



Cheshunt to Broxbourne walk

River Lee Country Park and Waltham Abbey

Length	<p>Main Walk: 17½ km (10.9 miles). Three hours 55 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7½ hours.</p> <p>Short Circular Walk, from Cheshunt: 12 km (7.5 miles). Two hours 35 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Long Circular Walk, from Broxbourne: 20 km (12.4 miles). Four hours 30 minutes walking time.</p>
OS Map	Explorer 174. Cheshunt, map reference TL365022, is in Hertfordshire, 7 km NE of Enfield. Waltham Abbey is in Essex.
Toughness	2 out of 10 (1 for the Short Circular Walk).
Features	<p>The Lea Valley is a wide floodplain which has long been both an important transport corridor and a natural boundary (eg. between the Saxons and the Danes in the Dark Ages). Its rivers provided water and power for many mills and factories, although nowadays the journey out of London seems to offer an unbroken line of light industrial estates, warehouses and retail parks. This does not exactly lift the spirits when seen from the train, but on the Herts/Essex border just before Cheshunt the view abruptly changes to the tree-lined lakes of River Lee Country Park. There are good opportunities for bird-watching in this wetland landscape of rivers and filled-in gravel pits, and several locations where orchids can be seen in late May and June. A series of sculptures are dotted around the park and the walk route goes past many of them.</p>

The lunchtime stop is in the historic market town of **Waltham Abbey**. In about 1030 a black crucifix was brought to the town and one of the pilgrims attracted by this 'Holy Cross' was **Harold Godwinson**, then Earl of Essex and later (briefly) King Harold II in 1066. He built a larger stone church on the site and this in turn was rebuilt in Norman style after the Conquest. It was extended again in the 12thC when **Waltham Abbey** was built by Henry I as part of his penance after the murder of Thomas Becket. It was the last monastic house to be closed by Henry VIII in the Dissolution of the Monasteries and most of the abbey was demolished in 1540. Fortunately, part of its medieval nave survived to become the present **Church of the Holy Cross**: reminiscent of a scaled-down Durham Cathedral, it is well worth a visit.

The walk route goes back past Cheshunt station so it is possible to complete a **Short Circular Walk**. The full **Main Walk** continues to head north through a less-frequented section of the Country Park, at first on woodland and lakeside paths following the course of the Small River Lea and then on the River Lee Navigation's towpath. An optional stretch through a water meadow leads into the **Broxbourne Waterside** area, a centre for boating and canoeing with a café and a pub for refreshment before the journey home.

Walk Options

As well as the Short Circular Walk option mentioned above, directions are also given for a **Long Circular Walk** from Broxbourne station. For the most part this takes a different route out through the Country Park, but there is one out-and-back section along the same stretch of towpath where there is no convenient alternative.

On all the walk options you could omit the loop into Waltham Abbey. This **Short Cut** is worth considering if you prefer a walk entirely within the Country Park, but of course it leaves out the walk's historic features as well as the town's wide choice of eateries. On the full walk a suggested loop around Waltham Abbey is described, with an optional extension around a large water meadow to the north of the town.

If you miss a train and start a group walk late you might be able to catch up by taking an early short cut at Seventy Acres Lake, saving 1¾ km. Conversely, there are several places where you can extend the walk by detouring to bird hides and other points of interest mentioned in the directions.





If you want to abandon the walk in Waltham Abbey you could head for the station at Waltham Cross; this is 1½ km away along a busy main road, but several bus routes go there from the large roundabout on Highbridge Street (and also to places where you could catch a tube, eg. Loughton).

Transport

Cheshunt and Broxbourne are served by trains from Liverpool Street (and Stratford) on the West Anglia line to Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford and Hertford East. The normal off-peak service is six trains per hour (four on Sundays), with a journey time of 20-28 minutes to Cheshunt. All trains call at Tottenham Hale, on the Victoria line. There is also a (slower) half-hourly London Overground service from Liverpool Street to Cheshunt, via Seven Sisters.

Oyster PAYG can be used at both stations but a simple **return to Broxbourne** (or Cheshunt for the Short Circular Walk) might be better value. Cheshunt is in TfL Zone 8 but Broxbourne is outside the numbered zones.

