

St. Margarets Circular		
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St. Margarets Circular

Start: St. Margarets Station

Finish: St. Margarets Station

St. Margarets Station, map reference TL 381117, is in **East Hertfordshire**, 6 km south east of Hertford, and 30m above sea level.

Length: 24.1 km (15.0 mi).

Cumulative ascent/descent: 258m.

For a shorter or longer walk, see *below* **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 4 out of 10

Time: 5 hours 15 minutes walking time.

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

Transport: St. Margarets Station is on the Liverpool Street to Hertford East line (and within the Oyster Pay As You Go-area) with a half-hourly service, journey time 39 minutes (41 on Sundays). Trains stop at Tottenham Hale (connect from the Victoria Line). Buy a return to St. Margarets (Herts).

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.45 hours, if walking the full walk, and the one closest to 10.15 hours for the shortest version.

OS Landranger Map: 166 (Luton & Hertford) and 167 (Chelmsford, only for a very tiny part)

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

Walk Notes:

This walk leads along ancient tracks and green lanes through some very quiet, rolling East Hertfordshire countryside defined by wheat fields and woods, in-between extensive stretches along the Ash, Rib and Lea rivers. Cold Christmas hamlet and a haunted, ruined church are passed just before lunch in Wadesmill. Long parts of the afternoon route are spent in the quiet scenic Ash valley, before passing through Amwell Nature Reserve, a bird watcher's paradise. The final stretch leads along the Lea Navigation back to St. Margarets.

Stile Count: 3; Arable Field Crossings: 330 metres.

Considerably shorter versions with lunch in Wareside are described.

Walk Options:

Outbound and return route are never far from each other, sometimes as little as 150 metres. See the route map for some obvious and easy-to-follow shortcuts. Described in the text are the following:

Shortcut I cuts out about half the distance to leave a figure-of-eight walk of 12.6 km (7.8 mi), while also cutting ascent/descent by 168m. This is rated **1/10**.

Shortcut II cuts out the outer loop of this walk to leave an hourglass-shaped walk of 19.5 km (12.2 mi), while also cutting ascent/descent by 54m, this is rated **3/10**.

An Extension from Wadesmill adds 1.6 km (1.0 mi) and 12m ascent/descent (**5/10**).

Buses to Ware or Hertford train stations (one or two stops further from London on the same line) are available from the lunch pubs in Wadesmill (line 331; hourly Mon-Sat) and Wareside (lines M3 and M4; with 2 buses in the afternoon, Mon-Sat).

Lunch

Main Walk (Details last updated 30/06/2022)

Ermines Tea Room & Village Stores 39 Ermine Street, *Thundridge, Herts, SG12 0SY (01920 745 042)*. Open 09.00-17.00 Tue-Fri and 09.00-15.00 Sat-Sun. Good selection of sandwiches, cakes and health food, and with some outside seating.

The Anchor Cambridge Road, *Wadesmill, Herts, SG12 0TD (01920 462 861)*, <https://www.anchorpubherts.co.uk/>. The Anchor is located 10.8 km (6.7 mi) into the main walk. **This pub is currently closed and for sale.**

The Feathers Inn 49 Cambridge Road, *Wadesmill, Herts, SG12 0TN (01920 462 606)*, <https://www.greenekinginns.co.uk/hotels/feathers-inn/>. Open daily 11.00-23.00. Food served daily 11.00-22.00. The Feathers Inn and Hotel is located 10.9 km (6.8 mi) into the main walk. It was originally a 17th century coaching inn, in the early 1600s the inn was called The Princes' Arms and had been owned by various blacksmiths and tanners. In 1670 the name was changed to 'The Feathers'. It subsequently became one of the busiest coaching inns in the area, stabling over 100 horses. Documents of the period mention five bedrooms, a step parlour, moon parlour, lion parlour and various other rooms.

Short Walk (Details last updated 30/06/2022)

The White Horse Ware Road, *Wareside, Ware, Herts, SG12 7QX (01920 464 433)*, <http://whitehorsefh.co.uk/>. The White Horse is located 12.9 km (8.0 mi) into the shortcut version of the walk and 6.7 km (4.1 mi) from the end of all walk options. **This pub is currently closed and for sale.**

Chequers Inn Ware Road, *Wareside, Ware, Herts, SG12 7QY (01920 467 010)*, <http://www.chequerswareside.com/>. The Chequers Inn is located 12.9 km (8.0 mi) into the shortcut version of the walk and 6.7 km (4.1 mi) from the end of all walk options. Open Mon-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-22.30. Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-20.30 and Sun 12.00-14.45 and 18.00-20.00.

Tea (Details last updated 30/06/2022)

The Jolly Fisherman 8 Station Road, *Stanstead St. Margarets, Ware, Herts, SG12 8DH (01920 870 125)*, <http://www.mcmullens.co.uk/jollyfisherman>. A McMullen's pub since 1918, with outdoor seating by the Lea Navigation. Open all day every day. Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-21.00 and Sun 12.00-20.00.

The Oak 36 High Street, *Stanstead Abbots, Ware, Herts, SG12 8AG (01920 877 294)*, <https://www.oakstansteadabbotts.co.uk/>. The Oak is a Fuller's pub with dining rooms. Open all day Tue-Sun. Food served Tue-Sat 12.00-21.00 and 12.00-18.00 Sun.

The Red Lion & Amico di Amici 1 High Street, *Stanstead Abbots, Ware, Herts, SG12 8AA (01920 410 056)*, <https://www.redlionamicodiamici.co.uk/>. Built in 1538, The Red Lion is one of the oldest buildings in the area and the second oldest in Stanstead Abbots. It now features an Italian restaurant set within the pub. Open to 23.00 Wed-Sat and to 20.00 Sun. Food served to 20.30 Tue-Sat and to 16.15 Sun.

Notes:

St. Margarets (Stanstead St. Margarets)

Originally known as Thele, in the 16th century the parish began to be called St. Margaret's Theale (Margarthele, 1535) and Stanstead Thele, the first from its church and the second from the fact that the village adjoins the village of Stanstead Abbots, from which it is divided by the bridge over the Lea. Stanstead St. Margarets is a modern form of the name.

River Lea

The River Lea (or Lee) originates in Marsh Farm, Leagrave, Luton in the Chiltern Hills and flows for 68 km, generally southeast, east, and then south, through Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City, Hertford, Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Tottenham and Stratford to London where it meets the River Thames (as Bow Creek). It forms the traditional boundary between the counties of Middlesex and Essex, and part of the boundary between Essex and Hertfordshire. The spelling Lea predominates west (upstream) of Hertford, but both spellings are used from Hertford to the Thames.

Stanstead Abbots

The village's name was recorded as "Stanstede" at the time of the Domesday Survey in the late eleventh century. In the twelfth century the manor passed to the abbot of Waltham Holy Cross. By the 14th century the suffix "Abbatis", "Abbotts" or "Abbot" formed part of the parish's name. The abbey continued possession of the manor until its dissolution in 1531. It was granted to Anne Boleyn and remained with the crown after her execution. In 1559 Queen Elizabeth granted it to Edward Baeshe and it remained in the Bashe family for several generations.

The Greenwich Meridian (longitude 0°) passes through the village with its exact position on the Riverside Green marked by Meridian obelisks which were erected in 1984 to commemorate the centenary of the adoption of the prime meridian line. The current line is one of many that have existed, however the Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system uses a prime meridian that is about 100 metres east of the Greenwich Meridian at Stanstead Abbots.

The main industry in the village used to be making ale but today just the one malting of French & Jupps remains, while many of the original maltings have been demolished to make way for a small business park.

Greenwich Meridian Trail

The Greenwich Meridian Trail is a 467 km (290 mi) waymarked long-distance walk that follows the line of the Prime Meridian. Inaugurated in 2009 to coincide with the 125th anniversary of the Meridian, it begins at Peacehaven in East Sussex and ends, on the Holderness peninsula at Sand le Mere in East Yorkshire.

Hertfordshire Way

A waymarked 305 km circular Long-Distance Path along public rights-of-way. The route passes through a variety of scenery, mostly in open countryside, but also through some of the more interesting and attractive villages in the county. It includes the fringes of the Chilterns and Ashridge Forest, a National Trust estate. Hertford and St Albans, as the County Town and the main historic centre, are the only large towns on the route. <http://www.fhw.org.uk/>

Easneye

The Buxton family of Easneye (Saxon for water-island) commissioned the distinguished Victorian architect, Alfred Waterhouse (designer of the Natural History Museum, 5 Oxbridge Colleges, Manchester Town Hall, the Prudential Building, Holborn etc.) to build Easneye Mansion on their Hertfordshire estate in 1867, moving in a year later.

The Buxtons had made their fortune (along with Messrs Truman and Hanbury) by brewing and popularizing porter (beer), which was considered to be a cheaper, more nutritious and healthier alternative to the gin which was destroying the working classes of the early 19th century.

Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (Snr) was a Christian man of great integrity and social conscience. He was a member of the so-called Clapham Sect, a group of influential like-minded Church of England social reformers, and it was to him that the ailing William Wilberforce entrusted the oversight of the Emancipation of Slaves Bill which Buxton eventually got through Parliament in 1832. This earned him not only a Baronetcy but also the title of "The Liberator". His sister-in-law was the penal reformer, Elizabeth Fry, and Buxton could be seen (wearing glasses) alongside Fry on the back of an English five pound note on the original paper note introduced in 2002 (but phased out in 2017 and replaced by a polymer note in different design). During and after World War II Easneye Mansion was used as an orphanage for children bereaved by the bombing of London. Many villagers worked "up on the hill" at Easneye as carers etc. during this period and the film, "Blue Murder at St Trinians" was made there in the early 1950s. When there was no further need of Easneye as an orphanage it was rented by All Nations, a missionary training college. It is now the largest of its kind in Europe.

River Ash

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

Ware, Hadham & Buntingford Railway

The Buntingford Branch Line was running from 1863 to 1964 for 22 km between the village of St. Margarets and the town of Buntingford. It was originally intended to branch off in Ware from what is now known as the Hertford East Line.

Harcamlow Way

A waymarked 227 km figure-of-eight Long Distance Path through Herts, Cambs and Essex, starting in Harlow. Mainly on tracks and green lanes, passing many places of historic interest, crossing low hills, woods and arable land via Standon and Manuden to meet the cross-over point at Newport. It continues through Saffron Walden and over the low Bartlow Hills to Horseheath and the Fleam Dyke, to enter Cambridge, the return route passing through Melbourn and Chrishall to Newport, continuing via Debden, Thaxted, Takeley and Hatfield Forest.

River Rib

The River Rib originates near the East Hertfordshire village of Buckland and runs for 31 km, initially parallel with the A10, through Buntingford, Westmill, Braughing, Puckeridge and Standon, before dividing the villages of Thundridge and Wadesmill and continuing until it reaches its confluence with the River Lea near Hertford.

Thundridge Old Church

The church of All Hallows and Little Saint Mary was demolished – with the exception of the tower – in 1853, and a great part of the material was used in the restoration of St. Catherine Church, Sacombe. It was one of the oldest churches in this part of the county, and the low, semi-circular arch which connected with the nave, is enriched with a magnificent example of Norman moulding, which indicates the period of its building to have been about the year 1100. The tower was erected in the 15th century. The field in the foreground is moated on 2 sides and the overgrown churchyard to the east contains many gravestones. In more recent times the church has become infamous with Satanic rituals and Devil worshiping in its many forms.

Thundridge

There are references to "Tonrich" in the Domesday Book with land being held by Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux. The name refers to Thunor, a pagan Anglo-Saxon god, dating the settlement to before about ad 600, i.e. before the East Saxons were converted to Christianity. Thundridge is now on Ermine Street, a Roman road, on which course ran the A10 road until it was by-passed in 2005, restoring Thundridge to a quiet village. Originally though, like many early Anglo-Saxon settlements, it was located about half a mile to the east of the road, also adjacent to the River Rib, by the Old Church. With the 1826 improvement of the London to Cambridge road there was an increased migration to the "new" location of Thundridge, along the main road, eventually leading to the demolition of the old church.

Ermine Street

The name of a major Roman road, which ran from Bishopsgate in London (Londinium) to Lincoln (Lindum Colonia) and York (Eboracum) crossing the Icknield Way in Royston, Herts. The Old English name was 'Earninga Straete' (1012), named after a tribe called the Earningas, who inhabited a district later known as Armingford Hundred, around Arrington, Cambridgeshire and Royston, Hertfordshire. The original Roman name for the route is unknown. It is also known as the Old North Road from London to where it joins the A1 Great North Road near Godmanchester.

Wadesmill

Located on the north side of the River Rib, it is the location of the first Turnpike in England (and therefore the world). The Turnpike was created by Act of Parliament ("The Turnpike Act") in 1663 as a result of serious deterioration of the "Old North Road" due to travel by barley wagons supplying the brewing trade in the nearby maltings town of Ware.

Halfway up nearby High Cross hill is the Clarkson Memorial, a memorial to Thomas Clarkson's rest point in his travels at which he decided to devote much of the rest of his life to ending the slave trade.

Youngsbury Estate

Youngsbury consists of an 18th century park and woodland with 4 hectares of garden around the house, the front part of which is dated 1745, the back early 19th century, with 18th century stables. There are extensive 16-18th century walled kitchen gardens, an arboretum, an icehouse and tumuli and Roman barrows within the grounds, which extend to the river Rib. Capability Brown's involvement included widening the river and creating two islands, designing a ha-ha and placing small groups of trees in open parkland.

Amwell Nature Reserve

A former gravel pit in the Lee Valley near Ware that supports internationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl along with outstanding communities of breeding birds, dragonflies and damselflies. The site includes Great Hardmead Lake and Hollycross Lake, which were excavated between 1973 and 1990 by Cemex (previously RMC Aggregates), and a variety of associated wetland, grassland and woodland habitats. Amwell is one of the most important sites in Hertfordshire for otters, following reintroduction here in 1991.

<https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/amwell>

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alighting from the train in **St. Margarets** on platform 2, turn back along the platform towards a main road where you *turn left* through the level crossing. Walk along the pavement of **Station Road** and in 135m, just after passing **The Jolly Fisherman** on the right, cross the **Lea River** into **Stanstead Abbots**. Continue along the road (the **Greenwich Meridian Trail** (GMT) has joined from along the towpath) for 540m, passing along the way: **Libby's Coffee Shop** and **The Oak** on the right, and the **Village Café and Pantry** on the left, until you get to a roundabout by **The Red Lion & Amico di Amici** pub and Italian restaurant. *Turn left* along **Cappell Lane**. In 75m ignore a footpath turning off right up **Abbotts Way**. In 150m you pass **St. Andrew's** church on the right. In another 230m – opposite **number 88 Cappell Lane**, *turn right* up a grassy path between fences by Public Bridleway (Wareside 2 ¼) and **Hertfordshire Way** (HW) signposts. In 100m you leave the houses behind, now with a wood on the right and a field on the left, continuing uphill on a grassy gravel-and-earth path. In 40m ignore a public footpath forking right into the wood to continue uphill.

In 200m the path starts levelling out, now between arable fields. In 470m the car wide grassy path leads to a four-way bridleway junction, where you **[!]** *turn left* on an earthen car wide farm track, following a Public Bridleway 18-signpost (Holly Cross Road ¾), leaving the **Hertfordshire Way**. The views to the left are across the **Lea Valley** to **Broxbourne Woods**, with the green cupola of **Haileybury College** boarding school (past pupils include: Clement Attlee, Stirling Moss, Rudyard Kipling, Dom Joly) prominent on a rise behind **St. Margarets**, and eventually – in the very distance, behind on the left – the **City of London**. *Turn right* in 470m at the T-junction with Public Footpath 16 along a car wide gravel track (Waterspace Farm ¾). In 250m, just before passing a redbrick house, go through a metal field gate. The wood behind the house is **Easneye Wood**, with **Easneye Mansion** (passed again on the other side in the afternoon) hidden behind trees on a rise. In 110m pass another redbrick house. In 165m the slowly descending path enters woods, with a stream down to the right of the path in a cut. In 125m swing left with the path and in another 180m cross a cattle grid to emerge from the wood with views of the **Ash Valley**. In 110m ignore a footpath turning left (the afternoon return route), and in 120m cross **The Ash** over a raised footbridge to the left of a ford.

Continue on a gravel car wide farm track towards **Waterspace Farm**. In 25m go through a metal kissing gate and cross the course of the dismantled **Ware, Hadham & Buntingford Railway**. 110m from the river, at the corner of a large black timber and brick barn, continue uphill, now on tarmac (the **Harcamlow Way** has joined from the right). Ignore a permissive footpath on the right in another 40m and in 65m cross a road and *veer right* on a gravel-and-earth farm track with a Public Restricted Byway 25-signpost (Morley Ponds 1 ¼). In 400m you pass **Pat Rayden House** on the right and in 100m *fork right* with a Public Restricted Byway-marker on a post along a gravel path past **Newhole Farm** on the right, and **Swades Farm** on the left, soon on a grassy path between hedges. In 150m from Swades' farmhouse you cross an occasional stream (with a plank bridge to the right of the easily flooded path) and *ignore* a bridleway forking off left along a field margin (and with it the Harcamlow Way). Continue uphill on the path between trees, in 65m ignoring a path forking off left. In 415m you pass **Morley Hall** behind fences on the right and in 150m, just after a pond in a garden on the left, *ignore* a bridleway turning left across the lawn. In 40m you get views on the right through trees of a turreted wooden house on stilts (difficult to spot in summer) and in 120m come out at a bend of a tarmac lane, by **Morley Pond Cottages**.

Here you have a choice:

For Shortcut I, continue in the same direction along the lane and in 350m at a triangular green on the fringes of **Wareside** village and by a Primary School on the right, the Main Walk joins from the left through a wooden bike barrier. *Fork left* at the green and pick up the directions below at the triple asterisk ***).

For the Main Walk, *turn left* away from the tarmac lane, following a Public Footpath-signpost, on a grassy path along a field margin, initially with trees on the left (due N). In 390m, in the field corner by a solitary oak tree, *veer right then left* to continue in the same direction, with a hedge and a ditch on the left. In 375m further you pass through **New Hall Farm**, and in another 115m reach a road by a Public Footpath 3-signpost, where you *turn left*. In 140m *turn right* off the road with a Public Restricted Byway 1-signpost to walk along a field margin with a hedge on the right. In 190m stay to the right of an old oak tree and then *turn left* at a T-junction of paths along a wide grassy margin of the same field. In 125m a public footpath joins from the left across the field and you *turn right* into trees with the restricted byway. Cross a ditch on an un-railed concrete slab bridge and *veer left* in the wooded area. In 130m leave the wooded area into a field to continue in the same direction along the left hand field boundary. In 120m leave the field onto a gravel-and-earth farm track, to continue in the same direction.

In 250m a public footpath joins from the right along a gravel track. In 80m, at the corner of a wood on the left, you **[!]** *turn left* along a gravel-and-earth track with a bridleway marker post. At the end of the wood, in 75m, a footpath joins from the right out of a field. In 560m, having crossed a byway en route, at a four-way junction, you can see the towers of **Canary Wharf** on a bearing of 185° (on a very clear day). *Turn right* (325°) along a permissive bridleway between newly fenced-in young woods (2 of 60 'Diamond Woods' planted by the **Woodland Trust** in 2012 on occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee). You are now back on the **Harcamlow Way** and the **GMT**. In 215m ignore a footpath on the left through a wooden gate into trees and follow the bridleway downhill along a farm track, with a hedge on the right and another Diamond Wood on the left. In 320m you reach a tarmac lane by a Public Bridleway 16-signpost and by **Swangles Farm** on the fringes of **Cold Christmas** hamlet. *Turn left* along the lane. In 200m, by a Public Footpath 30-sign set back a little (High Cross 1 ½), *turn right* through a gap in the steep road banks and descend on a car wide farm track towards the bottom of this valley. Just before a ford over the river (and with a metal footbridge to the right of it) you come to a four-way path junction by the banks of the **River Rib**.

Here you have a choice:

For Shortcut II, cutting out the outer loop of this walk, *turn right* here and pick up the main walk directions at the double asterisk **).

