

Railway days out from King's Cross, St Pancras and Moorgate



The text in this book is merely an indication of what might be possible ... or what might have been possible at the time of researching or later revision.

Each reader must assess whether each part of the route qualifies as suitable or safe for public access. The author does not warrant any point of legality or safety in any part of the description of the route.

Thanks are due to many people who have helped me with route-finding and with intelligence local to a number of areas traversed by the route. Their contributions enrich the route and the stories along it. Clearly, any mistakes and misinterpretations remain with the author.

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Front cover photograph:
King's Cross station

The days out

Introduction

This document contains details of some walks which may be reached from the London termini of King's Cross, St Pancras and Moorgate. The two large stations are, of course, adjacent, and Moorgate fits into the Great Northern stable, with connections to or from the other stations at Finsbury Park.

One destination makes use of high-speed services from St Pancras, where the journey times from, say, London Bridge or Victoria would be significantly greater.

Those routes which are presented without photographs require a further visit to confirm updated details, so a degree of caution is to be espoused.

Routes

- **Bayford and Newgate Street**
(circuit from Moorgate)
15.4km; 3hr 19min (see page 15)
- **Broadstairs to Margate**
(linear from St Pancras)
17.3km; 4hr 05min (see page 19)
- **Kettering to Corby**
(linear from St Pancras)
15.4km; 3hr 23min (see page 25)
- **Market Harborough and Foxton Locks**
(circuit from St Pancras)
19.5km; 4hr 14min (see page 31)
- **Meldreth and Wimpole Hall**
(circuit from King's Cross or St Pancras)
19.5km; 4hr 14min (see page 37)
- **St Albans to Harpenden**
(linear from St Pancras)
11.6km; 2hr 26min (see page 41)
- **Sandy and Everton**
(circuit from King's Cross or St Pancras)
11.9km; 2hr 28min (see page 45)
- **Welwyn North and Datchworth**
(circuit from King's Cross or St Pancras)
11.9km; 2hr 28min (see page 49)

Note that some of these walks may be reached by direct trains from London Bridge and intermediate stations to St Pancras. See the summary table for each route for details.

General information

Planning your days

Getting to and from the routes

First of all, I intended to reach the start of each route as early in the day as possible. I did this by catching (generally) the first bus of the day from my nearest stop in the outermost fringe of London. This demonstrated the great difference between Sunday walking and the rest of the week: the first Sunday bus (at about 0740, as opposed to 0610 on other days) meant that the day's walk might not be started before 1000, and sometimes even later. I aim to finish the day's walk by 1400 if at all possible, because that's when the heat is switched off by the sun in winter (and the switch-off time comes even earlier if you are to the north of higher ground).

In the route guides, useful bus stops and stations are noted, with link routes described if they are not adjacent to the route itself. You will need both the TfL journey planner (<https://tfl.gov.uk/>) and the National Public Transport Information site (which has superseded and consolidated the various regional Traveline offerings and is at <https://www.nationalpti.co.uk/>) to plan your days. Once you know the routes you will need to research, <https://bustimes.org/> comes into its own, providing information about every bus and every stop — to give you shorter options and emergency exits.

You may note that I have tried to ensure that linear walks are chosen to be walking northwards or westwards as much as possible (unless the opposite direction makes significantly greater sense). This minimises staring into the sun, particularly in the morning when it is low in the sky. On circular walks, of course, the direction is all but immaterial, for you will be pointing south at some point in the circuit.

Finding the way

Map

Of course, the first step in finding the route is to read and to follow the detailed route-notes in the guide! But a map is still a very helpful aid, especially to find context, exit routes and alternatives, and the very best published maps for walkers are the Ordnance Survey Explorer series at a scale of 1:25000.

Assuming that you have access to a computer and printer, though, there is a far better option open to you than buying large fold-out paper maps which go out of date with every by-pass, brownfield

conversion, or cliff collapse. A subscription to the Ordnance Survey's online map service is one of the best investments any walker in Great Britain can make. For less than £40 per year (at 2026 prices), this will give unlimited online access to Ordnance Survey cartography stretching from Shetland to Scilly: you will note that they have a range of subscription plans available. See

<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/osmaps/>)

for details of the subscription service.

With this subscription, you may import GPX routes and create your own routes: these may be stored in the cloud, accessible only to you with your account or, if you so desire, made available to other users of the app. Also, you may export basic GPX data for any route to a file, and the software is able to calculate optimal directions for road trips too. You may then print maps and route-plans, using your own decisions as to paper size (A4 or A3), scale, and orientation, without limit) for your personal use. The map quality is second to none, just as one would expect from the Ordnance Survey.

The A-Z atlases and maps (and similar publications) are also useful for street names, etc., and show some of the paths, particularly in the built-up areas, but the limitations of scale are greater with a mapset which prioritises roads and streets, so the precision is diluted.

Needless to say, Google Maps (and other online services) can show the route of an imported GPX file on top of their base maps. However, the quality of the map, and of the resultant print, will suffer badly in comparison with the Ordnance Survey app's offering of crisp, clear, high-quality cartography.

Never rely solely on a map on your smartphone: the drain on the battery as the phone polls for your location is significant, and the consequences of losing navigability because of battery drainage, while perhaps not quite as life-threatening as it was for the idiots who tried to navigate across the Lakeland Fells with a phone, are still serious. Also, when all is said and done, the places where you are need navigational assistance are precisely those with extremely limited signal quality.

To return to the Lake District for an example of the vagaries of signal strength, I pulled out my phone at Hardknott Roman camp (but only to check for a text), and there was only a very weak signal ... from Manx Telecom. To cap it all, I had a text from Manx Telecom two days later, asking for my views on having experienced their service in using my phone while abroad.

Compass

Within the narrative, the sixteen main compass directions are used for most instances of orientation where the bearing is close enough. However, sometimes more accuracy is required, and a numerical

compass bearing has to be given (clockwise from north). It should be stressed that a compass is a very useful piece of equipment, even on suburban streets, but it becomes essential when crossing areas of heath or woodland where there is a multitude of paths (or none at all).

Nowadays, many of our mobile phones have compass apps, and for those whose phones are missing the app ... well, a basic Silva or Suunto (or similar) compass will be fine for these walks. Just keep yourself clear of danger by using your phone (and its battery) sparingly.

Of course, if you can see the sun, you can gauge directions pretty easily: it is in the east at 6am, in the south-east at 9am, south at noon, south-west at 3pm and west at 6pm (an hour later during British Summer Time, of course). The pedants may raise the question of longitude, but even at North Foreland, the clock lags the sun by only six minutes.

Logistics

Start and finish

You should note the restricted nature of much Sunday travel (and also on Saturdays, in some cases), and this may inform your choice of the day of the week for a particular route. The National Rail status page

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/disruptions/>

should warn you of planned and *ad hoc* disruptions to rail services, as will the TfL site for disruptions within London. Be sure to check <https://bustimes.org/> for bus availability, particularly at weekends.

Food and drink

It might seem, at first glance, unnecessary to carry provisions while walking in a well-populated area, but needing to hunt down victuals can be distracting and dispiriting. If a café or pub is not reached at the right time of day (or is found to be closed when you arrive), a period of gloom may set in; at the wrong point of the natural cycle of walking spirit, the need for a formal stop can disrupt the flow of the walk.

Each of these eventualities may lead to a mental off-switch being thrown, when you will be walking *through* an area without the experience of being *in* the area. Indeed, if you stick rigidly to the routes as given in the notes, there will often be long stretches along which you will not encounter a shop on the route itself. In areas of dearth, off-route facilities are indicated.

Of course, this applies more stringently in the rural areas, where you know that there could be long distances between refreshment facilities. You should always carry a small water bottle and some emergency nibbles; on some stretches, it can be handy to have a sandwich or similar in reserve. You are encouraged to make use of local facilities in the areas passed through, but you should also make sure that you have a Plan B tucked away in your pocket or backpack — whether for yourself, or for someone you might meet who is in greater distress.

First aid

The above advice applies equally to the carrying of a simple first aid kit of sticking plaster, antiseptic cream, antiseptic wet wipes (for disposal other than by flushing), tissues and sunscreen, plus zipped polythene bags for the sterile collection and subsequent disposal of any contaminated material. The small barrel of brandy which is stereotypically to be found round the neck of a St Bernard is optional.

Directions

I try to keep out of the trap of “cross the stile, and make for invisible barn over the skyline”, a direction which I discovered (and revised) within a set of route-notes to a long-distance path more than forty years ago.

You will see that these directions are sufficient to follow the route if you have a capable map in your hand ... and a capable map-reader in your party.

Times and distances

Each route is headed by details of the distance, ascent and duration. For the purposes of the calculation, standard walking pace is set at 5 kilometres per hour: individual readers may adjust expected timings according to their natural speed.

Distances are given in kilometres (after all, that's how the grid squares are constructed on the map, and we should really have ditched the awkward multiples of 12, 3, 220, and 8 several generations ago); the duration is based on Naismith's Rule at a flat-ground pace of 5 kilometres per hour, and accounting for slope. If your natural walking speed is at 4 kilometres per hour, you will need to adjust the duration by a factor of 1.25 to obtain an approximate duration for your own needs.

