

## 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.

### Kensworth

In 1897 the Parish was transferred from Hertfordshire into Bedfordshire. In its early days this agricultural community also supported a straw plaiting industry supplying the Luton hat trade. At that time some of the water for the farms was drawn from deep wells by large donkey wheels big enough to allow the donkey to walk inside the wheel! Subsequently in the late 19th century brick-making flourished finally declining after the Second World War.

The village divides into three quite separate parts:

**Church End** to the north where the 12th century Norman church of St Mary stands together with a few farms and houses. St Mary's has an aisle-less nave twice as long as it is wide leading to a later, equally wide, chancel added at about the same time as the tower during the 14th and 15th centuries.

**The Lynch** (*an old name for a wooded place*) at the east end of the village, is now designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Lynch House is 17th century whilst Kensworth House at the top of the hill is 19th century.

**The Common** is now the main residential area of the village. Its Methodist Chapel, built in 1935, on the site of the 1847 Wesleyan Chapel. The school, a national School from 1852, had its school house added in 1872. Of the ten pubs of yesteryear only three now remain.

## How to get to the start:

**By Car:** Leave the M1 at Junction 9 and go north towards Dunstable on the A5. Markyate is approx 2 miles from the junction and the A5 is its bypass. Leave the A5 at the second Markyate turn on your left just after the footbridge (Hicks Road). Go to the end and turn right. Drive up the High Street past chip shop on your right, take next turning left (Cavendish Road). Go to the top and turn right to Village Hall and car park.

**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

**W**ear sensible clothing and footwear.

**A**lways respect the property you travel through.

**L**et someone know your whereabouts and have their Tel No handy.

**K**eep dogs under control.

**I**nclude a mobile phone and drink in your back pack.

**N**ever leave litter—take it home with you.

**G**ates 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**
- **Three short walks around the village**
- **Kensworth**
- **Bridens Camp**

Maps also available on the Parish Council Website: [www.markyateparishcouncil.com](http://www.markyateparishcouncil.com)

CAONB website: [www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org)

**Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 182** features Markyate and surrounding area.

# MARKYATE CIRCULAR Country walks byway



## KENSWORTH

*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

**CHILTERNES CONSERVATION BOARD  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND**



# KENSWORTH WALK

A walk through the fields to Kensworth with its ancient church and return via Kensworth Common. The Old Red Lion is situated at Kensworth Common. You may also wish to spend some time looking at the 12th Century Church of St Mary The Virgin. The hedgerows have attractive berries in the autumn and winter and the fields you walk through have a variety of crops and grasses which vary with the seasons.

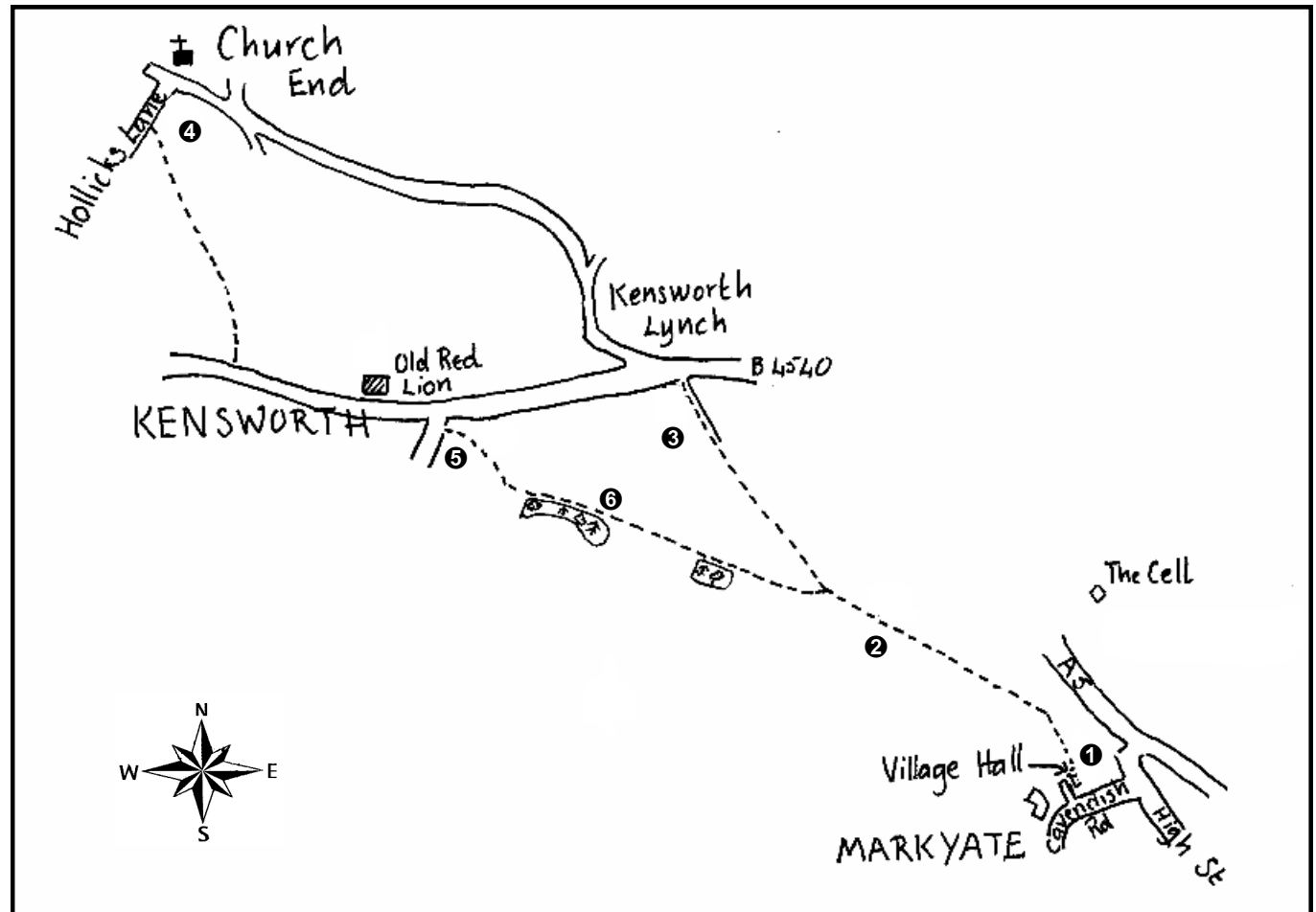
**Walk: 5 miles**

**Time: 2 to 2½ Hours**

- Gradient: gentle rise to the main road then gentle drop to Kensworth with a rise as you head for Kensworth Common and back to the start.
- Not suitable for pushchairs or bikes etc.
- Refreshments: The Old Red Lion. (a time of printing) Number of stiles: 1.
- Number of kissing gates: 4.
- Parking: Village Hall Car Park Recreation Ground off Cavendish Road.

## Making a start:

- 1 Walk between the village hall and the cricket pavilion and with the playing fields to your left walk by the hedge towards the electricity poles. In the corner of the field go through the kissing gate and still with the hedge on your right follow the line of the telegraph poles. Keep going and you will see a large gap in the hedge, which if you look to your right you will see ahead a good view of the Wating Street valley and if you look back you will see Markyate Cell.
- 2 Keep walking ahead until there is a gap in the hedge where you walk diagonally across the corner of the field towards a gap in the hedge with a yellow waymark post. Go through the gap and turn right with the pylon on your left.
- 3 When you reach the main road go through the kissing gate which is to the right of a large gate. Cross the main road (please take care it is a busy one) turn left and bear right down Church End. Keep



walking straight ahead for a considerable distance ignoring the crossing roads until you reach the Church on your right.

- 4 With the Church behind you head up Hollicks Lane. When you come to the footpath sign on your left in the hedge head across the field. When you reach the next signpost go straight ahead and curve right with the path. The path will cross into the next field. On reaching the forked tree go diagonally left across the field to the stile. Walk towards the main road and turn to your left. Keep walking until you reach The Old Red Lion pub which will be on your left.

- 5 Turn left out of the pub and then after a short walk turn right into Clayhall Road. After 20 yards you will see footpath sign in the hedge on your left with a kissing gate which takes you through the side of someone's garden. Keep going towards the next kissing gate.

- 6 Go through the paddock (which may have horses in it) and through the gate taking a diagonal path. Curve left to the Footpath signs in the hedge through the kissing gate, keep going straight ahead past the copse with a seat and you will reach (2) of this walk. Retrace to the car park. There are pubs in Markyate, a bakers, fish bar and an Indian Restaurant.