

Historical notes:

Markyate

Markyate grew up along the Old Roman Watling Street, in the valley of the River Ver, during medieval times. The Priory was established around 1145 but following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII during the 1530s, it was converted into the mansion known as the Cell. The Chapel of Ease, built in 1734 in a corner of the Cell Park became the Parish Church in 1877. Interestingly until 1897, when the civil Parish of Markyate was formed, the village itself straddled several parishes in both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Markyate served the needs of travellers for many centuries. Until the late 1830s many stage coaches, en route from London to the Midlands and the north of England, stopped at the village inns. Later, and up to the early years of the 20th century, there were many hat and bonnet factories in the village.

Traffic through the narrow streets of the village increased greatly during the 20th century. In 1954 the villagers joined in protests seeking a by-pass and in 1957 one was built.

Today the High Street is still busy and frequently congested with parked cars, despite the by-pass taking the passing traffic. The hat factories are long gone, replaced with light industrial units and other businesses, however most residents now commute to the larger towns surrounding Markyate.

Flamstead

Flamstead, which dates back to Saxon times, sits on a hill above the River Ver valley. The present church with its distinctive Norman tower, containing some Roman tiles possibly re-cycled from the ruins of Verulamium, and 'spike' was started in the 12th century on the site of an earlier Saxon church. Inside are a series of 13th – 14th century wall paintings depicting scenes from the Easter story and Christ's Resurrection which were brought to light in the early 1930s.

The parish whilst being one of the largest in Hertfordshire, being largely rural, is also one of the least populated. Agriculture and, in the 19th century, straw plaiting for the Luton hat trade were the major employers, however today most commute to jobs elsewhere.

Historic pubs

The Spotted Dog, a 17th – 18th century private house later listed in 1836 as a beer house and butchers. The butcher's business is now gone but the pub remains and serves food throughout the day.

The Three Blackbirds a short distance away is older, principally 16th century but older in parts, also serves food. In the past, during the 18th and 19th centuries, this house has been somewhat schizophrenic about its name being known for several periods as 'The Bird in Hand'.

How to get to the start:

By Car: Leave the M1 at Junction 9 and go north towards Dunstable on the A5. Markyate is situated approximately 2 miles from the junction and the A5 is its by pass. Leave the A5 at the second Markyate junction on your left just after the footbridge (Hicks Road) you will find the car park a few yards down on your right.

Public Transport: Trains run frequently to St Albans and the No 343 bus route serves St Albans and Dunstable. Nearby Luton and Hemel Hempstead also have frequent trains and the No 46 bus serves both these towns and Markyate.

Enjoy your walking

Wear sensible clothing and footwear.

Always respect the property you travel through.

Let someone know your whereabouts and have their Tel No handy.

Keep dogs under control.

Include a mobile phone and drink in your back pack.

Never leave litter—take it home with you.

Gates must be left as you found them.

Markyate Health Walks

Every Friday (All weathers) 10.30 am at the Fire Station. You are welcome to join them.

There are now eight maps in this series as follows:

- **Aley Green and Woodside**
- **Flamstead**
- **Studham**
- **Kensworth**
- **Bridens Camp**
- **Three short walks around the village**

Maps also available on the Parish Council Website:

www.markyateparishcouncil.com

CAONB website: www.chilternsaonb.org

Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 182 features Markyate and surrounding area.

MARKYATE CIRCULAR Country walks byway of



FLAMSTEAD

The aim of these walks is to promote healthy living by providing residents and visitors with gentle walking exercise whilst enjoying the countryside around our village and visiting places of special interest in the Chilterns area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Leaflets sponsored by:

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL

with the aid of funding from

**CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND**



FLAMSTEAD WALK

A walk through the fields to Flamstead. Refreshment possibilities in Flamstead are The Spotted Dog and The Three Blackbirds who both serve food. You may also wish to spend some time looking at the Church of St Leonards. The return route takes you via Friendless Wood which in May produces a carpet of bluebells. The fields you walk through have a variety of crops and grasses which vary with the seasons.

