

Hertford & Ware Activity Map



where to walk, cycle & have fun outdoors in:

Hertford, Ware, Waterford, Bengoe, Hertingfordbury, Hertford Heath, Great Amwell, Hailey

Parks, woodland & nature reserves

Amwell Nature Reserve [G3] Only moments from the River Lea towpath, the nature reserve is a mecca for local wildlife after being transformed from its former use as a quarry. Managed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust the site is renowned for populations of waterfowl, breeding birds, dragonflies and damselflies. Although public access into the reserve is limited, spectacular views across the site including the lakes can be gained from the public hide by Great Hardmead Lake. Access the hide from the towpath or Amwell Lane.

Balls Wood [D5] Balls Wood has mature hornbeam coppice, ash and maple and some conifers. The woodland rides attract butterflies – including the white admiral. Bluebell and wood anemone burst out in the spring, whilst flocks of tits and finches can be enjoyed in winter. In autumn, the different types of wood bring forth a wonderful array of fungi.

Hartham Common [B-C3] This pleasant area of parkland is situated adjacent to Hartham Leisure Centre. Walks lead across the common and into the wooded area known as The Warren. Besides the tennis courts, football pitches and children's play area there is also a trim trail and swimming pool to keep you fit! A skate park has also recently opened.

Hertford Heath [E4] Managed by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust the rare, damp heathland of Hertford Heath (and its pools) attracts newts, dragonflies and damselflies. Nuthatch, tree-creeper, all three species of woodpecker and birds of prey are found in the woods. In spring flowers appear in the wooded areas and in summer the rides are alive with butterflies and spring flowers. Hertford Heath is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Heather is a scarce plant in Hertfordshire these days, so to enjoy spectacular displays of heather, visit the reserve in the late summer to autumn.

King's Meads [D2] Managed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust this is the largest area of grazed riverside meadow in Hertfordshire. The rivers and ditches which criss-cross the site traditionally flooded the flat land; but because of falling water levels this now happens less often. This combination of ditches, floodwater and regular grazing has created a rich wetland habitat that is becoming very rare in Britain.

Postwood [E3] Just a short walk from Ware town centre and railway station is Post Wood. Ideal for a short woodland walk, a circular route is waymarked by wooden posts with white bands. This can be accessed by car from the car park in Walnut Tree Walk or from the town centre and station via London Road and Postwood Road.

This ancient woodland has been in existence since at least 1600 AD. Oak, hornbeam and holly trees predominate as do birds and wildlife including the nuthatch, treecreeper and greater spotted woodpecker. Visit during April and May and see a rich blue carpet of Bluebells.

Priory Park & Lido [E2] The largest of all the parks in Ware can be found in the grounds of The Priory. This park has a children's play area with equipment for all ages and a refreshment kiosk (from May to September inclusive). There is also a basketball court and putting green. Next to the park is the heated outdoor pool open everyday from May to September. – all this within a one minute walk of the High Street.

Rye Meads Nature Reserve & Visitor Centre [G5] Only a few minutes walk from Rye House railway station, this reserve is jointly managed by the RSPB and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Visit the hides to see many different varieties of bird life. In the Summer months, amongst other species you will see common terns nesting and the breeding site of kingfishers. Explore the lakes and trails, see water buffalo grazing and learn more in the visitor centre. Look out over marsh, reed bed and water meadow. Entrance is free all year round and there are many special events which you can attend. *(continues)*

(Rye Meads Visitor Centre continued) Family fun days are also organised particularly to engage children who can loan a special 'explorers pack' when they visit.

Waterford Heath & Marsh [A-B2] The marsh provides a great place for a stroll along the River Beane which you share with grazing cattle and passing trains on the Hertford North branch.

The heath was developed into a community nature park in the mid nineties once the former sand and gravel workings closed down. A number of footpaths cross the heath which can be accessed from Sacombe Road, Bulls Mill Lane, Vicarage Lane by car are from Waterford Marsh on foot by following paths under the railway line. The heath harbours a unique yet wide variety of plants and animals. A diverse range of plants thrive in the gravelly soil including Viper's Bugloss and the Carline Thistle. Many species of butterfly live here. You may also spot willow warblers and sky larks in the Spring.

Get out and explore

There is an open space within walking distance of almost every home and office in Hertford and Ware and many more are just a short trip away.

This map covers the main urban areas and the surrounding countryside.

There are loads of open spaces to discover, cycle tracks to ride and parks to play in. So get outside, breathe in the fresh air and take a bit of gentle exercise.

Whether you want to find a new route to get to work or school, walk the dog, cycle, have a family picnic, grab a sandwich away from the office or kick a ball around, use this guide to explore and enjoy the local area.



Amwell Nature Reserve



Hertford Heath



Balls Wood



Kings Meads



Rye Meads Visitor Centre Waterford Marsh



Major walking & cycling trails

Cole Green Way [A4-B3] The old branch line that linked with the East Coast Main line at Welwyn was closed in 1966 as part of the Beeching cuts. The Victorian brick bridges and the platform at Cole Green remain as the only reminders of its past. Today it provides a pleasant, flat and traffic-free route from Hertford to Welwyn Garden City. In recent years the path has been integrated into the National Cycle Network and provides a well signed cycle link between both town centres. The 7 mile ride can usually be cycled in less than an hour without all the worries of traffic congestion. It makes a great route for both leisure and work journeys between Welwyn and Hertford.

Why not use the Cole Green Way as part of a circular walk into the countryside? Refreshment is available en route at The Cowper Arms at Cole Green. For cyclists who would like to go further afield you can link into the Great North Way and Ayot Greenway in Welwyn Garden City. Pick up a Cole Green Way leaflet for more details.

Hertford to Ware towpath [B3-E2] The quiet route next to the River Lea is part of the National Cycle Network and provides a hassle free way of travelling between Hertford and Ware, avoiding the busy A119 Ware Road. Enjoy the views across the valley and the wildlife along the riverside. For those that wish to extend their journey the towpath continues on through Broxbourne into London.

New River Path [D3-G5] The New River is neither new nor a river. It is a water supply aqueduct, completed in 1613, to bring drinking water from Hertfordshire to North London. A way marked path has been created linking the inner city of London with Hertfordshire's open countryside via the Lea Valley following where possible the route of the aqueduct. Its total length between Hertford and Islington is 28 miles. The section in Hertfordshire contributes to half of the path at 14 miles.

Museums

Hertford Museum [B3] Set in the heart of the town, the museum is located in the old market area of Bull Plain in an early 17th century town house. It is enhanced by a charming recreated 'Jacobean' Knot garden of intertwined hedges of box and lavender. Displays depict Hertford's historic past as a royal borough, market for a large rural population and county town.

There is a changing programme of temporary exhibitions. Free entry. The museum will close on 24 December 2008 for major redevelopment and will re-open in early 2010.

Ware Museum [E2] Occupying the Priory Lodge, the museum has a permanent display on "The Story of Ware," including archaeology. Temporary exhibitions, changing every two months, feature many aspects of the town's life, such as arts and crafts, buildings, malting and other industries. Contact the museum for opening times. Free entry.

Scott's Grotto [E2] The grotto was built by John Scott between 1761 and 1763 consisting of underground passages and chambers decorated with shells and stones. Construction of such buildings was fashionable in the 18th century but may have been built to provide a cool quiet place away from the house. The Ware Society restored the grotto in 1990 and it was formally re-opened in 1991. It is open on Saturday afternoons and Bank Holiday Mondays between April and September, 2 – 4:30pm. Admission is free, although donations are welcome.



Hertford Museum

Other places of interest

St Leonard's Church Bengoe [C3] Claims to be the oldest building in Hertford and is a fine example of Norman architecture with an unusual wooden spire. The simple interior includes a Norman font, a 13th Century wall painting and an Anchorite's cell where a religious recluse once lived.

St Mary's Church Ware [E2] The church has stood in the High Street for over 1,000 years being built in 1078. In 1380 it was rebuilt and the Priory built.

Jacob's Island [C2] This natural island has recently been managed as an otter habitat. It is one of the most important sites in Hertfordshire for otters, following reintroduction on the Rivers Lea and Stort in 1991.

Hertford Castle [B4] The building often referred to as Hertford Castle is in fact the gatehouse. The castle itself no longer stands but occupied the enclosed area behind the gatehouse. For 300 years a Royal Palace stood within the flint walls having previously been one of a series of castles built for defence purposes. There is plenty of seating in the pleasant castle grounds.

Westmill Farm [C1] Set in picturesque surroundings overlooking the Rib Valley, take one of the farm walks, play a round of golf or bring your bike and pedal one of the cycle tracks. If you prefer a slower pace you could try a spot of fishing or visit the shops on site.

East Herts Miniature Railway [F4] Located at the Van Hague Garden Centre in Great Amwell, the railway is open to the public at weekends and on designated school holidays throughout the year.

Useful links

Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/herts
 Lee Valley Park – www.leevalleypark.org.uk
 Hertford – www.hertford.net
 Ware – www.wareonline.co.uk
 Hertford Heath – www.hertfordheath.com
 East Herts Countryside www.eastherts.gov.uk/countryside



Hartham Common



Waterford Heath

Facilities KEY

- Parking
- Wheelchair Access
- Cycle Paths
- Seating
- Children's Play Area
- Footpaths
- Waymarked Footpaths
- Nature Reserve
- Leaflet Available
- Information Panel
- Bridleway
- Picnic Area
- Toilets
- Cafe

Other leaflets

Cole Green Way & Hertford to Ware towpath: Covers the 10 mile walking and cycling route between Welwyn Garden City, Hertford and Ware town centres. An old railway line, canal towpaths, open spaces and quiet roads create a green route which also forms part of the National Cycle Network.



A little further afield...

Walking & Cycling The Ayots The recently upgraded Ayot Greenway links the centres of Welwyn Garden City and Wheathampstead along the old railway line to Luton. Traffic-free, apart from a small section in Ayot Green the trail also criss-crosses many footpaths to the villages of Ayot St Peter and Ayot St Lawrence.



Alban Way Traffic-free all the way from Hatfield to St Albans, the Alban Way is accessible for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Starting near Hatfield and St Albans Abbey Stations the trail links with Smallford, Fleetville and The Galleria shopping centre.



The above leaflets along with a number of others in the series can be downloaded or ordered free of charge at:

www.hertsdirect.org/walkingandcycling





Key

1 mile 1 kilometre

By car take the A1170 towards Hoddesdon, then turn left into Middlefield Road. Continue down Rye Road past Rye House Station and over the canal. From the station it is about a 10 minute walk.

Rye Meads Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre

Lea Valley Walk
NCN Route 61
to London