For the Main Walk, *turn left* along the river on a gravel-and-earth path, swinging left after 50m. In 35m cross the approach track to **Fabdens** to then *veer right* through a wooden gate with the gravel-and-earth path between hedges and fences. In 290m a bridleway joins from the left. In 165m a footpath joins from the right through a wooden kissing gate, and in another 20m you pass by the ivy-clad ruin of **Thundridge Old Church** on the right on its moated site in a bend of the river, as another footpath joins from the left downhill. Continue ahead with a field on the left, and a barbed wire fence on the right. In 520m, just before reaching the raised **A10-bypass**, *turn right downhill* on a car wide gravel path, by a Public Bridleway 54-signpost, with good views on the right back to the church tower. Swing left with the path under the A-road. 30m further on the path continues as tarmac and turns to the right. In 35m you *turn left off the tarmac path* with a public footpath signpost, onto a grassy track between fields.

In 100m pass through a boundary hedge using a wooden kissing gate and stay in the same direction through a meadow with a house behind a wooden fence on the right. In

100m in the far-left corner, exit the meadow through a wooden kissing gate into a narrow earthen path between fences. In 60m exit the path onto a tarmac lane by **The Windmill** (a house) in **Thundridge**. *Turn right* to a road and right along it, following the course of the old **Roman Road: Ermine Street**. In 50m pass **Thundridge Primary School**, and in 95m *turn left* with the road, where **Old Church Lane** joins from the right. In 30m pass **Ermines Tea Room & Village Stores** and *turn right* to cross **The Rib** on a footbridge parallel to the main road connecting **Thundridge** and **Wadesmill**. Immediately after the bridge on the left is the first of two recommended lunch pubs in Wadesmill, **The Anchor (currently closed)**. Another 80m along the road on the right is the other lunch stop, **The Feathers Inn**, as well as a **bus stop**.

You now have a choice:

For an Extension (adds 1.6 km), continue along **Cambridge Road** past a **Tollhouse** on the right (informative plaque on the wall). **[!]** In 40m *cross the road*, by a sign for **Wellcroft** and **Athena** houses on the other side, and follow a Public Footpath 40-signpost (Marshall's Lane $\frac{3}{4}$) along a drive, initially between hedges. In 65m pass a double garage and *veer left* along a grassy path by a footpath marker post. Cross a metal-railed wooden plank bridge to the left over **The Bourne**, a dry river, to *turn right* and soon up a few steps, then following a grassy field boundary. Follow the course of **The Bourne**, sunken below on the right in a steep holloway, for the next 900m, in 500m crossing a railed wooden plank bridge over a tributary from the left, and in another 400m passing through a grassy area and a farm yard to come out on a road.

[For the very adventurous, and in drier periods, at various points it is just about possible to descend into The Bourne, and then follow it for stretches, canyoning-style. This is not recommended for the faint-hearted or the not-quite-so-fit though, especially as the re-ascent further up The Bourne is very steep and difficult indeed.]

Turn right along **Marshall's Lane**, cross The Bourne on the road and rise into **High Cross**. In 540m you come to a T-junction with **Cambridge Road**. *Turn left* along the road towards a service station. In 50m pass **North Drive** and the service station to continue along the road. In 120m pass **St. John the Evangelist**. At the end of the churchyard wall *turn right* along a narrow path by a bridleway-signpost.

[After 50m slip through a gate into the church yard to visit the tomb of the **Martin-Leakes** in the northeast corner, Arthur being one of the most distinguished military heroes in British history (the first of only three men to be awarded the VC twice).] Continue along the path into a field and along a wide grassy path, initially with houses to your right. Follow yellow arrows through trees into the next field and along its left-hand boundary towards the sunken **A 10-Bypass Road**. *Turn right* along the field boundary upon reaching the bypass road. In 230m leave the field and *turn left* along **North Drive** and over the **A-road**. *Ignore* a footpath left immediately after the bridge, and in 50m *ignore* a footpath joining from the right to continue along the lane. In 235m at a four-way bridleway-junction Shortcut II joins from the right along a lane through the **Youngsbury Estate**. Continue through a gap to the right of a metal field gate and join the main walk directions at the asterisk ***)** below.

