

# Enjoy!

a journey through East Hertfordshire



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## Introduction

Set in attractive rolling countryside, East Herts has a great deal to offer both the visitor and the people who live and work here.

This leaflet takes you through some of our picturesque villages situated between the traditional market towns of Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware highlighting some of our history and folklore.

Find out which village has Hertfordshire's last surviving 17th Century Mill and which village was home to a witch. Discover what town had a Great Bed that could sleep a dozen at any one time.

During your journey you will discover many traditional pubs, tea rooms and restaurants providing refreshments and hospitality. If you're looking to stay you will find accommodation from farmhouse bed and breakfast to 5 star hotels.

## History & Folklore

**Albury** - Folklore says that Albury has been touched by the Devil's hand. In 1880 one of the four church bells fell to the foot of the tower but before it could be repaired or replaced, it disappeared. Some say it was stolen by the Devil.

**Anstey** - Folklore claims that there is a mile long cave which runs from the west to Cave Gate. Locals say that the passage, rediscovered in 1904, is inhabited by a dragon. Although the cave is now grassed over it is possible that it was an entrance to a prehistoric flint mine. The last person to have ventured into the passage was a local fiddler called Blind George who accepted a wager to explore it. He set off with his dog when suddenly the sound of his fiddle stopped, followed by a scream and then silence. His dog emerged without a tail and his coat singed off. Blind George was never seen again.

**Ardeley** has an attractive green with a well surrounded by thatched cottages, a thatched village hall and the Norman church of St Lawrence. Ardeley Bury is an Elizabethan hall with Victorian extensions built very much to resemble a Gothic castle.

**Aspenden** - The church of St Marys has a tomb which is one of only five in the country to have coloured brasses. The tomb is the resting place of Sir Robert Clifford. He was a knight to Henry VII and was involved in a plot to remove him from the throne.

**Aston** is an attractive compact village in a good walking area. Traditional village housing includes a thatched 17th century cottage and a Jacobean house at Aston Bury, which used to be a monastery until Henry VIII intervened.

This village can boast of having a highwayman. In the 17th and 18th Centuries, Colonel Jack Whitney waylaid farmers on their way back from Hertford Market. One night he was caught and shot on the spot. He was buried in a grave without a headstone (halfway between Aston and Aston End) on a hill, later named after him as Major's Hill.

**Bayford** - The parish boundaries offer a host of footpaths through woodland, including Brickendon Woods, and a recently added well-signposted cycle route.

**Bengeo** - The church of St Leonard at Bengeo is a rare example of a Norman village church. Built around 1120, St Leonard's has undergone little change over the centuries. The church's treasures include a Norman font, an Anchorite's cell and a wall painting, featuring the deposition from the cross.

**Benington** is a picturesque village set around a perfect green with a duck pond, and is regarded as one of the most attractive villages in the county. Its reputation has grown in part from the magnificent gardens of the Georgian house, Benington Lordship, as well as the timbered cottages clustered around the green. The Lordship lies next to a fine medieval church. Its grounds contain the ruins of a Norman Castle, whose keep was destroyed by King John's henchmen in 1212.

**Bishop's Stortford** - The market town of Bishop's Stortford has many old buildings including 16th and 17th century inns. The George Hotel is said to date from the 14th century.

William the Conqueror built Waytemore Castle, a wooden castle which was replaced by a flint and stone structure in the 12th century. All that remains today is a massive castle mound.

Bishop's Stortford is the birthplace of Cecil Rhodes, the founder of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. His family home is now a museum.

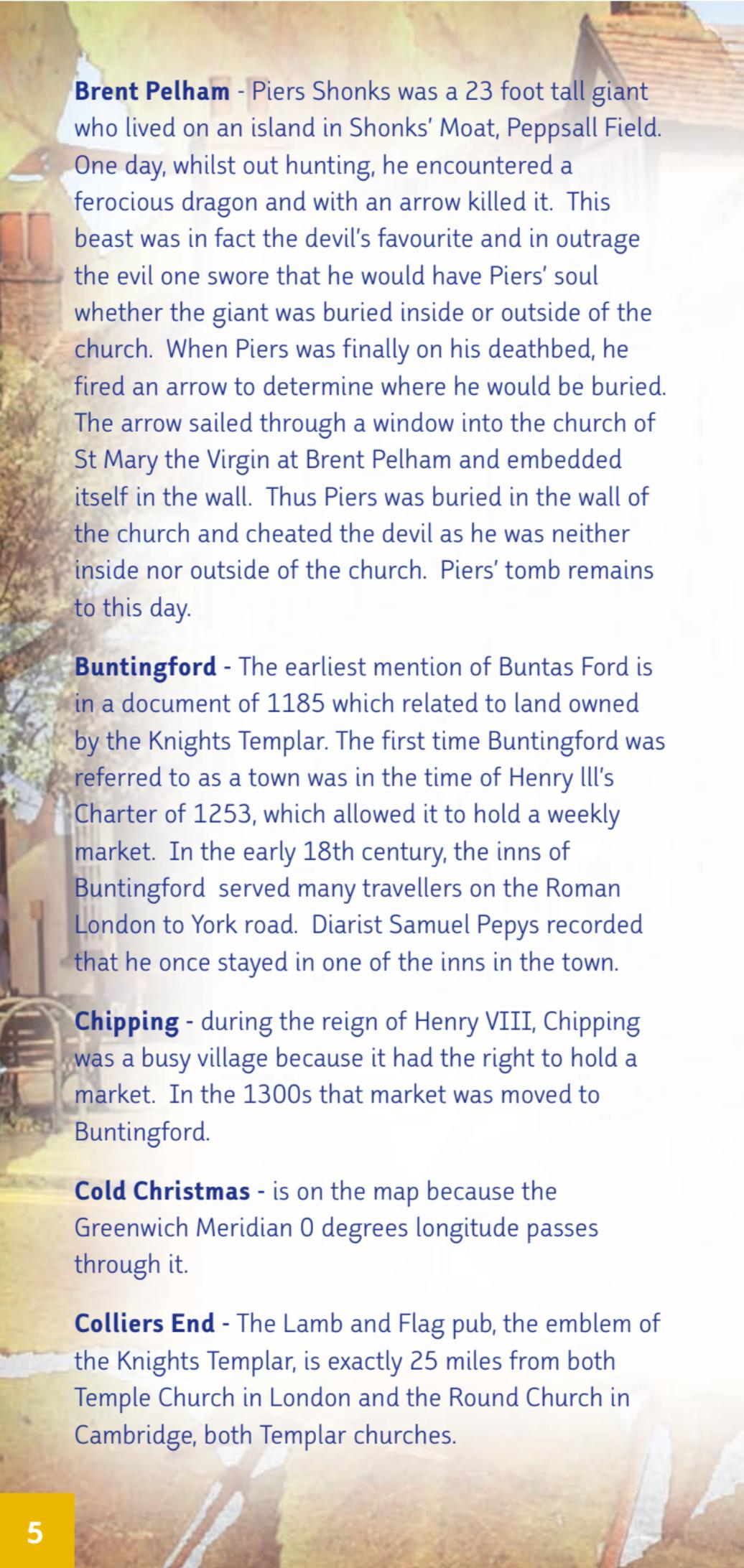
The town's prosperity as a staging post on mail coach routes was enhanced by the opening of the Stort Navigation in 1769. The arrival of the railway in Victorian times laid the foundation for a market town.

**Bramfield** - St Andrew's Church was there in Saxon times, near the Saxon manor house called the Bury. Bramfield was the first parish for martyr Thomas a Becket. After he was murdered in 1170, while Archbishop of Canterbury, a Saxon well at Bramfield church was renamed the Holy Well of St Thomas, attracting pilgrims for its reputed healing powers.

Bramfield was also home to a witch, provided a hiding place for Dick Turpin, and saw the murder of a local felon.

**Brickendon** - Archaeological finds, now in Hertford Museum, have led to speculation that Queen Boadicea used to camp in the area. The parish is called Brickendon Liberty, which stems from its connection with the Priory at Waltham Abbey. Monks used to live in the village, growing vegetables for daily delivery to the Abbey. Their home has survived and is now known as the White House.

**Braughing** - Folklore tells of a 16th century farmer who was dropped from his coffin on the way to the churchyard. The jolt awoke the body and he lived for several more years. In his will he asked that the church bells be rung on October 2, the anniversary of his escape. Braughing is also famous for its local sausages.



**Brent Pelham** - Piers Shonks was a 23 foot tall giant who lived on an island in Shonks' Moat, Peppsall Field. One day, whilst out hunting, he encountered a ferocious dragon and with an arrow killed it. This beast was in fact the devil's favourite and in outrage the evil one swore that he would have Piers' soul whether the giant was buried inside or outside of the church. When Piers was finally on his deathbed, he fired an arrow to determine where he would be buried. The arrow sailed through a window into the church of St Mary the Virgin at Brent Pelham and embedded itself in the wall. Thus Piers was buried in the wall of the church and cheated the devil as he was neither inside nor outside of the church. Piers' tomb remains to this day.

**Buntingford** - The earliest mention of Buntas Ford is in a document of 1185 which related to land owned by the Knights Templar. The first time Buntingford was referred to as a town was in the time of Henry III's Charter of 1253, which allowed it to hold a weekly market. In the early 18th century, the inns of Buntingford served many travellers on the Roman London to York road. Diarist Samuel Pepys recorded that he once stayed in one of the inns in the town.

**Chipping** - during the reign of Henry VIII, Chipping was a busy village because it had the right to hold a market. In the 1300s that market was moved to Buntingford.

**Cold Christmas** - is on the map because the Greenwich Meridian 0 degrees longitude passes through it.

**Colliers End** - The Lamb and Flag pub, the emblem of the Knights Templar, is exactly 25 miles from both Temple Church in London and the Round Church in Cambridge, both Templar churches.



**Cromer** Windmill is Hertfordshire's last surviving 17th century mill. Now fixed in one position, the sails used to run on a rail and would rotate out over the road.

**Dane End** - means the 'valley ends' and refers to where a tributary of the River Lea comes off the surrounding chalk. The village has a 12th century church with examples of medieval graffiti and a stone font.

**Datchworth** has a museum housed in an old village blacksmith's shop on the green.

A whipping post which stands on the green was used for public floggings until July 1665. Rectory Lane, which runs from the green towards the churchyard, is reputed to be haunted by a horseless cart. It is said to be a manifestation of the 'death coach' or hellwain which carried off the souls of the dead.

**Furneux Pelham** is one of three Pelham villages each of which was owned by the Furneaux (pronounced furnix) family in the 13th century. The church is rather grand, with stained glass by William Morris and Burne-Jones in the chapel. The countryside around the Pelhams gives the impression of great remoteness, combining the low hills and valleys of Hertfordshire with the large, hedgeless fields of East Anglia.

**Great Amwell** - The church of St John the Baptist stands by the picturesque waters of the New River. The river was constructed between 1609-13 to provide water for London. In the graveyard of the church lies Issac Reed, a Shakespearean editor.

**Hertford** - historically a major market for agricultural produce, a lucrative trading post and a base for royalty and nobility to enjoy country life and sport.

Archaeological finds have uncovered earthworks and possible Bronze Age burials (1800BC - 600BC) and there have been Iron Age discoveries, plus evidence of a settlement in late Pre-Roman Iron Age (150BC-43AD).

Hertford Castle was used by monarchs as a country home and a prison! The Black Prince brought the captive King John of France and his son Prince Philip to Hertford Castle in 1359.

Henry VI spent much of his childhood there and it was home to many of Henry VIII's children, including Elizabeth I, who visited the castle after her coronation.

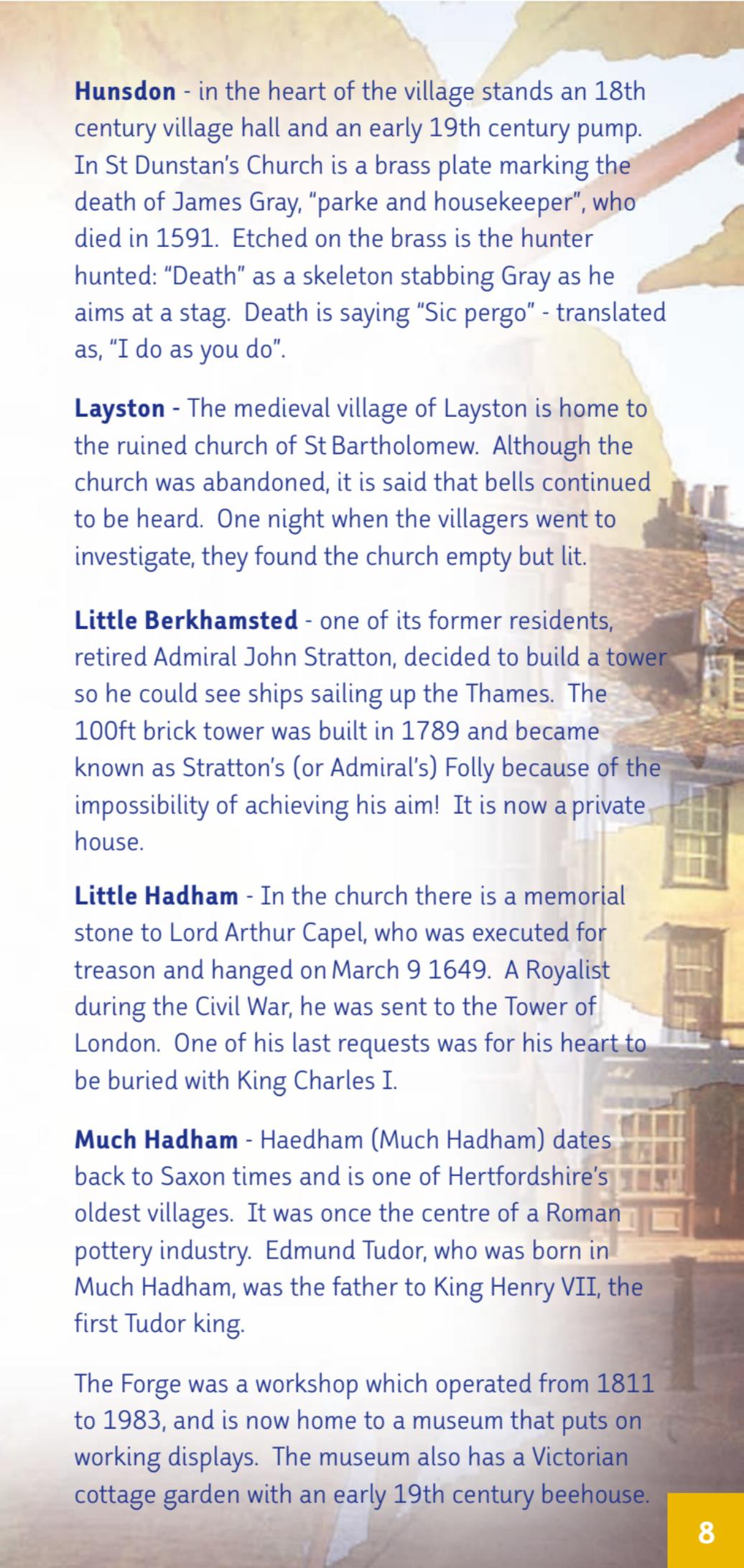
**Hertford Heath** was a notorious area for highwaymen in years gone by.

Hertford Heath was home to a prominent political economist of the early 19th century, Thomas Malthus (1766-1834).

**Hertingfordbury** - Hertingfordbury Park was identified in Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* and was visited by diarist John Evelyn (1620-1706).

The original structure of St Mary's Church dates from before 1400. Tombs include Lady Anne Calvert, ancestress of the founders of Maryland, USA and the city of Baltimore.

**Hormead** - The parish of Hormead consists of Great Hormead, Little Hormead and Hare Street. St Mary the Virgin, at Little Hormead, is a small Saxon church containing an important ironwork door which dates from the 12th century.



**Hunsdon** - in the heart of the village stands an 18th century village hall and an early 19th century pump. In St Dunstan's Church is a brass plate marking the death of James Gray, "parke and housekeeper", who died in 1591. Etched on the brass is the hunter hunted: "Death" as a skeleton stabbing Gray as he aims at a stag. Death is saying "Sic pergo" - translated as, "I do as you do".

**Layston** - The medieval village of Layston is home to the ruined church of St Bartholomew. Although the church was abandoned, it is said that bells continued to be heard. One night when the villagers went to investigate, they found the church empty but lit.

**Little Berkhamsted** - one of its former residents, retired Admiral John Stratton, decided to build a tower so he could see ships sailing up the Thames. The 100ft brick tower was built in 1789 and became known as Stratton's (or Admiral's) Folly because of the impossibility of achieving his aim! It is now a private house.

**Little Hadham** - In the church there is a memorial stone to Lord Arthur Capel, who was executed for treason and hanged on March 9 1649. A Royalist during the Civil War, he was sent to the Tower of London. One of his last requests was for his heart to be buried with King Charles I.

**Much Hadham** - Haedham (Much Hadham) dates back to Saxon times and is one of Hertfordshire's oldest villages. It was once the centre of a Roman pottery industry. Edmund Tudor, who was born in Much Hadham, was the father to King Henry VII, the first Tudor king.

The Forge was a workshop which operated from 1811 to 1983, and is now home to a museum that puts on working displays. The museum also has a Victorian cottage garden with an early 19th century beehouse.



**Puckeridge** - was once a coaching stop which is still evident today in the High Street archways which lead to the stable yards. On the outskirts of Puckeridge, in Skelton Green, a Roman cremation site was excavated.

**Sacombe** remains a very rural parish. Sacombe's ancient Church of St Catherine was substantially rebuilt in 1885-6 by the patron Abel Smith, who lived at Woodhall Park.

Sacombe lies on a Roman road, part of which remains in use today - Sacombe Green Road.

**Sawbridgeworth** - At the time of the Norman Conquest, Sawbridgeworth was one of the most valuable estates in the country, owned by Asgar the Staller, who was in charge of King Harold's stables. Sawbridgeworth was home to one of the oldest nurseries in the country, Thomas Rivers & Sons, first established in 1725. Many new fruit varieties were raised there, including 30 kinds of plum. The nursery closed in the 1980s. To the south of the town is Pishiobury, a fine Tudor mansion on an estate given to Anne Boleyn by Henry VIII.

Sawbridgeworth has many attractive riverside walks close to the town and the River Stort. The Stort is very popular for boating.

**Stapleford** is one of East Herts' newer villages, consisting mainly of houses built after the First World War for returning soldiers. It is centred around the church of St Mary's.

**Standon** has a 13th century church with a detached tower which was joined in 1865 as an organ chamber. St Mary's, the Virgin contains monuments to notable people, including Sir Ralph Sadler, Privy Councillor for Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I.



**Standon Green End** has a boulder in a field known as the balloon stone. This stone commemorates the landing of the first balloon voyage in England on September 15 1784. Vincenzo Lunardi, secretary to the Neopolitan ambassador, took off two hours earlier from Moorfields in London.

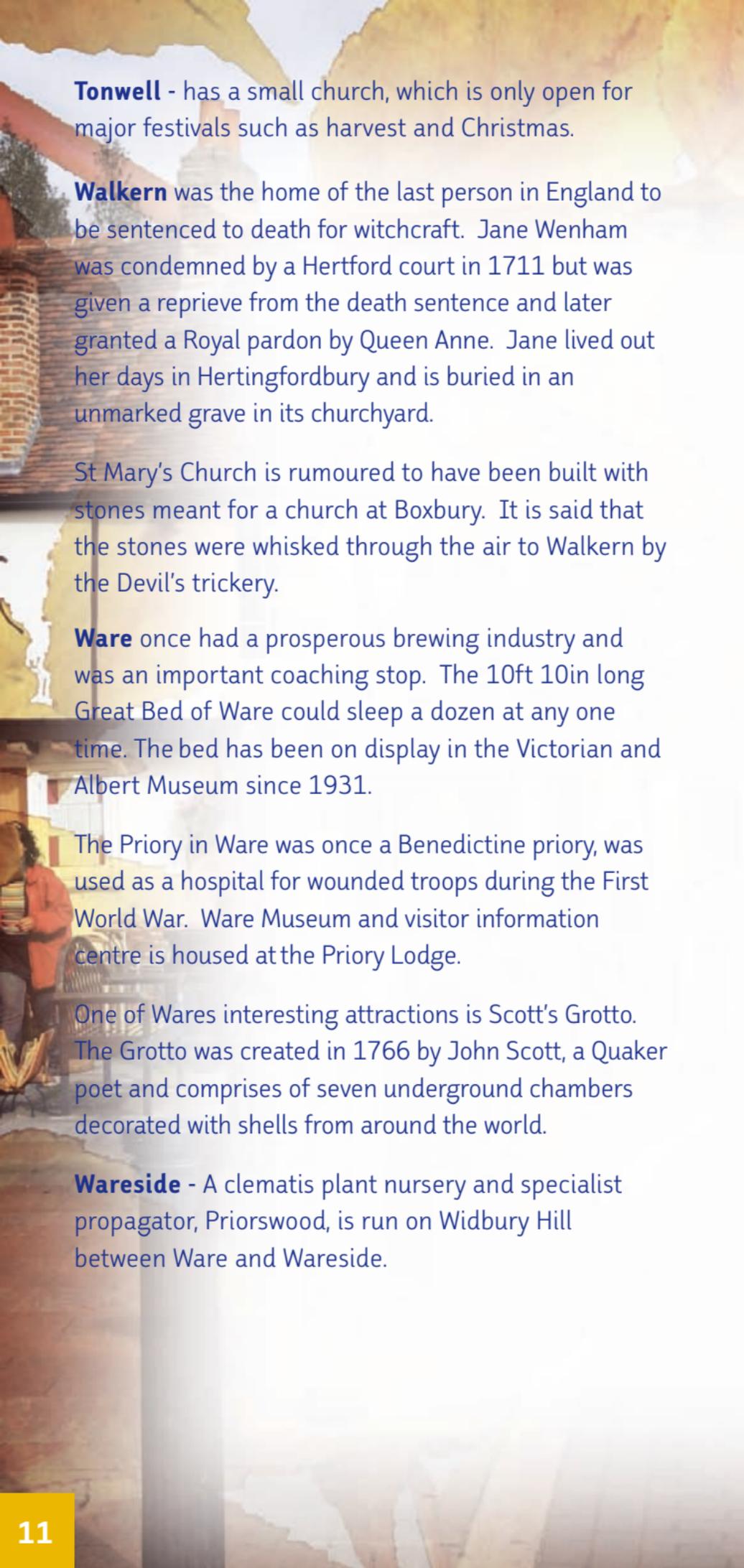
**Stanstead Abbots** has a lovely riverside walk which takes you past the marina towards Ware and Hertford, or in the other direction towards the Lea Valley Park. Many of the 200 year old buildings on the High Street are listed, and the Red Lion pub is reputed to have an old priest hole.

**Stocking Pelham** - Arthur Mee's "Hertfordshire" describes the village as follows:- "It has three good companions, a little church, a barn about twice as big, and the rectory still guarded by part of its old moat. The plain little church has been here about 600 years, and in its belfry hangs a bell which may have rung out news of Agincourt".

**Tewin** - The north wall of St Peter's Church dates from Saxon times. The Normans carried out restoration and other changes were made during 1335 - 1530.

**Thorley** - The three times Lord Mayor of London, Dick Whittington was Lord of the manor of Thorley. Another resident of Thorley was the infamous 19th century hanging judge, Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough. Thorley has archaeological finds dating back 3,000 years.

**Thundridge** - The parish of Thundridge, Wadesmill and High Cross has the busy A10 road running through it. The Old North Road from Wadesmill was the first toll road in England under the 1663 Turnpike Act.



**Tonwell** - has a small church, which is only open for major festivals such as harvest and Christmas.

**Walkern** was the home of the last person in England to be sentenced to death for witchcraft. Jane Wenham was condemned by a Hertford court in 1711 but was given a reprieve from the death sentence and later granted a Royal pardon by Queen Anne. Jane lived out her days in Hertingfordbury and is buried in an unmarked grave in its churchyard.

St Mary's Church is rumoured to have been built with stones meant for a church at Boxbury. It is said that the stones were whisked through the air to Walkern by the Devil's trickery.

**Ware** once had a prosperous brewing industry and was an important coaching stop. The 10ft 10in long Great Bed of Ware could sleep a dozen at any one time. The bed has been on display in the Victorian and Albert Museum since 1931.

The Priory in Ware was once a Benedictine priory, was used as a hospital for wounded troops during the First World War. Ware Museum and visitor information centre is housed at the Priory Lodge.

One of Ware's interesting attractions is Scott's Grotto. The Grotto was created in 1766 by John Scott, a Quaker poet and comprises of seven underground chambers decorated with shells from around the world.

**Wareside** - A clematis plant nursery and specialist propagator, Priorswood, is run on Widbury Hill between Ware and Wareside.



**Watton-at-Stone** - The “stone” of Watton-at-Stone is presumed to refer to a prehistoric or Roman mark stone of Hertfordshire puddingstone, which can be found at the right of the door of the Waggon and Horses.

Watton’s most exciting archaeological find was a bronze mirror, discovered near the burial site of an Iron Age princess in the Great Humphreys area. It is called the Aston Mirror because it was technically found in that parish. It is now on display in the British Museum.

The existence of a church is recorded in the Domesday Book, but the present St Andrew’s and St Mary’s building is 15th century. During the Civil War the Roundheads held their Royalist prisoners in the church.

**Westmill** has a traditional green and thatched cottages overlooked by the spire of the Anglo-Saxon St Mary’s Church. It is a peaceful backwater in the Rib Valley with many ancient trees.

**Widford** - has a church which dates from the 12th century and has several wall paintings from about 1500.

**Wyddial** is situated 500ft above sea level and is one of the smallest villages in the county. The only public building is its medieval parish church

# Local Attractions

## **Artshed**

Westmill Farm, Westmill Road, Ware, Herts SG12 0ES

Website: [www.artshed-ware.com](http://www.artshed-ware.com)

## **Audley End House**

Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4JF

Tel: 01799 522 399

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

## **Bennington Lordship Gardens**

Bennington, Stevenage, Herts SG2 7BS

Tel: 01438 869668

Email: [rhbott@benningtonlordship.co.uk](mailto:rhbott@benningtonlordship.co.uk)

Website: [www.benningtonlordship.co.uk](http://www.benningtonlordship.co.uk)

## **Buntingford Heritage Centre**

The Manor House, Buntingford

Tel: 01763 273220

## **Courtyard Arts**

Port Vale, Hertford, Herts SG14 3AA

Website: [www.courtyardarts.org.uk](http://www.courtyardarts.org.uk)

## **Cromer Windmill**

The Windmill stands beside the B1037 to the north-east of Stevenage.

Tel: 01279 843301

## **Datchworth Museum**

9A Datchworth Green, Datchworth, Nr Knebworth, Herts SG3 6TL

Tel: 01438 813477

## **Duxford Imperial War Museum**

Cambridgeshire, CB2 4QR

Tel: 01223 835000

Website: [www.duxford.iwm.org.uk](http://www.duxford.iwm.org.uk)

## **Hatfield House Park and Gardens**

Hatfield, Herts AL9 5NQ

Tel: 01707 287010

Email: [curator@hatfield-house.co.uk](mailto:curator@hatfield-house.co.uk)

Website: [www.hatfield-house.co.uk](http://www.hatfield-house.co.uk)

### **Henry Moore Foundation**

Dane Tree House, Perry Green, Much Hadham, Herts  
SG10 6EE

Tel: 01279 843333

Email: [visits@henry-moore-fdn.co.uk](mailto:visits@henry-moore-fdn.co.uk)

Website: [www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk](http://www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk)

### **Hertford Museum**

18 Bull Plain, Hertford, Herts

Tel: 01992 582686

Website: [www.hertfordmuseum.org](http://www.hertfordmuseum.org)

### **Hopleys Garden**

High Street, Much Hadham, Herts SG10 6BU

Tel: 01279 842509

Website: [www.scotts-grotto.org](http://www.scotts-grotto.org)

### **Knebworth House**

Knebworth, Herts SG3 6PY

Tel: 01438 812661

Email: [info@knebworth.com](mailto:info@knebworth.com)

Website: [www.knebworth-house.com](http://www.knebworth-house.com)

### **Paradise Wildlife Park**

White Stubbs Lane, Broxbourne, Herts EN10 7QA

Tel: 01920 470490

Email: [info@pwpark.com](mailto:info@pwpark.com)

Website: [www.pwpark.com](http://www.pwpark.com)

### **Bishop's Stortford Museum**

South Street, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

Tel: 01279 651746

Website: [www.rhodesbishopsstortford.org.uk](http://www.rhodesbishopsstortford.org.uk)

### **Scott's Grotto**

Scotts, Road, Ware, Herts SG12 9JQ

Tel: 01920 464131

Website: [www.scotts-grotto.org](http://www.scotts-grotto.org)

### **The Forge Museum**

High Street, Much Hadham, Herts

Tel: 01279 843301

### **Ware Museum**

The Priory Lodge, High Street, Ware, Herts SG12 9AD

Tel: 01920 487848

## Tourist Information

### **Birchanger**

Welcome Break Services,  
Junction 8 M11 Motorway  
Bishop's Stortford  
Herts CM23 5QZ  
Tel: 01279 508656

### **Bishop's Stortford**

The Old Monastery, Windhill,  
Bishop's Stortford CM23 2ND  
(Next to St Michael's Church)  
Tel: 01279 655831  
Email: [tic@bishopsstortford.org](mailto:tic@bishopsstortford.org)  
Website: [www.bishopsstortford.org](http://www.bishopsstortford.org)

### **Buntingford**

Visitors Information Point  
The Manor House, High Street  
Tel: 01763 272222  
Email: [btc.manorhouse@btclick.com](mailto:btc.manorhouse@btclick.com)

### **Hertford**

10 Market Place, Hertford SG14 1DG  
Tel: 01992 584322  
Email: [www.hertford@eetb.info](http://www.hertford@eetb.info)  
Website: [www.hertford.gov.uk](http://www.hertford.gov.uk)

### **Ware**

Priory Lodge, High Street  
Ware  
Tel: 01920 487848  
Website: [www.waremuseum.org.uk](http://www.waremuseum.org.uk)

### **Other Useful Contacts**

[www.eastherts.gov.uk](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk)  
[www.growninherts.org.uk](http://www.growninherts.org.uk)  
[www.enjoyhertfordshire.com](http://www.enjoyhertfordshire.com)  
[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)  
[www.visiteastofengland.com](http://www.visiteastofengland.com)  
[www.bhl.org.uk](http://www.bhl.org.uk)

## Local Markets

### **Bishop's Stortford**

Market held Saturdays and Thursdays

### **Buntingford**

Market held Mondays

### **Dane End**

Farmers Market held second Saturday - monthly

### **Datchworth**

Farmers Market held fourth Sunday - monthly

### **Great Amwell**

Farmers Market held first Thursday - monthly

### **Great Hornead**

Farmers Market held first Saturday - monthly

### **Hertford**

Market held Saturdays

### **Hertford Heath**

Farmers Market held third Sunday - monthly

### **Little Hadham**

Farmers Market held last day of month

### **Ware**

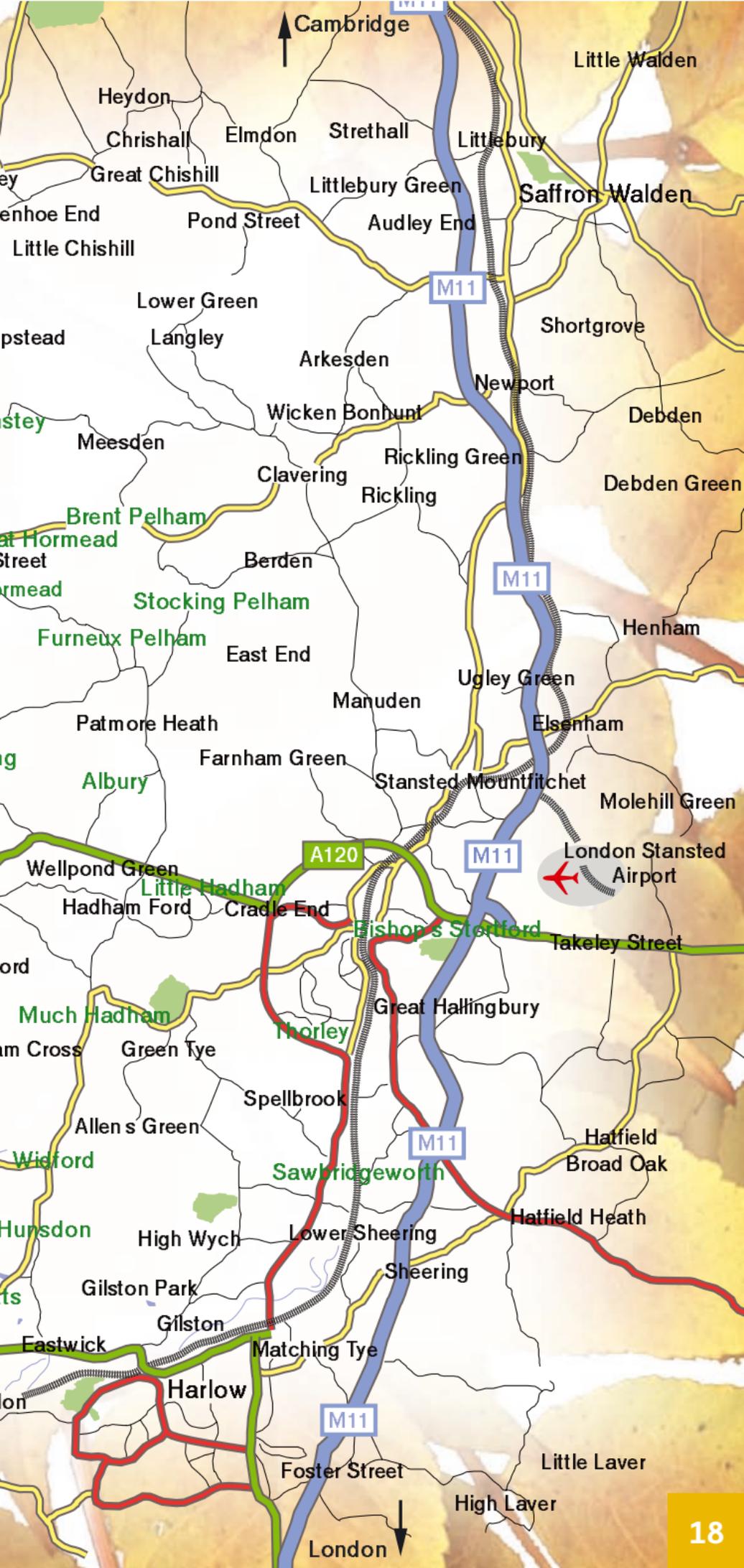
Market held Tuesdays

### **Woolmer Green**

Farmers Market held fourth Sunday - monthly

# Map of the Area





Cambridge

Little Walden

Heydon

Chrishall

Elmdon

Strethall

Littlebury

Great Chishill

Pond Street

Littlebury Green

Audley End

Saffron Walden

Lower Green

Langley

Arkesden

Newport

Shortgrove

Wicken Bonhunt

Rickling Green

Debden

Clavering

Rickling

Debden Green

Berden

Manuden

Ugley Green

Henham

Stocking Pelham

Furneux Pelham

East End

Farnham Green

Stansted Mountfitchet

Molehill Green

Albury

Patmore Heath

Wellpond Green

Hadham Ford

Cradle End

London Stansted Airport

Little Hadham

Much Hadham

Green Tye

Thorley

Great Hallingbury

Takeley Street

Allen's Green

Spellbrook

Hatfield Broad Oak

Widford

Hunsdon

High Wych

Lower Sheering

Sheering

Hatfield Heath

Gilston Park

Gilston

Eastwick

Matching Tye

Harlow

Little Laver

Foster Street

High Laver

London



[www.eastherts.gov.uk](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk)

**Enjoy!**  
Hertfordshire

Intalink traveline  
Daily: 0700-2200  
Tel: 0870 608 2608

National Rail Enquiries  
24 hours a day  
7 days a week  
[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)  
Tel: 01845 48 49 50