

## 15-mile route description

Heartwood Forest, Nomansland Common, Historic Wheathampstead, Ayot St Lawrence and returning via part of the Hertfordshire Way and Devil's Dyke, to Heartwood Forest

**Adapted route description for use during the coronavirus pandemic**

***Route checked and route description revised 10 September 2021***

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

- This route contains areas that may be challenging for social distancing, especially at busy times. Therefore, **narrow sections are marked in red.**
- The walk starts at the Scout Hut in Heartwood Forest, Sandridgebury Lane, Sandridge, St Albans, **AL3 6JB**, but use the adjacent Heartwood Forest carpark, the nearest postcode is **AL4 9DQ**. The carpark opens at 8.00 and closes at 20.00. Follow the yellow signs to the Scout Hut. There is also nearby parking in Sandridge, off the main road. Please share a car or use public transport if you can, as weekends can be busy.
- **The Scout Hut will close at 17.00.** Allow plenty of time for parking, registration, the walk itself, some stops, and tea&cake on your return.
- The **± 15-mile** route takes about 6 hours at a steady pace and without a break, so we advise you to you **start your walk between 8.30 and 9.30.**
- We ask you to **follow current Government Covid Guidelines** on wearing masks, social distancing, and sanitising, in the Scout Hut as well as during your walk. **If you prefer not to come in, call one of the numbers below, and we will come outside to register you.**
- **In case of emergency, or if you will not return to the Scout Hut to check out,** it is important to call Sue Cockell on **07535 695744**, or Wilma Mendonca on **07305 807288**.
- **Bring your own** copy(s) of this route description, water, packed lunch, snacks, sunscreen, hat, anorak, a small first-aid kit, secateurs (if you wear shorts), and a fully charged mobile phone. Also bring some cash for tea&cake and for purchases at the St Albans Oxfam shop stall, and your bank details to make your Walk for Water donation on JustGiving. We have no card-reader.
- There are six **Check Points**, **C1, C2, C3, C4, C3** again, and **C5**.
- There will be **no yellow Herts Hike route signs** after **C1**, but the arrows in this route description **← ↖ ↑ ↗ →** indicate your direction.
- **Benches, café's and pubs** are highlighted in **italic**, and **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}.

**Enjoy your walk!**

## Section 1: Scout Hut to Check Point C1

- 1 At the **Scout Hut entrance gate** turn left ← onto the **Scout Hut drive**, then left ← onto a bridleway, and almost immediately right ↗ through a kissing gate into **Heartwood Forest**.
- 2 Go ahead gently uphill on the diagonal gravel path ↑.
- 3 Where the gravel path divides left and right at a **signpost**, go straight ahead on the grassy path ↑ towards a second **signpost on the skyline**.
- 4 Here turn left ← onto a track, soon passing on your left a **bench dedicated to Matt Risby**.
- 5 Continue straight ahead ↑ entering the **Magical Wood**, passing the **Mouse carving** and then the **Woodland Arch** on your left as you go.
- 6 At the corner of **Puddler's Wood** in front of you, cross straight over another track ↑, continue ahead with the wood on your left and a young wood on your right, until a gate marked with a small plaque saying '**Brian's gate**' on your right.
- 7 Turn right through this gate →, and follow the broad grassy path, passing between a **memorial stone for Brian & Brenda** and a **bench**, to another gate, which is 'Brenda's gate'. Go through, turn left ← on the track for a few yards, to the edge of a wood.
- 8 Turn right →, continuing on the grass ↑, between a wood on the left and a young wood on the right.

Going downhill, you can see **Check Point C1** {TL 162 122} in a shady spot. **Please show your walker number to the Marshall.**

## Section 2: Heartwood Forest C1 to Wheathampstead underpass C3

### 9 CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!

- 10 The 2.5 & 4-milers turn left, whilst the 5, 8, 15 & 20-mile walkers turn right →.

**Don't just follow the people in front!** Continue along the boundary of Heartwood, passing a **bench** set back on your right, until you reach a **Woodland Trust kissing gate** {TL163 123}.

- 11 Go through the gate ↑, down the path for a few metres and then branch right ↗ walking towards the open space of **Nomansland Common**, and **Check Point C2**. **Please show your walker number to the Marshall.**
- 12 Walk along the Common for ± 0.5 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 {TL175 124} near the far-left corner of the Common, (The **Highstreet B651** lies ahead of you).
- 13 Once there, turn left ← to cross **Ferrers Lane WITH GREAT CARE** at the road sign '**Give Way–50 yds**'.
- 14 **CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!** At a small enclosure the 5-milers turn right, whilst the 8, 15 & 20-mile walkers go straight on ↑, Aim for the house seen beyond the cricket pitch.
- 15 Follow the right side of the cricket pitch, passing 3 **benches**, and notice the small **historic puddingstone** in the **semi-circular bench** ↑.

- 16 Aiming at the ***Wicked Lady pub***, leave the pitch, and see the **Historic Wheathampstead board**. Turn left ← on to the tarmac drive of the **cricket pavilion**.
- 17 Just before the **cricket pavilion**, where the edge of the wood is set back slightly, turn right → onto a ***very narrow woodland path***, which is easily missed, and almost immediately take a left-hand fork ↖.
- 18 Ignore a left turn, and at a **waymark** where paths cross (you may still see a large tree blocking the path ahead), turn right →, and after ± 10 yards turn left ←, keeping the wood on your left and making your way along the edge of a (corn) field on your right. At the corner of the field, the north side of Nomansland woodland [TL173 128], turn right →.
- 19 Go straight on ↑, with the hedge on your left and the field on your right, and follow a short section of **telegraph wires**.
- 20 At the next corner of the field go straight on, onto a gravel path, and almost immediately turn right →.
- 21 At the T-junction turn left ←.
- 22 Emerge onto an open space and continue diagonally uphill ↗, towards the right-hand corner of an **enclosure**.
- 23 Carry straight on ↑ with the fence on your left and a narrow wood on your right. Just after the next corner of the enclosure turn right →.
- 24 Go past an iron gate, and turn left ← onto an asphalt path.
- 25 Continue **WITH CARE** alongside the **High Street** for ± 50 yards, to **Butterfield Road**.
- 26 Turn left ← into Butterfield Road. After ± 200 yards cross Butterfield Road **WITH CARE** and turn right → into **Wick Avenue**.
- 27 After **house number 39A**, turn right → onto a ***narrow asphalt path***.
- 28 At the end of the path turn left ← to continue gently downhill on a ***narrow sloping path*** above the **High Street**.
- 29 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 yards up Church Street, away from the busy junction, before crossing **WITH CARE**.
- 30 Returning to the High Street, pass the **lychgate to St Helens Church**. (Time permitting, you may like to stop and see the windows and monuments inside this lovely building).
- 31 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**.
- 32 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.
- 33 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** ↑.

- 34** Immediately after passing between two **benches**, (and ahead you can see **picnic tables**) turn left ← to cross the **River Lee** over the **footbridge**.
- 35** 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** immediately on your right. After passing through two gates the path turns right →.

Go through another gate on your left, taking the steps down to **Check Point C3**, from where you can see the **underpass** on your left. **Please show your walker number to the Marshall.**

### Section 3: Wheathampstead Underpass **C3** to Ayot St Lawrence

- 37 CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!** The 8-milers turn right, whilst the 15&22-milers turn left ←.
- 38** 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**.
- 39** Cross the road **WITH GREAT CARE**, and follow **Footpath 40** (Gustard Wood 1 1/4 mile) ↑. Keep the boundary on your left, and the field on your right, heading for the metal kissing gate in the corner.
- 40** 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.
- 41** 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 yards.
- 42** Carry on until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through onto a track. Turn right → for ± 10 yards.
- 43** Then turn left ← through the kissing gate onto **Footpath 38** into a wood, with a barbed wire fence on your left.
- 44** 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 ↑.
- 45** Continue through a wood on a wide track ↑. After the path bears left ↖, continue straight on ↑. The path meanders through a long, narrow wood.
- 46** 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, you reach the end of the wood.
- 47** 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 of **Bibbsworth Hall farm**.

- 48** At end of the field (ignoring the kissing gate and **Footpath 15** on the left), go through the kissing gate on the right →. Then immediately turn left again ← to continue in your original direction for ± 10 yards, now with a hedge on your left and a field on your right.
- 49** Ignore **Public Footpath 41** to the right, and go through the kissing gate straight on ↑. Go along a wood 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 ↑, onto **Footpath 36**.
- 50** At a crossroad of tracks go straight across ↑ into woodland, **Footpath 13** direction Ayot St Lawrence.
- 51** Follow the track ↑ by a barbed wire fence, to waymark where the path forks, and **Checkpoint C4**. *Please show your Walker Reference number.* {TL 191166}. At this point, 20-mile walkers are advised to check if there is enough time to complete their last loop and return to the Scout Hut, or divert onto the 15-mile route at St Lawrence Church.
- 52** Turn left ← to 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**.
- 53** 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'.
- 54** Turn right → to go anti-clockwise around **St Lawrence Church**, and go inside, or rest on the *benches* or the *steps* to take in the view. Continue on the church path, and go through the metal church gate.

#### **Section 4: Ayot St Lawrence to Wheathampstead underpass**

- 55 CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!** The 20-milers turn straight on, whilst the 15-mile walkers will turn right.
- 56** With your back to the **church notice board**, turn right ↗ through the metal kissing gate onto a **footpath marked 'Hertfordshire Way clockwise'** {TL 192169}.
- 57** 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*.
- 58** 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**, where the 20-milers re-join the 15-mile walkers. If you wish to stop off and have a look at the old **church ruin or visit *The Brocket Arms pub***, turn left.
- 59** 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.
- 60** Cross the road **WITH GREAT CARE** and just past the **house called 'Amesbury'**, at the corner of a field, take the public bridleway ↑ **Public Bridleway 1, Codicote Road 3/4, Ayot Greenway 2**.



- 61 Continue along the initially narrow bridleway for ± 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**.
- 62 Cross the road **WITH GREAT CARE** ↖, turn left for a few yards, and then turn right, 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.
- 63 Carry straight on ↑ when the path enters the wood and continue ↑ as it comes to a field.
- 64 The path then goes left through a hedge ← into another field, but continue in the same direction ↑, now with the hedge on your right.
- 65 At the **old railway embankment and bridge** do not pass under the bridge, but immediately before it turn right →, up a slope, to join **Ayot Greenway**.
- 66 Turn right → here and continue along the old railway track, passing under **another bridge**.
- 67 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 ↑.
- 68 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.
- 69 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.
- 70 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 ↑.
- 71 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 to a **signpost** (or greyish looking pole) and a small gap in the wooden fence.
- 72 Go through the kissing gate and turn right →, 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.
- 73 You are now back at **Check Point C3**. *Please show your Walker Reference number.* Here, the 15 & 22-mile walkers re-join the 8-milers.

### Section 5: Wheathampstead underpass C3 to Hammonds Farm

- 74 Follow the gravel track, **Sheepcote Lane**, as it crosses the **River Lea** by a small bridge and then becomes a tarmac road.
- 75 Continue up the lane ↑ and cross over **Marford Road WITH GREAT CARE**.

- 76** Carry straight on **↑** into **Dyke Lane** and continue **WITH CARE** uphill to the **Wheathampstead Heritage Trail information board** with the entrance to the **Devil's Dyke** on your left.
- 77** 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.
- 78** Follow the Dyke until a flight of **wooden steps** on the right **→**. Go up, onto **Footpath 24**.
- 79** Soon the path forks. Take the left turn **←** up to **Dyke Lane**.
- 80** **TAKE CARE** both looking and listening for traffic as you emerge onto **Dyke Lane**, where you turn left **←**. Follow the lane **WITH CARE**.
- 81** Pass **Beech Hyde Farm** on the left,  $\pm$  10 yards 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.
- 82** 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.
- 83** Enter the wood **↑** by a waymark sign, ignoring the path on the left, through an area of destroyed woodland, and where paths cross, follow the **narrow path** straight ahead **↑** to **Check Point C5** {TL 189 125}. *Please show your walker number to the Marshall.*
- 84** ( $\pm$  100 yards 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).
- 85** Where the path forks, turn right **↗** towards **Coleman Green Lane**.
- 86** 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.
- 87** 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.
- 88** 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.
- 89** 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.
- 90** 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**.
- 91** **TAKE GREAT CARE** on the lane, which is generally quiet but does have some traffic. Follow Hammonds Lane past a junction with **Tower Hill Lane** on the right. At **Meadow Lodge** on the left, cross the stile. You are now on the **Hertfordshire Way** footpath.
- 92** Continue straight on **↑**, parallel to Hammonds Lane, with a field on the left and a hedge on the right.

## Section 6: Hammonds Farm to Scout Hut

- 93** Pass **Hammonds Farm** and **Hammonds House** on the right, two metal gates, and another one with a with a **large log** behind it. Here, the 5-milers re-join the 8,15 & 20-mile walkers.
- 94** Continue with the hedge on your right, towards a wood.
- 95** As the path enters the wood, continue straight on **↑**. Soon the Hertfordshire Way emerges from the wood, bending sharply to the left **↖**, and then continues straight on **↑**, with the wood on the left, and a young wood with a fence on the right.
- 96** Passing a **small pond** on the left, you reach the corner of the wood, and the **houses of Sandridge** come into view. Carry straight on **↑** through a field to **Langley Grove**. Cross the road **WITH CARE** **↑** onto a **narrowing footpath**.
- 97** After a few minutes, at the end of a garden fence and a **waymark post** on the right, take a short and **narrow path**, which forks off to the left **↖**, to cross a tarmac drive at a small zebra crossing (take care).
- 98** 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.
- 99** From the lychgate go straight on **↑**, past the **Queen's Head pub**, toward the **bus shelter at St Albans Road B651**.
- 100** Cross the main road **WITH GREAT CARE** and walk a few yards to the right **→**, to the drive of **Pound Farm**.
- 101** Take the drive through Pound Farm **←**, leaving the **large barn** to the left.
- 102** Continue gently uphill on the bridleway, past the **Heartwood Forest welcome sign** **↑** until the **Scout Hut** comes into sight again.
- 103** Turn left **←** onto the Scout Hut drive, and immediately right **→** through the gate.

## CONGRATULATIONS ON FINISHING YOUR WALK

Please go inside to register your arrival, hand in your sponsorship money/donation(s) or make a transfer to

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Oxfam-St-Albans1>

Give us some feedback, and treat yourself to drinks and cakes whilst sending us your experiences & photos for our website on [oxfamstalbans1@gmail.com](mailto:oxfamstalbans1@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**

We hope you enjoyed your walk  
and we look forward to seeing you on

**SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Do save the date!**