For the Main Walk, *turn right* up **Youngsbury Lane** with a bridleway signpost and in 135m continue along a tarmac path between houses. In 20m walk through a metal gate onto a gravel-and-earth path. In 110m join a tarmac lane coming from the right to go under the raised **A10-bypass** road. In 200m cross a cattle grid with a wooden gate to its right and continue on the lane through the **Youngsbury Estate**, with the **Rib Valley** down on the right, soon rising gently. In 520m go through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate and in another 80m ignore a footpath turning off left through a wooden gate. In 260m, at the top of the rise at a crossroads with a Public Footpath, the main walk joins from the left. *Turn right* through a gap to the right of a metal field gate.

***)** Head along this car wide gravel farm track with High Cross Airfield (now used for light aircraft only) visible 400m away on the left. In 200m pass **Home Farm**, ignore a restricted byway joining from the left (the Harcamlow Way) and stay on your path, soon downhill. In 140m you have Youngsbury's **Arboretum** on the right. In 165m *fork left* with the farm track, **[!]** ignoring a footpath ahead across the grass towards a wooden gate 75m away (leading back down to Thundridge Old Church). In 450m you reach the **River Rib** and cross the railed footbridge seen earlier to the left of the ford. At the four-way footpath/bridleway junction on the other side, *turn left* along **The Rib**.

****)** Walk along the grassy field margin with the river on your left and in 150m cross into the next field through a car wide gap in the boundary trees. In 165m by a low wooden pole, where the path swings ever so slightly left, stay on the path along a (presumed) permissive path and in 240m **[!]** *turn right* up a grassy, then gravel path, soon passing a **Hertfordshire Way** marker post. [**Note:** The right-of-way between the river and this point *veers right* from the wooden pole mentioned above across an arable field corner (95°) towards an overgrown railed wooden plank bridge over a ditch in 50m and then across the next field in the same direction towards the path 135m away.]

In 150m you curve left with the bridleway to reach a road opposite **Hollytrees**. *Turn right* and in 120m – in a bend of the road – *turn left* along a gravel car wide drive with a Public Bridleway 9-signpost. In 15m *ignore* a permissive bridleway to continue ahead and in 100m, by **Timber Hall** on the left (on the OS map), you *ignore* a bridleway running off to the right and *bear left* with the continuation of the drive, now a wide gravel path. You pass between **The Old Barn** on the left and a pond on the right (can be dry in summer). In 40m the path continues as grassy and in another 40m you *fork right* with a bridleway and HW marker post along a grassy path [*if this is very overgrown, continue along the lane for 45m to turn right and in 10m turn left*]. In 45m you emerge onto a gravel-and-earth farm track at a bend, where you continue in the same direction. The track curves to the right immediately and in 75m it turns left and in another 30m right again. In 150m cross a footpath and enter **Buckney Wood** with a bridleway marker post along a path just inside the wood.

Stay on this path for 570m. Just after crossing a railed wooden plank bridge at a T-junction with a byway *turn right* with the HW, still inside the wood. In 70m at a footpath junction with a wooden plank bridge on the right, continue in the same direction, now between trees, with a field behind on the right. In 125m there is a field behind trees on the left as well. In a further 150m at a Y-junction of gravel paths *fork left* and in 25m *turn left* with the HW to pass **Legges Cottages**. In 300m *turn right* with the track and in 20m cross a small triangular green and then a road to continue through a wooden kissing gate by a Public Footpath 13-signpost (Reeves Green $\frac{3}{4}$, Wareside $\frac{3}{4}$). Follow a path across a grassy area and through a (part-collapsed) wooden kissing gate 60m away into a grassy path between hedges, and in 50m into an open field. Continue along the grassy field margin and in 75m through a kissing gate into a narrow grassy strip. In 90m you walk into the next field through a gap in the boundary hedge.

In 150m continue in the same direction across an arable field along a usually well-cleared path (170°). In 210m in the right-hand field corner *ignore* a footpath 10m to the left heading into the trees through a metal kissing gate, but instead *turn right* over a two-railed plank bridge to *turn left* and walk along the left-hand grassy margin of the next field, broadly in the previous direction. In 85m exit this field in its corner through a wooden gate with a yellow marker onto a path between wooden fences. In 110m you emerge through a wooden bike barrier onto a tarmac lane by a triangular green, with **Wareside Primary School** to your right. *Turn left* to the left of the green.

*****)** In 25m *turn left* at a T-junction with a lane and in 50m *turn right* off the lane down a grassy signposted footpath with a ditch to the right. In 190m you come out on a

narrow tarmac strip and then a road, where you *turn right*. In 20m you reach the main road in **Wareside**, opposite an early tea stop, **The White Horse (currently closed)**. *Turn left* on the road past the **Chequers Inn** and a footpath forking up to the left. 50m *after* passing **Post Office Cottage** on the right, *turn right* off the road down the **second** of two wide grassy paths with a Public Footpath 32-signpost (Hunsdon 2). 310m from the road the path enters trees and 10m later crosses **the River Ash** on a railed wooden plank bridge. *Turn right* along a field margin to now broadly follow the course of **The Ash** for the next 3.9 km, up to near its confluence with **The Lea**.

In 175m cross a wide gravel track, the course of the dismantled railway again. Climb over a stile into a pasture to initially continue in the same direction (the Hertfordshire Way turns up left) and then swing right with the meandering Ash on your right and a wooded slope on the left. After 1.1 km in a succession of fields along the river, passing through a couple of metal field gates along the way, leave the narrowing grassy strip through another metal field gate onto a tarmac lane and *turn right* to cross the river. In 65m a bridleway turns off right down a tarmac lane, but you continue ahead. In 100m, *just before a metal-and-brick bridge*, [!] *turn left* with a bridleway marker post. In 80m *turn left* downhill on a narrow grassy path across a field towards a railed wooden bridge over the Ash. In 40m beyond the bridge join a gravel lane uphill, by a house on the left. Climb uphill for 175m, with a wood on the left, to a triangular junction of footpaths.

Turn right with a field on the left and a sloping field on the right. In 115m *veer right* downhill and in 130m pass **Hopneye** cottage on the right. In 50m meet the course of the dismantled railway, cross the gravel lane, and walk through a metal field gate into a field to *veer left* across it on a wide and clear path following a yellow marker (due W). In 120m on the other side go over a raised two-railed wooden plank bridge across **The Ash**. Emerge into a grassy area and *veer left* with a yellow marker along a brick garden wall, with a chicken coop and a tennis court on the right. Continue in this direction to the end of a large black barn, where you *turn left* and briefly reverse-walk part of the morning route. Walk through a metal kissing gate and cross **The Ash** on a raised footbridge to the right of a ford, and in 120m [!] *turn right* at a three-way footpath/bridleway-junction (with the HW) along a gravel drive towards a house.

In 160m you go through a metal field gate and continue in the same direction, with the valley on the right and **Easneye Wood** on the left. In 180m go through a metal kissing gate with a yellow marker into a sloping pasture, while the lane turns left uphill. Stay on the right-hand side of this field by a barbed wire fence (230°), catching glimpses of **Easneye Mansion** half left through the trees (in winter). After about 275m the path joins **The Ash** and in 100m swings right with the river. In the far field corner, where **The Ash** continues ahead, [!] *turn left*, *any of two ways*: either *turn left* inside the field, following a fence or go over a stile and *turn left* along the course of the dismantled railway between trees. Both paths re-join in 180m to then cross **The Ash** for a last time on a two-railed wooden bridge. On the other side of the river [!] *veer right* and up onto the dismantled railway track and continue in the same direction. In 170m walk under **Hollycross Road**, and enter **Lee Valley Park** through a wooden kissing gate. In 60m pass a welcome panel for the Lee Valley and an access gate to **Hollycross Lake**.

In 180m you cross **The Lea** on a two-railed wooden bridge and in 180m reach the **Lea Navigation**, where you *turn left without crossing it*, towards the **Amwell Nature Reserve** viewpoint. In 75m a path turns off left to bird hides. In 260m by the viewpoint, *turn right* across the **Lea Navigation** and then left along the towpath towards **St. Margarets**. In 750m pass **Stanstead Lock**. In 410m *fork right* and up to **Station Road**, opposite **The Jolly Fisherman (The Oak and The Red Lion)** are to the left over the bridge in Stanstead Abbots). *Turn right* along Station Road and in 130m reach the railway level crossing by **St. Margarets Station**. London bound trains depart from the near platform.