

## How to get to the start:

Berkhamsted Station is situated on the Lower Kings Road.

Berkhamsted is a market town situated three miles west of Hemel Hempstead or twelve miles east of Aylesbury, off the A41

**Public Transport:** Berkhamsted Railway Station is on the London, Euston to Birmingham Line.

For train times ring 08457 484950. Buses regularly serve Berkhamsted.

Contact Hertfordshire Intalink on 0870 608 2 608 for bus times and routes.

**Cycling:** Cycle parking facilities are available at the Station.

**Parking:** You can park in the Station car park or there is parking nearby at public car parks off the Lower Kings Road.

This is one of a series of walks through the **Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**. It follows rights of way most of which are waymarked as follows:

### Path waymarking

-  'yellow arrow' Footpaths (walkers only)
-  'blue arrow' Bridleways (horseriders, cyclists and walkers)
-  'red arrow' Byways (open to all traffic)

Please be considerate in the countryside:

- keep to footpaths, especially through crops, and leave farm gates as you find them.
- please keep dogs on leads when walking through fields with livestock

An initiative of the **Chilterns Conservation Board**, the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project is a partnership which aims to conserve and enhance all major chalk streams in the Chilterns, and to encourage enjoyment and understanding of them. The project provides advice to landowners and managers on riverside management, carries out practical projects to enhance the streams for wildlife, undertakes surveys of rare species and provides educational materials for schools. **For more information contact the Chilterns AONB Office on 01844 355500.**

The **Countryside Management Service** works with communities in Hertfordshire to care for and enjoy the countryside.

For more information contact us at 01727 848168  
southwest.cms@hertscc.gov.uk  
www.hertsdirect.org/cms

If you, a neighbour or member of your community would like this leaflet produced in another language or format (large print or audio cassette) please contact the CMS.



