

Broxbourne Circular		
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Broxbourne Circular

Start: Broxbourne Station

Finish: Broxbourne Station

Broxbourne Station, map reference TL 374 072, 7 km south east of Hertford, and 30m above sea level.
 Bayford Station, map reference TL 315 082, 5 km south of Hertford, and 73m above sea level.
 Both are in **East Hertfordshire**.

Length: 24.3 km (15.1 mi), of which 2.0 km (1.2 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 325m.

For a shorter walk or an Alternative Ending, *see below* **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 5 out of 10

Time: 5 hours 30 minutes walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ½ hours.

Transport: Broxbourne Station is on the Liverpool Street to Cambridge North or Hertford East lines with four trains an hour every day, journey time between 25 and 33 minutes. It is also serviced by trains from Stratford, with up to four trains per hour taking from 25 minutes. Trains stop at Tottenham Hale (connect from the Victoria Line). Bayford Station (an Alternative Ending) is on the Moorgate to Hertford North and Stevenage line (two trains per hour), with a journey time of 47 minutes weekdays and 50 on weekends. Currently Broxbourne is within the Oyster Pay-As-You-Go area (but outside the numbered zones), while Bayford is not. Freedom Passes aren't valid at either station. A Hertford (All Stations) return ticket covers both stations. This should be the cheapest option for the short walk.

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.30 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 166 (Luton & Hertford)

OS Explorer Map: 174 (Epping Forest & Lee Valley)

Walk Notes:

After winding its way out of Broxbourne along a canal and through a park, this strenuous walk ascends through the Spital Brook valley into Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve, an assortment of varied, ancient and wild woods, serrated by a plethora of streams. A circuitous route linking up separate woods follows age old trails, paths and green lanes through a magnificent and diverse woodland setting. While broadly following a well signposted trail through the Nature Reserve, the walk often diverts from it to take more interesting directions. Most of the distance and the ascent are covered before lunch, but the lunch pub serves food all afternoon, so a leisurely pace is entirely possible.

There are plenty of signed and unsigned paths in the woods, thus following the detailed written directions is essential, and a map and a compass are recommended.

Walk options:

A **Shortcut** just before lunch cuts out 0.9 km (0.6 mi).

An **Alternative Ending** at Bayford Station cuts 5.5 km (3.4 mi) and 60m ascent/103m descent but adds 340m to the tarmac count. It leaves an 18.8 km (11.7 mi) walk, with a toughness rating of **4/10**.

[!] Bayford is served by a different train company. See ticketing details on page 1 under 'Transport'.

Lunch (details last updated 04/11/2018)

The Woodman & Olive 20 Wormley West End, *Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, EN10 7QN* (01992 463 719, <http://www.thewoodmanandolive.com/>). Open Tue-Thu 12.00-23.30, Fri-Sat 12.00-24.00, Sun 12.00-22.30. Food served Tue-Sat 12.00-21.00, Sun 12.00-18.00. The Woodman & Olive is located 14.5 km (9.0 mi) into the main walk. Believed to be of the 17th century or even earlier, the Woodman was a dwelling house before it became a public house, probably in the middle of the 19th century. McMullens brewery of Hertford bought the pub in 1921. The traditional country pub, a listed building since 1988, is independently managed on a McMullens Tenancy and offers East Mediterranean Cuisine. It has generous outdoor seating in a quiet garden, as well as plenty of space and a fireplace inside.

Tea (details last updated 04/11/2018)

The Bull 74 High Road, *Broxbourne, Herts, EN10 7DZ* (01992 462 639, <http://www.mcmullens.co.uk/bullbroxbourne>). Open Mon-Sat 11.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-22.30. Food served 12.00-21.00 Mon-Thu, 12.00-21.30 Fri-Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun.

The White Bear 95 High Road, *Broxbourne, Herts EN10 7BN* (01992 441 389, <http://www.whitebearbroxbourne.co.uk/>). Open Mon-Thu 11.00-23.30, Fri-Sat 12.00-01.00 and Sun 12.00-23.00. Food served 12.00-17.00 daily.

The Old Mill Retreat Café Mill Lane, *Broxbourne, Herts EN10 7AX* (<https://www.cafesinthepark.com/old-mill-retreat/>). Open Spring/Summer 09.00-17.30, Autumn/Winter 09.00-16.00.

Nibbles Station Approach, *Broxbourne, Herts, EN10 7AW*. Open Mon-Fri 07.00-19.00, Sat-Sun 08.00-15.00. Tea & Coffee Shop in the railway station.

