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## Tewin and Bramfield

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Distance: 11 km=7 miles

easy walking

Region: Hertfordshire

Date written: 21-aug-2017

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Refreshments: Tewin, Bramfield

Map: Explorer 182 (Hatfield) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Village, woodland, views, easy field paths, country houses, historic church*

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### In Brief

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This is a gentle circular walk of great variety showing you the best of the Hertfordshire countryside, including long woodland walks, open country and gentle green meadows. The village of Tewin at the start and end of this walk is one of the oldest in history and its church is a wonderful record of a bygone age.

There are two ideal places for food and drink along the way. To enquire at the *Grandison Arms* in Bramfield, ring 01992-554077. For the *Rose and Crown* in Tewin, ring 01438-717257.

This walk can be combined with the walk *Tewin from North Welwyn Station* to make a very satisfying walk of 17 km=10½ miles. See the turn off points in the text.

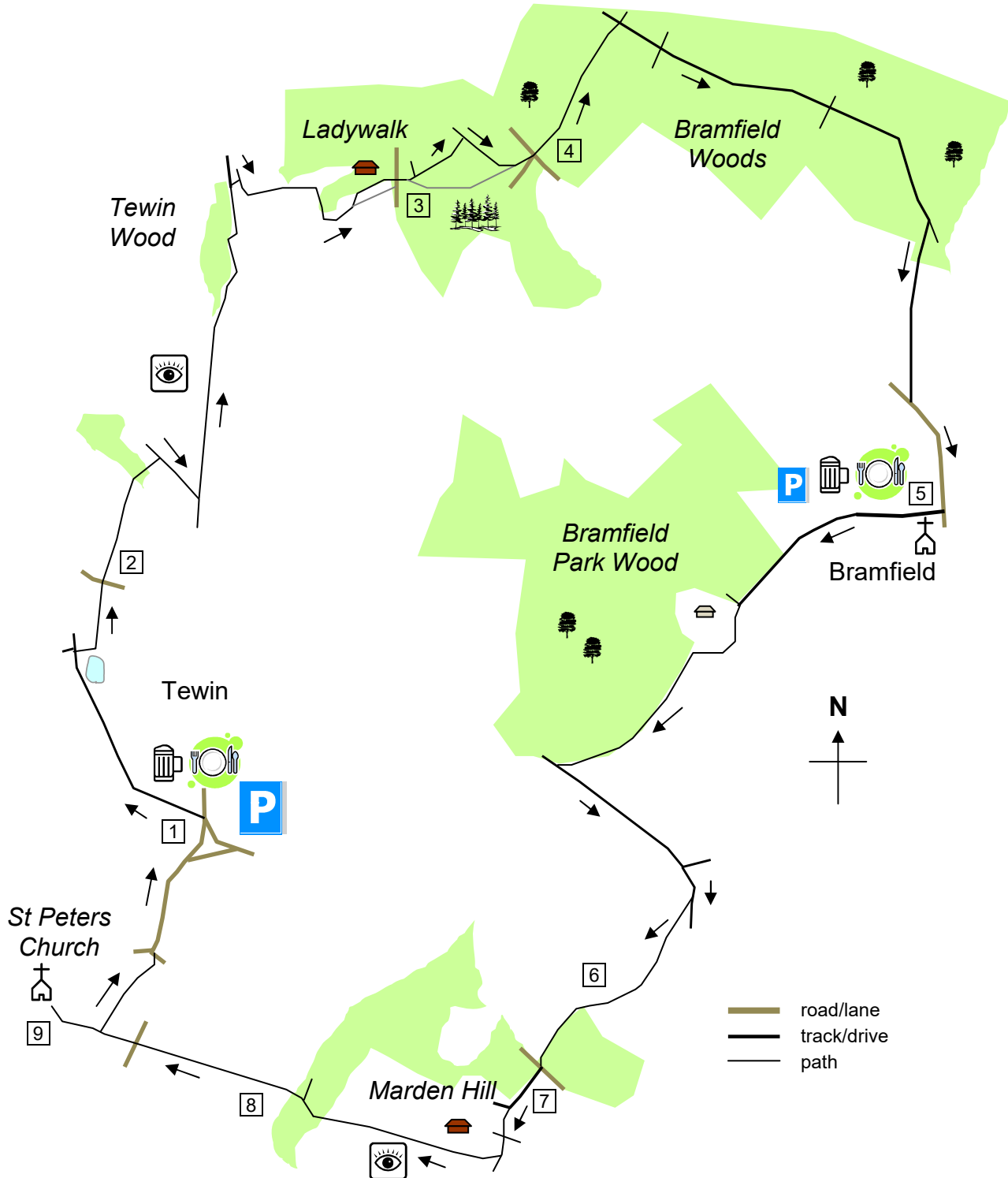


The paths are generally wide and well-made, so that you are not worried too much by nettles and brambles and can wear sensible walking shoes, except possibly in the wet winter months. Your dog can certainly come too.

The walk begins at the Lower Green in Tewin, Hertfordshire, postcode **AL6 0LE**. There is plenty of space around the green. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk

*Tewin is possibly the oldest village you are likely to meet on any of these walks. It dates from at least the year 450 and its church is almost as old. The name, by the way, is pronounced "Chew-in" but some older folk say "Too-in". Tew was the Anglosaxon god of war. (The equivalent Norse god Tiw gave his name to "Tuesday".) But nothing about this serene village could be less warlike. A national survey in the press named Tewin as one of the most desirable places to live. If you look from the excellent pub, the "Rose and Crown", to the other side of the road, the house built in the same style, the "Old School", may have been the idea behind Dotheboys Hall in Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby. (The author lived in Welwyn.) The village well cover on the Lower Green was moved to the corner when the original well was closed. For much more about this lovely village, read Tony Rook's books on "Welwyn".*



- 1 From the Lower Green in the village of Tewin, take a rough driveway called Back Lane, just on the side of the *Rose and Crown* pub. Keep straight on, avoiding a private right fork, on a good wide path through open country. Your path widens to a track and you soon arrive at a small pond on your right. Turn **right** here, passing a bench seat, to reach the Upper Green which is much larger and incorporates a cricket pitch.

[The Tewin from North Welwyn Station walk joins this walk at this point.](#)

Keep **left** as you cross the green, parallel to the original track. At the far side, cross the road to a bridleway directly opposite, next to the mock-timbered No. 13.

- 2 At once you have good views, with a sheep meadow and hills beyond. Keep **left**, following a sheltered footpath. It leads up, through a swing-gate, into a large meadow. Turn **right** along the edge, following a faint path which cuts the sharp right-hand corner to reach a rustic bench. Do *not* go ahead through the swing-gate but turn immediately **sharp left**, staying in the meadow, following a wire fence on your right. At the far side, you come through a wooden swing-gate onto a narrow path with private gardens on your left. *They belong to the residential zone of Tewin Wood, one of the most exclusive areas of Hertfordshire.* Your path zigzags right-left and runs between wooden fences to come out to a tarmac drive by a smart entrance. Turn **right** as indicated, immediately ignoring a footpath on your left. In only 25m, you come up to a T-junction. Turn **right** on the path and follow it as it bends left and runs between field fences. Soon you are skirting the grounds of a large house which you probably noticed from afar. *This is Ladywalk House, once the property of racing ace Lewis Hamilton, who sold it to the disgraced tycoon Vijay Mallya for £11½m (note the initials VJM later under the house name).* Your path turns right along a stretch where ripe blackberries are plentiful in late summer. After the path turns left you have a choice of a permissive path, or the footpath which is also wide but more sheltered. The footpath leads out through a swing-gate, crosses straight over the driveway and reaches a tarmac lane. (If you chose the permissive path, you need to turn left a short distance on the lane.)
- 3 Cross directly over the lane onto a footpath, marked with a yellow arrow, going through a wooden barrier. This is Brickground Wood which, although private, allows fairly free access. In 15m, ignore a right turn at a yellow arrow (and a left turn just after) and keep straight on passing a sign for a *permissive path*. (You can instead turn right at the yellow arrow, following the official footpath, but through less attractive pine woods.) Keep to the main woodland path for just over 200m, where you come to a crossing path. Turn **right** here. In 150m you re-join the official footpath coming from the right as your path curves left. The path leads to a road junction where Tewin Hill meets Winding Shott / Bramfield Road.
- 4 Cross straight over onto a bridleway marked *Watton at Stone 2*. Follow this main wide shingly path through Nicholson's Wood. [There are a few muddy patches here which will soon peter out.](#) In 500m, you come between wooden uprights to a junction with a red-topped gas marker post. Turn **right** here on an attractive wide path through Bramfield Wood. In 150m, your route goes over a crossing path, and another 500m later. Your path rises under tall oaks and curves right. In another 250m, you reach a marker post indicating a fork: keep **right**, ignoring a path on your left shortly after. You are now on a sunken path between fields. *Note that you have been walking*

