

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

Strolls from the Lock Number 4 – To Loudwater Lane

Time approximately 110 minutes

Distance 3.5 miles

Turn right onto the towpath from the lock centre and walk under the bridge. You are sandwiched here between the canal and the River Chess to your right. After 200 yards cross a wooden bridge over this river, just before an iron bridge which takes the towpath over the junction of the River Colne and canal. Follow the line of the fence to the road. Cross this at the lights and turn right onto the pavement for about 30 yards. On the far side of what appears to be a small stream, just before a bench, turn left onto a footpath that runs along the right bank.

The stream was originally a branch canal, called the Bury or Bakers Arm. It was built in 1845 by John Taylor, in order to deliver supplies to his flour mill. The Bury, the large building on the left, was built in about 1637 as the Manor House of Rickmansworth. It was used as a Civil Defence HQ in WW2, and then as a Health Centre, before being converted to housing again in the 1990's after a period of dereliction during which demolition was mooted.

Follow the footpath which veers to the left past the Bury gates, onto a road leading to the right. The old stables (on your right), were also redeveloped, but not in a sensitive way. Go between the old gateposts onto Bury Lane, once the private road to the Bury, and walk straight on. The road passes over a stream, (the Town Ditch) which was a water splash until 1963. On the left are the Beresford Alms-houses, built 1894, but founded much earlier and moved from their original position in the High Street. Next on the left are the Ebury Rooms, dated 1901, again redeveloped in the last 20 years from the original village hall. Before that, there was a straw plaiting factory here. Walk straight on, leaving a small car park and British Legion building to your L, to join Rickmansworth High Street. Cross straight over onto Solomon's Hill, passing between Boots and a coffee shop. This will reach the railway line eventually, but crosses a road and goes up steps along the way. Cross the bridge, which passes over the line and a main road, into Rickmansworth Park.

The Metropolitan Railway opened in 1887, and was electrified in 1925. However, it was the changeover point for the steam trains, which ran on to Amersham until 1960. The station is on a curve as the line had to skirt Rickmansworth Park - the owners would not allow it to be built across their land. You may notice many old chestnut trees, for instance, immediately to the right inside the Park, which were planted after Rickmansworth Park house was built as the new Manor House in 1740 (but only completed in 1810/11). During WW1, the grounds were used for army training and later for German POW's. It was eventually sold to Royal Masonic Institute for Girls in 1926, and the new Royal Masonic School opened in 1934. The buildings have been carefully designed to incorporate Masonic symbols throughout. The school was originally intended for the orphans of Masons, but now caters for other girls. This walk skirts around the school grounds.