The Farmer's Boy 1 Brickendon Lane, *Brickendon, Hertford SG13 8NU* (01992 511 731, <http://www.farmersboy.pub/>). Open 12.00-24.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-22.30 Sun. Food served 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00 Mon-Thu, 12.00-21.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-19.00 Sun.

Notes:

Broxbourne

The Broxbournebury manor was held in the time of Edward the Confessor by Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, but passed into Norman hands following the Conquest. King John granted the manor 1198 to the Order of Knights of St John of Jerusalem until the Dissolution, when it passed to Sir John Cock, after whose family Cock Lane (passed late on in this walk) is named. Later it was held by the Monson and Bosanquet families. The manor house has now become The Hertfordshire Golf & Country Club. Broxbourne itself (older forms of the name are Brochesborne and Brokesburn) grew along the Great Cambridge Road (the old A10, now the A1170). A number of houses and inns dating from the 16-19th century still line the High Street.

Broxbourne railway station was built in 1840, moved from Station Road to its present site in 1959, and is now considered one of a very small number of post-war railway stations of clear architectural distinction, and therefore Grade II listed.

The New River

The New River is neither new nor a river. It is an aqueduct built from 1609-1613 from near Ware to Islington to bring freshwater from the Lea river and from Hertfordshire springs to London. Thames Water still uses it as a source for London's drinking water, although as of 1946 the New River Head is at East Reservoir in Stoke Newington. Its current course largely still follows the historic water channel and also provides a 45 km (28 mi) Long Distance Footpath.

River Lea

The River Lea (or Lee) originates in Marsh Farm, Leagrave, Luton in the Chiltern Hills and flows for 68km, generally southeast, east, and then south, through Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City, Hertford, Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Tottenham and Stratford to London where it meets the River Thames (as Bow Creek). It forms the traditional boundary between the counties of Middlesex and Essex, and part of the boundary between Essex and Hertfordshire. The spelling Lea predominates west (upstream) of Hertford, but both spellings are used from Hertford to the Thames.

The River to Wood Trail

The River to Wood Trail is an 8 km (5 mi) walkers' route linking two of south-east Hertfordshire's popular leisure areas – the Lee Valley Regional Park and Broxbourne Woods. It runs mostly on public footpaths and bridleways from Dobb's Weir on the River Lee Navigation, through Hoddesdon via Barclay Park to the middle of the Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve.

Hertfordshire Way

The Hertfordshire Way is a waymarked 305 km circular Long-Distance Path along public rights-of-way. The route passes through a variety of scenery, mostly in open countryside, but also through some of the more interesting and attractive villages in the county. It includes the fringes of the Chilterns and Ashridge Forest, a National Trust estate. Hertford and St Albans, as the County Town and the main historic centre, are the only large towns on the route. <http://www.fhw.org.uk/>

Hoddesdon Lodge

Grade II listed and dating from the middle of the 17th century, it belonged to Hatfield House until being bought by the forefathers of the current residents.

Broxbourne Woods

Collectively designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and as a National Nature Reserve, and also recognised as a Special Area of Conservation of European Importance, it comprises four principal woods (amongst a total conglomeration of about two dozen separate woods): Broxbourne and Bencroft (owned by Hertfordshire County Council), and Wormley and Hoddesdonpark (owned by the Woodland Trust). These are classified as ancient woodland, meaning it has been continuously wooded since at least AD1600 onwards, while archaeological studies suggest cultivation in and around the woods since the late Bronze Age (approx. 1000BC), as proven by bank and ditch earthworks throughout the woods.

Several other woodlands adjoin the National Nature Reserve, not all of which are ancient woodland.

At approximately 686 acres this is the largest woodland area in Hertfordshire, the woods being mainly oak and hornbeam (one of the most northerly points where hornbeam grows naturally).

A well-signposted figure of eight walking trail leads through some of the best parts of these woods:

Ermine Street

The name of a major Roman road, which ran from Bishopsgate in London (Londinium) to Lincoln (Lindum Colonia) and York (Eboracum) crossing the Icknield Way in Royston, Herts. The Old English name was 'Earninga Straete', named after a tribe called the Earningas, who inhabited a district later known as Armingford Hundred, around Arrington, Cambridgeshire and Royston, Hertfordshire. The original Roman name for the route is unknown. It is also known as the Old North Road from London to where it joins the A1 Great North Road near Godmanchester.

Danemead Wood Nature Reserve

Owned by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and forming part of the Broxbourne Woods complex. Developed from ancient woodland pasture, grazing ceased in the 1950s and trees started to encroach.

