

Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Tring – Little Gaddesden - Berkhamsted	Walk No.	396
Area	Hertfordshire	Type	Linear
Date	Wednesday, 18 January 2023		
Distance	9.8 miles (15.8 km)		
Timing	4 hours walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow 6.5 hours in total. Therefore, expect to be back in Islington between around 5pm-ish		
Meeting up & travel	Euston Station main hall. (West Midlands) Train 9.54 – arrives 10.32am.		
Route	Tring via Golf Course, past the Bridgewater Monument, then Ashridge Park and lunch in Little Gaddesden; via the Ashridge estate and Capability Brown designed landscaped gardens to Berkhamsted.		
Lunch	Food is available at the Bridgewater Arms pub; booking at 12.45pm.		
Dropping out	Taxi at the pub		
Suitability	<p>Suitable for a reasonably fit regular walker. The biggest difficulty is the deep mud at certain places and on descending paths. There is only one style.</p> <p>Terrain: slightly hilly, wooded but also open meadows.</p> <p>One or preferably two walking sticks; comfortable waterproof walking shoes/ boots; waterproof jacket. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain.</p> <p>Wear, or carry, an extra layer.</p>		
Facilities	There are toilets at Euston station, the pub in the middle and green ones behind the trees.		
Walk source	Very much my own designed walk.		
Maps	OS Explorer 181 or OS Landranger 165		
Leader & contact details	<p><u>Walk Leader: Pia Rainey</u></p> <p><u>Beforehand</u> phone: 07775 782860 (leave message if necessary)</p> <p>e-mail: piarainey@icloud.com</p>		
Interesting facts	<p>The Ashridge Estate: comprises some 5,000 acres of beech and oak woodland, commons, and chalk downland. The varied landscape supports a rich variety of wildlife, with carpets of bluebells in spring, rare butterflies in summer and rutting fallow deer in autumn. The Estate is steeped in history, from iron age forts, Roman settlements, a Royal Park, Capability Brown, both World Wars to its present day, now in the ownership of the National Trust (since 1926).</p> <p>Its most famous owner was Francis, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater. Known as the "Canal Duke", his pioneering work in the sector is commemorated in the Bridgewater Monument, erected in 1832. We will walk past the monument but not climb it (it's closed in winter) and therefore miss its fine views over the countryside. In 1759 Bridgewater employed engineer James Brindley to build a canal from Manchester to Worsley, Lancashire, one his other estates, to transport coal from his mines there. Brindley's innovation - a technique called "puddling" - enabled the canal to travel in an aqueduct across the Irwell River valley. The aqueduct became the wonder of the age and sparked a canal building boom that lasted till the advent of the railways in the 1830s. Bridgewater himself is buried in Little Gaddesden Church.</p>		

Little Gaddesden Village Green War Memorial You pass this striking memorial a few minutes after your lunch stop in the village pub. This unusual brick and stone structure was built circa 1920 by Ashridge Estate's bricklayers with the roof structure built by a local carpenter. The Memorial is in three sections – a central stone pediment under a pitched tiled roof with brick flanking walls on which the names of the fallen – 23 from WW1 and 6 from WW2 – are inscribed on stone tablets taken from Ashridge House.

Berkhamsted WW1 Troop Training Trenches In September 1914 the Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps (nicknamed The Devil's Own) set up a tented camp in Berkhamsted, close to the railway station, for officers' training in preparation for action in the Great War. Over the next four years some 12,000 officers – some straight out of public school - trained in the camp and dug trenches on the nearby common to assimilate conditions in Flanders. Some 13 km of trenches were dug, and of these 500 metres remain and have been preserved thanks to the Chiltern's Society. Today's walk passes the trenches towards walk-end, and there is an interpretation board cum information plaque for visitor reference. Do spend a little while looking at this piece of recent history. Of the men trained, fifty percent were casualties of war with 2,200 killed in action. Three VCs were awarded to the Devil's Own, and on the golf course next to the Common is a simple stone obelisk as a memorial to the men.