# Chilterns Country

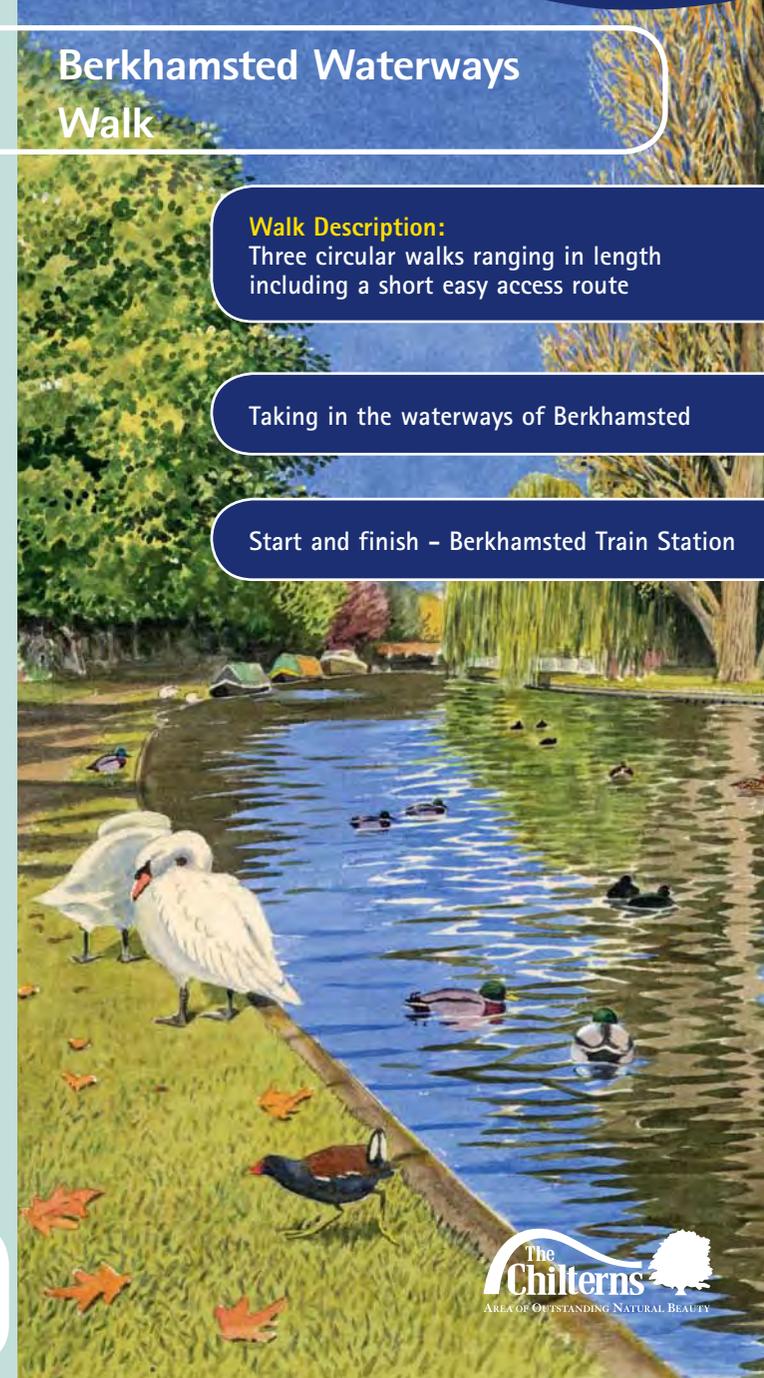
## Berkhamsted Waterways Walk

### Walk Description:

Three circular walks ranging in length including a short easy access route

Taking in the waterways of Berkhamsted

Start and finish – Berkhamsted Train Station



## River Bulbourne

The River Bulbourne is a chalk stream that rises in the Chiltern's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Cow Roast and flows through the centre of Berkhamsted. It used to support a vibrant watercress industry and remnant watercress beds still remain. It runs beside the Grand Union Canal for seven miles to its confluence with the River Gade at Two Waters.

Chalk streams are a globally rare habitat. With their clear waters and stable conditions, they are able to support many plants and animals, including rare species like the water vole.

Chalk streams are fed from 'groundwater'. This is stored in the 'aquifer' – layers of chalk which soak up water like a sponge. At various points the water emerges as springs which feed the streams.

We take our water from the aquifer too; we can help protect the River Bulbourne and its wildlife by using water wisely in our homes.

## Improving the future for the Bulbourne

A River Restoration Project has been implemented on the River Bulbourne at Berkhamstead. Groundwater abstraction has now ceased at New Ground Pumping Station. This will mean higher levels of groundwater in the chalk under the river and therefore more water escaping into the river. This is good for wildlife, increasing the chalk stream habitat many species rely on.

A partnership project for the enhancement of the River Bulbourne is underway. This includes removing a concrete weir to prevent silt accumulating, pollarding willows to allow more light to the river, restoring cress-beds and narrowing the stream through St John's Well.

## Bourne Gutter

The Bourne Gutter is a usually dry tributary of the River Bulbourne. It is said that when it flows it foretells of war and expensive bread. What we do know is that it only flows during a lengthy period of very wet weather – over 32 inches in 12 months. Such weather would be bad for crops so the expensive bread bit may well be true.

The river rises from a spring on land close to the Berkhamsted to Chesham road, flows down the valley, under the A41 and into the village of Bourne End where it joins the Bulbourne. Records for the 19th Century show it flowing on nine occasions. It flowed in November 2000 and in May 2001 and ran for 3 miles. This was prior and during the Foot and Mouth epidemic in which much of the countryside had to be closed. Was this the tragedy it was foretelling?

The valley of the Bourne Gutter can be seen from Sugar Lane on Loop 3 and further on you follow a footpath running along the channel of the river, if there has been a lot of rain wellies would be recommended.

## Grand Union Canal

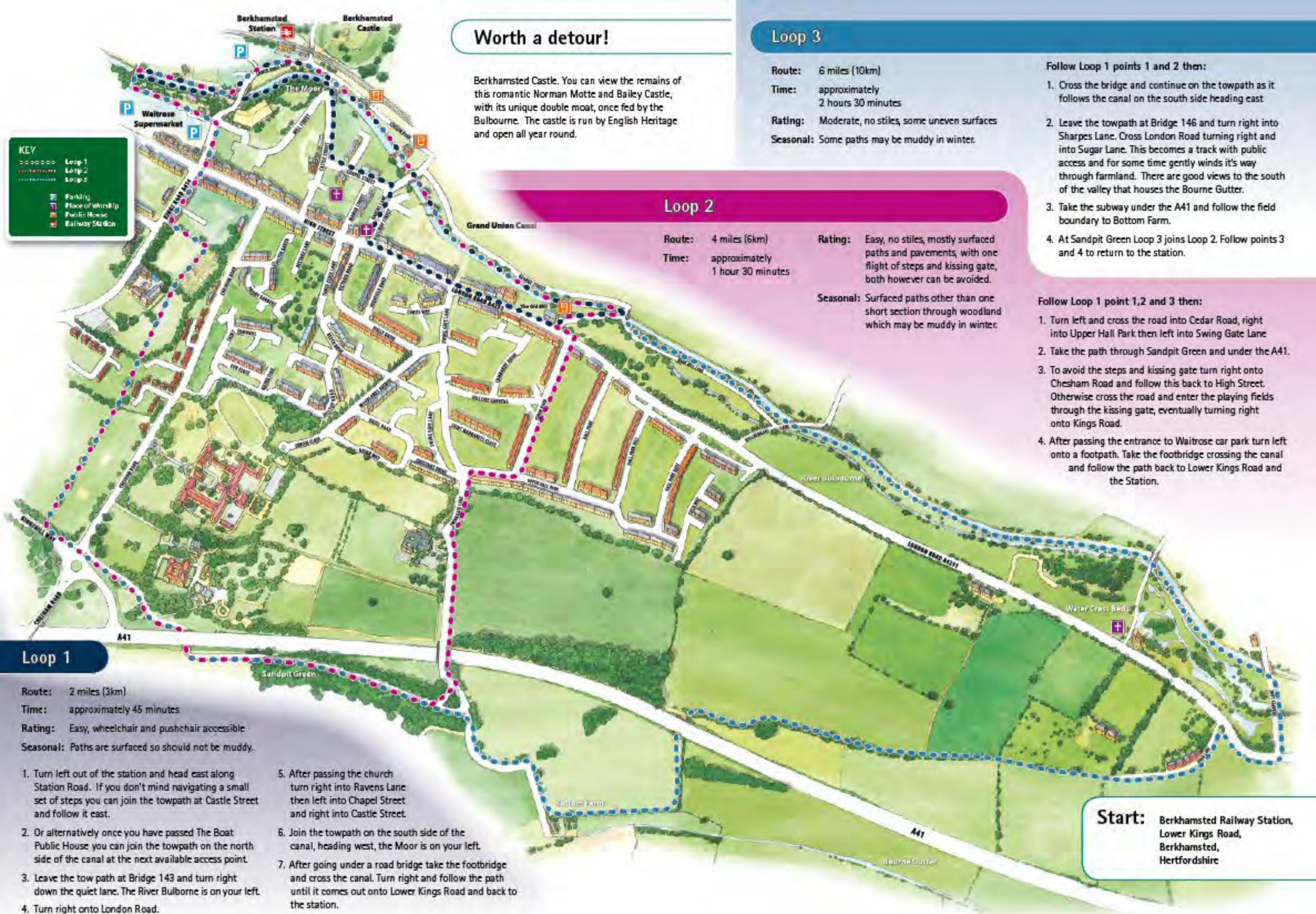
During 1798 the Grand Junction Canal, as it was first called, was built through this area of Hertfordshire. The canal formed the major transport link from London to Birmingham, which helped the industrial revolution transform Britain two centuries ago.