Coal (and Wine) Posts

Coal Posts served as tax collection points within the Metropolitan Police district for coal, wine and other goods going into London following the Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act of 1861, itself a successor to the Coal Duties Act 1851 (when the posts were covering an even larger area, roughly 20 miles around London). The money raised financed many infrastructure developments in the Capital, including several Thames bridges. The Coal Duties Acts were successors to other similar measures since the time of the Plague and the Great Fire.

Wormley West End

Originally the western part of Wormley, now part of Brickendon Liberty, it came into existence by the forming of a clearing in Wormley Wood at some time between the 14th and 16th century. The name Wormley probably derives from the old English wyrma leah, meaning a clearing infested with grass snakes.

Celtic Harmony Camp

Opened in 1999, Celtic Harmony Camp is a reconstructed Celtic Iron Age settlement in 13 acres of woodland. It is a not-for-profit organisation providing natural & cultural heritage education – mainly to children – to increase awareness of man's interdependence with the natural world, promoting a more sustainable way of life.

It aims to promote a better understanding & appreciation of the natural world through the ancient Celtic culture. Visitors experience first-hand how the people of the Iron Age, over 2000 years ago, made food, clothes and shelter from the natural environment, whilst protecting natural habitats by harvesting in the traditional way. <http://www.celticharmony.org/>

St. Augustine Church, Broxbourne

The parish church of St Augustine was entirely rebuilt in the 15th century, although a 12th-century Purbeck marble font survives. The interior has a number of monuments and brasses dating from the 15th to the 19th century. The three-stage tower has a belfry with a peal of eight bells, three of which are dated 1615.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Broxbourne** on platforms 3 or 4 and leave the station. In 15m *turn right* through a metal kissing gate by a display panel for the **New River Path**. Walk up railed metal steps onto the embankment and *turn right* along the wide gravel-and-earth path, in 260m passing a **Pumping Station** on the other side of the river (built in 1886, it pumps up to 16.000 m³ water per day into the **New River** from a chalk aquifer 65m below ground). In 120m continue along the grassy embankment, at a junction with a tarmac track and by a metal footbridge off to the left, passing through kissing gates either side of the tarmac track. In 225m *ignore* a footpath turning left across a steel footbridge and continue further along the grassy embankment. In 170m cross a road (Admirals Walk) and continue on the soon widening path. The scenery opens up with a lake and the **Lea Valley** on the right.

600m from the road [!] *turn left* across a narrow concrete-and-steel bridge over the **New River**, following Public Footpath and **The River to Wood Trail**-signs (25m before a footpath turns down right to Dobbs Weir). On the other side of the water walk through a metal kissing gate and continue on a gravel-and-earth track between hedges, away from the New River. In 110m on your left pass the entrance to **St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School** (Nursery Entrance). In 35m *turn left* along the pavement of **Esdale Lane** following a The River to Wood Trail-sign. In 60m *turn right* (also Esdale Lane) and pass **St. Augustine's Church** on the right and in 185m reach the main road through Broxbourne, at the boundary with **Hoddesdon**, opposite the **Golden Lion** pub. Cross the road and *turn left* along the pavement.

In 110m *turn right* through bike barriers onto a tarmac path between houses and in 25m through another set of bike barriers into a cul-de-sac to continue in the same direction. Pass **Taylor's Avenue** (right) and **Oxendon Drive** (left) to then curve right with the road. At a T-junction with another road *turn left* towards a main road 60m away, with a park behind it. Cross the main road and *turn right* along its pavement. In 25m *turn left* through bike barriers by a display panel for **Barclay Park**, and take the right of two tarmac paths into the park (250°), with **Hoddesdon Town FC's football stadium** behind a fence on the right. In 75m *turn right* with the path and in 60m *turn left* downhill on another tarmac path towards an ornamental lake. In 60m, at the lake, *turn left* along it *but in 40m leave the lake and turn left* over a railed wooden bridge across **Spital Brook** into a sloping grassy meadow, where you *bear right* towards a (not initially visible) wooden kissing gate in the far-right corner (due W).