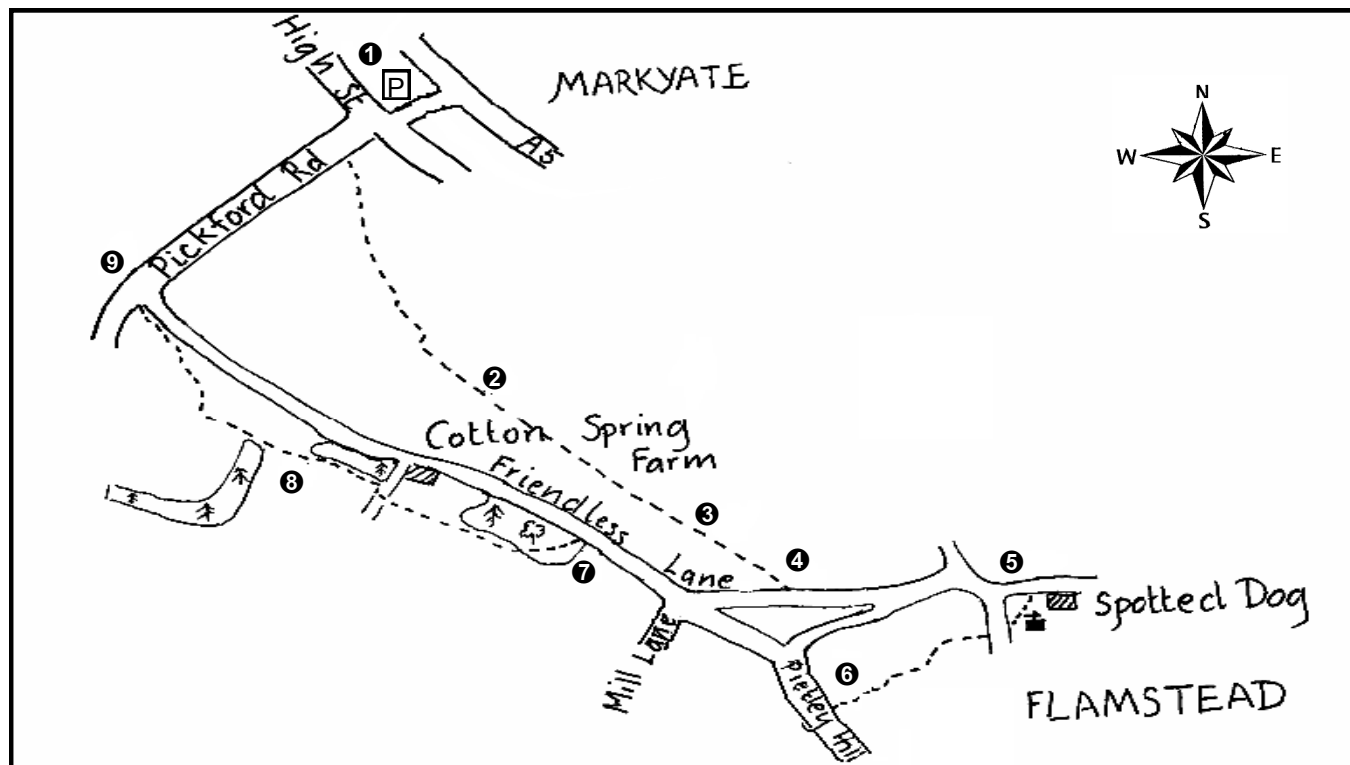
Walk: 5 miles

Time: 2 to 2½ Hours

- Gradient: Steep for a short time at the start with a gentle rise to Flamstead and the reverse on return.
- Not suitable for pushchairs or bikes etc.
- Refreshments: (At time of printing) The Spotted Dog—Dog friendly and The Three Blackbirds.
- Number of stiles: 3.
- Number of kissing gates: 6.
- Parking: Hicks Road near the Doctors Surgery.

Making a start:

- 1 Turn right from the car park then right at High Street and sharp left into Pickford Road. After a few yards you reach a rough path on the left which goes to the recreation ground. At the playground take the right-hand path and walk with the hedge on your right by the allotments. Follow the hedge until you come to a large planted field ahead with a farm track to the right.
- 2 Walk through the crops with the pylons on your right toward the hedge opposite. On reaching the hedge curve left with a hedge on your right and into a planted field towards another hedge. Slightly to the right there is a kissing gate. Go straight ahead through a horse paddock with a wire fence.
- 3 At the next hedge there is a kissing gate and then a stile. Continue with a hedge to the left and over a stile. Turn right to the gate with a stile to the left and you are on Friendless Lane.



- 4 Turn left and continue ahead passing the sports ground until you reach the main road. Go right and then left at the Three Blackbirds continue until you reach the Spotted Dog. (Careful of traffic). You may wish to take a break here.
- 5 Turn right into the Spotted Dog car park and into the Churchyard. Take the right hand path. At the main road take a path which is on the other side of the road slightly to your left. This path with houses on your left takes you to a large planted field. Go through the field which has lovely views to your left. Continue until you reach the road at the end (Pietley Hill).
- 6 Go right into this road and continue until you reach the junction with Mill Lane and Friendless Lane. Continue ahead on Friendless Lane, until you see a wood on the left at right angles to the road.
- 7 When you reach the edge of the wood there is a

sign post through the wood. Take the diagonal path until you are out of the wood. Cross through the kissing gate and turn right following the hedge. (Make sure you look to your left at the lovely view). Continue until you reach the farm track to Cotton Spring Farm. Go through the hedge opposite and go to your right taking the path along the woods which are full of bluebells in May.

- 8 Go through the kissing gate across a field to far hedge. Follow the path with the hedge on your left to another kissing gate. Go across the field to yet another kissing gate and left into Friendless Lane.
- 9 At the junction with Pickford Road cross (with care) to the grass verge opposite. Turn right down the hill and you will reach the start of your walk. There are pubs in Markyate, a bakers, fish bar and an Indian Restaurant.