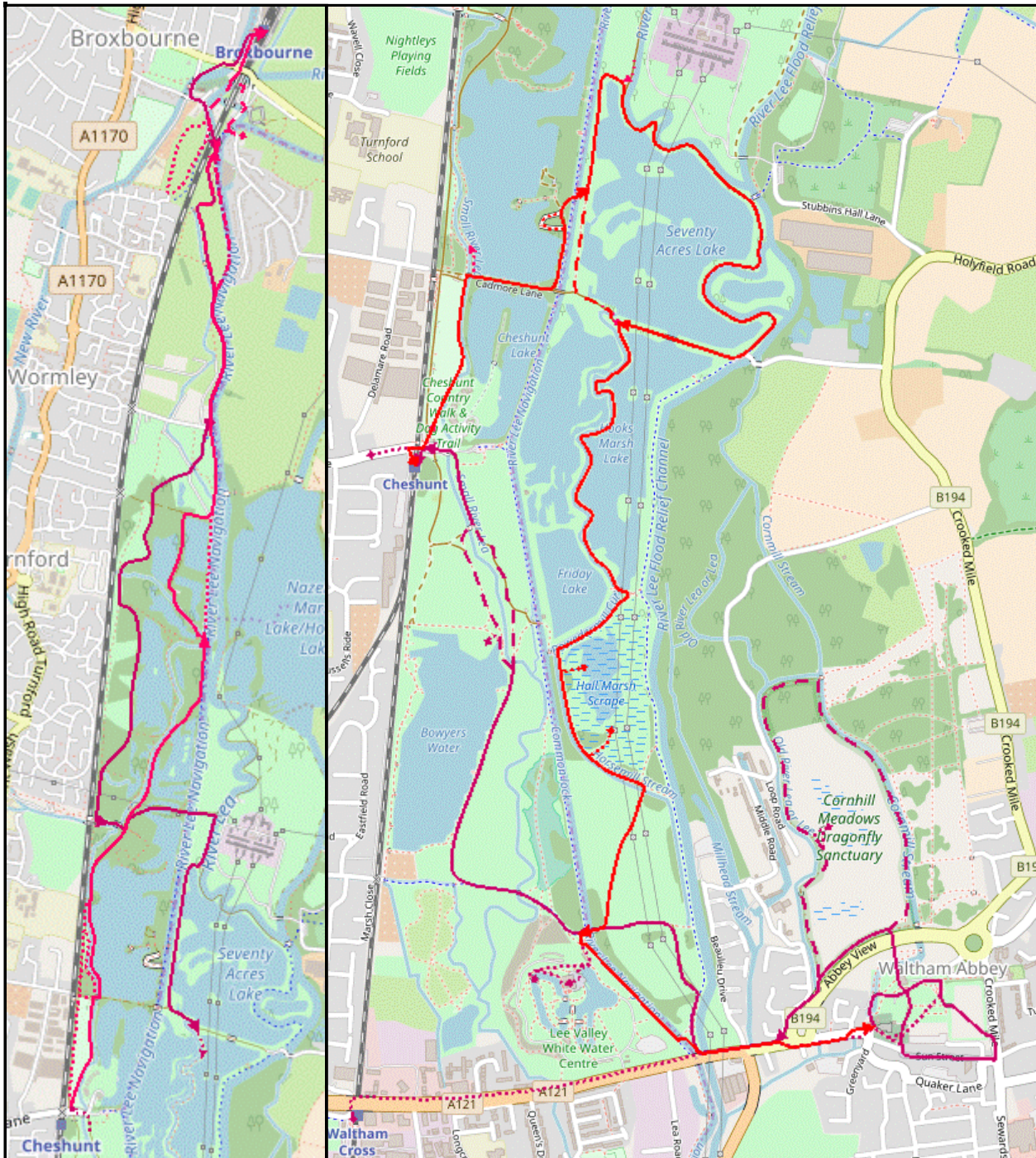
[A London Freedom Pass is only valid for travel to Cheshunt on the London Overground service from Liverpool Street, not on the West Anglia line.](#)

Suggested Train	Take the train nearest to 10:30 from Liverpool Street (or Stratford) to Cheshunt . For the Long Circular Walk , take the train nearest to 10:00 to Broxbourne . On all the walk options, you could start at least half an hour later if taking the Short Cut omitting Waltham Abbey.
Lunch	<p>There are plenty of refreshment places in Waltham Abbey (7¼ km from Cheshunt; 9¾ km from Broxbourne), although the pubs are not particularly food-oriented and fast-food joints are the predominant alternative.</p> <p>Two friendly pubs which are worth trying are The Crown (01992-701481) in Romeland and The Sun (01992-914249) halfway along Sun Street; both have small courtyard gardens. Two alternatives are the historic Welsh Harp (01992-711113) in Market Square and The Angel (01992-718671) at the far end of Sun Street. For a light lunch the Gatehouse Café near the church entrance looks the most appealing of the cafés in the town centre.</p> <p>An earlier lunch is possible at the Terrace Bar & Café in the Lee Valley White Water Centre (03000-030616), which is also the only refreshment place on the Short Cut route. Although primarily serving visitors taking part in the activities, this modern food outlet declares that it is “open to everyone, from rafters to rambblers”. It has plenty of indoor and outdoor seating and is open daily to at least 5.30pm.</p>
Tea	<p>The Terrace Bar & Café (see above) is a good place to stop for mid-afternoon refreshment, especially if you spend some extra time in and around Waltham Abbey after lunch (or are doing one of the shorter options as an afternoon walk).</p> <p>At the end of the Short Circular Walk there are several establishments near Cheshunt station, although these seem to cater mainly for thirsty commuters on their way home. There is a Latte to Go buffet on Platform 2, but this usually closes “between 2 & 3pm” at weekends. Just past the station on Windmill Lane you could try the Rose Café or one of three pubs: The Windmill (01992-624884), The Red Cow (01992-623509) and The Maltsters (01992-631369). There are more places in the town centre but this is 750m past the station.</p> <p>Towards the end of the longer walk options the Old Mill Retreat Café (01992-460960; open daily to 4pm winter, 5.30pm summer) serves home-made cakes in a pleasant spot on Broxbourne Waterside. Nearby, The Crown (01992-462244) is part of the Vintage Inns chain and has a large riverside garden. There are also some snack bars on the covered walkway to the station platforms, but for other places you would have to detour to the town's High Street, 400m off the walk route.</p>
Help Us!	<p>After the walk, we would love to get your feedback</p> <p>You can upload photos to the SWC Group on  Flickr, and videos to  Youtube. This walk's tags are:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;">  swcwalks </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;">  swcwalk311 </div> </div>
By Car	Start EN8 9AQ Finish EN10 7AW
Help	National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234
Version	Apr-20

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Walk Directions

Walk Maps



All maps © OpenStreetMap contributors

Walk Options (~~W/A~~)

M. Main Walk (17½ km)

i. Main Walk, omitting Waltham Abbey (13½ km)

a. Short Circular Walk, from Cheshunt (12 km)

- ai. Short Circular Walk, omitting W/Abbey (8 km)
- b. Long Circular Walk, from Broxbourne (20 km)
- bi. Long Circular Walk, omitting W/Abbey (16 km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing the Long Circular Walk (from Broxbourne), start at §C.

A. Cheshunt Station to Seventy Acres Lake (1¼ km)

1. Arriving from London, leave the station near the front of the train and turn right to cross the railway tracks, via the footbridge if necessary. On the other side immediately **turn left** into the signposted **River Lee Country Park**¹, with the first of several information panels for the **Waterbird Discovery Trail** at the back of the small car park. Take the right-hand path through this semi-open area.
2. The surfaced path goes past a series of small wooden structures (for exercising your dog!) with a stream on the right, the **Small River Lea**². Later **Cheshunt Lake** is visible beyond the stream. At the end turn right to cross the stream and follow the track between two lakes, with the one on the left having the less appealing name of **North Metropolitan Pit**.
3. Just before the track rises to cross the **River Lee Navigation**³ **fork left** onto a path running parallel to its towpath. You will be crossing the navigation at the lock 300m ahead, but shortly before reaching it there is a gate on the left into a fenced-off area of wet woodland.
 - If you wish you can detour around this **North Met Pit Orchid Area** on a continuous section of boardwalk (part of the **Orchid Discovery Trail**), returning to the main path a little way ahead.
4. Either way, immediately after the exit from the Orchid Area **fork right** off the main path onto a broad grassy path going up to **Cheshunt Lock**. Cross the navigation and follow the path out to another Waterbird information panel in front of **Seventy Acres Lake**.

B. Seventy Acres Lake to Hooks Marsh Lake (2¼ • ½ km)

There is a choice of routes for this section. The main route in [5] is a long loop around the lake, with the opportunity to visit an Information Centre and bird hide on the far side. If you want to cut out this loop, turn right and follow the short cut directions in [6].

5. Main route (2¼ km)

- a. For the loop around the lake **turn left** onto the perimeter path, heading **N**. Follow the path around the north-western corner of the lake and then **fork right** at a triangular path junction to start coming back on the other side.
- b. The path follows the meandering course of the **Old River Lea**² on the left, passes an "Otters in the Lee Valley" information panel and comes to a low brick building on the right, the **Bittern Information Centre**.
There is a bird hide which you can use even if the centre is closed, although you will be lucky to see a bittern (a very secretive heron).
- c. Continue around the lake, passing a viewing platform down on the shore and a footbridge across the river on the left. The path makes a wide loop around an island in a meander of the river and eventually leads into a car park, now with the wide **Flood Relief Channel** on your left.
- d. Go through the car park and **fork right** in front of a **Bird Transition** sculpture, away from the river. Follow the path out of the car park and over a high footbridge between two lakes. Shortly before the path curves right **turn left** onto an unsurfaced path heading **S**.

6. Short cut (½ km)

- a. Head **S** on the perimeter path, with the lake on your left. In 300m **fork left** at a path junction with a **Viking Sign Post** sculpture, away from a bridge over the navigation.
- b. After curving right and then left, and where you can see the path sloping up towards a high footbridge 100m ahead, **turn right** onto an unsurfaced path heading **S**.

Continue the directions at §G.

C. Broxbourne Station to Silvermeade (¾ km)

7. Outside the station go through a gate on the right and climb a flight of steps up an embankment. At the top **turn left** onto a path alongside the **New River**⁴, passing the station car park down on your left. At the far end go through a kissing gate and turn right onto Station Road, crossing the river.
8. Cross the road carefully and in 50m **turn half-left** onto a path across a corner of Broxbourne Recreation Ground, with a churchyard beyond the river on your left. At the end turn left onto a lane (Churchfields) to go back across the river and past **St Augustine's** church⁵. At a junction follow the road down to the left, away from the river.
9. The road (now Mill Lane) curves to the right. Keep right at junctions, entering **River Lee Country Park**¹. The lane goes alongside the **River Lea**² and passes a Canoe & Cycle Hire shed, a signposted path for a "Wetlands and Woodlands" trail and the **Old Mill Retreat Café**. *The café is the suggested tea place at the end of the walk, with the trail an optional extension.*
10. Continue on the riverside path, under a low railway bridge. The path merges with another from a footbridge on the left where the river merges with the **River Lee Navigation**³. At the start of this section of its towpath there is a gate on the right with an information panel for **Silvermeade**⁶.

D. Silvermeade to Wharf Road (1¼ km)

11. If the ground is not waterlogged, the suggested route is to go through the gate into the water meadow.
 - If instead you decide to stay on the towpath, resume the directions at [14] (after 650m, where the main route rejoins from the second of two more gates into the meadow).
12. Inside the meadow follow a grassy path curving gently to the left. You will be leaving this triangular part of the meadow at its far right-hand end, but the path goes along its left-hand side (close to the towpath), then swings right in front of a belt of trees. Cross a stream in these trees on a wide bridge and go through a wooden kissing gate into a larger part of the meadow.
13. Ignore a footbridge across the reed-covered stream on the right and bear slightly left to follow a faint grassy path parallel to the stream for 400m. You pass several small fenced-off areas and another footbridge on the right. The path gradually approaches the river and eventually you go out through a kissing gate and turn right onto the towpath.
14. After the exit from Silvermeade there is a 600m stretch along the towpath, with the river bending left and then making a long slow curve back to the right. 100m after going past vehicle barriers **veer right** off the towpath into Wharf Road car park.

E. Wharf Road to Turnford Brook (2¼ km)

15. Leave the car park on a surfaced path heading **S** across a grassy picnic area, dotted with trees. This soon merges with another path from the river and bears right. In 150m you cross a ditch on a footbridge and turn left briefly onto a lane, then veer right onto the continuation of the path. In 200m bear left at a path junction to head **S** again. *The suggested route now simply follows this cycle path for 1¾ km as it weaves between the railway line off to your right and two large fishing lakes. There are some short cuts on grassy paths nearer the railway (see map), but these have no views of the lakes.*
16. In 50m keep ahead at a path crossing. The path soon passes a fishing lake on the left (**Railway Pit**), then bends right to head towards the railway. After a stretch alongside the tracks it swings left and right, then goes alongside the much larger **Ashley Lake** for nearly 500m.
17. At the end of this lake the path turns half-right and heads back towards the railway. After a final stretch of 200m near the tracks you come to a path T-junction in front of a stream, **Turnford Brook**. **Turn left** to head **E**, away from a bridge over the railway.

F. Turnford Brook to Hooks Marsh Lake (1¾ km)

18. In 100m the path crosses the **Small River Lea** (not much more than a ditch here) and you **fork left**, briefly heading back towards Broxbourne. Keep to the main path as it veers right and continues between the tree-lined edges of two lakes. Go up to and straight across the Lee Navigation on a high bridge.
19. Continue across **Holyfield Marsh** to a path T-junction flanked by a pair of **Wildlife Bench** sculptures. **Turn right** to head **S** alongside the River Lea, with a large electricity substation on the opposite bank. In 250m **fork right** at a triangular path junction, away from the river.
20. The path soon swings left to go alongside the large **Seventy Acres Lake**, with the navigation behind trees on your right. In 350m keep ahead where a path from **Cheshunt Lock** joins from the right, by an information panel for the **Waterbird Discovery Trail**.
21. Head **S** on the perimeter path, with the lake on your left. In 300m **fork left** at a path junction with a **Viking Sign Post** sculpture, away from a bridge over the navigation.
22. After curving right and then left, and where you can see the path sloping up towards a high footbridge 100m ahead, **turn right** onto an unsurfaced path heading **S**.

G. Hooks Marsh Lake to the White Water Centre (2½ km)

23. Follow the path for just over 1 km on its meandering course between **Hooks Marsh Lake** (on your left) and a stream on the right, with **Police Pit** and later **Friday Lake** beyond it.
24. At the end of this stretch ignore a boardwalk on the right leading to the edge of Friday Lake, and cross a footbridge over a stream. In front of a small grassy area containing **The Banded Demoiselle** sculpture **turn right** onto a path heading away from the **Flood Relief Channel**.
25. Continue on the path between a tree-lined stream (**Powdermill Cut**) and **Hall Marsh Scrape**. Later you pass the steel **Phoenix hide** on the left, an unusual viewing point across this floodplain grassland. At the corner of the scrape do not cross the footbridge ahead but **turn left** onto another surfaced path to stay alongside it.
26. On the next stretch there are paths on the left where you could make short out-and-back detours to **Teal Hide** and then **Snipe Hide**. The main path heads back towards the Flood Relief Channel, but 75m before reaching it **turn right** to go across a stream on a wide bridge.
27. Go through a gate and follow a grassy path across a large open area, the **Showground**. On the far side this merges with one coming from Waltham Abbey and you cross the Lee Navigation on a high footbridge. On the other side **turn left** down a slope to one of the entrances to the **Lee Valley White Water Centre**⁷.
 - The full walk loops back to this point so you will have a second chance to look around the centre, but if you are doing the walk's short cut this is the only refreshment place *en route*. The large **Terrace Bar & Café** is on the first floor.

If you are doing the short cut and not visiting Waltham Abbey, go to SK.

