

NEW RIVER WALK – HERTFORD TO ENFIELD

WALK LEADER – JOHN POLLEY (New River Action Group)

Thank you for your interest in our walk from the source of the New River near Hertford to Enfield Town. This is an all day walk of around 16miles (26.5kms). If you prefer to join us for part of the route then you are welcome to leave or join us at Old Mill Meadows, Broxbourne where we stop for lunch or at any other point along the route.

Our walk starts at Hertford North station, then via Hertford East stn to the 'New Gauge' – nowadays the main source of water supply to the New River. This is located on the River Lea floodplain between Ware & Hertford.



Our walk finishes around 5.30pm at the 'Crown & Horeshoes' pub on the banks of the New River Loop in Enfield Town.

The 'Crown & Horseshoes' pub is situated adjacent to one of the original heritage NR Company steel bridges on the redundant 'Enfield Loop' at Enfield Town.

When built the NR was around 40 miles (64km) in length, 10 feet wide & about 4 feet deep. The bed of the river was originally formed of puddled clay, which was far from watertight. Leaks were commonplace especially on the generally lower east bank (the left hand side as you walk downstream). Flooding of adjoining land led to numerous complaints from local landowners and work to maintain & repair the banks has been ongoing ever since!

The many loops, such as the Enfield Loop, allowed the NR to cross the many intersecting watercourses and to maintain it's natural downward flow along the 100 foot contour. It descended a mere 20 feet (5.8 metres) in the course of it's journey towards London, an average of only 6 inches per mile - quite an achievement in the early 17th Century!

When the NR was constructed no means of pumping water existed. In later years the invention and increased use of 'modern' technology, starting with wind & horsepower, followed by the steam engine and latterly electricity, enabled the course to be shortened. The NR has been straightened and shortened over the years with the many loops being abandoned in favour of new tunnelled, piped or viaduct sections. The Enfield Loop itself is by-passed by three 54" diameter pipe runs built in about 1880. Enfield Council now own & maintain the loop, it being preserved as an amenity water feature only. The piped section was bombed & damaged during WW2 and the Enfield Loop was brought back into use as a main feed to the NR during the 1940-1950s.

Aside of the many changes, much of the NR you will walk today follows the original course constructed 400 years ago between 1608 & 1613. You will be able to see many of the original NR features, how & why the course was planned, where some of the loops used to be, why King James's intervention was crucial to the completion of the project, how construction of the river led to complaints and caused upset to landowners, mill owners, barge owners and others affected by it's construction. Nowadays construction of new roads, motorways & airports causes much the same public response!

Some NR facts:

- The name 'New River' is incorrect. It is neither 'new' nor a 'river'. It is technically a canal or man made aqueduct.
- Water takes approximately 2 days to flow naturally from the 'New Gauge' River Lea intake to the Stock Newington reservoirs
- 48 million gallons of water per day (MGPD) is fed into the NR. The bulk comes in via the River Lea at 'New Gauge' (22.5 MGPD) whilst the balance is sourced from Chadwell Spring and the many pumping stations along the course
- The cost of building the NR was approximately £18,500

It is only in recent years that much of the NR has been made accessible to the public. In years gone by, you were not allowed to go near the river & certainly not to walk along the banks! I can well remember as a young boy in the 1960s

seeing the banks regularly patrolled by uniformed security guards with dogs!
Like you, I am happy that we can now walk & enjoy most of the NR.

We hope that you enjoy the trip and leave with a better understanding of the history & significance of this unique man made waterway that sits on our doorstep.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding the New River, either during the course of the day, or in the future. Thank you for joining us.

Contact details:


John Polley (New River Action Group)

07814 546772










New River walk – Hertford to Enfield

A 26km (approx 16 miles) level walk downstream following the present day course of the New River. The walk will be led by John Polley who will explain many of the interesting features & industrial archaeology of the Hertfordshire section of this 400 year old man made watercourse. It is a full day walk taking in an interesting mix of both urban & rural stretches of the New River.

If you are coming by car & plan to walk the whole route to Enfield Town you are best to leave your car near Hertford North station. At the end of the walk we take a train back to Hertford North station from Enfield Chase station which is close to the finishing point - the Crown & Horseshoes pub.

If you are planning to join us for part of the walk at any point up to Broxbourne, you are advised to leave your car at Hertford East station. This is easily reached by train from Ware, St. Margarets, Rye House or Broxbourne stations. Walkers may join or leave the walk at any point & more easily at the rail served points indicated by  below.

Lunch will be taken at the cafe on Old Mill Meadows at Broxbourne which is at approximately the halfway point. Short breaks will in the morning near St. Margarets & in the afternoon near Cheshunt.

Location	Distance (km)	Total (km)	Time
 = station nearby			
Hertford North Station 	0	0	9.45am
Hertford East Station 	1.25	1.25	10.00am
New Gauge	1.75	3.00	10.30am
Chadwell Spring	1.25	4.25	11.00am
Amwell End PS  Ware	1.00	5.25	11.20am
Great Amwell	1.75	7.00	11.45am
St. Margarets  St Margarets	1.00	8.00	12.00am
Rye House  Rye House	2.00	10.00	12.45pm
Essex Road	1.00	11.00	1.00pm
Arrive Broxbourne Station 	2.00	13.00	1.30pm
Lunch (Broxbourne - Old Mill Meadows)	1.30-2.00pm		
Leave Broxbourne Station 	2.00	15.00	2.00pm
A10 - Great Cambridge Road	3.00	18.00	2.45pm
Cheshunt - Council Offices	2.50	20.50	3.30pm
M25 – London Orbital Motorway	2.00	22.50	4.00pm
Enfield Town – ‘Crown & Horseshoes’ pub	4.00	26.50	5.00pm
 Enfield Chase			

If you have any questions, please let me know.

I look forward to seeing you!

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