part of the Hertfordshire Chain Walk, a series of 15 linked circular walks, running between the borders of Greater London and Cambridgeshire. You reach a road on the outskirts of Bramfield. (5m before the wooden posts, on your left is an unofficial path, often used by the villagers, which avoids walking on the road - turn right and left at the end.) Continue through the village to the picturesque Well Green. *St Andrews churchyard with the little church (often locked) is a little further on the right.* Turn **right** opposite the little green on Bury Lane, quickly reaching the *Grandison Arms*.



*Bramfield has always been tiny. In fact, in 1428, after the plague years, the parish had no inhabitants at all! We know a great deal about Bramfield from a local farmer who was an administrator and tax collector at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. This was John Carrington and his hand-written Diary gives an account of his village sojourns, mainly an account of good dinners. "4 Jan 1805: to Paul Benfields at the Bull Wiltshires at Watton at Stone. He paid Poor Rate, Land Tax, and Property Tax for wood land. They gave us a Good Dinner and punch." "16 April 1805: to Bramfield Vestry as Overseer. Dinner at the Grandison Arms the widow Deards. Buttock Beef, Roast Shoulder of Mutton, puddings etc.." A gloomier entry records a hanging: "Ann Mead, aged 16, was found guilty of the Royston murder of Charles Proctor, aged 1, by feeding him a spoonful of arsenic."*

*As for our own dinners, the "Grandison Arms" is one of the best and you may need to book. Beers are typically Haresfoot's Lock Keeper and Sharp's Doom Bar and Coaster. Note that the Grandison may be closed on Saturday till 3 because of a wedding (a dubious trend in Hertfordshire). It is closed Mondays, a pleasing 11-11 on other days (except Sunday when it closes at 6.30).*

- 5 After possible refreshment, continue past the *Grandison* on the cul-de-sac lane, passing a car park on your left (alternative start). The lane becomes a gravel track as you pass close to Bramfield Park Wood on your right. You come to the wooden gates of a 15<sup>th</sup>-century house *Bramfieldbury*. Turn **left** here on a path which skirts the estate in a semicircle. Afterwards, continue as before with the woods on your right. Your path gradually curves right and, 500m after *Bramfieldbury*, it ends at the edge of another field. Turn sharp **left** here on a wide path across the field. In 400m, you reach a boundary of fields with an untidy patch of shrubs on your right. Ignore a wide path on your left, thus leaving the bridleway, and bear a fraction **right** on a grassy path, following a yellow arrow. Your path heads across the centre of another field. In only 50m, you meet a marker post. Leave the main path here by forking **right** on a narrower path, diagonally across the field. (*Don't miss this turn!*) [Oct 2017: this path was ploughed over; if this happens, carry on ahead for 100m, turn sharp **right** at the field edge and **left** after 50m to regain the path.]
- 6 At the other side, your path goes under an apple tree, down three steps and into a small green meadow, a timely change from the big open fields. Head straight across to a post with a yellow arrow visible ahead. Go through a gap and continue in the same direction across the next small meadow. Your destination is a bank of trees, where there is a gap near the left end. (If you miss the gap, simply aim for the left-hand side of the trees and bear **right** by a fence.) Go through a wooden gate and straight ahead up the left-hand side of the field ahead, with a hedge on your left. Your path runs beside the trees of Red Wood on your left and reaches a tarmac lane.

- 7 Cross straight over onto a tarmac drive marked *Marden Hill, Private*, also a footpath. Shortly, you pass the converted barn and immaculate garden of *Mereden Cottage*, which lies within the Marden Hill estate. Keep **left** at a fork to avoid a private entrance but go straight over a crossing track coming from the house on your right. Go ahead through a wooden swing-gate beside a large wooden gate. In 40m you come to another swing-gate. Avoid a path on your left and go through the swing-gate onto a wide strip of mown grass. There are paddocks on your left, a bench seat and a haha giving you a view of the house on your right.

*The Grade-II listed mansion of Marden Hill in this site high above the Mimram River was a banker's house. It was built in the early 1600s but totally remodelled in later centuries. One owner was Richard Flower (of Flowers Brewery), a banker, whose son founded the English Settlement in Illinois. Sir John Soane (architect of the Bank of England) refashioned much of it for the then Governor of the Bank of England. It is now six luxury apartments (whether for bankers is not known).*



Shortly, there is another bench seat from which to admire the pleasant aspect. At the end of the grass, go through a wooden swing-gate. Ignore a diagonal crossing footpath and keep straight on along a path under lime trees. Your path curves right downhill quite steeply into woodland. Avoid a level path on your right and keep straight ahead, down a flight of steps. You come out into a large field.

- 8 Go straight ahead up the slope. At the time of writing this field is fallow and a colourful display of ragwort, pink thistle, hogweed and other colonisers. At a marker post, ignore side path and keep straight on to a tarmac lane. [Tewin is on your right but this walk takes an interesting route.](#) Cross over the lane and go through a wooden swing-gate. Your path runs between fences, steeply down. At the bottom, make a note of a small wooden gate on your right: this is your route after visiting the church (unless you are extending the walk to North Welwyn station). Continue steeply uphill and go **right** through a wooden swing-gate into the churchyard of St Peters with the prospect of visiting this wonderful Saxon church.

*Tewin Church was founded by the "Sons of Tew", the pagan Saxon invaders, in the year 449 and it has become a catalogue of English styles: Norman, Early English, Perpendicular, Tudor, Victorian. The north wall and some of the windows are still Saxon. The tower has six bells, four of which date from 1673. The church is full of memorials and it is worth buying the Visitor's Guide (£1.50).*

*The Churchyard is a shady arboretum with kind of tree: yew, ash, holm oak, red oak, whitebeam, etc. It is as interesting as the church. John Carrington's (see above) tomb is supposedly here. But the tomb that gets the most visitors from all over the world is that of Lady Anne Grimston (inside the iron railing on the east side) who was reputed to have said "If, indeed, there is life hereafter trees will render asunder my tomb." (Non-believers in the Afterlife were termed "Sadducees".) But she must have been pious, driving her horses every week to Tewin from St Albans. For 200 years four trees have battled with the tomb and a few cracks have appeared.*

[If you are combining this walk with the \*Tewin from North Welwyn Station\* walk, and returning to the railway station, revert to the other guide and resume at section \[5\]\(#\).](#)

9 After visiting the church, retrace your steps through the swing-gate and down the steep path to the little wooden gate. Go **left** through the gate into a sloping horse pasture. Keep straight ahead up the slope, gradually leaving the fence on your left. Head just to the right of an electricity pole with a transformer on it and go through a swing-gate to a residential road.



Go **left** on the road and immediately **right** on a major road. It leads into the centre of the village with the Lower Green and the *Rose and Crown* where the walk began.



*The Rose and Crown is a good lively local which has resisted the tendency to chicness and faux-gastro. Ales are typically Sadlers, Aunt Ebb and a few standards. There is a shop and café near here: keep **left** beside the Green.*

## Getting there

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By car: Tewin is easily accessed from the A1 trunk road and hence from the M25 motorway. From the A1, come off north of the Hatfield underpass at **Exit 4** signed *Hertford, Welwyn Garden City*. From here, take the **A414** signed to *Hertford*. At first there is a series of roundabouts, then 2½ miles of open road. The next roundabout directs you to fork **left** for Hertford. In one more mile, a roundabout directs you straight on, avoiding Welwyn Garden City on your left and Letty Green on your right. In under ¼ mile, there is a junction on your **left** pointing to **Tewin**. This is Panshanger Lane. Follow this country road for one mile to a junction. Turn **left** as for *Welwyn and Tewin Fish Farm* and keep **left** on the B1000 road. In a mile or so, you will see a little road sign pointing **right** for *Tewin and Church*. Park in the Lower Green in Tewin village.

By bus/train: buses 204, 378 and 388 run from Welwyn Garden City or Hertford. Check the timetables. **North Welwyn station** is 2 miles to the west and is used on the adjoining walk which can be combined with this one.

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