Do not assume, though, that you can manage a faster gait, especially in towns and cities: that will just put you under the cosh on expectations, and will leave no time to stand and stare. Urban

walking has its own accelerations and decelerations, separate from its rural counterpart — even waiting at traffic lights will change your overall speed. Key access points to public transport within routes are given at the appropriate points in the narrative of the route directions.

Background information

Throughout the text, I have attempted to give historical and other context to the areas through which you are passing. This may discuss a physical aspect of the route, such as the geology or architecture. Alternatively, it may point out something which might be interesting in social terms — a famous resident, perhaps, or a link with another route. These discursive alerts will be in [blue](#).

While each reader may have a favourite topic for such background information, it is hoped that there will be some interest for all in each of these inserts into the route-text.

Another form of insert alerts the reader to the various logistical matters which you will encounter — either for good (the presence of opportunities for refreshment or for the replenishment of supplies, and transport opportunities), or for the not so good (having to travel along a busy road or cross a busy railway, or the presence of other poor or dangerous walking conditions). In addition, this covers any points where an apparently obvious next step is the wrong answer. These logistical alerts will be in [red](#).

Respecting the route

Responsible walkers will always obey the Countryside Code when in the country, but respect for the route does not stop at the 30mph signs.

Whether you are on a street, a towpath, a footpath, or any other part of the route, you are only a guest passing through the community of others. The residents and other users have every right to expect that you do not abuse their environment while you borrow it for your transient use.

- Parking in residential roads, in front of gates or other field access, and beside farm driveways at the start or end of your walk is dissuaded most strongly — use local car parks if you really must arrive by car (though using public transport is a far better option, especially in walking linear routes). After all, these routes are described as *railway* days out.
- Do not make excessive noise as you go along — play no music, and quiet conversation barely above a whisper is loud enough. Let the surroundings do the talking.

- Do not block the way for other users by walking in large groups or more than two abreast (this is, of course, the most civilised way to act wherever you walk, be that along Oxford Street or in the Outer Hebrides).
- Be extremely careful not to leave litter anywhere — it is always an eyesore and may be dangerous (*e.g.*, in starting a wildfire). Always try to replenish your supplies at local shops, cafés, and so on: this helps to pay back the community for your use as you pass through.
- Finally, be sure to enjoy your passage through the areas borrowed by the routes — and show it by smiling to the locals you meet.

Conventions used in this guide

Measurement

One convention will already have been noted — the consistent use of metric measurements. This is the logical choice to correspond with map scales, and avoids the need for mental arithmetic in scales of three or of 22. Most people can be happy to consider their natural walking pace at 6kph, 5kph, or 4kph: that translates to one kilometre per 10, 12, or 15 minutes respectively. Even an ambling 3kph comes out at a nice round 20 minutes per kilometre.

However, there are other conventions to give you, the reader, help in reading the text.

Colour

Within the route sections of the guide (that is, excluding these preamble pages), black text is used to denote the detailed route descriptions, while coloured text is used for other types of information.

- Text in black is used for detailed route description.
- Text in maroon is used for logistical information, such as access to public transport or the whereabouts of cafés, restaurants, pubs or shops. It is also used to warn of dangers or “wrong-route” options
- Text in blue is used for historical and other background information, and for descriptive discussion text.
- Text in green is used to describe alternative routes.

Clearly, these classes of information may overlap in places to a greater or lesser degree, and inevitably there will be some leakage of text into what some readers may consider the ‘wrong’ colour.

Words

Within the text I use the word *refuge* in two ways to describe specific aspects of the route.

- A *refuge path* is a path provided (usually as a permissive route by the landowner, and often by agreement with the local highway authority) along the edge of a field, etc. This typically separates the walker from a roadway which would be dangerous owing to the lack of a verge. Some refuge paths are also used as off-road equestrian refuges.
- In crossing a road where there is no pedestrian crossing (whether light-controlled or a plain zebra crossing), a small island between the two directions of road travel is described as a *refuge*.

I use the word *triangle* to describe a refuge of that shape, usually as a means of separating the traffic at the approach to a junction or roundabout. The word *footway* is preferred to *pavement*, and *underpass* to *subway* to avoid ambiguity with road surfaces and underground railways respectively.

Maps of the route

The routes are mapped and are available to view on the *OS Maps Online* website and app (see the appropriate link at the end of this introduction) — *OS Maps Online* subscribers have access to the 1:25000 and 1:50000 maps, the latter really only useful for broad planning. You should note that the online access to the mapping will give you automatic updates to roads, paths and other features in the landscape (such as cliff erosion and rewilding projects) as they appear. This very useful feature is, of course, not covered by using paper maps, unless you keep purchasing replacements every time they are updated.

To find a particular route, you should home in on the area of interest (making sure that the start of the route is covered by the displayed area of the on-screen map).

- Select *Routes*, then *Discover routes*, and untick the *Premium routes* constraint (which restricts the search to some commercial providers).
- You should then be able to find the required route (whose name will begin with “Railway days out”, followed by the starting point, by scrolling through the list of routes alphabetically).

Alternatively, you may find it easier to paste the URL from the introduction to the route as given in the appropriate section of this document.

Online resources — transport and logistics

There are some very useful resources from the major transport players, and from others. A few of the most notable resources are listed below.

- **Transport for London**

<https://tfl.gov.uk/>

Full details of all TfL services, including timetables, bus route maps, status reports, live arrival data, journey planning, and more. Third-party connections such as National Rail and non-TfL bus services are included. The website also contains resources for walking routes in London.

- **National Public Transport Information**

<https://www.nationalpti.co.uk/>

Journey planning for public transport across the country. TfL is generally more detailed and more accurate within London, but NPTI is needed when you stray beyond the TfL area. This website/app supersedes and consolidates the former regional Traveline offerings.

- **National Rail**

<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Journey planning for rail services. Note that the TfL journey planner includes rail services within London. There is coverage of some rail services beyond London (there are inexplicable gaps) — however, since fares, disruptions and many other details may be found on the National Rail website, it is to be preferred for travel beyond London.

- **Bustimes**

<http://www.bustimes.org/>

Timetables (and maps of bus stops) for just about every bus route in Britain and Ireland. The compact format is kinder to smartphone usage than the apps from some transport organisations, and of course it consolidates data from all such organisations.

- **Ordnance Survey**

<https://explore.osmaps.com/>

Access to Ordnance Survey maps online, for desktop, laptop, tablet and smartphone. Printing maps is possible. Walkers are urged to take out a subscription: the cost will be repaid countless times over.

- **Bikehike**

<http://www.bikehike.co.uk/mapview.php>

Using OpenStreetMap, footpaths and cycle paths are overlaid on the base map. Useful for viewing link paths

to and from the route.

- **National Library of Scotland**

<http://maps.nls.uk/>

It may seem curious to reference a library in Edinburgh for information about the topography of London and elsewhere, but NLS carries an extensive collection of digitised historic maps covering the whole of Great Britain. These may be searched from an overlay on the modern map. Within the narrative text, if a reference is made to “old maps”, then NLS will be your source.



Bayford and Newgate Street

BAY

Start	Bayford station (BAY) — SG13 8PH
Finish	Bayford station (BAY) — SG13 8PH
Distance	13.0km
Duration	2 hours 56 minutes
Ascent	206m
Transport and ticketing	Direct train from Moorgate; sparse bus service to Cuffley station at Newgate Street and Epping Green; buy a day return to Bayford
Facilities	Pubs at Newgate Street, Epping Green and Bayford
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/12656568/

Introduction

The walk begins and ends at Bayford station, on the line between Moorgate and Hertford/Stevenage.

The station would have been called a halt in earlier times: there is no more than a shelter and a ticket machine.

Journey times between Moorgate and Bayford are about 50 minutes.

Route

2 Take the stairs at the south end of the platform, turn left, and exit the station at the ticket machine and card-reader.

Although the station is beyond the bounds of London, you may use a pay-as-you-go Oystercard for travel to and from Bayford. Contactless/mobile payment is available, but cannot offer discounts or concessionary fares such as a railcard.

Turn left along Brickendon Lane, and follow it to Brickendon Green. Turn right when you reach the green, and follow the track, keeping left at the fork to pass two cottages (the first, 28 Brickendon Green, named Poplars). The track leads to Brickendon Grange, now a golf clubhouse, on your right: the main access road for the golf course comes in from the left, and there is a car park ahead.

3 Pass to the left of the car park; beyond the tarmac, turn half-left to take a path which starts off roughly west-south-west across the golf course.

Remember to observe golfing etiquette, making no sound as you cross the course, and standing stock-still when a golfer is addressing the ball or playing a stroke.

Pass one green on the left, then another on the right. Cross a fairway which is played from left to right, then another played right to left. Bend left and pass between two fairways, easing out to cross the one on your right. Bear left along that fairway (against the direction of play), and look for a path to take through the trees.

Beyond the trees (and now out of the golf course), bear half-right to the corner of a field, then follow the right-hand edge of the next field to reach a road, White Stubbs Lane, with Claypits Farmhouse on your right.

Turn left along the lane, and follow it for about 600m to reach the corner of a wood, Old Grove, with public footpaths going off to right and left.

4 Turn right to enter Old Grove, and follow the footpath through the woods: after a bend to the right and then to the left, the path takes up a line marginally west of south.

After almost 1km from the road, you will come to a pond on your right. Turn right beyond the pond, and follow the path past the pond for 170m, where you will reach another pond. Turn left and follow the path southwards for 230m, then turn right, following a gap in the trees. After about 140m, you will be almost at the edge of the wood.