H. The White Water Centre to Waltham Abbey Church (1¾ km)

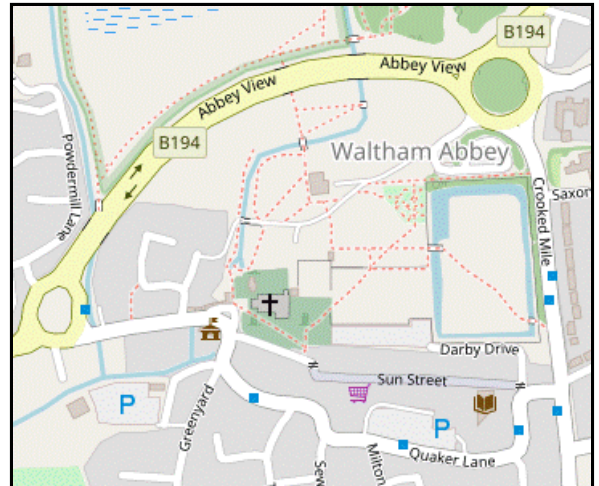
28. For the full walk make your way to the towpath and turn right to head **SE**, with the navigation on your left. Go back across the navigation at **Waltham Town Lock** and across a patch of grass to the main road ahead, passing the **Viking Ship** sculpture.
 - Alternatively you could simply stay on the towpath up to the road, as the return route also goes past this sculpture.
29. Turn left onto the A121. Unless you want to make a long out-and-back detour along Beaulieu Drive to the museum at the former **Royal Gunpowder Mills**⁸ (500m off to the left) keep ahead at the traffic lights after 175m. You are now on the B194 (Highbridge Street), heading directly towards the parish church.
30. Use the zebra crossing a little further along to go past the right-hand side of the large roundabout ahead (with the **2012 Olympic Shield**⁹ in its centre), staying on Highbridge Street and crossing the Old River Lea.

31. Two of the suggested lunch stops are on the left, shortly before reaching the church. **The Crown** pub is in a residential street (Romeland) just before you pass the **Town Hall**¹⁰ on the right, while the **Gatehouse Café** is off the small parking area in front of the church.
- The route in the next section goes past more refreshment places in Market Square and Sun Street, or you could carry on past the church to reach them directly.

I. Around Waltham Abbey to Highbridge Roundabout (1¾ • 3½ km)

Explore as much of the town and gardens as you wish. The suggested route is a loop out through Waltham Abbey Gardens and back through the town via Sun Street to Market Square, then a shorter loop via the southern edge of Cornmill Meadows. Several short cuts are suggested; alternatively, you could double the length of this section with a complete circuit of this large water meadow.

32. This section starts in front of the **Church of the Holy Cross & St Lawrence**¹¹, which has a statue of **King Harold**¹² high up on its south wall.
- Even if you skip the entire circuit around the town (by retracing your outward route along Highbridge Street to the large roundabout), the church is well worth a visit.
33. Take the path heading **N** from the parking area in front of the church, passing the **Rectory** on your right, to come to the **Mill site**. Cross the narrow footbridge over the left-hand of the two mill-races to continue briefly alongside the **Cornmill Stream**, then cross it on a wide bridge to pass through the **Abbey Gateway**¹³.
34. Keep ahead on the main path through the **Abbey Gardens**¹⁴ (or slightly to its left to inspect a tall wooden sculpture, the **Ancestor**¹⁵). The path swings left and right as it passes the **Church Centre** and approaches a walled garden.
35. You could enter this **Rose Garden** through the colourful **Sun & Moon** gateway, but if you stay on the path to its left you will go over a mosaic marking the **Greenwich Meridian**¹⁶; there is another entrance to the garden on its northern side, opposite the site of the medieval **Bloomery Forge**¹⁷.
36. Take any route through the Rose Garden and leave via an exit on its southern side, opposite the Forge. Unless you want to cut out the loop through the town, **fork left** where the path splits outside the garden.
- For a short cut, fork right and head back towards the church, eventually going through a gap in the brick wall into the churchyard. In the grassy area behind the east end of the church there is an information panel; from there you can either resume the directions at [41] for the meadows loop, or carry on past the church and go back along Highbridge Street to the roundabout.
37. The tarmac path from the Rose Garden comes to a path crossing where you **turn left** to cross a moat into the old **Abbey Orchard** (and wildflower garden). Take any route across it to the far right-hand corner. Cross the other arm of the moat on a wooden footbridge and go out onto a road (Crooked Mile).
38. Turn right onto the road, then turn right again at the traffic lights into Quaker Lane. Where this road swings left **go straight ahead** into the pedestrianised Sun Street, passing **The Angel** pub on the right and the attractive half-timbered building housing the **Epping Forest District Museum**¹⁸ on the left.
39. Further along you pass **The Sun** on the left (another possible lunch pub) and go over another pavement mosaic marking the **Meridian**¹⁶. At the end of Sun Street bear right across a corner of Market Square and re-enter the churchyard through a passage at the side of the timber-framed **Welsh Harp** inn.



40. Unless you want to cut out the loop through the meadows, go straight ahead to an information panel in the grassy area behind the east end of the church.
- For a short cut, turn half-left onto the tree-lined path leading to the west door of the church and go back along Highbridge Street to the roundabout.
41. The panel is by a stone slab **memorial** marking King Harold's possible burial site. From there head **NE** to a gap in the brick wall leading back into the Abbey Gardens; to the left of the gap the remnants of a medieval **Slype**¹⁹ can be seen behind an iron grille. At the other end of this short passageway take the path heading **N** across the gardens to cross over your outward route.
42. Continue on the path to the left of the Church Centre, still heading **N**. Leave the gardens by crossing a footbridge over the Cornmill Stream and head towards the ring road (with the top of the medieval **Stoney Bridge** just visible off to the right). Follow the path through a subway under the road and go through a wooden kissing gate into **Cornmill Meadows Dragonfly Sanctuary**²⁰.
43. Unless you want to do the optional extension, **turn left** and go along the broad grassy path parallel to the ring road to the south-western corner of the water meadow.

