

D - Munden Estate is an area of 850 acres, which includes a formal lime avenue to the house, medieval parkland and meadow pasture. This section of the river corridor also contains the site of several Roman villas. Bricket Wood Common is also part of the estate.

E - Bricket Wood Common is an open space well worth a detour or special visit. It consists of diverse habitats including ancient semi-natural woodland, hornbeam coppice woodland, wet heath, ponds and seasonal streams. The Common supports an array of wildlife including great crested newts, butterflies, heather, fungi and bluebells. Cattle grazing has recently been introduced to maintain the balance between woody and shrubby plants and the species rich grass and heathland.



An amazing show of bluebells can be found in Jack Williams Wood in late April or early May.

F - Riverside Way is a multi-use path following the River Ver just before it joins the River Colne. The River Ver is a chalk river, an internationally rare habitat. Here it is in a man-made channel and work is being completed to create more meanders in the river, speeding up and increasing variation in the flow. This will improve the habitat, increasing the number and range of insects and fish found in this stretch.

G - Watling Street is the name given to an ancient trackway that was first used by the Britons mainly between the modern cities of Canterbury and St Albans. The Romans later paved the route.

H - Sopwell Nunnery dates back to 1140 when a nunnery stood on this site. Following the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII in 1539, Sir Richard Lee, a soldier and royal engineer, was granted the land by the King and built his house on top of the medieval nunnery. This romantic ruin is all that remains of the Tudor mansion built around 1560. The open space is worth exploring with raised walkway, willow tunnel and River Ver, frequented by kingfishers. Here you will walk under the Alban Way, a multi-user route along the former route of the Hatfield to St Albans branch line of the Great Northern Railway.

I - Verulamium was one of the largest towns in Roman Britain. A short walk from the Abbey Station are Verulamium Park, the Hypocaust, Verulamium Museum and the Roman Theatre.

J - St Albans Abbey Station. The Abbey line was the first railway St Albans received in 1858, the mainline didn't open until 10 years later. The station, known originally simply as 'St Albans', changed to 'St Albans Abbey' in 1924, to distinguish it from the mainline station, now known as 'St Albans City'.



Abbey Line Trail



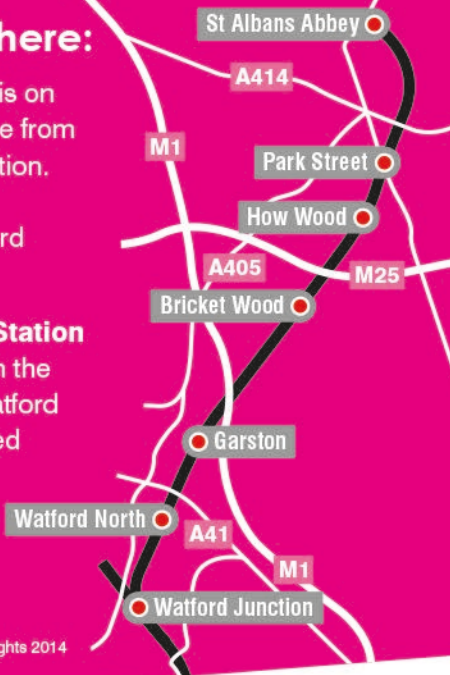
Enjoy the combination of taking the train and walking up to 9 miles in the beautiful Colne Valley countryside.



How to get there:

Watford Junction is on the National Rail Line from London, Euston Station. It is situated on Station Road, Watford WD17 1AB.

St Albans Abbey Station is the final station on the Abbey Line from Watford Junction. It is situated at the bottom of Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 2DN.



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Parts of this walk can be wet and muddy underfoot.



For more information about the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership visit www.abbeyline.org.uk



Countryside Management Service works with communities in Hertfordshire to help them care for and enjoy the environment.

For more information on further opportunities to enjoy the Hertfordshire countryside, including Health Walks, visit www.hertslink.org/cms

Photographs kindly supplied by Chris Newman and the Community Rail Partnership

The Abbey Line

The 'Abbey Line' is a 6.5 mile (10km) branch line in Hertfordshire linking Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey Stations. It is part of the national rail network.

Opened on May 5th 1858, the Abbey Line has given over 150 years of service to the local community.

Being a branch line, trains were usually made up of 3 to 4 coaches, and hauled by a tank engine. These engines were housed at the Watford Junction engine shed. Diesel trains gradually replaced steam in the 1950s, but the technology was largely untried. The Abbey Line played host to a variety of experimental designs until steam engines were fully replaced by diesel trains in 1955. Since 1965, new stations have been opened at Garston and How Wood, and in 1987-88 the branch was electrified.

Since 2005, the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP) has promoted the use of the line. It brings together local people and organisations who work in partnership to improve their local railway.



Produced by FitzpatrickWoolmer - 0800 130 3630

Points of interest along the Trail

A - Watford Junction. The original Watford station, which opened in 1837 was built on the London to Birmingham Line, just north of the present-day St Albans Road rail bridge. The original station now houses a used-car sales office. In 1846 the line became part of the vast London & North Western Railway (LNWR), and Watford Junction Station moved to its present location in the 1850s.

B - Orphanage Road housed the London Orphan Asylum. Built in 1871, the buildings still stand and are now private residences. They once housed 600 orphans from the London area. In World War II, the orphans were evacuated from Watford; the boys to the Seymour Hotel, Totnes and the girls to a number of houses near Towcester. The site was used as an Army hospital during the conflict.

C - Colne Valley. The River Colne is a tributary of the Thames, rising 5 miles to the east, in North Mymms Park. The river meanders within the valley bottom and there are lots of associated pools and springs, important for wildlife. You are likely to hear the 'peewit' call of lapwings here and see herons and little egrets fishing in the pools.



Route details

To walk the full 9 miles (15km) start at either Watford Junction or St Albans Abbey station. The Trail will take approximately 4 - 5 hours and the train journey takes 16 minutes from end to end. To shorten or vary the walk you can join it from Watford North, Garston, Bricket Wood, or Park Street stations. The Abbey Line Trail and links to these stations are waymarked in both directions.

Waymarks



Abbey Line Trail Waymark

follow these waymarks to enjoy the Trail



Abbey Line Station link

follow these to return to stations or join the Trail from intermediate stations



Yellow arrow

Footpath (walkers only)



Blue arrow

Bridleway (walkers, horse riders and cyclists)



Plum arrow

Restricted Byway (walkers, horse riders, cyclists and horsedrawn vehicles only. Not motor vehicles)



St Albans Abbey

3 miles

4 mins

1 hr 30 mins



Park Street

3 miles

4 mins

1 hr 30 mins

 **Bricket Wood**

2 3/4 miles

3 mins 

1 hr 15 mins 

 **Garston**

2 1/2 miles

3 mins 

1 hr 15 mins 

 **Watford North**

1 3/4 miles

2 mins 

45 mins 

 **Watford Junction**



Some of this Trail goes through fields with farm animals. Please keep dogs under effective control and clear up after them, 'bag it and bin it'.



Other local walks

There are also short circular walks from St Albans Abbey, Park Street, How Wood and Bricket Wood stations on the Abbey Line.

Download a leaflet from www.hertslink.org/cms



Key

-  Route of Abbey Line Trail
-  Link to station
-  Right of Way
-  Station on the Abbey Line
-  Points of interest
-  Public house
-  Take care - cross at traffic lights
-  Take care crossing the railway

