

Walk from Mutton Lane along Darkes Lane to Hudsons Court and return

Start from the traffic lights at the junction of Mutton Lane and Darkes Lane. Walk along the left-hand side of Darkes Lane towards the Rail Station.

Darkes Lane

The High Street used to be the town centre but, with the expansion of Potters Bar, Darkes Lane grew overtaking it as the main shopping area. The first shops you pass are called The Broadway owing to the wide pavement. Built just before the Second World War, they were commandeered to accommodate troops.

Wyllyotts Manor

Take the next turning on the left, Wyllyotts Place. On the right hand side of the road, just before the bend, is Wyllyotts Manor. Over the years, the spelling has varied a great deal – it was originally named Williotts Manor.

Wyllyotts was first mentioned in 1349 but nothing remains of the medieval buildings. It was opened to the public for the first time in 1974 as the local Council offices. After the Wyllyotts Centre and the offices surrounding Wyllyotts Manor were built in 1990, it became a restaurant. More recently, its name was changed to The Old Manor. The buildings comprise a barn and house from the 16th and early 19th century, respectively.

Opposite The Old Manor is the Wyllyotts Centre housing a theatre (also used as a cinema) and the Potters Bar Museum.

Retrace your steps to Darkes Lane, turn left walking past the station car park entrance and under the railway bridge.

Memorial Garden

Just after the railway bridge is a small garden in memory of those who died in May 2002 when a King's Cross to King's Lynn train derailed crashing into the station platform. Paul Bainbridge's sculpture 'Commemoration' was erected in 2003 to remember the seven people killed and 76 injured in the accident.

Unfortunately, there have been two earlier accidents at the station. The first was a train crash in 1898 when, fortunately, no-one was killed or seriously injured. The second occurred in February 1946 when a crash resulted in the loss of two lives and 17 people were injured.

Railway Station

The original railway station, opened on 8th August 1850, was built to serve the London to Peterborough railway. It survived with very few changes until 1955 when a new station was opened to meet the demands of an up and coming town. This was rebuilt in 1987 with the concourse part of an office block. Now these offices have been remodelled as apartments with ground floor retail space. The East Coast Main line from Kings Cross to Edinburgh runs through the station.

The station forecourt has bus and taxi services for onward travel. At the back of the station forecourt is Sainsburys supermarket, built in 1980 on former railway goods yard land, and several smaller shops, one of which houses the Post Office.

Cross the station forecourt and continue along Darkes Lane.

Millenium Clock

At the corner of the station forecourt stands the Millenium Clock donated to the town by the Potters Bar Society in 2000.

Shops

Buildings along this side of Darkes Lane, typical of early 1930s, have flats above the shops. Over the years retail has given way to service businesses such as hairdressers, nail bars and print shops. The shop that has been in the same business the longest is Readers the butchers which has been in the same premises since 1935.

Cross Manor Road and continue along Darkes Lane.

Hudsons Court

On the corner, at ground level below flats, is a pub named after Admiral John Byng who was court martialled and executed in 1757. Just past the pub is Hudsons Court retirement housing which opened in 2000. This complex replaced Hudsons Garage, which had been on the site since the 1920s. In front of Hudsons Court you can glimpse Potters Bar Brook as it emerges from the culvert under Darkes Lane.

Cross Darkes Lane towards the bed store.

The building where Dreams bed store and Revive Gym are situated, was the site of the Ritz Cinema. Built to serve the growing population it opened in 1934 with 'Roman Scandals', a musical starring Eddie Cantor. The cinema was demolished in 1967 and a Tesco store built. In 1996 Tesco relocated to Mutton Lane. Sportz Academy and later Dreams used the site. More recently, extra floors were added to the building for use as flats.

Turn right, cross Byng Drive and walk back along Darkes Lane.

Shops

On this side of Darkes Lane the pavement is especially wide as the Potters Bar Brook runs underneath, allowing the installation of attractive flower beds., Although there was some building along Darkes Lane after 1927, because of the brook it was 1953 before the central block was constructed.

To the left of the post box is the former post office, currently a homewares store, and a brick building which is the post office delivery and callers, office. The largest shop in the parade was occupied by Woolworths from 1953 until it closed in 2009. It became Carpetright and then, in 2018, Superdrug. On the corner of the junction with The Walk is Leighton House, another commercial property which has been extended upwards to provide accommodation.

Cross The Walk and continue along Darkes Lane.

Metropolitan House

Three of the shops at ground floor level are takeaways, including McDonalds. The offices above were once occupied by Albany Life Insurance Company, hence the building's former name of Albany House. When Albany Life Insurance was acquired by Canada Life in 1997, the building was subdivided and various companies moved into the premises.

Line Path

Next to McDonalds is the line path, so called because it follows the railway line from Darkes Lane to the bridge over Mutton Lane.

Potters Court

After walking under the railway bridge you come to Potters Court. Once the site of the Old Station Hotel, built in 1880, the hotel was rebuilt in 1938 as the Potters Bar before becoming a restaurant, The Potters, in 1980. This was demolished in 2000 to accommodate retirement flats.

Broadway Parade

The east side of Broadway Parade has similar shops to those on the west side.

The Potters Bar Society gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Brian Warren and the Potters Bar Museum in the compilation of the original pamphlet 'Jubilee Walk 2' now updated for this edition celebrating The Potters Bar Society's Diamond Anniversary in 2021.

The Potters Bar Society

Founded 1961

President: Ronald W G Smith

Affiliated to:

The Campaign to Protect Rural England,
London Green Belt Council,
Open Spaces Society, Communities 1st

The Potters Bar Society

Registered Charity No. 1087470

www.pbsoc.org.uk



Diamond Anniversary Walk 2

Mutton Lane to Hudsons Court, via Darkes Lane, and back

***Protecting the character and
amenities of Potters Bar***