The canal suffered from competition from the railway then the motorways. Today it leaves us with an important habitat for wildlife and a great place to spend time walking, cycling, fishing and boating.

The South side of the canal between Ravens Lane and Castle Street is known as Castle Wharf. This was the centre of Berkhamsted's canal trade and boat building activities. Coal was delivered here to supply the many factories and works.

A local partnership project has surfaced the towpath and installed seven informative panels about the canal, look out for them on your walk.





## Worth a detour!

Berkhamsted Castle. You can view the remains of this romantic Norman Motte and Bailey Castle, with its unique double moat, once fed by the Bulbourne. The castle is run by English Heritage and open all year round.

## Loop 3

**Route:** 6 miles (10km)  
**Time:** approximately 2 hours 30 minutes  
**Rating:** Moderate, no stiles, some uneven surfaces  
**Seasonal:** Some paths may be muddy in winter.

Follow Loop 1 points 1 and 2 then:

1. Cross the bridge and continue on the towpath as it follows the canal on the south side heading east
2. Leave the towpath at Bridge 146 and turn right into Sharpes Lane. Cross London Road turning right and into Sugar Lane. This becomes a track with public access and for some time gently winds it's way through farmland. There are good views to the south of the valley that houses the Bourne Gutter.
3. Take the subway under the A41 and follow the field boundary to Bottom Farm.
4. At Sandpit Green Loop 3 joins Loop 2. Follow points 3 and 4 to return to the station.

## Loop 2

**Route:** 4 miles (6km)  
**Time:** approximately 1 hour 30 minutes  
**Rating:** Easy, no stiles, mostly surfaced paths and pavements, with one flight of steps and kissing gate, both however can be avoided.  
**Seasonal:** Surfaced paths other than one short section through woodland which may be muddy in winter.

Follow Loop 1 point 1,2 and 3 then:

1. Turn left and cross the road into Cedar Road, right into Upper Hall Park then left into Swing Gate Lane
2. Take the path through Sandpit Green and under the A41.
3. To avoid the steps and kissing gate turn right onto Chesham Road and follow this back to High Street. Otherwise cross the road and enter the playing fields through the kissing gate, eventually turning right onto Kings Road.
4. After passing the entrance to Waitrose car park turn left onto a footpath. Take the footbridge crossing the canal and follow the path back to Lower Kings Road and the Station.

## Loop 1

**Route:** 2 miles (3km)  
**Time:** approximately 45 minutes  
**Rating:** Easy, wheelchair and pushchair accessible  
**Seasonal:** Paths are surfaced so should not be muddy.

1. Turn left out of the station and head east along Station Road. If you don't mind navigating a small set of steps you can join the towpath at Castle Street and follow it east.
2. Or alternatively once you have passed The Boat Public House you can join the towpath on the north side of the canal at the next available access point.
3. Leave the tow path at Bridge 143 and turn right down the quiet lane. The River Bulbourne is on your left.
4. Turn right onto London Road.
5. After passing the church turn right into Ravens Lane then left into Chapel Street and right into Castle Street.
6. Join the towpath on the south side of the canal, heading west, the Moor is on your left.
7. After going under a road bridge take the footbridge and cross the canal. Turn right and follow the path until it comes out onto Lower Kings Road and back to the station.

**Start:** Berkhamsted Railway Station, Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire