has started a waiting list for people interested in purchasing an engraved brick.

See the next three pages for photographs of the Maze from 2004 to 2018 and of some recent events.



Frozen by the Beast from the East, 2018

Fourteen years in the life of the Maze, 2004-2018

The meadow in 2003, before the project began



Parish council chairman Geoff Weir cuts the first turf, guided by Pete Woolhouse, in April 2004



Pete excavates trenches and installs bricks



Muzzle loaders fire a volley to celebrate the opening in June 2004

and there is a big party



This is the Maze in May 2015



Phil Wise, Leslie Prater and Sally Woolhouse discuss restoration work in November 2018

Phil, working with his son Alec, replaces frost- damaged bricks



Pete lays one of the last new bricks, December 2018

Leslie Prater, Pete Woolhouse, Sally Woolhouse and Nick Brazil with the last four bricks of the 2018 campaign



Apple pressings and a BioBlitz, 2018 and 2019



Apple pressing 2018



BioBlitz 2019



Apple pressing 2019

Text for The Whitchurch Maze pages by Richard Wingfield and others, updated 12th February 2021. Photos by Nick Brazil and others.