

Sawbridgeworth to Bishop's Stortford (Full Walk)			Sawbridgeworth to Bishop's Stortford (Short Walk)		
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Sawbridgeworth to Bishop's Stortford (via Henry Moore Foundation)

Start: Sawbridgeworth Station

Finish: Bishop's Stortford station

Sawbridgeworth Station, map reference TL 490 150, is 6 km south of Bishop's Stortford, and 48m above sea level. Bishop's Stortford Station, map reference TL 491 208, is 43 km northeast of Charing X and 61m above sea level. Both are in **East Hertfordshire**.

Length: 23.7 km (14.7 mi), of which 5.1 km (3.2 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 186/175m. For a shorter walk, see *below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 4 out of 10

Time: 5 hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8 hours.

Transport: Sawbridgeworth Station is on the West Anglia Main Line from Liverpool Street to Cambridge (journey time from 40 minutes, up to three trains per hour). Trains usually stop at Tottenham Hale (connect from the Victoria Line). Bishop's Stortford is further down the line (journey time from 38 mins, up to six trains per hour).

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

OS Landranger Map: 167 (Chelmsford)

OS Explorer Map: 194 (Hertford & Bishop's Stortford)

Walk Notes:

After passing through the centre of Sawbridgeworth, much of which is a conservation area, this East Hertfordshire walk leads mainly through open countryside, either along tracks, green lanes or quiet country roads, providing extensive views across the gently rolling countryside of fields, woods and waterways. The most attractive parts are then a scenic stretch of the Ash Valley around lunch in Much Hadham, one of Britain's longest villages, and the long peaceful ending along the Stort Navigation past a couple of Nature Reserves. The pretty town centre of Bishop's Stortford with its many tea options can be explored on an optional extension.

The Henry Moore Foundation in Perry Green is passed in the morning. The walk features a substantially shorter version to enable an extended visit of the Henry Moore Sculpture Park, Studios and House. This version cuts out some of the most attractive parts of the walk, though.

Note: The Henry Moore Foundation is closed from end October to early April

Walk options:

You can cut the walk short by **taking a bus** (runs Mon-Sat about every two hours) from the recommended lunch pub to either Bishop's Stortford or St. Margaret's (Hertford East line to Liverpool Street, run by the same train operating company).

Shortcuts: It is possible to shorten the walk in four ways:

- Shortcut I cuts out 0.7 km (0.4 mi) at the start,
- Shortcut II cuts out 5.5 km (3.5 mi) and 84m ascent around lunch (and gives a rating of **2/10**),
- Shortcut III cuts out 1.0 km (0.6 mi) after lunch,
- Shortcut IV cuts out 0.5 km (0.3 mi) near the end.

Taking all shortcuts reduces the length of the walk to 16.1 km (10.0 mi).

Lunch:

The Hoops Inn Perry Green, Herts, SG10 6EF (01279 843 568, <https://www.thehoopsatperrygreen.com/>).

Winter: Open: Wed-Sat 12.00-21.30, Sun 12.00-18.00 & Bank Holidays 12.00-16.00. Food served Wed-Fri 12.00-15.00 and 17.30-21.00, Sat 12.00-21.00. Sun 12.00-18.00 & Bank Holidays 12.00-16.00. Summer: Open: Wed-Sun & Bank Holidays 11.30-23.00. Food served to 21.00 Wed-Sat and 18.00 Sun and Bank Holidays.

The Hoops Inn is located 7.5 km (4.7 mi) into the full walk and 6.8 km (4.3 mi) into it if taking Shortcut I. It was probably built in about 1834, a date found on several interior beams, with its ales initially being brewed on the premises. Ownership eventually passed to McMullens brewery of Hertford, but a long series of distinctive landlords, ensured The Hoops' popularity, especially during the War years when many troops were billeted in the vicinity.

Henry Moore had considered acquiring the property in the early 1970s, but it was not until 1990 that The Henry Moore Foundation, an arts charity set up by the artist, took on the lease. Moore, along with other local artists and occasionally his assistants, would often visit The Hoops on a Sunday, as did some of the important international figures who came to see the famous sculptor and his family.