In the far corner *ignore* a Permissive Path turning left through the kissing gate into a grassy field but *re-cross the brook* on a gravel-and-earth path to briefly re-join the tarmac path around the pond. In 35m *fork left* off the tarmac into a grassy area and curve left with the tree line on the left. The grassy area narrows eventually with a barbed wire fence on the right. Go through a wooden kissing gate into the next grassy field by a large Public Footpath sign. Follow the path at the bottom of this valley for 300m, with the brook about 30m to the left, behind trees, and leave the field through a couple of wooden kissing gates 5m apart. In 50m go through a wooden gate onto a two-railed wooden boardwalk and exit from it in 80m through another wooden gate. In another 75m leave the field through a wooden kissing gate onto an earthen track through a wooded area. In 130m cross the brook over a two-railed wooden plank bridge and *turn right* with the gravel-and-earth path through the wood.

In 110m you go under the **dual carriageway A10**, with the brook to the right in a concrete bed. On the other side of the underpass, at a T-junction with a gravel-and-earth bridleway, *turn right for 10m and then left through a wooden kissing gate* by a footpath signpost into a pasture. *Bear right* uphill across this field on a clear path towards the right of a large electricity pylon (330°). In 115m leave the field through a

wooden kissing gate in a gap in the boundary hedge into the next pasture to continue in the same direction towards a set of black barns and a house to their right. In 90m you go through a kissing gate and continue ahead, with **Hoddesdon Lodge** on your right. Proceed along its gravel-and-earth driveway, past a pond on the left and in 25m between large oak trees on either side of the lane. In 120m you come to a five-way footpath sign by a wooden fence on the border of **Hoddesdonpark Wood**. Go through a wooden kissing gate to enter **Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve**.

Initially take the car wide forest track straight ahead, ignoring the footpath veering right into the wood and the unsigned track on the left just inside the wood. [!] But in 25m, at a crosspaths with a narrow, unsigned and indistinct forest path, **turn left** along the path into the wood. In 15m this path veers right (210°). In 95m the path curves right (240°), now descending more steeply. In 40m you cross a path by a **Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail** marker on a pole (**Butterfly Symbol**) and in 40m you cross a streamlet over an un-railed wooden plank bridge. For the next 200m the path meanders gently uphill through the trees, broadly in a south westerly direction until you cross a (usually dry) ditch on an un-railed wooden plank bridge onto a wide forest track at a T-junction. **Turn left** and in 120m reach the edge of the wood at a T-junction of paths with **Spital Brook** running right-to-left on the other side of the path.

Turn right with a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail marker. In 40m you cross a stream on an un-railed wooden plank bridge. This stream forms the runoff of a **mediaeval moated enclosure** on the right (a scheduled ancient monument, with an explanatory board 20m ahead). In 60m you cross another streamlet on an un-railed wooden plank bridge. In 50m there is an open grassy field on the left beyond the brook. Follow brook and fence on the left for 360m, crossing two more streamlets and a few muddy parts on wooden floorboards, but *fork right* (325°) at a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail sign into the wood to *turn hard left* in 30m. In 30m go through a wooden kissing gate and turn down half left across the course of **Ermine Street**, a **Roman Road**, with a ford across the brook on your left and head for a bridge across the brook 25m away. *Turn left* across this railed wooden plank bridge and then immediately right across another wooden plank bridge over a tributary streamlet. In 10m pass a welcome panel for **Danemead Wood Nature Reserve**, with an explanatory panel 10m on the left.

Continue *to the right* of the welcome panel through the wood with the brook on the right (260°). In 110m you cross a streamlet on an un-railed wooden plank bridge. In 200m you ignore a wooden kissing gate (next to a wooden field gate) on the left. In 100m you walk on a raised wooden boardwalk, curving left in 35m and coming to a wooden kissing gate at the end of **Danemead Wood** in another 50m. Walk through the gate at a T-junction with a car wide gravel-and-earth bridleway. *Turn left* along this potentially very muddy path, but [!] in 65m **turn right** off it into **Broxbourne Common** along an unmarked narrow earthen path between trees to the right of decrepit wooden fence parts (250°). In 60m the path swings left (175°). In 120m (generally uphill) at the corner of a barbed wire fence, a house becomes visible to the left through a gap in the trees. *Veer right* to follow the fence further uphill (205°).

In 135m you have a wooden fence on the left with a wooded area behind it, in 30m you *ignore* a track forking right. In 55m a footpath joins from the left through a wooden kissing gate. Stay ahead (initially 230°, then due W), now on a level track on soft, spongy ground through the wood. In 165m you *veer right* as the path starts to descend (295°), ignoring a faint path on the left. In 115m you *turn left* at a T-junction with another forest track (260°), in 65m go through a wooden kissing gate and in 95m *turn right* to cross a stream over a two-railed wooden plank bridge (**Spital Brook** again). Climb uphill away from the brook, but in 45m [!] *turn left* following a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail marker (215°), ignoring a track ahead. Follow this meandering path, gently rising through **Cowheath Wood** for 300m, with the brook about 50m away to

your left, then swing right with the path. In 90m **[!]** *turn left* (due S) at a footpath-junction, back towards the brook. In 85m cross a streamlet over a wooden plank bridge and in 20m continue between fences, in 15m *veering right* downhill towards a two-railed wooden bridge across **Spital Brook** 30m away.

