

## The parish of Kimpton

Kimpton is located among chalk hills at the eastern edge of the Chiltern Hills. The river Mimram, a chalk stream important for the wildlife it supports, runs along the eastern boundary.

The village itself lies along the route of the former – and still occasional – river Kym, a tributary of the Mimram. The valleys give rise to all the 'Bottoms' to be found in these parts.



The parish is criss-crossed by an extensive network of public rights of way, some of them dating from pre-Roman times.

Most of the parish is still farmland with about 5% woodland. It is rich in wildlife. Keep your eyes – and ears – open.

## How to get to Kimpton

Kimpton is halfway between St Albans and Hitchin on the B651, about 4 miles north-east of Harpenden along the B652. Buses 44 (Luton- Stevenage), and 304 (Hitchin-St Albans), pass through the village. ([www.intalink.org.uk](http://www.intalink.org.uk) for details)



## Other local walks

These walks are among a series of Walking in Hertfordshire circular routes. Download them from [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/cms](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/cms)

To explore the rich history of Kimpton itself, follow the Kimpton Heritage Trail, our companion walking map around the historic places in the village of Kimpton.

It is planned to provide more walks, guidance and background information on the Kimpton Village web site ([www.kimptonvillage.com](http://www.kimptonvillage.com))



This leaflet was prepared as part of the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme.

Please report any problems, such as obstructions, to Hertfordshire County Council on 0300 123 4047 or to [row@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:row@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

# Kimpton Country Walks

**Walk 1:** The bluebell woods, 2.2/1.8 miles

**Walk 2:** Peter's Green & Ansell's End, 2.3/1.4 miles

**Walk 3:** around Kimpton Bottom, 3.9/3.5 miles

**Walk 4:** to Ayot St Lawrence, 4.1 miles



*Walks may also be combined up to 9 miles*



## Mammals

Deer are the most common of the larger wild animals in this area. There are many smaller animals – rabbits, squirrels & hares (since the end of stubble-burning) being the most obvious. Others – mice, voles, shrews and so on are too discreet for us to detect, generally.



**Muntjac** (or barking deer – because they bark!) come from SE Asia and in the 1920s found their way to Kimpton from Woburn Zoo. They live in small families and are often seen singly, typically foraging toward dusk.



**Fallow Deer** – the model for Bambi - were introduced by the Romans. They live in larger herds, a dominant male having a harem during the mating season. There will often be one or two herds of 10-15 deer roaming in an arc around Kimpton.



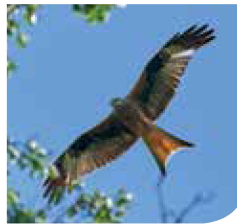
**Badgers** are fairly common, though rarely seen in daylight. But if you find a mound of soil mixed with chalk by the side of or across your path, there is a good chance that there is a badger sett close by.



**Foxes** here are much more shy than their town cousins, at least with humans. Not so with rabbits, pheasant, partridge and chickens.

## Birds

Scores of species can be seen in the parish. Here are just some of the more striking, starting with birds of prey...



**Red Kites & Buzzards** are the most noticeable with their similar mewing calls. Buzzards (broad wings) made a comeback once persecution of raptors was outlawed and then, a few years ago, reintroduced Red Kites (forked tails)

reached Kimpton. The two now co-exist alongside Kestrels and Sparrowhawks – especially at hay harvest time as they all soar and hover over the dwindling stands of grass.

**Sparrowhawks** are often evident from an exploded pile of grey and white feathers – a late pigeon.

Despite being so much smaller, rooks can often be seen chasing kites and buzzards away from their nests. Remember... *A rook on its own is a crow;  
A crow in a flock is a rook.*

**Owls** are also birds of prey. The Tawny Owl is the most common around Kimpton and its classic *twit-twoo* may be heard even during the day. And, good news, the Barn Owl has made a come-back locally, though most likely to be glimpsed as a white flash through the windscreen at night.



**Skylarks** are generally in decline in the UK but may often be heard around Kimpton, particularly above the fields to the NE of the village, high overhead, as they distract predators from their nests on the ground.



**Fieldfares & Redwings**, both of the Thrush family, are our most common winter visitors. The larger, grey-headed, Fieldfares give themselves away with their *chack-chack-chack* as a mob moves off together from a tree or from feeding on a patch of field. Redwings are easily mistaken for Song Thrushes but look for the red blush under the 'armpit'. Like Fieldfares, they also often move around in flocks, with a raggedy flight.