5 Do not go as far as the edge of the wood, but turn left to take a path through Long Grove: its general route is southbound, but that fact is somewhat masked by the many twists and turns, dips and climbs it takes on its way through the landscape.

After almost 700m, the path turns right to descend almost to valley level, before curling left and rising, with a building visible up to your left, to reach a road. Turn right and follow the road down to a bridge, noting the decapitated Coal Tax post on the right.

6 Cross the bridge, pass beneath the railway, and ascend the road to reach the T-junction at Newgate Street.

Note — the pub marked on the Ordnance Survey map is closed.

A short distance west from the junction, there are bus stops for the sparse service (not Sundays) between Hertford and Cuffley. You may be able to catch the lunchtime bus back to Bayford station (from the stop across the road from the pub) if you have set out at the right time.

7 Continue westwards from the junction, passing the church on the right. Just before you reach the Crown, take the left fork ahead onto New Park Road, and follow it until you reach 82 New Park Road on the right. Beyond the house, at first hidden by a utility pole, a footpath sign points you off to the right. Take the path, keeping a hedge on your right, to reach Tylers Causeway.

8 Turn right along the road; after 260m, take a footpath to the left (signposted towards Epping Green); there is a broad gateway

on the left-hand side of the road just beyond the footpath. Follow the footpath north across fields. The path eventually breaks to the right to reach a road. Turn left along the road as far as the Beehive Inn at Epping Green.

Here, there are bus stops for the same service as at Newgate Street. There is, however, an extra mid-afternoon bus to Bayford station (and Hertford).

The pub opens at noon, but is closed on Mondays: the food offering majors on fish and seafood but includes standard pub classics.

9 Take a path on the right with the pub now on your left — if you are not visiting the pub, you will turn off the road just before you reach it. After three fields path picks up an enclosed lane, which leads to Bucks Farm.

Bear left at the farm, keeping the buildings on your right. After 140m, the path turns left to cross a small stream and enter a wood. Descend through the wood to cross another stream. The path soon swings to the right. At a gap in the trees, take a path to the left and, at a T-junction of paths, turn right to follow a path northwards. At its end, turn right to reach a road, Bucks Alley.

10 Turn right along the road (with a brick wall on your left) for 20m and, just beyond the broad gateway to Garden Cottage, cross a stile on your left into a field. After about 250m, the path bears off half-left across two fields, passing the corner of a wood at the end of the first field and coming up against an entry into the woodland at the end of the second field.

Go ahead through the woodland. When you emerge onto a field, keep ahead with the hedge-line on your left. The path turns to the left and then to the right before emerging onto Ashendon Lane.

Turn left along the road and follow it all the way to the centre of Bayford, at the road junction just beyond the former Baker Arms pub.

Note — the pub marked on the Ordnance Survey map is closed.

11 Turn right at the junction onto Brickendon Lane, and follow the road for the last few minutes of the walk to return to Bayford station.



Broadstairs to Margate

BSR–MAR

Start	Broadstairs station (BSR) — CT10 1HZ
Finish	Margate station (MAR) — CT9 5AD
Distance	10.6km
Duration	2 hours 24 minutes
Ascent	127m
Transport and ticketing	Train from St Pancras; day return to Margate
Facilities	All facilities at Broadstairs and Margate; toilets at North Foreland and Botany Bay; pubs at Kingsgate and Botany Bay
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/21901525/

Introduction

This walk of a little over 10km presents no difficulties. There is a short stretch of cliffside field path at North Foreland, but after rain, even this is easy to by-pass. The rest of the route is on tarmac.

The centre of Broadstairs has a selection of shops, cafés and pubs.

The journey times between St Pancras and Broadstairs or Margate range between 1 hour 30 minutes and 1 hour 50 minutes — take the first available train.

Route

2 From Broadstairs station, leave the platform on which you arrive. If you are arriving via Ramsgate, turn left; if via Margate, turn right. Descend to High Street and turn left, passing beneath the railway if you have to. Follow the left-hand footway of High Street. At the point where the main road wheels round to the right (and becomes Queen Street), continue ahead on High Street. Go through the single-lane section, and at the bottom, turn left onto Albion Street.

Follow the right-hand footway of Albion Street down the hill, and through its single-lane section, and up to Church Road, where turn right. Follow Church Road to its end on the clifftop, with Bleak House on your right.

During the 1850s and 1860s, Charles Dickens (1812-70) would take holidays in the house (then called Fort House). He wrote *David Copperfield* while there, and sketched out the plot of *Bleak House*,



Bleak House, Broadstairs

though there are varying opinions on the building's relationship with the plot. However, the connection was cemented by Hazlitt's description of Fort House as "that old bleak house", and after the house was extended in 1901, the new name stuck.

At Bleak House, there is a tea room which is open between 0900 and 1500.

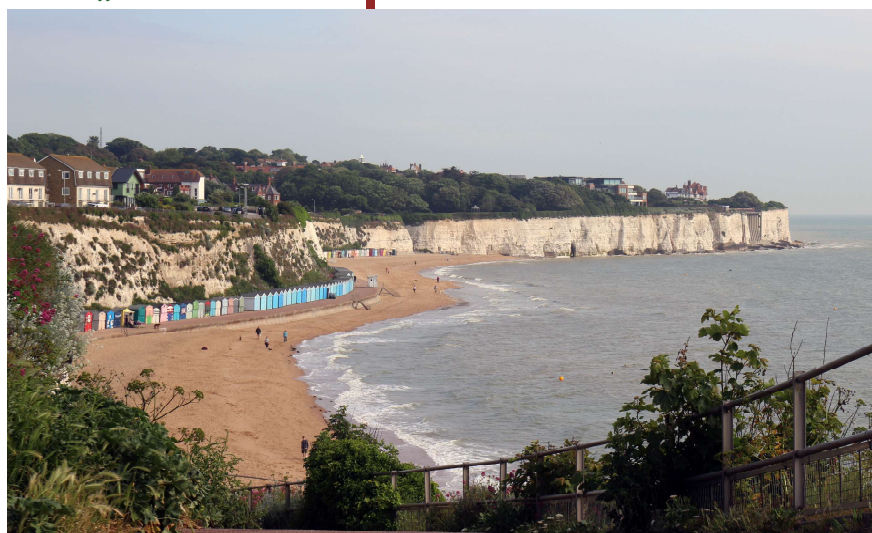
3 Turn left and pass through the traffic barrier. Follow the right-hand footway of Fort Road, overlooking the English Channel, to pass through another traffic barrier onto Eastern Esplanade, at the first of many shelters and benches along the route. Continue along Eastern Esplanade for about 500m. After you pass the second bus stop, you will see a small rectangular extension of the footway, with a low wall on three sides and an information board.

The extension is actually the roof of a small toilet block, reached by steps just before the extension. One might say that the information board would, if one was walking in company, provide a distraction with which to while away a few necessary minutes, but you are warned that the provision is fairly basic, probably to be classified as "emergency status".

There is a good view ahead of the East Cliff beach and the southern end of the North Foreland cliffs.

4 Continue to the end of the esplanade and turn left to ascend the right-hand footway of Park Road. At the top, turn right onto North Foreland Road, keeping to its right-hand footway. Pass the squash club premises (in this milieu, it seems one must call it a "squash rackets club" to reach the junction with North Foreland Avenue, where you have a choice.

East Cliff Beach, Broadstairs



During or after rain, a section of cliffside fieldpath ahead will be slippery and extremely muddy. If you would rather avoid this stretch, continue along North Foreland Road to the lighthouse, crossing to the left-hand footway (but not onto the lighthouse access road) to descend to the car park at Joss Bay.

In better weather, turn right onto North Foreland Avenue, then branch right onto Cliff Road, turning left at the end to

follow Cliff Promenade to the foot of Crescent Road.

If you have followed North Foreland Road to the lighthouse, you may reach this point by crossing the road onto North Foreland Avenue on your right, and branching left to descend Crescent Road. Conversely, if you reach this point and decide that the fieldpath ahead is not for you, you may ascend Crescent Road and follow North Foreland Avenue out to the right to reach North Foreland Road, crossing the road to turn right onto the left-hand footway to descend to Joss Bay.

Continue through the car park and onto the fieldpath beyond, close to the building on your right. Your nostrils will easily identify this as a wastewater treatment station (even if you miss the signboard). Here, you will be standing at the easternmost point in Kent.

5 Continue ahead on the earthen path to descend to the car park at Joss Bay, with views of Hackemdown Point beyond the small beach on your right, to reach the main road again at its junction with Elmwood Avenue.

On the right, a path descends past toilets to a beachside café (open until mid-afternoon, but closed on Mondays).

6 Cross the road to reach the end of Elmwood Avenue, and turn right to take a broad tarmac refuge path (but beware, it is a route shared with cyclists). Ascend the path to its end at the top of the hill. Continue ahead on Joss Gap Road, crossing to its right-hand footway at the entrance to Kingsgate Castle.

Descend to Kingsgate Bay, noting the fine view of the headland at Whiteness, a natural arch piercing the cliff, and climb to a large pub.



Coast path, North Foreland



Joss Bay



*Whiteness from
Kingsgate Bay*

The pub provides the usual array of food and drinks during normal opening hours for the kitchen and the bar respectively.

