

# Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

## Strolls from the Lock Number 12 – To Church of the Holy Cross, Sarratt, via Croxley Green and return

**Time: approximately 4hr (3hr 15min to Chorleywood station)**

**Distance: approximately 9 miles (7 miles via Chorleywood station)**

A two mile shorter version can be done by returning to Rickmansworth by train from Chorleywood.

From the Lock Centre, go up the ramp to Batchworth Lock. Walk along the towpath in direction of Watford. Note the canal signpost just before the bridge at the next lock, Lot Mead (15min), indicating 74 miles to Braunston, a village at the centre of the canal system in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Turn off the towpath at the lock, between the two houses, onto an unmade road (footpath #11). After passing over the railway (5min), turn left, then right shortly after (FP #11). Cross straight over a main road and continue with the church on your left. This joins Croxley Green Common - turn right to walk its full length. Three trees have been planted along here to mark the Coronations of 1911, 1936 and 1953. At the end of the Common, turn L into Loudwater Lane.

In about 5min there is a gap in the hedge on the right, marked with a footpath sign (FP #8). The path passes through a small holly wood into a field, and between the two telegraph poles on the right. It emerges onto a driveway across which is a five bar gate. The footpath (FP #3) is immediately on the right of this, on the other side of a tree, with its own gate. Arrows mark the path to a stile into a field, across which is a further stile and field. Exit via a gate and keep to the left next to the hedge. Another stile leads to a clear path across crops, at the end of which a sign directs you right along a track.

If you come across some attractive spotted pigs around here, they may be Oxford Sandy and Blacks, in which the nearby farm specialises. On the right is Micklefield Hall, listed Grade 2, dating from early 18<sup>th</sup> century but altered later. Its farm buildings include a 17<sup>th</sup> century barn. The track joins the house drive. Turn L onto this, then R, through a farmyard to another track leading to a small road. Cross this to continue over the M25 and straight up a hill through a newly planted wood. At the edge of the next field, you will be able to see the square tower and steeply tiled roof of the Church of the Holy Cross towards which you are heading.

The path joins a road at the small hamlet of Church End. This was the original settlement; the village of Sarratt a mile away developed later. Go straight on and turn left at a sharp bend onto a road between almshouses and the Church. The church (founded in 1190) is built of flint and brick (some of Roman origin), with puddingstone in the foundations. Sir Gilbert Scott (architect of St Pancras station) renovated it in 1865. Inside, the war memorial has 24 names from 1914-18 and 9 from 1939-45, a remarkable number from such a small village. There is also a list of the vicars from 1349 and part of a medieval wall painting. The Church End Almshouses on the left were founded in 1700 but rebuilt in 1821. They have a Victorian post box set into their walls.

Pass through the small gate at the end of the road and across the driveway of 'Goldingtons'. This Grade 2 listed building is one of the manorial residences of Sarratt, rebuilt in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, but with 16<sup>th</sup> century origins. In the 1994 film, 'Four weddings and a funeral', the reception and church scenes from the first wedding were filmed here and at the Church. The field below Goldingtons faces south and is terraced to follow the contour of the hill. These are medieval cultivation terraces or 'strip lynchets' from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, each of 20-30m wide, and were originally up to a metre high. Continue down the hill, and turn L at cottages onto a rough track leading to New Road. Across this, the path leads to a footbridge over the River Chess. This is a shallow, narrow chalk stream with a gravel base, fed by clear warm water from an aquifer. Turn left to follow the path alongside the river. In about 5min, there is signpost. Here you can choose between a shorter or longer walk.

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**Alternative route:** Walk to Chorleywood Station (approx. 45min.) and catch a train or bus back to Rickmansworth. *This is about 2 miles shorter overall than returning to Rickmansworth on foot.*

Turn right up the hill (FP#34) where there is a lovely view back to Goldingtons near the top. After about 12min, turn left onto a metalled road. This area was once the grounds of Chorleywood House, now flats, seen on the right. The road passes between tennis courts and a cemetery, to reach the A404. Cross over to Chorleywood Common; walk through the small car park, and onto a wide grassy ride bearing to the right. Keep straight, passing white cottages and a car park on the right. Walk along the edge of the Common, until a way down to the road can be found. The railway fence is on the other side of the road and the station a short distance away on the right.

Turn right out of Rickmansworth station, and walk under the railway bridge. Take second left onto the High Street, right at traffic lights (Church Street) to reach a roundabout. The canal and lock centre are on the far side of this.

**Main route to walk back to Rickmansworth** (approx. 85min.): Keep straight on to join a metalled track (FP#2) which ends at Solesbridge Lane. Turn left and cross over the M25 again. Solesbridge Mill was situated on the other side of the road here – one of the many mills on the Chess in the Rickmansworth area. Paper production started here in 1746 but ceased in 1888 as the water flow diminished. The remains of a Roman barley mill, for beer, have been found nearby.

Just before the bend in the road there is a 5 bar gate on the right leading to a permissive path through Beechengrove Wood. This wood is semi-natural ancient woodland with coppiced trees. It has a varied ground flora, some of which are rare in the County. Walk up the hill and turn right when the path reaches Sarratt Lane. Continue along the road to a stile on the left, just past Ladywood Close. This rejoins the road further on – turn left. Turn right into Troutstream Way (which has a white 5 barred gate across it) and almost immediately left for FP#8. This joins Loudwater Drive – turn left. At Loudwater Lane, turn left and then soon right onto Chess Lane. Loudwater farm on the right has a 450-year-old barn whilst pottery and coins have been found here dating from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

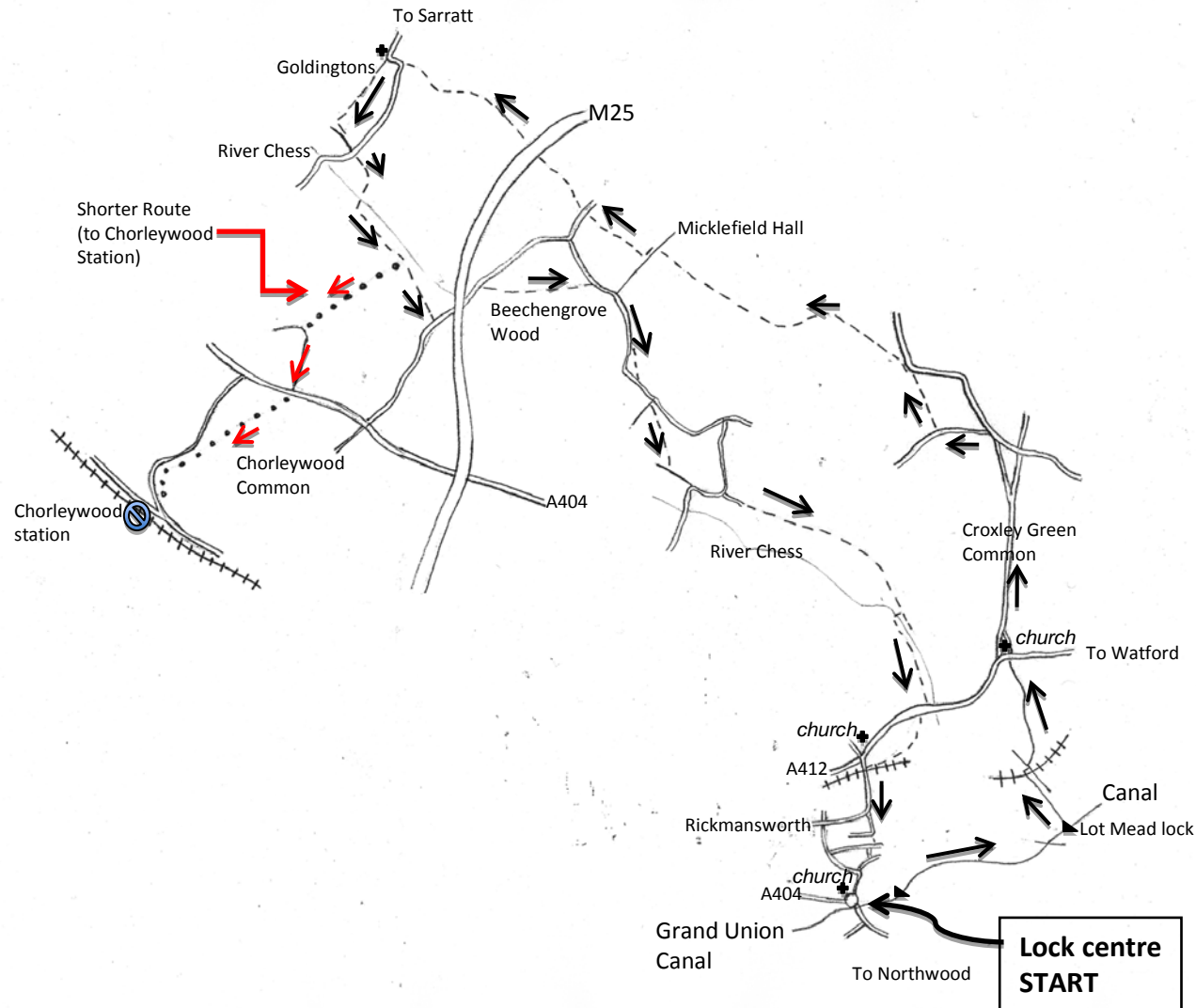
Keep straight on the footpath (FP#34) from the end of this road for about 10 min. Follow FP#1 on the right to a bridge over the River Chess. Turn left and walk along the riverbank until the path follows the fence away to the right. Keep straight on at this point, through the barrier, to enter playing fields and reach Scotsbridge Road. You will pass Scotsbridge Mill, now a restaurant, on the left just before the road. Inside, you can see the river which passes through the building, and some of the old mill machinery.

Cross over the dual carriageway onto a small green and walk along a path that bears diagonally right towards the railway. Turn left (High Street), then second left (Talbot Road) to a sharp right hand bend in the road. Just after, cross to a short road, at the end of which is an alleyway between houses, leading onto Norfolk Road. Turn right, then left (Waters Drive), right (Skidmore Way) to a main road skirting the church, (Church Street). Turn left towards the canal and lock centre, which are about 200yds away, beyond Travis Perkins builder's merchants.

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