

Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Bayford	Walk No.	389
Area	Hertfordshire	Type	Circular
Date	Friday 25 th November 2021		
Distance	<p>Link 3 & 4 of the Hertfordshire Chain Walk. Link 3 = 5½ miles. Link 4 = 6 miles Total 11½ miles, 20 kms</p>		
Timing	<p>5 hours walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow 8 hours in total. Therefore should be back in Islington by about 5.00 pm.</p>		
Meeting up & travel	<p>Meet at Highbury & Islington by 9.10 to catch the 9.22 train to Bayford (Moorgate - Hertford North line). Or you can join the train at: 9.24 Drayton Park, 9.26 Finsbury Park. On the sign up form indicate where you are joining the train.</p> <p>You'll need to buy an off peak day return from Crews Hill (or Zone 6 Extension) to Bayford. £3.75 with Freedom Pass and Senior Railcard. Return from Bayford. Trains every 20 minutes.</p>		
Route	<p>We've previously walked Links 1 & 2 of the Hertfordshire Chain Walk (<i>IF1</i>) a Long Distance Path and this time we'll pick up the chain from Bayford station to do Links 3 & 4 (or just Link 3 if you want – see Drop Out Points below)..</p> <p>(0 mls, 10.00) Coming from the station we turn right and walk on the road a short distance toward the village of Bayford. Just before we reach Bayford we take a left on a bridleway heading south. It's a gravel track but still could have surface mud. This runs between hedges before entering Blackfan Wood. At Keepers Cottage we veer right. Beyond the wood it runs through a belt of trees and after about 1¼ miles reaches a road opposite a garden centre (memories of Crews Hill!). Turn left and carefully follow the road a short distance as it twists and turns, descending a short dip and rising again. We leave the road to turn right down a good track. We are over Ponsbourne tunnel here (<i>IF2</i>). You might just about be able to see the air shafts for the tunnel. This also is the cross over point for Links 2 & 3. So we have walked the next part (in the opposite direction) previously. After passing a few of Ponsbourne Park cottages on the left, we leave Link 2 and turn right on another good track (11.00).</p> <p>The track goes down hill between trees, with estate buildings on the left and a field to the right, then enters a wood. It passes close to a house in the wood and continues on a short distance to reach a road junction. There is a lodge house here at this entrance to the Ponsbourne Park estate. Cross over the road and take the road ahead called Tyler's Causeway (part of the Hertfordshire Way). After ¼ ml pass a few houses, then turn right on a footpath. This follows a right hand hedge, containing many mature trees, through three grassy fields. Halfway across the third field (before you reach the water tower), turn right through a kissing gate in the hedge then</p>		

immediately left along a narrow path. This comes out onto a lane. Turn left along the lane, which immediately turns sharply to the right with the water tower on your left. Pass a number of houses on the right, with the large main building of Epping House School visible beyond them. Beyond the entrance to Woodcock Lodge over on the left, the tarmac lane gives way to a gravel track. Where this turns right, continue ahead on a good path, almost as wide as the track. This runs between trees, with good views over the fields and hills to the left. Carry on straight onto the road then turn right following it into Little Berkhamsted (12.00, 7km, 4½ mls). **IF3**

This is the drop out point – see below.

Quick visit to the church?

At the centre of the village we take the left road to continue on Link 4. This good road descends down hill. But leave it, take the path to the left, descending down a field and up the other side. Follow this path until it picks up a farm track at Ashfield Farm. But don't follow it left, keep straight on, on another path. Keep straight on. At Howe Green you pick up a road & turn left on it for a short spell but leave it, turn right through the gate and across a field passing the goats on the right to a road at the bottom. Turn right down the road. This road is actually to a quarry. It comes out on to the main road (B158). Go straight across onto the road leading to Letty Green. picking up a path. You soon cross a bridge - across the River Lee – just a stream at this point. Just as the main road reaches Letty Green take the track to the right skirting through the back of the village. Then left at the main road. At the junction in the centre of the village go straight across (sign posted to Labby Green. As the road dips under the railway bridge the pub for lunch is on the right (13.00, 14km, 7½ mls).

After lunch coming out of the pub we take the track on the left which immediately leads to the site of the old Cole Green Station (**IF4**), now a parking place and picnic area. This was the route of the Welwyn-Hatfield Line, which has now been converted into a path for walkers, cyclists and riders. Another long distance path, the Lea Valley Walk, also makes use of this path.

Go left and follow the good path along the old railway line for about half a mile. Go onto the disused rail line turning left on it. Follow the rail line for over a mile. We leave it turning right down the bank and the steps. Follow the path across the field then at the road turn right but only briefly, take the path to the left (signposted to Roxford). But only for a short distance, take the path to the left through the kissing gate. This area is a mix of gravel quarry and landfill site Follow the path over the top and down the other side. Ignore the path to the right and passing Grotto Wood. This was the site of some formal gardens created in the late 17th or early 18th Century, with a grotto and ponds amongst other features – it was associated with Roxford Manor, which stood on the site of the farm we next reach.

At the bottom (Roxford Farm) turn right on the road. Follow this road at the edge of the quarry/ landfill area (called Water Hall). Veer left over the concrete bridge (crossing the River Lea again).

