

Hitchin Camera Club Centenary Photo-walk 2022

Please use these notes to help you follow our 100 year photo-walk, which highlights some of the interesting things you may see along the route.

General info

Time and Date: Saturday May 28th at 11:00 AM

Starting point : Hitchin Railway station

Ending point : Silver Birch Room Christchurch

Distance: approx. 10Km or 6 miles

Time : Allow about 3 hours for the walk (to include time for taking photos)

Emergency contacts

- Andy Hyde Chairman 07917 154808

Risks

- The route is on pavements, country roads and footpaths, with one short section being on an easy track.
- You will need to cross a number of roads and some sections follow country roads without pavements. Please take all necessary safeguards when crossing roads.
- We strongly recommend following the route in small groups.
- There are some opportunities to purchase refreshments on route, we therefore recommend you take drink and snack with you.
- Please ensure you have mobile phone in case of difficulty.
 - We recommend installing a map application on your phone
- Even in May the British weather is unpredictable, therefore please dress appropriately and wear suitable footwear.

Advice

- Have fun!
- Take photos of each other as well as the walk, and share these with the club
- Invite your friends and family

After the walk

- Come and join us at the Silverbirch Room in Christchurch!
We'll be serving tea and biscuits between 2:00PM and 5:00 PM

Exit the station and turn left along Walsworth Road

As you walk along Walsworth Road look out for James Pepper Stone Mason’s shop, and on the opposite side of the road Paul’s bikes (formerly Frosts Cycles) who have been supplying cycles and accessories to the people of Hitchin for many years.

Continue along Walsworth Road

Passing the recently renovated Radcliffe Arms with its bright paint work and painted adverts. Once beyond the mini round about you’ll soon pass in quick succession; Walsworth Baptist church, the Queen Mother Theatre and The Dell (the woodside open air theatre).

At the traffic lights turn right onto Hermitage Road

Those looking to extend the walk will find a fine view across Hitchin from the top of Windmill hill.

At the end of Hermitage Road opposite Wilko turn left onto Bancroft

Along this short stretch of road look out for the colour ceramics on the Vodafone store (formerly Steve’s Sports at mosses corner). If you pop into the Lloyds Bank on the corner, you notice the impressive ceiling mouldings.

Wilko

Wilko was built in the early 1970s for Safeway supermarkets and controversially replaced the eighteenth century Waters House. The art deco mosaic tiles at Vodafone show the building was built about 1900 for the local grocers chain W B Moss; its up-to-the-minute plate glass windows were famously broken on 4th August 1914 - the day the Great War broke out - in a protest about price rises and war-profiteering.



Hitchin Station

The Great Northern Railway, a line from London to just north of Doncaster, arrived in 1850; the branch towards Cambridge opened at the same time. Prominent inhabitants were keen to use the new opportunities it provided to reinforce the commercial importance of the town, especially for the wider sale of grain and malt. Today’s station is mainly a rebuild of 1910-11 although a small portion of the 1850 structure (with rounded window arches) survives at the north end of the London bound platform.



The Radcliffe Arms

Woodside

Woodside car park is the site of a large house, built in 1866-67 for the Reverend George Gainsford, benefactor and incumbent of Holy Saviour church in Radcliffe Road. The church, and probably the house, were designed by the prominent Victorian architect William Butterfield. The house was demolished in the 1930s and the grounds passed to the town as a car park and wildlife sanctuary. The Dell became an open air theatre for the Festival of Britain in 1951; just over thirty years later the Queen Mother Theatre was opened, by the lady herself, adjacent.

Hermitage Road

In 1875 Hermitage Road was laid through the grounds of Frederic Seebohm’s large house which fronted Bancroft. He gave the land to speed access to the station; a fine line of ancient box trees in the garden survived alongside the road until 1919. Building on Hermitage Road, in a suburban mock-Tudor style, only began in the 1920s

Carry straight on and onto High Street

As you pass along High Street towards the Town square look out for the Cinnabar on the former site of the Cock pub. Directly opposite you'll find an interesting alley with a well worn entrance way and a little further down the road look out for the David Grieg sign above Greggs

Go straight across the town square and into Bucklersbury

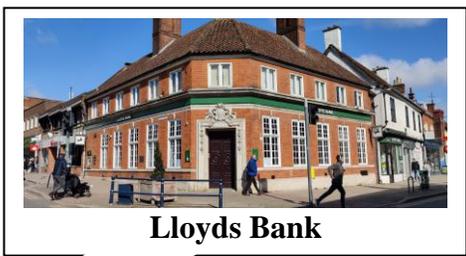
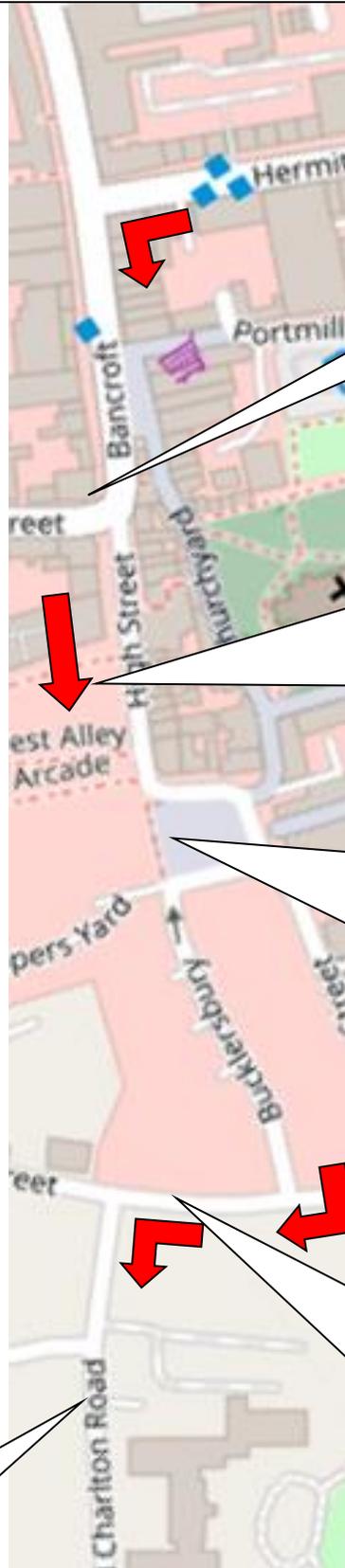
As you pass through the square take note of The Arcade on your right, Hoskins flag pole and the Gatwards clock, and the Freeman Hardy Willis Mosaic above The Dogs Trust entrance. For anyone needing the loo, public conveniences can be found in the West Alley Arcade.

Carry on down Bucklersbury

Note the former Hawkins site where you may gain a view of a Tudor roof, and further down on the opposite side the Red Hart Pub.

Turn right onto Tilehouse Street

For those who want to see the "Tiled House" go up the road to number 25 opposite the Coopers Arms. For those wanting to extend the walk, carry on to the top of the road where you'll find some interesting houses and the Reginald Hine Memorial Garden. You may also note the yellow door at number 31. You'll also be able to sneak a view of the towns 1960' Library.



Lloyds Bank

Cinnabar

Today's Cinnabar occupies the Cock Inn which dates from about 1563 although the present building is a substantial reworking of 1930 to allow the construction of a modern Woolworths (now Boots) on part of the site. Further to your left is Greggs: look up and you will see the ceramic thistles and signboard of David Greig, a chain grocer who occupied this site from the 1925 into the 1970s. .

Market Place

The Market Place is the sole surviving portion of the large open trading area once bounded by Bucklersbury-High Street on the west, Churchyard-Sun Street on the east. Tilehouse and Bridge Streets on the south and Bancroft in the north. It was mainly in-filled as more and more of the market stalls became permanent shops. Market Place remains, together with St Mary's, at the heart of a historic town plan that probably dates back at least a thousand years.

Tilehouse Street

Tilehouse Street is one of the town's most attractive. Most of what you see is much older than it looks as the brick frontages are mainly eighteenth century modernisations with older timber framed buildings within. Today the only pub is the Coopers Arms but at one time many others operated such as the Three Tuns (No 11) and Old Bulls Head (behind the yellow door at No 31) on your left as you walk up the street



Tilehouse Street

Turn Left into Wratten Road East and continue straight onto Old Charlton Road

As you pass along Old Charlton road note the alms houses on the right.

At the end of Old Charlton Road turn Right using the under pass
Rather than enter car park, turn right and cross Parkway safely by using the under-pass then turn left towards Charlton Road

Turn Right on to Charlton Road
Follow the pavement and then when you reach Hawthorn Close cross to the other side of the road to use the pavement.

TAKE CARE at this crossing

Follow this road using the pavement and then Turn left towards Charlton itself
Walk toward Charlton and enjoy how quickly you can move out of Hitchin and into the country side.

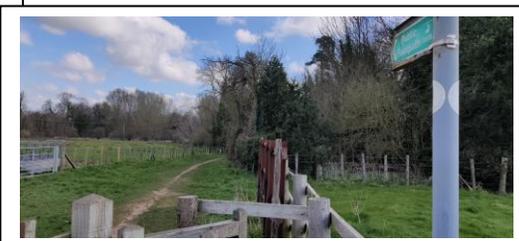


Beka Building

The Beka building, a Brutalist architectural 'lump' of the late 1960s, sits on the site of one of Hitchin's last maltings. Malt was a major town product from the medieval period well into the nineteenth century. The Almshouses were built in two phases (1931 and 1938) under the bequest of William Brown.



Turn HERE!



The footpath from the original walk

Pass through Charlton

Within the Village of Charlton, keep an eye out for the former Willmill Pub and then immediately opposite the birth place of Sir Henry Bessemer.

For those looking for a short detour follow the foot path adjacent to the car park, cross the river and walk up to the Pig Farm – which isn't as smelly as you'd think

Continue through Charlton and out the other side to Maydencroft Lane

Take care here, since there are no pavements, but where the hedges allow enjoy the views of the countryside and the occasion glimpse of Charlton Mill Pond the River Hiz.



Henry Bessemer

Turn left into Maydencroft Lane

In the original 1922 walk, there was a water splash and a wooden bridge, however the metaled road now crosses the river via brick bridge and into Maydencroft Lane.



Henry Bessemer

Henry Bessemer (1813-98) invented the process which facilitated modern large scale steel production; it was quickly taken up by the American iron industry but more slowly by British manufacturers. Henry began his career working for his father, a refugee from the French Revolution, whose small Charlton foundry made type for printing.



Brick Bridge to Maydencroft

Follow Maydencroft Lane all the way to Gosmore Village

En route to Gosmore, you'll again see various views of the countryside, and pass by Maydencroft nurseries, before arriving at the cross roads with the Bull pub



Springtime in Hertfordshire

Gosmore

Gosmore is a village characterised by a wealth of Georgian style. The Bull public house dates from 1785 although its name is more recent (1840). It was the regular location of meetings of the Court of the Manor of Maydencroft whose manor house still survives nearby.

Go Straight across and onto Waterdell lane

When you reach the cross roads at the Bull pub go straight across.



The Bull Pub

Continue down Waterdell lane

As you pass through the relatively modern houses think about how different this would have looked in 1922. Just before you reach St Ippolyts Stores, keep an eye out for the Charlton House, and the interesting wall plaque.

For those needing a snack St Ippolyts Stores will be able to provide sustenance!

Turn Right and go along the London Road (AKA B565) toward Codicote

From here you'll get a great view of St Ippolyts church, which we'll be going to shortly.

TAKE CARE when crossing the London Road

Keep an eye out for the interesting thatched building on the corner of the interestingly named Half Handkerchief Lane.

Opposite Half Handkerchief Lane follow the footpath

This foot path will take you down to and over Ippolyts Brook, were you'll find a number of pleasant views.

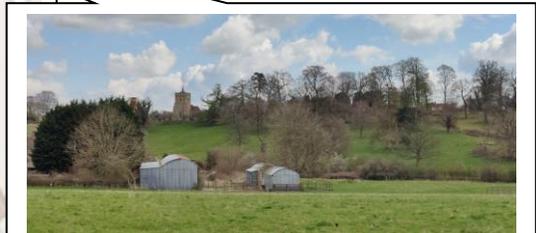
CONGRATULATIONS

You're at the half way point...



Half Handkerchief Lane

Half Handkerchief Lane takes its name from a rearrangement of common land in the early nineteenth century made necessary by the Reverend Lax's desire to shift a footpath that overlooked his garden and new Observatory. Once the changes were made some villagers grumbled that their reallocated land amounted to no more than 'a folded pocket handkerchief' and was not worth cultivating.



The View to St Ippolyts

Follow the path up to the church

Those with an eye for Bird watching should look out for a Kingfisher by the brook, then as you climb up towards St Ippolyts church check the fallen tree on the left where you may be lucky enough to see a Woodpecker.

Once at the top of the hill enjoy the view back.

Enter St Ippolyt's Church yard

Take few minutes to walkaround St Ippolyts church yard.

As you exit the church yard turn left and follow Ashbrook lane until it becomes Folly Lane/Hitchin Lane

As you walk through St Ippolyts note the Victorian architecture of the original building built in 1847 and how they contrast with the 2004 extension.

Follow Folly lane/Hitchin Lane until you reach the Stevenage Road

Cross the road with care and turn Left towards Hitchin

TAKE CARE crossing the Stevenage road

A crossing can be found a short way up the road towards Kingshot school



Open views back to the London Road

St Ippolyts

St Ippolitts may owe its name to Hippolitus, a Saint who closely connected with horses and horsemanship. The medieval church, showing Perpendicular and Decorated styles and - characteristically for Hertfordshire- built of flint and rubble, was restored in 1878.



St Ippolyts Brook



St Ippolyts Church

Follow the Stevenage Road and enter Hitchin
Continue along the Stevenage road, passing Whitehill junior school on the right.

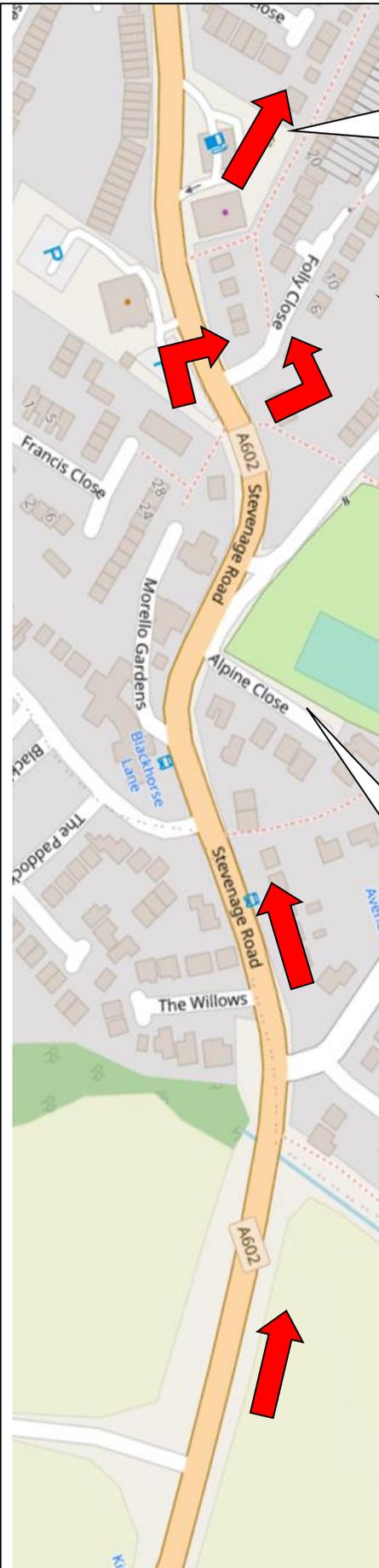
TAKE CARE as you walk along the Stevenage Road.

There's a short section with no foot path so you may like to cross to the other side of the road

For those requiring a refreshing beverage the Orange Tree pub is immediately at hand!

Turn Right into Folly close then look for an alley way on the left

Just before the Orange tree pub enter Folly close, the immediately follow the alley way on the left. Follow the alley way until you reach St John's Park



Folly Path

Folly Path

Folly Path (and Close) lay in an area once occupied by a brick works developed from the 1840s by George Jeeves of the Hitchin building dynasty.. Onetime Folly Path was also known as Cannon's Cottages after Harry Cannon who was responsible for the original twenty houses built here in 1907.

New Found Out

On your right as you move towards the town centre was the New Found Out, a pub dating from about 1818. The building, now converted to residential use, is mainly of the sixteenth century but with later alterations. In the eighteenth century it was leased to the Hitchin Parish Vestry for use as a pest-house, essentially an isolation ward for infectious diseases.

Continue along Folly Path until

St John's Park

One you reach the park feel free to enjoy the play park or kick a football around!

Cross St John's Park onto Cemetery Road

As you walk down Cemetery Road take time to note the path down to the Victorian chapel within the Cemetery.



Taylor's Hill

Cross Standhill Road and go down Taylors Hill

Follow Taylors Hill, one of many hidden paths and alleys in this area down to the path down to Park Street

Turn Right on Park Street

As you come down to the mini round about check out the Lord Lister Hotel, the former site of Moore's Book shop and the Half Moon pub



To your left is the site of Hitchin's first bus garage (recently rebuilt in a semi-reflective style) and the northern most outpost of London Transport when it was formed in 1933. Also on the left is the former Post Boy Inn famous in recent years as the home of Eric Moore's second hand bookshop (hence 'Books & Prints' still on the exterior). To the right is the onetime hotel on the site of Isaac Brown's Academy where Joseph Lord Lister (1827-1912), later father of anti-septic surgery, attended school in 1840 – and did not much enjoy it.

Taylor's Hill

Taylor's Hill is one of those ancient routeways in Hitchin where piecemeal early nineteenth century development has produced a row of houses which front onto the path as their only access. The name comes from the owner of the adjoining land. The Hill is joined by Storehouse Lane, possibly named after a military depot established during the Civil Wars of the 1640s.

*****HISTORIAN'S NOTE: ABSOLUTELY NO GHOSTS..... (!!)**

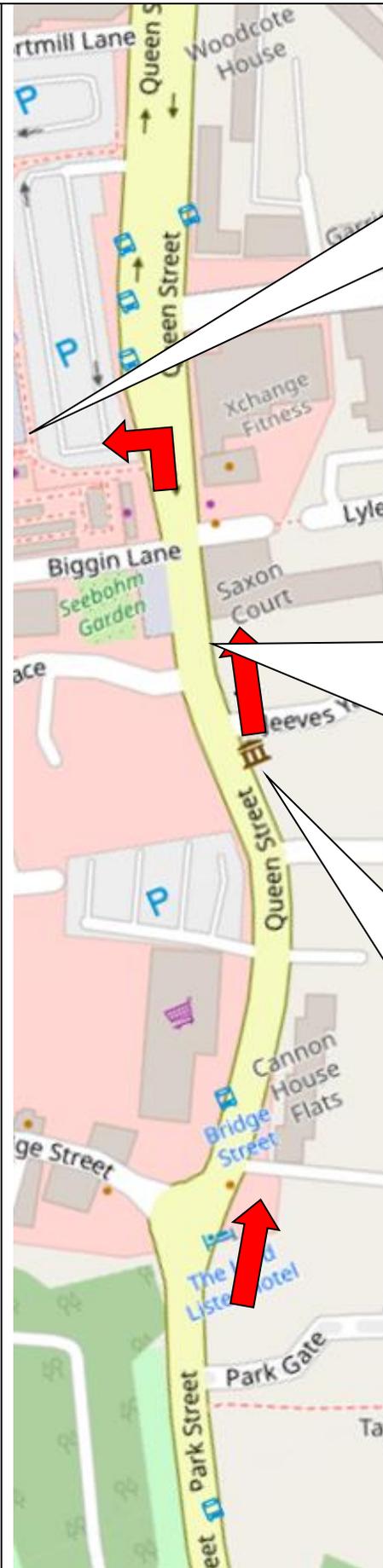
The Cemetery was opened in May 1857 at a time when public health concerns meant the town centre Churchyard at St Mary's was superseded. The Cemetery Chapel, dedicated by the Bishop of Rochester in whose Diocese Hitchin then lay, provided facilities for both Anglican and non-conformist committals. In the 1930s land was acquired adjacent for an extension which itself is now very short of space.

Continue into Queen Street until the Brick Layers Arms

Here you'll pass the British Schools museum and the Bethel Chapel before reaching the market, the Brick Layers Arms and the former Telephone Exchange.

Cross the road here and walk through the Market to Churchyard

Those in need of the loo will be served by the public toilets here, however you'll also get to see the iconic views of St Mary's Church.



The River Hiz at St Mary's



Bethel Chapel

British Schools Museum

The Hitchin British Schools, providing non-denominational education, were founded here in 1810 by local solicitor and landowner William Wilshere. The present buildings mainly date from 1837-57 and include, as a unique survivor, a Monitorial Hall devised for the Lancasterian system where the teacher was assisted by boy 'monitors' to instruct a large number of pupils simultaneously.

Follow Churchyard around the church

Turn right at the Hitchin Information shop (a great place to pick up a souvenir of your trip to Hitchin) taking the views of the Church from different angles

Pass to the left of Simmonds

As you pass Simmonds Bakers carry on the Moss' Corner which we passed earlier on our way out of town.

Turn left then immediately right into Brand Street

In Brand street you'll pass several interesting buildings including the former Town hall and library on the left, the current town hall and recently opened museum.

Continue up Brand Street as it turns into Bedford Road

The when you reach Christchurch that marks the end of the walk. Please pop in and join us for a cup of tea!

The end!



Come and join us for tea and biscuits in the Silver Birch Room!



Brand Street

Brand Street was a small lane until development in 1834 and soon named after the local MP. It has Hitchin's two Town Halls. On the left is the Old Town Hall of 1840 (supplemented by the Mechanics Institute Library in 1861) both now residential; on the right is the New Town Hall of 1900 which remains a civic venue and incorporates the local Museum. Further on, on your left, you pass the new Quaker Meeting House of 1959 (an older one of 1840 is immediately across the road to your right) and Hitchin's first Infirmary (now Thomas Bellamy House after its architect who also designed both the Old Town Hall and old Quaker Meeting House which you have just seen).

St Mary's

St Mary's is the largest parish church in Hertfordshire. Traditionally founded by the Saxon King Offa of Mercia in 792 AD it is likely very much older. The earliest origins of the town, dating from the late Roman period, have been found nearby on Queen Street and these include evidence of Christian burials. The present building was begun in the twelfth century and has evolved piecemeal since. Medieval wool money, London mercantile fortunes and Edwardian restorations have all contributed to what you see today.