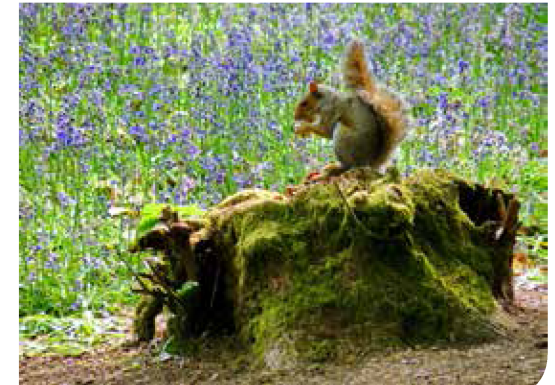
**The Little Egret** is a member of the heron family. Once a rare visitor from warmer places, climate change has come to Kimpton. This egret has now established itself in several places along the River Mimram.

## Plants

Many of our wildflowers are under threat: please leave them for others to enjoy.



**Bluebells** may be found throughout the parish but in some of our woods there are large numbers that make a beautiful display. In the same woods earlier in the year you will find snowdrops.



**Cowslips** are not very common around Kimpton. So the patch above Cottage Farm is quite special in May. Careful where you walk!

**Wild Orchids** are found surprisingly frequently throughout the British Isles, despite their exotic reputation. Locally they may best be seen in the same field as the cowslips, above Cottage Farm.



**The Spindle Tree** is named for the use of its wood to make spindles for spinning – often, but not only, wool. Its straight twigs were also used for knitting needles, skewers and tooth-picks. Trees and bushes are best identified in the autumn by their brilliantly coloured and unusually formed fruit. Careful: they are not deadly but they are poisonous.



## WALK 2: BRIGHT STAR WALK



A short walk of a little over 2½ miles with a short cut of about 1½ miles

Park at the Bright Star public house (01438 832351) and walk in either direction, though the views may be better when walked clockwise.

The full route entails crossing the Luton-Kimpton road and walking some of the way along the lanes: take care.

The shortcut is along headland but take care not only crossing the road but to find the small land bridge across the ditch between the road and the footpath.

## WALK 1: BLUEBELL WALK



A short walk of just over or just under 2 miles.

Park in the Parkfield Sports Ground car park.

Walk in either direction, though the views may be better when walked clockwise.

The shorter route is across a cropped field: this stretch can be extra-muddy.

## WALK 3: BOOT WALK



A walk of almost 4 miles with a slightly shorter 3½ mile variant.

Park in the Memorial Hall car park or at The Boot public house (01438 832438).

Walk in either direction: each way is good for different views. So why not walk it both ways?

The shortcut entails crossing the Luton-Kimpton road: do look out for the waymark and finger-post that indicate the crossing. The full route entails crossing the Luton-Kimpton road and walking some of the way along the lanes: take care.

Both options entail another crossing at a quite dangerous bend in that road: again, take care.

## NOTES

The local pubs and Kimpton Memorial Hall usually have parking space for small groups but sometimes host events, limiting availability.

Large parties expecting a pub lunch please call in advance to book.

When crossing roads, be careful. Many drivers will not be expecting walkers in the road.

All the walks are likely to be muddy after rain. And cross-field paths may be difficult for a while after ploughing.

There are no stiles on any of these walks, and there are benches to take a rest along most of them, But unfortunately, given the terrain, these routes are not suitable for wheelchair access.

The 4 paths indicated here, 3 of them with shortcuts, may be extended by combining them – perhaps walk 2 with walk 3, walk 3 with walk 4, or all of walks 2, 3 & 4 together.

Using other public rights of way in the parish there are many options for varying these routes or creating routes of your own. For these, use the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map 182 for the south part of the parish, including the village itself, and map 193 for the north.

## KEY

### Waymarks

These walks do not have their own waymarks, so please use the usual waymarks for the public rights of way to help you navigate. But to help you confirm that you are on the right track, each walk has its own logo that will, generally, be fixed to the waymarks for the rights of way by means of a small sticker to indicate Bluebell, Bright Star, Boot or Cross Keys.

Public footpath, only for walkers

Bridleway, for use by walkers, horse-riders & cyclists

### Legend

Footpath or Bridleway

Car parking

Viewpoint

Road crossing take care!

Public House

Church or Chapel

### Flora and fauna to look out for on your walk

Fieldfares & Redwings

Red Kites & Buzzards

Skylarks

Muntjac or Fallow Deer

Spindle Tree

Cowslips

Bluebells

Badgers

## WALK 4: CROSS KEYS WALK



A walk of a little over 4 miles.

Park in the Memorial Hall car park, at the Cross Keys public house (01582 832165), or in Ayot St Lawrence.

Walk in either direction, though the route may be easier to follow when walked anti-clockwise - and the views may be better too.