	<p>Coming out onto the main road (B158), cross straight over and take the signed path. This goes uphill to start with quite steeply then downhill. High banks on either side showing that this was quite an old track. Ignore the path off left up the hill. The path comes to a small wooden footbridge over a dry stream bed. Keep on this path until it comes out at a house. Follow the drive straight ahead (ignoring path signs slightly to the right), The drive leads to Stockings Lane. Follow that passed the houses to the end. Turn left on the road called Robin's Nest Hill. Nice views here opening out over the Lea valley and the flatter land around Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City.</p> <p>To the left we walk passed Stratton's Observatory (<i>IF5</i>).</p> <p>We are now back at Little Berkhamsted. We pick up Link 3 again to take us back toward Bayford. Just at the outskirts of Little Berkhamsted turn left down the side road. Soon you find the Hertfordshire Way crossing the road, take the left path.</p> <p>**This runs between gardens for a few yards then crosses some large grassy fields (on the right hand side). It dips down to a stile (you can dodge round this one) at the wood's edge. The path now climbs steadily uphill through the wood. Another stile at the edge of the wood gives access to another grassy field. Follow the path with the hedge on the left as it turns left, then crosses a stile to join a track, turn right pass a couple of houses then it reaches the main road in about a hundred yards. Turn left on to the road. Follow the road for almost half a mile into Bayford (16.00, 11½ miles, 20 km). Trains at 18, 38 & 58 passed the hour.</p>
Lunch	<p>Food is available at the Cowper Arms at Letty Green. Quite smart. 01707 330202 https://www.thecowperarmscolegreen.co.uk/menu#/</p>
Dropping out	<p>Possible after lunch – walk out from Little Berkhamsted (4½ml / 7km) back to Bayford. At the church take the Hertfordshire Way path. The path went through a grassy field, following the boundary of the churchyard on the left. It went through a kissing gate at the next field boundary, and continued on the same line through another grassy field. The path comes out onto a road. The path continues slightly down the road to the right. Follow the signs. Pick up the route description above ** back to Bayford.</p>
Suitability	<p>Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. Terrain: some slight undulations. Will be some muddy patches. Some walking on minor quiet roads. Possible obstacles: 6 stiles (1 fairly high). Comfortable waterproof walking boots. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain.</p>
Facilities	<p>There are no toilets at Bayford station. Use the facilities on the train and at the pub at lunchtime.</p>
Walk source	<p>Leaders creation from links below.</p>
Map & other references	<p>OS Explorer 174 & 182 Links: https://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=hertfordshire+chain+walk</p>

	http://www.petes-walks.co.uk/Hertfordshire%20Chain%20Walk/hcw_frame_page.htm
Leader & contact details	<p><u>Walk Leader</u>: Derek Harwood <u>Phone</u>: 077 5931 4096 <u>e-mail</u>: derek.harwood@live.co.uk</p>
Interesting Facts	<p>IF1: About the Hertfordshire Chain Walk <i>The Hertfordshire Chain Walk is an 86-mile walk that crosses the county of Hertfordshire from south to north, starting on the northern edge of London and finishing in Cambridgeshire. This path consists of 15 circular walks of between 4 and 9 miles in length that are linked together to form a 'chain' – hence the name Chain Walk. In fact there is a quarter mile gap between Walk 7 and Walk 8, so the Hertfordshire Chain Walk is also unusual in that it is a long distance footpath with a hole in the middle!</i></p> <p><i>The Hertfordshire Chain Walk starts in the south of the county, the first walk actually passing through the London borough of Enfield. Sharing some early parts of its route with the Hertfordshire Way, it then heads north to Little Berkhamsted and passes just west of Hertford. Continuing northwards between Stevenage (to the west) and Buntingford, it again meets the Hertfordshire Way near Sandon and Therfield, just south of Royston. The Hertfordshire Chain Walk finishes at Ashwell and Morden railway station, just across the county boundary in Cambridgeshire.</i></p> <p>IF2: <i>The air shafts you pass are into the Ponsbourne Tunnel which takes the Hertfordshire rail line we came on. The tunnel at 2,648 yards (the longest in the eastern counties of England and the last to be built by traditional methods), combined with World War I shortages of men and materials, delayed the opening of the route to Stevenage until 4 March 1918.</i></p> <p>IF3: <i>Little Berkhamsted's greatest claim to fame is that it was the place where William the Conqueror accepted the surrender of the City of London after the Battle of Hastings. The village dates back to at least Saxon times, and is mentioned in the Domesday book. It has previously been known as Berkhamsted Parva or East Berkhamsted to distinguish it from the town of Berkhamsted in the west of Hertfordshire. There are a number of impressive residences in the village, including two former manor houses and two former rectories. The cricket commentator Brian Johnson lived here (famous for that immortal line "As you join us, the bowlers Holding, the batsman's Willey"). The church has a rather unusual wooden tower, which somehow reminded me of churches I'd seen in Scandinavia.</i></p> <p>IF4: Cole Green Railway See this link for more information: http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/cole_green/</p> <p>IF5: <i>This is a round brick Georgian prospect tower built in 1789 as a folly in 1789 by John Stratton on the site of a former brewhouse. Stories that Stratton was an admiral who wanted to be able to see his ships moored on the Thames are almost certainly fiction. Most likely he simply wanted to enjoy the views offered by this folly. Certainly the tower is quite a landmark</i></p>

Full route of the Hertfordshire Chain Walk