Beyond the pub and its car park, turn right onto a path between the pub car park and a golf course (if you reach the golfers' crossing, you have overshot), and follow it to pass the remains of Neptune's Tower at Whiteness on your left.

Neptune's Tower is a folly, built in 1760 by Lord Holland to echo his Kingsgate Castle across the bay, though the tower may have been built on the site of a fortification of the fifth century CE.

Turn left through 90°: at this pivot-point, you leave the English Channel behind and the water on your right becomes the outermost point of the Thames Estuary. Follow the clear path until you are across the road from Botany Bay hotel, restaurant, bar and café.

Neptune's Tower



There are toilets on the path down to the beach.

7 Bear slightly to the right to follow the main cliffside path round a gentle curve to the left to reach a small car park (with a way down to the beach) at the end of Botany Road.

There is a bus stop a little way inland.

This time, the right turn to keep to the clifftop is a full 90°. Follow the clifftop path for about 800m until, when you

are nearing a building on the promontory of Foreness Point, you turn left at the path junction to cut off the point. At the end of this path, you will reach the access track for Foreness Point.

8 Turn left to follow the track to another beach access point at Friend's Gap, and turn right to stay on the clifftop path. Cross a bridge (over an access to Palm Bay) and pass tennis courts on the left, to reach the Palm Bay Café.

Continue at the same level to cross another bridge, again over a beach access track. Pass an open-sided shelter, to reach an (architecturally undistinguished) indoor bowls centre.

The bowls centre boasts a café and bar which are open to all comers.

9 Continue along the clifftop path and cross a third bridge over the Newgate Gap. Continue ahead, passing a play area on your left. Pass a car park on your left, then turn left to reach the road.

Turn right to keep the lido centre (Brockwell Lido it is not) down on your right. At the end of the Lido building, bear slightly right to keep to the clifftop, passing a large tenement building whose frontage may look fine, but whose back walls have slumped in the fresh-paint stakes. Continue ahead to reach the Winter Gardens complex on your left and beneath your feet.

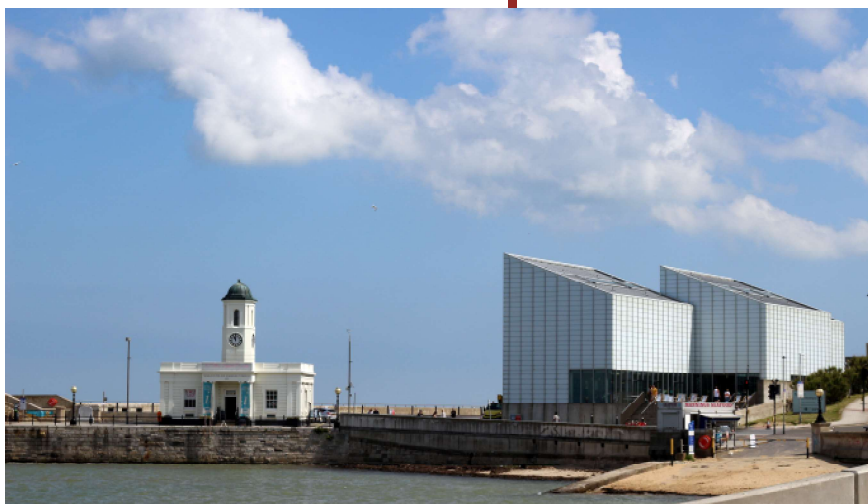
10 Continue ahead, curving to the left to reach Fort Crescent. Turn right to cross the access road to Fort Lower Promenade, and take a path to the right of the Fort Crescent footway. Descend the steps to reach the Turner Contemporary Art Gallery on your right, and emerge at the road which leads onto the Harbour Arm.

The Turner Contemporary Art Gallery was opened in 2011, and was intended to kickstart the regeneration of Margate, which had suffered (as had many British seaside resorts) from the changes in (previous) visitors' aspirations regarding holidays. There may be green shoots, but there is a lot of rubble, some on the foundation of complacency (again, as in many such towns).

Off to the right, in Droit Tower (the former harbour offices), is the local tourist information centre. Ahead, there is an installation of a stepped patio which is partially covered at high tide. The Harbour Arm was built in the years following 1815.

11 Continue along the right-hand footway, passing the patio, with the harbour immediately on your right. Pass the clock tower, which was built to commemorate the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria. Like the Jubilee Line of the London (which commemorates the

*Droit Tower and
Turner Contemporary
Art Gallery*





Margate Clocktower

silver jubilee of Queen Elizabeth ninety years later), the clock was not inaugurated on time but came two years after the event commemorated.

The tower looks like a standard upright tower which has physically gone to seed and has expanded around the hips. The bent pole on top (which originally contained a Time Ball — a recent attempt to re-instate the ball ended in failure), and the further bent top, give off a faint echo of the Hungarian coat of arms, with its bent cross on top.

On the approach to the next roundabout, turn left to cross Marine Terrace by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn right. Cross All Saints Way using the central refuge, and continue ahead with the installation of rocks on your right. Continue ahead to reach the entrance to Margate station.

There is a café at the station, and of course Margate has many shops and other options for eating and drinking.

Kettering to Corby

KET–COR

Start	Kettering station (KET) — NN15 7HJ
Finish	Gravesend station (COR) — NN17 1UJ
Distance	14.4km
Duration	3 hours 23 minutes
Ascent	188m
Transport and ticketing	Trains from St Pancras to Kettering and from Corby to St Pancras St Pancras; occasional buses at Weekley and Geddington.
Facilities	All facilities in Kettering; café and pub at Geddington; pub and supermarket near station in Corby.
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/21958083/

Introduction

The route begins at Kettering station, which is served by East Midlands Connect trains which take around an hour — the mainline trains save a few minutes but cost three times as much. The return journey from Corby take an extra 10 minutes. Return fares vary rather unpredictably, so to sort out the best combination for you, check

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/journey-planner/>

The railway arrived at Kettering in 1857, and the current station buildings date from 1898 on the same site as the original station. These buildings are listed Grade II.

After taking a fairly direct route eastwards through Kettering, paths are followed to Warkton. then roads to Weekley. After a short intermission on paths, the bulk of the Boughton estate precludes anything but the road to Geddington, but at least there is a footway all the way. Beyond the edge of Geddington, the route is almost all on paths almost until you reach Corby station.

It would be wise not to rely on the pubs and cafés but to carry your provisions for the day.

Route

2 On arrival from London, cross the footbridge to Platform 1 and the historic station building.

There are toilets and a café on Platform 1. There are no ticketing gates at Kettering station.

Follow the right-hand footway of Station Road, easing to the right at the end to reach Sheep Street. Cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left onto the right-hand footway. Pass the Alfred East Gallery (East was a local artist), and the Dryland Memorial Fountain and horse-trough (John Winter Dryland was a local doctor).

Continue along Sheep Street past the library on your right to reach Market Square, where turn right to keep the parasol canopy on your left. Continue ahead onto Church Walk and follow it out to London Road. Turn right along the right-hand footway to reach a refuge at the Corn Market Hall. Cross London Road using the refuge and continue ahead onto St Peter's Avenue, crossing to take the right-hand footway.

Follow St Peter's Avenue, passing the traffic barrier at the junction with Gladstone Street, along the full length of the street to reach the junction with Linden Avenue. Cross the road ahead at the hump and turn left along the right-hand footway. Immediately, turn right onto Fir Road and follow the left-hand footway to its end at the junction with St Mary's Road.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of St Mary's Road, crossing to the right-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Take the path ahead, to the right of 140 St Mary's Road, to reach Oak Road. where turn left along the left-hand footway to the end of the street at the junction with Windmill Avenue.

There is a convenience shop across the road.

3 Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Windmill Avenue, then turn right to cross the road using the refuge. Cross the service road and turn left along the right-hand footway to reach the junction with East Avenue, where turn right to follow the right-hand footway to the end of the street. Cross East Walk and cross the grass to reach a path, where turn right. Take the left-hand bend and follow the path eastwards to cross the River Ise. Where the major path bends to the left, continue ahead to keep trees on your left. Follow this path to a T-junction of paths with the house-backs of St Amanda's Close ahead of you.

4 Turn left onto a public bridleway and follow it northwards for 350m, then bear to the right to follow it on a straight line for about 850m, where it bends to the right. After a further 50m, turn left to follow the right-hand edge of a field. Take the right-hand bend at the end of the field, then turn left to reach High Street in Warkton. Follow the road round to the right, then turn left to follow Church Street to its end at the junction with Pipe Lane.

5 Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Pipe Lane for 400m to cross a stream on a footbridge. Continue ahead for a further 100m and turn right. After 400m, bend to the left to follow the bridleway out onto main Street. Follow the right-hand footway as far as the end of Church Lane, Weekley.

There is a tea room ahead and off to the left which is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, but is otherwise open between 1030 and 1500.

6 Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Church lane to its end, then continue ahead with the churchyard wall on your left. Continue ahead along the right-hand edge of two fields, crossing the avenue of trees called Broad Walk, to emerge onto Stamford Road over a stile.

The next 3.6km is along roads. The land to the right is Boughton Park and, with the exception of the path you have just walked from Weekley, there are no public rights of way on the estate, and there is no alternative to the tarmac. Just think positive thoughts of Geddington.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Stamford Road for 400m to reach the Porter's Lodge at a private entrance to the Boughton estate.

7 Follow the right-hand footway of Stamford Road for about 800m to reach the junction with Queen Street, on your right. Follow the left-hand footway to reach, on your right, a post office.

Behind the post office, there is a café which is open between 0900 and 1600 (but is closed on Mondays), and serves breakfasts and light lunches.

Cross to the right-hand footway and continue ahead, crossing the River Ise on the footbridge with the ford to your left, to reach the Eleanor Cross in the centre of Geddington.

In 1290, Eleanor of Castile, queen consort of Edward I, died at Harby, near Lincoln: her body was taken to Lincoln for embalming before being taken in funeral procession to London. At Lincoln and at Charing Cross, and at the ten overnight resting-points on the way, the King had tall, graceful monuments built and surmounted by a cross: these have become known as Eleanor Crosses. Three of these crosses survive to this day – here at Geddington, at Hardingstone (also in Northamptonshire), and at Waltham Cross, just north of the M25. Fragments of some others may be found.

Between 1291 and 1647, an Eleanor Cross had stood at Charing Cross in London (where the statue of Charles I now stands). The idea of a replica Eleanor Cross seemed to provide the right cachet for the South Eastern Railway's Charing Cross Hotel, and the hotel's architect, Edward Middleton Barry (1830-80), son of Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860), who designed the rebuilt Palace of Westminster following the fire of 1834, designed one: it was constructed in 1864-65 and placed on the station forecourt, where it remains to this day.

To the left of the cross, there is a pub which is open from 1200 (except on Mondays) and offers a range of simple food, including sandwiches and classic pub lunches.

8 Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of West Street to its end at the junction with Stamford Road. Turn left to cross over the end of West Street, then turn right to cross Stamford Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right to return to the junction, where turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Newton Road out of the village, where the footway comes to an end. Pass Mill Farm on your left, then follow the road for 500m through a right turn and two half-left turns to reach a gap in the hedge on your right, where two public footpaths leave the road.

9 Take the right-hand of the two paths at 90° to the road and cross the field. Pass through the gap and ease to the right in the next field, making for a tree on the far side of the field. Continue ahead along the right-hand edge of two fields for 500m, then turn left onto a path which passes beneath high-voltage power lines.

10 Continue along the left-hand edges of three fields to reach Mill Hill, where turn right to follow the road into Little Oakley, picking up the right-hand footway. Continue through the village to reach a former telephone kiosk which has, like so many others, been re-purposed to house a defibrillator.

There is a bench which may be useful to rest weary legs for a short break.

11 Cross the road to continue along the left-hand footway for 80m to reach the edge of the village. Turn left onto a public bridleway which follows the left-hand edge of a field, then crosses the line of a dismantled railway before continuing ahead to reach a track at a T-junction. Turn right to follow the bridleway along the track to reach another T-junction, third time with Featherbed Lane, where turn left to cross the A43 on a bridge.

12 Follow the bridleway round to the left, then take a half-right bend, followed by a half-left bend, then a right-hand bend. Pass the end of a hedge on your left and continue straight ahead, ignoring the track on your left, for 450m to meet a public footpath coming in from the left. Turn half-right and, after 30m, leave the bridleway as it turns left. Follow the footpath ahead through Bandy Slade woods to reach a roundabout on Long Croft Avenue, arriving through a gate and down some steps.

13 Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Long Croft Road, passing the roundabout on your left. Cross the road using the triangle as a refuge and turn right along the left-hand footway. At a waste bin, turn left onto a tarmac path. Cross a footbridge, then turn left to descend to a railway, turning right to pass beneath it. Continue ahead, passing beneath high-voltage power lines, to reach St Luke's Road to reach a large supermarket on your left. Turn left across the frontage of the supermarket to reach the entrance.

There is a café and other concessions (food-related and otherwise) inside the supermarket.

Turn right to use a pedestrian crossing to reach a walkway across the car park, and use another pedestrian crossing at the far end of the car park to reach and follow a path out onto St Mark's Road. With a roundabout on your right, use a pedestrian crossing to cross over the exit from the supermarket car park and follow the left-hand footway out to the junction with Oakley Road.

Turn right to cross over the end of St Mark's Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to cross the main road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead onto the left-hand footway of Station Road and follow it for 150m. Cross over the vehicular entrance to Corby station, then turn left along a walkway to reach the station.

There is a coffee point within the station. If you continue along Station Road to the junction with High Street and turn right, you will reach a pub which is open from noon daily and serves the usual range of pub food. The pub is 200m distant from the walkway on Station Road.



Market Harborough and Foxton Locks

MHR

Start	Market Harborough station (MHR) — LE16 7DT
Finish	Market Harborough station (MHR) — LE16 7DT
Distance	15.9km
Duration	3 hours 29 minutes
Ascent	187m
Transport and ticketing	Trains from St Pancras; bus to Market Harborough at Lubenham; return ticket to Market Harborough
Facilities	Pubs at Foxton, Foxton Locks and Lubenham; café at Foxton Locks; all facilities in Market Harborough
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/13502743/

Introduction

The walk begins and ends at Market Harborough station, which is served by half-hourly trains between St Pancras and Nottingham. Journey times between St Pancras and Market Harborough are around one hour.

The route follows streets in Market Harborough, Foxton and Lubenham, but otherwise it is on the canal towpath or across fields. The highlight of the route is the flight of locks at Foxton.

The railway came to Market Harborough in 1850; the present station was opened in 1885. Lines to Stamford, Northampton and Rugby closed in the second half of the twentieth century. The station building, built to a design by John Livock (who also designed the Trent valley stations between Rugby and Stafford), is Grade II listed, and was restored with sensitivity in 1981.

Walkers arriving from London will arrive on Platform 1; at the end of the walk, the return train to London will leave from Platform 2 (across the footbridge).

Route

2 Leave the station and follow the road out of the forecourt. At the end of Station Approach, cross Great Bowden Road then turn left to cross over the end of Fernie Road. Turn right onto the right-hand footway of St Mary's Road and follow it to the junction

with Clarence Street, where turn right onto the right-hand footway. Continue ahead as Clarence Street becomes Connaught Road, which becomes Broadway.

Turn right off Broadway opposite Orchard Street onto a path. Cross Meadow Street and Hammonds Way. Opposite Douglass Street, turn left onto a path which leads to Warwick Close. Follow the right-hand footway to its end at the junction with Ridgeway opposite a school.

3 Cross the road ahead and turn left, then turn right on a path with the school on your right and house-backs on your left. Beyond the school, the path continues across fields to come out onto Burnmill Road through a kissing-gate. Cross the road and turn right to follow the left-hand footway into Great Bowden.

At the junction, cross Leicester Lane and take Green Lane ahead, with a fine red brick house on your left. Where the path runs into a field, head half-left and follow the left-hand edge of the field to its far end. Head half-left across the next field to a gap in its left-hand side. Go through the gap, and head westwards across the next field. Go through the gap, and turn half-right to follow the path to the Market Harborough arm of the Grand Union Canal.

The canal was intended to link the Leicester and Northamptonshire Canal (later the Leicester branch of the Grand Union Canal) with Northampton, but it got no farther than Market Harborough.

4 Do not cross the canal, but turn right onto the towpath. Follow the towpath round a broad left-hand bend and on past an animal by-product processing plant to reach a road bridge. Pass beneath the road, then turn right off the towpath to reach road level.

5 Turn immediately left off the road to follow a path parallel to the canal, along the left-hand side of a field. Where the hedge bends away to the left, carry straight on across the field to a gap on the far side, slightly to the left of the corner of the field. Go through the gap and bear slightly right to cross the corner of the field, your route and the two hedges on your right making a neat, almost equilateral, triangle.

Cross a ditch, and take the right-hand side of the field ahead. After 120m, bear left on a path which cuts the corner of the field. Go through the gap and follow the left-hand side of the next field, with a hedge on the left. Carry on into the next field, the hedge now on your right. Carry straight on through two fields; in the third field, the hedge on your right turns right through 90°.

Here, continue straight ahead into the next field to its far left-hand corner. Exit along a track to the right of the buildings at the corner of the field to reach Swingbridge Street, your first taste of the village of Foxton.

6 Turn left along Swingbridge Street. After 70m, where a low brick wall on the right ends, turn right along a path which

leads to Middle Street. Turn left, then immediately turn right to take a path which leads to Main Street. Turn left and follow main Street to the canal bridge.

A mere 100m away on the other side of the canal is the Black Horse Inn. The pub opens at 1200 daily, with a closure between 1500 and 1700 on Mondays and Tuesdays. As well as serving pub food, there is a tearoom which is open between 1000 and 1600 on Wednesdays to Saturdays.

Gain the towpath by turning right before the bridge along North Lane and easing left. Follow the towpath with the water on your left for 850m. Just before you reach the junction of the Market Harborough arm of the canal and its main route (towards Leicester off to the right), cross the canal by a swing bridge. Bear left away from the water ahead to reach a road. Turn right and cross the bridge.

Ahead, you will see the Foxton Locks Inn. The pub and restaurant opens at noon (1100 at the weekend) and closes at 2100 (1930 on Sundays).

The bridge spans a short length of canal which was cut to serve an inclined plane: the plane was built in 1900 to by-pass the flight of ten locks, shrinking some of the side-pounds (reservoirs to conserve the water let out in managing the locks). However, the plane only lasted for ten years: in the end, the locks won!

Foxton Locks has ten locks in two staircases of five (where each lock lead directly to the next). They can be very busy, necessitating some queueing, but once moving through the locks, it should only take an hour.

There is a small museum, which is housed in the boiler house for the inclined plane. The locks are listed Grade II*, the lock-keepers' cottages at the top and bottom are listed Grade II, and the site of the inclined plane is a scheduled monument.

7 At the end of the bridge, turn left up a path with the side-pounds on your right. Bear right to reach the canal at the small basin half-way up the flight of locks between the two staircases. Turn left (up), and cross the canal opposite the museum. Continue to the top of the locks and out to a road.

The lock-keeper's cottage at the top of the flight houses a café, serving a range of simple food (including an all-day breakfast selection); it is open daily between 0900 and 1700.

Beyond the lock-keeper's cottage, you will see a cut on the far side of the canal. This served the top of the inclined plane. The bridge on the road is a crossover bridge, where the towpath crosses to the other side of the canal.

Turn left to cross the bridge, then go down the steps on the right. Do not go as far as the towpath, but go through a squeeze-stile on the left. Cross fields on a bearing slightly south of south-east, eventually

passing a pond on your right. Pass to the left of the buildings which make up Holme's Farm.

8 After crossing the farm's driveway at a bend, advance into the next field. Bear left along the left edge of the field, and pass through a gap just to the right of the far corner. Bear slightly right to cross the next field to a gap just to the right of its far corner. Go ahead across the corner of the next field to reach a road.

Cross the road, taking a track opposite. Pass a pond on the right, then turn right. make for the stand of trees slightly to your right, and pass into the next field just to the left of the corner. Keep a hedge on your left through fields until you have a building on your right, then switch to the other side of the hedge at a gap.

At the end of a field, take a right turn, then a left turn, to keep the hedge on the right, then turn left to walk through a children's playground to its far right-hand corner and exit out to a road. Turn left and then right to reach the main road in Lubenham. Cross the road and turn left.

The pub on your right is open daily between noon and midnight.

9 Go past the pub and turn right into School Lane. Before you reach the school, where the word *SLOW* is painted on the road, turn left along an enclosed path. This comes out onto Old Hall Lane; cross the road and go through a kissing-gate into the field opposite. Cross the field and the next one to reach Harborough Road.

10 Cross the road and take the path opposite, which bears right and rises to the horizon at the far end of the field. Go through the gap and pass between tightly-packed houses in streets with twee agricultural names, crossing Harvest Road. The path continues to reach and follow The Pastures out to Brookfield Road.

Turn right onto Brookfield Road. After passing a postage-stamp piece of grass on the left, turn left along a path. This path crosses a stream, then comes out onto Gardiner Street, which has buildings much older than those you have passed.

Turn right on Gardiner Street as far as Charles Street, where turn left. Follow Charles Street across Wartnaby Street to its end at Clarke Street. Turn right, and follow Clarke Street to Highfield Street. Turn left, and take Highfield Street to its end at East Street. Turn right, and take East Street to its end at Nelson Street.

Cross Nelson Street and turn left. Where there are a few parking spaces, bear right across shop frontages to reconnect with Nelson Street, which has turned a corner. Follow Nelson Street out to Fairfield Road, where turn right to reach Coventry Road at a mini-roundabout.

11 Turn left onto Coventry Road. Take advantage of a refuge to cross to the right-hand footway and continue as far as the entrance to a car park beside a supermarket — there is a red-brick church just beyond. Turn right and go through the car park to its

far end. Cross the River Welland using a footbridge, and turn left along the riverside path, with the water flowing on your left. The path crosses Northampton Road and Kettering Road, each at a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continues ahead through a couple of bends before crossing the river to come out onto Rockingham Road.

Cross the road and turn right towards the railway bridge. Just before you reach the bridge, turn left up some steps to reach the railway station.



Meldreth and Wimpole Hall

MEL

Start	Meldreth station (MEL) — SG8 6JP
Finish	Meldreth station (MEL) — SG8 6JP
Distance	17.6km
Duration	3 hour 38 minutes
Ascent	70m
Transport and ticketing	Train from Kings Cross; sparse bus service to Cambridge at Orwell; day return to Meldreth
Facilities	Café at Wimpole Hall; pub and convenience shop at Orwell and at Meldreth
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/12659229/

Introduction

The walk begins at Meldreth station, served by stopping trains between King's Cross and Cambridge. Direct trains take 1 hour 20 minutes for the journey, but you may gain up to 20 minutes by changing at Stevenage.

This route includes a walk through the National Trust's Wimpole Estate. If you intend to visit Wimpole Hall, allow at least two hours. This would make for a very satisfying all-day outing.

The station opened in 1851 to serve Meldreth and, on the other side of the railway, Melbourn.

Route

2 Exit the station and turn left along Railway Close, turning right to meet High Street. Cross the road and bear left, keeping the war memorial on your left. This takes you onto Whitecroft Road.

Follow the right-hand footway of Whitecroft Road to the edge of the village (just over 500m) and on to the crossroads with Fenny Lane (a further 500m) at Mettle Hill.

3 Continue ahead on Whaddon Road, which has no footway. After about 800m, beyond a left-hand bend, pass a factory entrance on your right. About 400m beyond the factory entrance, cross to take up the left-hand footway and make your way along the road in Whaddon. After a further 400m, you will reach a chevron sign indicating the right-hand bend in the road.

4 Pass the chevron sign, then take the path on the left, to the right of a gate. Follow this path roughly west-south-westwards (do

not take the southbound path) for about 300m with a hedge on the right in a narrowing field. Go through the hedge on the right onto a golf course..Bear half-left from the hedge, and pass to the left of the clubhouse. Continue out onto Church Street and turn right.

5 Follow Church Street past the village hall and sportsfield as far as its right-hand bend. Here, continue ahead (north) on a track, following the Harcamlow Way.

The Harcamlow Way is a 227km figure-of-eight recreational and waymarked walk between Harlow and Cambridge (and back). See

<https://www.trailman.co.uk/england/east/harcamlow-way/>

for details of the walk (other sources are available).

The track, a bridleway, eases left to take up a north-westerly direction. Continue along the track until you reach Wimpole Avenue, your entry onto the National Trust's Wimpole Estate.

6 Do not cross the avenue with the track, but bear right to follow a path northwards between the two lines of trees on the right-hand side of the avenue. Beyond the octagon, move into the centre of the avenue to cross the River Cam, then return to your line between the trees on the right of the avenue. Follow the path for a further 400m to emerge onto Cambridge Road.

Turn right to follow the road past a house, then cross the road to a kissing-gate opposite.

7 Continue north along the avenue, still between the lines of trees on its right-hand side. At the end of the avenue, continue ahead, drifting very slightly to the right, to reach a road at the left-hand corner of a large square red-brick building.

This building, formerly a stable yard, houses the National Trust's ticket office, café and various shops for Wimpole Hall and its estate. The Hall is over to the left. It is easy to spend two hours here, and depending upon the time you left Meldreth and your rate of progress, this might make for an extended break half-way round the circuit.

Full details of the estate may be found at

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wimpole-estate>

8 Turn eastwards along the road from the stable block. pass the car park and continue out to Old Wimpole Road. Cross over the road and continue ahead on a track. Follow the track as it bends half-left and passes through some trees.

In the short gap between blocks of trees, turn right and follow a path across a field, heading roughly in an east-south-easterly direction to three trees at the far end of the field.

9 Take a track ahead through a gap, then follow the left-hand side of the next field, just outside the woodland on your left-hand side. Follow the path out to Cambridge Road.

Cross the road and take Fisher's Lane opposite. Follow Fisher's Lane, using the left-hand footway, as far as the Orwell village sign. Turn right onto Town Green Road and follow its right-hand footway to reach the pub and convenience shop, the one across the road from the other.

The shop is open each day except Sunday, but is closed on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. On other days, it closes for an hour at lunchtime.

The pub is closed on Mondays, opening at noon on other days. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, it closes between 1430 and 1700, and closes early on a Sunday evening. From a short menu of sandwiches and meals, food is offered at lunchtime until 1400, and in the early evening (Wednesdays to Saturdays only) between 1800 and 2030.

10 Continue along Town Green Road to the next junction, and turn left into Lotfield Street. Where the road bends to the left, turn right onto Meadowcroft Way. Follow the right-hand side of the road, crossing to the left-hand footway at a postbox, until you reach 37 Meadowcroft Way on the left. Immediately beyond this house, turn left.

Pass the side of a house on the right, and swing right to follow the house-backs. Continue to a hedge, and turn to the left. Follow the track with the hedge on your right. After 850m, pass to the left of a small belt of trees. After 150m, the stream on your right bends away to the right, taking the hedge with it. Continue ahead over the field for 450m to reach Malton Road and crossing beneath medium-voltage power lines just before you reach the road.

11 Turn right along the road, passing Malton Cottage on your right. Pass two more houses, and continue on the road, soon passing a farm and workshops on the right. Advance along the road to cross the River Cam (otherwise known as the River Rhee) on a bridge.

Continue along the road for 1km through a left-hand bend and then a sharper right-hand bend. Just beyond a slight bend to the left, you will see a road sign, warning of horses in the vicinity. Opposite the sign, there is a stile.

12 Take the footpath over the stile, bend half-left, and cross three small fields. Pass through the hedge, and cross the field to the other side. Go through the gap in the hedge, and follow a path round to the right.

After passing trees on the left which surround a house, pass to the right of two separate trees in the middle of the field. Bear half-left just after the second of these trees, and advance to the corner of the field.

Cross the River Mel on your right, and follow the left-hand edge of the next field. Bear round to the left to keep a tennis court on your

right, and follow the path out over a stile and onto a street (North End). Turn left along the street for 80m, then turn right through a gateway for Topcliffe Mill, as signposted towards Melbourn.

Follow the path south past the mill, following the River Mel. After 800m, turn right to reach Woolpack Way and follow it out onto Meldreth's High Street.

About 100m to the right on High Street, there is a pub which is open from noon daily. It offers standard pub fare including sandwiches at lunchtime each day and also weekday (early) dinners.

Just on your left on High Street, there is a convenience shop which is open daily between 0700 and 2200.

13 Turn left onto High Street, taking the left-hand footway. Pass the convenience shop on the left. Continue ahead to reach the school on the left and the village hall on the right. Cross to the right-hand footway at the bus stop outside the village hall

Cross to the left-hand footway at the traffic squeeze-point, and pass an electricity substation on the left. Turn left onto a footpath which leads to Meldreth station.

Station facilities are on Platform 2; London-bound trains are over the footbridge on Platform 1.

St Albans to Harpenden

SAC–HPD

Start	St Albans City station (SAC) — AL1 5HE
Finish	Harpenden station (HPD) — AL5 4SP
Distance	11.6km
Duration	2 hours 26 minutes
Ascent	84m
Transport and ticketing	Thameslink trains from St Pancras (fast trains also from London Bridge and intermediate stations in central London); day return to Harpenden; buses at Bow Bridge and on approach to Harpenden
Facilities	All facilities in St Albans and Harpenden
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/33673402/

Introduction

1 The route crosses St Albans to Verulamium, then follows the valley of the River Ver to Redbournbury before crossing over to the Lea Valley at Harpenden. Apart from some streets at each end, the route is predominantly on paths.

St Albans City station opened in 1868 as part of the Midland Railway's push to reach London at St Pancras. Little is left of the original station, and the latest refurbishment dates from 2021. Journey times from St Pancras are as little as 20 minutes, with the slowest trains taking up to 15 minutes longer. The return trip from Harpenden takes less than 10 minutes longer.

The route passes through the commercial centre of St Albans, where provisions may be obtained — there are no other options until you reach Harpenden.

Route

2 Turning right off Station Way if coming from St Albans City station, cross the railway on the right-hand footway of Victoria Street. Continue the full length of Victoria Street to reach St Peter's Street. Cross the road ahead and pass the local museum on the left to reach Market Place.

You are now in the heart of the commercial centre of St Albans. All facilities are available.

3 Turn left to pass to the right of the museum. Where the roadway narrows, continue ahead on the right to pass along the narrow French Row. Cross High Street using the light-controlled pedestrian

crossing. Pass through the archway, Waxhouse Gate, a few metres to your left, and continue until you reach the abbey.

Look to your right to notice the courses of small bricks beneath the window — lots of Roman bricks were re-used in the building of the abbey.

Turn left and make your way round the east end of the abbey, turning right onto Sumpter Yard to reach the south transept.

The abbey's café (and the inevitable gift shop) are at this location.

Turn half-left to follow a diagonal path to the foot of Abbey Mill Lane to reach the historic inn, Ye Olde Fighting Cocks.

The pub opens at noon each day, with standard pub fare and, at the weekend, standard pizza options.

Turn right at the pub, then turn left to reach a corner of Verulamium Lake, where the River Ver has been widened.

There are toilets ahead, worryingly located above the end of the lake.

Turn right to keep the lake on your left, and follow the path past it and a second, smaller lake (used for sailing model boats). Turn left to follow the path to the park café, where turn right to reach, on your right, the Verulamium Museum, which displays the history of the Roman town.

4 Continue past the museum to reach St Michael's Road, where turn left to follow the left-hand footway out to Bluehouse Hill. Cross the road ahead using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead between the entrance posts to the Gorhambury estate.

Pass the Roman amphitheatre on your left, and after a further 300m, pass through a belt of trees where once stood the boundary wall of the Roman town. A further 550m brings you to the point where the path leaves the Gorhambury access road, and the point is made abundantly clearly by the seigneur, the Earl of Verulam. Turn right to follow the path to cross the River Ver.

5 Turn left to follow the path with the water on your left. The path follows the meanders of the river and emerges onto Redbourn Road at Bow Bridge.

The bus stops to the right carry a surprisingly thin service (hourly, but with no service on Sundays or Bank Holidays) between St Albans and Dunstable.

6 Cross the road and continue with the water on your left past Shafford Stud. Beyond the buildings, the path continues, reaching the access road to a water treatment facility.

7 Cross the access road and continue with the facility on your right. The path comes out onto Beesonend Lane. Continue ahead to reach a ford on your left.

On the other side of the river sits Redbournbury Mill. There is a bakery/café there, but it is only open on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons.

8 Continue ahead for 400m and, at a fishery, take a path on your right. At a path crossing, turn left, then at a T-junction of paths, turn right onto a rising path. Pass Hammondsend Wood on your right and, with a right-and-left zigzag, reach Hammonds End Farm on your left.

9 Continue along Hammonds End Lane, with a golf course to left and right, to reach Redbourn Lane.

The bus service here is even thinner than at Bow Bridge — three buses per day in each direction between Harpenden and Redbourn with, of course, no service on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Redbourn Road. Cross over the end of High Elms on your right. Where the road takes a bend to the right, at the end of some trees on the left, cross the road and continue across the grass to reach a road junction at an information board on Hatching Green.

The road to your left leads to Rothamsted Manor, where one of the first agricultural research stations, founded in 1843. The agricultural research began serious statistical research, with several eminent statisticians, including Sir Ronald Fisher (1890-1962) and John Nelder (1924-2010), active at Rothamsted. It was here that Nelder coalesced various types of statistical regression into a Generalised Linear Model, which remains a backbone of statistical method. The manor is now a wedding venue.

10 Continue ahead across Hatchings Green. At the entrance to Rothamsted Cottage, continue along a footpath to the left of the road, with house-backs on your right. This path comes out, with a bend to the right, onto West Common. Follow West Common and continue onto Leyton Road, following the right-hand footway when it appears.

Pass a pub on your right (the main entrance is on the road to your right) then pass the fire station on your left. Cross the road using the pedestrian crossing and take a diagonal path to reach the junction with High Street. Cross High Street using the pedestrian crossing and continue round to the right onto the right-hand footway of Station Road.

Here, you are in the commercial heart of Harpenden, with all facilities available.

Follow the right-hand footway of High Street to the junction with Station Approach. The station is on the right.

Harpenden station opened in 1868 as the Midland Railway extended to St Pancras. The station has since been completely rebuilt.



Start	Sandy station (SDY) — SG19 1AW
Finish	Sandy station (SDY) — SG19 1AW
Distance	17.2km
Duration	3 hours 38 minutes
Ascent	118m
Transport and ticketing	Trains from Kings Cross; day return to Sandy; bus at Everton to/from Sandy
Facilities	Pub (lunchtime opening Sat/Sun only) at Everton; café at RSPB estate
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/15057303/

Introduction

The walk starts at Sandy station, on the East Coast Main Line south of Peterborough. Journey time is about 50 minutes.

Sandy station opened in 1850. For many years it was a junction station, the other line linking Bedford and Cambridge. There are plans to resurrect this link, with an interchange station at or to the north of Sandy.

The narrative below assumes a clockwise circuit: this is the more convenient route if you approach Sandy from the south. The other advantage (at weekends) is that the pub at Everton will be reached beyond the half-way point.

There is a small coffee bar within the station building on the northbound platform: there are no facilities before Everton, and none during the week before the RSPB café, almost 14km from the start. Be prepared!

Route

2 Exit the station from the northbound platform and turn right to ascend the right-hand footway of Station Road to the junction with Potton Road. Turn right along the right-hand footway to cross the railway and reach a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left to cross the road using the crossing and turn left along the right-hand footway back to the bridge. Turn left along a track which runs parallel to the railway with the tracks on your left. After 80m, bear right, then bear left to reach a T-junction of paths, where turn right to join the Greensand Ridge Walk.

The Greensand Ridge Walk is an established route of 67km between Linslade (Leighton Buzzard) and Gamlingay. Full details, including generic maps, may be found at

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leisure-and-countryside/countryside/walking/greensand-ridge-walk>

Ascend on the Greensand Ridge Walk; bear left at the top to come out onto Sand Lane. Turn right to follow Sand Lane to its junction with Everton Road and Swaden. Turn left onto a path (still on the Greensand Ridge Walk).

This path is marked on the map as a Roman road — between Baldock (probably) and Godmanchester (Durovigutum). However, it seems that the Romans simply took over an existing trackway of the Catuvellauni.

Continue northwards to reach an area of woodland (Hanging Croft) on the right, where the Hassell Hedge accompanies the Roman road.

The Hassell is not intended to imply difficult progress: it is a corruption of Hazells, the estate which is to be found to the east of the route

3 Follow the hedge line northwards, crossing a road until you reach Fernbury Farm on your left.

Just beyond the farm, the Greensand Ridge Walk turns right towards Everton: this will serve as a short-cut if necessary. Everton is 1.5km distant from this point along the Greensand Ridge Walk, and using this short-cut will clip 4km from the distance on the full route as described below.

4 Continue northwards on the Roman road, crossing a road and advancing to Gibraltar Farm.

This barn was the point of equipment issue by the Special Operations Executive for Resistance personnel who were attached to RAF Tempsford during the Second World War. There is a commemorative plaque on the wall of the barn.

Just before Gibraltar Farm, the North Bedfordshire Heritage Trail takes off to the east, making for Everton. This could provide a short-cut. Everton is 1.8km from this point, and the use of the short-cut will save 2.8km.

The North Bedfordshire Heritage Trail is a 111km circular route linking the villages in the area, with its conventional start in the centre of Bedford. Full details may be found at

<https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/PDFs/North-Bedfordshire-Heritage-Trail.pdf>

5 Continue past Gibraltar Farm for 350m, then take a right fork to reach the corner of Joan's Wood. The path bears right, then left, keeping the wood on your left, to the eastern tip of the triangular plantation.

6 Turn right to pass some woodland (Hare's Home) on your right. At the end of the wood, turn left, then after 110m turn right. Cross a stream, then bear left at a fork (where the right fork leads to Woodbury Home Farm). Ascend to and through the woodland to reach a path junction where the Greensand Ridge Walk crosses.

7 Turn right to follow the Greensand Ridge Walk through Woodbury Park. Pass Woodbury Hall over to your right, then pass Story Farm immediately to your right. Continue through the park, passing a church, to reach the centre of Everton at the Thornton Arms.

The Thornton Arms is open seven days a week, but only from 1600, except on Saturdays and Sundays when it opens at noon.

There is a bus service from here (but not on Sundays) to Sandy.

8 Turn left at the pub to follow Potton Road. After about 1.1km, turn right onto Mill Lane (not onto the curving driveway just beyond). Follow Mill Lane for 380m, where it turns left to aim towards Potton.

9 At this point, continue straight ahead on a track for 720m to reach a crosspaths. Turn right to pick up the North Bedfordshire Heritage Trail for the rest of the route back to Sandy station, passing the mast on your left. After 800m, you will reach a track which goes off to the left, called Long Riding.

10 Turn left and follow the full length of Long Riding. Where it ends (beneath high-voltage power lines), turn left to take a bridleway out to Potton Road. Cross the road to enter the Lodge estate, which contains the headquarters of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The RSPB has a café here, with attached toilets. Though there is less than 4km left on the circuit, you may well be glad of the refuelling opportunity, since there are no facilities on the London-bound platform at the station.

There is a sketchy bus service to Sandy from here.

11 Follow the route south from Potton Road. Ignore the branch off to the right, which leads to RSPB offices, but continue ahead, descending to a path junction (if you reach a former railway line, you have overshot). Turn right (with the North Bedfordshire Heritage Trail) to reach the hamlet of Stratford, next to the former railway junction (with the line to Cambridge).

12 Continue ahead, parallel to the railway line, to reach the station, over to your left.

You will enter the station onto the London-bound platform; for Peterborough and the North (and for the small station coffee bar), cross by the footbridge.



Welwyn North and Datchworth

WLW

Start	Welwyn North station (WLW) — AL6 0AS
Finish	Welwyn North station (WLW) — AL6 0AS
Distance	14.1km
Duration	3 hours 00 minutes
Ascent	109m
Transport and ticketing	Trains from Kings Cross; day return ticket to Welwyn North
Facilities	Pubs at Burnham Green, Datchworth, Bulls Green, Upper Green, Tewin and Welwyn North; cafés and convenience shops at Datchworth and Tewin
Map	https://explore.osmaps.com/route/12637313/

Introduction

The walk begins and ends at Welwyn North station, which is served by stopping trains (operated by Thameslink) between St Pancras and Cambridge. The route is almost entirely on footpaths, with minimal engagement with streets. Journey time is around 45 minutes.

Welwyn North station was opened (as Welwyn) in 1850: the remaining structures from the time of the opening — the station building, footbridge, tunnel portal and viaduct — are all Grade II listed. The Cowper Arms, which is situated to the west of the station, was built as the Railway Inn to stop the navvies and other workers from descending into the taverns of Welwyn, and was later named after Earl Cowper, the principal landowner from whom the Great Northern Railway purchased the land.

Walkers arriving from London will arrive on Platform 2; at the end of the walk, the return train to London will leave from Platform 1. This means that you will not need to cross the tracks by the footbridge at either end ... unless you visit the Cowper Arms at the end of the walk.

Route

2 Leave the station by the exit on Platform 2, and bear slightly right to cross the car park (the Cowper Arms is over to your left), picking up a path at right angles to the railway (not the path parallel to the tracks) out to Cob Lane Close.

Cross over the end of Cob Lane Close, and bear left to reach the junction with Woodside Road, where turn right along the right-hand

footway. Take the first road on the right, Warren Way, and follow the right-hand footway to a little horseshoe extra at the top. Bear right at the nearer end of the horseshoe, and burrow into the top corner, where take an enclosed footpath to the right.

The footpath leads to the railway cutting, where turn left to reach the tunnel portal. At the portal, turn left on a path (with the house-backs of Warren Way on your left) which soon bends to the right. Take the right-hand option soon after where the path divides — you are now travelling north-north-east.

After 300m, turn right on a path which crosses the railway (here still in the tunnel) and continues ahead (eastwards) to Harmer Green Lane. Turn left and follow Harmer Green Lane to its end, with the war memorial over to your left on the green.

3 Go ahead on New Road; bend to the left and then to the left and right onto Pennyfathers Lane to keep the pond on your right. Turn half-left onto Vera Lane, which itself bends half-left, continuing for 800m to reach and cross Harmer Green Lane at the entrance to Burnham Green. Turn right, then turn left onto Two Oaks Drive, bearing right to pass the house frontages until you come up against the corner of the White Horse Inn's car park.

The White Horse is open from Wednesdays to Sundays, and serves food for lunch and dinner, from a wide-ranging menu which covers the bases of pub classics, and ventures farther afield.

4 Turn left at the pedestrian entrance to the pub car park to follow a path which runs roughly north-west for 950m, then shifts to northbound before emerging onto Robbery Bottom Lane.

5 Continue ahead northbound on the lane, turning right with it and following it to its end on White Horse Lane. Turn right, then immediately left, on a path which starts off on the left side of a field and continues in the same direction for 660m until you have a sports club on your left. Continue ahead, with the cricket field on your left, to reach the eastern corner of Datchworth Green.

At the crossroads, there are two pubs (one rather upmarket, with a wide range of food priced accordingly) and a convenience store. There is no evidence of food service at the Plough, and online information seems sketchy and, in the main, old.

6 Continue east on Watton Road for 320m, and turn right onto a track. After about 650m, with Backlane Wood on your left, turn right to follow a path past a pond (do not take the path off to the right here) to Bramfield Road at Bull's Green.

The Horns Inn is over to your right. It is open all day, and serves food for lunch and dinner, also during the afternoon on Fridays and Saturdays; food service closes at 1700 on Sundays.

7 Take Coltsfoot Lane opposite, keeping the pub over to your right. After 230m, opposite the last house on the right, turn left onto a fenced path which bears left as it enters a wood: it emerges

onto Burnham Green Road. Turn right along the road for 100m, then turn left on a path between houses.

The path soon bears right to keep to the right-hand edge of a field before setting off due south across the next field. Cross a driveway, and continue on an enclosed track with Tewin Wood on your right, to the end of the wood.

8 From the southern tip of the wood, continue due south across a field, and bear slightly left across the next field. Take a path to the right of the beer garden ahead, and emerge into the car park of the Plume of Feathers pub at Upper Green.

The pub opens at noon, and serves food until 2100. The menu is broad and from a nationwide source, clinging to the standard pub fare with some embellishments.

9 Turn right out of the pub car park, then left along a path which soon has tennis courts on your right. Follow the path ahead, with house-backs on your left, to emerge (after a final bend to the left) onto Upper Green Road. Turn right and follow the road to the centre of Tewin at the Rose and Crown Inn.

The pub serves drinks and simple lunchtime food. There is a convenience shop and café (community enterprise) off to the left, about 230m along Lower Green Road (which continues as Hertford Road): it is open between 0830 and 1600 on weekdays, closing at noon at the weekend and opening at 0900 on Sundays.

10 Do not turn right down the left-hand side of the pub, but continue across the frontages of cottages ahead on the right, and turn right onto a path. The path turns half-left, then half-right, crosses another path, and ends at a crossing track. Turn right along the track to a crossing of paths at Margery Green.

11 Continue ahead on the path, passing through Dawley Wood. Ignore paths to left and right, and continue until you reach Pennyfathers Lane. At a multi-directional footpath signpost, take the path on the left, signposted to Digswell.

12 Keep a south-westerly bearing for a little more than 1km, then bear to the right to reach Harmer Green Lane. Turn right, and follow Harmer Green Lane, forking left at the junction with New Street, to reach Welwyn North station, the end of the walk.

There is a café (open until 1400) and toilets on Platform 2.

If you want to go to the Cowper Arms for a drink before returning home, turn left onto Station Road and cross the railway.

The pub is open 1200-2300 (2200 at weekends); food service covers lunch and dinner (but closes at 1800 on Sundays). The range of food is wide, from pub standards to Asian surprises.

