

Cockrobin Lane

The walk is approx 3 miles, 4.8 km and takes about 60-70 minutes at average walking pace. Stout walking boots are recommended as much of the walk is over cultivated fields which can be muddy after any prolonged rain. Walkers are reminded that there are both agricultural and commercial tenants on this land and care must be taken to ensure that there is no disturbance to their activities. You should also be aware of the use of heavy machinery using the roadways and of low flying aircraft using the microlight airstrips.

From the Village Hall turn left, cross the road by The Pump and proceed down Drury Lane to the entrance to Amiens Close on your right and then take the path immediately left past the Pill Box to pass through the kissing gate in the hedge. You are now on Hunsdon FP 10 and continue straight, across the old airfield perimeter road in a South Easterly direction past the waymark post. Continue forward until you reach the post marking the junction with Hunsdon FP 20. Take the left hand path, easterly. This will eventually take you across two pieces of old



airfield roadway and Hunsdon FP 11 after which it starts to go downhill, passing into Eastwick Parish, becoming Eastwick FP 23 just before crossing another section of roadway and terminating at the junction with Cockrobin Lane (Eastwick BR 2).

Old 19th Century maps show Cockrobin Lane as an integral part of the road network at the time, following on from Eastwick Hall Lane along the route of the present bridleway Eastwick BR 2 before joining the road from Gilston Church south of High Trees in High Wych Parish.

All of it can still be walked but the part from where you are now standing up to Queen's Wood to the north was levelled in 1941, as part of the construction of Hunsdon Airfield, although you can still see a faint depression across the fields following the bridleway indicating its original route.

Continuing with the walk, turn right and follow the lane between the hedges giving you a good idea what it must have been like all those years ago. In the spring the verges are lined with cowslips and other wild flowers.

The lane now begins to descend and it was towards the bottom of the slope that problems arose some years ago. The adjacent stream spread across the path in the winter and combined with the continual passage of horses the surface became a morass and was impassable on foot for much of the time. Several years ago Hertfordshire County Council and Eastwick & Gilston Parish Council embarked on an ambitious scheme to separate the stream from the bridleway and now the surface is raised above the stream, held up by a wooden sleeper retaining wall giving all year round access. Passing along this section with the stream on the right and a small wood, Rowndsell Shaw, on the left, the path rises slightly to the left away from the stream before joining Eastwick Hall Lane at Eastwick Hall Cottages.

At this point turn right and follow the road/farm track, Eastwick FP 8, as it climbs past Eastwick Hall Farm. At the top of the slope, ignoring the track off to the right, carry on forward with the boundary hedge of Hunsdon House to your left. A short way along the path you pass back into Hunsdon Parish and it becomes Hunsdon FP 5. Look out to your left as you go along the path for the view of Hunsdon House through gaps in the trees. Further along, the path begins to turn gradually away from Hunsdon House passing through a new plantation of small trees. Finally an open field is reached. Turn slightly right to follow the path across to the small clump of trees at the far corner surrounding Nine Ashes Ponds. Bear round the right side of the larger pond then along a grass path with the wire fence to your right, finally reaching a stile opposite Spellars House on Acorn Street. Turn right and follow Acorn Street back to Hunsdon and the starting point of the walk.

The former Hunsdon Airfield

The routes of the footpaths across the old airfield may seem a bit haphazard today but if you overlay them on the old 1842 Tythe Map they conform to many of the old field boundaries and woods. Today all across this open space you will be rewarded with the sound of skylarks aloft, not a common feature of many country walks these days. Depending on the time of your walk you may also see deer, foxes, hares and other wildlife.