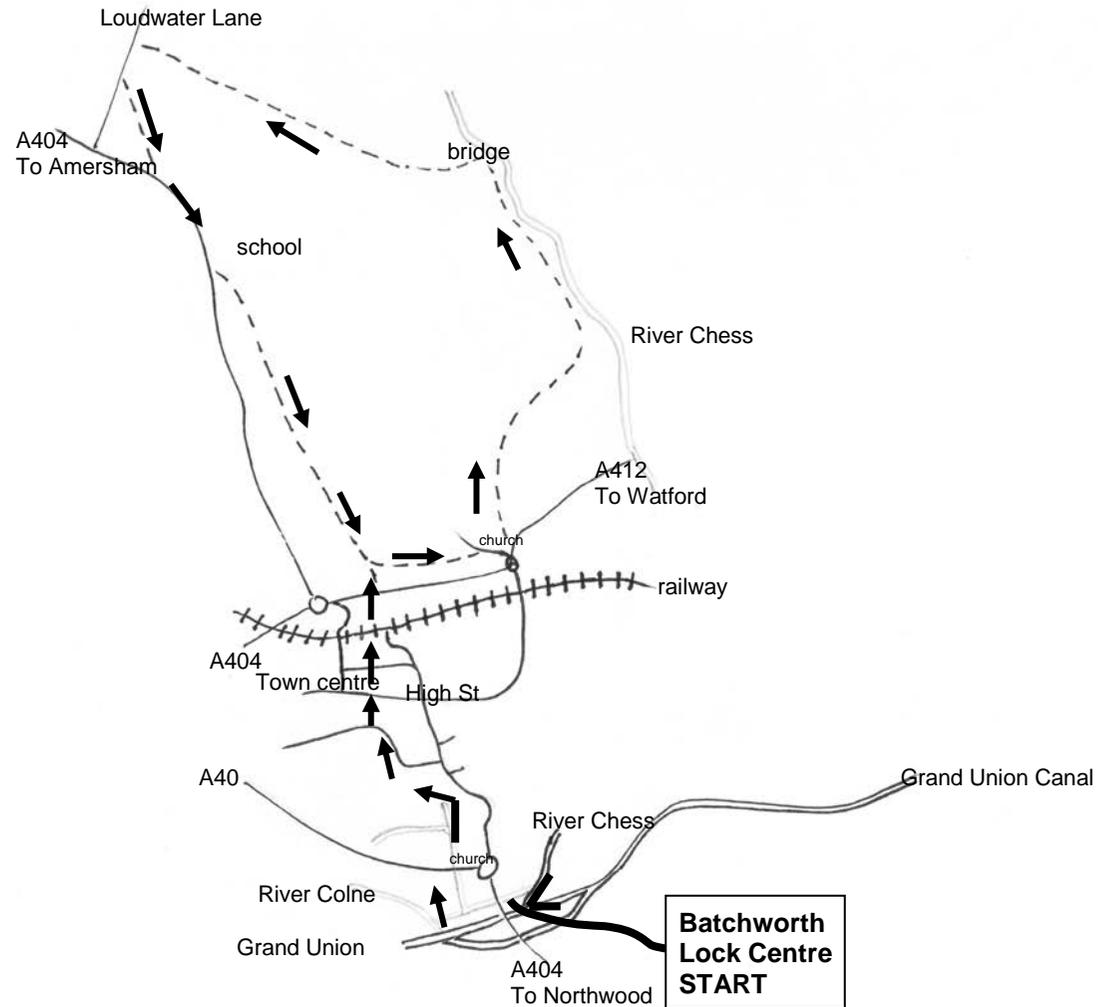
From the bridge, cross over the grass to the school fence on the far side, where you will join a paved footpath – turn right. Walk down the hill, past the Park JMI School on your R, and you will see a Chess Valley Walk sign on the left at the road bend. The church here was built in 1901 on the site of Salter's malt house. Follow the footpath, with the fence of the Masonic school to your left. After about 10min, you will reach the River Chess, and here follows a wonderful walk along its' left bank. The Chess is a chalk stream with clear cold water and a gravel bottom. Fish here include brown trout, and the 'millers thumb', or bullhead, a type of loach. Watercress grows at the edge. For a few years, Little Egrets have wintered here, unmistakable large birds with pure white plumage, which are members of the heron family.

At a small bridge, stay on the left hand bank, following the path as it goes away from the river between two fences. After 15min, the path reaches Loudwater Lane. Don't go up onto the road, but turn left along the fence, where the path rises through a small wood to reach Chorleywood Road. Turn left at the road, and walk along the pavement until you reach the wrought iron gates of the Masonic School. Go through the opening on the right of these. You will now walk between a tall hedge and the school car park, through an avenue of lime trees, some planted when Rickmansworth Park House was built. At the point where there is a bridge over the road to your right (10min from the school gates), take the path to your left, and cut across the grass to your right, to rejoin the road bridge where you originally entered Rickmansworth Park. Retrace your steps to return to the lock centre.

These walks are written by Jillian Christensen and are provided free by The Rickmansworth Waterways Trust but a minimum donation of 20p is suggested to help support our education programme. Thank you!

Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

Strolls from the Lock Number 4 – To Loudwater Lane



These walks are written by Jillian Christensen and are provided free by The Rickmansworth Waterways Trust but a minimum donation of 20p is suggested to help support our education programme. Thank you!