

Oxfam Walk for Water 2020

15 mile route instructions

From Heartwood Forest through Nomansland and historic Wheathampstead, to Ayot St Lawrence and returning via part of the Hertford Way and Devil's Dyke to Heartwood Forest

Adapted route description for independent use during the coronavirus situation

Revised 27 July 2020

Please check on <http://www.oxfamstalbans.org> for the latest version

Please note:

- This route contains areas that may be challenging for social distancing, especially at busy times. **Particularly narrow sections are marked in red.**
- The route starts and finishes at the Heartwood Forest carpark, nearest postcode **AL4 9DQ**. If closed, there is nearby parking in Sandridge, off the main road. The carpark is open from 8.00 a.m. until 8.00 p.m.
- The route description is amended to enable you to find your way without our usual signs, and takes about 6 hours at a steady pace, plus breaks.
- There will be no Marshal Points and Check Points. For your orientation their locations on the enclosed map have been **marked in red (e.g.M1, C2)** in the route description.
- The arrows ← ↖ ↑ ↗ → indicate your forward direction.
- **Benches, pubs and cafés are highlighted in italic, orientation points in bold.**
- For those of you finding it useful, OS Grid References are shown as: {2 Grid letters 3 figures (easting) 3 figures (northing)} e.g. {TL 189 149}.

Section 1: Starting point Heartwood Forest carpark.

- 1 As you enter the carpark from the drive, start at the second path on the right →.**
- 2 Set back from the path, you will see the circular wooden-poled display on your right.**
- 3 At the signpost go straight on ↑ and uphill, passing log posts with bluebell stories, and a bench on your left. At the end of this path you reach the Heartwood Forest welcome board, with the kissing gate and the Scout Hut on the left.**
- 4 Turn right → and go gently uphill on the diagonal gravel path.**
- 5 Where the gravel path divides left and right at a signpost, go straight ahead on the grass ↑ towards a second signpost on the skyline.**
- 6 Here turn left ← onto a track, soon passing on your left a bench dedicated to Matt Risby.**
- 7 Continue straight ahead ↑ through a young wood, passing the Mouse carving and the Woodland Arch on your left as you go.**
- 8 At the corner of a wood, cross straight over another track ↑, continue ahead with the wood on your left and a young wood on your right, until a (kissing)gate marked with a small plaque saying 'Brian's gate' on your right.**

- 9 Turn right through this gate → and follow the broad grassy path, passing between a **memorial stone for Brian & Brenda** and a **bench**, to another (kissing)gate, which is 'Brenda's gate'. Go through, turn left ← on the track for a few metres to the edge of a wood.
- 10 Turn right →, continuing on the grass ↑, between the wood left and a young wood right.
- 11 Where the path forks take the path to the right, going downhill. **M1** {TL 162 122}.

Section 2: Heartwood Forest to Wheathampstead underpass

- 12 At the end of the path turn right →. Continue along the boundary of Heartwood, passing a **bench** set back on your right, until you reach a **Woodland Trust kissing gate** {TL163 123} ↑.
- 13 Go through the gate, down the path for a few metres, then branch right ↗ walking towards the open space of **Nomansland Common**.
- 14 Walk along the Common for ± ½ mile ↑, remaining parallel with the road on your left, passing a **bench** at the top of the hill, and the **public car park** on your left (do NOT cross the road here). Aim for the red bin **C1** {TL175 124} near the far-left corner of the Common, (The **Highstreet B651** lies ahead of you).
- 15 Once there, cross **Ferrers Lane** on your left **WITH GREAT CARE** at the road sign 'Give Way-50 yds'.
- 16 Head straight on ↑, past a **small enclosure**. Aim for the **house** seen beyond the **cricket pitch**.
- 17 Follow the right side of the cricket pitch, passing 3 **benches**, and notice the small **historic puddingstone** in the **semi-circular bench** ↑.
- 18 Aiming at the **Wicked Lady pub**, leave the pitch, and see the **Historic Wheathamstead board**. Turn left ← on to the tarmac drive of the **cricket pavilion**.
- 19 Walk almost to the pavilion and just before the **red bin** turn right → onto a **narrow woodland path**.
- 20 Carry straight on, and almost immediately take a left-hand fork ↙.
- 21 Ignore a left turn, and at a **waymark** where paths cross:
Choose A) if the path is clear. Carry on ↑ ignoring tracks to the left and right. At the next crossroad of tracks, turn right → to leave the wood and emerge into a field at the north side of Nomansland woodland [TL173 128].
Or choose B) if the path ahead is still blocked by a fallen tree: Turn right → at above mentioned **waymark**, and soon turn left ←, keeping the wood on your left and a field on your right. At the corner of the field, the north side of Nomansland woodland [TL173 128], turn right →, re-joining the route at *).
- 22 Go straight ahead ↑. *). With the hedge on your left and the field on your right, follow a short section of **telegraph wires**.
- 23 At the next corner of the field turn right →. After a few metres bear left ↙ into a woodland strip, onto a **narrow path**. **This path can be by-passed** via the parallel track, with the **wood on your left and the field on your right**, but about half-way to the next corner of the

field, immediately after a **large oak tree** on your left, re-join the narrow path at *). Via a narrow cut-through.

- 24 *) Shortly, the **narrow path** forks, take the left turn ←.
- 25 Emerge into an open space and continue diagonally uphill ↗, towards the right-hand corner of an **enclosure** where you reach a 'permissive path' sign.
- 26 Carry straight on ↑ with the fence on your left and a wood on your right, onto a **narrow path, with passing places**. Near the end of the enclosure take the right-hand fork over a wooden walkway, to a gate/gap. Go through the gate, turn left ← onto the asphalt path.
- 27 Continue **WITH CARE** alongside the **High Street** for ± 50 metres, to **Butterfield Road**.
- 28 Turn left ← into Butterfield Road. After ± 200 metres cross Butterfield Road **WITH CARE** and turn right → into **Wick Avenue**. After **house number 39A**, turn right → onto a **narrow asphalt path**.
- 29 At the end of the path turn left ← to continue gently downhill on a **narrow sloping path** above the **High Street**. **This path can be by-passed** by going straight on down the steps and crossing the **High Street, WITH GREAT CARE**. Just after the next bus stop cross back **WITH GREAT CARE**, to re-join the route at *). by turning right →.
- 30 Continue left, onto the pavement. After a little way descend by steps to street level, turn left ← *). and continue on the pavement down into the village and past **The Swan pub** to the corner with **Church Street**. Walk a few metres up Church Street away from the busy junction before crossing **WITH CARE**. **M3** {TL 177 139}.
- 31 Returning to the High Street, pass the **lychgate to St Helens Church**. (Time permitting, you may like to go inside to see the windows and monuments inside this lovely building).
- 32 Proceed to the foot of the hill and just before you get to **Loafing Bakery & Coffee Shop**, (or **Charlie's Coffee Shop** would be a bit further on, past the Pharmacy and the mill stream), cross the High Street at the **zebra crossing**.
- 33 Turn right → between **The Bull pub** and the **Jessamine garage** into **East Lane**. Walk past the public car park on your left (note there are **public toilets** available here) ↑ and as the road bends to the left, pass the **Women's Institute Mead Hall** on your left and a **bench** on your right.
- 34 At the **East Lane** road sign keep left ↙ as **Meads Lane** carries on gently downhill past the **Rainbow House Nursery** and emerges in the **river meadows** ↑.
- 35 Immediately after passing between two **benches**, (and ahead you can see **picnic tables**) turn left to cross the **River Lee** over the **footbridge**. Immediately turn right → and follow the path along the **riverbank**, past a **bench** on your left, until it climbs to join a bridleway (**Lea Valley walk**).
- 36 Turn right → and follow this, passing a **bench** on your right. After passing through two gates the path bends right →, then descends through another gate on your left to a gravel track, from where you can see the underpass on your left **C2**.

Section 3: Wheathampstead underpass to Ayot St Lawrence

- 37** Turn left ←, go through the **underpass of the B653 Cory-Wright Way**, and continue on the gently rising track, ignoring the bridleway to the right. Go straight on ↑ past the metal gate on your right. Keep straight on ↑ where paths cross (and the **Ayot Greenway** goes right on the old railway line). Continue until you reach **Codicote road. M4** {TL 189149}.
- 38** Cross the road **WITH GREAT CARE** and follow **Footpath 40** (Signed: Gustard Wood 1 ¼ mile) immediately opposite ↑. Keep the boundary on your left, and the field on your right, heading for the metal kissing gate in the corner.
- 39** Go through the gate ↖. This was **Lamer Park Golf Course** but is no longer in operation. Continue on with trees on your left and barbed wire fences on both sides ↑. Walk for some distance ↑, always guided by the fences.
- 40** Where a track joins from the left, bear right ↗, immediately crossing a track between two wooden gates. Continue onto a broad path, again fenced on both sides, and **narrowing** at one point for ± 20 metres.
- 41** Carry on until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through onto a track. Turn right → for ± 10 metres
- 42** Then turn left ← through the kissing gate onto **Footpath 38** into woodland with a barbed wire fence on your left.
- 43** On leaving the wood, continue ↑ in your original direction - but crossing a large field **diagonally**. Head for a right-hand curve in the tree&bush-lined boundary. Go through a wooden kissing gate ↑ to cross the lane, then through a metal kissing gate opposite ↑.
- 44** Pass through woodland on a wide track ↑. After the path bears left ↖, continue straight on ↑. The path **narrows** and meanders through a long, narrow wood.
- 45** Eventually the wood widens, with a fence on the right close to the path. After passing a hollow on the right and a garden fence on the left (pay a visit to Fairyland on the left, if it is still there!) you reach the end of the wood.
- 46** Go through a metal kissing gate onto a junction of paths {TL 177166} and turn immediately right → onto **Footpath 36**, which in due course **narrows**. Walk with a field on your left and a wood on your right. At the corner of the field, go through another kissing gate ↑. Continue with the wood on your right, now with an electric fence on your left and a view across the field on the left to **farm buildings**.
- 47** At end of field (ignoring the kissing gate and **Footpath 15** on the left), duck under the fallen holly tree (if still there), and go through the kissing gate on the right. Then immediately turn left again ← to continue in your original direction for ± 10 metres, now with a hedge on your left and a field on your right.
- 48** Ignore **Public Footpath 41** to the right, and go through the kissing gate straight on ↑ (path not numbered). Follow a **narrow path** along wooded land to the left and a barbed wire fence and a field on your right, at times with a narrow strip of wood in-between. Continue through a wooden gate ↑, back onto **Footpath 36**.
- 49** At a crossroad of tracks go straight across ↑ into woodland, **Footpath 13** direction Ayot St Lawrence. Follow the track ↑ by a barbed wire fence. **C3** {TL 191166}.

- 50** At a waymark where the path forks, turn left ← and go **up 5 steps** ↑, still on **Footpath 13**. Continue with a field on your left and a hedge on your right, going through a private garden until you reach **Bibbs Hall Lane**.
- 51** Go through the gate and turn right →. Follow the lane **WITH CARE**, and at the bend turn left along a gravel track ←, Signposted '**To the Church**'.
- 52** Pass the brick back-wall of the **St Lawrence Church**, then branch right ↗ on the path following the fence around the side of the church, to the **church notice board** {TL 192169}. (Break off here to go inside the church grounds and look inside the building if you wish).
- 53** Now **with your back to the church notice board**, turn right ↗ through the kissing gate onto a **footpath marked "Hertfordshire Way clockwise"**. Keep going straight on ↑ through a field, with the church behind you and barbed wire on your left, passing a **bench** in memory of **June and Archie Laing**.
- 54** Go through a metal kissing gate, now on a **narrow path** between electric fences, and exit through a wooden kissing gate ↑ and across gravel to reach **Hill Farm Lane**. (If you wish to stop off and have a look at the old **church ruin** or visit **The Brocket Arms pub**, turn left).
- 55** Otherwise turn right → and follow the lane **WITH GREAT CARE** as it curves left past an **old red telephone box**. Come to the **sign for "Shaw's Corner"** and take **Bride Hall Lane** to the left ←, passing the garden of **Bernard Shaw's house on your right**. Again, **TAKE GREAT CARE** on this stretch of road. Go on through a double bend. **M5** {TL 194 166}.

Section 4: Homebound Ayot St Lawrence to Wheathampstead underpass.

- 56** Cross the road **WITH GREAT CARE** and just past the **house called "Amesbury"**, at the corner of a field, take the public bridleway ↑ (signed: **Public Bridleway 1**, Codicote Road 34, Ayot Greenway 2).
- 57** Continue along the initially **narrow bridleway** for approximately 1 mile ↑, first between hedges, then passing a small wood on your right ↑, and eventually a small strip of wood on your left and a field your right ↑, until you reach **Codicote Road**.
- 58** Cross the road **WITH GREAT CARE** ↖ and turn left for a few meters, and then turn right **M6** {TL 203 154}. Go past a **concrete block**, to continue in your original direction ↑ through a gate onto another bridleway, which curves along a wood on the left and a field on the right. Ignore a track on your right, and one on the left leading into the wood.
- 59** Carry straight on ↑ when the path enters the wood and continue ↑ as comes to a field.
- 60** The path then goes left through a hedge ← into another field, but continue in the same direction ↑, now with the hedge on your right.
- 61** At the **old railway embankment and bridge** do not pass under the bridge, but immediately before it turn right →, up a slope, to join the path along the **old railway track**.
- 62** Turn right → here and continue along the track, passing under **another bridge**.
- 63** At a **black&white Ayot Greenway post** on your left, the path comes out of the cutting and a path merges from the left. Keep straight on ↑.

- 64 Keep going ↑ until you reach another **black& white Ayot Greenway post** on your right. At this point turn left ← downhill on a bridleway, with a field with **telegraph poles** on your left a hedge on your right.
- 65 Continue ↑ to the bottom of the field and turn right → at the T-junction of tracks. Keep along the track, the **Lea Valley Walk**, as it becomes a grassy path with a hedge to your left.
- 66 After a waymark **the path narrows**. At one point it divides for ± 10 metres, but both lead to the same metal kissing gate ↑. Go through, into a long meadow. Follow the path between the fences, with the **Lea river** on your left and the **telegraph poles** and a **bench** on your right. Ignore a diagonal track on you right, carry straight on until you reach another kissing gate ↑.
- 67 Go through the gate and continue with a fenced field on your right, then follow the path straight on as the hedge on the left bears away from the path. Head across the field for a **signpost** (or greyish looking pole) and a small gap in the wooden fence.
- 68 Go through the kissing gate and turn right → along the **narrow path** between **two wooden fences**. Turn left ←, go down some **steps** and you will be back at **the underpass of the B653 Cory-Wright Way**. Turn left ← on to the track, go through the underpass. **C2**.

Section 5: Wheathampstead underpass to Hammonds Farm

- 69 Turn right → and follow the gravel track, **Sheepcote Lane**, as it crosses the **River Lea** by a small bridge and then becomes a tarmac road. Continue up the lane ↑ and cross over **Marford Road WITH GREAT CARE**. **M7** {TL 185 137}.
- 70 Carry straight on ↑ into **Dyke Lane** and continue **WITH CARE** uphill to the **Wheathampstead Heritage Trail information board** at the entrance to the **Devil's Dyke** on your left.
- 71 Pass through the **metal gate** ↑ to enter the **Pre-Roman earthworks**. Carry straight on into the **deepening ditch**, over a **wooden boardwalk** at one place.
- 72 Follow the Dyke until a flight of **wooden steps** on the right →. Go up, onto **Footpath 24**, **M8** {TL 183 133}.
- 73 Soon the path forks. Take the left turn up to **Dyke Lane**
- 74 **TAKE CARE** both looking and listening for traffic as you emerge onto **Dyke Lane**, where you turn left ←. Follow the lane **WITH CARE**.
- 75 ± 10 metres past **Beech Hyde Farm**, turn left| onto **Footpath 15** into a large field. Follow the field boundary with a hedge on your left and then, at a **yellow waymark sign**, continue on with hedges on both sides.
- 76 Emerge onto **Beech Hyde Lane** opposite **Old Beech Hyde house**. Turn right → onto the lane. As you come to the end of a **fenced wooded garden** on your left and a **telegraph pole**, take the footpath on the left ← **Public Footpath 14**, Lemsford 2 miles, which leads across a field towards a wood.
- 77 Enter the wood ↑ by a waymark sign, ignoring the path on the left, and where paths cross follow the **narrow path** straight ahead ↑. **C4** {TL 189 125}. (± 100 metres to the left you will

find the **John Bunyan pub**, so named because the famous preacher and writer stayed at a cottage close by. Just the chimney stack of the cottage still remains).

78 Where the path forks, turn right towards **Coleman Green Lane**.

79 Cross the lane **↑ WITH CARE**, to a field gate opposite. At the gate two footpaths diverge. Take the right fork **↗** to follow the path with the field on your left and a hedge on your right.

80 Continue straight on up-hill. At a gap in the hedge ahead, with **waymarks**, go right **↗** along the edge of the field with the hedge on your right.

81 Continue straight on to follow the footpath across the field to the edge of **Titnol's Wood**. Do not enter it but turn right **→**, with the wood on your left and a field with a barbed wire fence on your right.

82 At a hedge ahead and a waymark, ignore a left and a right turn, but cross a stile and continue straight on **↑**, on a **narrow path**, still on the Hertfordshire Way, with the wood to your left and a field on your right.

83 Then follow the **fence of a house** on the left and **stables** on the right, to a kissing gate where you turn right **→** onto **Hammonds Lane**.

84 TAKE GREAT CARE on the lane, which is generally quiet but does have some traffic. Follow Hammonds Lane for ± half a mile, which will take you past a junction with **Tower Hill Lane** on the right, then a gravel track at **Meadow Lodge** on the left, and finally **Hammond's Farm** to your right.

Section 6: Hammonds Farm to Heartwood Forest carpark

85 Continue **WITH GREAT CARE** along the lane, past **Hammond House** on the right. Where the lane curves to the right you see a **large log** on the left. Look for the green **Hertfordshire Way** sign **↖**. Pass through the gate, turning right **→** onto the Hertfordshire Way footpath. **You can bypass this stretch of the lane by squeezing past the second metal gate opposite Hammond House, and following the edge of the field with the hedge on your right, soon re-joining the route at the next gate with the large log *).**

86 *). Keeping the hedge on your right, follow the edge of the field, towards a small wood.

87 As the path enters the wood, continue straight on **↑**. Soon the Hertfordshire Way emerges from the wood, bending to the left, and then continues straight on **↑**, with the wood on the left, and a young wood with a fence on the right.

88 Passing a **small pond** on the left, when you reach the corner of the wood, the **houses of Sandridge** come into view. Carry straight on **↑** through a field to **Langley Grove**. Cross the road **WITH CARE** and carry straight over **↑** onto a **narrowing footpath**.

89 Pass the houses on your right, until you come to a fence and a **waymark post** on the right. Take the path which forks off to the left **↖** to cross a tarmac drive at a **zebra crossing**.

90 You emerge into the grassy churchyard of **St Leonard's Church**. Where the path forks, keep to the right **↗** aiming for the **lychgate arch** at the front of the church.

91 From the lychgate go straight on **↑**, past the **Queen's Head pub**, to the **bus shelter** at **St Albans Road B651. M9** {TL 171 106}.

- 92** Cross the main road **WITH GREAT CARE**, and walk a few metres to the right → to the drive of **Pound Farm**.
- 93** Take the bridleway through Pound Farm ←, leaving the **large barn** to the left. Continue ↑, following the bridleway gently uphill, then taking the first entrance right, into the **carpark**.
- 94** Follow the path clockwise, to get back to your starting point.

CONGRATULATIONS ON FINISHING YOUR 15-MILE WALK!

Now put your feet up and treat yourself to drinks and cakes whilst sending your experiences & photos for our website to us on oxfamstalbans1@gmail.com , and completing your fundraiser sheet.

Donation(s) to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/StAlbansOxfam>

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!