44. Optional Cornmill Meadows Extension (+1¾ km)

Note that there are no paths cutting across the meadow so you have to go all the way around them on this extension.

- For the extension **turn right** onto a grassy path across the meadow, gradually moving away from the wooden fence on your right. Turn left in front of the Cornmill Stream, passing the **Abbey Fishponds**.
 - Follow the perimeter path all the way to the north-eastern corner, where there is an information panel about the **Dragonfly Sanctuary**. Ignore a footbridge across the river and **turn left** to stay inside the meadow.
 - The path soon bends left again to head **S**, soon with some derelict buildings of the **Royal Gunpowder Mills**⁸ site visible across the Old River Lea.
 - Halfway along this stretch you could make a short detour to **Wake Hide** on the left. Shortly before reaching the south-western corner the perimeter path goes past an information panel about the **Calico Ditches**²¹.
45. In the south-western corner of the meadow go through a wooden kissing gate and up a grassy slope. Turn right onto the ring road, crossing the Old River Lea. Follow the pedestrian path and then Lea View around two sides of the large roundabout to return to Highbridge Street.



J. Highbridge Roundabout to the White Water Centre (1 km)

46. Retrace your outward route for 250m, heading **W** along the right-hand side of the main road, to reach the bridge across the two river channels.
- The return route has to go back along the B194 and A121 as there are no other convenient crossing points over the wide Flood Relief Channel.*
- If you want to abandon the walk, **Waltham Cross** station is a further 1 km along the A121: see the Walk Map.
47. For a different route back to the White Water Centre, **turn right** onto the path alongside the wide Flood Relief Channel (not the Lee Navigation), passing the **Viking Ship** sculpture on your left. Follow the riverside path for 200m as it swings round to the right. Before it curves back to the left, **turn left** through a metal fieldgate into the Showground.

48. Follow the broad path through this large open area, at first tracking a line of pylons and later veering left to head **W**. On the far side the path briefly merges with your outward route as you cross the navigation again on a high footbridge, with one of the entrances to the **Lee Valley White Water Centre**⁷ down the slope to your left.
- The walk route continues on the path curving off to the right, but it is worth making a detour into the centre. If the Olympic Course behind the main building is operating you can watch the participants from a footbridge over the course, and you can get some mid-afternoon refreshment in the **Terrace Bar & Café**.

K. The White Water Centre to Cheshunt Station (2 km)

49. Take the surfaced path heading **NW** away from the footbridge over the navigation. Follow the path past a sign for the Country Park's **Disc Golf Course** and continue across the **Small River Lea** on a footbridge.
50. In 200m **fork right** and keep right at further path junctions to head **N**, soon with the large **Bowyers Water** on your left. In the north-eastern corner of the lake the path forks and you can take either route: each goes past a large wooden sculpture.

51. Giant's Chair route

- Fork left at the path junction. In 75m the route continues ahead at the next path junction.
 - A short out-and-back detour to the left would bring you to a viewing platform over an **Orchid Area** in front of the lake.
- Continuing on the main route, the path merges with another from the left and goes along the right-hand side of a meadow (**Thistly Marsh**), soon passing **The Giant's Chair** sculpture on the right.
- In a further 150m **fork right** onto a path through some trees. Cross the Small River Lea on a footbridge and **turn left** onto a cycle path, rejoining the other route.

52. Green Man route

- Fork right at the path junction to cross the Small River Lea on a wooden footbridge. Where the path splits again in front of **The Shrine** sculpture (of a 'Green Man'), **fork left**.
 - In 150m the path merges with a cycle path coming from **Waltham Common Lock**. In a further 300m the other route rejoins from a footbridge on the left.
53. Follow this cycle path for 250m, passing a group of wooden sculptures in a clearing on the right along the way. At the end turn left onto Windmill Lane to come to the small car park at the start of the Main Walk, in front of the level crossing at Cheshunt Station.

54. Finishing at Cheshunt Station

- There is a direct entrance to Platform 1 on the left (for West Anglia trains to London), but if this is locked you will have to cross the tracks to the main entrance and use the station footbridge. London Overground trains leave from Platform 3.
- If the snack bar on Platform 2 is closed and you want some refreshment, there are several places a little way along Windmill Lane: in less than 150m you would pass **The Windmill** and **The Red Cow** pubs on the left, **Rose Café** and **The Maltsters** pub on the right.

L. Cheshunt Station to Aqueduct Lock (2¼ km)

55. For the continuation to Broxbourne go through the small car park. The most direct route is along the right-hand path beside the Small River Lea, but if you have already done this at the start of the Main Walk you could take the other path (or the grassy strip between them). All routes come to a track at the end of the open area after 600m, where there is a **Stag Beetles** sculpture.
56. A simple route would be to take one of the paths straight ahead, but the suggested route is to **turn right** briefly onto this track. After crossing the stream **immediately turn left** onto a path alongside **North Metropolitan Pit**. On the other side of the stream the alternative routes pass a **Play Boulders** sculpture and all routes rejoin at a brick bridge over the stream after 500m.

57. The surfaced path continues on the right-hand side of the Small River Lea. In 400m **fork right**, avoiding another bridge over the stream at **Turnford Brook**. In 50m **keep ahead** on an unsurfaced path, leaving the main path which veers right. Ignore a small bridge on your left and follow this woodland path between more fishing lakes, keeping the stream on your left.
58. In 500m the path bends right and weaves its way through the trees, soon coming out in front of the **Lee Navigation**. Turn left and go along its towpath for 250m to **Aqueduct Lock**.

M. Aqueduct Lock to Broxbourne Waterside (2½ km)

59. At the far end of the lock you could simply remain on the towpath, but the suggested route is to **turn left** down steps onto a path signposted to Ashley Lake. Turn right at a path T-junction in front of a lake (which is actually **Marsh Pit**) and follow the path up a small flight of steps, heading **NW** with the lake off to your left.
60. In 200m the path turns half-right, crosses a ditch and goes through a patch of scrubland to a small car park for anglers. Ignore a path opposite and **turn left** to go out along the car track, which immediately bends right to head **N**. You pass **Railway Pit** on the left, **Boot Pit** and then **Lee Pit** on the right.
61. At the end of the track turn right onto a lane and follow it back towards the Lee Navigation. After making your way around a metal fieldgate ignore a sharp left turn onto a lane, but **turn left** onto the towpath in front of a bridge over the river, keeping the navigation on your right.
62. For the next 1 km it is simplest to follow the towpath, although near the start you could veer left down the bank and go through a large grassy picnic area, dotted with trees. On the towpath you would pass **King's Weir** and continue alongside the wide **River Lea**, navigable on this stretch.
63. At the end of the picnic area you come to Wharf Road car park and the only continuation is along the towpath for a further 600m. At the start of a line of trees there is a wooden kissing gate on the left with an information panel for **Silvermeade**⁶. Unless you came out through this water meadow on the Long Circular Walk, the suggested route is to go through this gate.
 - If you have already been through Silvermeade (or if it looks flooded) simply continue along the towpath for 650m and resume the directions in §N, where the River Lea splits from the Lee Navigation.
64. For the Silvermeade route, go through the gate and turn half-right to follow a faint grassy path all the way across the main part of the meadow, parallel to a stream on your left and passing several small fenced-off areas. On the far side go straight ahead through a wooden kissing gate and cross a tree-lined stream on a wide bridge into a smaller meadow.
65. As the direct route across this part of Silvermeade can be waterlogged it is advisable to turn right and go around two sides of the triangular area. At the far end leave through a wooden kissing gate, rejoining the towpath where the River Lea splits from the Lee Navigation.

N. Broxbourne Waterside to the Station (¾ or 1½ km)

There is a choice of routes to the station, with the café route in [66] including the opportunity to loop around some wetlands on a long boardwalk. If the café has closed or you need something stronger, either take the pub route in [67] or detour to the town's High Street via Mill Lane (see map).

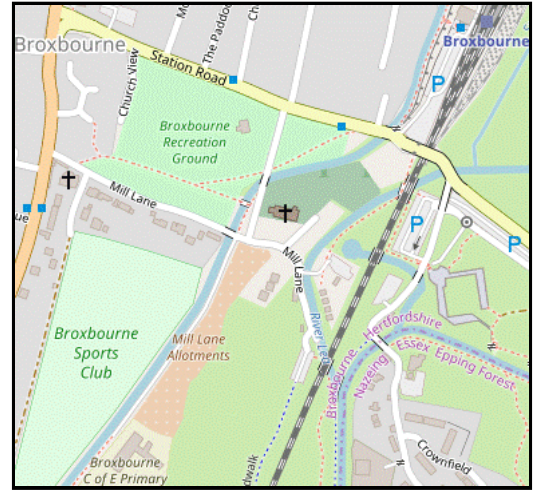
66. Old Mill Café route (¾ or 1½ km)

- a. Take the left-hand path, which goes alongside the River Lea under a low railway bridge and into the car park for the **Old Mill Retreat Café**. In the marshy area behind the car park there is a horseshoe-shaped "Wetlands and Woodlands" trail.

You can do this optional extension in either direction, but it is advisable to check the car park before starting on the woodlands section: if the back of the car park is under water, part of the boardwalk in the wetlands section will be flooded too.

b. Optional Wetlands & Woodlands extension (+¾ km)

- The wetlands section starts from the back of the car park; the woodlands section between the café and a Canoe & Cycle Hire shed. Whichever direction you take, ignore steps up to an exit at the far end and return on the other path.
- c. Go past the Canoe & Cycle Hire shed to a road junction and **turn right**. Cross the river and **immediately veer left** through the ruins of **Broxbourne Mill**²².
- d. Follow a tarmac path running between the river and a small picnic area. Just before this goes under the railway, **turn left** up steps onto a metal footbridge.

**67. The Crown route (¾ km)**

- a. Take the right-hand path, which goes across the river on a footbridge and alongside the Lee Navigation. Go up to the next bridge and turn right onto a narrow lane to cross the Navigation. **The Crown** is directly ahead.
- b. After visiting the pub, retrace your steps over the road bridge and follow the lane round to the right. Go past the **Lee Valley Boat Centre** and across another waterway.
- A short out-and-back detour up the steps on the right would reveal the site of **Broxbourne Lido**²³.
- c. For the station, go down steps on the left and diagonally across a car park. In the far corner follow a tarmac path under the railway and **immediately turn right** up steps onto a metal footbridge.
68. To complete the walk, cross the River Lea and follow the path up a slope and under Station Road. The station²⁴ is at the far end of its long car park, with the entrance on the left. All the platforms are accessed via an overhead walkway, with trains to London leaving from Platforms 1 or 2.

Walk Notes

1. **River Lee Country Park** is a large open space between Broxbourne and Waltham Abbey. It is part of the linear Lee Valley Regional Park, which follows the course of the **River Lea** for 42 km from Ware to the Thames. [By convention the spelling *Lee* is used for constructed features such as the Navigation and the Country Park, whereas the natural river and place names derived from it are spelt *Lea*.]
2. The **River Lea** runs for 68 km from its source in the Chilterns near Luton to the Thames in east London. It splits into several waterways (Old River Lea, Small River Lea, etc) as well as the constructed channels.
3. The **River Lee Navigation** was constructed alongside long stretches of the River Lea in the 18thC to improve navigation, which had become more difficult with the increased extraction of water into the New River.
4. The misleadingly-named **New River** is an aqueduct, constructed in the early 17thC to increase the supply of clean water to London.
5. **St Augustine, Broxbourne** dates from the 15thC and contains several interesting memorials, including a tomb with effigies of Sir Henry Cock and his wife surrounded by their kneeling children.
6. **Silvermeade** is an area of wet grassland dissected by a network of ditches. The fences along their sides are to protect the banks and provide a habitat for water voles.
7. The **Lee Valley White Water Centre** was constructed to hold the canoe slalom events of the 2012 Olympic Games.
8. The **Royal Gunpowder Mills** were acquired by the Crown in 1787, taking over a private business which had been operating for over a century. Production continued until 1945 when the site became a research centre for rocket propellants, but this too closed in 1991. A heritage centre has been open to the public since 2001.
9. The **2012 Olympic Shield** commemorates the building of the Lee Valley White Water Centre. It depicts King Harold surrounded by King Henry VIII and various civic and Olympic plaques.
10. **Waltham Abbey Town Hall** was built in 1904 in a Continental Art Nouveau style.

11. The **Church of the Holy Cross & St Lawrence, Waltham Abbey** was rebuilt in Norman style between 1090 and 1150, the fourth church on the site. When construction of the abbey started in 1177 it was greatly lengthened eastwards but the extended nave, transepts and chancel were all demolished in 1540. The west tower was added in 1556 after the old (east) tower collapsed.
12. **King Harold (Godwinson)** is said to have been cured of paralysis while praying before the Holy Cross when Earl of Essex. After his death at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 legend has it that his body was brought to Waltham, but some historians have speculated that he is buried in Bosham church, in West Sussex.
13. The **Abbey Gateway** was the main entrance to the monastic area, with separate arches for horse-drawn vehicles and pedestrians. The interior wall is one of the earliest brick walls in the country, partly built with large medieval red bricks known as 'Waltham Great Bricks'.
14. **Waltham Abbey Gardens** were laid out by the Denny family, who built Abbey House on the site of the former abbey at the end of the 16thC. The house was demolished in 1770.
15. The **Ancestor** sculpture (1992) was carved by artist Helena Stykianides from a single oak tree cut from Epping Forest. It represents an Augustinian canon and has a series of enigmatic images on the back.
16. The **Greenwich Meridian** was established as the universal baseline of 0° longitude at an international conference in 1884. It runs through Waltham Abbey and is marked by pavement mosaics in Sun Street and the Abbey Gardens, as well as the 'Sun & Moon' gateway (1995) in the Rose Garden.
17. The **Bloomery Forge** smelted iron ore and provided metalwork for the abbey and its farm (a bloom is an iron or steel bar in an intermediate stage of manufacture).
18. The **Epping Forest District Museum** of local history is contained in two historic houses which have been skilfully combined into a single building.
19. The **Slype** is a stone passageway with a vaulted ceiling leading into the cloisters, a remnant of the 12thC abbey.
20. **Cornmill Meadows Dragonfly Sanctuary** is an area of partly-flooded rough grassland surrounded by slow-flowing rivers which together support many species of dragonflies and damselflies. It has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
21. The **Calico Ditches** are parallel ditches where cotton cloth was washed and then laid out in the grassland to be bleached in the sunshine.
22. **Broxbourne Mill** is mentioned in the Domesday Book and produced flour until the late 19thC. In the 20thC the mill wheel powered a small engineering works, but the three-storey building burned down in 1949. It has been partially restored by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.
23. **Broxbourne Lido** was built by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority in 1978, but demolished only 30 years later because it did not meet contemporary health & safety standards.
24. **Broxbourne Station** was relocated from its original Station Road site in 1959, hence the distinctively modern building (which is Grade II listed) on a railway line which opened in 1840.

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