Cross the brook and ascend through a wooden kissing gate into a large grassy field. Head uphill, initially towards the right of a solitary oak tree 120m away (due S), then towards the roof of a house just beyond the end of the field. Leave the field through a sequence of metal kissing gates into a narrow grassy strip and then out onto a road (**Pembridge Lane**) by a Public Footpath 13-sign opposite **Elysium House**. *Turn right* along the road. In 160m Public Footpath 15 (White Stubbs Lane ½) joins from the left across an un-railed wooden plank bridge over a streamlet. **[!]** In another 10m you *turn right* through wooden bike barriers, following a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail sign (15°). This track winds its way slowly downhill through **Broxbourne Wood**, on wooden boards at notoriously muddy patches. In 110m *turn right* at a T-junction of forest tracks.

In 210m you cross a bridge over a stream (**Spital Brook**) to the right to ascend on the other side (315°), soon with a wire fence on the right and a – usually dry – streamlet and a wood. In 125m go through wooden barriers and past a bench on the right, with a wide forest track joining from the left, and continue in the same direction, now more gently uphill. In 60m you *turn right* with the fence (due N) and in 100m *veer left* across another broad path joining from the left and onto a wide track with a wooden fence on the left (initially 320°). This track through **Claypits Wood** swings left and starts to descend gently (210°) by a wooden field gate and kissing gate on the left. In another 200m you *turn right uphill* (325°) with a **Permissive Bridleway marker** post on the left, while the track continues left and down to cross a stream. In 30m the path *turns left* (250°) and in 90m left again. In 40m you leave the forest onto a road.

Turn right along the opposite verge and in 60m *turn left* along a gravel-and-earth track between trees (260°) with a Public Bridleway sign and a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail marker on a pole. In 200m swing left with the track, now with **Brickendon Grange** golf course on the right behind trees (185°). In 560m you cross a road (**White Stubbs Lane**) and follow a Public Footpath 23-sign (Newgate Street Road 1¼) through a wooden kissing gate into the **Woodland Trust**-owned **Wormley Wood**. Head downwards into the trees with a grassy field on the right behind a barbed wire fence (205°). In 50m you *veer right* at a T-junction of paths (230°). **Follow this path for 870m.**

But in more detail: in 55m cross the first of four streams in the **Old Grove** to ascend steeply on a wide forest track. In 70m curve left (due S), and in 40m ignore a track to the left by a bench at the top of this rise. Instead you *veer right* and descend towards another stream crossing on an un-railed wooden plank bridge in 35m. In 50m you get to the top of this rise with a bench on the right. In 30m swing right with the track (200°). In 110m descend more steeply on a wooden boardwalk towards another stream. In 60m cross this stream over an un-railed wooden plank bridge and ascend steeply on a stepped path. In 110m you reach the top of this rise (195°) and in 40m cross the next stream over an un-railed wooden plank bridge. In 60m pass a bench on the left. In 160m the path veers left around trees to continue in the same direction, in another 100m you reach the top of this rise at a yellow marker post. At a cross-paths 10m further along, a broad and straight forest track turns left downhill on a dog leg (70°).

Here you have a choice:

For a Shortcut *turn left* (for details go to the end of this text under **Shortcut**).

For the main walk, *continue ahead* and in 20m cross an un-railed wooden plank bridge across boggy ground by a pond on the left and then **[!]** *turn left immediately* along a

narrow path into trees into **Westfield Grove** (110° initially), leaving the Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail. In 60m *veer right* with the path (130°) and in 50m *veer right* again (190°). In 170m *turn left* with the path (due E), ignoring a lesser path continuing onwards a little to the right. You have a dry ditch running parallel on the right. [These bank and ditch earthworks are remnants of ancient field systems, possibly dating back to the Bronze Age.] In 200m you pass a long, narrow pond on the right-hand side and in 310m join a main forest track at a T-junction, with a circular depression 20m away on the other side of the path and fields visible behind the trees ahead and to the right.

Turn left along the forest track, re-joining the Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail and also following **Hertfordshire Way** and Bridleway markers. In 40m stay ahead and to the left of a pond, while the main forest track swings right towards the edge of the wood, to pass to the right of a circular metal bench around an oak tree 40m away (interesting welded detail in the backrest: a deer chasing its tail). *Turn right* past the pond to re-join the main forest track in 35m where you *turn left*. Follow this path for 1.0 km, without alternative, to a display panel at the end of **Wormley Wood**.

But in more detail: descend gently (5°), with a field about 30m to the right behind the trees. In 130m pass a **Coal Post** on the left and *swing right* and further downhill with the path (70° initially), to then follow the woods' boundary. In 300m the path curves left and downhill (20°) with a barbed wire fence on the right and **Firs Wood** behind. In 150m you *swing left* (330°) with the path and pass a wooden bench in 50m. In 15m you cross a streamlet and in 20m *veer right* towards a wooden plank bridge across a stream in the bottom of this valley (350°). In 120m you cross the bridge over **Wormleybury Brook**, fed by all the streams that you crossed earlier in **Wormley Wood**. Ascend again in a northerly direction, with a tributary to **Wormleybury Brook** on your left in a cut. In 175m you reach a path-junction at a **display panel**. The path joining from the left is the Shortcut. *Turn right* and uphill on a gravel-and-earth path into **Bencroft Wood**.

*) In 35m *turn right* along a narrow grassy **Permissive Footpath** into trees, following a **Hertfordshire Way**-marker post, and soon passing the first of several posts with a purple ring-marker (160° initially, then broadly easterly for 740m).

But in more detail: in 90m another Permissive Footpath joins from the left. In 30m you pass a bench on the right to then descend steeply towards a streamlet 35m away. In 45m pass a bench on the left, now with a field on the right. In 80m you cross a (usually dry) streamlet on an un-railed wooden plank bridge. In 200m you continue ahead at a crosspaths, with a Public Footpath running downhill from the left and continuing through a metal kissing gate on the right into a grassy field. In 100m you cross another streamlet on an un-railed wooden plank bridge and in 60m pass a bench on the left to *fork right immediately*, following purple ring-markers. In 65m you continue along a wooden boardwalk, and in 25m come to a bench.

Turn left uphill, following a Hertfordshire Way-marker. In 100m you pass through wooden bike barriers at a T-junction with a car wide gravel-and-earth forest track and *turn right*. In 150m you walk through metal barriers at a T-junction with a road. Cross the road go past another metal barrier into **Emanuel Pollards**, and in 20m *fork right* along a narrow path, ignoring a track straight ahead. In 20m you pass a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail marker (140°) and in 65m, near the wood boundary, *turn left* with the track (55°) and in 35m *turn right* towards a T-junction of footpaths near the corner of the wood in 30m. On your right you have a metal kissing gate and a signpost for **The Woodman Public House**. *Turn right* downhill through the gate along a narrow grassy strip, barbed wire fence and field on the left and orchard on the right. You get views of the **Lea Valley** to the left. In 350m reach a road by a Public Footpath 21-sign opposite the lunch stop **The Woodman & Olive**, in **Wormley West End**.

After lunch you retrace your steps across the road and up to the metal kissing gate and into **Emanuel Pollards** (due N). Continue in your direction uphill through the wood and in 200m, just before reaching a road, *turn left* inside the wood at a Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail marker. In 125m reach **West End Road** and *turn right* to cross **White Stubbs Lane** and head through trees and through a wooden kissing gate into a pasture (in 20m). Go through a metal kissing gate in 90m (350°) and in 120m walk through another metal kissing gate amongst trees into the next pasture. Continue in the same direction, *but not towards the metal kissing gate* 65m away, but to the right of it, directly towards the house and sheds 130m away (345°).

Leave the field through a metal kissing gate and in 10m pass through a wooden gate into a grassy strip with the house and garden on the left. In 35m reach a road (**Pembridge Lane**). You have walked the next 480m half-way through the morning route and will re-trace it now: cross the road and enter a grassy field, using a sequence of metal kissing gates, head downhill, staying left of the solitary oak tree, cross **Spital Brook** and ascend into **Cowheath Wood**. 170m from the brook crossing at a footpath T-junction in the forest, **[!]** *turn left* uphill along a forest track (315°). Follow this forest track for 700m, ignoring all ways off.

But in more detail: in 135m continue ahead at a crosspaths. In 115m pass a memorial bench for **Henry Barnes**. In 15m *veer left* (275°). In 45m cross a car wide forest track and *veer right*. The path levels out in another 50m, where it circumvents a couple of muddy stretches. In 65m *veer left* (305°, then 280°), but in 190m *veer right* (320°) and in 50m *fork left* to reach the edge of the wood in 50m by a **Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail** marker post. Follow the marker across a ditch and through a metal gate into a grassy field with a wooden fence and trees on the left (due N).

In 90m you stay to the left of a pond on a narrow earthen path and in 50m go over a stile next to a metal field gate into the next grassy field to continue in the same direction. In 200m leave this field in its far-left corner through a metal kissing gate, by a **Public Footpath 13**-sign (Pembridge Lane 1¼, Broxbourne Common 2). Continue in the same direction between house gardens on the right and a hedge and a ditch on the left (350°). In 140m you go through a gap next to a wooden field gate into a gravel area outside a house on the right, by a permissive footpath-sign pointing left.

Here you have a choice:

For an Alternative Ending at Bayford Station (services via Highbury & Islington to Moorgate), *turn left* (for details go to the end of this text under **Alternative Ending**).

For the main walk, you *continue ahead* for 35m and **[!]** *turn right* at a four-way footpath-junction (Public Footpath 10: Monks Green ½) to soon pass through a wooden kissing gate onto a grassy field margin, with houses and barns on the right (80°). In 170m you cross the gravel driveway to the **Celtic Harmony Camp** on the right into the next grassy field and stay in a similar direction on a clear path. In 150m continue along a wide grassy path through a lightly wooded area. In 60m ignore the obvious farm track ahead into the next field and *turn left* following a yellow marker across an un-railed wooden plank bridge over a stream and through a wooden kissing gate. *Turn right* in the next field to continue in the previous direction, swinging right with the hedge on the right. In 65m pass through a wide gap in the boundary hedge, into the next grassy field, and follow the direction of a yellow marker (65°) along a wooden fence on the right.

In 135m leave this field by veering right through a gap next to a wooden field gate onto a gravel-and-earth farm track between hedges. In 85m, at a T-junction with a tarmac lane, *turn right* through the buildings of **Monks Green Farm**. In 200m *ignore* the

footpath ahead (towards Highfield Farm) and *turn right* following a Public Footpath 14-sign (Broxbourne Common 1¼) along a gravel-and-earth track between trees (due S). In 90m you *veer left* with the now car wide track (130°) through **Bramble's Wood**. In 450m you cross another car wide forest track and start descending more prominently. In 360m, just before the forest path swings right and 35m before it then crosses a brook, **[!]** *turn left* into the trees of **Highfield Wood** on an unsigned and narrow but distinct meandering path, which immediately curves right to reach the brook in 50m (this is **Spital Brook** again, walked along on the other side in the morning). In 50m you cross a stream, in 270m cross another stream and in 175m emerge from the trees onto a car wide forest track running left to right (**Ermine Street**) by the ford seen earlier.

Cross Ermine Street and walk through a wooden kissing gate on the other side (with a **Woodland Trust** sign) into **Hoddesdonpark Wood**. *Ignore* the track hard right (along the fence) and the one half-right into trees. **[!]** But *turn left uphill* on a faint forest track (initially 40°). In 250m the path levels out and in 50m you cross a car wide forest track (with a metal field gate visible about 40m to the left) to *veer left* (350°). In 80m *veer right* (15°) and in 90m *turn right downhill* (60°), ignoring a track ahead. In 40m you cross a stream on an un-railed wooden plank bridge. In 110m the path levels out and curves left (35°). In 55m a marker post guides you left (340°). In 50m *veer right* (due N), in 75m come to a path junction with a wooden kissing gate 10m ahead leading onto a road with a house to the left. **[!]** *Turn right* inside the wood following a **Broxbourne Woods NNR Trail** marker post downhill (85°) and *veer right* in 25m.

In 110m you cross a stream on an un-railed wooden plank bridge to continue uphill (105°) and in 65m cross a car wide forest track (with a road visible 150m away to the left) to continue in the same direction. In 50m pass a bench on the left. In 100m ignore a track turning left on a dog leg just before another bench. Continue through the wood following the odd white arrow on a tree or yellow marker or butterfly marker on a pole (115°). In 145m **[!]** *ignore* the NNR-trail forking right *to stay ahead* in a south easterly direction, following a yellow marker on a wooden pole. In another 145m you emerge from the trees at a forest track junction and a five-way footpath sign by a wooden fence and a wooden kissing gate on the border of **Hoddesdonpark Wood**. This is where you entered the woods in the morning.

Go through the gate to leave **Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve**. Re-trace your steps along the lane towards and through the grounds of **Hoddesdon Lodge** and across a couple of fields to the **A10** by the underpass. **[!]** But *ignore* the underpass and **turn right** along the raised **A10 embankment**, following a **Hertfordshire Way** sign, uphill for 20m, then on a level path, which swings away from the dual carriageway after 130m. In 200m you come out onto **Cock Lane** and *turn left* to cross the A10 on a road bridge (from the far part of the bridge you can spot **Canary Wharf** on the right in extension of the A10, on a clear day). Immediately beyond the bridge *turn right* into a car park, going under a height restriction barrier. Leave the car park through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate by a sign for **Lucy Warren Open Space**.

Turn left across this grassy space, to the right of a line of trees, with small wooded areas on your right (110° initially, then 150°). This is a **converted landfill site**, as evidenced by occasional ventilation ducts. In 330m pass a wooden kissing gate on the left, leading towards houses. In 60m *turn right* through a wide grassy gap between two wooded areas. In 45m *turn left* at the end of the wooded area on your left and in 20m **[!]** leave the grassy area by *turning left* along a narrow unsigned path between bushes and trees (65° initially). In 50m, at a T-junction of paths by a wooden kissing gate, you *turn right* and in 20m follow a **Hertfordshire Way** marker to go through another wooden kissing gate onto a crosspaths by a four-way footpath/bridleway-signpost.

Cross the bridleway and take the half right footpath through metal bike barriers along a narrow earthen path between tall wooden garden fences (135°). In 310m this leads through metal bike barriers onto a road (**Park Lane**). *Turn right* and in 25m *turn left* with the road and continue downhill into **Broxbourne**, ignoring roads off right, with views ahead into the **Lea Valley**. In 370m, at the junction with the main road through Broxbourne, you *turn right* and in 50m pass the entrance to **The Bull** pub, the first of two possible (pub) tea stops (the other one, **The White Bear**, is 60m further along the road). *Turn left* in 25m along **Richmond Court** and in 35m continue to the right of a house along a brickwork, then tarmac path with a low wall to the right. In 65m you emerge onto **Broxbourne Recreation Ground** and *turn left* between trees (110°). In 95m pass a WWI memorial, and in 110m cross the **New River** on a narrow railed concrete bridge onto a road pavement, opposite **St. Augustine's Church**.

Cross the road (**Churchfields**) and:

- **For a slightly longer route to the station, past The Old Mill Retreat Café:** *turn right* along the opposite pavement and in 40m *turn left* along **Mill Lane**. In 90m you reach **The Old River Lea** by the **Old Mill** site on your left. The Café is 50m away on your right. For the station, cross the river and *turn left* past the mill site along a tarmac path, signed for the station. You keep the river on your left and in 170m, just before the raised railway line, *turn left* over a raised bridge to cross the river. On the other side follow the path under the raised **Nazeing New Road** and go through the large station car park to **Broxbourne Station**.
- **For the direct route to the station:** *turn left* along the opposite pavement, but in 55m, after re-crossing the New River, *turn right* along a path across a grassy area, with the New River now to your right. In 115m you reach **Station Road** (the location of the original station, until relocated in 1959) and *turn right* along it. In 50m re-cross the New River for the last time and *immediately turn left* following a **New River Path** sign through a metal kissing gate onto a path along the embankment. In 170m *turn right* down some steps and walk through a metal kissing gate to reach **Broxbourne Station**.

Shortcut (cut 920m)

Follow this broad forest track for 1.0 km, crossing a couple of streams and a streamlet in the process, and ignoring all ways off. *But veer right* off the track by a pentagonal wooden bench around a tree on the right, to descend and cross the last of the streams. Re-ascend until you get to a junction with another broad forest path coming up from the right (this is the main walk), by a display panel for **Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve** and **Wormley Wood**. Continue ahead and uphill on a gravel-and-earth path into **Bencroft Wood**.

Re-join the main walk directions at the asterisk *).

Alternative Ending

(cut 5.5 km and 60m ascent and 103m descent, Toughness: 5 out of 10)

Follow the driveway to the house just passed, with a pond on the right, towards a road 100m away. *Turn left* along this road. In 470m pass the tea stop **The Farmer's Boy** in **Brickendon** at a road junction, where you continue ahead, with the village green now on your left. In 850m *fork right* off the road to **Bayford Station**. London bound trains depart from the near platform.