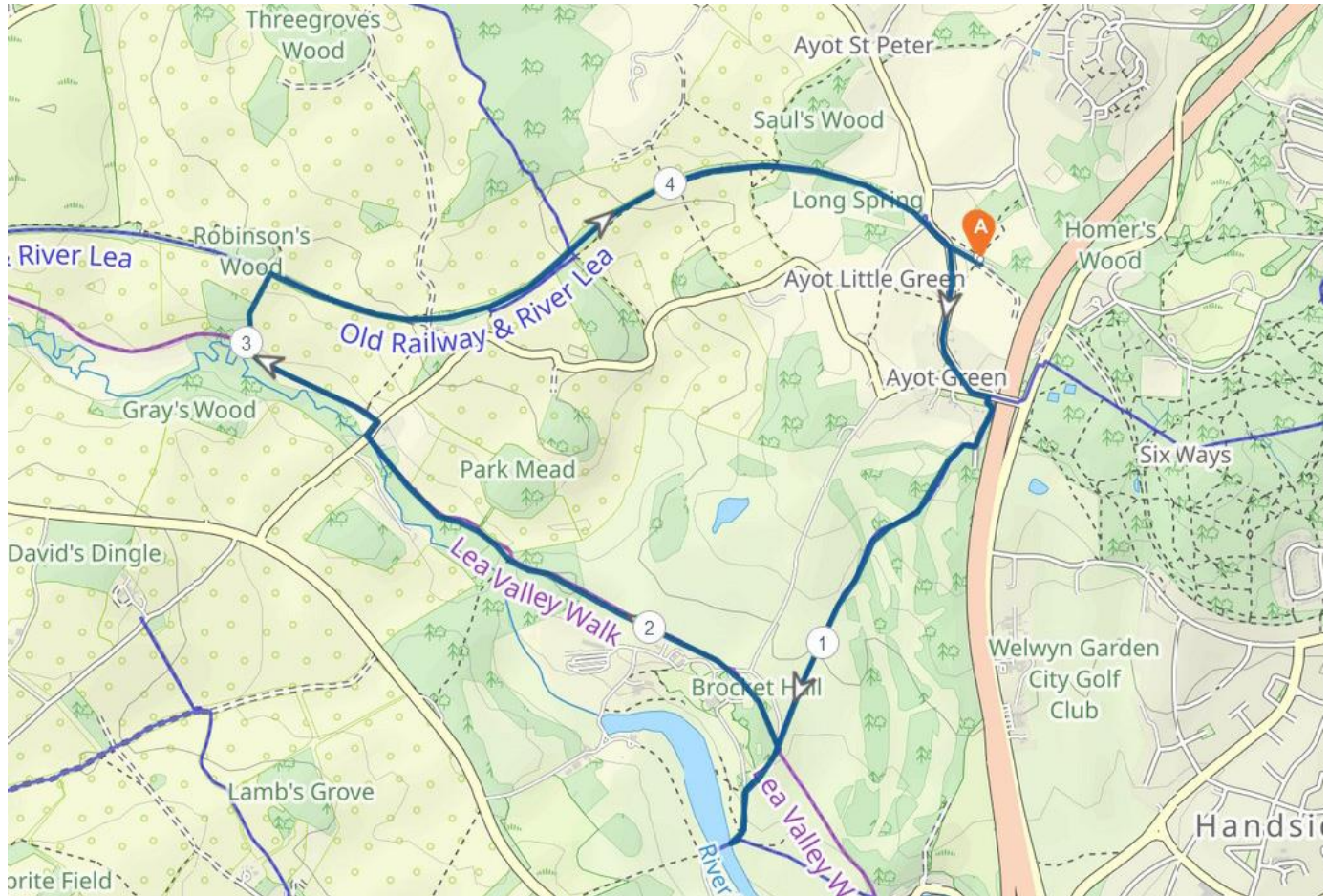




The countryside charity
Hertfordshire

Ayot Greenway and the Lea Valley



This 4.6 mile circular walk takes in some lovely countryside in the Broomfield Hall estate, through the Lea Valley, and along the Ayot Greenway - the old branch railway line that once linked Welwyn Garden City with Wheathampstead, Luton and Dunstable.

Distance: 4.6 miles / 7.5 km

Ascent: 360 feet / 110 metres

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy - but with some short steep hills

Start / Finish: The free car park just off Ayot St Peter Road at the eastern end of the Ayot Greenway in Ayot Green (what3words: mixer.last.shelf)

Refreshments: The Waggoners pub in Ayot Green or bring a picnic

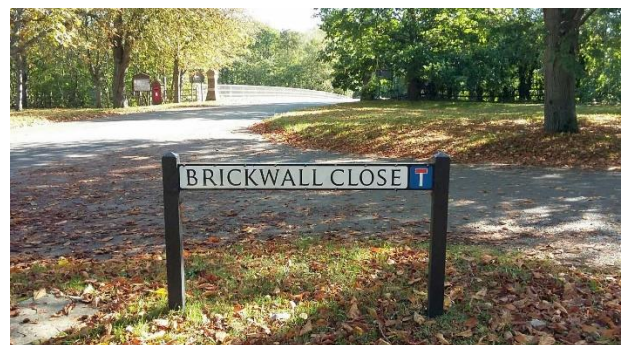
This walk can be accessed in several ways using public transportation:

- From the bus stop in Lemsford, the southeastern-most part of the walk is one-third of a mile along a public footpath.
- From the bus and rail stations in Welwyn Garden City, Ayot Green is a 1.5 mile walk northwest via The Campus and Sherrardspark Wood.
- From the bus stop in Wheathampstead, the western-most portion of the walk is about 1.75 miles along either the Lea Valley Walk or the Ayot Greenway.

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From the car park at the eastern end of the Ayot Greenway, walk one-tenth of a mile down the gravel track to Ayot St Peter Road. Turn left (south) and walk along the road, watching out for any cars, for about a quarter-mile to reach the hamlet of Ayot Green.

At the eastern edge of the hamlet, turn right onto Brickwall Close and walk south. After one-tenth of a mile, just after passing "The Waggoners" on your left, turn right onto the marked public footpath.



You will now be following a short stretch of the 20.20 km Welwyn Garden Centenary Trail, waymarked in 2020 to commemorate the founding of the garden city.

Follow the path, initially with a pasture on your right, through a metal stanchion, and into the Brocket Hall estate.



Keep on the path straight ahead and through the golf course.

The path is well-trodden and clearly marked. Take care to avoid golfers when crossing the fairways.

Continue on the path as it gently descends through the golf course.



As the terrain levels out, join the tarmac golf cart path and continue in a southerly direction. You will walk past the point where the Lea Valley Walk comes in from the right, near a large hedge.



Continue on the path onto the Palladian Bridge over the River Lea. There is a good view of Bocket Hall, former home of two Prime Ministers and now a hotel.



After admiring the bridge, retrace your steps back up the path...

... passing the brick-pillared gateway on your left.

Continue up the tarmac path keeping the hedge on your left.



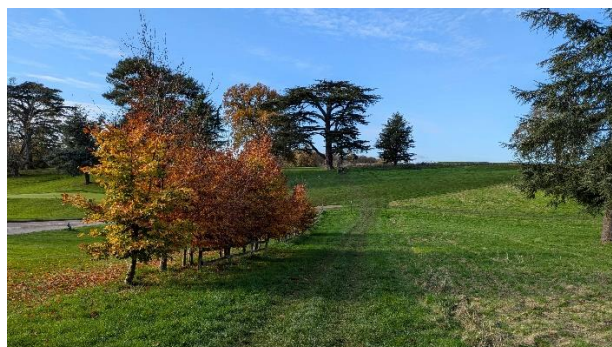
Turn left off the tarmac onto a grassy path where the Lea Valley Walk diverges to the left. For the next 1.5 miles you will be on the route of the Lea Valley Walk.

Follow the path, keeping the hedge on your left.



Cross a tarmac lane where the path jogs left and then right.

Continue on the path, keeping the Bocket Hall buildings and a fence with a row of trees on your left.



Continue across more of the golf course, then across a field and into a wood. In the springtime, this wood is filled with a carpet of bluebells.

Continue in the same direction through the wood. The path soon descends a short steep slope with a wooden handrail.



At the bottom of the slope there is a path junction, which is also the boundary between Welwyn Hatfield Borough and St Albans District. You continue straight ahead, still following the Lea Valley Walk.



The path gradually edges closer to the River Lea, eventually coming to the river bank near a house with a fence on the right.



You then reach Waterend Lane. There is an impressive ford over the river, and a signpost for "Brocket Hall" and "Lemsford 1 1/2" pointing back the way you've come.



Turn right onto Waterend Lane, and after about 50 yards turn left onto the path at the signpost.



Follow the level path straight ahead for a quarter-mile. For much of this stretch there is an open field sloping uphill on your right.

At a single distinctive oak tree on the right, there is a signpost at a path junction. Turn right (north) and follow the path up the hill.



After a little less than two-tenths of a mile you will reach the Ayot Greenway. Turn right and proceed in an easterly direction, enjoying the long views as they open up to the north...



... and to the south over the Lea Valley.



Continue along the Greenway, noticing the old railway infrastructure.



At the eastern end of the Greenway, descend some wooden steps at Ayot Little Green Lane.



Watching for any traffic, cross the road and ascend the steps on the opposite side.

From here, follow the path along the top of the embankment for a short distance to the car park where you started the walk.



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This route last walked by CPRE in November 2024.

If you have enjoyed this walk, please consider supporting CPRE Hertfordshire in our efforts to protect and promote the Hertfordshire countryside for everyone. For more information on our work, or to sign up for our newsletter, make a donation, or volunteer with us, please visit www.cpreherts.org.uk

CPRE Hertfordshire is a registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel 01438 717587.

Note: all walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended.