

# WALKING IN BROXBOURNE



## WALKING IN BROXBOURNE

This four mile riverside walk starts and finishes close to Broxbourne train station and incorporates some of the greenest (and bluest) spaces in the heart of the Lee Valley. The surrounding reservoirs and marshes are home to many species of birds, some rare breeds and many parts of the Lee Valley have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) guaranteeing greater protection from change and development. This area also has a busy boating centre with boat hire, day trips, cycle hire and waterside pubs.

### HISTORY

The River Lee Navigation is often confused with the River Lea. The original Lea was made wider, deeper and new courses cut during the Industrial Revolution to allow better barge access for transporting cargo and was then re-named the River Lee Navigation. At times during the walk you can see the original River Lea running alongside the River Lee Navigation.

The history of the original River Lea can be traced back over 1000 years receiving a mention in the Treaty of Wedmore between King Alfred and the Danes and also later in the Domesday Book. It's hard to imagine that these quiet waterways were once filled with barges carrying cargo to and from London. Grain and malt were transported from Hertford down to the Thames and timber and other cargoes were transported back north. The scene today couldn't be more different with the pretty narrowboats carrying only passengers on their leisurely journey through this blue corridor.

### Lee Valley Boat Centre to Dobbs Weir

Begin your walk from the car park behind the Lee Valley Boat Centre on Old Nazeing Road. Walk over the bridge and head north on the towpath alongside the beer garden of the Crown pub. If arriving by train, exit the station through the car park and bear left under the bridge and then left again through a leafy corridor following the Lee

Valley Walk signs, some of which are mounted in the footpath.

Walk through the car park towards the leisure pool and emerge onto Old Nazeing Road. Begin your walk as above. Heading north on the towpath the cheerful buzz of the boat centre and the pub are soon replaced by the pleasing sound of birdsong. This area of the River Lee is rich in wildlife and is home to many species of mammals, birds



and insects including common varieties such as Canadian geese, mallards, blue tits, and dragonflies and also the more elusive such as the water vole, now a rare sight in Britain largely due to habitat loss and the predatory American mink. The peace and quiet of the towpath offers real escapism from the chaos of the crowds, roads, shopping centres and other trappings of modern life. Here you can breathe deeply, relax and unwind while you walk the half a mile to Carthage Lock, the navigation's prettiest lock and the point where the meridian line divides the lock between the eastern and western hemispheres. Continue along the towpath for approximately one mile to Dobbs Weir.

### Dobbs Weir to The New River

As you approach the road bridge at Dobbs Weir you will find toilets and a tea room on the right. There is also the Fish and Eels pub on the other side of the bridge.

Continue the walk by crossing the bridge into the park by the weir. This is an ideal spot for a picnic. Turn left over the small weir bridge, walk around the weir crossing the bridge with the original sluice machinery. Enter the park and follow the river around to the left exiting the park through the gate. Cross the road (be careful it can get busy) and continue straight ahead. Follow the public footpath sign (it runs parallel with Lee Valley Caravan Park). Continue down this track for about a quarter of a mile. You will eventually reach the level crossing for the train track which you must cross. You will soon spot Admiral's Lake on your left which is one of the best feeding sites for bats in the Lee Valley. Continue through the field and up towards a blue turnstile which leads you to The New River.

### The New River to Lee Valley Boat Centre

Turn left as you emerge onto the banks of The New River. On the opposite side of the river, grand

## British Waterways London

1 Sheldon Square  
Paddington Central  
London W2 6TT

T. 020 7985 7200

F. 020 7985 7201

E. enquiries.london@

britishwaterways.co.uk

W. www.waterscape.com

Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of all information given in this guide and British Waterways London does not accept responsibility for any changes that may have occurred since going to press. Walking alone in isolated areas is not recommended.

Designed by Archipelago Creative.

www.archipelago.co.uk

Printed by Reedprint Ltd.

**Start:** Old Nazeing Road  
**Finish:** Old Nazeing Road  
**Distance:** 4 miles  
**Time:** 2 hours  
**Transport:** Train station  
Broxbourne  
**Parking:** Old Nazeing Road  
**Conditions:** Flat, some areas may be unsuitable for wheelchairs

houses and lavish gardens spill over onto the banks. Continue on this path for just over a mile. The New River is a man made water course and was built in the early 17th century to take drinking water from local springs to London. This was an incredible feat of engineering as it had to accurately follow the contours of the land to enable the water to flow. Nearly 400 years later, the river still supplies the capital with drinking water and provides a beautiful environment for people to enjoy. You will shortly pass Broxbourne pumping station. Now a Grade

II listed structure, the pumping station was built by the Victorians in 1886 to pump water from below ground to double the output of drinking water for the city. A little further on you arrive back at Broxbourne train station. For a detour to Broxbourne Mill ruins and back to your starting place follow the instructions below. Continue down the New River path to the bridge. Cross the road and bear left. At the railway arches turn right bearing left onto the small bridge. Turn right following the Lea Valley Walk signs going through the

park and arriving at the ruins of Broxbourne Mill on the right. A mill stood on top of this site for over 900 years until a massive fire destroyed it in 1949. For the train station, retrace your steps from here. For the car park follow the signs to the car park and refreshments on the left after the mill. Pass the cycle hire centre and Broxbourne Model Railway Club in the green outhouses to your right. Continue under the railway bridge and immediately turn left onto the next footbridge arriving back at the Lee Valley Boat Centre and your starting point.

## Other walks available in this series

- Little Venice to Camden
- Walking the East Ends Canals
- Islington to Limehouse Walk
- Walking around Hanwell
- Walking in the Lea Valley
- Walking in Harlow