Among those visiting his home at Hoglands were actresses Lauren Bacall and Julie Andrews, writers W. Somerset Maugham and W.H Auden, Politicians Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterand and even Her Majesty, The Queen Mother. Until 2009, The Foundation entrusted the running of The Hoops to independent publicans. The Inn has a large outdoor area at the back.

The Bull Inn High Street, Much Hadham, Herts, SG10 8BU (01279 842 668, <https://the-bull-inn-bar.business.site/>). Bar open Mon-Fri 11.00-15.00 and 17.30-23.00, Sat 12.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-20.30. Restaurant open 12.30-14.30 and 18.30-20.30. Located 10.8 km (6.7 mi) into the full walk.

Hopleys Café Hopleys Plants, High Street, Much Hadham, Herts, SG10 6BU (01279 841 188, <https://www.copleysfood.co.uk/cafes/copleys-at-hopleys>). Closed January and February and all Tuesdays. Open Mon and Wed-Fri 9.00-16.30, 09.00-17.00 Sat, Sun & Bank Holidays 12.00-17.00. Located 10.9 km (6.8 mi) into the full walk.

The Prince of Wales Green Tye, Much Hadham, Herts, SG10 6JP (01279 842 139, <https://www.thepow.co.uk/>). Free House and CAMRA LocAle pub. Bar Food and Snacks available 12.00-14.00. Located 13.0 km (8.0 mi) into the full walk (12.3 km if skipping the out-and-back to the recommended lunch pub).

Tea:

Too numerous to list here.

Please see the walk directions for details of names and locations of the recommended cafes and pubs.

Notes:

Sawbridgeworth

Prior to the Norman Conquest, most of the area of "Sabrixteworda" (one of many spellings previously associated with the town) was owned by the Saxon Angmar the Staller. At the time, Sawbridgeworth's rich farming land was as fully developed for cultivation as was possible with the means available at the time: it was the richest village community in the country. The Manor was recorded in the Domesday Book and granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville. Many important medieval families had estates here. The number of manors increased during The Middle Ages, by a process of subinfeudation, which is the granting out of a part of an existing manor to a new owner so that a new manor was created. Local notables have included Sir John Leventhorpe, who was an executor of King Henry V's will, and Anne Boleyn, who was given the Pishiobury/Pishobury estate, located to the south of the town. Much of the town centre is a conservation area; many of the buildings date from the Tudor, Stuart, and Georgian periods. The modern town's prosperity came from the maltings (now a small business and residential area near the station). Sawbo, as it is also casually known, is divided from the county of Essex on the south and east by the River Stort, except for a projecting tongue of land forming the Hyde Hall estate. The road from London to Newmarket passes through the parish in a north-easterly direction.

<http://www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk/town-information/other-town-services/town-history/>

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=43625>

River Stort/Stort Navigation

The River Stort is a 38 km (24 mi) long tributary of the River Lea which it joins at Hoddesdon, Herts. Unusually, the river takes its name from Bishop's Stortford, a town through which it flows. The Stort Navigation is the canalised section of the River Stort, running 22 km (14 mi) south from Bishop's Stortford.

Great St. Mary's Church, Sawbridgeworth

Great St Mary's was originally built from flint stone and mortar in the 13th century (although a church on the site existed in Saxon times) and includes a Tudor tower containing a clock bell (1664) and eight ringing bells, the oldest of which dates from 1749. In the base of the tower is a 'Pudding Stone' which indicates that this had previously been an ancient pagan site of worship which had been converted to Christianity.

Famous local families, including the Chauncey's, the Jocelyn's, the Wiseman's and the Leventhorpe's are remembered in this building through its memorials and monumental brasses. Today St. Mary's has one of the finest collections of church monuments in the country.

Amongst the gravestones can be found that of Joseph Vick, who was one of the few survivors of the valiant six-hundred who "rode into the valley of death" in the famous Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War in 1854.

St. Elizabeth's School & Home

Established in 1903, it is one of only two national centres of excellence for people of all ages with severe epilepsy, associated neurological disorders, learning disabilities and other complex medical conditions. The Centre is set in 65 acres of safe, spacious parkland. It is one of the charitable works of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, a Roman Catholic religious congregation, founded in 1833 in Liege, Belgium. <http://www.stelizabeths.org.uk/>

The Henry Moore Foundation

Outdoor sculpture grounds with many monumental works by Henry Moore in 70 acres of Hertfordshire countryside. Indoor spaces include the Aisled Barn with tapestries, the Sheep Field Barn Gallery with a 'Henry Moore Plasters' exhibition, four studios with sculpture displays and the artist's house with Moore's personal art collections, including work by Renoir and Courbet. Henry Moore lived and worked here for 46 years. <http://www.henry-moore.org/pg>

Open from April to the end of October.

Sculpture Grounds, Barns & other Studios open 11-17 Wed-Sun & Bank Holidays.

Entry to the Artist's House is with timed ticket and in small groups only.

River Ash

The River Ash is a 26 km (16 mi) long tributary of the River Lea which it joins near Stanstead Abbots. It originates near Brent Pelham in North Herts and flows through The Hadhams (Little, Ford and Much), Widford and Wareside.

Hertfordshire Way

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/>

Much Hadham

Formerly known as Great Hadham, Much Hadham is reputedly one of the longest villages in England, and runs in the valley of the River Ash. The houses are of a variety of architectural styles, with the oldest dwellings dating from the 14th century. Past famous inhabitants include Edmund Tudor, the father of the first Tudor king, the sculptor Henry Moore, Bob Monkhouse, Chas & Dave and The Petshop Boys.

There are two churches – the parish church and a Congregational church. The gothic parish church, built largely between 1225 and 1450, is being shared between the St. Andrew's Church of England (Anglican) congregation and the Holy Cross Roman Catholic congregation. An entrance to the church is adorned with (replicas of) two small sculptures by Henry Moore. Near the church are remains of a palace that had once been the country home of the Bishops of London for 800 years.

Until 1964 the village was served by a railway station on the Ware, Hadham & Buntingford branch line.

Thorley Wash Nature Reserve

One of a string of wetlands flanking the Stort, Thorley Wash (13 ha) was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1986 for its botanical interest associated with tall wash grassland habitat.

Wildflowers present include ragged robin, marsh marigold, fen bedstraw and meadowsweet. Early and southern marsh orchids have also been recorded. A small herd of Water Buffalo graze here in spring and summer.

Rushy Mead Nature Reserve

The name Rushy Mead comes from an old tithe map showing the site as riverside meadows. The 5 hectares site is managed by Essex Wildlife Trust. The low ground has water near the surface all year, and there are good areas of sedge and reed. The northern end of the site has developed into mature alder woodland with ash and willow. It is a particularly good area for birds, including the uncommon willow tit. A network of drainage ditches supports a rich variety of aquatic wildlife including marsh marigold, dragonflies and water beetles. The drier ground has areas of scrubby woodland and chalky grassland. The latter supports a good variety of wild flowers including bee orchid and wild carrot.

Bishop's Stortford

The East Hertfordshire town of Bishop's Stortford took its origin from a ford over the river, which is now known as the Stort. Archaeological evidence shows that the Romans had several roads across the area, at least one of which crossed the river in the vicinity of what are now known as the Town Meads.

Contrary to popular thinking, the name Stortford is not derived from the name of the river, though. Instead it may have arisen from the personal name, possibly Steorta (old English, Steort – tail), of a family or small clan who lived in the vicinity of the ford in Saxon times and perhaps controlled the crossing. From c. 1060, when the town and its castle were sold to the Bishop of London, it became known as Bishop's Esterteferd, which later became corrupted to the present spelling. Later, when early cartographers came to the town in the 16th century, they reasoned that the town must have been named for the ford over the river and therefore assumed the river was called the Stort.

The Normans built a motte-and-bailey wooden castle in the town on the site of an earlier Saxon castle (possibly even preceded by a Celtic Barrow) to guard the route north from London, now known as Waytemore Castle.

In the early 13th century the town became a pawn in the disputes between King John and the Pope. The King seized the town from the Bishop and ordered the destruction of the castle in 1208 but then, soon after in 1214, had to pay for it to be rebuilt. By the Tudor period it was in ruins, though, yet the impressive mound still remains.

Bishop's Stortford developed as a small but thriving market town throughout the Middle Ages. It was a staging post on the mail coach routes between London and both Cambridge and Newmarket, while the town's prosperity was further enhanced by the opening of the Stort Navigation in 1769 and the London to Cambridge Railway in 1842.

The Herts/Essex-county boundary forms the easterly town border.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alighting from the train on platform 2 in **Sawbridgeworth**, leave the station at the back of the platform and *turn right* along the pavement of **Station Road**, soon passing **The Maltings** on the left. In 150m you cross a bridge over the **Stort Navigation**.

In 20m you have a choice:

For a shortcut, continue right along Station Road (for details see the end of the text under **Shortcut I**).

For the main walk, head up the second road on the left (**The Forebury**) and in 160m pass a large sunken grassy area on the left. In 90m reach a road at a bend and continue in the same direction along its left-hand side. In 20m *fork left* through bike barriers by a Footpath 28-sign and along a fenced tarmac track with a hedge on your left. In 80m enter a churchyard through a gap in a wall. Continue in the same direction, pass **Great St. Mary's Church**, and leave the churchyard through a wooden gate on the right and continue along Church Street. In 20m *turn left* along **Vantorts Road**. Pass the **King William IV** pub, and then the **Masonic Centre**. 70m from Church Street, at the corner of the wall on the right, **[!]** *turn right* across a small grassy area. In 40m cross a road (**The Square**, once the town's market-place) and continue along a tarmac track (Public Footpath 32) with a hedge on the left and a wall on the right. Follow this path past a cricket pitch with its club house, tennis courts and a bowling green on the left. In 300m emerge through bike barriers by a Footpath 32-sign onto **London Road**. Cross the road and *turn left* along its pavement. In 30m *turn right* along **Hoestock Road**.

In 200m at a T-junction cross a road (Gilders) and *turn left* along the pavement, in 70m forking right with the pavement. In 60m in a turning circle continue in the same direction along Public Footpath 15 (High Wych Lane) between fences. In 50m reach a wooden plank bridge over a brook at a footpath-junction and **[!]** *turn right before crossing the brook*, with garden fences on the right. You are now following the brook for the next 1.2 km: in 230m ignore a footpath turning right and continue along a road and in 110m *turn left* into a grassy area through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate by a Footpath 12-sign. In 100m leave the grassy area in its far-left corner through a gap in a low wooden rail by a Footpath 12-sign onto a road where you *turn right*. Shortcut I joins descending down the road. In 35m *turn left* and cross the road and continue through a gap right of a metal field gate (or over a stile on the left) and along a grassy path between hedges and trees, with the brook again on your left.

***)** In 115m *turn right* in a field corner along the grassy boundary on a Permissive Path, with the brook on your right. In a while a couple of paths join from the right through a wooded area. 140m from the end of the wood *turn left* with a yellow marker on a low wooden pole on a gently rising car wide grassy margin between fields (280°) towards large barns. In 540m continue in the same direction through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and to the left of some barns at **Tharbies Farm**. Follow occasional yellow markers along a gravel track around the barns and in 220m you reach a tarmac lane at a T-junction with a Footpath 42-signpost. **[!]** *Turn left* along the lane, soon passing a large black wooden barn conversion and the red brick **Tharbies Farm House**. In 500m ignore a footpath turning right into a field and in 180m reach a road at a T-junction in a bend and *veer right* along it.

In 200m *turn left* with a Restricted Byway 34-signpost at another bend in the road along a gravel-and-earth lane between hedges (**Chandler's Lane**). In 250m pass **Chandler's Lane Cottage** on your left and the lane continues as a grassy track. In 80m ignore a footpath turning right into a field. In 250m you emerge by a Restricted Byway-sign on a low wooden pole onto a car wide lane by a thatched house (**Chandler's Cottage**) on

the right. Continue in the same direction, in 60m ignoring a footpath turning right into a field. In 280m – at a lane junction – with a house on either side (**Park Baylis and Cobies**), *turn right* and in 20m *fork left* with a Restricted Byway 34-sign, soon passing a sign for a house called “**Surrounded**”. In 200m pass the house and continue along a green lane between hedges (**Covey’s Lane**), which soon swings right. In 50m you can exit the green lane (if too muddy) through a hedge gap on the left and continue parallel along a grassy field boundary. In 350m a footpath joins from the right from a field.

In 40m emerge from the green lane at a junction with a farm track at a bend and *turn left* with a footpath marker post to cross a field (280°). In 60m cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over **Fiddler’s Brook** and *turn right* along a field boundary on the other side. In 350m continue in the same direction at a junction with a farm track at a bend towards a large farm (280°). In 340m in the grounds of **Old Park Farm** *turn right* through a double metal field gate and then *left* along a tarmac lane, ignoring footpaths off to the right (to Allen’s Green) and left (towards **St. Elizabeth’s School & Home**). In 340m *veer right* at a bend in a road (a red brick mail box is perched on a small triangular green). In 350m pass the early lunch pub **The Hoops Inn**, Perry Green.

Just past the pub by a green on the right you have a choice:

For a shortcut, *turn right* with a Public Footpath 41-signpost (for details see the end of the text under **Shortcut II**).

For the main walk, continue along the road past a white house on the left (**Hoglands**, Henry Moore’s home for the 46 years until his death) and *turn left* immediately after it along a car wide tarmac drive. In 35m walk through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate and pass the visitor centre and ticket office for **The Henry Moore Foundation** on the left. You pass a small car park on the right and in another 65m continue ahead with a footpath marker post along a narrow path between trees when the track turns left (some sculptures are visible on the left in the grassy area, and one on the right amongst some trees). In 20m enter a pasture through a metal kissing gate and continue along its right-hand side. In 90m walk through another metal kissing gate and follow a farm track past some converted sheds and in 100m go through a double metal field gate to continue along the farm track.

In 130m *turn right* with a footpath marker post along a grassy strip between fields (15°). In 170m *turn left* at a footpath marker on a raised grassy strip between fields (285°). In 350m, on the other side of the field and upon reaching **Sidehill Wood**, you *turn left* with a marker post and follow the field boundary around right and down into the **Ash Valley**. At a four-way footpath/bridleway junction by a bench, *turn right* with Bridleway and **Hertfordshire Way** markers through a metal gate along a gravel-and-earth path (10°). In 100m *turn left* through a metal gate and continue in the previous direction. In 60m enter **Sidehill Wood**. In 600m emerge on a road descending from the right and *turn left* along it. In 60m where the road turns right, continue ahead through a wooden kissing gate into a grassy field. Two footpaths cross the field: follow the Footpath 25-sign (Oudle Lane) straight ahead (330°) across the field.

In 150m in the far-right field corner exit through a wooden kissing gate onto a raised path by a road T-junction where the right-hand road fords **The Ash**. *Turn right* on the raised path – without crossing the river – and then along the right-hand road, which also doubles as the streambed of **Bury Green Brook** and can be completely submerged and fast flowing! In 65m *turn left* by a footpath and **Hertfordshire Way** signpost through a wooden kissing gate into a grassy field. Head for a wooden kissing gate in a wooden fence 150m away (15°) and then *veer left* on a grassy field between trees, now with **The Ash** on your left-hand side. In the raised far right field corner leave the field through a wooden kissing gate onto a gravel lane. [If you want to skip the

recommended lunch pub and café, *turn right* along the lane and pick up the directions four paragraphs on “In 15m *turn right* through a wooden kissing gate...”.]

Cross the lane and walk through a metal kissing gate to continue through a meadow. In 150m cross The Ash over a two-railed concrete bridge, continue on a gravel path and in 50m go through a wooden kissing gate onto a tarmac lane at a bend. *Turn left*, unless...:

With the lunch pub or café only 125m away you might have time for this detour (1.4 km out and back) to the gothic Parish Church, shared between Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations (adorned with two small Henry Moore sculptures) and for views of the former site of the country palace of the Bishops of London (no visible remains):

- *turn right along the road; in 420m reach the churchyard of **St. Andrews with St. Thomas’ and Holy Cross’** churches; you’ll find the Henry Moore sculptures (replicas) on the left-hand side either side of the westerly entrance, while access to the church is through the southerly door (usually open);*
- *with the south entrance in your back veer left (155°) to leave the churchyard through a metal gate onto a narrow footpath where you turn left; in 130m cross **The Ash** on a railed bridge and turn left with a Footpath 18-sign, with the river and a fence on your left, gently ascending – the site of the former **Bishop’s Palace** is down on the left across The Ash;*
- *in 120m, by a wooden gate on the left, the path levels out; turn sharp right on a dog leg (due S) at a marked footpath junction, to ascend further up the hill; in 100m a footpath joins from the right below; exit from the trees onto a tarmac lane and turn right along it; in 270m turn right off the lane at a footpath signpost through a wooden kissing gate downhill into woods, with a stream on the right in a cut; in 150m go through a wooden kissing gate on the left hand edge of a grassy area and turn right and in 30m cross a two-railed concrete **bridge over The Ash**; turn left along a lane and in 60m turn right with it.*

In 20m continue in the same direction at a junction with a road at a bend, in 100m reaching the main road through **Much Hadham** and the recommended lunch pub **The Bull Inn**, with the also recommended **Hopleys Café** 60m to the right. After lunch retrace your steps for 350m (from The Bull Inn) to the gravel lane: down a road for 120m, *turn right* in a bend through a kissing gate, across the Ash, through a grassy field and in 150m through a metal kissing gate. *Turn left* along the lane.

In 15m *turn right* through a wooden kissing gate into a grassy field and head up its left-hand side. In 120m in the top left corner walk through another wooden kissing gate to follow the left-hand boundary of a larger grassy field. Leave this field in the far-left corner through a wooden kissing gate onto a gravel lane and *turn left* along it. In 25m *turn right* at a footpath marker post across a ditch and follow a path around a garden fence. In 150m emerge through a wooden kissing gate into a grassy field. Follow its left-hand side and in 260m in the far-left corner descend onto a tarmac lane (**Danebridge Road**). **[!]** *Ignore* the footpath continuing ahead up a lane to houses and *turn right* along the road. In 40m *turn left* at a Bridleway 38-sign (Green Tye) through the left-hand bank and over a two-railed wooden plank bridge across a stream (**Bury Green Brook** again, which floods the road near the ford across **The Ash**).

Continue up along the left-hand boundary of a large field, with a tributary stream on your left. Stay in the same direction with the stream on your left, all the way up to the brow. In 500m *turn left* with a bridleway marker post at the corner of a wooded area. In 25m *turn right* into the wood along a car wide bridleway, ignoring the footpath veering left along the field boundary. In 240m reach the road through **Green Tye** and *turn left* along it. In 190m pass **St. Thomas’ Mission Hall** on the right and in 90m you reach the late lunch pub **The Prince of Wales** and *turn right* along a car wide tarmac lane (Restricted Byway 42). In 310m *turn right* at a path T-junction. In 15m emerge from

the trees and continue along the right-hand grassy boundary of a large field. In 45m ignore a restricted byway turning left across the field. In 420m, at the far-right field corner and level with some farm buildings on the right, you reach a Footpath/Byway Open to All Traffic T-junction. Shortcut II joins from the right. *Turn left* with the Byway along a gravel-and-earth path towards a double line of trees.

******) In 40m continue along a green lane between trees (**Brook Lane**). In 160m a Restricted Byway joins from the left through a break in the trees. In 230m emerge from the trees. In 70m cross a stream (**Fiddler's Brook** again, crossed earlier today, further downstream) and *turn left* with the path between hedges and with red byway markers. In 25m *turn right* with the path and continue between trees. In 210m a footpath joins from the left through a gap in the trees and you continue in the same direction along the footpath. In 125m *turn left* (20°) at a T-junction with a farm track (a restricted byway and by **Sacombs Ash** farm house on the right). With fields either side, in 350m a footpath joins from the left. Continue along the farm track. In 60m ignore a footpath turning right at a fence corner. In 190m you reach a road and *turn right* along it.

In 75m *turn left* through a gap to the right of a double metal field gate with a Bridleway 31-sign (Thorley Church and Houses). Follow a concrete-and-gravel farm track towards a wood. In 470m upon reaching **Mathams Wood** *turn left* with a bridleway and **Hertfordshire Way** signpost. In 50m enter the wood on a narrow grassy path, in 120m pass a pill box and continue along a field boundary, in 150m cross a railed wooden bridge and *turn right* at the end of the wood on the right. In 40m follow a raised grassy path between two large fields. In 120m ignore a bridleway turning left. In 520m pass some large barns on the right. In 25m *turn left* along a gravel-and-earth track at a bridleway/footpath-junction in front of the grounds of **Moor Hall** (Footpath 13 Thorley Church). Follow the path around the grounds (ignoring a stile on the right along the way) and onto a tarmac drive, where you *turn left*.

In 20m *turn right* off the lane to the left of a double wooden field gate to continue along a gravel farm track, with a field on the left. In 100m continue in the same direction along a wide grassy field margin, where the gravel farm track doubles back right towards some sheds. In 300m in the far-right field corner cross an un-railed plank bridge over a ditch to enter another field. *Veer right* across this field (130°) and in 160m at a footpath cross paths cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a stream and continue through a wooded strip. The right-of-way continues gently uphill across a large field on a usually clear path towards **Thorley Church** visible ahead and then through a small wood and in 40m through a metal kissing gate into the churchyard of **St. James the Great, Thorley**.

[Alternatively, if the field is overgrown or too muddy, you could *turn right* along the field boundary and in 50m *turn left* along a concrete farm track to the church.]

At the far-right corner of the churchyard, by a metal gate, you have a choice:

For a shortcut, *turn left* through the churchyard (for details see the end of the text under **Shortcut III**).

For the main walk, *turn right* through a concreted farm yard-turned-small commercial park and in 70m *turn left* at a three-way footpath/bridleway-junction. In 275m *veer right* along a gravel-and-earth track through fields, where the concrete lane turns left. In 180m you go through a gap in a field boundary and continue downhill between a field on the left and a fenced sand quarry and treatment plant on the right. In 450m on the opposite side of the field *veer left* along a wide grassy margin *to the left* of a stream in a cut. In 230m walk through a wooden gate to the left of a double wooden field gate and continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane. In 90m reach the **A 1184**.

Cross the road and *turn right* along the opposite pavement. In 20m *turn left* through a gap into a meadow with a Public Footpath 22 signpost. Head on a clear path towards the railway line and in 100m cross a set of stiles either side of the tracks and then a two-railed wooden bridge to continue through **Thorley Wash Nature Reserve**. In 180m cross the **Stort Navigation** on a raised bridge and [!] *turn left* on the towpath on the other side, ignoring a footpath ahead. In 1 kilometre, Shortcut III joins from the left across a raised narrow footbridge.

***) In 220m leave the towpath through a metal gate and *turn left* along a road.

Cross the Stort on a bridge and immediately afterwards you have a choice:

For a shortcut, follow the road (for details see the end of the text under **Shortcut IV**).

For the main walk, *turn right* with a Footpath 6-sign (Bishop's Stortford) past **Twyford Lock 2** and across a bridge over a weir to continue for 1.1 kilometres along the riverside towpath, eventually passing **Rushy Mead Nature Reserve** on the right. 170m from the end of the Nature Reserve pass **Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club** on the right. In 70m [!] *turn left* across a railed concrete bridge over the **Stort** (*just before South Mill Lock 1*) and *turn right* along the opposite bank of the river. In 140m cross another weir on a footbridge, in 70m pass under a railway bridge and in 320m emerge onto a road and *turn right* along its pavement. Shortcut IV joins from the left.

****) Cross the **Stort** on a road bridge and *turn left* immediately after the bridge through bike barriers with a Footpath 42 signpost back onto the towpath. In 310m pass the elaborate ramped "**Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard**"-footbridge over the **Stort** (cross here for **one café** and **several restaurants** in the former Maltings buildings on the other side of the bridge; **all other tea options** though – apart from one pub at the station – need you to **continue walking along the Stort** into the town centre).

In 250m in a right bend of the river you have a choice:

- **For a 1.6 km** (out and back) **detour through the attractive historic town centre** and past numerous **tea options** continue walking **along the Stort**: In 140m pass under Station Road. In 220m ascend to and cross a major road to continue along the river. In 250m *turn left* over the second footbridge on the left into **Castle Gardens**, with **Waytemore Castle Mound** in the middle. An info panel is located on the left-hand side of the Mound. Leave the gardens to the left past the **War Memorial** and *turn right* along The Causeway towards a roundabout. *Turn left* and up along **Bridge Street**. In 120m **Café Mocha** is on the left down a narrow lane, just before passing **The Black Lion** and **The Star Inn** pubs on either side of the road. In 70m you reach the four-way junction with **Potter Street**, **North Street** and **High Street**, with restaurants on either side. *Turn left* along **Potter Street** and pass the former **Corn Exchange** with the recommended **Rosey Lea Café** on the right up **Market Square**. Further along the street find **Café Thyme**, **Hollys Café** and **Riverside Café** tucked away in three narrow walks turning left off it: **The Dells**, **Regent Walk** and **Riverside Walk**. At the next four-way road junction (with **Coffee Corner** on the left and **The Bridge House** pub on the right) *turn left* along **Station Road** (and later past **The Rose & Crown**) to reach **Bishop's Stortford Station** in 450m.
- **For the direct route to the train station,** *turn right* up some steps to leave the **Stort** and continue between houses, through a little residential square and then along a cul-de-sac to reach a four-way road-junction (100m from the river), **Bishop's Stortford Station** ahead. The area is currently a building site: follow temporary signs to the station. **The Three Tuns** pub is located on the other side.

Shortcut I (cut 0.7 km and 5m ascent/descent in the morning)

Continue along the road for 1.1 km: in 420m pass the **George the Fourth** pub, at the junction with Knight Street; in 230m cross Cambridge Road and continue in the same direction, eventually downhill; in 400m, at the bottom of the descent, the main walk joins from the left across a green with a children's playground in the middle of it; *turn right* through a gap to the right of a metal field gate along a grassy path between hedges, and with a brook on your left.

Join the main walk directions at the asterisk *).

Shortcut II (cut 5.5 km and 84m ascent/descent in the afternoon, but also the attractive Ash valley and all lunch options apart from The Hoops Inn)

Keep to the right-hand side of the grassy area, with a stream to your right. In 50m walk through a gap in the trees and emerge into a field corner. *Turn left* (initially 60°) along the left-hand grassy boundary for 480m until you get to a field corner with the buildings of **Bucklers Hall Farm** and its pond in front of you. *Turn right* in the field corner and in 45m *turn left* with Hertfordshire Way and Footpath markers at a T-junction with a farm track. In 60m *turn right* in front of a field gate leading into the farm grounds. In 40m continue ahead on a gravel-and-earth path towards a double line of trees, where a footpath (the main walk) joins from left along a field boundary.

Join the main walk directions at the double asterisk **)

Shortcut III (cut 1.0 km, but cut out a Nature Reserve and riverside walking)

Pass the church on the right, leave the churchyard through the lychgate and continue along **Church Lane**, ignoring all paths off. In 150m cross a bridge over the **A1184**. In 220m *veer right* at a T-junction with a road. In 160m continue ahead on a wide tarmac footpath. In 90m the path is now a main road's pavement. In 40m *turn right* across the road and over a stile with a **Hertfordshire Way** marker. Follow a grassy field boundary with a wood on the left, turning left in 40m, soon with a hedge on the left. In 460m in the far-left field corner walk through a hedge gap and continue along a raised grassy path between fields. In 260m continue in the same direction downhill between hedges. In 60m cross the main road into **Bishop's Stortford** and continue with a Footpath 5-sign (**Pig Lane**) down a narrow path. In 125m cross the railway line and in 100m the **Stort Navigation** on a raised footbridge and *turn left* along the towpath.

Join the main walk directions at the triple asterisk ***)

Shortcut IV (cut 0.5 km, but replace a meandering riverside walk past another Nature Reserve with – mainly – road walking)

In 50m *turn right* with a Footpath 9-sign (Twyford Bury Lane) towards a metal field gate with a fenced in farm track behind. Cross the remnants of a stile *left of the gate* and *veer left* (15°) across a meadow sloping down right towards the river. Head just to the right of the garden fence of **Twyford Bury Farm** and continue along the fence and then a hedge. In 300m at a corner of the hedge on the left *veer left* on the left of two distinct paths on grassy ground, aiming just left of a solitary bush (345°) in the meadow 130m away. Leave the meadow through a gap in the boundary growth and *turn right* on a gravel farm track. In 15m ignore a lane to the right. In 100m walk through some wooden gates to cross the railway tracks. Continue along a tarmac lane (Twyford Road) through a small industrial estate and then past some houses. In 260m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road. In 200m Footpath 41 joins from the right. This is the main walk.

Join the main walk directions at the quadruple asterisk ****)